

Holy Baptism (Infant Baptism)

Infant baptism is not treated separately in Luther's Catechism—indeed, because it is the self-evident conclusion from the answers already learned. So review!

1. How does each Q&A support baptizing infants? What about Acts 2:38–39; 16:25–33; Mark 10:13–15; John 3:5–6; Matthew 18:6?

From Luther's *Large Catechism* (IV: Baptism)

⁵²⁻⁵³ [E]verything depends upon the Word and command of God. This now is perhaps somewhat acute, but it rests entirely upon what I have said, that Baptism is nothing else than water and the Word of God in and with each other, that is, when the Word is added to the water, Baptism is valid, even though faith be wanting. For my faith does not make Baptism, but receives it. Now, Baptism does not become invalid even though it be wrongly received or employed; since it is not bound (as stated) to our faith, but to the Word...

⁵⁷ We bring the child in the conviction and hope that it believes, and we pray that God may grant it faith; but we do not baptize it upon that, but solely upon the command of God. Why so? Because we know that God does not lie. I and my neighbor and, in short, all men, may err and deceive, but the Word of God cannot err.

⁵⁸ Therefore they are presumptuous, clumsy minds that draw such inferences and conclusions as these: Where there is not the true faith, there also can be no true Baptism. Just as if I would infer: If I do not believe, then Christ is nothing; or thus: If I am not obedient, then father, mother, and government are nothing. Is that a correct conclusion, that whenever any one does not do what he ought, the thing in itself shall be nothing and of no value?

⁸³ Thus it appears what a great, excellent thing Baptism is, which delivers us from the jaws of the devil and makes us God's own, suppresses and takes away sin, and then daily strengthens the new man; and is and remains ever efficacious until we pass from this estate of misery to eternal glory.

⁸⁴ For this reason let every one esteem his Baptism as a daily dress in which he is to walk constantly, that he may ever be found in the faith and its fruits, that he suppress the old man and grow up in the new.

⁸⁵⁻⁸⁶ For if we would be Christians, we must practise the work whereby we are Christians. But if any one fall away from it, let him again come into it. For just as Christ, the Mercy-seat, does not recede from us or forbid us to come to Him again, even though we sin, so all His treasure and gifts also remain. If, therefore, we have once in Baptism obtained forgiveness of sin, it will remain every day, as long as we live, that is, as long as we carry the old man about our neck.