

Appendix IX — Martin Luther and Baptism

The following paragraphs are taken from Martin Luther's *Small Catechism* and are a summary of the doctrine of Holy Baptism. Martin Luther would explain doctrines by utilizing a series of questions and answers.

THE INSTITUTION OF BAPTISM

What is baptism?

Baptism is not just plain water, but it is water used by God's command and connected with God's Word.

What is that word of God?

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Matthew, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit!"

THE BLESSINGS OF BAPTISM

What does baptism do for us?

Baptism works forgiveness of sin, delivers from death and the devil and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.

What is God's promise?

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Mark, "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."

THE POWER OF BAPTISM

How can water do such great things?

It is certainly not the water that does such things, but God's word which is in and with the water, and faith which trusts this word used with the water.

For without God's word the water is just plain water and not baptism. But with this word it is baptism. God's word makes it a washing through which God graciously forgives our sin and grants us rebirth and a new life through the Holy Spirit.

Where is this written?

St. Paul says in Titus, chapter 3, "He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying."

THE MEANING OF BAPTISM FOR OUR DAILY LIFE

What does baptizing with water mean?

It means that our old Adam with his evil deeds and desires should be drowned by daily contrition and repentance, and die, and that day by day a new man should arise, as from the dead, to live in the presence of God in righteousness and purity now and forever.

Where is this written?

St. Paul says in Romans, chapter 6, "We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."