



The Sacrament
Of Holy Baptism

So You were blessed with a Baby?...What Now?



Let's first just say congratulations on the new person in your home.. This little one is truly a gift of God in every sense. I know it may not seem like it during a 4:30 feeding but Oh well—that goes with the territory and it's why God gave us coffee (LOTS AND LOTS OF COFFEE). As a conscientious parent you no doubt have already considered duct taping foam rubber over every pointy corner in your home in an effort to child proof your house (or you may have given up on this and just raised all the breakable, valuable items in your home "up" about two feet).

While this may be your first child or you may be working on an even dozen you have certainly shown yourself to be a parent who loves your child—How do I know that—because you've contacted the Church and talked to a Pastor about baptism. Before we go any further let me just say "WELL DONE YOU!" There may have been any one of a number of reasons for you wanting to have your child baptized so let me ask you this question:



Why Do You Want Your Baby Baptized?

Now I ask this question not to make anyone feel

uncomfortable but because I very strongly believe that we need to honestly look at our reasons, our intentions and our assumptions not only about Baptism, but about God's place in the life of your family and about Christianity in general. The reasons WHY you want your child baptized has

- Top Ten Reason People Have For Baptizing their Children**
- 1) So My Child will Have their Sins Forgiven
 - 2) To Have them Claimed By God
 - 3) To Save them from Sin, Death & the Power of the Devil
 - 4) So They can always know they are loved by God
 - 5) So They can be part of the Church
 - 6) So God can Be a "Part" of their life
 - 7) Because the Grandparents won't shut up about it.
 - 8) To Publically Present them to Family and friends
 - 9) Because the Rest of the family was Baptized
 - 10) So We can Use the Family Baptismal Gown

very much to say about what you believe about God. For example many parents give me **reason number 6** as the main reason why they want their child to be baptized, namely that they want God to be a "part" of the life of their child even as He is likely a "part" of their life. But which part? For that matter what does God want?... does He have something to say here? Does He wish to be limited to a *part* when He wants to be so much more in your life? When you brought your child visit—only to send your baby away—you

home you did not bring him or her for a short brought him or her home to be a part of your family to share your lives together in the relationship of parent and child. There is no way that you would be satisfied to have just a nodding acquaintance with your little one but then only see them at the occasional birthday or event. God Your Heavenly Father is no different. He has more invested in your child even than you do—He made sure that your child was "fearfully and wonderfully formed" and "knew them" even while they were yet within the womb and now that your child has been born He wants to be more than a "Part" or their life He wants to have a real loving giving and growing relationship with them. A relationship that, while it may BEGIN with Baptism, will continue throughout their whole life, a relationship that is nurtured and strengthened through time spent together with God in Worship with God's people (the Church) and as God is present in your home.

So while you may be thinking of Baptism for your child as a single event—God and His Church are asking you to think more in terms of Baptism as the beginning of a new Life that begins with the event but continues for years and years to come.

Who is actually involved in this Baptism?

As human beings we are very “self aware” in the sense that we are intensely aware of our own participation in events such as Worship and much of the Christian life. While this is certainly not a bad thing it tends to preoccupy us and lead us away from focussing on those events that God is initiating and participating in. We can mistakenly believe that because we are so aware of our own participation in these events - that it is in fact WE who are initiating them, we who are doing something for God.



Baptism is a good example of one such event. When we have a baptism in our church we are very aware of the activities of the Pastor, the Parents, the Godparents, even the Elder who is assisting. What is NOT so apparent however is the most important actor in the event - GOD. Thus it's easy to preoccupy ourselves with our own feelings and understanding regarding baptism while missing its true benefits.

Many Protestant denominations, understand baptism as a public declaration of someone's faith in Christ. Some also say it is a time of public repentance and turning one's life around. Ultimately, all of these views center around the activity of the person who is turning their life over to God. Lutherans, however, take the opposite stance, that it's not about what they're doing, but it's about what God is doing in and through baptism. Thus, the focus in baptism shifts from human action to God's action.

When we look at what happens during a baptismal ceremony we can mistakenly think that all that is going on is what we see: parents/godparents bringing a child to have the Pastor pour some water on his/her head. Because it looks so simple and straight forward we think “nothing special is going on here; it's just some quaint old ceremony.”

Actually, nothing could be further from the truth. What we are witnessing is far more than meets the eye. In this simple washing of water we are witnessing nothing less than a miracle. We are watching someone being put to death and brought back to life again. But as with so many things pertaining to God's work, if you are not watching this through the eyes of faith, you are likely to miss it entirely.



Baptism: What It Is and Why the Big Deal?

Baptism comes from the Greek word *baptizo* (baptizo) meaning:

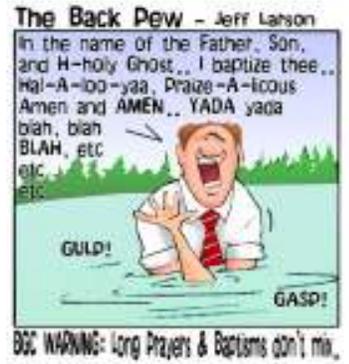
1. to dip repeatedly, to immerse, to submerge (of vessels sunk)
2. to cleanse by dipping or submerging,
3. to wash, to make clean with water, to wash one's self
4. to overwhelm



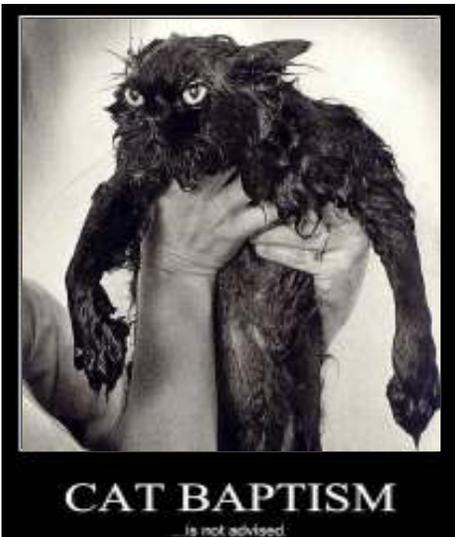
Baptism is one practice which, although performed by all Christian Churches, has been the source of a great deal of controversy over its practice and meaning. Some feel that the main issue involves the **mode** of baptism - whether one is immersed entirely in water or whether one only has a small amount of water poured over them at a baptismal font. For Lutherans the mode of baptism is not the issue.

Many theologians, even Dr. Luther have agreed that immersion was the original mode of the New Testament church. The greatest evidence for this is by the very word itself, taken from the Greek root *bapto*, which is in both secular and classical Greek translated as the act of dipping or immersing.

However *baptizo* is not a specific action but rather a derivative of the word *bapto* which expresses a thing - but not necessarily how it is to be performed. Thus the root *bapto* may also have various other meanings as well, among them: to dye, by dipping, to dye without regard to mode, to gild, to wet, moisten, or wash, to temper, to imbue, to overflow with water, to pour upon or drench, or to be overwhelmed or overpowered. There has also been some question as to how feasible immersion would have been for large numbers of converts, such as the 3,000 on the day of Pentecost due to the limited water supply of Jerusalem, which consisted of personal cisterns and public reservoirs. This being said, the main issue for Lutherans is neither the mode nor the amount of water being used in baptism. Rather the issue centers upon ***“what is taking place in baptism”*** & ***“who is to be baptized?”***



Who Should be Baptized?



The Christian Church continues to be sharply divided over the important question of whether babies should be Baptised or only those adults who have made a profession of faith. Those who answer "yes" (Lutherans, Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists, etc.) claim Biblical support for their position. Those who answer "no" (Baptists, Seventh Day Adventists, many "evangelical," or "non-denominational" churches) say the Bible is on their side. The pro-infant baptism churches assert that Christ commanded infant baptism. The opposing side asserts that nowhere is such a thing commanded. They hold that at best it is useless and at worst harmful. It is even their practice to re-baptize adults who were baptized as babies. The Lutheran Church has always taught that baptism is for everyone, including infants. We believe that Jesus

wants babies to be baptized.

The Nature of our Sinful Nature?

One of the primary reasons why the Lutheran Church baptizes babies is because we understand from scripture that we are all born sinful and unclean. That we are guilty not only of the "sins" which we commit on a daily basis but that we also stand condemned before God, along with all mankind, because of the sin which Adam and Eve plunged the entire human race into when they fell into sin. This is called ***“Original sin”*** and while as Lutherans we take for granted that it applies to each and everyone of us, even babies, many denominations do not. Some denominations, who, while they agree that mankind possesses an "original depravity," they deny that this "original depravity" is in fact sin (it's more like a disease or an inclination that must be resisted). Because it is not Sin, there is the abil-



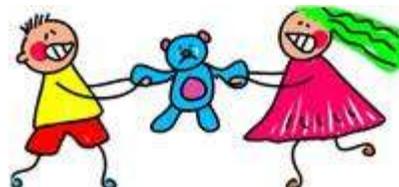
ORIGINAL SIN: In Eden, God warned Adam and Eve of the consequence of Sin, saying "In the day you eat of it you shall die." Though we may not like to admit it and often ignore it as best we can, Death entered the world and has a consequence, which is separation from God. Original Sin is not an activity (like actual sin) but an inherent condition. It exists. Original sin is the complete lack or absence of the originally created righteousness of the image of God according to which man was originally formed in truth, holiness, and righteousness. Original sin is not a slight corruption of human nature, but ... it is so deep a corruption that nothing sound or uncorrupted has survived in man's body or soul, in his inward or

Babies are in Need of Forgiveness: Refuting the Age of Accountability



Those who would deny infant baptism do so mostly because they believe that babies are not sinful. Some would suggest that babies and young children are not accountable for sins - at least not until they have reached what they have termed the "age of accountability." The age of accountability is suggested to be at around 4-6 although the specifics vary from child to child. Most people would agree that basically it means, 'a person who is young enough that he is not yet able to understand fully the results of his actions' (It being theorized by some that these children are not held accountable for the things which they do which are against God's law).

For example, a six year old child that might hit his sister over the head with a toy block in anger. 'Theoretically,' this child is not held accountable by God because he had not yet reached an age where he is able to fully understand what he was doing.



Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me **Psalm 51:5**

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **Romans 3:23**

As it is written:
 "There is no one righteous, not even one;
¹¹there is no one who understands,
 no one who seeks God.
¹²All have turned away,
 they have together become worthless;
 there is no one who does good,
 not even one." **Romans 3:10**

Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward and speak lies. ⁴Their venom is like the venom of a snake, like that of a cobra that has stopped its ears, ⁵ that will not heed the tune of the charmer, however skillful the enchanter may be **Psalms 58:3-5**



⁶Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. **John 3:6**

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned. **Romans 5:12**

For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death **Romans 7:5**

¹⁸I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. [e]
 For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.
¹⁹For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. ²⁰Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. **Romans 7:18-20**

every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood **Genesis 8:21**

As Lutherans we have problems with this whole concept. Not only because it denies original sin, but because it injects a concept which is not biblical. There is nothing in God's law that says man must fully understand sin, before it is actually sin.

We could go on at length here and exegetically review each verse used to support the age of accountability theory but suffice it to say that there are a couple glaring problems with this view that Children are not sinful until they reach the age where they understand it.

- 1) it suggests that there is a time in a persons life when they are not sinful and do not need Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. And
- 2) It suggests that the most logical and loving thing a parent could do would be to kill the child and make sure that this child enters heaven before they have a chance to become accountable for the sin they commit.



There is an age of accountability but it does not begin at an age based on our own speculation. The Biblical age of accountability is CONCEPTION. Sure, many can and do disagree with this, but they do not have any Bible verses to back up their belief that a person has to be old enough to realize that he is a sinner or be able to understand God's Salvation before he has real sin!

Don't let looks deceive you! When we look at the visible things (or "elements") in the Sacraments, we may think that what we see is what we get. But this is not so. The water in Holy Baptism is not just simple water. In his Small Catechism, Martin Luther wrote, *"Baptism is not simple water only, but it is the water comprehended in God's command and connected with God's Word."* What makes the water in Baptism so powerful? **God's Word**. Baptism is simply a God-given connection of water with God's Word. That's what makes Baptism work. God's Word is always powerful. Paul, in Romans 1:16 taught that the Word of God "it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes."

Baby on Board - God's Forgiveness for Infants



Many raise the objection: *"There is not a single example of infant baptism in the New Testament, nor is there any command to do so. Therefore Christians should not baptize babies."*

When Jesus commands us to *"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father*

*"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples **of all nations**, baptizing them in ^[a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."* **MATTHEW 28**

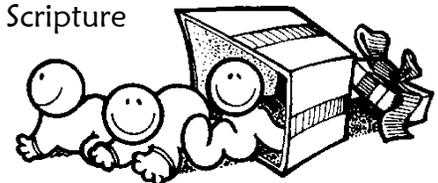
and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19), He doesn't set any age restrictions. The command is general. It includes infants, women, men, and teenagers, even though none of these groups is specifically named. Each of these groups is included in *"all nations."*



But wait a minute...The bible doesn't specifically say to baptize babies - how come you assume He means babies when he says to baptize "ALL NATIONS."

Check out John 3:16 - *"For God so Loved the World that He gave His only Begotten son that whoever should believe in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."* When God sent His son to die for us- He included ALL PEOPLE in the words *"loved the whole world"* and *"whoever believes in Him"*.

Even those who don't agree with baptizing babies will admit that when Jesus died for *"Whoever would believe"* and *"The Whole World"* it includes babies (even though John 3:16 does not SPECIFICALLY mention babies). While it is true that there is no example in Scripture of a baby being baptized, to conclude from this that babies are not to be baptized is absurd. Note that there are no specific examples of the elderly being baptized, or teenagers, or little children either.



Instead we read about men (Acts 2:41; 8:35) women (Acts 16:14-15), and entire households being baptized (**Acts 10:24,47-48; 16:14-15; 16:30-33; 1 Co. 1:16**) would this not include infants?



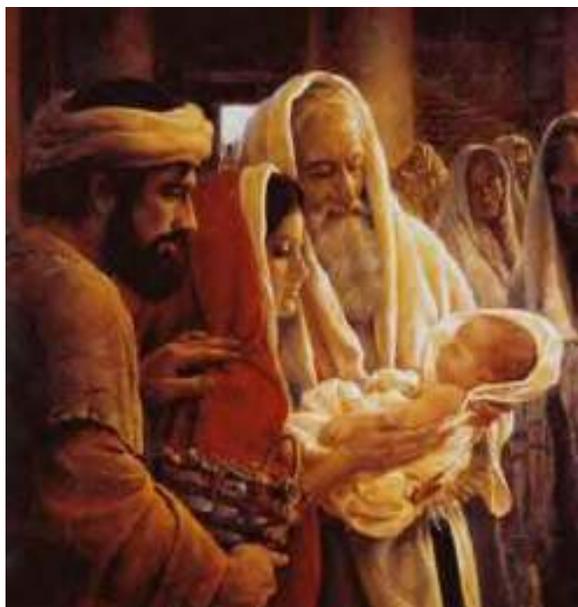
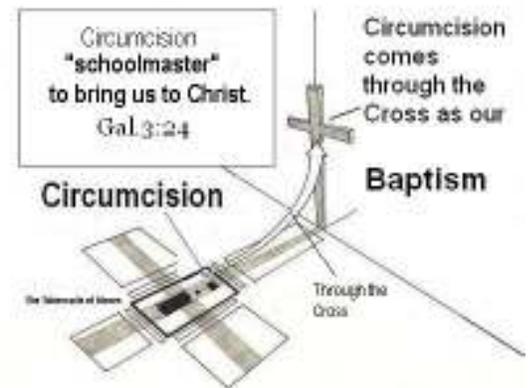
The authors of the New Testament documents didn't feel compelled to give examples of every age group or category being baptized. Why should they have? Certainly they understood that "all nations" is all-inclusive. So who is included in His gift of Baptism - EVERYONE. Those who deny infant baptism not only defy Jesus' command to baptize everyone. They also deny the universal, unlimited grace of God who would reach out and

How Does God's Mercy Apply To Babies? - Circumcision & Baptism



Back in the Old Testament God established a relationship with the people of Israel through a promise or Covenant that He made with their father Abraham. God's covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17:10-14) demanded that every male child was to be circumcised when eight days old. By circumcision, the baby entered into a covenant relationship with Abraham's God and the God of his offspring as well. Then God says that Abraham's part of the covenant is to believe God's promise and be circumcised AND to circumcise his male children 8 days old as well.

Now, what is really amazing about this is that Paul, looking back to Gen 17 in Romans 4:11, says that circumcision was the sign and seal of the righteousness that comes by faith! In the sign of his circumcision a Jewish child at **8 days old** became a Jew and a child of the promise. He had no decision to make in the matter - He was circumcised .



St. Paul teaches us that in the New Testament baptism has replaced circumcision. *"In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism . . ."* (Col. 2:11-12).

To put it a little differently, baptism is a sign of the gift of righteousness that is given to those who don't hope in their own righteousness but receive an alien righteousness (not from within themselves) from Christ - that is - by faith. What's interesting about all this is that God says this sign of the righteousness that comes by faith, is to be applied to 8 day old male infants who couldn't possibly have

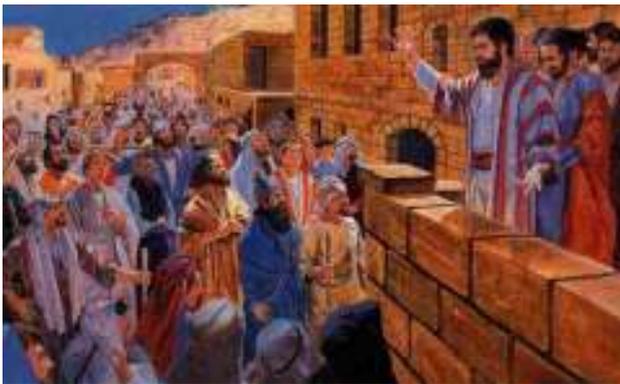
Alien or Forensic Righteousness:
Righteousness that comes not from our own works but from "outside of us" ie: through Jesus Christ.

the faith that brings them the *alien righteousness* that comes by faith - why could He not do the same in Baptism?!!

And when we DO come to the New Testament, we need to realize that the early church was Jewish and came to the New Testament with a Jewish understanding flowing from the Old Testament Scriptures.

In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. **Col 2:11-12**





In **Acts 2:38-39**, after his Pentecost sermon, Peter, when asked by the crowd what they should do, said *"Repent and be baptized."* And THEN he adds, *"For the promise is for you **AND YOUR CHILDREN**..."* There is only one way the listeners, which were ENTIRELY Jewish (Acts 2:5), would hear Peter's words. They'd say, *"Well, yeah of course. That's how it has ALWAYS been! The covenant promises have ALWAYS been for us and for our children! God had always promised to be a God to us and to our children. And God has always given the*

sign of the righteousness that is by faith to not only believing adults, but to the children of believers as well."

So when Paul connects circumcision and baptism to each other in the closest possible way...he means that they are ways that God includes people - children and infants too - in the promise of righteousness. He says that they both pointed to the same thing...the righteousness that comes by faith. It was never understood by either God's Old Testament people or the New Testament believers that Children were not to be included in this gift. For those who say that it does not 'specifically mention children, neither does it specifically exclude them.



It seems strange that after over 2000 years of Old Testament church history, the children of believers would no longer be included in the covenant community or heirs to the covenant promises. If 1st century Jewish parents were to believe that only believers were to receive the sign and seal of the righteousness that comes by faith, there would have to be CLEAR EVIDENCE of that...and there is none. Just because the New Testament records baptisms of people who seem to be adults and come to faith and then get

baptized, it doesn't mean children are NOT to be baptized. That is simply an argument from silence and is no argument at all.

Given this fact, it would have been natural for first century Jewish believers to baptize infants, since they were accustomed to circumcise their male children at eight days old. It is also logical that if God regarded eight day old male babies as members of His covenant people through circumcision, He will also regard newborn babies to be members of His kingdom through baptism, the *"circumcision made without hands."*



It's A Matter of Faith - So how can a Baby Believe"?



Those who would object to infant baptism often ask 'since it clearly states "believe and be baptized" **How can a baby believe?**'

Part of the problem lies in how these churches understand belief. Most of the time they understand belief in Jesus as the ability to understand and accept the bible's teaching of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Obviously they are right that a baby is unable to read or possibly

understand let alone articulate the faith in the same way as an adult (or even a young child). But is that the basis of faith. Is OUR ability to understand, to articulate or confess the BASIS of Faith? Or are these abilities the evidence of Faith? Looking deeper—Is Faith really something WE do at all or is faith something that is done within us?



If your faith depended upon you and upon your ability to understand it and confess it, what would happen if you were UNABLE to believe or articulate the faith. What if you were in an accident and in a coma. What about people who have Alzheimer's or are mentally ill. Does their faith depend upon their ability to understand and articulate it?



Ephesians 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.



By this verse we see that faith is not something WE do. **Faith is gift of God** - it does not depend on the intellectual or cognitive ability of a child. If it is God giving His gift of faith he can also give it to a little one. Baptism is the MEANS by which God gives his Gift of Faith

Faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit as much for the adult as for the child (see John 6:44; 1 Cor. 12:3; Eph. 2:1-4). When the adult believes in Christ it is only because the Holy Spirit, working through the Gospel, has worked the miracle of faith in his heart. So with the infant. If faith, then, is always a miracle, why can we not believe that God would work such miraculous faith in a baby?



Someone might ask, "If babies can believe then why do they need baptism?" Answer: it is through baptism that faith is created in the infant's heart - the **seal of God's promise to create faith**

Baptism, far from being the empty symbolism that some imagine it to be, is the visible Gospel, a powerful means by which God's grace is given to this infant. According to Scripture, baptism "washes away sin" (Acts 22:16), "saves" (1 Peter 3:21; Mark 16:16), causes one to "die to sin, to be buried, and raised up with Christ" (Romans 6:3-4) causes one to be "clothed with Christ" (Galatians 3:27), and to be a member of the body of Christ: "for by one Spirit, were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13). It bears repeating: baptism is a special **means of God's grace** by which He gives faith, forgiveness, and salvation to the infant.

Holy Baptism is a Means of Grace



While Jesus Christ died on the cross to bring us forgiveness of the Sin which separated us from God. This forgiveness is given to us as a free gift. We do not earn it, we don't merit it and there is nothing we have done to deserve it. God has simply given it to us out of His incredible love for us. The means or the way He has chosen to communicate or bestow this forgiveness upon us is through His Word and through the sacraments of Holy Communion and Baptism. God's Word and the Sacraments are *His means of grace or the "ways by which god's grace comes to us."* He uses these "tools" as a means to bring us to faith...and then to strengthen our faith. Baptism therefore is not something WE do to show our devotion to God or our intention to live the sanctified life. It is God working in us. It is God reaching into our lives and applying His love and His forgiveness.

But How can a Ceremony with Water to this - Jesus Saves - not Rituals!

This is absolutely correct...kind of! First of all man made rituals do not save us. They may be magnificent for teaching the word of God or for demonstrating his love. But they do not in and of themselves confer anything - only Jesus does through His word. That is why apart from the word and the promise of Jesus - Baptism is just plain water.

However - Jesus commanded us to baptize - and to this visible symbol of washing with water - He attached HIS OWN WORD OF PROMISE. Thus as Lutheran Christians we don't trust in the water or the activity - but the promise of God that he attaches to baptism. So why would God attach His promise to a washing with plain old water?

"Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands **Isaiah 49:16**




But now, this is what the LORD says— he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; **Isaiah 43:1-3**

At some point in our lives we struggle with doubt - that is the nature of what it is to be a sinful human. Even though Jesus promises us His love and His presence - there are times when we still have doubts - times when we wonder if God is with us? These are times when we need to trust in something more than our feelings or emotions - we need something OBJECTIVE. God's promise of forgiveness is attached to tangible water -



though we may feel alone - we need never believe that we ARE alone. We were baptized - IT HAPPENED - God's promise was applied to us - Nothing Satan can do or say can change the fact that Jesus promised to love us and to forgive our confessed sin. In Baptism He claims us and we trust in His promise of ownership over us.

Baptism: What It Does Like all Sacraments, Holy Baptism does three things. It...

- 1) Grants us forgiveness of sins;
- 2) Deliver us from death and the Devil; and
- 3) Give eternal salvation to all who believe this as the words and promises of God declare.



Baptism: God Makes Us A "New Creation"



Whenever God's Word is present, the Holy Spirit is there to empower the Word of God to change hearts. When God's Word is connected with water, the most remarkable thing that can happen occurs: God renews and regenerates a sinner and makes them a forgiven child of God. This is nothing less than a miracle, a total renovation and recreation of who we are.

When one is baptized and comes to saving faith, they become a "new creation." No longer does God look at us as sinners. He sees us as forgiven saints. Do we deserve God's forgiveness? Do we deserve this new identity as "New Creation?" **Of course not!** It is entirely by God's grace that, by Holy Baptism, He makes us His children. God gives this calling to everyone! Whether one is black, white, yellow, red, male, female, young, old, smart or not-so-smart,



So Does this mean that once I'm Baptized I've got All the Bases Covered?



Some people believe that Lutherans teach that all you have to do is to be baptized and that's it. That you don't need to believe or to have faith in Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Baptism is not Fire insurance - just because God gave you the gift of faith as a child does not mean that you can neglect it or reject it and still have that faith flourish as "Saving Faith."

We must also remember that just because one is baptized doesn't mean they "automatically" go to heaven. Baptism is where God's gift of saving faith is planted in your child—but this gift of faith precious as it is can be abandoned through neglect and apathy. God's gift of Faith through Holy Baptism needs to be nurtured through hear-



ing and being instructed in the promises within His Word. God's plants the faith through His Holy Spirit, but if this tender faith is not fed by the word - the benefits of baptism are lost through negligence. **Baptism may be the gift of faith, but people can and choose to reject or ignore this gift.** For that reason, there will be people in Hell who were baptized as Christians. The reason they are in Hell is not because there was a problem with their Baptism. No. The reason they are in Hell is because of their unbelief. Somehow Satan deceived them and they gave up their faith in Jesus Christ...in whom they were baptized.

John 3:16-18

16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

The tragic part of what many believe about Baptism—and this brings us back to the original reason why so many parents wish to have their child baptized; So that God can be "a part" of their life—is that being a "Part" of their life is simply not enough. Kind of like sugared cereal is a "Part of your good breakfast (perhaps in the case of the cereal it's the part best left out)





MORE than a mere "Part"

Baptism is meant to be the beginning of a wonderful and growing relationship between your child and the God who loves them –who died for them. God does not wish to be a “part” of their life like clarinet lessons that soon get dumped when something more interesting comes along. He wants to be the center of their life - the source of joy and happiness that brings meaning and depth to all the other area of their life. This is where (and I can’t stress this enough) being brought to God’s house regularly for Worship, for Sunday School and eventually confirmation is so necessary. Often parent think nothing of sacrificing so many hours to take their children to Hockey or dance or some other activity, but cannot spare a short time to make sure their child has the relationship needed with their Saviour that will assure them of eternal life. For this reason the Church tries to be diligent in helping parents to realize the enormity of what God is doing in the life of their child—and then to act and support that work with their own change in priorities and life style.



What if we just begin with Baptism, but we let our child make up their own decision about God? Seriously? I mean c’mon, people have been saying this for the longest time and though it sounds good, it ‘s ridiculous. Do we really allow our children to make up their own minds about nutrition, personal hygiene, manners, School...even crossing the street when they are small? This is the reason we ARE parents, because we have a responsibility to care and guide our children until they are able to make informed rational decisions on their own. Do we not guide and direct our children regarding rules and laws of our country, wrong vs. right? Do we not educate and teach them with regard to racism or bullying? Why would we not also guide and direct them regarding the importance of God’s love for them and the relationship He would have with them through Jesus?

Baptism: Done Once —Lived Daily

Though Holy Baptism is only done once, it is celebrated every single day. Each day one ought to remember their Baptism and reflect on God's forgiveness, grace and love for them. We remember that God has claimed us - and we live and thrive in that love and **identity** as a child of God .



In baptism you were made a child of God - a royal heir to the kingdom of heaven. You were sealed with God’s own seal as His own loved possession. By Baptism God claims you and promises to care for you and never to leave or abandon you - NO MATTER WHAT! You have been Sealed By God! NO ONE else has a claim on you. By remembering our Baptism *daily*, we continue to live in the confidence of which St. Paul wrote in Romans

*I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to **separate** us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

Romans 8:38-39

'In Baptism, God gives His gracious, eternal promise to be with us always "until the end of the world." We rejoice in this gift God is giving your child. Let’s plan to continue to be nurtured and grow in that grace for our whole lives and even unto life everlasting.



The Sacrament of Holy Baptism

Luther's Small Catechism says:

First - *What is Baptism?*

Baptism is not just plain water, but it is the water included in God's command and combined with God's word.



Which is that word of God?

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Matthew: "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" ([Matthew 28:19](#)).

Second - *What benefits does Baptism give?*

It works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.

Which are these words and promises of God?

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" ([Mark 16:16](#)).



Third - *How can water do such great things?*

Certainly not just water, but the word of God in and with the water does these things, along with the faith which trusts this word of God in the water. For without God's word the water is plain water and no Baptism. But with the word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a life-giving water, rich in grace, and a washing of the new birth in the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul says in Titus, chapter three: "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" ([Titus 3:5-8](#)).

Fourth - *What does such baptizing with water indicate?*

It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

Where is this written?

St. Paul writes in Romans chapter six: "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" ([Romans 6:4](#)).

Question: If one does not use God's Word in Baptism, is there a Baptism?

Answer: Definitely Not! Without God's Word, the water of Baptism is simply water...and nothing more.

