

Biblical Topics

Baptism – Significance of Baptism

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.

The Old Adam is the sinful nature. It came upon us by the fall of Adam and is ours by birth. The Old Adam is our original sin. In Baptism original sin is not removed from our nature, but its guilt is forgiven.

- Ephesians 4:22: You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires.

The Old Adam is to be drowned. This happens in us when we have sorrow for our sins and repent of them believing that we are forgiven. Then we will resist the evil desires and suppress them. As we daily wash our faces, so must we daily wash our hearts in sorrow and repentant faith. This is daily confession of our sins.

- Galatians 5:24: Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.

The new man is the new spiritual life. It is created in us by the washing of regeneration. The new man is found only in believers. It is our faith in Christ by which a new spiritual life is created in us.

- 2 Corinthians 5:17: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

The new man comes forth and arises as we daily overcome our sin and live in true godliness. Faith is not an idle sentiment. Faith is an active power. It shows itself in our holy desires and prompts us to lead pure and righteous lives.

- Ephesians 4:24: and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

While Jesus lived on earth He was occupied with the great task of suffering for the sins of the world. When Christ died He died for our sin. He, now, was all through with the problem of sin. When we die we, too, are done with sinful lusts and passions.

Christ also rose from the dead. By Baptism we are partakers also of the resurrection of Christ. Therefore we are alive to God through Jesus Christ we are free from sin.

Therefore our Baptism is to be to us a daily reminder that we shun the old paths of sin and walk in the new way of righteousness.

The above information is taken from: "Luther's Small Catechism" annotated by Edward W. A. Koehler.