

Biblical Topics

Baptism – Blessings of Baptism

What benefits does Baptism give?

It works forgiveness of sins, recues 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)

The blessings of Baptism are in that:

A. It offers and imparts the forgiveness of sins. God's promise and assurance of forgiveness in Baptism covers all our sins, also those which we commit later in life. It certainly is a great comfort for us to know that already in our early infancy God assured to us full forgiveness for all our sins.

- Acts 2:38: Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- Acts 22:16: And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'
- Galatians 3:26-27: ²⁶ You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

B. It delivers from death and the devil. In Baptism we have put on the merits of Christ. These merits include that through Jesus' death He destroyed the devil who, had power over death. Therefore Baptism delivers us from death and the devil.

- Romans 6:3: Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

C. It gives eternal salvation. Baptism assures to us eternal life. Therefore even in the hour of death Baptism is to us a great comfort.

- Mark 16:16: Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.
- 1 Peter 3:21: and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

By His suffering and death Christ has earned these blessings for us. Baptism is a means by which the Holy Spirit makes these blessings our own.

- Galatians 3:26-27: ²⁶ You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

- 1 Corinthians 6:11: And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

These blessings are offered in Baptism to all that are baptized. This offer is always valid and good, but only he who believes the promises of Baptism actually receives what they offer. He who does not believe does not get what God offers. He who later on falls away from the faith, loses the blessings of Baptism. He does not lose Baptism itself and need not be re-baptized.

Baptism is not absolutely necessary for salvation. It is only a means through which the saving merits of Christ are offered to us. This is also done in the Gospel. Faith is absolutely necessary. Therefore a person can be saved without Baptism (The thief on the cross). However if one despises Baptism and refuses to be baptized, then he despises Christ and the blessings of Baptism offers (The Pharisees did this).

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