

b. The significance of baptism as witnessed to by various creeds and confessions

(1) Luther's *Small Catechism* (1529)

Part IV. The Sacrament of Holy Baptism, as it should be clearly and simply explained to every household by the head of the family.

I. What is Baptism? Answer: Baptism is not simply common water, but it is the water comprehended in God's command, and connected with God's Word.

What is that Word of God? Answer: It is that which our Lord Christ speaks in the last chapter of Matthew (28:19): "Go ye into all the world, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

II. what does Baptism give, or of what use is it? Answer: It worketh forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives everlasting salvation to all who believe, as the Words and promises of God declare.

What are such words and promises of God? Answer: Those which our Lord Christ speaks in the last chapter of Mark: "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned."

III. How can water do such great things? Answer: It is not the water, indeed, that does it, but the Word of God which is with and in the water, and faith, which trusts in the Word of God in the water. For without the Word of God the water is nothing but water, and no baptism; but with the Word of God it is baptism -- that is, a gracious water of life and a washing of regeneration in the Holy Ghost, as St. Paul says, Titus, third chapter: "By the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; that being Justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." This is certainly true.

IV. What does such baptizing with water signify? Answer: It signifies that the old Adam in us is to be drowned by daily sorrow and repentance, and perish with all sins and evil lusts; and that the new man should daily come forth again and rise, who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

(2) The *Augsburg Confession* (1530), Article 9 -- Of Baptism

"Of Baptism they teach that it is necessary to salvation, and that by Baptism the grace of God is offered, and that children are to be baptized, who by Baptism, being offered to God, are received into God's favor. They condemn the Anabaptists who allow not the Baptism of children, and affirm that children are saved without Baptism."