

Part II: The Sacraments: Baptism: LORD'S DAY 26

Q & A 69: How does baptism remind you and assure you that Christ's one sacrifice on the cross is for you personally?

In this way:

Christ instituted this outward washing¹
and with it gave the promise that,
as surely as water washes away the dirt from the body,
so certainly his blood and his Spirit
wash away my soul's impurity,
in other words, all my sins.²

¹ Acts 2:38

² Matt. 3:11; Rom. 6:3-10; 1 Pet. 3:21

Q & A 70: What does it mean to be washed with Christ's blood and Spirit?

To be washed with Christ's blood means
that God, by grace, has forgiven my sins
because of Christ's blood
poured out for me in his sacrifice on the cross.¹

To be washed with Christ's Spirit means
that the Holy Spirit has renewed me
and set me apart to be a member of Christ
so that more and more I become dead to sin
and increasingly live a holy and blameless life.²

¹ Zech. 13:1; Eph. 1:7-8; Heb. 12:24; 1 Pet. 1:2; Rev. 1:5

² Ezek. 36:25-27; John 3:5-8; Rom. 6:4; 1 Cor. 6:11; Col. 2:11-12

The Heidelberg Catechism

Q & A 069-074



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Q & A 71: Where does Christ promise that we are washed with his blood and Spirit as surely as we are washed with the water of baptism?

In the institution of baptism where he says:

"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."¹

"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved,
but whoever does not believe will be condemned."^{2*}

This promise is repeated when Scripture calls baptism
the washing of rebirth³ and
the washing away of sins.⁴

¹ Matt. 28:19

² Mark 16:16

³ Tit. 3:5

⁴ Acts 22:16

* Earlier and better manuscripts of Mark 16 omit the words "Whoever believes and is baptized . . . condemned."

Part II: The Sacraments: Baptism: LORD'S DAY 27

Q & A 72: Does this outward washing with water itself wash away sins?

No, only Jesus Christ's blood and the Holy Spirit cleanse us from all sins.¹

¹ Matt. 3:11; 1 Pet. 3:21; 1 John 1:7

Q & A 73: Why then does the Holy Spirit call baptism the washing of rebirth and the washing away of sins?

God has good reason for these words.
He wants to teach us that
the blood and Spirit of Christ wash away our sins
just as water washes away dirt from our bodies.¹

But more important,
he wants to assure us, by this divine pledge and sign,
that the washing away of our sins spiritually
is as real as physical washing with water.²

¹ 1 Cor. 6:11; Rev. 1:5; 7:14

² Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27

Q & A 74: Should infants, too, be baptized?

Yes.

Infants as well as adults
are in God's covenant and are his people.¹
They, no less than adults, are promised
the forgiveness of sin through Christ's blood
and the Holy Spirit who produces faith.²

Therefore, by baptism, the mark of the covenant,
infants should be received into the Christian church
and should be distinguished from the children
of unbelievers.³

This was done in the Old Testament by circumcision,⁴
which was replaced in the New Testament by baptism.⁵

¹ Gen. 17:7; Matt. 19:14

² Isa. 44:1-3; Acts 2:38-39; 16:31

³ Acts 10:47; 1 Cor. 7:14

⁴ Gen. 17:9-14

⁵ Col. 2:11-13