

## THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

HAVING SEEN WHAT THE SCRIPTURES PRINCIPALLY TEACH US CONCERNING GOD, IT  
FOLLOWS TO CONSIDER WHAT THEY REQUIRE AS THE DUTY OF MAN

QUESTIONS # 165 & 94.

*(Larger Catechism)*

Q #165. *What is Baptism?*

A. Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, wherein Christ hath ordained the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,<sup>1</sup> to be a sign and seal of ingrafting into himself,<sup>2</sup> of remission of sins by his blood,<sup>3</sup> and regeneration by his Spirit;<sup>4</sup> of adoption,<sup>5</sup> and resurrection unto everlasting life;<sup>6</sup> and whereby the parties baptized are solemnly admitted into the visible church,<sup>7</sup> and enter into an open and professed engagement to be wholly and only the Lord's.<sup>8</sup>

*(Shorter Catechism)*

Q #94. *What is baptism?*

A. Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,<sup>9</sup> doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.<sup>10</sup>

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Question 1—*What makes baptism a sacrament of the New Testament?*

*Answer*—There is a fourfold baptism spoken of in Scripture: 1.) The baptism of light, or the illumination of doctrine, Acts 18:25. 2.) The baptism of blood, which is martyrdom, Matt. 20:22, 23. 3.) The baptism of the Spirit, which is the pouring out of the Spirit, Matt. 3:11. 4.) The baptism with water, which is properly speaking the New Testament sacrament, Acts 8:36.

Although baptism had been previously administered to those who acknowledged him as the Messiah, and desired to be admitted into the number of his followers, this was not by him, but by his disciples, John 4:1-3. Nonetheless, this ordinance received a more extensive application, when Christ authorized his apostles to administer it to men of every nation, using the Trinitarian formula, after his resurrection, Matt. 28:19, 20.

The signifying element used in this sacrament is water, Acts 8:38, 39. As to the water, it does not matter whether it be from a fountain, or from a river, as long as it is clean water, contrary to the Papists adding of oil, salt and spittle, to that water, Heb. 10:22.

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 28:19.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. 3:27.

<sup>3</sup> Mark 1:4; Rev. 1:5.

<sup>4</sup> Tit. 3:5; Eph. 5:26.

<sup>5</sup> Gal. 3:26, 27.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Cor. 15:29; Rom. 6:5.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Cor. 12:13.

<sup>8</sup> Rom. 6:4.

<sup>9</sup> Matt. 28:19.

<sup>10</sup> Rom. 6:4; Gal. 3:27.

The word *baptism* signifies a *washing, dipping or sprinkling*, Heb. 9:10. Yet, dipping into water is not necessary, but baptism is rightly administered by the pouring and sprinkling of water, Heb. 9:19-22; Ezek. 36:25. That dipping is not necessary appears: 1.) Because the apostles, when they baptized three thousand in one day, could hardly have dipped each one, Acts 2:41. Likewise, in the case of the Philippian jailor and his family, who were baptized at night, dipping can hardly be imagined, Acts 16:33. Neither can it be supposed in the case of Paul's baptism, Acts 9:18; 22:16. 2.) The Israelites are said to have been *baptized unto Moses in the cloud*, 1 Cor. 10:2; which was by sprinkling them with its rain, Ps. 77:17. 3.) Because *baptizing* in Scripture is used for both affusion and sprinkling, Mark 7:4; Luke 11:38. 4.) The thing signified by water baptism is called *sprinkling*, Heb. 12:24; 1 Pet. 1:2. Thus, affusion (*i.e.*, pouring) or sprinkling provides a clearer sign of that which is signified, Num. 8:7; Isa. 52:15; Acts 10:45, 47, 48.

Question 2—*What is signified and sealed by the sacrament of baptism?*

*Answer*—There is signified and sealed and engaged on God's part by our being baptized into his name: *First*, the engrafting into Christ, Gal. 3:27. By which is meant being cut off from our old stock of nature and being joined to Jesus Christ, whereby we come to draw virtue from him as our root, that we may grow up in him and bring forth fruit to him, John 15:5; Rom. 11:17.

*Second*, the making us partakers of the benefits of the new covenant, Rom. 6:3. These benefits include the following: 1.) The remission of sins by virtue of the blood of Christ, Mark 1:4. As water washes away the stains of the body, so the blood of Christ washes off the guilt of sin, Rev. 1:5. Therefore, the apostle prescribes it for the easing of troubled souls who were pricked and awakened by his sermon, Acts 2:37, 38. 2.) The regeneration by the Spirit of Christ, signified by the water, Tit. 3:5. The Spirit of Christ in regeneration works like water, John 3:5. By his Spirit, Christ washes and cleanses the soul from its impurities and makes it holy, Eph. 5:26. 3.) The adoption into the family of God, Gal. 3:26, 27. In baptism, God places his name upon us and we are visibly taken into the visible family of God, Isa. 44:3-5; and having his Spirit dwell in us, we are really taken into the family, Rom. 8:9-11. All of which is signified by baptism, Eph. 4:5, 6. 4.) The resurrection unto life eternal out of the grave by the same Spirit, Rom. 6:5. The reference of baptism to the resurrection of the dead appears elsewhere in Paul, 1 Cor. 15:29 (which ought to be understood as referring to the practice in Num. 19:11-22).

*Third*, the admission of the baptized parties into the visible church, Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 12:13; and, thereby, to all visible church privileges, Eph. 2:11-13. It supposes the party to have a right to these privileges before, and does not make them members of the visible church, but admits them solemnly thereto, Acts 8:37.

Question 3—*What are the consequences of that which is being signified and sealed in baptism?*

*Answer*—The consequence is that, on account of this, we partake of such great and glorious benefits, engaging openly to be wholly and only the Lord's, Rom. 6:4. We engage to be his *wholly* in all that we are, soul, spirit and body, 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; as well as in all that we have, whether gifts, graces or worldly comforts, 1 Chron. 29:14. We engage to be his *only*, in opposition to all his rivals and competitors, every one of whom we profess to renounce in baptism, Hos. 14:8. These rivals and competitors with God are sin, Rom. 6:6; Satan, Acts 26:18; and the world, John 17:14.