



His Word Is Truth!

This article is written by Pastor Tom Eckstein of Concordia Lutheran Church in Jamestown. "His Word is Truth" will appear in this paper every 3rd Monday.



Last month marked **3** years for me writing these "His Word is Truth" articles. I hope those who read these articles in the Jamestown Sun have been blessed. Those Christians who agree with me that Holy Scripture is the inspired Word of God without error in all that it teaches and that salvation from sin is a free gift through faith in Jesus Christ alone very likely also agree with most of what I have written.

However, today I am going to begin a series of articles on a topic that does NOT share full agreement among Christians who agree on most other things. The topic of

which I speak is Holy Baptism and Infant Baptism. ***I have good friends who are sincere Christians and yet have different views than I do about Holy Baptism and Infant Baptism.*** As brothers and sisters in Christ we should always be willing to humble ourselves before each other as we study the Holy Scriptures together in love and thereby allow God's Word to lead us into unity on those issues where we do not yet agree. **(See John 17:17-21; Acts 17:11; Ephesians 4:1-6, 14-16)**

Therefore, the goal of this series of articles is to show from Holy Scripture what Lutherans teach about Holy Baptism and Infant Baptism. I will not be able to examine all bible passages related to Baptism or answer all questions about Infant Baptism in just one article – *and thus this series of several articles on this topic.* Those who do not agree with me will at least have a better understanding of what Lutherans DO and DO NOT

believe regarding these things.

At this point in the article allow me to explain what Lutherans do NOT believe about Baptism and Infant Baptism. **We do NOT believe that infants who have not been baptized are going to hell!** Some wrongly think Lutherans teach this. Even though Baptism is one important way that God brings Christ and His gifts to infants, Baptism is not the only way that God does this. God also uses His spoken Word to bring infants to faith in Christ. ***(In next month's article I will explain what Scripture teaches about infant faith.)***

In addition, Lutherans do NOT believe that Baptism is a magical work of humans that guarantees salvation even if a person rejects Christ and lives as an unbeliever. Sadly, some who were baptized as infants were not nurtured by God's Word over the years and in certain cases eventually lost their faith in Christ. ***(In a future***

article I will explain how those who are baptized also must have their faith in Christ nurtured by God's Word throughout life.)

Now I would like to carefully explain what Baptism actually IS. Simply put, Lutherans do not believe that Baptism is only a symbol of an adult's conscious decision to trust in Jesus, because in no place does Scripture ever speak of Baptism in this way! Instead, Scripture always defines Baptism as being something much more than a mere symbol. According to Scripture, Baptism is the work of God through which He gives us various gifts! **God uses Baptism to put His Name on us** (see Matthew 28:19). **God uses Baptism to give us "new birth," that is, faith in Christ** (see John 3:5 and Titus 3:5). **God uses Baptism to give us forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit** (see Acts 2:28 and 22:16; Ephesians 5:26). **God uses Baptism to connect us to the death and**

resurrection of Jesus (see Romans 6:3-4 and Colossians 2:11-12). **God uses Baptism to clothe us with Christ** (see Galatians 3:27). **God uses Baptism to save us by the power of Jesus' death and resurrection** (see 1st Peter 3:18 & 21).

We must understand that Baptism is NOT a human work of obedience that we perform to get blessings from God. *That is salvation by works, and clearly condemned by Scripture!* Instead, Baptism is God's work, that is, an instrument that God uses to give to us the salvation that Jesus accomplished for us by His life, death and resurrection. Some who object to the Lutheran view of Baptism will say: *"But we're saved by Jesus, and not by Baptism!"* **Of course, I fully agree that we're saved only by what Jesus did for us! The question is: "How does God deliver to us the salvation that Jesus alone accomplished for us?"** Scripture teaches that

Baptism is one of the ways God gives us Christ and His salvation. Baptism is GOD'S work and something He does for us – *and so Baptism is a wonderful sign of God's grace!* (See Ephesians 2:1-10 and 5:25-27; also see Titus 3:5 and 1st Peter 3:18-22)



Please read the next "His Word is Truth" on Monday, October 20th! ***Pastor Eckstein will use Holy Scripture to give answers to the following objections to Infant Baptism: 1) "Infants are not sinful, and so they don't need to be saved!" and 2) "But infants can't have faith in Jesus!"***

For more resources about Christian teaching and issues, go to Concordia Lutheran's web page:
www.concordiajt.org

Paid for by Concordia Lutheran Church