

## Lutheran Confessions

47] Here a question occurs by which the devil, through his sects, confuses the world, namely, *Of Infant Baptism, whether children also believe, and are justly baptized.* Concerning this we say briefly: 48] Let the simple dismiss this question from their minds, and refer it to the learned. But if you wish to answer, 49] then answer thus:—

**That the Baptism of infants is pleasing to Christ is sufficiently proved from His own work, namely, that God sanctifies many of them who have been thus baptized, and has given them the Holy Ghost;** and that there are yet many even to-day in whom we perceive that they have the Holy Ghost both because of their doctrine and life; as it is also given to us by the grace of God that we can explain the Scriptures and come to the knowledge of Christ, which is impossible without the Holy Ghost. 50] But if God did not accept the baptism of infants, He would not give the Holy Ghost nor any of His gifts to any of them; in short, during this long time unto this day no man upon earth could have been a Christian. Now, since God confirms Baptism by the gifts of His Holy Ghost, as is plainly perceptible in some of the church fathers, as St. Bernard, Gerson, John Hus, and others, who were baptized in infancy, and since the holy Christian Church cannot perish until the end of the world, they must acknowledge that such infant baptism is pleasing to God. For He can never be opposed to Himself, or support falsehood and wickedness, or for its promotion impart His grace and Spirit. 51] This is indeed the best and strongest proof for the simple-minded and unlearned. For they shall not take from us or overthrow this article: *I believe in one holy Christian Church, the communion of saints.* (The Large Catechism, IV)

## Put it into Practice

### Prayer

Almighty and everlasting God, who has given to us, Your servants, grace, by the confession of a truth faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity, we implore You that You would keep us steadfast in this faith and evermore defend us from all adversities; who lives and reigns, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.** (*Collect for the Holy Trinity*)

**Word of God: St. John 3:1-21 (on back)**

### Questions to Ponder in Prayer

1. What do we know about Nicodemus from verse 1? (Note: “The Pharisees were of the party which laid utmost stress on the strictest outward observance of the law, around which they had built up a forbidding hedge of traditions and human

commandments. There were utterly self-righteous and cultivated a formalism that was ostentatious to a degree, especially in observing ceremonies, fastings, almsgiving, long prayers, tithes, etc.... The people revered the Pharisees for their supposed holiness and for their zeal regarding the law;” K&D, p.115.)

- Compare Nicodemus statement in verse 2 with those who “believed” because of the miraculous signs, but Jesus knew they didn’t really believe(2:23-25). What does Nicodemus think of Jesus at this point? And thus, why does he come to Jesus? Why does he come at night? How does Jesus begin his replies(v.3,5,11)?
- Would Nicodemus have understood Jesus’ words about “the kingdom of God?” How did Nicodemus and Jesus differ in the way one entered God’s kingdom?
- Though an old, respected Pharisee, what words does Nicodemus not understand?
- What does the requirement “born again” (v.4 a second time) imply concerning everything connected with the first birth? Is “being born” active or passive?
- Nicodemus asks, “How?” Jesus explains “born again” is given by means of “water and the Spirit.” What is that? (Mt 3:6,11; Mt 28:19, Titus 3:5-8) Note that Nicodemus did not even flinch concerning a reference to the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus makes the point of question #5 even clearer. What is “flesh” in verse 6?
- Nicodemus can’t get beyond the “surprise” of Jesus’ great claim for what holy baptism does, and must do for Nicodemus(“You” v.7). Why?
- Jesus gives the example of the wind. Does Nicodemus acknowledge the reality of the wind? Based on what? How do we know that baptism works? Based on what?
- With verse 9, Nicodemus allows the claim to stand, but what does he question? Instead of be surprised(v.7) and ask questions(v.9), what should Nicodemus do?
- In verse 10, who is surprised? Why is He surprised?
- According to verse 11 what is the reason for Nicodemus denial of baptism?
- The “we” must refer to Jesus and \_\_\_\_\_ (John 1:6-8, 15, 19-34, **esp. 24-25**)?
- Jesus contrasts the earthly things with the heavenly things. If Nicodemus doesn’t understand earthly repentance, faith, baptism, etc., he surely won’t understand the heavenly counsel(inner relation, motivation and love of the Trinity). Who alone can speak as a witness of those heavenly things?
- Who does Jesus claim to be with verse 13? Some texts include the end of verse 13 saying, “...except the one who came from heaven—The Son of Man, *who is in heaven.*” (See NIV footnote) How do you understand those words?
- When was Jesus lifted up(Jn 12:32-33)? How does Numbers 21:4f, apply to Nicodemus? What point is Jesus pushing with Nicodemus?
- The divine necessity(“must be lifted up”), is so that believers “...may have eternal life.” The reason it must be this way is because of God’s graciousness revealed in verse 16. What do we learn about God’s desire(heavenly things)?
- What is Nicodemus told is the source and reason for salvation? (v. 16)
- According to verse 16-17, who does God love and save? (objective justification)
- What is the first warning given to Nicodemus (v.16)? How does anyone receive that gift? (v.18)
- At death, will there be a judging of each person to determine their eternal fate?
- RESULT: “The Light has come into the world.” When? “Men loved darkness.” Who is to be faulted for damnation? “deeds will be exposed” What was their fear? The believer “comes into the light.” What about the believer’s deeds(v.21)?

### 6:30 PM “Learn by Heart”

*Through simple repetition those present will inwardly digest...*

Hymn #156, stanza 3-4

Table of Duties: To Parents: Eph 6:4

To Children: Eph 6:1-3 (catechism, p.36)

John 3:5-6

### 7:00 PM “Catechesis”

+ Opening Verses

“O Lord, open my lips...” p.224

+ Ascription of Praise

“Praise to you, O Christ. Alleluia.” p.225

Reading

St. John 3:1-17 (back)

Hymn

“Creator Spirit, Heavenly Dove” #156

Catechesis on... (back)

St. John 3:1-17

Liturgy

Catechism

--prayer based on reading

+ Lord’s Prayer (sung)

p.284

+ Responsive Prayer 2

p. 273-275

(skip Lord’s Prayer)

Apostles’ Creed

Psalm verses

Collect of the Day

--prayer based on reading

Evening Prayer

Benedicamus

Benediction

## Catechesis on St. John 3:1-17

1 There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”

3 Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

4 Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”

5 Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

9 Nicodemus answered and said to Him, “How can these things be?”

10 Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? 11 Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. 12 If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? 13 No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. 14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. (NKJV)

## Blind Human Reason Alone

Ap III, 26-27, 31-32 “False also is this, that men are accounted righteous before God because of **the righteousness of reason** [works and external piety]. 27] False also is this that **reason, by its own strength, is able to love God above all things, and to fulfill God’s Law**, namely, truly to fear God, to be truly confident that God hears prayer, to be willing to obey God in death and other dispensations of God, not to covet what belongs to others, etc.; although reason can work civil works.

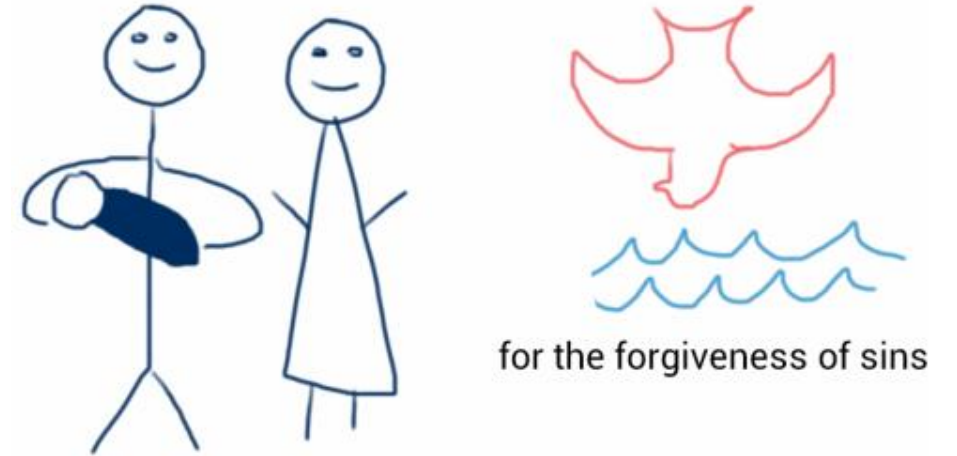
31] And John 8, 36: *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.* Therefore by reason we cannot be freed from sins and merit the remission of sins. And in John 3, 5 it is written: *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. But if it is necessary to be born again of the Holy Ghost, the righteousness of reason does not justify us before God, and does not 32] fulfill the Law*, Rom. 3, 23: *All have come short of the glory of God*, i.e., are destitute of the wisdom and righteousness of God, which acknowledges and glorifies God. Likewise Rom. 8, 7. 8: *The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*

Historical Introductions, 61: “In an antisnergistic confession published by Schluesselburg, we read: “This doctrine [of conversion by God’s grace alone] is simple, clear, certain, and irrefutable if one looks to God’s Word alone and derives the *Nosce teipsum*, Know thyself, from the wisdom of God. But since poor men are blind, they love their darkness more than the light, **as Christ says John 3, and insist on criticizing and falsifying God’s truth by means of blind philosophy**, which, forsooth, is a shame and a palpable sin, if we but had eyes to see and know ... **Whatever blind reason produces in such articles of faith against the Word of God is false and wrong.** For it is said: *Mulier in ecclesia taceat!* Let philosophy and human wisdom be silent in the Church.” (*Catalogus* 5, 665f.)

## Gospel

FC Ep VII, 21 “...and on the other hand, we maintain and believe, according to the simple words of the testament of Christ, the true, yet supernatural eating of the body of Christ, as also the drinking of His blood, which human senses and reason do not comprehend, but **as in all other articles of faith our reason is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and this mystery is not apprehended otherwise than by faith alone, and revealed in the Word alone.**”

Catechesis  
On  
St. John 3:1-17



## Trinity Lutheran Church & Early Childhood Learning Center

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## Table of Duties: To Parents

“Therefore it is the duty of parents and the government to see to it that our youth be brought up to discipline and respectability, and when they have come to years of maturity, to provide for them [to have them married] in the fear of God and honorably; He would not fail to add His blessing and grace, so that men would have joy and happiness from the same” (LC I 218).

“In addition, it would be well to preach to **the parents also, and such as bear their office**, as to how they should deport themselves toward those who are committed to them for their government. For although this is not expressed in the Ten Commandments, it is nevertheless abundantly enjoined in many places in the Scripture. And God desires to have it embraced in this commandment when He speaks of father and mother. **168]** For He does not wish to have in this office and government knaves and tyrants; nor does He assign to them this honor, that is, power and authority to govern, that they should have themselves worshiped; but they should consider that **they are under obligations of obedience to God**; and that, first of all, they should earnestly and faithfully discharge their office, **not only to support and provide for the bodily necessities of their children, servants, subjects, etc., but, most of all, to train them to the honor and praise of God.** **169]** Therefore do not think that this is left to your pleasure and arbitrary will, but that it is a strict command and injunction of God, to whom also you must give account for it.

**170]** But here again the sad plight arises that no one perceives or heeds this, and all live on as though God gave us children for our pleasure or amusement, and servants that we should employ them like a cow or ass, only for work, or as though we were only to gratify our wantonness with our subjects, ignoring them, as though it were no concern of ours what they learn or how they live; **171]** and no one is willing to see that this is the command of the Supreme Majesty, who will most strictly call us to account and punish us for it; nor that there is so great need to be so seriously concerned about the young. **172]** **For if we wish to have excellent and apt persons both for civil and ecclesiastical government, we must spare no diligence, time, or cost in teaching and educating our children, that they may serve God and the world, 173]** and we must not think only how we may amass money and possessions for them. For God can indeed without us support and make them rich, as He daily does. **But for this purpose He has given us children, and issued this command that we should train and govern them according to His will, else He would have no need of father and mother. Let every one know, therefore, that it is his duty, on peril of losing the divine favor, to bring up his children above all things in the fear and knowledge of God, and if they are talented, have them learn and study something, 174] that they may be employed for whatever need there is [to have them instructed and trained in a liberal education, that men may be able to have their aid in government and in whatever is necessary].**

**175]** If that were done, God would also richly bless us and give us grace to train men by whom land and people might be improved, and likewise well-educated

citizens, chaste and domestic wives, who afterwards would rear godly children and servants. **176]** Here consider now what deadly injury you are doing **if you be negligent and fail on your part to bring up your child to usefulness and piety**, and how you bring upon yourself all sin and wrath, thus earning hell by your own children, even though you be otherwise pious and holy. **177]** And because this is disregarded, God so fearfully punishes the world that there is no discipline, government, or peace, of which we all complain, but do not see that it is our fault; for as we train them, **we have spoiled and disobedient children and subjects.** Let this be sufficient exhortation; for to draw this out at length belongs to another time” (LC I)

### All Authority Derived from Parental Office

“...For **all authority flows and is propagated from the authority of parents.** For where a father is unable alone to educate his [rebellious and irritable] child, he employs a schoolmaster to instruct him; if he be too weak, he enlists the aid of his friends and neighbors; if he departs this life, he delegates and confers his authority and government upon others who are appointed for the purpose. **142]** Likewise, he must have domestics, man-servants and maid-servants, under himself for the management of the household, so that all whom we call **masters are in the place of parents** and must derive their power and authority to govern from them. Hence also **they are all called fathers** in the Scriptures, as those who in their government perform the functions of a father, and should have a paternal heart toward their subordinates.” (LC I 140-142)

### Spiritual Fathers

“Besides these there are yet **spiritual fathers**; not like those in the Papacy, who have indeed had themselves called thus, but have performed no function of the paternal office. For those only are called spiritual fathers who govern and guide us by the Word of God; **159]** as St. Paul boasts his fatherhood 1 Cor. 4, 15, where he says: In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel. Now, **160]** since they are fathers they are entitled to their honor, even above all others. But here it is bestowed least; for the way which the world knows for honoring them is to drive them out of the country and to grudge them a piece of bread, and, in short, they must be (as says St. Paul, 1 Cor. 4, 13) as the filth of the world and everybody’s refuse and footrag” (LC I 158-160).

### Playful Methods

**75]** Behold, thus we might train our youth, in a childlike way and playfully in the fear and honor of God, so that the First and Second Commandments might be well observed and in constant practise, Then some good might take root, spring up and bear fruit, and men grow up whom **76]** an entire land might relish and enjoy. Moreover, this would be the true way to bring up children well as long as they can become trained with kindness and delight. For what must be enforced with rods and blows only will not develop into a good breed, and at best they will remain godly under such treatment no longer than while the rod is upon their back.

77] But this [manner of training] so spreads its roots in the heart that they fear God more than rods and clubs. This I say with such simplicity for the sake of the young, that it may penetrate their minds. For since we are preaching to children, we must also prattle with them. Thus we have prevented the abuse and have taught the right use of the divine name, which should consist not only in words, but also in practise and life, so that we may know that God is well pleased with this, and will as richly reward it as He will terribly punish the abuse. (Large Catechism, Second Commandment)

25] After this semblance of wisdom and righteousness has deceived men, then infinite evils follow; the Gospel concerning, the righteousness of faith in Christ is obscured, and vain confidence in such works succeeds. **Then the commandments of God are obscured; these works arrogate to themselves the title of a perfect and spiritual life, and are far preferred to the works of God's commandments [the true, holy, good works], as, the works of one's own calling, the administration of the state, the management of a family, married life, the bringing up of children.** 26] Compared with those ceremonies, the latter are judged to be profane, so that they are exercised by many with some doubt of conscience. For it is known that many have abandoned the administration of the state and married life, in order to embrace these observances as better and holier [have gone into cloisters in order to become holy and spiritual]. (Ap XV)

### Preface to the Large Catechism

4] Therefore it is **the duty of every father of a family to question and examine his children and servants at least once a week and to ascertain what they know of it, or are learning, and, if they do not know it, to keep them faithfully at it.** 5] For I well remember the time, indeed, even now it is a daily occurrence that one finds rude, old persons who knew nothing and still know nothing of these things, and who, nevertheless, go to Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and use everything belonging to Christians, notwithstanding that those who come to the Lord's Supper ought to know more and have a fuller understanding of all Christian doctrine than children and new scholars. 6] However, for the common people we are satisfied with the three parts, which have remained in Christendom from of old, though little of it has been taught and treated correctly until both young and old, who are called and wish to be Christians, are well trained in them and familiar with them. ... 15] These are the most necessary parts which one should first learn to repeat word for word, 16] and which **our children should be accustomed to recite daily** when they arise in the morning, when they sit down to their meals, and when they retire at night; and until they repeat them, they should be given neither food nor drink. 17] Likewise every head of a household is obliged to do the same with respect to his domestics, man-servants and maid-servants, and not to keep them in his house if they do not know these things and are unwilling to learn them. 18] For a person who is so rude and unruly as to be unwilling to learn these things is not to be tolerated; for in these three parts everything that we have in the Scriptures is comprehended in short, plain, and simple terms. 19] For the holy Fathers or apostles (whoever they

were) have thus embraced in a summary the doctrine, life, wisdom, and art of Christians, of which they speak and treat, and with which they are occupied. (LC , Preface)

Preface to Small Catechism

19] **Especially should you here urge magistrates and parents to rule well and to send their children to school, showing them why it is their duty to do this, and what a damnable sin they are committing if they do not do it.** For by such neglect they overthrow and destroy both the kingdom of God and that of the world, acting as the worst enemies both of God and of men. 20] And make it very plain to them what an awful harm they are doing **if they will not help to train children to be pastors, preachers, clerks [also for other offices, with which we cannot dispense in this life], etc.,** and that God will punish them terribly for it. For such preaching is needed. [Verily, I do not know of any other topic that deserves to be treated as much as this.] Parents and magistrates are now sinning unspeakably in this respect. The devil, too, aims at something cruel because of these things [that he may hurl Germany into the greatest distress] (SC, Preface)

85] Let this, then, be said for exhortation, not only for those of us who are old and grown, but also for the young people, who ought to be brought up in the Christian doctrine and understanding. For thereby the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer might be the more easily inculcated to our youth, so that they would receive them with pleasure and earnestness, and thus would practise them from their youth and accustom themselves to them. 86] For the old are now well-nigh done for, so that these and other things cannot be attained, unless we train the people who are to come after us and succeed us in our office and work, in order that they also may bring up their children successfully, that the Word of God and the Christian Church may be preserved. 87] Therefore **let every father of a family know that it is his duty, by the injunction and command of God, to teach these things to his children, or have them learn what they ought to know.** For since they are baptized and received into the Christian Church, they should also enjoy this communion of the Sacrament, in order that they may serve us and be useful to us; for they must all indeed help us to believe, love, pray, and fight against the devil. (LC V)

### Table of Duties: To Children

“Therefore it is the duty of parents and the government to see to it that our youth be brought up to discipline and respectability, and when they have come to years of maturity, to provide for them [to have them married] in the fear of God and honorably; He would not fail to add His blessing and grace, so that men would have joy and happiness from the same” (LC I 218).