

# Why We Baptize Babies

## *7 biblical reasons*

### **1. Jesus commanded infant baptism**

Jesus' words to his disciples were, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them ... teaching them ...." His command includes all nations. Nowhere in the Bible is there anything written limiting the words all nations according to age or sex. Only the arguments of human reason and a faulty understanding of baptism can exclude infants from this command. We baptize them and teach them later as they grow in understanding.

### **2. Little children are born sinful and need baptism**

Infant baptism is most often rejected by people who misunderstand this clear teaching of the Bible. "The intention of man's heart is evil from his youth." (Genesis 8:21). "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Psalm 51:5). "Flesh gives birth to flesh." (John 3:6). "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh." (Romans 7:18). "Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath." (Ephesians 2:3). Babies are sinful by birth and nature. "The wages of sin is death," (Romans 6:23) and little babies also die. If they were not sinful; if they were innocent, how could a just God require death of them?

### **3. Baptism provides forgiveness of sins and salvation**

This is also denied by those who reject infant baptism. Yet the blessings which Baptism brings are clearly listed in the Bible. "Baptism does also now save us." (I Peter 3:21). "Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away!" (Acts 22:16). "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven," (Acts 2:39). Many other passages teach the same thing: Mark 16:16; Colossians 2:11-13; Ephesians 5:25-27; Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:27.

### **4. Infants can believe**

The Bible often connects faith and repentance with the mention of baptism. For this reason many deny infants baptism because they say infants cannot believe. Jesus warned about offending "These little ones who believe in me," (Matthew 18:6). Faith is entirely the gift of the Holy Spirit in the heart of an adult or an infant. It does not depend upon the cooperation or the reason of man: (I Cor. 12:3; Ephesians 2:8; I Cor. 2:14). The Holy Spirit can work faith in infants in any way he chooses (Jeremiah 1:4,5); Luke 1:41). Jesus warns adults not to let their reason and understanding get in the way of believing like a little child (earlier referred to as "babies" - Luke 18:17).

### **5. Baptism is the only way of salvation God has revealed for infants**

God has the power to bring infants to faith in any way He chooses. But He has given us only one way and commanded us to use it. We do not have his promise for anything else. Prayer cannot save. Prayer is what man does for God, not what God does to save man. A parent's faith cannot save. Each must believe for himself, (Ezekiel 18:4). A baby cannot be saved by preaching the Gospel to him because he cannot understand it, (Neh. 8:2,3). He cannot take the Lord's Supper because that is only for those who can examine themselves (I Cor. 11:29). Only baptism has God's command and promise for the blessings of the cross of Christ.

## **6. The Bible has examples of infant baptism**

It bothers many people that most of the instances of baptism in the Bible are of adults. But it's not hard to understand why this is the case. The church was young and none of the adult believers had been baptized as infants. Also, they were converted many times without their families even being present, like the Ethiopian eunuch who was traveling alone (Acts 8:26-40), and like the travelers in Jerusalem on business on Pentecost Day (Acts 2:7-11). Yet baptism of children and family and servants is always mentioned with the adults whenever they were present. Lydia's family was present, so the Bible says, "She and the members of her household were baptized," (Acts 16:15). So was the jailor's family present, so it is mentioned of him, "He and all his family were baptized," (Acts 16:33). Even on Pentecost Day, Peter reminded the holiday travelers, "The promise (of baptism, see preceding verse) is for you and your children," (Acts 2:39).

## **7. The Bible compares baptism to circumcision**

In Colossians 2:11-12, Paul writes, "in him you were also circumcised, in putting off of your sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of man, but with the circumcision done by Christ. In baptism you were buried with him and raised with him through your faith in the power of God who raised him from the dead." There are several comparisons with circumcision which encourage us to baptize our children as infants. First, there is the matter of age. In the Old Testament God commanded circumcision on the eighth day (Genesis 17:12). God also warned that the uncircumcised child could be considered lost (Genesis 17:14). Third, Paul reminds us that through baptism our sinful nature is buried with Christ. That is the nature with which we are born, and which our children have as infants. What a powerful and compelling word of God for having our children baptized as infants.

So ...

- ✓ If infants are sinful and need forgiveness ...
- ✓ If forgiveness is delivered through baptism ...
- ✓ If this promise is also for children of believers ...
- ✓ If infants can believe ...
- ✓ If there is no command to exclude them ...

the question is not "Why baptize them?", but "Why exclude them from such a gracious gift?"