



Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God (John 3:5).

What is Baptism?

In Psalm 51:5 David understands that he was sinful (as are we) from the moment of conception. This means that we are born spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1) and have lost the image of God that Adam had at Creation through that sin.

If children are then born with sin then they must also be accountable for their sins as children (Romans 3:19) and indeed as children they can sin (see Matthew 18:6). If children are born with sin, can sin as children and are accountable for their sins, then Scripture indicates that they too are under the sentence of death (Romans 6:23).

Since this sinful nature occurs from birth, it is therefore present so early that it cannot possibly be considered as the result of imitation (Psalm 51:5; Job 14:4; John 3:6). In Ephesians 2:3, Paul says of the Ephesians that they are by nature children of wrath, just as are the non-believers. In this passage the term 'by nature' points to something inborn and original, in which all people participate, and which makes them guilty before God.

Moreover, according to Scripture, death is visited even upon those who have never exercised a personal and conscious choice (Romans 5:12-14). This passage implies that sin exists even in the case of infants prior to moral consciousness.

Since infants die, and therefore the effect of sin is present in their case, it is natural, logical and reasonable to assume that the cause is also present. Scripture teaches that all men are under condemnation and therefore need the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. Children are never made an exception to this rule (e.g. John 3:3, 5; I John 5:12).

Scriptural support infant Baptism is wide and deep. First, we must look to how Jesus treated little children. Christ loved little children and scolded His disciples when they rebuked the children who were trying to come to Him. Instead He asked that the children be brought to Him and said that unless one had the faith of a little child, that they would not get into heaven—Mark 10:13-16; Matthew 18:3.

The fact that we have to have the faith of a little child proves that a little child is capable of having faith. Further, this faith is the work of God and therefore does not depend upon the capabilities of the child to understand or intellectualize it—Psalm 71:5-6; 22:9; 8:2)

Romans 9:10-16: *Not only that, but Rebekah's children were conceived at the same time by our father Isaac. Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God's purpose in election might stand: not by works but by Him who calls—she was told, "The older will serve the younger." Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."*

What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! 15 For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." It [Faith] does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God's mercy.

Christ also said that anyone who receives one little child in His name receives Christ Himself (Matthew 18:1-6, 10)—the same type of standard that He uses at the last Judgment to identify the believer (Matthew 25:31-40). Then He issues a stern warning to anyone who causes a little one who believes in Christ to sin (Matthew 18:6; Mark 9:42).

This becomes even stronger when one considers that in Luke 18:15-17, a parallel account of Mark 10:13-16, Christ uses the Greek word *brephos* (Strong's Number NT:1025; an infant, properly, unborn, literally or figuratively) referring to the children that belong to kingdom of God. This same word is used in Luke 1:41, 44 for an unborn child and later in Luke 2:12, 16 to refer to the infant Jesus.

Likewise, John the Baptist leapt in faith in his mother's womb upon the entrance of Mary pregnant with the infant Jesus (Luke 1:15, 41). So, John, as a yet unborn child still in his mother's womb, was able to have faith.

Faith does not contain knowledge nor is there any necessity to have knowledge to have faith, but rather is a gift of God. If it were not so, then those who are in a coma, have Alzheimer's disease, are developmentally disabled or even while asleep would not have faith. In Mark 10:15 we are even warned not to let reason get in the way of faith (see also II Timothy 3:7).

So, Baptism is God's means of extending grace to children [and others] who are incapable of understanding otherwise what the Word of God says and thus come to faith by hearing (Titus 3:5; John 3:5; I Peter 3:21). This, then, gives fresh meaning to the concept that we become children of God through faith (Galatians 3:26-27).

To summarize, we are under a command to baptize "all nations" which does not limit age (Matthew 28:19-20). All are conceived in sin and in need of salvation through faith in Christ (Psalm 51:5).

Children are specifically included as recipients of the benefits of Baptism (Acts 2:38-39). [The word "children" in this passage in Greek is *teknon* NT 5043 from the base of GSN5098; a child (as produced). It always means children and is not meant to mean generations.]

Therefore, we baptize infants with His promise of salvation (Romans 6:3). It is one Baptism of water & Word (Ephesians 4:5) through which the infant receives the promised Spirit in all fullness (Acts 2:38-39) which results in rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5).

This Baptism is by one Spirit given to drink into one body in Christ (I Corinthians 12:13). All of the blessings that Baptism offers to the adult are then also offered to our children (Acts 2:38-39), so even babies can, through the washing of water and Spirit, have faith created in their hearts to receive those blessings (John 3:5) and free them from the condemnation of their sinful nature.