

TRUTH FOR THE WORLD
Bible Question and Answer Booklet

INFANTS

QUESTION: Some say that according to Ezekiel 18:20, “babies are born sinless.” Can you look at Job 15:14, 25 & Psalms 51:5 and tell me how these are to be comprehended? Other scriptures for consideration are: Job 14:4; Psalms 58:3; John 3:6.

ANSWER: Some in the denominational world teach that infants are born with sin and are, therefore, candidates for baptism. Before dealing with the above passages, perhaps it would be wise to answer the question, “Should infants be baptized?”

There is no reference whatever in God’s Word to the baptism of infants! The purpose of baptism is to bring about the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Infants do not and cannot commit sin. Neither do they inherit sin! “The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him” (Ezekiel 18:20). Since an infant neither commits, nor inherits sin, baptism would serve no scriptural purpose. Additionally, belief in Christ (John 8:24), repentance (Acts 17:30), and confession (Romans 10:10) are necessary before one’s obedience in immersion. An infant, incapable of doing these things, cannot, for this reason, be a proper candidate for baptism! Again, given that an infant cannot sin and does not inherit sin, he or she obviously has no sin and is, therefore, not separated from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). It is of these that Jesus spoke when He said, “for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 19:14). For anyone to adopt and practice infant baptism and sprinkling, they must first assume that Christ either forgot to tell us about it in the scriptures, or that He just did not realize its importance! When man assumes such and legislates in the place of God, he is guilty of presumptuous sin! This is the case with sprinkling and infant baptism!

As well, sprinkling as a substitute for scriptural baptism (immersion) is a doctrine not of the Bible, but of men! Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins was the only practice commanded and practiced during New Testament times by the early church! See Matthew 3:16; John 3:23; Acts 8:35-38; Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12. The first recorded case of other than baptism by immersion was performed on a man by the name of Novation in 251AD (Neander, Church History I, 325). Pouring water upon the candidate’s head in cases of an emergency was approved by Pope Stephen in 753AD (Edinburgh Cyclopaedia III, 245-246). The council of Ravenna accepted either sprinkling or immersion in 1311AD. These men and their councils have sinned by binding their traditions on men, negating in their lives the very Word of God by which they will one day be judged! Immersion only is commanded of God. Immersion only is accepted by Him! Immersion only will put one in contact with the cleansing blood of Christ!

TRUTH FOR THE WORLD

Bible Question and Answer Booklet

The verses in question:

(Job 15:14, 25): Chapter fifteen has no reference at all to infants. The phrase in verse 14, "and he which is born of woman, that he should be righteous" is simply the way Eliphaz refers to the character of "man" generally, and to Job (a full grown man) indirectly! Note that throughout the chapter, and especially in verse ten, that men of age are under consideration, "With us are both the gray headed and very aged men, much elder than thy father." To single out a verse from the middle of a discourse about the character of mature men and apply it to infants would be improper. Also notice that the phrase "born of woman" is used elsewhere, e.g., Job 14:1-4; Job 25:14; Matthew 11:11; and John 7:28. Each time reference is to mature men!

The one being spoken of in Job 14:25 is not an infant, but rather the "king ready to battle" in verse 24.

(Psalms 51:5): "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." The "sin" referred to is not something that David did or inherited. The passage says that David was born of a mature person who had sinned (his mother) and that his conception and birth took place in a sinful world! Note Psalms 14:3, David does not say here that men are born "aside" and "filthy," but rather he says that they are all "gone" aside; they are "become" filthy! Clearly implied is: a moving from one state to another; that if one has "become" filthy, he must have previously been clean. So it is with all men, including David.

(Job 14:4): "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." This passage in no way implies that an infant is born in sin! In context, we find in reading verse one of this chapter that just the opposite is true, Man that is born of woman is of few days (marginal reading: short of days) and full of trouble. Note that such was not true of man at birth, but, rather, short days (compared with all his days) after his birth!

(Psalms 58:3): "The wicked are estranged from the womb: They go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies." The second part of this verse explains the first part of the verse and means that man "goes astray" soon after birth, speaking lies! Note that he "goes" astray; not that he "was" astray! When does he "go" astray? When he speaks lies!! The person referred to in this passage is one who understands and tells lies! Such excludes infants!

(John 3:6): "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." This passage has absolutely nothing to do with infants, but is simply contrasting flesh and spirit.

TRUTH FOR THE WORLD
Bible Question and Answer Booklet

QUESTION: Would you please explain Luke 18:15-16 in relation to infant baptism?

ANSWER: Some brought their children to Christ, perhaps looking for Him to bless them in some way. The disciples rebuked the parents of these children (verse fifteen), apparently believing that such was improper. Jesus used the situation to teach a lesson! He said (vs.16), "Suffer (permit) the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." The lesson: Sinful man cannot enter the kingdom of God unless he becomes like a little child in disposition and character!

The passage does not teach that infants are to 'come unto Christ' in order to be immersed, sprinkled, or poured. Those who so teach read into the passage that which God did not intend (Revelation 22:18-19)!

QUESTION: Does the phrase "all have sinned" in Romans 3:23 include children who have not yet come to the age of accountability?

ANSWER: No! In the context of this chapter, the word "all" refers to Jews and Gentiles, just as it does in verse nine. Of course, we realize that an infant is either Jew or Gentile, but, nonetheless, to infer that the "all" includes infants and, therefore, they are sinners is to read into the passage that which it does not teach. As well, such inference creates contradictions with other passages. For example, Ezekiel 28:15 teaches that we are perfect, or without sin, as infants; that iniquity is found in us at a later time in life. Ezekiel 18:20 teaches that we do not inherit sin. It is said of the "little ones" who left Egypt that they only (except Joshua and Caleb) would inherit Canaan, because they "in that day had no knowledge of good and evil" (Deuteronomy 1:39). So it is today. Without the mental capacity to know good and evil, one cannot sin. Infants clearly do not have the capability of knowing good and evil and, therefore, have no sin!

QUESTION: Does not the Bible teach that children can also be received into the covenant of God's grace since they can believe (Matthew 18:1-6)?

ANSWER: This passage does not teach that sinful children are received into God's grace upon the condition of "faith only" in Christ! Jesus is teaching here that sinful man cannot enter the kingdom of God unless he becomes as (like) a little child in disposition and character! Nothing more, nothing less! Any one (adult or child) who is capable of believing may be baptized in order to be saved (Mark 16:16). Since Matthew eighteen is talking about "little ones" capable of believing (vs.6), one must be careful not to use the passage to support a false doctrine relative to infants. Certainly, we can see the difference between newly born infants incapable of believing and "little ones" capable of believing!

TRUTH FOR THE WORLD
Bible Question and Answer Booklet

QUESTION: Should we not baptize infants against their will, since Ephesians 6:4 teaches that adults are baptized against their will?

ANSWER: Since Ephesians 6:4 has nothing to do with baptism, it is assumed that the author of the "question" is referring to Romans 6:4. Neither of these passages, however, teaches that adults are to be baptized against their will. To the contrary, Romans 6:16-17 clearly shows that obedience from the heart requires a 'yielding of one's self,' which means to give up; to surrender. In Revelation 22:17, Jesus said, "whosoever will" may come!

QUESTION: Isn't it true that even after adults are baptized they still are not free from sin; that they are unaware of their sins, just like infants?

ANSWER: Roman 6:12-15 shows that man is aware of his sin! Romans 6:16-18 teaches that when one obeys from his heart that form of doctrine (baptism), he is then made free from sin! See also John 8:32 and Romans 6:8. At baptism one is freed from his past sins. When sin occurs after baptism, the Christian in fellowship with Christ will continue to be cleansed by the blood of Christ as he confesses his sins (I John 1:6-9). Certainly confession of sins demands an awareness of sins!

QUESTION: When an infant dies, doesn't God decide where the child will go?

ANSWER: God has already decided! Since only sin can separate one from God (Isaiah 59:1-2) and since infants cannot sin (Ezekiel 18:20; Ezekiel 28:15), it follows that these are not in need of salvation, because they have not been lost! In death they shall remain eternally in a safe relationship with a loving Father!

QUESTION: What is a good age to baptize a child?

ANSWER: When a person comes to a knowledge of good and evil and understands that he, in his sins, is separated from God; when he comprehends the purpose of the blood atonement of Christ; when he understands the purpose of baptism as it relates to forgiveness and the singular nature of the kingdom (the church); when he has a deep desire to repent of his sins and to confess faith in Christ; when he is ready to commit a life of service to his Lord, then he is ready to be immersed! He can be nine or ninety! The restriction is not in age, but in knowledge and understanding!

TRUTH FOR THE WORLD

Bible Question and Answer Booklet

QUESTION: Did the infants of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:24-25), and those who perished in the flood (Genesis 7:21-23), die because of inherited sin? Did God not kill these infants in anger because of their “wrongful deeds?” Doesn’t Exodus 20:5 teach that God punishes children for the sin inherited from their fathers?

ANSWER: The answer to all of the questions is No! What “wrongful deeds” could an infant perform? Sin is a transgression of God’s Law (1 John 3:4). Which of God’s laws can an infant transgress? Surely there are none! Without the mental capacity to know good and evil, an infant is incapable of sinning!

In Ezekiel 18:20, it is clearly shown that a person dies spiritually (is separated from God - Isaiah 59:1-2) because of their own sins. This means that the son will not die spiritually because of the father’s sin; nor will the father die spiritually because of the son’s sin. Since an infant cannot commit “wrongful deeds” of his own accord, and since the Bible plainly says that he does not inherit sin, it follows that an infant remains in a “safe” relationship with his loving God as long as he remains an infant! This, however, does not mean that the son will never physically experience the effect of his father’s sin. Often this is the case. For example, a father may spend all of his living on alcoholic beverages rather than buying food for his children. Or, a child may die as a result of a father’s ungodly sex life! The father is clearly guilty of the sin! Though the children are not guilty, they certainly often suffer, and sometimes die, as a result of their father’s sin. It is, therefore, the father of the children (not God) who causes the suffering. The suffering of the children is but a natural result of the father’s sin. This is the meaning of such phrases as “visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children” found in Exodus 20:5 and 34:7. Clearly, when God, because of the sins of parents, executes divine judgment upon a nation or a people, the children, though not guilty of their parent’s sins, must naturally experience the consequences of that judgment! It was true of Sodom and Gomorrah! It was true of those who died in the great flood! It was true of the Jews carried into captivity, and, as well, of those who died in the 70AD destruction of Jerusalem!

Does this mean that God was wrong? Does it mean that in His judgment He improperly punished the infants of Sodom and Gomorrah and in the flood? Of course not! God cannot sin or do wrong! Some thoughts that would be good for consideration are these: What would the final destiny of these infants have been had they been brought to maturity in the traditions and teachings of their ungodly parents - heaven or hell? Obviously hell! If Ezekiel 18:20 is true (and it is) what will be the final destiny of these children - heaven or hell? Obviously heaven! Which course was the better of the two for the infants involved? Obviously God in His wisdom pursued the best course!