

Infant Baptism

By Casey Head

- In order for us to accept the practice of infant baptism as scriptural, we must first find authority for it in the New Testament (Col. 3:17; 1 Pet. 4:11; 2 Jn. 9). The problem is, the New Testament never authorizes infant baptism. If so, where?
- Mark 16:16 says, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” Before a person can be scripturally baptized, they must first believe. Faith precedes baptism, but an infant is not capable of believing. Therefore, infants cannot be baptized scripturally. We see in other conversion accounts where individuals were instructed to believe, repent, and/or confess prior to being baptized (Ac. 2:38; 8:35-38; 16:30-31). We also know that baptism alone is incapable of saving anyone. Consider Rom. 10:9-13 along these lines.
- A person is baptized for the purpose of washing their sins away (Ac. 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6), but infants have no sins. Babies have no knowledge of good and evil (Deut. 1:39), and we are told in Eccl. 7:29 that God makes man upright. Therefore, they do not need baptism. It is not until a child reaches what is called the “age of accountability” and is guilty of sin that they need to be baptized.
- Not only is there is no authority for infant baptism, but the Bible confirms that infants are sinless and do not require conversion. They are pure and innocent and in fellowship with God.
- Arguments used to justify infant baptism:
 - The Catholic doctrine of “original sin” which states that babies are born sinful is used to teach the necessity of infant baptism, but this doctrine is false. Romans 5:12-21, which is the main proof-text for “original sin,” does not teach that we inherit the consequences of Adam’s sin. Death has passed upon all men “for that all have sinned” (vv. 12). Furthermore, if we are all made unrighteous because of Adam, then we are all made righteous because of Christ! Passages such as Ezekiel 18 disprove the doctrine of “original sin.”
 - Many contend that baptism is “New Testament circumcision.” Therefore, because the male children in the Old Testament were circumcised at eight days old, so also must we baptize babies soon after birth. But baptism and circumcision are only comparable in the way that Paul describes in Colossians 2:11-12. Both involve a “cutting away.” But that is the only point of comparison. Furthermore, only male infants were circumcised! If baptism is “New Testament circumcision,” then are we going to only baptize male infants?
 - Others will point out the word “household” in passages like Ac. 10:7; 16:14, 32; 1 Cor. 1:16 to support infant baptism. In each of these examples, the gospel was preached to a “household” and those in the “household” were baptized. People conclude that there must have been infants in these households, and therefore they were baptized just like everyone else. First of all, we don’t know if there were any infants in any of these households. Second, we can conclude that if there were infants, they *weren’t* baptized because they didn’t need to be!
- The history behind infant baptism:
 - From the 3rd century onward, infant baptism was a common practice.
 - Many “early church fathers” are said to have supported the practice of infant baptism.
 - The Catholic Church believes that infant baptism is necessary and urgent.
 - The Catholic Church has no official teaching regarding the fate of infants who die without baptism, but they say, “The Church entrusts these infants to the mercy of God.”
 - Infant baptism is also practiced by Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, etc.
- Our only concern MUST be the word of God (Jn. 8:32; 17:17; 1 Pet. 1:22-25). If infant baptism is not authorized in the New Testament, then we must not practice it, lest we be guilty of adding to the doctrine of Jesus Christ (2 Jn. 9; Rev. 22:18-19).