

Why Baptize Babies?

1. Babies, like all people, are sinners, and Baptism forgives sin.

Ever since Eve, and then Adam sinned, all people are now sinners—by nature (that is, we are *fallen* people).

Genesis 5.1-3—*Seth was born in the (sinful) image of his father, Adam; not in God's image.*

Romans 5.12-19—*Adam & Eve's sin has affected us all. Now, to be human means to be a sinner. (Original Sin: a condition we have "inherited" from our first parents. Original sin leads to Actual Sin, i.e. doing wrong things and failing to do what's right.)*

Romans 6.23a—*Death is the result of sin. No sin, no death. Can a baby die? Yes, obviously; therefore sin is present.*

Psalm 51.5—*"I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me."*

Romans 3.23—*"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*

John 3.6—*Jesus teaches that we must be "born again" (or "born from on high"); a new beginning is necessary. That new beginning, he says, comes through "water and the Spirit" (Christian Baptism). See also Titus 3.5.*

Baptism forgives sins, i.e. it is one of God's ways to communicate his forgiveness.

Acts 2.38—*"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins."*

Acts 22.16—*"Get up, be baptized, and wash away your sins."*

1 Peter 3.21—*"(Baptism) saves you..."*

Titus 3.4—*"(God our Savior) ...saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit..."*

2. Jesus said to baptize "all nations" (Matthew 28.19).

The command is to baptize *everyone*; no exclusions or exceptions are made.

It is true that the Bible does not say "Baptize babies," (directly); but neither does the Bible say, "Don't baptize babies."

3. Babies can believe.

We usually think of faith/belief as something a person does him/herself. That's true, but it does not fully describe faith. While faith is something we do: Knowledge, Acceptance, Trust; faith is also a **gift from God**:

Ephesians 2.8-9—*Faith is "not of ourselves"; "it is a gift of God"*

1 Corinthians—*"No one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit."*

(Continued on back)

side)

Babies can believe because ...

they can receive a gift (even if they don't know they have it!)

Matthew 18.1-6—*Jesus says, “Whoever causes one of these little ones (children) who believe in me to sin ...”*

4. The Apostles baptized entire households; which would likely include babies.

Acts 10.48—*Peter baptized Cornelius' household*

Acts 16.15, 25-33—*Lydia's household baptized*

1 Corinthians 1.16—*Paul said he baptized the household of Stephanus*

5. Babies/Children are important to God.

Mark 10.13-16—*Jesus rebuked the disciples who tried to prevent young children from coming to him. God desires a living relationship with people—even babies, and Baptism establishes that saving relationship (see the next point).*

6. Baptism is the New Testament counter-part to Circumcision (the ritual through which infants were incorporated into the people of God/the Church), which was done to Jewish infants at 8 days of age.

Colossians 2.11-15—*Paul writes that Baptism is the “circumcision done by Christ.”*

Note- While circumcision was a rite of bringing a male child into the people of God, Baptism is for both males and females. (It's also painless! ☺)

7. The vast majority (90%+) of Christians all through history have baptized babies. It's been the mainstream practice through Christian history.

The practice of infant baptism was not even questioned until 150 A.D.

With all this being said, there is no reason to have a child wait for Baptism, if indeed God is here giving a great gift! The sooner one receives the gift, the better!

Objections to Baptizing Babies

Reasons for not baptizing babies come down to three contentions:

- 1) Babies are not sinful *See #1 above*
- 2) Even if babies are sinful, God doesn't hold them accountable for their sins until they

know right from wrong. (Age of Accountability)

This seems to make some sense logically, BUT the Bible does not use this line of logic ... or even suggest it.

3) Babies cannot believe

See #3 above

Can a Person (Babies included) Be Saved Without Baptism?

First, we say clearly and directly, “**Yes, a person can be saved without Baptism.**” Jesus himself said in Mark 16.16, “*Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.*” (emphasis mine) Jesus himself here assures us that it is only the lack of faith that separates us from God eternally, not the lack of Baptism.

And yet we must also say, that being baptized is still Jesus’ command, i.e. it is his wish. Matthew 28.19, “*Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit....*” For this reason, Baptism is not optional. What we can conclude, however, is that God does not limit himself to saving only baptized people. But we are bound to make disciples as he commanded, i.e. by baptizing and teaching. We must conclude, as did St. Augustine long ago, “It is not the lack of baptism that condemns, but the despising of it.”

In addition we can say with certainty that if a baby is baptized s/he will be saved. That’s God’s promise, so we can readily affirm that! And we certainly would give any Christian parent/s assurance that even if their child died and had not yet been baptized, that God would have mercy; that’s his nature. This assurance is appropriately given especially to troubled parent/s and those who intended to have their child baptized (even soon).

Finally, we must also say that baptism is to be accompanied by teaching. Matthew 28.19 (cited above) continues, “*Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you....*” (emphasis mine) Christians see that Baptism and teaching go together, as Jesus’ way of making disciples. To fail to do one or the other does not honor Jesus’ command.

Christians baptize and teach; we do both. The sequence of those two is not prescribed by Jesus, nor by the Bible. The book of Acts has examples of Baptism first (-) and of teaching first (-).

A **valid Baptism** is one that is done correctly. Two things are necessary for Christian Baptism: water and God’s Word (“*in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*”) An **effective Baptism** is one where Baptism and teaching (faith) go together, as Jesus indicated they should. The first concern is that we do

Christian baptism correctly; then our effort goes toward nurturing that gift of God as we teach the faith and cultivate the relationship of the baptized person with God, our heavenly Father.

Dangers re: Our Thinking of Baptism ...

While a person can trust that s/he receives God's grace (undeserved forgiving love) in Holy Baptism, being baptized is not a substitute for not actively living the Christian (baptized) life. Instead, being baptized calls us to live the new life it gives. (*If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation. 2 Corinthians 5.17*) That new life includes: daily repentance, seeking God's will and ways, following and obeying the Lord Jesus, doing what he calls us to do. Read the following:

Romans 6.1-6—*When we were baptized we were joined to Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Shall we go on sinning? No! We've been called to a new life.*

Galatians 3.27—*In Baptism we put on Christ (a new/different life!)*

Galatians 5.24—*Those who belong to Christ have crucified the sinful nature*

Ephesians 4.22-23—*Put off the old self; put on the new self (Baptismal language)*

Colossians 3.1ff.—*Since you've been raised with Christ (through Baptism), set your mind on things above.*