

Infant Baptism

Infant baptism resulted from the belief that everyone is born in original sin. In New Testament times and in early history, infants did not receive baptism. Does the Bible authorize infant baptism?

First, the Bible does not teach that babies are born in sin. Infants are not born astray, but people go astray: "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies (Psalms 58:3)." God is "the Father of spirits (Heb. 12:9)." Would a holy God place a sinful spirit in an infant?

Second, the conversions recorded in the book of Acts do not mention infants. In fact, the book of Acts states each conversion in such a way as specifically to exclude infants. In Acts 2 on the day Pentecost, the people who were baptized were capable of receiving God's word and repenting (Acts 2:38, 41). Infants are incapable of these acts. Philip did not baptize any infants in the city of Samaria. the people who were baptized were capable of believing (Acts 8:12). Those in the household of Cornelius were not infants because they were capable of hearing God's word (Acts 10:44-48). Those people in Lydia's household who were baptized did not include infants for they were capable of receiving comfort from Paul and Silas (Acts 16:14-15, 40). Paul spoke the "word of the Lord" to the jailor and his house. The people who heard this word had the capacity to believe and rejoice (Acts 16: 30-34). Since the infants in the jailor's house did not have the capacity to believe and rejoice, they were not in the group who received baptism. No infants received baptism at Corinth because the word of God says, "And many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized (Acts 18:8)."

Third, the great commission does not include the baptizing of infants (Mark 16:15-16; Matt. 28: 18-20). The great commission requires teaching God's word to people who when they believe his word, are baptized. Those who baptize are to teach believers "to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you. (Matt 28:19-20)." Infants simply cannot fulfill the great commission.

Finally, infants are not sinful and responsible (Matt. 18:3; 19:14). Since they are not sinful, how can they receive baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16)? The gospel, which addresses people who are responsible, excludes children. To be saved, all responsible people must believe in Christ (John 8:24), repent of their sins (Acts 17:30), confess Jesus before men (Rom. 10:9-10), and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16).