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Infant Baptism

Many religious groups practice the baptism, or christening of infants, as a means of cleansing their souls of sin. This is a doctrine that has no root in the New Testament, nor in the historical practice of the first century church. The belief perhaps originated from the doctrine of “original sin” that is the inheritance of guilt or the sinful nature of humanity. We recognize that the scriptures teach that man is sinful. We find that God recognizes this as part of the nature of mankind following the flood during the days of Noah. As Noah offered a sacrifice to God we read, **“And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth” (Gen 8.21)**. The doctrine and practice of infant baptism appears to be rooted in a misunderstanding of Paul's’ statement about sin in his letter to the Romans. **“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned...” (Rom 5.12)**. Another passage cited as proof of the need to baptize children, ridding them of the guilt of original sin, is taken from Peter’s statement on the day of Pentecost. **“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” (Acts 2.38-39)**. The scriptures however reveal that salvation is needed when one comes to a realization that they have sinned against God. Christ used children as an example in speaking to his disciples concerning their discussion of who was to be greatest in the kingdom. **“Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt 18.3)**. This implies a difference between those who know the difference between right and wrong and therefore have a knowledge of being in a sinful state and thus separated from God. Little children, those who have not reached

what is referred to as an age of accountability, have no consciousness of sin. Turning to the examples of conversion found in the book of Acts we cannot find a single example of children being baptized, nor can we find such a command in the scriptures. This is a doctrine that appears to have arisen in the church in the mid second century and eventually became an accepted doctrine and practice as men took it upon themselves to add to the word of God. An action that is condemned repeatedly in the scriptures. Over the years this practice became a mandate and those who did not accept it were persecuted and killed for their noncompliance. The practice of infant baptism leads to many problems including the notion that one is a Christian because they were baptized when young. In the scriptures we find that one who desires to render obedience to God must first come to a knowledge of the Gospel through hearing the word. One is convicted of their sins when they realize that they are outside of the family of God and believe in Christ. Believers who reached this point then acknowledged their desire to change, repentance, through confession of their belief and their subsequent baptism for the remission of sins. Infants lack the sense of sin in their lives and also the ability to consciously act on their own belief in order to be saved. We find no examples or commands in the scriptures where one person ever rendered obedience to God on behalf of another. We are each responsible for our actions and will give an account to God for the deeds done in the flesh (2 Cor 5.10). We must also render obedience to God when we come to a realization of what the scriptures tell us we need to do. Infants and small children, once again, lack the ability to do this. The nature of man, as stated by God and Paul, is to drift away from God. As we grow and come to terms with life we have a responsibility to learn what God wants us to do. At the point in our lives when we understand that, we must obey.

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