

Should Babies Be Baptized?

Jon Mitchell

The Bible clearly teaches that baptism is essential to salvation and forgiveness of sins ([Mark 16:16](#); [Acts 2:38](#); [22:16](#); [1 Pet. 3:21](#)) and is needed in order to become a disciple of Christ ([Matt. 28:19-20](#); [Gal. 3:26-27](#)). Concerning this act, a question many have is whether infants should be baptized. This question is relevant especially to me at this point in my life, being a new daddy with an infant daughter a little over a year of age. Is my daughter in need of salvation and forgiveness of sins? Should she be baptized today? Should I have baptized her a year ago when she was born? A careful study of everything the Scripture says about baptism and sin in general reveals that the baptism of infants is not the baptism one reads about in God's Word.



What does water on the head of babies do?

For one, biblical baptism is actually immersion in the original Greek, rather than pouring or sprinkling. Today, the “baptism” of infants as commonly practiced is a misnomer, in that water more often poured or sprinkled on the baby. It could only be truly called “infant baptism” if the baby was immersed.

That said, immersion is not the only thing which constitutes biblical baptism, because the baptism one reads of in the New Testament requires certain prerequisites. First, one must have faith in Christ before being baptized ([Acts 8:35-38](#); [Mark 16:16](#); cf. [Rom. 10:9-10](#)). An infant is incapable of believing in anything, much less in Jesus, and certainly cannot confess that faith as is commanded by Paul and exemplified by the Ethiopian eunuch. Secondly, one must also choose to repent of their sins before being baptized ([Acts 2:38](#)). Repentance requires having godly sorrow over one's sins ([2 Cor. 7:9-10](#)). An infant does not have the capability to have godly sorrow over sin and thus make the decision to repent or turn away from said sin.

In fact, the Bible actually teaches that infants have no sin in their lives that they need to repent of or be saved from the wages of ([Rom. 6:23](#)) in the first place. A widely held belief in the denominational world is that babies inherit the guilt of their ancestor's sins, going all the way back to Adam. It is this belief that in fact led to the establishment of the practice of infant baptism by men two centuries after Christ lived on this earth and the church began. However, the Bible very specifically states that people are not held accountable for the sins of their ancestors ([Ezek. 18:20](#)). In fact, Paul described a time

in his life when he was spiritually alive before becoming a sinner ([Rom. 7:7-11](#)). He also described Jacob and Esau as having not yet done either good or evil while in the womb ([Rom. 9:10-11](#)). If the doctrine known as “original sin” is true, Paul would not have been able to say this about himself or about Jacob and Esau because they all would have been physically born sinful. But if children are born free from the guilt of sin and remain so until they reach an accountable age as taught in the Bible ([Is. 7:15](#)), then Paul’s statements about himself and Jacob and Esau are correct.

Finally, consider the fact that no one enters into the new covenant with the Lord without first knowing him ([Heb. 8:6-13](#)). In the old covenant, the Israelites entered into it by virtue of being born into a Jewish family. The males entered the covenant by way of circumcision when they were eight days old ([Gen. 17:9-14](#)), and as they grew older they had to be taught to know the Lord. But under the new covenant, you are first taught the gospel about the Lord ([Rom. 10:17](#); [Mark 16:15](#)). Only after having obeyed it through faithful, penitent, baptism do you enter into that covenant relationship with God with a “**circumcision without hands**” ([Col. 2:11-12](#)). Where infant baptism is practiced, this distinctive feature of the new covenant is no longer present. Infants who have been baptized and supposedly entered a covenant relationship with the Lord at that point would still need to be introduced to know the Lord as they grew older. However, what the writer of Hebrews said about the new covenant is true only when baptism (the means by which we enter a covenant relationship with the Lord today) is administered to penitent believers.

Therefore, God’s Word teaches me that there is no need for my infant daughter to be baptized. If I did so, I would only accomplish getting her wet and going against what the Bible teaches myself. Eventually, she will grow enough so that she will become accountable, and then it will be inevitable that she will sin ([Rom. 3:23](#)). That is when she will need the salvation and forgiveness of sins that only the penitent baptism of a whole-hearted believer in the gospel of Jesus Christ can provide.

What about you? Were you baptized as an infant? If so, I encourage you to consider that you need to be baptized again, baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, baptized into his body which is his church ([1 Cor. 12:13](#); cf. [Eph. 1:22-23](#); [4:4](#); [Gal. 3:26-27](#)), so that your sins will be washed away ([Acts 22:16](#)). If you believe in Jesus with all of your heart and are willing to repent of your sins and dedicate your life to him, there is no better time than today for you to be baptized ([Acts 8:35-38](#); [2:38](#); cf. [2 Cor. 6:1-2](#)). Jesus is extending to you his invitation right now. Accept it by obeying his commands. Only then will he truly be your Lord and Savior ([Luke 6:46](#); [Matt. 7:21-27](#); [Heb. 5:9](#)).