

“Why Do We Baptize Our Infants?”

1 Cor. 7:14 and others

I. Summary Answer

- A. First, the Bible teaches that the infant children of believers belong to God’s covenant people. (1 Cor. 7:14)
- B. Second, covenant children are to receive the *mark* of covenant inclusion — which was circumcision in Old Testament times (Gen. 17:10-11) and is baptism in the New Testament age (Matt. 28:19; Gal. 2:27).
- C. Third, baptism is not a person’s profession of faith. Rather, baptism is a personal sign of *God’s* personal promises of salvation (Acts 2:38-39; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:1-11) — promises that must be received by faith.

II. Summary Answer Pt. 1 Expanded: The Children of Believers are God’s Covenant People

- A. Beginning with Abraham in Gen 12, God communicated salvation to His people through covenant.
- B. The covenant arrangement did two basic things:
 - 1. Promised salvation to all who trusted in God’s promises.
 - 2. Distinguished God’s people from the world, i.e. made them holy (covenantally):

Deuteronomy 14:2 - For you are a people holy to the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

- C. The covenant made with Israel (the Old Covenant) included their children.

Genesis 17:7 - “I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.”

- D. The covenant made with God’s people today (the New Covenant) still includes our children:

1 Corinthians 7:14 - For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.

- 1. Not “holy” in the sense of being internally renovated by the Spirit.
- 2. But “holy” as in *covenantally* set-apart.

III. Summary Answer Pt. 2 Expanded: Covenant Children Should Receive the Mark of Covenant Inclusion

- A. The children of believers *already* belong to the New Covenant. (See above)
- B. Thus, they should receive the *sign* of the New Covenant, that is, baptism (Matt. 28:19; Gal. 2:27).

IV. Common Objection to Summary Answer Pts. 1-2: Doesn’t Jeremiah 31:34 say that the New Covenant will *only* include *true* believers?

Jeremiah 31:34 - “They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the Lord, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

- A. Remember the 1 Cor. 7:14 passage about children born to believers in New Covenant times (see above).
- B. The language of Jer. 31:34 does not mean “each and every”. For example:

Jeremiah 6:13 - For from the least of them even to the greatest of them, everyone is greedy for gain, and from the prophet even to the priest everyone deals falsely.

- C. The New Testament speaks of real New Covenant members who were not true believers:

Hebrews 10:29 - How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?

2 Peter 2:1 - But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

D. The first New Covenant sermon repeats God's Old Testament covenant promises to the *children* of believers:

Acts 2:38–39 - ³⁸ Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."

E. Then why are there so many *adult* baptisms in the New Testament?

1. Believing adults had to receive the *New Covenant* sign (as did adult Abraham when he first came into the Old Covenant).
2. But the households of these initial believers were also the recipients of baptism:

Acts 16:33 - And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household.

V. Summary Answer Pt. 3 Expanded - Baptism is Not a Person's Profession of Faith

A. That idea is not found in scripture. Baptism is *God's* profession to the one baptized, be they adult or child.

B. What does God pledge to the one baptized?

1. That they are part of His visible covenant people. (See Above)
2. God also personally pledges the promise of forgiveness of sins through Christ:

Acts 2:38 - Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins..."

Acts 22:16 - 'Now why do you [Paul] delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.'

C. The promises of baptism, like *all* of God's promises, must be received by true *faith*.

D. The promises of baptism are real and all who have received them are obligated to believe them!

"But we must realize that at whatever time we are baptized, we are once and for all washed and purged for our whole life. Therefore as often as we fall away [i.e. sin - Ken], we ought to recall the memory of our baptism and fortify our mind with it, that we may always be sure and confident of the forgiveness of sins." (John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion 4.15.4)

VI. Application

A. Believe what God told you at your baptism.

B. Bring your children to baptism to receive those personal promises too.

1. As parents, believe God's promises concerning your kids.
2. Teach your children to do the same.

C. Remember the words of Jesus...

Mark 10:14 - But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God."