

Just How Inspired are You?

A boy was watching his father, a preacher, write a sermon.

“How do you know what to say?”, He asked.

“Why God tells me”, the father answered.

The boy replied, “Then why do you keep crossing things out?”

The moral is we should not claim something we do not have or God will be blamed for our mistakes. It is God’s message delivered by human skill.

But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Matt. 18:6



May 23, 2010

INFANT BAPTISM
Jim Stauffer

The history of the practice of infant baptism can be traced to the second century. The justification for it can be traced to the failure of men to limit themselves to the instruction of Scripture.

The arguments offered from Scripture in support of infant baptism, as we shall see, are based upon the opinions and “I thinks” of men rather than any instruction that either commands it or shows an example of it.

One of the first things we learn about hermeneutics is that one teaching cannot conflict or disagree with another. Therefore if Scripture teaches us lessons about baptism that would prohibit baptizing infants, we would understand any inference from other passages would necessarily exclude a conclusion of baptizing infants.

An example of such would be the comment of Jesus that the Apostles were to “preach the gospel to the whole creation and he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” (Mk. 16:15,16) We then see Philip preaching Christ to the Ethiopian in Acts chapter 8. When he requested baptism from Philip at the sight of water, Philip said, “If thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” It was at that point Philip baptized him. (Acts 8:37ff)

Another example is found in Acts 2:38 where the condition of repentance was placed on those who were to be baptized. We have instruction in Rom. 10:9,10 that requires one to confess Jesus as Lord in order to be saved. All of these teachings of Scripture place requirements or conditions on candidates for baptism that infants are incapable of. Therefore you have a conflict in Scripture between its core teaching and

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 Sunday - Bible Classes: 9:30AM
 Worship Services 10:20AM & 6:00PM
 Wednesday - Bible Classes 7:00PM

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the doctrine of infant baptism. The conflict comes from the inferences and conclusions drawn by men and not the clear teaching of Scripture.

Those who would have us practice infant baptism tell us it occurred in the New Testament when the household of the Philippian jailer was baptized. (Acts 16:33) The same claim is made for the household of Cornelius. (Acts 10:48; 11:14) In both of these cases the mature mind of a person was required to comply with the message of salvation. The jailer had listened to Paul and Silas worship God in song and prayer. When they demonstrated uncommon honesty by remaining in custody after being loosed by the earthquake, an act that saved his physical life, he asked what he needed to do to be saved. His question undoubtedly referred to spiritual salvation because the fact they were still there had already saved his physical life. This called for a mature understanding that recognized their message to the city had been from God all along. They then instructed him to believe along with his household and they were subsequently baptized for the remission of sins because of their belief.

In the case of Cornelius' household, he gathered his family and friends together to hear what Peter had been commanded of the Lord. (Acts 10:33) Peter preached unto them words whereby they could be saved. (Acts 11:14) He told them, men of every nation who feared God and worked righteousness could be saved. (Acts 10:35) He told them if they believed on Christ they could receive remission of sins. (Acts 10:43) Now, do we believe infants could understand what Peter preached and believe on Jesus and do works of righteousness? Of course not!

One more claim that needs refutation is the misunderstanding of Jesus' actions in Matthew 18:1-6 and 19:13-15. On these occasions Jesus is demonstrating the need for the humility and purity on the part of mature men desirous of entering the kingdom. Never in these passages does it mention little children having sin and being in need of forgiveness. Quite the contrary. The little children are set up as an example of the purity adults can attain through salvation from sin achieved through baptism into Christ. (Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:27)

This brings us to one of the major motivations for infant baptism. The false teaching of inherited depravity. Again this teaching comes from a failure to understand Scripture. Men have concluded infants inherit this condition and the sin of Adam and thus need baptism to avoid eternal damnation. Ezekiel 18 teaches clearly that while a child may well suffer from the consequences of the sins of those who have gone before him, he does not bear the sin or guilt itself. A similar misunderstanding of Romans 5:12-19 has resulted in many saying we inherit the sin of Adam. Based on that conclusion, they say we are born totally depraved with no ability to decide to do good. All this passage in Romans is teaching us is that we need the justification of Christ because we

all eventually have sinned just as Adam did. That sin in our life came when we like Adam decided to transgress the law of God. (1 John 3:4) Infants cannot decide to or in any way transgress the law of God.

Since they are not born in sin and since they are not capable of deciding to serve sin rather than God, they cannot be in need of remission of sin which is the Biblical purpose for baptism.

There is another consideration needed to understand why infant baptism is so widely practiced today. This is because the organization of the New Testament church was perverted in the second century. Men who were elders or bishops over local autonomous congregations according to Scripture, (1 Pet. 5:2; Acts 20:28) were elevated by men to oversee many churches. This is and was a clear violation of the original design of the church set forth in the New Testament. This created a hierarchy that rendered control over the church in every location and when doctrinal error such as infant baptism was adopted it was forced upon all congregations. Of course this departure from the original authority for local congregations led ultimately to the Universal Bishop of Rome, now called the Pope.

It became easy for such error as infant baptism to be perpetuated when every congregation was authorized to practice it. As a result it is a world wide practice today based only on tradition and not on any authority in Scripture.

When the Reformation period came along approximately 1000 to 1200 years later some areas of the Universal authority were corrected but many were carried on. The failure of the Reformation movement was in trying to fix a broken product by way of changing it rather than returning to the original pattern in the New Testament and starting over.

There is one final and most important point to be made about this erroneous doctrine that few consider. When a practice such as this is perpetuated throughout the religious world, there are souls who are lost because of it. Think of the number of adults in the world today who were baptized as infants and go about their daily lives believing their sin is forgiven. These are denied the remission of sins promised by the sacrifice of Christ (Rom. 5:8-11) when one is baptized into His death. (Rom. 6:3,4) This is why Jesus warns against false prophets as ravaging wolves in sheep's clothing. (Matt. 7:15)

News and Notes: **Carol Wyrick** will undergo further chemotherapy as the cancer has returned. **Terry Czirr** continues treatment and recovery efforts. **Carl Spratlin** had successful open heart surgery and is now recuperating. Please pray for divine assistance in the recovery of all these loved ones. Also let us each inquire into ways of assisting the elderly especially during some of the bad weather.