

INFANT SALVATION

The Bible teaches we are saved by faith in Christ. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Then verse 18 says, "He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Verse 36 states, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on him." These are just a few verses that teach we are saved through faith in Jesus Christ. The Bible is clear on this.

So, the issue comes to us . . . what about infants and small children who die before coming to a place where they are able to understand the Gospel and put their faith in Jesus Christ. What happens to them? We could expand that situation, what is going to happen to children when Christ comes back again? Will children be caught up in the rapture? Will those who have never come to an understanding of the Gospel and have never put their faith and trust in Christ be left behind? This is a practical problem and we want to look at the Scriptures to find what the Bible says about it.

Various theological positions have tried to solve this problem, hence we have the doctrine of infant baptism which says infants must be baptized in order for them to go to heaven. But from our study of the Bible we know baptism is only for those who have put their faith and trust in Christ and infants are unable to do this. We also know from the Bible that baptism doesn't save. Water does not wash away sin, whether it is poured, sprinkled or you are immersed in it. So, infants are not saved by baptism.

Others have a covenant theology in which they believe in various kinds of covenants. One of these is that there is a covenant between the parents and God so, if the parents believe in Christ, their children are included in that covenant and are saved. We know from our study of the scripture that God does not save people on the family plan. God saves people as individuals and nothing in the Bible teaches that because a mother or father is saved any other member of the family will be saved. It is possible for other members to be saved, but not upon

virtue of the fact that a mother or father is saved. So, this position falls short.

There is also the Catholic doctrine of limbo. This doctrine says that infants who die don't go to heaven or hell. They go to a very special place called limbo. The Bible is completely silent on limbo. There is nothing in the Bible about such a place.

There are some who believe that all infants who die before being able to put their faith and trust in Christ perish. They are lost and go to hell. One such writer has written that the halls of hell are lined with infants not a span long. I utterly reject that as unscriptural, unreasonable and repugnant. I do not believe the Bible teaches that.

There is then a position that all who die before an age of understanding are included in the redemption of Christ. That is the position I am going to take and defend from the Scriptures . . . that all who die before coming to an age of understanding, where they can understand the Gospel and put their faith and trust in Christ, or come to an age of accountability as some call it, are included in the redemption of Christ. This is the position I believe is the correct one and I am going to show a biblical basis for that.

Unlimited Atonement

The first point is the unlimited efficacy or efficiency of the death of Christ. Jesus died and paid for every single person's sin. This is called unlimited atonement. Jesus Christ died for the sins of everyone who ever lived or ever will live, including infants and small children who die before they reach an age of understanding. I John 2:2 says, "And he (Christ) is the propitiation (the one who satisfied the justice of God through the shedding of his blood and satisfied the righteous demands of God in regard to sin) for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." The Bible teaches Jesus Christ satisfies God's righteous demands in reference to sin, not only for the sins of those who believe, but for the sins of the whole world.

Hebrews 2:9 states, "But we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for **every** man." Christ entered into and experienced death for every single person, including infants and small children.

I Timothy 2:5-6 says, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a

ransom (purchase or redemption price) **for all**, to be testified in due time." Chapter 4:10 says, "For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, **who is the Saviour of all men**, specially of those who believe." The Bible teaches that the death of Christ is sufficient for the sins of every single human being who will ever live, no matter what their age. Christ died for our sins and is the Savior of all men. He is especially the Savior of those who believe. It becomes **effective** for each person when they put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ. We will see from the Word of God that it is also effective for those who can never come to an understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, nor put their faith in him, because of **a total inability** to do so. An infant or small child does not have the ability to trust Christ. Total inability is not the same thing as ignorance.

One more verse on the unlimited atonement of Jesus Christ is II Peter 2:1 which says, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, **even denying the Lord that bought them**, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." This verse is speaking of unsaved people, false teachers, apostates who deny Jesus Christ and bring in damnable heresies, even denying Jesus Christ. Peter says even denying the one that **bought them**. Christ death was **sufficient** to pay for their sin too. The redemption price that Jesus paid on the cross was the purchase price for their redemption. They were bought by Jesus Christ and His death on the cross and yet are unsaved, because they have not come to a place of repentance and faith in Him. Being accountable before God, they are required to come to that place of repentance and faith in Christ.

What is the basis for believing that infants and small children who have never believed in Jesus Christ can still be saved? The basis is that Jesus Christ died for them. He died for their sins. All sin is paid for because Christ died for all. Christ paid the penalty and the redemption price for every single person, including infants and small children. On this basis God, according to his foreknowledge, can choose to elect to salvation those who die before they come to an understanding of the Gospel and He may righteously and sovereignly do so.

I Peter 1:2 and other portions of Scripture tell us God's election is based upon foreknowledge. God, according to His foreknowledge, taking His means of grace into account, knows those who will respond to His grace in faith and those He elects to salvation. But upon the basis

of the atonement of Christ, God can righteously, according to His foreknowledge, elect to salvation infants and small children who will never be able to come to an understanding of the gospel, nor repent of sin, nor place their faith in Christ. He may righteously and justly do so because their sin has been paid for, Christ is the propitiation for them. God's righteous demands have been met in Christ, so God, according to foreknowledge, can elect them to salvation, not based upon repentance and faith, but based upon the fact that Jesus Christ died for them. Therefore, He can graciously extend the redemption and the atonement to them and He can justly and righteously do so. I maintain that is exactly what He does.

No Imputation of Sin without Law

We are now going to examine the point that there is no imputation of sin when there is no law. In other words, God does not place to your account your sin if there is no law. Romans 2:12-13 says, "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law (speaking of the law of Moses); For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." If you want to be justified by the law, you have to keep 100% of it, all the time. Of course nobody can. Verse 14 says, "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having no law, are a law unto themselves." In other words, the Bible teaches the law is not simply contained in the Mosaic Law, but the righteous demands of the Mosaic Law are also contained somewhere else. Where is that? Notice Verse 15, "Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another." This puts everybody under law. If you don't have the written law of Moses, you are still under law, because of the work of the law that is written in your heart and you are held accountable for that. That is what the conscience is about. So, the Bible puts everyone under one aspect of the law or another, whether it is written on the tables of stone that came down from Sinai or whether it is written in your heart and on your conscience, as a creation of God. We are all under moral law of right and wrong, good and evil. Nobody escapes.

Now turn to Romans 3:20, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." This is true whether it is

by trying to obey the law written on stone, or by trying to obey the law written in your heart. Notice the rest of the verse, "For by the law (whether it is on stone or in your heart) **is the knowledge of sin.**"

What did the law written on tables of stone inform the people about? God's righteousness and their inability to maintain it. Of what does the law written in the heart inform us? Of God's righteous demands and we find we are not able to keep them. So, by the law, whether it is written on stone or in the fleshly tablets of the heart, is the knowledge of sin. The law was given, so that man may stand guilty before God. Remember what the Bible says, "By the law is the knowledge of sin." With that understanding look at what Romans 4:15 says, "Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression." When you break the law, the consequences are wrath, condemnation and judgement. No law means no transgression. For you and I that is impossible because we have understanding. We are aware of the law written on tables of stone and of the law written in our hearts. Therefore, we cannot excuse ourselves from transgression.

Now look at Romans 5:13, "(For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.)" Sin was in the world before the law of Moses and before the law of Moses there was the law written in the conscience and hearts of men. But if there is no law there is no imputation of sin. What does imputation mean? It means placing to the account of. Without law there is no transgression and no imputation of sin. I maintain that infants and small children are totally unable to understand, comprehend or know law and because of their **total inability** to understand and comprehend law, there is no transgression and no imputation of sin.

Ignorance is different from total inability. I can be driving down the street doing 85 mph and get pulled over by a policeman who asks, "Do you know what the speed limit is here?" I say, "No, I don't officer and I don't think you ought to give me a ticket because I don't know what the speed limit is here. He then asks me, "Do you have a driver's license?" "Yes, I do." "Did you have to take a test to get that driver's license?" "Yes, I did." "It seems to me then, sir, that you have the ability and the responsibility to know what the law is and furthermore you know there are laws regarding speed. Sir, I am not going to accept your plea of ignorance, it is not valid. You are accountable and you are responsible." You see that is pleading ignorance. Total inability means there is no ability to comprehend or understand, therefore it is the same as having no law. There is no law until you can comprehend and

understand it. An infant does not have the ability to comprehend law and I maintain God does not impute sin where there is no law. That does not mean children are not born in sin and are not sinners. How do I know that? Because the Bible tells me so. Verse 12 of Romans 5 says, "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." The reason infants die is because they are infected with sin. I am not saying children are born immaculate or apart from sin, because they are not. David said, "In sin my mother did conceive me." What I am saying is God does not impute their sin because there is no law until they come to an age of understanding and accountability.

We have built a theological base for believing infants and small children who die before the age of understanding do not perish. It is based upon unlimited atonement, in which God's justice is satisfied so God can graciously elect them and upon the fact there is no imputation of sin to their account when there is total inability to understand the law.

Little Children are of the Kingdom

The next point is Christ's statement in Mark 10:13-15, "And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." Jesus says little children belong to the kingdom of God. In II Samuel 12:15-23 we have the example of David. David sinned with Bathsheba and because of his sin they had a child. God brought judgement upon them and their little baby died. While that baby was sick, David fasted and prayed and he wept and cried out, but when the baby died David stopped fasting and weeping. He made the statement that his little child could not come back to him, but he could go to him. David was a sinner, but he was a saved man. David was saying his little child was not going to be brought back to life for him, but when he died he would go to be with him. He was speaking of his little infant baby who had just died as saved.

God's Nature and Will

The last point is the nature and will of God. It deals with who God is and what His will is concerning children. In Jeremiah 32 God is rebuking Israel for their many sins and he brings out one sin in particular that is an extremely heinous abomination to Him. In verse 32 God says, "Because of the evil of the children of Israel and of the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke me to anger, they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets, and the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And they have turned unto me the back, and not the face: though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not hearkened to receive instruction. But they set their abominations in the house, which is called by my name, to defile it. And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech: Which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin." The valley of the son of Hinnom was a valley just outside of the environs of Jerusalem that was used as a garbage pit where they burned their garbage. They also burned the dead bodies of low lifes, criminals and the poor there. Notice what they did . . . "they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom to cause their sons and daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech." They were burning their children in idolatrous worship and this angered God. It was an absolute total abomination to Him. Why? Because it was totally against His nature and His will. God said He did not command them to do this, and it didn't even enter His mind. He says I wouldn't even think of such a thing. If God wouldn't even think of such a wicked thing as burning children in offerings, I say it is unscriptural, unreasonable and repugnant that someone would think God would line the walls of hell with infants not a span long. Our God is holy, just, righteous and loving and He has provided for infants and children who have not reached the age of accountability to be saved. He graciously extends His redemption to them based upon the fact that Christ met all of His righteous demands concerning sin. So, His justice is satisfied and in His love He reaches out and saves those who cannot respond to the Gospel. He saves those who are unable to come to an understanding, comprehension and faith in Christ, but on the other hand He has commanded all who can understand sin and transgression to repent. God commanded all men everywhere to repent and put their

faith and trust in the one who died for them. You and I, who have come to an age of understanding, are under obligation to do that if we want the gracious effects of the atonement applied to us, but God graciously saves those who cannot come to that place.

So, I believe confidently and without a doubt we don't need to pour water on our children. It will do no good. What we need to do is understand the scriptures and simply entrust these little ones into the hands of Christ. But beginning from the time that they are what the Bible in the Greek calls "Brethos," little infants from the womb, we need to teach and instruct them, so at the earliest possible age they can come to understand and put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ. We do not know when they come to that age of accountability and understanding and it is our responsibility as parents and churchmen to teach our children so, at the earliest possible time, they may trust Christ.