

WHAT ABOUT SO CALLED " INFANT BAPTISM?"

by Reggie Thomas

Infant baptism is common in some denominations, but it does not have any scriptural authority. This baptism comes from men--not from God. The Bible clearly tells us that the kingdom of God belongs to the little children (Matthew 19:14; Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16). They are considered to be pure in heart. God's Word teaches that unless we become like little children, we will never enter the kingdom of God (Matthew 18:3; Mark 10:15; Luke 18:17). This means we are to be pure in heart and follow Jesus without questioning why. Some who practice infant baptism attempt to use scriptures such as Psalm 51:5 and John 9:34 to claim we are born with sin and are unsaved. But this is not a correct interpretation of the scriptures. We are born with sinful nature, but not with sin which a baby could not repent of. Jesus Himself was born of a woman. If we are born with sin, then Jesus would not have been sinless. Yet, even though he was tempted as we are, He was always sinless (Hebrews 4:15).

In Matthew 11:25 and Luke 10:21, Jesus says that things have been revealed to the little children which are hidden from the wise and learned. As little children grow older, their hearts harden as the knowledge of the secular world fills them. This is when the blood of Christ is needed to cover their sins. Thus, this is when one must be baptized.

Who are biblical candidates for baptism? In Mark 16:16, the Bible teaches that those who believe and are baptized will be saved. Belief is required before one is baptized. In Acts 2:38, God's Word says to repent and be baptized. Repentance is required before one is baptized. 1 Peter 3:21 states that baptism is the pledge of a good conscience toward God. These scriptures indicate that one must believe in Christ, repent of sins, and be aware of one's conscience toward God before he or she is eligible for biblical baptism. Small children are not capable of these things, therefore they are not candidates for biblical baptism.

Only when we can believe in Christ (John 3:16; Mark 16:16) and repent of our sins (Acts 2:38) can the blood of Christ wash away our sins (Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:18-21) when we clothe ourselves with Christ at baptism (Galatians 3:26-27). At baptism, we are buried with Christ, and just as Christ was resurrected, we are raised out of the watery tomb to live a new life in Christ (Romans 6:3-5).