

## **INFANT BAPTISM**

In many denominations it is stated that Infants cannot be Baptized because babies are incapable of believing. We will attempt to show why this is not so, and we begin with the Gospel of St. Luke.

“Now they were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them; and when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to him, saying, “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God.”

(Luke 18:15-16)

Infants were brought to Jesus so He could touch them. But why was this done? The parents knew if Jesus touched the infants, they would receive a great gift. The children most likely didn't know this but the “faith” of the parents was sufficient. Similarly, it is through this faith that parents bring their infants to the Sacrament of Baptism. Through this Sacrament they are freed of Original sin and made members of the Mystical Body of Christ.

Let's look at other verses in Sacred Scripture.

“And to the centurion Jesus said, “Go; be it done for you as you have believed.” And the servant was healed at that very moment.” (Matthew 8:13). How does this apply?

Our Lord cured the centurion's servant because of his faith. But was the servant a believer of Jesus? We do not know, but it did not matter because the centurion had faith. So it is with the parents of an infant; the faith of the parents is sufficient for baptism.

### ***But wait, there's more!***

St. Matthew continues in 9:2,6: “And behold, they brought to him a paralytic, lying on his bed; and when Jesus saw their faith he said to the paralytic, ‘Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven. But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins’, he said to the paralytic—‘Rise, take up your bed and go home.’”

Many times in the Bible it was the faith of others that healed their loved ones by God's grace. Here Jesus not only healed the man, but forgave his sins because of the faith of his friends. This supports the Church teaching that the faith of the parents is sufficient for the Baptism of their infant children!

I close it out with a quote from Acts 2:38-39, “And Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him.’”

St. Peter said that the promise was made to children but he did not specify age. Are we to believe that there were no infants included in this promise? Was the promise given to children over the age of accountability? There is no age specified when a child is to be accountable. As soon as a child is born in the United States he/she is automatically an American citizen. Do we tell people, “wait until the child is grown and let them decide when they are 18 if they want to be American citizens?” No. We give them the benefits our country at birth. Then why do we not our children to have God's grace early, be free from sin and become part of His Body on earth? Phillip Bellini, DRE



## MORE ON INFANT BAPTISM

Last week we spoke on why infants CAN be baptized even though they are incapable of believing. We used four quotes from Sacred Scripture to prove the point. Therefore we have shown that it is biblical. Yet there are some who will still claim that infants being baptized is not in Scripture. So we will offer this explanation in summation.

### Let's look at some facts from the Acts of the Apostles.

Acts 16:15 “And when she was baptized, with her household, she besought us, saying, ‘If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.’ And she prevailed upon us.”

Infants may have been baptized in Lydia's household. The Bible doesn't make this point clear, so to hold that the Bible alone disproves infant baptism is not biblical. There is more Biblical evidence to suggest that infants were baptized, though not conclusive. However, the early Church Fathers who were the disciples of the first century Apostles taught and practiced infant baptism. How can someone today claim that they have greater insight into the practices of the early Church? They cannot.

Acts 16:31, 33 “And they said, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.’ And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their wounds, and he was baptized at once, with all his family.”

Sacred Tradition tells us that infants were included in Baptism. The Bible doesn't specifically address infant baptism. So to hold to a Bible alone theory and deny that infant baptism is not biblical, as not everything Jesus did is included in the Bible (John 21:25). We must look at Tradition and the history of the early Church. A prominent convert to the Catholic Church once said something to the effect: “To be steeped in history is to no longer remain Protestant.” His name was John Henry Cardinal Newman.

**Let's close our discussion on Infant Baptism with some quotes from St. Paul.** The first come from St. Paul's Letter to the Corinthian 1:16, “(I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else).

St. Paul baptized the household of Stephanas. The Bible does not say whether there were infants in the household or not. It is most likely there were children and possibly infants in the household. However, we cannot say from the Bible that there were or not, so we must turn to the tradition of the Church. If you hold to Bible alone, you cannot deny that infants being baptized nor can you prove it because the Bible does not specify age.

One last point from St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians 2:11-12, “In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ; and you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.”

Circumcision was the sign that united people to the Old Covenant. The law commanded that male babies were to be circumcised on their eighth day. Moses, after coming down from the mountain, was going to be killed by God because he had not circumcised his baby (Ex 4:24-27). Baptism fulfills circumcision in the New Covenant.

Next week we will continue our discussion on the Sacrament of Baptism and explain why Baptism is not just a symbol and is necessary for salvation. God bless. Phillip Bellini, DRE