

THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE

LESSON 14 INFANT SALVATION

What is the fate of infants, small children, and the mentally handicapped who are incapable of hearing and believing in the gospel of Jesus? Can they be saved? Why should we believe in infant salvation? Let's consider some questions:

- Are infants truly persons?
 - Yes!
 - Psalm 139:16

- Are infants truly lost? Do infants need salvation?
 - All are sinners and are born sinners
 - Genesis 8:21
 - Psalm 51:5
 - Psalm 58:3
 - Ephesians 2:3

 - Per original sin, all inherit from Adam a fallen nature that is inclined to sin, in rebellion against God, and at enmity with God
 - Per original sin, all also inherit from Adam guilt

 - Reference "Lesson 3—Original Sin" in this series

- Is infant salvation affirmed or denied in Scripture?
 - The Bible does not directly address infant salvation one way or another
 - But there are verses which take us in the direction of infant salvation
 - 2 Samuel 12:23

- How would an infant be saved?
 - By baptism?

 - By the faith of their parents?

 - By their own faith?

 - By unconditional election and grace?

 - If infants are indeed saved by God, let us affirm some basic truths:
 - Their salvation is possible only through the finished work of Christ
 - Their salvation is just as unmerited as it is for adults
 - Their salvation is just as costly as it is for adults (namely the substitutionary death of Jesus on the cross)
 - Their salvation comes by regeneration

 - There are two possible examples of infant regeneration in Scripture
 - Jeremiah 1:5
 - Luke 1:15, 41

- Why believe that God has elected all those who die in infancy?

1. God's view of children

- Deuteronomy 1:39
- 1 Kings 14:9-13
- Jonah 4:11
- Ezekiel 16:4-7, 20-22

2. Christ's view of children

- Matthew 18:1-6, 10, 14
- Matthew 19:13-15

3. Lack of willful sin

- Romans 1:18-21, 30-32
 - Romans 5:13
 - Romans 2:11-15
 - Jeremiah 2:34; 19:4-5
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- To whom does infant salvation apply? What is the age of accountability?
 - A “condition” of accountability seems to include:
 - Knowledge of God through creation
 - Knowledge of God’s will through conscience (i.e. knowledge of right and wrong, good and evil)
 - Willful violation of God’s will (i.e. deliberate sin)
 - Knowledge that such sins make one worthy of death
 - Understanding of death and eternity
 - Hatred of God
 - Suppressing the truth of God in unrighteousness
 - Ultimately unbelief