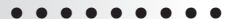




His Word Is Truth!

*This article is written by
Pastor Tom Eckstein of Concordia
Lutheran Church in Jamestown.
"His Word is Truth" will appear in
this paper every 3rd Monday.*



This article is the fourth in a series of articles on Baptism and infant Baptism. In my first article I explained how Scripture teaches that baptism is the work of God – an instrument He uses to give us Christ and His gifts of salvation. (See **Matthew 28:19, John 3:5, Acts 2:38 and 22:16, Romans 6:3-4, Galatians 3:27, Ephesians 5:26, Colossians 2:11-12, Titus 3:5, 1st Peter 3:21**) In my second article I used Scripture to give answers to the following two objections to infant Baptism: **1) "Infants are not sinful, and so they don't need to be saved!"** and **2) "But infants can't have**

faith in Jesus!" We learned from Scripture that infants are sinners who need the salvation that comes through faith in Christ alone. We also learned from Scripture that it is possible for infants to have saving faith in Christ. In last month's article I examined the Baptism of Jesus and how it actually supports the practice of infant Baptism. **If you missed reading any of these previous articles, you can find them on Concordia's web page:**

www.concordiajt.org. In today's article I will use Scripture to answer yet another objection to infant Baptism: "*Scripture never teaches we should baptize infants!*" The answer to this objection must begin with the witness of the Old Testament Scriptures where we find that infants and children were included in the saving acts of God and took part in the rituals God gave to Israel. For example, God gave Abraham the ritual of circumcision as an outward sign that the Savior of all nations would come from his family line (see Genesis 12:1-3 and Galatians 3:6-9). **The**

sign of circumcision was given to infant boys when they were only 8 days old! In Colossians 2:11-13 the Apostle Paul shows that circumcision has been replaced with Baptism through which Christ Himself works to give spiritual life to those who are dead in sin. The Jews who became Christians would have assumed that Baptism was for infants because infants had also received the Old Testament ritual of circumcision.

In addition, the infants and children of Israel participated in many of the Old Testament rituals (the Passover, the Sabbath, the Day of Atonement, etc.). The infants and children of Israel were included in the high priest's blessing which God used to put His Name on His people (see Numbers 6:22-27; also see Matthew 28:19). The infants and children of Israel took part in the crossing of the Red Sea which was a picture of the New Testament gift of Baptism (see 1st Corinthians 10:1-4).

When we consider the New Testament Scriptures we find

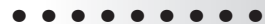
that nothing changes regarding infants and children receiving the gifts of God. When Jesus Himself was an infant He was involved in all the Old Testament rituals common to infants. In Matthew 28:19 the resurrected Jesus teaches that His apostles should make disciples of ALL nations by baptizing them. *Jesus makes no exceptions as to age!* In Acts 2:38-39 the apostle Peter clearly states that the gift of Baptism is also meant for children. The Jewish audience would have assumed that Peter meant infants as well. In addition, throughout the book of Acts we read of whole households being baptized and never once is it mentioned that infants are excluded.

Some will point out that adults were always taught first, and then after they believed they were baptized. However, we must understand that infants have one advantage over adults. Infants have not yet developed a skeptical reason that is opposed to the Word of God. Adult unbelievers first had to be reduced to

being "spiritual infants" through the preaching and teaching of God's Word before they could receive the benefits of Baptism. In contrast, infants have no conscious barriers to the work of the Spirit in Holy Baptism. *Jesus never says that infants need to become more like adults before they can be saved. Instead, Jesus teaches that adults must become like infants if they are to enter the Kingdom of God.*

The entire witness of Holy Scripture assumes that infants should be baptized. Therefore, the burden of proof is on those who believe that infants should NOT be baptized. Since Matthew 28:19 and Acts 2:39 assume that infants will be baptized, those who oppose infant baptism need to find one Scripture that clearly prohibits this practice. But no such Scripture exists! The Bible clearly teaches that Baptism is an instrument that God uses to give us Christ and His gifts of salvation – a gift meant for infants as well as adults. **Infants who are**

baptized must then have their faith nurtured by God's Word throughout their lives so that they will continue to trust in Christ and not fall away because of false teaching (see Colossians 2:6-7, 2nd Timothy 3:14-4:4 and 2nd Peter 3:17-18).



Please read the next "His Word is Truth" on Monday, January 19th! In next month's article Pastor Eckstein will give samples of teachings from Christian leaders of the early Church who clearly supported infant Baptism as a biblical practice handed on by the Apostles of Jesus.

For more resources about Christian teaching and issues, go to Concordia Lutheran's web page:
www.concordiajt.org

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