



The Voice of Truth

A weekly publication of the
HILLCREST CHURCH OF CHRIST
1621 Hillcrest Drive
Green Bay, WI 54313
(920)499-5677 E-mail: Hillcrestcofc@live.com
www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com

December 14, 2008

Does the Bible Teach Infant Baptism? By Jimmy Pettigrew

I have read my Bible carefully, and I still do not find any case where babies were baptized. It does not contain one command to any preacher to baptize infants. Are we to base our faith (and practice) on what the Bible does **NOT** say, or what it says? I read that “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing the word of God. (**Romans 10:17**).

Some teach we inherit the sin of Adam, so that we are born with original sin. Infants do not inherit the sins of Adam or their parents! “The soul that sinneth, it shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him” (**Ezekiel 18:20**). God goes on and says, “Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, **every one according to his ways**, saith the Lord Jehovah. Return ye, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin” (**Ezekiel 18:30**). So sin is not passed down or inherited.

The purity of little children is revealed in God’s word. Jesus said, “And they were bringing unto him also their babes, that he should touch them: but when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them unto him, saying, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein” (**Luke 18:15-17**). They (infants) have no knowledge of good and evil (**Deuteronomy 1:39**). Sin is not a heritage; sin is what someone does (**1 John 3:4**). Through growth children learn to choose between good and evil, “Butter and honey shall he eat, when he knoweth to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land whose two kings thou abhorrest shall be forsaken” (**Isaiah 7:15-16**). This passage clearly says the child had to reach a time in life before he/she could know to refuse the evil and choose the good.

The Bible teaches that babies are born pure and innocent, not with the guilt of sin upon them. “Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions” (**Eccl. 7:29**). Solomon uses the plural indicating that God made **all men** upright; God does not make man depraved. The Psalmist rehearses Israel’s history and transgressions against God. He recalls the idolatry in which they engaged. “Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood” (**Psalms 106:37-38**). While the parents engaged in sin (sacrificing to idols), the children were innocent.

There is a sense in which Jehovah is the Father of all men. We are to “be in subjection to the Father of spirits” (**Hebrews 12:9**). There is one Father (**Ephesians 4:6**) of all human spirits, at death the human “spirit returneth unto God who gave it” (**Ecclesiastes 12:7**). “The burden of the word of Jehovah concerning Israel. (Thus) saith Jehovah, who stretcheth forth

CONTINUED INSIDE...

the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him" (**Zechariah 12:1**). Since God is the Father and giver of all human spirits, the spirit, at birth, is pure and holy. God cannot father, or give, that which is less than good. At birth, babies are without sin and in their purity altogether acceptable to God. God instructs Eze-kiel to write a lament for the king of Tyre; in the midst of this lament he writes, "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee" (**Ezek. 28:15**). The king of Tyre was perfect (without iniquity or sin) when he was created; he remained in this state of perfection until he reached the age of accountability and sin was then found in him. If the doctrine that a child is born a sinner was true, this would make sin come from God. Read with awareness **Habakkuk 1:13**, **James 1:13-15** and **Romans 1:23**. "To show that Jehovah is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him" (**Psalms 92:15**).

It seems that some of the most popular passages used to teach the doctrine of original sin are **Psalms 51:5** and **Psalms 58:3**. First, let us notice **Psalms 51:5**: "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." The passage says, "In sin did my mother conceive me." It does not say "with sin did my mother conceive me." This passage does not teach that David was born full of sin! If the doctrine that a child is born a sinner was true, it would make a sinner out of the Lord. The doctrine holds that the sin is inherited from the parents, and all the way back to Adam. But, the Lord Himself was born of a human mother. **Psalms 51** makes no mention of the father, but "my mother conceived me." If the sin is inherited from the mother, then this would make a sinner out of the infant Jesus, since He was born of a human mother. If not, why not! But Jesus "knew no sin" (**2 Corinthians 5:21**); He was spotless (**1 Peter 1:19**); guileless (**1 Peter 2:22**); innocent (**Matthew 27:4**).

Another passage which is used to teach this false doctrine is **Psalms 58:3**: "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies." But does this passage teach that a child is born totally depraved? No! Notice in verse 3 the phrase "**they go astray**." It does not say they are born astray. Notice again in verse 3, it says "speaking lies." Can a just-born baby speak? Can a just-born baby lie? But it says they go astray from the womb as soon as they are born. But how soon is soon? Look at verse 6 of this chapter; "Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth" (**Psalms 58:6**). The ones talked of here are at least old enough to have teeth. So, how soon is soon? I call your attention to the book of **Deuteronomy**, "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over the Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed" (**Deuteronomy 4:26**). Israel shall soon perish from the land when they commit idolatry they were punished by being cast out. So, how soon is soon?

It is no wonder that Jesus says, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (**Matt. 18:3**). The word translated "little children" is the Greek term *ta paidia* which means, "A young child, a little boy, a little girl" but then for this exact phrase, "infants; children; little ones" (Thayer, p.473). If babies are totally depraved, then Jesus is teaching that one must become totally sinful and depraved to enter God's kingdom. Moreover, Jesus teaches, in **Matthew 19:13-15**, that the kingdom of Heaven consists of such as these infants. Thus, additionally Jesus teaches not only to become a member of God's kingdom one must be totally depraved, but to remain a member one must continue to be totally depraved, wicked and sinful. That is totally ridiculous! Yet that is the implication of this degenerate doctrine of total hereditary depravity.

I had a debate with a Grace Lutheran preacher over an article I wrote in the news paper, which stated that a baby is not born a sinner, and does not need baptism. He taught that since the fall of Adam all infants born are born in sin. The sacrifice of Christ counters the

effects of Adam's transgression (**Romans 5:12-21**). In fact, Christ is the "last Adam" (**1 Corinthians 15:45-47**). He (Lutheran preacher) quoted **Romans 5:19** as proof that man is indeed born a sinner. If by the way of Adam's transgression all men inherit a sinful nature at conception, then why do not all inherit the righteousness of Christ who died to counter such effects? Are Adam's transgressions of greater power than that of Christ's act of obedience in dying on the cross? We no more sinned in Adam than we sinned in David. Sin is something the individual does himself.

One can locate many examples for the baptism of accountable persons in the scriptures. Please give us book, chapter and verse for the authority of infant baptism. In this debate this Lutheran preacher said that infant baptism is a "scriptural practice." Where does God command every infant born to be baptized? What verse? The Bible authorizes by what it says, not by what it doesn't say! The way we know whether we are right or wrong is by speaking the way the Bible speaks (**1 Peter 4:11**). No, we are not born with original sin!

Sin is the transgression of God's law (**1 John 3:4**). So sin is a violation of law; it is something someone does (**Ezekiel 18:20, 30**). So what does the infant do to be so sinful? What sin does an infant commit by being conceived? Where does the Bible say that babies are sinners? Do you believe that babies who die at birth are eternally lost? Even in the days of David, it was known that babies who die in the state of innocence are not lost. When David's son by Bathsheba died, David said, "But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me" (**2 Samuel 12:23**).

To be a proper subject for water baptism a sinner must be taught. Teaching must precede baptism (**Acts 2:14-21; 8:35-39**); infants are incapable of being taught the gospel. Faith must precede baptism (**Mark 16:16**). One must believe before he is ready to be baptized, but infants are incapable of believing and trusting in Christ. Repentance must precede baptism (**Acts 2:38**); infants have nothing for which they need to repent and are incapable of repenting. Confessing faith precedes baptism (**Acts 8:37; Romans 10:10**); infants cannot confess Christ.

Paul said of God, "who will render to every man according to his works" (**Romans 2:6**). It is not due to being born a sinner that one is lost, but it is due to his works. No, we are not born with original sin. Yes, infant baptism is a false doctrine.

One Church By Mike Thomas

There are literally hundreds of churches in the world, maybe even thousands, each with a peculiar slant on salvation, worship, the godhead, eternal life, and other important doctrines. What hope does a person have of finding the true church of the Lord?

Immediately, some would say that all churches belong to God and that He is the Father of them all. The only problem with that idea is that it is contrary to Bible teaching. God does not receive all religions, nor does He respect all who claim to love and follow Him.

Consider what Jesus taught while He was on earth—"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (**Matthew 7:21**).

Notice He didn't say this to people who had no interest in living for God. The people He was referring to were those who "cast out demons, and performed many wonders" in His name (**Matthew 7:22**). Yet they were rejected by God for not following all of His will in love and humility. They were only righteous enough to win the approval of others.

People may claim to have a devotion to God while practicing denominational doctrines, but if they are diligent students of the Bible, and genuine seekers of truth, there is no way they can say they are obeying all of God's will. The Bible doesn't teach the modern philosophies of salvation apart from water baptism, a universal bishop, church-sponsored recreation, the sponsoring church arrangement, divorce and remarriage apart from adultery, women preaching before men, infant baptism, instrumental music, and so on. These are not taught in the New Testament.

I am not suggesting that all who practice these things are dishonest hypocrites who have no love for the Lord. I cannot read people's minds. But what I am saying is that they are not practicing the Father's will as stated in the Bible, and they are in jeopardy of missing out on eternal life with God. Remember, Jesus said salvation is not in what we claim before men (calling Him, Lord, Lord), but in seeking and applying the will of God. This is true whether we accept it or not.

If every church would seek the pattern found in the New Testament, we would all have unity in matters of faith; that is, we'd believe alike on salvation, worship, eternal life, God, etc. The reason I know this is so, is because the Bible only teaches one faith for the Christian age (**Ephesians 4:1-4**). This is why God can ask and demand that we all practice the same thing in religion (**1 Corinthians 1:10**; **Philippians 1:27**). We can have unity because only one pattern for Christianity was revealed (**Jude 3**)—the pattern that God, Jesus, and the Spirit believe in (**John 17:20-21**).

Are you honestly seeking, or are you dishonestly satisfied?

Truth Unknown Author

One thing that is absolutely indispensable to the practice of pure religion is truth. "Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding" (**Proverbs 23:23**). Whatever truth may cost (time, money, lands, houses, or physical suffering), it is worth the price; and once obtained, it must not be sold at any price.

It matters little what we think, feel, imagine, suppose, or would like to believe; the truth is what counts. Jesus said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (**John 8:31-32**).

Apollos was an eloquent man, mighty in the Scriptures, fervent in spirit, bold, and convincing; but he lacked the one thing which all must have to be successful in preaching—the whole truth (**Acts 18:24-28**). Eloquence is not necessary if one has the truth; other things may be helpful, but are not essential.

To disregard, neglect, reject, or deny the truth is to dispense with the indispensable.

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3

Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24

Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30

Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21

Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27

Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17