



# Does The Bible Teach Infant Baptism?

DISCOVERING GOD'S WORD BIBLE STUDY SERIES

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Does the Bible teach “infant baptism”? There are many religious organizations that practice “infant baptism.” But, is this common practice according to the teachings of God’s word? Let’s evaluate this question based on the teachings of the Bible.

## **No Bible Authority For “Infant Baptism”**

In order for the practice of “infant baptism” to be pleasing to God, we must be able to find Bible authority for it. Colossians 3:17 says, “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” Therefore, everything that we do must have Biblical authority behind it. For, we are prohibited from adding to or taking away from the things God's word reveals (Revelation 22:18-19; Galatians 1:6-10).

Bible authority for a thing is established by having one of the following: A direct command, an approved example, or a necessary inference. Not only are these the necessary ingredients to have Bible authority; but, they are the necessary ingredients in order to know *anything* to be true! For instance, how can you know what the required speed limit on a road is? Generally, you know this by a direct command (when you see the signs that give direct instructions about the speed limit). Or, perhaps you would be able to necessarily infer the speed from knowing what type of road you are traveling. The same thing is true with the Bible. We only know what is approved of God when we establish Bible authority for everything we do.

Now, let's put “infant baptism” to the test and see whether there is any kind of Bible authority for its practice.

(1) There is no direct command to baptize infants. There are many direct commands and statements given in the Bible concerning baptism (see Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16). But, there is not a single command or statement that directly says that infants are the proper subjects of Bible baptism. Therefore, the practice of “infant baptism” cannot find its Bible authority through this means.

(2) There is no approved example to baptize infants. Of all the examples of baptism given in the Bible, there is not a single approved example of “infant baptism.” For instance, in the book of Acts, there are examples of baptism in chapters 2, 8, 9, 10, 11, 16, 18, and 19. Yet, not one of these examples contain an example of “infant baptism.” Not even the “household” baptisms are evidence of “infant baptism.”

For instance, Cornelius' household was baptized (Acts 10-11), Lydia's household was baptized (Acts 16:15), and the Philippian jailor's household was baptized (Acts 16:3). However, there is not a single piece of evidence that forces us to conclude that there were any infants among these household baptisms. In fact, the statements that are made in the texts demonstrate that these individuals did some things that infants are *incapable* of doing. For instance, after Acts 16:33 says that the jailor “and all his family were baptized,” verse 34 says that everyone was brought into the jailor's house, he set food before them, and rejoiced – “having believed in God with all his household.” Therefore, whoever was part of this man's household and was baptized was capable of having true faith in God!

(3) There is no necessary inference of “infant baptism.” A necessary inference is a conclusion that is inescapable (a forced conclusion) based on the teachings of the Scriptures. However, there is nothing that would force an individual to conclude that infants are proper subjects of baptism. Instead, the teachings of the Scriptures force us to conclude the opposite – that infants are incapable of doing what is required of those who are to be baptized (as we will discuss in a few moments).

While there are no Bible teachings that would force us to conclude that infant baptism is approved of God, there are a number of improper conclusions that some have made in order to justify its practice. For instance, some who believe that babies are born in sin reach the conclusion that baptism is necessary in order for them to be cleansed from this sin. However, this is an example of one false conclusion leading to another. The Bible teaches that babies are born sinless (see Ezekiel 18:20). Therefore, since babies are not born in sin, the conclusion that babies must be baptized for the remission of their sin is a false conclusion (not a necessary or forced conclusion). In fact, there is no necessary inference from the Bible at all (one that holds true from beginning to end) that authorizes the practice of “infant baptism.”

Since there is no direct command, approved example, or necessary inference that authorizes the practice of “infant baptism,” there is no Bible authority for it. To teach and practice “infant baptism,” then, is based on man's own religious doctrines and traditions – and is entirely without God's approval!

### **Infants Are Not The Proper Subjects Of Baptism**

Now, as we continue our search of the Bible, we discover that it teaches us concerning who a proper subject of baptism is. We need to consider these Bible teachings and make application of them to be able to know whether God approves of infants as proper subjects for baptism. In fact,

what we will discover is that infants are not capable of the prerequisites God has placed upon Bible baptism. Again, I encourage you to search through the entire Bible about what God says about baptism and discover for yourself that these are the conditions God has placed upon baptism.

(1) Proper subjects of baptism have committed sin. God has commanded baptism for a very specific purpose. He has said that baptism is necessary in order for sins to be forgiven/remitted. For instance, Peter commanded, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." (Acts 2:38). Ananias told Saul, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Therefore, since baptism is necessary in order for sins to be forgiven, God does not require it until an individual has committed sin! And, as I've have stated briefly already, babies have not sinned. Therefore, they are not proper subjects of baptism.

(2) Proper subjects of baptism must have heard God's word. Before anyone in the Bible was baptized for the forgiveness of his/her sins, he/she was first taught the word of God. In fact, hearing what God's word teaches comes before any of the other requirements God has placed upon salvation! Romans 10:17 says, "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Therefore, you cannot even have faith in Jesus Christ without first hearing the message of the gospel. In addition, Acts 18:8 records one of several examples of baptism in the Bible. Specifically, it states that "many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized." What infant is there who is capable of hearing (and understanding) the message of the gospel so as to take the appropriate actions? Not a single one! Therefore, they are not proper subjects of baptism.

(3) Proper subjects of baptism must have believed. God requires belief for salvation. It is *always* a prerequisite to individuals being forgiven of their sins. For instance, Jesus said, "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" (John 8:24). Then, not only is faith in Christ necessary for salvation from your sins, but, it is also a prerequisite for baptism. Again, Acts 18:8 demonstrated that the Corinthians heard God's word, believed, and then were baptized. Also, Jesus said, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16). Therefore, both belief and baptism are necessary to bring about the desired result of salvation from sin! Yet, infants are incapable of possessing such faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, they are not proper subjects of baptism.

(4) Proper subjects of baptism must have repented of their sins. God requires that sin be repented of in order for a sinner to be saved. Acts 17:30 says that God "now commands all men everywhere to repent." Furthermore, repentance must always precede baptism. Acts 2:38 demonstrates this order when Peter commanded, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." First, notice that repentance was necessary to have the forgiveness of sins. Second, notice that it is coupled with baptism. Therefore, not only must those who desire to be baptized have sin, but they must also repent of (turn away from) their

sin. Infants are not capable of either one of these. Therefore, they are not the proper subjects for baptism

(5) Proper subjects of baptism must have confessed Jesus Christ. God requires that a confession be made in order to be saved from sin. This confession is a confession with the mouth of the Lord Jesus (Romans 10:9-10). An example of this confession being made is found in Acts 8:37. On that occasion, a man was told that he could be baptized if he believed in Jesus with all his heart. He responded, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” Then, he was baptized. However, infants are not capable of making this confession. Therefore, they are not the proper subjects for baptism.

(6) Proper subjects of baptism must choose to be baptized. Throughout the Bible, individuals always made a personal decision to be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins. It was *not* something forced upon them by someone else. Go back and read each of the passages in the book of Acts I listed before. However, in infant baptism, someone else is making the decision for a child to be baptized. Therefore, infants are not the proper subjects of baptism.

Clearly, infants are not the proper subjects of Bible baptism. For this reason, God did not give any Bible authority for them to be baptized. To baptize an infant is an entirely meaningless practice that only results in a baby getting wet!

## **Conclusion**

The Bible does not teach “infant baptism.” It is entirely the creation of man. There is no Bible authority for “infant baptism” and the Bible is clear in teaching that infants are not the proper subjects for baptism – because they have no need for what it does and cannot fulfill the prerequisites.

### **Discovering God’s Word Bible Study Series**

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