

Genesis 17:1-10 (Txt V10)–Why We Must Baptize Covenant Babies

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: Christian churches today largely treat children as pagans(异教徒, 非基督教徒) and refuse to put the mark of the covenant (圣约, 盟约) on them. But a refusal to baptize (施洗) children is a sin. It is a sin because it is a refusal of a most precious gift from God. Hear what God's Word as to why you should receive this gift for your children.

Our headings are:

Children get the sign of the covenant because they have a Precious Promise

Children get the sign of the covenant because they have a Precious Position

Our goals are: That you will praise God for his promise to your covenant children and for the sign of covenant baptism, and that you will fulfill your responsibility by teaching your children so that they willingly receive this promise.

Genesis. 17:10 "This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised (受割礼) ;

Children get The Sign of the Covenant because they have a Precious Promise

1. God saved Abraham, brought him out from Ur of the Chaldees, and promised him Canaan. Why Canaan?

- Canaan was a picture of Abraham's completed salvation (拯救, 得救) -a picture of heaven.
- Canaan would be the place of salvation. From there Jesus would come to die for Abraham sins. Abraham was obligated to serve the Lord as part of this covenant that God initiated with him.

2. But because he couldn't serve God to get that promise, Abraham looked to the coming Covenant Keeper who would perfectly obey God for him and take his punishment for not being able to serve God perfectly.

3. God's promise was not to Abraham only; God also promised to save his family-all his descendants. But they too could not keep the covenant and they too have to be saved by their Covenant Keeper, Jesus. In order to remember that promise of salvation, Abraham's children had to receive the sign of the covenant.

4. Jesus confirmed this to promise to save Abraham and his descendants. (John 8:56) Indeed he treated them as special receivers of his promise. This was why he put his hands on the children and blessed them. He rebuked those who were trying to chase the children away. He would not tolerate ill-treatment of the ones he had promised forgiveness. He did not treat covenant children as pagans. They were his! They were circumcised. They had the covenant sign!

Matthew 19:14 But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." 15 And He laid His hands on them...

Apostle Paul assumes covenant children are good and receivers of God's promise.

Ephesians 6:2 "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: 3 "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."

Colossians 3:20 Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.

The Apostle Peter said that covenant children are forgiven.

Acts 2:38 ... "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

This promise comes even to the Gentiles (外邦人), as the Apostle Paul said to the Philippian jailer (狱卒).

Acts 16:31 "...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."
("...当信主耶稣, 你和你一家都必得救。")

"Your household" is often missed. Apostle Paul did not say that the members of your household would be saved when they were old enough to speak for themselves. This was the same language God used to Abraham in our text.

5. Some people don't like the idea that children could be forgiven of their sins because children are too young to confess their sins. But consider:

If children were condemned (被咒诅) in their first parents without their consent (同意, 许可), why couldn't they be saved in their 2nd parent -Jesus- without their consent? Based on God's promises to you, would you worry about your children's salvation if they died in infancy (婴儿期, 幼年时期).

Couldn't God save the insane (精神病人) or the handicapped (残障者) without their consent?

Couldn't God save you if you did not confess all your sins before you died? No one ever has the full knowledge of the extent to his sins, and no one has every confessed all his sins. Couldn't God save millions of miscarried (流产的) children? You see, Christian children also get their forgiveness through Christ's work, not through their own work.

6. In short, OT Christians were no different from NT Christians. OT Christians and their children had the **same Gospel** (福音), they had the **same faith**, they looked to the **same Savior**, and they were part of the **same church** as we. Therefore, it is logical to expect a covenant sign to continue for believers **and their children**. God made no declaration that the promise or sign of the covenant on children was obsolete (过时的). **Let the detractors** (毁谤者) **prove that God forbids promise and the sign from covenant children today**. You don't have to prove it. The covenant sign was so important that God was going to **kill Moses for not putting** the covenant sign on his son. **Why did God put such a strong emphasis on the covenant sign? A sign is useful to remind you of the covenant** promise and duties. God didn't want you to rob his children of his promise. **The sign was tied to the thing promised.**

7. But why do we have baptism instead of circumcision to remember God's promise? Before Christ, circumcision was sensible sign to point to the bloody sacrifice (献祭) of Jesus on the cross. Now, with that sign fulfilled, God established a non-bloody sign. God changed the sign (not the thing signified) from circumcision to baptism. **Neither Jesus nor the disciples revoked** (撤消) **the need for a sign for covenant children**. If there were going to be such a monumental change in church life, wouldn't you have expected they would have said so?

8. Further, look at New Testament evidence of those who received the sign of promise. The Apostles reiterated (重申) **the new sign of the covenant on the whole family, not just adults.**

Acts 16: 15 And when she and **her household were baptized**...

Acts 16:33 And he took them **the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized.**

Acts 2:38-39 -...Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **"For the promise is to you and to your children,** and to all who are afar off...Consider Apostle Paul:

1Corinthians 1:16 Yes, I also baptized the **household of Stephanas**. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other.

Consider also the households **Crispus' family** in Acts 18:8. The "family" was people of God. **Never was it recorded that one was baptized when he "came of age."** There are only 3 cases of individual baptisms and 5 of families.

9. If a covenant child (Esau, Absalom) rejects God's covenant promise God at his baptism, he will have to give account for it. We don't stop giving the covenant sign because some reject it. The church will never be perfect. Further, those who reject the covenant promise and are re-baptized spit at the God's promise. Surely God is not pleased with the rejection of his gift.

Children get the Sign of the Covenant because they have a Precious Position

1. God revealed to Abraham that covenant children were special because Jehovah was their God.

God brings covenant children in a special place-a place where they are taught of their sins, taught of their Savior by Word and sacrament (圣礼), and taught to put their trust in him. These children are in a place where they are disciplined. On the contrary, those who were not circumcised were executed...or excommunicated (逐出教会). **Can you imagine Abraham telling God that Ishmael looked bad and his mother wasn't good so he should not be circumcised?** Certainly not.

2. God treated covenant children as special at the Passover (逾越节). He killed non-covenant children but saved covenant children. On the night of the first **Passover in Egypt, if a father put the Passover Lamb's blood on the door, his children were saved.**

Colossians 2:11 In Him you were also **circumcised with the circumcision made without hands**, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, **12** buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. **13** And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses...

You and your children are forgiven and distinct from the world by being in the covenant and

receiving baptism. The covenant and the sign put children in a spiritually clean place.

Romans 4:-11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe(并且他受了割礼的记号，作他未受割礼的时候因信称义的印证，叫他作一切未受割礼而信之人的父，是他们也算为义。)

3. God made the family the center of the covenant. Since children are in the family, they are in the covenant and distinct from the world. Covenant blessings flow to all its members.

1Corinthians 7:14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, **but now they are holy.**

How can a child please the Lord if he is an unbeliever? This is because the children are not reprobated (被弃绝) but a part of the covenant.

Further, if children are not to be baptized, it would mean that children in a worse place under the new covenant...even while God promises expanded to allow Gentiles in. But children are not treated in a worse way –but in a better way. In Zechariah 10, you see that **little children living in the future church** with the elderly. What a precious place to be!

4. God directly addressed children as members of the covenant, showing they are distinct from non-covenant children and in a special place.

Exodus 20: 12 "Honor your father and your mother, **that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.**

This was the covenant law. God required that Samson (John the Baptist, etc.) be dedicated (被献上), even from the womb. Samson was not treated as a pagan.

5. God taught covenant children. God doesn't teach pagans. Consider Isaiah's words:

Isaiah 54:13 **All your children shall be taught by the LORD,** And great shall be the peace of your children.

6. You are called to teach, pray with, and discipline your children. If your children are not believers then they have no access to God and you therefore must not allow them to pray. But on the contrary, you know that God puts his mark on them and calls them holy. So pray with them. Let them read his Word. Discipline them. **Sing with your children:** "*Jesus loves the little children*" and "*Jesus loves me this I know.*" And claim the Lord's promise. Isn't this clear that there's something different between covenant children and those outside the church?

Conclusion:

Children get the sign of the covenant because they have a Precious Promise. God would save them thorough their Covenant Keeper, take away their sins, and take them to that heavenly Canaan. **Children get the sign of the covenant because they are in a precious position.** That position allows them to hear, see and experience the Gospel. Surely they are distinct from non-Christian children and blessed.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. What a comfort it is to know that your children are marked by the Lord and given his promise, and then put in a **special place where they could be taught** and receive that promise.

2. Train your children to receive this promise. Train them so that they don't see themselves as the frozen chosen, but as the precious children of Jesus.

3. Then show them how to serve worthily, and love wholeheartedly. Teach them to stand up for Christ in the public square. Teach tell others of their Savior. Teach them to worship God and not what he has given to them. In doing this, they will advance Christ's kingdom.

Finally, neither you nor your children can have eternal life without the sacrifice of Jesus for sins. So if you are not a Christian, may this day not pass without calling on him and asking him to make you his child so that you and your children might receive his blessings.