

Heidelberg Catechism Q&A74 –Why you must baptize your baby.

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: Should your children be baptized 受洗? You will say “yes.” But are you able to explain why your children should be baptized? I am going to attempt to give you the main points of the arguments I use, and hopefully you can use them too, to explain why your children should be baptized.

Our headings are:

Believers’ Children are included in the Covenant 圣約

Believers’ Children are given the Sign of the Covenant

Believers’ Children are distinguished from 區別于 non-believers’ Children

Our goals are: **That you will know why your children are baptized, that you will praise God for his love for you and your children, and that you will fulfill your responsibility to God by teaching and disciplining 管教 your children so that they are raised to serve the living God.**

74 Q. SHOULD INFANTS, TOO, BE BAPTIZED?

A. Yes. Infants as well as adults are in God’s covenant and are his people. They, no less than adults, **are promised the forgiveness of sin through Christ’s blood** and the Holy Spirit who produces faith. Therefore, by baptism, the mark of the covenant, infants should be received into the Christian church and **should be distinguished from the children** of unbelievers. This was done in the Old Testament by circumcision 割礼, which was replaced in the New Testament by baptism.

Believers’ Children are included in the Covenant

1. God promised salvation to covenant children based on their parents’ faith and incorporated them into the body of Christ.

Just as they were condemned 被定罪 in their wicked parents without their consent 同意, so through their believing parents they receive the promise of forgiveness of their sins without their consent.

2. Look at the proof that children of believers were incorporated in the covenant, promised the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ, and raised with the terms of the covenant. This will explain why the covenant sign was applied to them.”

a. God directly told Abraham that his children were to be incorporated into the covenant and God instructed him to raise his children with this awareness.

Genesis 17:7... I will establish My covenant between Me and you **and your descendants after you** in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, **to be God to you** and your descendants after you. 9 And God said to Abraham: **“As for you, you shall keep My covenant,** you and your descendants after you throughout their generations.

Abraham had to teach his children (keep the covenant). The mere act of circumcision was not the covenant, as Muslims argue. This meant Abraham had to speak of Jesus, the ultimate **Covenant Keeper**. Yes, Abraham believed in Christ. (Jn 8; Rom 4)

b. The Covenant Keeper Jesus showed that children were incorporated into the covenant when he put his hands on them and blessed them. He rebuked those who were trying to chase the children away. Also: Mk 10:14, Lk 18:16. He would not tolerate ill-treatment of the ones he had forgiven...especially no ill-treatment of his children from his own disciples.

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 and departed from there.**

The Lord doesn't bless pagans 异教徒.

c. Apostle Peter, quoting the Old Testament, said that covenant children were forgiven in Jesus and incorporated into the covenant.

Acts 2:38 ... "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission 除去 of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 "For the promise is to you and to your children..."

d. Apostle Paul showed that children were included in the covenant and promised salvation.

Acts 16:31... "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

Covenant children are not "vipers 毒蛇 in diapers." Treat them as forgiven children and let them be baptized. This must be your starting presupposition 推测设想. Don't act with doubts.

3. God directly addressed children as members of the covenant when he gave the covenant law.

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.

Believer's Children were given the Covenant Sign 记号

1. God marked those children who were incorporated into the body of Christ through their parents' faith with the sign of the covenant, circumcision in the Old Testament and baptism in the New Testament.

Look at the Biblical proof.

a. Look at Luke's account of Lydia's family...and the Philippian jailer 狱卒. Whole families were baptized.

Acts 16: 14 Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. 15 And when she and **her household were baptized**, she begged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay..."

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

b. Look at Apostle Peter's Words:

Acts 2:39 "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."

c. Consider Apostle Paul's words:

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, and **Gaius**, and **Lydia**, and **Stephanas'** families. The families were people of God. It would be incredulous if whole households had no children. Further, never, ever was it recorded in the Bible that a child was baptized when he "came of age."

2. We know that children were included in the covenant, promised the forgiveness of sins in Jesus, and given the sign of the covenant because God pronounced excommunication 开除教籍 or death on those children that did not have the covenant sign.

Genesis 17:14 "And the uncircumcised 未受割礼的 male child, **who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin 包皮**, that person **shall be cut off from his people**; he has broken My covenant."

God was going to kill Moses – even as he was going to Egypt to rescue Israel – for not

circumcising his son?

3. Some argue that some covenant children turn out to be wicked, so how can we possibly call covenant children people of God and include them in the covenant?

Answer: When a minister says “people of God,” does he refer to every single person in the church? Of course not. The church is never the “elected” ones only. **The church is God’s covenant people**. There are hypocrites 假冒伪善者在 the church. Similarly, you can say that covenant children are God’s children, though some may turn out to be wicked. So it was proper for the Apostle Paul to assume children of believers are good and able to do good.

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."

And for a work to be good, it must be done from faith in Christ, according to the law of Christ, and for the glory of Christ. And another verse!

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

4. Some people don’t like the idea that children can be forgiven of their sins because young children do not have faith and cannot repent, and so they must not be baptized.

There are three problems with that.

a. Forgiveness of sins is God’s gift. Forgiveness is not based on what you do. Suppose you did not confess all your sins before you died, does that mean that you will be lost? Certainly not! Like you, Christian children get their forgiveness through Christ’s work, not through their own work.

b. And forgiveness is based on faith...and faith is present, the faith of the parents’ of the children.

c. Old Testament children received the promise of forgiveness of sins, so why could they not receive it now? New Testament Christians, like Old Testament Christians and their children had the **same Gospel福音**, they had the **same faith**, they trusted in the **same Savior**, and they were in the **same church**. With all these things the same, it is logical to expect a covenantal sign to continue for believers and their children.

Believers’ Children are Distinguished from Unbeliever’s children

1. God revealed to Abraham the real difference between covenant children and non-covenant children and God gave a sign on the covenant to show that distinction.

God put these children in a special place—a privileged place where they would be **taught of their sins, taught of the Savior** by Word and sacrament 圣礼, and **taught to put their trust in him**.

You can rightly teach your children to sing and to pray. If they weren’t holy, they would be condemned for attempting to worship and to pray without sacrifice 祭物献祭. But you are to teach your children to pray. Let them read his Word. **Sing with your children**: “*Jesus loves the little children*” and “*Jesus loves me this I know*.” And claim the Lord’s promise. Children of non-believers may not claim this!

Further, these children are in a place where **they would be disciplined** also.

2. God gave special protection to believers and their covenant children and killed non-covenant children.

Let me illustrate. On the night of the **Passover逾越节 in Egypt, if a father put the Passover Lamb’s blood on the door, the children were saved**. God did not let his covenant children die in Pharaoh’s Egypt. **Even wicked Ham was saved** from the flood on account of being in the covenant with his father Noah. **And what about Rahab and Zaccheus whose families were saved**. Being in the covenant (and being circumcised) put them in a special place. Similarly, **believers and their children are in a special place**. You have the full knowledge of what your Covenant Keeper did for you.

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.

You can see the change of the covenant sign after the old sign was no longer appropriate.

There was still need for a sign to mark the distinction, but it must no longer be a bloody sign. But whether blood or water, the covenant sign distinguishes you and your children from the world. The covenant and the sign put children in a spiritually clean place.

3. Children are now in a covenant family where the blessings of the covenant members flow to each other.

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

If children were not to be baptized, it would mean that children are in a worse place under the new covenant, even while God promises expanded to allow Gentiles 外邦人 in. But covenant children are not treated in a worse way –but in a better way.

4. God called covenant children “holy seed.”

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

5. God taught covenant children.

He casts no pearls to swine 猪. Peter taught that is Acts 2 above. 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.

Conclusion:

Covenant children are part of the covenant people of God. God said so and God treated them as such. God then marked covenant children by a covenant sign so that they could join the church. From Abraham to Lord Jesus, and to disciples after him, they all treated believers’ children as being distinct from children of non-believers.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

First, what a precious covenant promise baptism is to you and your children. It is a gift you receive by faith. But this precious mark came at a great price. The **Lord Jesus had to perfectly obey** so you are credited with his obedience, and he **had to suffer and died and his blood flow to the ground for you** so God would be satisfied with your punishment. This is the message that must go to your heart and the hearts of your covenant children.

Second, let this message comfort you and your children. He singled you out for salvation. He didn’t have to.

Third, let this motivate you to serve the Lord in fullness. You are the chosen of God, but you are not the *frozen chosen*. Spread the warmth of Christ’s love so others may see Christ in you and be drawn to him.

Finally, neither you nor your children can have eternal life without the sacrifice of Jesus for sins. May this day not pass before you call on him and ask him to make you his child so that you and your children might receive his blessings! Without it you are damned – damned to hell for eternity.