

Babies and Baptism

Many denominations practice what they call "infant baptism." First, "baptism" is a misnomer in this case, because "baptize" in first century Greek meant "immerse," not sprinkle or pour as commonly practiced today. Second, baptism is part of the disciple making process (Matthew 28:18-20).

A disciple is a student (Matthew 10:24). Can infants be taught the gospel? Can infants follow Jesus, place Jesus above their loved ones and even themselves, carry their own crosses, count the cost of discipleship, or give up all their possessions (Luke 14:25-33)? Can infants love as Jesus loved (John 13:34-35)? Can they bear much fruit (John 15:8)?

Jesus said, "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Can infants believe? Are they lost? Paul said he was baptized to wash away his sins (Acts 22:16). Peter told a crowd, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins" (Acts 2:38). Do infants sin? Can they repent? Do they need forgiveness?

To whom should we listen on babies and baptism-Jesus, Paul, and Peter, or denominational traditions?