



A Study of The Age of Accountability: Is the Bible Silent?

By Pat and Brian Field

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“But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike”. Acts 8:12

Preface

This topic has been objectively approached by two people with an open heart and an open bible. Neither of us is independently wealthy, nor did we write this study for personal gain. Our goal is simply to make this information available to as many people as possible. Over the course of the next several months, this study will be distributed free of charge by mail and email to several thousand churches of Christ across the United States. We believe that the church is routinely practicing grave error in its tradition of baptizing children. If what we are asserting is correct, then many will unfortunately pay a very high price because of their ignorance of the subject matter at hand. Regardless of the reason(s) why this ignorance exists, this topic needs to be discussed in a rational, faithful manner, since many souls are at stake.

If, after *fully* reading this study, you can *prove* a position contrary to what you have read here, please don't hesitate to contact us with your *scriptural* objections at: isthebiblesilent@gmail.com.

This is not a subject to be taken lightly, and if you feel we are in error, we want you to *biblically* show us where what we have said is contrary to the truth.

If, on the other hand, you have been encouraged by the things written in this study and have now changed your position, we would like to know that too! This effort took several years of work and research to complete, so it would be nice to know that we have encouraged and positively affected some souls in the Lords church.

If you are reading this on a computer, all of the links contained within this study are clickable, so please double check the verses and references that we have included, so that you can know for sure that we aren't making anything up.

If you are not reading this on a computer, keep your bible handy!

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Introduction

As children raised in the church become older and begin asking spiritual questions, their concerned, believing parents wonder whether or not their child is old enough to become a follower of Christ, or more simply put, a Christian. Through the years I have found that this topic is rarely ever approached with an open Bible in hand. It is also undoubtedly an emotionally charged issue, because so many people who have been “raised in the church” are now adults and were baptized at a young age. If these same people find that their baptism as a child was unnecessary, they are now faced as an adult with the dilemma of whether or not they are a Christian at all. So, some choose not to look at this subject, believing that there are no specific age guidelines given by God that indicate how old a person must be before they can become a Christian. Others become angry and/or dismissive, feeling that it is divisive and unnecessarily upsetting to discuss this topic at all. Notably however, truth always makes a separation ([Hebrews 4:12](#)). It divides between good and evil, right and wrong, light and dark, etc. The reasoning behind this study is a search for truth, not an effort to be divisive. There is a difference between being fruitlessly argumentative and earnestly trying to determine the truth of a matter.

I was not raised as a Christian. I was taught to believe and follow a lot of teachings that could not be substantiated by the word of God. After coming out of denominationalism and talking with people regarding their souls, I witnessed first hand the reality that many people believe what they believe on a purely emotional and subjective basis. I have seen people time and time again reject truth because of that emotionalism. Many have even rejected their own eternal salvation because they couldn't bring themselves to believe that their position could be wrong, or they valued their love for family members more than their love for the God that literally died for them. [Proverbs 28:26](#) is exactly right when it says **“He who trusts in his own heart is a fool.”** I have also seen this emotionalism exhibited relating to many issues in the Lord's church. So when any Biblical topic is discussed or approached, it cannot and must not be approached on a purely emotional or subjective level, because emotionalism clouds even the clearest of issues. We are to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength ([Mark 12:30](#)). Our emotions are God given and not evil in and of themselves. Yet, our love of God must transcend a mere emotional “feeling in our hearts”. One of

the necessary four components involved in loving God is our “mind”, indicating that we need to have an educated relationship with God. For a Christian, our education comes from the knowledge of His Word (the Bible), and nowhere else. This word has been so painstakingly preserved through the ages by God, even though there have been many attempts by people to destroy it.

I began writing this study on my own because I felt that this topic was something that needed to be addressed on a brotherhood level. As time went on, it became obvious to me that I needed additional input, so as the study progressed, it became more of a collaborative effort between my son Brian and I. Due to that fact, you will notice the words “I” and “we” being used interchangeably throughout this study.

In the bible, we see “multitudes of men and women” being baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. It is clear from the scriptures that this is how a person enters into the kingdom of heaven and how their soul is saved from eternal hell. There are no examples of children being baptized in the scriptures. However, today there is a common practice of baptizing children within the brotherhood, even little children. Actually, we see more children being baptized in the church than adults. Seeking to harmonize this practice with what the bible clearly teaches, many have reasoned that:

In the same way as adults...

- Children sin
- They can have faith in God
- They can repent of bad behavior
- They “understand” that they are sinners and want to be forgiven.
- If they then “know” what the scriptures teach, believe with it with all their heart and want to be baptized, “who are we to stand in their way?”

Therefore, based on this reasoning, there are many that believe that there are ways in which children can and should be considered adults (men and women). Is becoming a member of God’s kingdom strictly an adult decision, or is it a decision that can also be made by children? If it is a decision only for adults to make, then do the scriptures show us how we can know *for certain* when someone becomes an accountable adult in the eyes of God? Has God revealed to us at any point, Old or New

Testament, what age He considers a person to be *unaccountable* for their sins, and what age He considers a person to be *accountable* for their sins? By definition, baptism is the immersion of a person in water. Who were considered candidates to be baptized during the age of inspiration? These are all eternally important questions that need to be addressed with an open mind and an open bible. During this study, we will compare the common church practice of child baptism with the scriptures. We will also seek to prove beyond any reasonable doubt, that there is a way to know *for certain* whether a person is a child or an adult, and that it *does in fact* matter what age a person is when they are baptized.

This approach seemed reasonable to us, because at the moment that a penitent, accountable believer is immersed in water, that is when their sins are forgiven and they become a Christian. I know that many people who read the bible don't believe this is true. There are those that believe that a person becomes saved and *then* they are baptized in water to show an outward sign of their salvation, commonly called "an outward sign of an inward grace". The bible doesn't teach this doctrine. In [Acts 2:36–46](#), we have the historical account of the first people becoming Christians. The Jewish people who heard the apostle Peter preach the first gospel sermon heard him show from the Old Testament scriptures that Jesus was the Lord and Christ, and that they had put him to death. They were pierced to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles: "what shall we do"? They were told that every one of them should repent and be baptized in order to receive the forgiveness of their sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Where was their inward grace before they were baptized? **They had none.** He convicted them of being the murderers of the Lord Jesus Christ! They repented and were baptized to be forgiven so they could **have** some inward grace. When Saul the Christian torturer and killer was blinded on the way to Damascus, he first had a conversation with Jesus Himself and then with a man named Ananias. In [Acts 22:1-16](#), we have the historical account of Paul becoming a Christian. Ananias spoke to the blinded, fasting Saul of Tarsus, later to be called the apostle Paul. He told Paul to arise and be baptized and wash away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord in [verse 16](#). Where was his inward grace before he was baptized? **He didn't have any.** He was on his way to Damascus to seize, persecute and try to make more Christians blasphemous. He was a torturing, murdering man who was still in his sins. Yet even after he spoke to Jesus Himself, he still needed to be baptized to wash away his sins ([Acts 22:16](#)). There are no exceptions. The baptism to get into Christ

[\(Romans 6:2\)](#) is our re-enactment of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, and a uniting with it. Please keep this in mind: a burial is ALWAYS for the DEAD. Jesus died, was buried, and rose again from the dead. We re-live that fact when we realize we are dead in our sins, we submit to a burial with Christ in the watery grave of baptism, and we are raised out of the water to walk in newness of life... ***born again*** ([Romans 6:1-8](#)). It makes absolutely no sense to take someone who is supposedly alive in Christ and bury him/her in a watery grave. What does make sense is taking a person that is dead to God because of their sins, and burying them in a watery grave. When they are raised out of that watery grave, they leave their sinful life behind, and begin walking a new, godly life. Born again! The reason this makes sense is because a burial *is always* for the dead; NEVER for the living! If you haven't been taught this, you haven't been taught the truth regarding salvation. You need to find a local church of Christ in your area and tell them you weren't taught the gospel correctly and want to be saved.

PRESENT DAY PRACTICE IN THE CHURCH

When I became a Christian, I was already in my twenties. I was clearly an adult, so as a new convert the topic of how old a person needs to be before they can become a Christian wasn't immediately a pressing issue to me. As part of a church family, I continually witnessed young children being baptized and the consequent joy of those around me. I also have three children, and as they became older (in their teen years), I, like any other concerned parent began to struggle about their age and when they may be held accountable before God for their sins. Each of my children were initially baptized in their teen years, so I understand completely the struggle that parents feel when they look at their young people and spiritually want what is best for them. However, this care and concern for our children is not the determining factor as to whether we came to the correct conclusion regarding their need for baptism or not. Even when the majority of people do something, it doesn't mean that it's right. Truth is not determined by the number of people who believe it. Truth is determined by the Giver of Truth, God. End of story. In an attempt to find some spiritual guidance on this subject, I spoke to leaders in the church all over the country. When I asked them whether or not my children were accountable to God, I was never given a clear, biblical answer. Their answers actually caused me more confusion and uncertainty than before I spoke to them. Some leaders seemed

unconcerned, leading me to believe that they didn't feel that this was an important subject at all. Others took a very abrupt, hostile, or defensive attitude when I asked questions and tried to find some biblical consistency in their position on the subject. Either way, I was urged to do *whatever I thought was right*. But we don't take that same approach when we are studying the Bible with someone who asks us what they must do to be saved, right? We don't say: "You have the Bible; read it yourself and do whatever you think is right," do we? No, we don't! Needless to say, when it comes to my salvation or the salvation of my children, I don't want to do what I *think* is right. I want to do what I KNOW is right. I have lived for a long time knowing that I am saved but with the haunting suspicion that my children, being "raised in the church" were baptized possibly when they were too young; when God didn't yet hold them accountable for their sins. Then they grow up trusting in that unnecessary baptism, *which if it is truly unnecessary*, has become just another form of infant baptism. After all, what is the difference if my child is baptized as a three month old or an eleven year old, if God doesn't view him or her as lost and in need of saving at either age? So I am saved, and with all my good intentions, my children quite possibly are lost. God forbid! I would never want that for my own family or anyone else's family either.

THE DOUBLE STANDARD

I have also seen many inconsistencies regarding children "raised in the church" in comparison to children that are raised in non-Christian families. On one hand we will baptize our eight year olds because they "believe in Christ and know they have sinned and need a savior." But then we hear of a non-Christian child that was eight or twelve years old that died in a car accident or some other terrible tragedy. When their parents ask if we believe their child went to heaven, we tell them "yes". After all, who would want to tell them no? Or, we tell them: "We have to let God judge because only He knows for sure". Yet the question remains... are our eight year olds that attend church services with their parents somehow accountable (being responsible to God and punishable to eternal hell if they died), but someone else's child who is eight years old or older and didn't attend church services somehow saved and going to eternal heaven? Why do we consider the children of Christian parents accountable to God sooner than the children of non Christian parents?

Is there a double standard? Should there be a double standard? **Does early knowledge = early accountability?**

We also practice a double standard or inconsistency in regard to children that have been “raised in the church” that are *of the same age*. For instance, in a congregation there is a ten year old that gets baptized into Christ whose parents are members of the church. They feel that if their child wants to get baptized, who are they to stand in their child’s way? So at age ten we have “a sinner” who will go to hell if they die without Christ (that’s the reason why they are being baptized, isn’t it?). Then, there is another member of that same church who has a ten year old that *wasn’t* baptized, and tragically dies in some circumstance. We give the family consolation by saying that they can take comfort in the fact that their ten year old is in heaven. Isn’t there a contradiction here? Does one child become accountable to God simply on the basis of their own *desire* to follow Christ, and another child remain unaccountable on the basis that he/she has no desire to follow Christ? And if we believe that a child is unaccountable because they have no desire to follow Christ, at what point does God hold them accountable regardless of their desire or lack thereof? Stated another way, does desire to follow Christ equal accountability, and a simple lack of desire to follow Christ excuse one from spiritual obligation? Has God left us without any direction on this important issue? I believe He has not left us without direction, and so it is out of a heartfelt concern that I am writing on this topic.

Adulthood and childhood are stages of human development, and those distinctive age categories are frequently referenced in both the Old and New Testaments. So, if we can find any indicators of what is considered “childhood” or “adulthood” in either testament, it will give us insight into the mind and thinking of God on this topic. If He didn’t address the issue at all, then any discussion on the topic would be mere speculation and there would never be a definitive “Thus says the Lord.” It would basically be up to human judgment. **But if He did address the issue specifically and we ignore it, then we do so at our own peril.**

HOW GOD COMMUNICATES HIS WILL TO US

Before we begin this topical study, it is important to keep in mind the way God has communicated His words to us. In the writings of the Bible we have spiritual thoughts combined with spiritual words.

1 Corinthians 2:12-13: *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining **spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.***

So, Almighty God does not arbitrarily use words as He communicates with us. He is very specific. As an example of how literal God intended His words to be understood, Paul made a spiritual argument based on whether a word was singular or plural as found in the scriptures.

Galatians 3:16: *Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, ‘**And to seeds**’ as referring to many, but rather to one, ‘**And to your seed**’, that is, Christ.*

It is not “nit picking”, being “petty” or “Pharisaical” to look closely at the scriptures and try to determine what the Spirit is saying to us. Could there be something that we previously overlooked or simply didn’t notice before? In our church culture in the 21st century, looking into the Bible for answers and discussing spiritual ideas has almost become taboo. We often speak more about our opinions and what we think and feel than we do about what the Bible says on a variety of topics. People who study the Bible daily and speak to other Christians about what they have read are not only becoming RARE these days, but are often viewed as contentious, troublemakers and/or *Pharisees*. Yet, Jesus never condemned the Pharisees for “following the Bible too closely”. He condemned them for negating the word of God through their traditions, and for teaching as doctrines the precepts (or ideas) of men ([Mark 7:7-8, 13](#)). **They didn’t follow the word of God!** Today, there are many leaders in the church who don’t know the Bible very well at all, but are still considered to be knowledgeable and spiritual people anyway. **“Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God”**. But in our day and age, most “Christians” basically live by bread alone. So what is my point here? Simply that if Christians can’t discuss the word of God with other Christians in a

Christ-like manner without being labeled “a Pharisee”, we might as well just pack it in.

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES

Leviticus 27:1-8: *Again, the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, when a man makes a difficult vow, he shall be valued according to your valuation of persons belonging to the LORD. If your valuation is of the male from twenty years even to sixty years old, then your valuation shall be fifty shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary. Or if it is a female, then your valuation shall be thirty shekels. If it be from five years even to twenty years old then your valuation for the male shall be twenty shekels and for the female ten shekels. But if they are from a month even up to five years old, then your valuation shall be five shekels of silver for the male, and for the female your valuation shall be three shekels of silver. If they are from sixty years old and upward, if it is a male, then your valuation shall be fifteen shekels, and for the female ten shekels. But if he is poorer than your valuation, then he shall be placed before the priest and the priest shall value him; according to the means of the one who vowed, the priest shall value him.”*

In the above passage, God is telling Moses the procedure to follow when a man makes a difficult vow. Vows were made to God by many people and for many reasons. When these vows were made, an amount of money was given to the priest. The amount of money given to the priest depended upon the age of the one making the vow, or the age of the person that the vow was being made on behalf of. A vow could even be made on behalf of a person that wasn’t even born yet. One example of this would be Samson, who was a Nazirite from his mother’s womb ([Judges 16:17](#)). As we view this passage in [Leviticus 27](#), we see that God required a different amount of money or tribute depending on the age group or category that the person belonged to. Let’s take a look at these age groups and then consider a few points from this passage.

- From one month old to five years old
- From five years old to twenty years old
- From twenty years old to sixty years old
- From sixty years old and upward

We'll start with the easy one first. What age category is from sixty years old and upward? Old age or senior citizen. What age category is from 1 month old to five years old? Infancy. What age category is from twenty years old to sixty years old? Adulthood. What age category is from five years old to twenty years old? CHILDHOOD. Directly from God, [Leviticus 27](#) gives us a standardized delineation of the definitive stages of human growth and maturity, *by age alone*. This breakdown includes both males and females. Had God said that He wanted a certain valuation for infants, children, adults and seniors and didn't give us an age breakdown at this point, the question would come back: "What *age* is an infant, child, adult and senior citizen", wouldn't it? So God didn't leave this up to human wisdom or reasoning for mankind to come up with some ages on our own, did He? If He hadn't mentioned differing ages in this passage, then certainly Moses or the priests would have needed to come up with their own age breakdowns in order to fulfill the requirements indicated in this passage of scripture, wouldn't they? And one thing we can know for sure, as human beings we would NEVER agree on what age infancy is, childhood is, etc. What amazes me is that even when God gives us distinct groups divided by age, many will still disregard or disagree with His delineation. Some insist that all that God was discussing here was differing amounts of money to be collected. Although God was discussing differing money amounts, He was discussing it on the basis of age first, and then on the basis of gender. Even though females paid different tribute amounts than their male counterparts, the age breakdowns are exactly the same for males and females. At the very least, we can see that He made no distinction between males and females regarding their age category based solely on their gender. So, God *has* given us guidance regarding what ages He considers infancy to be, childhood to be, adulthood to be, as well as when a person becomes a senior citizen. I would think that this should be considered a significant point worthy of much thought and consideration.

As we continue in our study, we will look to see if the standard defined in [Leviticus 27:1-8](#) is consistently demonstrated throughout the scriptures. We want to determine if the age breakdowns we have just read are a reliable pattern or not. Have we just been shown what the dividing lines are? *Is there another dividing line?*

GOD STATES THE AGE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Before you continue this study, please take the time to read Numbers chapter one in its entirety.

Numbers 1: 1-3, 21, 22: *Then the LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting, on the first of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, “Take a census of all the congregation of the sons of Israel, by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, every male, head by head from twenty years old and upward, whoever is able to go out to war in Israel, you and Aaron shall number them by their armies.” (vs.21) Their numbered men of the tribe of Reuben were 46,500. (vs.22) Of the sons of Simeon, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers' households, their numbered men, according to the number of names, head by head, every male from twenty years old and upward, whoever was able to go out to war...*

Here God instructs Moses to draft an army for Israel. He tells Moses to choose males who had the ability to go to war “**from twenty years old and upward**”. **The Bible calls these males that are age twenty “men”**. As you continue reading throughout the rest of the chapter, the Bible tells us the number of men from the different tribes of Israel that will be fighting as soldiers. In keeping with the tenor of scripture as far as the age distinctions of [Leviticus 27: 1-8](#), a person would be an adult at age twenty. The significance of this passage in [Numbers](#) is that God is not requiring any males under the age of twenty to fight in His army. He did not want children fighting in His army. Some have said that the reason God didn't want males younger than twenty years old to fight in His army is because teens are weaker physically than men in their twenties. God never shared His reasoning as to why He excluded teens from battle, so no one can say with any authority that physical strength was the determining factor in God's mind. Even though a male that is sixteen years old is probably not as strong as a male that is twenty years old, it would also stand to reason that a man that is twenty one years old is probably not as strong as a man that is thirty years old. **Age is the discussion in this passage, followed by ability.** Although it does say that the adult male **must be able** to go out to war, ability can mean many things. Being blind would make someone unable to go out to war,

regardless of age. If he were missing arms and/or legs, he would not be able to go out and fight in a war. Being mentally or physically handicapped would also make someone unable to fight in a war. Also, God made an exception for and excused the newly married man from going out to war, even if he was the right age and was perfectly healthy ([Deut. 24:5](#)). Adulthood and adult responsibility is the issue. God made a distinction between those males that were nineteen years old and younger and those that were twenty years old and older. Those that were twenty years and older were considered adults (men), and were therefore called upon to defend their nation. Those nineteen years old and younger were not called to do so. There is a time for childhood and it's relatively carefree innocence, and a time for adulthood with its corresponding responsibilities and burdens.

Numbers 14: 22-33: “Surely ***all the men*** who have seen My glory and My signs which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, ***yet have put Me to the test*** these ten times and have not listened to My voice, shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers, ***nor shall any of those who spurned Me see it.*** But My servant Caleb, because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it. Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites live in the valleys; turn tomorrow and set out to the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea.” The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, “How long shall I bear with ***this evil congregation who are grumbling against Me?*** I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel, which they are making against Me. ***Say to them, 'As I live,'*** says the LORD, ***'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will surely do to you; your corpses will fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me.*** Surely ***you shall not come into the land in which I swore to settle you, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun. Your children*** (“little ones”), however, whom you said would become a prey--***I will bring them in, and they will know the land which you have rejected.*** But as for you, your corpses will fall in this wilderness. Your sons shall be shepherds for forty years in the wilderness, and they will suffer for your unfaithfulness, until your corpses lie in the wilderness.”

Moses sent out spies into the Promised Land in [Numbers chapter 13](#). They returned back to Moses and the people after forty days with the report that the land was a land flowing with milk and honey, but because of the large people who lived in that land they would not be able to defeat them. So they gave a bad report and completely discouraged all the people. And the response of the sons of Israel was:

[Numbers 14:2-4](#): All the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder; would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" So they said to one another, "Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt."

WILL WE ACCEPT GOD'S ANSWER?

At this point, God has had enough with the unfaithfulness of those that He brought out of Egypt. He decides that because of their unfaithfulness, He is not going to allow the adults that came out of Egypt to enter into the Promised Land. Only two adults twenty years and older, Joshua and Caleb, would be allowed to enter the land because they followed God fully ([Numbers 14:24, 30](#)). The questions to consider here are:

1. At what age did God hold the Israelites accountable for their sin of unfaithfulness ?

and...

2. Who did He allow to enter into the Promised Land?

He answers these questions in [Numbers 14:22-32](#).

In answer to the first question, [Verse 29](#) says “**even all your numbered men according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward who had grumbled against Me.**” Some have argued that it was only the fighting soldiers that God held accountable here and not all Israel. [Verses 2 thru 4](#) say **all the sons of Israel and the whole congregation grumbled against Moses and Aaron.** [Verse 22](#) says all

the men who have seen God's glory and signs performed in Egypt and the wilderness and put God to the test would not enter the land. **God drew a line of spiritual accountability at age twenty.** Almighty God who knows the people He created from the dust of the earth, essentially said: *I can overlook their sins and unfaithfulness from nineteen years old and earlier, but I hold them accountable at age twenty and upwards. They will not enter the Promised Land.* God held all the people accountable at age twenty. This is such a powerful section of scripture that directly addresses the subject of when God holds people accountable. It is interesting that the *only deciding factor* that God used to excuse those under the age of twenty was **their age**, NOT THEIR UNDERSTANDING. There were no exceptions. Some may ask, what is the difference between a nineteen year old and a twenty year old? You may think this question raises a good point, but clearly the God of Heaven did make a distinction between those two ages. And one thing I know...He knows all things and sees everything with perfect clarity. I can trust Him when I can't trust anyone else. In these passages we have God deciding between life and death and accountability vs. unaccountability based upon the age group distinctions clearly outlined in [Leviticus 27:1-8](#), more specifically the twenty and above age category, signifying adulthood.

In answer to the second question, God said He would bring **their children, their "little ones"**, into the Promised Land. So, what age were those children, those **little ones** from [verse 3](#)? From one day old to nineteen years old. If they were under twenty years old, they were called little ones and/or children, **and they were not held accountable by God.** It is true that the children however did suffer because of the unfaithfulness of their parents. They had to wander in the wilderness for forty years until the adults who had been unfaithful died. But God did allow them to live, enter the Promised Land, and **did not** hold them accountable for their acts of unfaithfulness to Him.

As we continue our examination of Old Testament scriptures, we would like to address the age distinctions mentioned in the accounts of Abraham, Isaac and Ishmael.

[Genesis 17:23-26](#): *Then Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all the servants who were born in his house and all who were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's household, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the very same day, as God had*

said to him. Now **Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. In the very same day Abraham was circumcised, and Ishmael his son.**

Genesis 21:1-18: Then the LORD took note of Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had promised. So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him. Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac. Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. **Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.** Sarah said, "God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me." And she said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age." The child grew and was weaned, and **Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.** Now Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, mocking. Therefore she said to Abraham, "Drive out this maid and her son, for the son of this maid shall not be an heir with my son Isaac." The matter distressed Abraham greatly because of his son. But God said to Abraham, "Do not be distressed because of **the lad** and your maid; whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her, for through Isaac your descendants shall be named. And of the son of the maid I will make a nation also, because he is your descendant." So Abraham rose early in the morning and took bread and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar, putting them on her shoulder, and gave her **the boy**, and sent her away. And she departed and wandered about in the wilderness of Beersheba. When the water in the skin was used up, she left **the boy** under one of the bushes. Then she went and sat down opposite him, about a bowshot away, for she said, "Do not let me see **the boy die.**" And she sat opposite him, and lifted up her voice and wept. God heard **the lad** crying; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What is the matter with you, Hagar? Do not fear, for God has heard the voice of **the lad** where he is. Arise, lift up **the lad**, and hold him by the hand, for I will make a great nation of him."

Let me rehearse with you the passages above. Abraham was ninety nine years old when he was circumcised and his son Ishmael was thirteen.

When Abraham was one hundred years old he became the father of Isaac. That makes Ishmael fourteen years old. When Isaac was weaned, Abraham threw a big party for him. This was a custom in those days. Being that in the United States we don't have this custom, I looked in the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia to learn more about this custom and to see what age Isaac would be when this "party" occurred. The following is a quote from the I.S.B.E.:

"To wean' in English Versions of the Bible is always the translation of (gamal), but gamal has a much wider force than merely "to wean," signifying "to deal fully with," as in [Psalms 13:6](#), etc. Hence, as applied to a child, gamal covers the whole period of nursing and care until the weaning is complete ([1 Kings 11:20](#)). This period in ancient Israel extended to about 3 years, and when it was finished the child was mature enough to be entrusted to strangers ([1 Samuel 1:24](#)). And, as the completion of the period marked the end of the most critical stage of the child's life, it was celebrated with a feast ([Genesis 21:8](#)), a custom still observed in the Orient....."

So, according to the custom, Isaac was around three years old at the time of this great feast. The Hebrew word here in [verse eight](#) for "boy" is "yeled", which means *child*. When Isaac is three years old, Ishmael would be seventeen years old (14+3 =17). *The scriptures use the same word "yeled" to describe Ishmael when he was seventeen (in verses [14](#) and [16](#)) as they did to describe Isaac when he was three years old... Child. When Ishmael was about seventeen years old, he was directly and repeatedly called a lad, a boy, a child. Ishmael and his mother were ordered to leave Abraham's household when he was still considered by God to be a child. And God took care of him and his mother and made him into a great nation. This historical account places Ishmael in the five to twenty year category and is in harmony with the age distinctions of [Leviticus 27:1-8](#). Furthermore, God instructed Hagar to "take him by the hand" and lead him where He wanted them to go. This is the kind of terminology you would expect between a mother and a child, not between a mother and an adult man.*

[2 Chronicles 34:1-3](#): Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. He did right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of his father David and did not turn aside to the right or to the left. For in the eighth year of his reign while he was still a youth, he began to seek the God of his father David; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the Asherim, the carved images and the molten images.

Josiah became king when he was eight years old. In the eighth year of his reign, **when he was sixteen**, the Bible says he “**was still a youth.**” This phrase in Hebrew is literally translated as “[he still him lad](#)”. *Still a boy*. This passage in [2 Chronicles 34](#) speaks about a sixteen year old being a child in the same way that [Genesis 21:14, 16](#) spoke about a seventeen year old being a child. Even though he was a King, it didn't make him an adult. He was a King *and a child*. **So even if you were given a position of great responsibility at a young age, that doesn't make you an adult.** This passage is also consistent with the age distinctions of [Leviticus 27: 1-8](#), which states the time span of childhood, between five and twenty years old. The reason the three above mentioned passages are significant in their application today is because we are more inclined to view our sixteen and seventeen year old kids as adults rather than children. However, this inclination is the result of mere human reasoning, not scriptural instruction. If there was a scripture which stated that a sixteen or seventeen year old was an adult, Old or New Testament, then the age distinctions of [Leviticus 27](#) would have little bearing on this study. If that were the case, I would have no problem with that. If you can find a scripture that indicates a seventeen year old is an adult, please share it with us.

In addition to mentioning what Josiah did in his childhood, the passage also mentions what he did as an adult. In the twelfth year of his reign (which would make him twenty - an adult), he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of their idolatrous practices. It is interesting to note that he did not take action to purge Judah and Jerusalem of their idols, images and high places until he was twenty. If God merely wanted us to know that Josiah was a good King and purged Jerusalem and Judah of their idolatrous practices, there would have been no need to mention the age Josiah was when he performed these acts of faithfulness. But obviously God **did** want us to know that Josiah was twenty years old when he did these things, and so his age was mentioned. So in the above cited passage we have the following facts:

- Josiah was chosen to be King at age eight
- Josiah was sixteen years old and still being called a child
- At sixteen years old the child Josiah began to seek for God
- Josiah was twenty (an adult) when he purged Judah and Jerusalem of their idolatrous practices.

It has been my experience in the church that many believe that when a young person begins to seek for God, it is at *that point* that they become accountable to God for their sins. When they start looking in a spiritual direction in their life, that means they are no longer a child and therefore are to be considered an adult. Let's consider this way of thinking for a minute. If merely seeking God makes a person accountable, then searching for God is a negative thing. After all, you would be a saved child if you were not beginning to look in a spiritual direction. But now that you are searching for God, you have become hell bound! It is important to understand that what makes a person hell bound is their sins that are not forgiven, *not their search for God*. We were created by God so that one day we would search for Him (Acts 17:26-28). The search for God and learning the gospel is *good news* because *before* you searched for Him, you were lost. The gospel is *the solution* to your sin problem; it does **not** create the problem! It is important to note that this passage indicates that when Josiah was sixteen years old, **he was still a child** even though he began to seek for God. So searching for God does not make you an adult, and it doesn't make you accountable, even though many people believe that it does.

Many people say that age is not all that important to God, and that it is certainly not what determines when someone is considered an adult "because everyone is different". However, within many historical accounts in the scriptures, not only have people been referenced as being adults or children, but their specific ages were mentioned as well; even though the accounts could have been written without those details. Since these accounts were written for our learning, what can you and I learn from them?

NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES

In reading the New Testament and clear examples of when people became Christians, the word of God indicates that adults, specifically "men and women", were baptized.

Acts 5:14: *And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to their number.*

Who were considered believers in the Lord in this passage? **Men and women**. Who were constantly being added to the number of believers?

Multitudes of men and women. Did the scripture say multitudes of men, women, and teenagers? No, it did not. So then, what about the teenagers? Weren't they considered believers to be added to the number of people in the church? Not according to this or any other New Testament verse. If someone says the children are also believers and should be added to the church whenever they feel they are ready, why didn't the Holy Spirit mention them in this passage? He could have *and would have* mentioned them as being added to the church if that's what was happening, right? Yet *clearly* He didn't, and in not mentioning them, He specifically excludes them.

Acts 8:3: *But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off **men and women**, he would put them in prison.*

A great persecution of the church began after the death of Stephen. Those behind the persecution went about looking for members of the church almost Gestapo style, entering houses and dragging off **members of the church** to punish them for their beliefs. [Verse 3](#) says they were putting members of the church in prison, but it is specific. It says "men and women". When they wanted to find members of the church, **they were looking for adults**. Not men, women, and children; which they could have and would have been doing if **they considered** children to be members of the church. But they left the children alone and went after the parents, "the adults".

Acts 8:12: *But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, **they were being baptized, men and women alike**.*

Who are the "they" that believed Philip's preaching and were being baptized? "**Men and women alike.**" Does it say men, women and children of all ages? No, it doesn't say that. Does it say men, women, and anyone that could hear and understand? No. Could this verse have said that those who were being baptized were men, women and children of all ages; those who could listen with understanding? Yes, it could have said that, **but it didn't**. Read the passage below to see just *how easily* this could have been said if that's what was happening.

Nehemiah 8:1-3: *And all the people gathered as one man at the square which was in front of the Water Gate, and they asked Ezra the scribe to*

*bring the book of the law of Moses which the LORD had given to Israel. Then Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly of **men, women and all who could listen with understanding**, on the first day of the seventh month. He read from it before the square which was in front of the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of men and women, those who could understand; and all the people were attentive to the book of the law.*

Note that in [verse 2](#) the scriptures say that the assembly was comprised of men, women and all who could listen with understanding. Looking for a way to justify their practice of baptizing children, some have applied this passage in Nehemiah to say that all who can listen with understanding should be baptized as well. They reason that older children can listen with understanding, ***and therefore can and should be baptized***. You have to want to justify your position very badly to get that type of an understanding using this Nehemiah scripture, because not a single passage in the New Testament speaks of those who were baptized as anything except men and women. The New Testament ***never once*** included those who could listen with understanding as candidates for baptism. If in [Acts 8](#) God wanted to include the baptism of children, then all He would have had to say is:

*“But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, **they were being baptized, men and women, and all who could listen with understanding alike**”.*

Oddly enough, it doesn't say that. Click [here](#) for some examples, Old and New Testament, where children *are* included alongside men and women in many different circumstances. These examples show how easily the scriptures could have included children among those who were being baptized if that's what was happening. Going back to [Acts 8:12](#), we read that those who believed Philip's preaching were being baptized, **“men and women alike”**. Weren't there any children present that heard Philip's message and believed it? Well, there probably were children there when Philip was preaching, but according to this passage they weren't among the group that was being baptized, were they? **If the Holy Spirit wanted us to understand that “only men and women” were being baptized, how else could He say it?**

In [Acts 8: 25-39](#), we clearly have the example of conversion to Christ of an adult, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship. Here is another clear passage of an adult being baptized and becoming a Christian.

In [Acts 9:1-19](#), we have the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, the Christian killer. He clearly was an adult when he was baptized into Christ.

In [Acts 22:4](#), Paul states ***“I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons”***.

In [Acts 22](#), Paul is recounting his conversion to Christ. He mentions that before he became a Christian, he persecuted Christians to the death. When he went from city to city searching for members of that way, who was he seeking out and imprisoning? “Men and women!” Who were members of the way? “Both men and women”. Did he persecute and bind men, women and children? No, he didn’t. So then, **those who were members of the way according to Paul were exclusively adults, weren’t they?** It seems significant to me that even people who were not Christians understood that being a Christian was an adult decision.

[Acts 17: 32-34](#): *Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some began to sneer, but others said, “We shall hear you again concerning this”. So Paul went out of their midst. But **some men joined him and believed**, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them”*.

Here is another clear example of adults becoming Christians, where God through the scriptures clearly mentions grown adults, a “man” named Dionysius and a “woman” named Damaris. As in the other conversion examples already mentioned, these people were clearly adults and there is no mention of a single child being baptized. And so the question comes back to us again, when is a person a man or a woman? Does the New Testament give us any indicators regarding this question? Yes it does!

WHO IS "A CHILD" IN GOD'S EYES

Luke 2: 41-52: *Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when **He became twelve**, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast; and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, **the boy Jesus** stayed behind in Jerusalem. But His parents were unaware of it, but supposed Him to be in the caravan, and went a day's journey; and they began looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances. When they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem looking for Him. Then, after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were **amazed at His understanding and His answers**. When they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You." And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?" But they did not understand the statement which He had made to them. And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, **and He continued in subjection to them**; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men.*

There are some that believe that their eight, ten, or twelve year old is, *or can be* an adult. This is how they reconcile in their mind the fact that only men and women were baptized. They mention that for girls, at the point in time that they have their first menstrual cycle, this is the point when they become "a woman". Let's consider this point for a moment. If your ten year old girl gets her first menstrual cycle (which is not uncommon), gets baptized, and then decides she never wants to go to school again, can she stay home because she is "an adult?" "That's her decision to make"? Or, if she then *chooses* to stay in school, can she opt to no longer have a designated bed time, and decide to stay out until 4:00am if she chooses to do so? Would you allow your baptized ten year old daughter to begin dating a thirty year old man, get married, smoke, drink, and do whatever she wants? After all, she's an adult right? Can't stop her!? Of course you can, and you would! The ten year old in this example is not an adult in any other facet of her life. She's not ready for ANY adult responsibilities. Why then would she be considered responsible enough to make the most important decision of her life?

When Jesus was twelve years old, the Bible refers to Him as a boy, [verse 43](#). At that point in time, do the scriptures refer to Him as a man? No, they do not. Is it reasonable therefore to consider that *any other child at twelve years old* would be more mature than Jesus himself? No, that is not reasonable. At twelve years old, Jesus knew the scriptures, He asked questions, and “amazed” everyone with His understanding and His answers to their questions. But in [verse 52](#), it says that He still needed to “grow in wisdom”. Would you say that if this were a twelve year old in your local congregation that he should be baptized if he indicated that he wanted to be? To be perfectly honest, I can’t think of a single congregation *that wouldn’t* baptize this twelve year old. After all, Jesus was very intelligent; amazing even the teachers. He’s putting the things of God first; even being willing to upset His parents by not going back with the caravan when they left Jerusalem. He was very spiritual and arguably wise beyond His years compared to other twelve year olds. Should He be baptized *if He wanted to be*? No. Why? Because He is a child and children were not baptized in the New Testament. During the age of inspiration, children were not considered lost souls in need of being saved. The scriptures say that **Jesus was a boy at age twelve, so a twelve year old is a child and not an adult**; end of story. So then, accountability is not determined primarily on the basis of what you know. It is not determined by how intelligent you are. Knowing the scriptures does not make you more accountable than someone who does not know the scriptures at the same age, does it? But accountability does have something to do with age. At twelve years old, Jesus was a very spiritual, intelligent, Son of God, **boy**.

From [verse 51](#), the scripture states that Jesus went back with his parents and “He continued in subjection to them”. Childhood is a time when children are under the authority of their parents ([Ephesians 6:1](#)). This is what God expects of them, so that’s what Jesus did. But, there was a time in Jesus’ life when He no longer was in subjection to them. Now, when I say He was no longer in subjection to His parents, I am not saying that He didn’t need to show respect for them, look out for them, and be a caring son to them. However, eventually He could speak for Himself, make His own life decisions, and be His own person. For example, read [John 9:1-34](#). This is the account of the man that was born blind that was healed by Jesus. When his parents were questioned by the Pharisees as to whether this was their son and if he was really born blind or not, his parents made an interesting statement. In [verses 20 and 21](#) it says: “*We know that this is our son and that he was born blind, but how he*

now sees, we do not know; or who opened his eyes, we do not know. **Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself**". Notice it didn't say: "He can listen with understanding, ask him." It also didn't say, "he's a very intelligent person, ask him". In the first century there was an understanding that there was "an age" when someone was considered to be "of age". At that age, they were an adult, able to speak for themselves and accountable for their own actions. There is a time in childhood when a parent will speak on behalf of their children. When the child does something wrong, the parents are contacted and expected to do something about the situation. But, there is a time when that child becomes "of age" and the parents no longer have that responsibility. The son or daughter speaks for himself or herself and answers primarily to God. When they do wrong, the parents aren't called. They bear the consequences of their own actions, whether good or bad. At this point in Jesus' life, age twelve, He was still a child and thus still under the authority of His parents. So back to Nazareth He went with them, whether He liked it or not. Therefore, even in the case of Jesus Himself, there is still complete agreement with the age distinctions in [Leviticus 27:1-8](#).

[Mark 5:21-24; 35-42](#): *When Jesus had crossed over again in the boat to the other side, a large crowd gathered around Him; and so He stayed by the seashore. One of the synagogue officials named Jairus came up, and on seeing Him, fell at His feet and implored Him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death; please come and lay Your hands on her, so that she will get well and live." And He went off with him; and a large crowd was following Him and pressing in on Him. While He was still speaking, they came from the house of the synagogue official, saying, "Your daughter has died; why trouble the Teacher anymore?" But Jesus, overhearing what was being spoken, said to the synagogue official, "Do not be afraid any longer, only believe". And He allowed no one to accompany Him, except Peter and James and John the brother of James. They came to the house of the synagogue official; and He saw a commotion, and people loudly weeping and wailing. And entering in, He said to them, "Why make a commotion and weep? **The child** has not died, but is asleep." They began laughing at Him. But putting them all out, He took along **the child's** father and mother and His own companions, and entered the room where **the child** was. **Taking the child by the hand**, He said to her, "Talitha kum!" (which translated means, "**Little girl, I say to you, get up!**"). Immediately **the girl** got up and began to walk, for*

she was twelve years old. And immediately they were completely astounded. And He gave them strict orders that no one should know about this, and He said that something should be given her to eat.

In this Biblical account, we have Jesus showing extraordinary kindness to a Synagogue official named Jairus. Jesus healed Jairus' "little" daughter. If the scriptures hadn't mentioned any age here, we could assume that this was a three year old, a five year old, or any other age that came to mind. But thankfully, the scriptures are specific. **The inspired word of God calls a twelve year old a child, a "little daughter" and Jesus Himself calls her a "little girl!"** Jesus could have said: "Woman, I say to you, get up!" Couldn't He? Jesus would know if a twelve year old girl is a woman or not, wouldn't He? Yes, He would. He made us. **And He said a twelve year old is a "little girl".** So no matter what I have thought in the past, I need to align my thinking with Jesus, unless I think that He is wrong in what He said, or perhaps He misspoke, right? In this case again, there is still complete agreement with the age distinctions in [Leviticus 27:1-8](#), confirming that in God's eyes, a twelve year old is a child.

[Acts 20:7-12](#): On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight. There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered together. And there was a young man named Eutychus sitting on the window sill, sinking into a deep sleep; and as Paul kept on talking, he was overcome by sleep and fell down from the third floor and was picked up dead. But Paul went down and fell upon him, and after embracing him, he said, "Do not be troubled, for his life is in him." When he had gone back up and had broken the bread and eaten, he talked with them a long while until daybreak, and then left. They took away the boy alive, and were greatly comforted.

We don't know how old Eutychus was, but he was obviously an older boy. The scriptures don't tell us an age. But if a twelve year old is a little girl, Eutychus was at least older than that. Was he fourteen, sixteen, or eighteen? I don't know, but the scriptures called him a "young man". So in [verse 12](#), we have the scriptures calling this young man, **"a boy"**! Here the Greek word for "boy" is "*paida*", which means: "children", or "boys and girls". This young man was obviously spiritually minded. He was gathered with Christians listening to Paul's

message until midnight, so he was extremely dedicated as well. The scriptures don't say if he was there with his family or not. **But they do clearly say that this “young man” was “a boy”.** Although he was a “young man”, **he was not an adult.** And as we have found with the other scriptures we have seen in both the Old and New Testaments, in this case again, there is still complete agreement with the age distinctions in [Leviticus 27:1-8](#).

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS AGREE!

There is no confusion Old or New Testament regarding who is a child and who is an adult. The scriptures are perfectly consistent. We would expect that from God, wouldn't we?

Although this point has already been mentioned briefly in passing, there are many that believe in the possibility that a very bright child may be accountable earlier than a child of average intelligence. In looking at whether a person is ready to become a Christian, we need to look at whether a person is able to give an account of themselves to God. *Accountability - The ability to give an account.* We will all agree that there are some that will never be able to give an account to God, the mentally challenged for example. A fifty year old person that is mentally challenged will never have the capacity to be a reasoning adult, and will therefore never be accountable to God. So, along with age, there also has to be *the ability*.

What about a very bright child or a child that is considered a “genius”? Wouldn't that child be able to give an account earlier than most? First, let me say I see no example of this mentioned in scripture. In the account of [Numbers 14](#), when God did not allow those twenty and older to enter into the Promised Land, He made no exception for the mentally bright. He didn't say that those that are twenty years old and upward *and* the exceptionally bright that are younger than twenty will not enter into the Promised Land. There certainly could have been some exceptionally bright teenager(s) among those traveling in the wilderness, right? Also, I believe that Jesus at age twelve was exceptionally bright. [Luke 2:47](#) says that *all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers*”. So Jesus was exceptionally bright, but at age twelve He was still considered a boy, even though He was able to “fend for himself” for multiple days without parental supervision. In our country, we have age

restrictions and regulations regarding many behaviors that are considered to be adult privileges. If someone in the state of New York is exceptionally bright at age eleven, do we allow them to drive? No. What if your very intelligent eleven year old *insists* they are mature enough to drive your car? They demonstrate to you their driving ability and convince you that they completely understand all the rules of the state regarding the operation of a motor vehicle. They explain to you the consequences if traffic laws are not obeyed, what is expected of them, and constantly beg you to drive your car. Do you hand them your car keys and say: “Who am I to stand in their way?” Absolutely not! Do we allow intelligent fifteen year olds to vote? No. Couldn’t they possibly understand the candidates and the issues more completely than someone who is thirty? Yes, but can they vote? No. What about a bright fourteen year old? Can they legally drink alcohol? No, they can’t. Why not? Because there is more to being an adult than just being very intelligent. With age there is time. There is life experience. There is wisdom. There is emotional growth. Becoming a Christian is a more difficult and challenging responsibility than driving, voting and drinking alcohol. It is a lifelong determination and commitment. And so, for the same reason, there would not need to be any exception for a bright child in becoming a Christian either. Why would we allow our children to make THE MOST important, lifelong, life changing, ETERNAL decision of their entire life while they are a child, but not allow them to (*in comparison*) do trivial things, such as drive, smoke, drink, or go to war if they *chose* to do so? Isn’t this inconsistent? If you apply the same reasoning that many people do regarding how they determine when someone is ready to become a Christian, then your eleven year old should be able to drive your car. And if you say that your totally capable eleven year old *shouldn’t* drive your car, *according to your reasoning*, why not? Finally, if you still think that a bright child might be held spiritually accountable to God simply on the basis of their intelligence, you need to take into consideration the many plain and basic requirements of discipleship laid out by Jesus and His apostles in the New Testament. For more on this subject, please refer to the portion in this study entitled “Discipleship”.

In continuing to establish the harmony of teaching between the Old and New Testaments regarding the question of age, there is another New Testament scripture I would like to mention. This scripture addresses the topic of Christian widows that were being placed on the support list by the local church. Although this passage doesn’t mention it specifically, these widows had a ministry where they provided help and assistance for

church members. Hence, we see the same kind of qualifications of faithfulness that we see for other types of church servants (i.e. bishops, deacons, their wives, etc). They were taking a pledge to serve Christ as a single person and choosing not get involved in a physical relationship with a man. In turn, they would be given financial support for their service ([Luke 10:7](#)). This also corresponds with bishops or overseers being paid, and some even given double pay as they serve the church ([1 Timothy 5:17, 18](#)). As we are about to see, in order to be considered for this type of service and support, the evangelist Timothy is given an age requirement to adhere to regarding the minimum age of a qualifying widow.

1 Timothy 5: 9-12: A widow is to be put on the list only if she is not less than sixty years old, having been the wife of one man, having a reputation for good works; and if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work. But refuse to put younger widows on the list, for when they feel sensual desires in disregard of Christ, they want to get married, thus incurring condemnation, because they have set aside their previous pledge.

The first qualification Timothy is given in considering whether or not to place a widow on the support list is that she must be **at least sixty years old or older**. It seems to me that we have seen that age category before in [Leviticus 27:1-8](#), haven't we? What age category is that? Old age or senior citizen. Of all the ages that God could have picked to be a cut-off point for determining eligibility, He picked age sixty. Would it be ok for the evangelist Timothy to put a widow on the list that was fifty nine years old? No. Why? After all, what is the difference between fifty nine and sixty years old? There is a one year difference and God's word says age sixty. He has that privilege, doesn't He? This is another example that leads to the observation that the age categories in the Leviticus passage are not arbitrarily chosen, but rather are stages of human development. So, whether we are looking at Old or New Testament passages, infancy is infancy, childhood is childhood, adulthood is adulthood, and old age is old age.

Now, we can clearly see multiple passages that indicate not only exactly who was baptized, but also who were considered members of "the church", "the faith", and "the way". This information was given to us during the "age of inspiration", when God through His Holy Spirit was

leading His apostles and prophets into “ALL the truth” ([John 16:13](#)). Has Christianity “evolved” so much through time that we are now willing to say that we have an even greater understanding than the inspired apostles and prophets? Are we smarter than they were? If anything, it’s safe to say that the clarity of basic principles gets more and more distorted over the passage of time, not clearer. Do we think that we can improve upon, or even omit these specific passages by practicing something different, and then think that it doesn’t matter to God? After all, hundreds of thousands of us “in the church” seem to think that baptizing children who request to be baptized is just fine, and in fact *necessary*. We can’t all be wrong, can we?

GOD DECLARES OLDER AGE FOR NEW COVENANT MEMBERS

Before we continue, I want to take a brief look into the Old Testament’s prediction of the New Covenant, and receive some inspired insight regarding who would be considered a candidate for entrance into this New Covenant relationship with God.

Please read the entire chapter of [Genesis 17](#) before you continue this study. The covenant that God made with Abraham was with Abraham and his descendants that came through Isaac ([verse 19](#)). This covenant was made with Abraham and his son Isaac **before** Sarah became pregnant with Isaac. This was a covenant that was given as a matter of birthright. When a male descendant of Abraham was eight days old, they were to be circumcised. This served as a physical sign ([verse 11](#)) of the covenant relationship that they had with God, based upon their genealogy back to Abraham. They were *born* into a covenant relationship with God. Other males that were not descendants of Abraham, but were members of his household, were mandated to become circumcised as well, or be cut off from his people. The young descendant of Abraham was born a child of God. As they grew up, they had to be taught to know God; to understand the covenant relationship they were born into, and had to learn the commandments, teachings, and ordinances of God. **In contrast to that first covenant**, Jeremiah gives us insight into the new covenant that Israel would enter into with God.

Jeremiah 31:31-34: "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their

fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

[Hebrews 8:8-12](#) quotes [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#). In contrast to the old covenant, you would not be born into a New Covenant relationship with God. Before a person could become a New Covenant member, they would ALREADY **have to know Him** ([verse 34](#)). The new covenant relationship with God is **not** one of birthright, but was a covenant **through education**. **Therefore, it was not like the old covenant.** Members of the new covenant would not have to be taught to know God, **for they ALL will know Me**, from the least of them to the greatest (whether you are a Christian for two days or for fifty years). Clearly from Jeremiah, infants and small children during the New Covenant dispensation were not to be considered candidates to become automatic members of the New Covenant. The point of [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#) is that a New Covenant member would already “know God” before they entered into a covenant relationship with Him. When you speak about “knowing” someone, you are not speaking about knowing “some things” about a person. I know some things about the President of the United States, but I don’t “know” him. I “know” my husband, my children, my friends, and my relatives. I have acquaintances that I know some things about, but I do not “know” them. Knowing someone indicates a close, personal relationship with them. You understand them; how they think, how they feel, what is important to them, what makes them happy or sad, etc. Here in [Hebrews 8](#), God says that all the members of the New Covenant would have a close, personal relationship with Him and would therefore “know” Him. In order to know the invisible God, a person would have to seek Him out. It would be necessary to spend time in His word and become His disciple. They would have to devote the necessary time, energy and effort to develop a relationship with Him, His family and His bride, the church. So, while this passage does not specifically indicate an age when someone would be able to become a covenant

member, it certainly rules out those that would be incapable of knowing Him (i.e. infants and small children).

HOUSEHOLD SCRIPTURES

No study concerning the age of accountability would be complete without addressing the subject of believing households. There are examples of conversions to Christ in the book of Acts that some have used to justify their position of baptizing children. Their contention is that in the “households” mentioned in the passages below, children were definitely present in those households, and that when the “whole household” was baptized, children were among those being baptized; although admittedly not specifically stated.

Let’s look at the following passages:

Acts 11:13-14: *And he reported to us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and saying, “Send to Joppa and have Simon, who is also called Peter, brought here; and he will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household.”*

Acts 16:13-15: *And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled. A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay.” And she prevailed upon us.*

Acts 16:31-34: *They said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household. And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household.*

Acts 18:8: *Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized.*

If you studied these verses exclusively without reading any other scriptures that spoke about conversion to Christ, you might conclude that children were baptized in the first century (even though not a single child was mentioned in any of these passages). In fact, if the above mentioned scriptures were the only examples of conversion that were recorded in our New Testament, it might appear that everyone present during the preaching of the gospel was baptized. Anyone from one day old and upward might be an acceptable candidate for baptism. **Acts 16:15** doesn't mention that *belief* was part of the equation for the members of Lydia's household (even though we know belief is necessary based on other passages). It simply says that Lydia's heart was opened by the Lord, and she and her household were baptized. So then, if someone is going to use the above mentioned passages to justify the baptizing of children that are six, eight, twelve, etc., **we will also have to apply them to the baptizing of any and all small children from one day old and upward.** You cannot avoid that conclusion. After all, two of the above mentioned scriptures don't even mention belief as a prerequisite for baptism.

But do these above mentioned scriptures negate the fact that faith is necessary for salvation? Of course they don't! Do they negate the fact that the New Testament clearly indicates specifically that men and women were baptized? Of course they don't! Do they nullify the fact that with all the clear conversion examples that we have in the scriptures, even where crowds and **multitudes** of people were present, that only "*men and women*" were baptized? No! Also, **and don't miss this**, do they negate the fact that the scriptures have never mentioned even one single child of any age ever being baptized? NO! Do they invalidate the **Jeremiah 31:31-34** passage that clearly states that even the least of God's covenant members would know Him? Of course they don't! What we can clearly see is that the above mentioned passages are inconclusive by themselves as to whether or not children were baptized in these households. In our search to understand what was practiced regarding baptism in the New Testament church among first century Christians (during the age of inspiration), we need to look at many other scriptures that further clarify and explain an overall tenor of scripture, so a more complete knowledge and understanding can be attained.

Also, consider the meaning of the word “household”. Unless it is clearly stated, does the meaning of the word “household” demand that there are little children present? No. Are there households that don’t have any children (little ones) at all? Yes. Are there households that have little children? Yes. So the word household in and of itself is not specific as to whether or not there are children present at all, unless the scriptures tell us so. For instance, we know the household of Jairus the synagogue official had at least one child, because Jesus raised her from the dead. But the above mentioned scriptures on “households” give us no specifics at all. If there were children present, then what were their ages? That’s an important question that needs to be answered if you are going to risk your eternal destiny and that of your children on the basis of a view not clearly established in scripture. Can we justify a practice of baptizing children by saying that in the above mentioned passages that children *might* have been present and baptized, even though never specifically discussed or referred to? And if they simply “*might*” have been, that we *can and should* do the same? I do not see how the belief that children were baptized in these “household” scriptures can be justified, except upon an unsubstantiated assumption, since there are no specific **facts** to prove that at all. And yet, this is the position of many within the church.

The above mentioned scriptures speak about households where **all** of the adults within it were baptized. If your concept of a Christian household means that by definition *every adult and every child* in that household has to be baptized, then biblically we are about to show you that you need to change your definition. The New Testament actually speaks of *another* kind of believing household. The last believing “household scripture” that we are going to look at describes a type of home that is considered a Christian *household* simply because one adult within it is a Christian!

1 Corinthians 7:12-16: *But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he must not divorce her. And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, she must not send her husband away. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy. Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace. For how*

do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?

In this section of scripture, the apostle Paul discusses the marriage relationship where only one spouse is a Christian. The unbelieving partner as well as the children are *definitely affected* in a positive way because of the believer's presence within the home. This passage gives specific instructions to those who are in the difficult situation of raising children while living with an unbelieving husband or wife. Before we continue giving our exegesis, we need to define some words contained in [1 Corinthians 7](#).

Holy: When people think of the word "Holy", they often envision some mystical emphasis that always indicates either some kind of supernatural power or flawlessness. However, the Greek word for "Holy" used throughout the New Testament, "*Hágios*", simply means "set apart for a specific purpose and therefore different". To illustrate this, see the following examples:

[Romans 16:16](#); [2 Timothy 1:9](#); [2 Peter 1:18](#); [2 Peter 2:21](#); [2 Peter 3:11](#); [Acts 7:33](#)

The "kiss", in Romans is not supernatural, it's simply different. The Gospel "calling" in 2 Timothy is *different* from any other calling. The "mountain" in 2 Peter looked like any other mountain, but Jesus was transformed there, and that made it different. The "ground" mentioned in the Acts 7 passage is still dirt, but Moses had to take off his shoes because God made the dirt *different. Holy*. See the point? That being said, the same word (*Hágios*) also refers to the "Holy Spirit" and "The Holy Of Holies". So "Holy" can be talking about God, the place where He dwells, or even the ground! Holy *ALWAYS* means different, but the question is to what extent, or in what way? We know that the biblical usage of the word doesn't necessarily have to be speaking of salvation, or even being sinless. Our examples above have shown that. In regard to the usage of *Hágios* in [1 Corinthians 7:14](#), let's allow the context to determine what "holy" means with respect to the children.

Sanctified: There are some that insist that when the word sanctified is used, it is always speaking about salvation. The word "sanctified" in [1 Corinthians 7:14](#) is the Greek word *hagiazō*, which comes from the same

root word as “Holy” (*Hágios*). Strong’s Lexicon defines *hagiazō* as the following:

- to render something hallowed
- to separate from profane things and dedicate to God
- to purify

In simpler terms, it means “to set apart”, “to make holy”, or “to make different”. “To sanctify” is the ACT of setting something apart and making it different, and in this case, the word has been translated in the past tense (*sanctified* as opposed to *sanctify*). The act of setting something apart can be done in various ways. For example, the setting apart of something may be initiated by a blessing, an acknowledgement, a separation from profane or common things, a consecration, by being in a certain location, by an act of purification or through ceremonial cleansing. As you will see, in the same way that the word “holy” isn’t necessarily speaking about salvation, the word “sanctified” isn’t necessarily either. To illustrate this, here are a few examples of its usage, Old and New Testament:

[Genesis 2:3](#): *God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.*

God made the seventh day *different* as compared to the other six days, by blessing it. The sanctification of the seventh day is not talking about it as “being saved”.

[Leviticus 22:32](#): *“You shall not profane My holy name, but I will be sanctified among the sons of Israel; I am the LORD who sanctifies you.”*

God, the creator of the universe, does not want to be considered just another god. The Gentiles had many, many gods. But Jehovah is different. He says here that “I will be sanctified among the sons of Israel”. God was insisting that His name not be used as a common word; that He would be treated differently (sanctified) among the people who are called by His name. This is talking about how He will be treated by his people. *Different... Holy*. He wanted them to use His name with reverence; with the utmost respect. To paraphrase, He is saying “I made you different from all the people of the earth, I chose you out from among them, and so you will treat me different from all the other gods of the people.” God wanting to be treated in a sanctified manner by his people is not talking about the topic or issue of salvation. It is talking

about showing reverence and respect for *who God is* and *what He has done*.

Matthew 23:16-18: “Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘Whoever swears by the temple, that is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple is obligated.’ You fools and blind men! Which is more important, the gold or the temple that sanctified the gold? And, ‘Whoever swears by the altar, that is nothing, but whoever swears by the offering on it, he is obligated.’”

Again, this passage is not talking about the lost or saved state of the temple gold. Jesus is saying the gold is made different or sanctified by the fact that it is in the temple, God’s dwelling. Being in God’s temple makes the gold different. It is not different on a molecular level. It is not different because it is saved and heaven bound. It is different because it has been set aside for use in the house of the Living God.

Therefore, based on the above mentioned scriptures, we can see that when [1 Corinthians 7:14](#) speaks of a “sanctified husband”, he is not necessarily a saved husband at all. In this particular case, since he is said to be an unbeliever, we can say with certainty that he is in fact not saved at all.

Unclean: The word “unclean” in [1 Corinthians 7:14](#) is the Greek word “*akathartos*”, which has two meanings.

- Not cleansed, in a ceremonial sense: that which must be abstained from according to the Levitical law. (See [Acts 11:8](#) for an example of this usage)
- In a moral sense, **not clean in thought and life**.

Regarding its usage in [1 Corinthians 7:14](#), the first definition referring to “ceremonially” unclean would not make any sense, however the second definition makes perfect sense in the context. The children of non Christian parents are not clean in thought and life. Their upbringing is not a spiritual one; it is unspiritual, worldly, and has nothing to do with the Spirit of God or His teachings. Therefore, they are without spiritual direction, and in a moral sense, they are *unclean*. They would be the *exact opposite of children that are “different”*. They would not be Holy, but rather *COMMON*, or ordinary. In the same way that the words “holy” and “sanctified” in this passage do not indicate that those being

discussed are “saved”, the word “unclean” is conversely not talking about the children in this family as being “lost” or “condemned”, but rather “common”.

Now that we have defined some key words within this passage and have come to a better understanding of what they mean, let’s look deeper to see the implications that are set before us. [In verses 12 and 13](#), the apostle Paul gives very clear direction to Christian parents with unbelieving spouses. If the unbeliever chooses to live with you, DO NOT DIVORCE THEM. He goes on to give two reasons for this directive. Reason #1 is the spouse, and reason #2 is the children.

Reason #1 - The Spouse

According to [verse 12](#), the unbelieving adult spouse has thus far made the decision to *not become a believer*. They are *not* saved. They are clearly *not* a Christian. They have no faith in Christ, and we know that “without faith it is impossible to please God” ([Hebrews 11:6](#)). However, these unbelieving mates have also made the decision to remain in the marriage. This mate who has chosen to stay in the marriage with a Christian exhibits a certain level of tolerance. They are either somewhat open to the faith of their mate, or at the very least are willing to have themselves and their children exposed to that faith on a daily basis. The Christian parent would be involved in making decisions as to what the children would believe, how they would live, and would be instrumental in shaping what type of adult their child will turn out to be. So Paul says to the believer: “If your spouse is willing to stay married to you, you must be willing to stay married to them!” The unbelieving spouse that has chosen to stay married to the Christian mate is called “sanctified” in [verse 14](#). *Their decision to stay in the relationship* with the Christian mate is what has sanctified them. Being that the word sanctified means “made different”, or “set apart”, the question is: “What does it mean to be a sanctified unbeliever?” Who or what are they made different from? Who or what are they set apart from? They are different from other non-Christian spouses because they *have chosen* to remain around or within the sphere of influence and example of the Christian mate. They are different from many people who would NEVER PUT UP WITH THAT or even be willing to have that type of godly influence around them or their children! In [1 Peter 3:1-2](#), the apostle Peter says that the Christian example is so great, and would affect them on so many levels, that they *could be won* to Christ without a word being spoken because of

the believer's chaste and respectful behavior! This is a completely different relationship than a worldly marriage relationship, and therefore the unbelieving spouse is "sanctified" or "set apart". They are "made different" by being in constant contact with their husband or wife that thinks and believes so differently than they do. So clearly, someone can be lost and unbelieving, *and* sanctified at the same time. To nail down this point one last time, [verse 16](#) says: "For how do you know, O wife, whether you *will save* your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you *will save* your wife?" The unbelieving husband or wife in this passage would not be in need of future saving *if they were already saved*. Both [1 Peter 3:1-2](#) and [1 Corinthians 7:12-16](#) discuss the situation where an unbeliever is married to a believer. It is important to note that both passages speak of the need for the *sanctified unbeliever* to be saved. ***There is no salvation through association.***

Reason #2 - The Children

The second reason given for a Christian to not leave their non-believing spouse is the children. The children would be adversely affected if the believer leaves them. It's as if to say: "Don't leave; you have to think about your children!" Children are born as "moral blank slates". The way they are raised determines the adult that they will become. "Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart" ([Proverbs 22:6](#)). That's the reason why a child born in India will probably grow up to be Hindu, but if that same child was raised in Italy, they would probably grow up to be Catholic. They are completely moldable. If the believer stays in this marriage, and the child is raised by at least one Christian parent, they are called "holy". If the believer leaves, and there is now no Christian influence on the child, there is nothing that sets the child apart from other kids with no Christian parents. This "holy child" would then become "unclean". What does that mean? If the child is considered "holy", they will *necessarily be different* from other children that are being raised in an unbelieving household. If the child is considered "unclean", it is because they are being raised by an unbelieving parent, and necessarily will be just like all other children. They will not be "different", or "holy". They will be *common*, or worldly minded, being raised without godly, spiritual values and therefore "unclean". This is *not saying* that the child raised in a home with unbelieving adults is a lost sinner in need of saving, but rather that they are common in thought and life. The bible does not teach that

children are lost souls in need of saving. Jesus Himself said: “The kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” ([Matthew 19:14](#)).

The first group of “household scriptures” that we previously listed in the beginning of the section entitled “Household Scriptures”, illustrate similar scenarios where all the adults in the households become Christians. The [1 Corinthians 7](#) passage addresses the second kind of “believing household”; the kind where there is one believer in it, along with an unbelieving, yet sanctified spouse, and children that have been “made holy”. The children discussed here are not mentioned as being believing or unbelieving, but it does mention the belief or unbelief of the married, adult couple. It is important to point out that the household described in [1 Corinthians 7](#) does NOT PUT ANY EMPHASIS ON THE BELIEF OF THE CHILDREN AT ALL. When we look at the conversion examples in the book of Acts, the children *aren’t mentioned* when speaking of those who were baptized (i.e. the “men and women” passages such as [Acts 5:14](#) and [Acts 8:12](#)). The Children *aren’t mentioned* when entire believing families were being baptized (i.e. [Acts 16:31-34](#) and [Acts 18:8](#)). When ***CHILDREN ARE mentioned***, as in [1 Corinthians 7:12-16](#), their personal faith is not only NOT DISCUSSED, but their “holiness” is dependent upon the faith or lack of faith of someone other than themselves; which we KNOW for Christians is not the case. So the question is: “What is the reason for this deafening silence?” The reason is very simple; these children have not reached the “age of accountability”. God is not holding the children responsible for their sins. This passage in [1 Corinthians 7](#) is speaking of children that have *no need of baptism*. Why would we say that? Because the only stated determining factor as to whether these children are “holy” or “unclean” is ***who they are living with, and not what they believe!*** The holiness or uncleanness of the child is based SOLELY on the decision of others (their parents); whether or not their parents choose to stay in their married relationship. *Again, it is not determined by what the child does or doesn’t do; what the child believes or doesn’t believe.* These verses do not give the children the adult status of being able to choose for themselves whether to become a Christian or not. They are clearly not accountable, but the adults *clearly are*. If there is an ***immediate need for salvation*** for anyone in this “household”, it is for the unbelieving spouse, ***not the children***. The verse says: “How do you know whether you *will* save your *wife*...or *husband*”. It *doesn’t say*: “How do you know whether you will save your *children*”, because *the children are not lost*. What makes this really powerful is that no ages are mentioned. So, as

long as someone is considered by God to be a child, they are not lost and are not in need of saving. That is why when we read the New Testament, it talks about multitudes of men and women being baptized, YET NEVER MENTIONS A SINGLE CHILD OF ANY AGE. NEITHER THE NEWBORN, NOR THE CHILD IN THEIR TEENS ARE IN NEED OF SALVATION. NEVER! In all of the “household passages” discussed before where it speaks of entire households becoming Christians, they are *obviously discussing* the accountable adults *only*. The children within *any type of household, believing or non believing*, are NOT ACCOUNTABLE! If all of the adults in a household become Christians, if only one adult within a household is a Christian, or even if *none* of the adults in the household are Christians, the children are not lost and are not in need of saving as long as they are children.

There are some that say that the children in [1 Corinthians 7:14](#) could possibly be “baptized Christians”. If that were true, why would the passage say to the believing parent that “if you leave, your children would be unclean”? Why would they be considered “unclean” at any point, whether the Christian parent stayed or left, if these children were Christians themselves? The answer is: ***they wouldn't***. Baptized believers are considered holy by God. Many passages teach that. For example, consider: [1 Corinthians 3:17](#); [Ephesians 1:4](#) and [Colossians 3:12](#). But the holiness of a Christian is not dependent upon those around them. So the children discussed here are *not considered Christians, and are clearly* spoken about in a non-baptized, non-Christian light. It is erroneous to assert or believe that since children are not mentioned as being baptized in the New Testament, that therefore a child at any age *can and should* be baptized whenever someone *assumes* that they are ready. If we approach the scriptures in this manner, we are substituting what **we can know for sure** with something **that cannot be substantiated at all!** The unaccountability of children, even including their teen years, is clearly established in both the Old and New Testaments, and once a “will or testament” has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it ([Galatians 3:15](#)).

Before we leave this chapter on “households”, I would like to mention one more topic regarding children that have been “raised in the church”. There seems to be a common, yet unfounded belief that the children of Christian parents become accountable to God sooner than the children of non-Christian parents. The reasoning behind this is that our children have been taught about the Bible and God from a young age, and therefore

“they know more” than others that haven’t been raised that way. Therefore, *early knowledge equals early accountability*. If you take that position to its logical conclusion, then the “good news” for the parents (their belief and obedience to the gospel) has actually turned out to be “bad news” for their children, since they are then accountable (hell bound) earlier than others. The scriptures in [Luke 2](#) that we previously studied show Jesus knowing the scriptures at age twelve, amazing those around Him, yet not being considered an adult at all. He is not more of an adult because He knows the scriptures; He’s still a child. As we look at [1 Corinthians 7:12-14](#), this passage indicates that the children of Christian households have *an advantage*, not a disadvantage. Truly, **if anyone has a disadvantage, it is the child of the unbeliever**. A child living with two non-Christian parents, or the child living in a home from which the Christian parent leaves, is referred to as “unclean”. A child living with only one believing parent, or the child living in a home in which the Christian parent stays with the unbelieving spouse, is referred to as “holy”. Wouldn’t this indicate that if anyone could possibly be accountable earlier, it would be the “unholy” child raised in the non-Christian household? I want you to know that I don’t believe that children raised in a Christian home become accountable earlier, or that children raised in a non-Christian home become accountable later. The Bible simply does not say that anywhere. But *if you do* think that way, or have thought that in the past, wouldn’t the [1 Corinthians 7:12-16](#) passage seem to indicate that if anyone would possibly become accountable sooner, that it would be the “unholy child” raised in the non-Christian household, since they are referred to as “unclean”? And yet, in the church, **many believe just the opposite**. Now, if you truly believe that children “raised in the church” are accountable to God earlier than those not “raised in the church”, then as a parent, wouldn’t the most loving approach be to leave your child at home? *Don’t bring them to church or children’s Bible classes!* Don’t teach them about Christ or how to be saved. After all, why put them in a position that could easily be avoided? Why jeopardize their “saved state” as a child by exposing them to the reality of hell any sooner than necessary? Even though this type of reasoning contradicts the scriptures that direct us to “train up our children in the way they should go” ([Proverbs 22:6](#)), this to be sure is the logical and reasonable conclusion to the unfounded belief that insists that “early knowledge equals early accountability”.

To be sure, the advantage for children raised in a Christian household is that they are “set apart and different” from their non Christian friends

and acquaintances. This is surely what the Bible teaches. What makes them different is the example of their parents' faith. They have learned on a daily basis how to live and practice their faith in God. They have been taught how to pray, and what to pray for. They developed a "God awareness", and were shown how to put their faith and trust in Him. Their parents demonstrated how to live as a disciple, and by example, helped them begin to incorporate those skills into their own lives. These are all blessings and advantages of being raised in a Christian family, but these things don't determine a child's accountability. What if you took that same child and placed them in a household where the mother is taking drugs, and is incarcerated or in rehab every other month? The fact of the matter is that children are children. They reap the results of their parents' choices, whether good or bad. They do not have control over their own lives. Some are blessed by the way they have been raised, and some have been cursed by the unusually difficult circumstances they have been raised in. In time, each child mentioned above will have to decide how they will live their own life when they become "*of age*". The child raised in the Christian home grew up with the good example of their parent(s), and witnessed a living model of what it means to be a follower of God. Nonetheless, when they become accountable to God to live their own lives, they will have to choose to follow Him or not. The child raised by the mother on drugs has seen the *bad example* of their parent(s), and they do not have a very clear picture of what it means to be a follower of God. They therefore have to learn from the Bible, and those adults who are already Christians. Unfortunately for them, they did not have the benefit of a godly upbringing. But one way or the other, when they become "of age", they have to make the choice to either follow in the footsteps of their mother, or choose a different path for themselves and follow God ([Ezekiel 18:14-17](#)). So clearly, the child raised in the church has a definite advantage in comparison to the child not raised in the church. That is what [1 Corinthians 7:12-16](#) is discussing!

DISCIPLESHIP - MORE THAN JUST ADMITTING "I AM A SINNER"

Sometimes I think people believe in a lower age of accountability because they don't understand what becoming a Christian really means. In the twenty first century that we live in, being a Christian or becoming one has taken on a totally different meaning than what is described in the New Testament. Through the years, Christianity has been manipulated and changed from what was taught and practiced in the word of God. The truth has been "sanitized" and changed so as to be "more acceptable" and "easier". The meanings of words, Christian beliefs, and teachings have been changed without many of us realizing it. For instance, a person may consider themselves a Christian simply because their parents had them "Christened" when they were a few months old. They consider themselves a Christian even though they have never opened up or read the Bible on their own at all. Some believe they are Christians simply because their parents were. Many believe in the theory of organic evolution, insist the Bible is a fairy tale, have adulterous relationships, curse and swear all day long, use God's name in vain in every other sentence, and still consider themselves a Christian. After all, "the United States is a Christian nation", isn't it?

Being a first century Christian, however, was an entirely different matter. In [Acts chapter 2](#), in the early days of the church, the church was praising God and "having favor with all the people". A few short years later, the church was a "sect that was spoken against everywhere" ([Acts 28:22](#)). Early in the book of Acts, we see Stephen stoned to death after preaching about Jesus ([Acts 7:54-60](#)). The church generally met in people's homes, and a little later in history, they met in the catacombs (underground cemeteries) in order to be able to worship God and escape persecution and death. Some were dragged out of their own homes because they believed in Christ. Others had their homes confiscated. They couldn't buy food in the market place. Children handed in their own parents to the authorities to be punished, persecuted and killed; and parents did the same to their own adult children. A little later in time, Christians were fed to the lions while the Romans watched as a form of entertainment. The Christians were forced to wear animal skins and were fed to wild animals. After all, there was no TV. Other Christians were dipped in pitch and lit while alive. They were then used like human candles around the Coliseum so that the Romans could still watch the "entertainment" that was going on without being hindered by darkness. History is filled with such references, and you can easily search for many

more examples and further details about the torture that early Christians were subjected to. We really can't and don't relate to this type of Christianity. This is what first, second, and third century Christianity was like, but not what we see being practiced all around us now. We want Christ without the persecution. We want salvation without having to speak to people about their souls. We want the kind of Christianity with an expensive building, classrooms, a huge fellowship hall and a gymnasium. We want the "sanitized and comfortable" type of Christianity; the type that you can't read about in your bible at all. With the type of fierce persecution that was experienced in the first century, *becoming a Christian was not a decision that was made lightly*. It is therefore *very easy to understand* why we don't see children becoming part of "this Way" in the scriptures. Many Christians suffered the loss of everything and everyone they loved dearly, including their own lives. It is in this context that we will discuss the topic of discipleship and review the following passages.

Matthew 28:19: *And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and **make disciples** of all the nations, **baptizing them** in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."*

Jesus commanded His apostles to go and *make disciples*, and to **baptize those disciples** in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Does the Bible specifically speak anywhere about "discipleship", what it is, and what attributes are necessary in order to be a disciple? Yes. So, *there is a prerequisite* to baptism. **Discipleship**. There is more to being a Christian than simply saying: "I am a sinner in need of a savior" and "I have sinned; I want to be forgiven." A young child *can* say these words. The question is whether or not they can be a disciple, and therefore a valid candidate for baptism. Jesus and the apostles didn't think so.

Matthew 10:34-39: *Jesus said "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW; and A MAN'S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who*

has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.”

Mark 8:38: *For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.*

Luke 14:25-33: *Now large crowds were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them, “If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he **cannot be My disciple**. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me **cannot be My disciple**. For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.”*

John 8:31-32: *So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, **then you are truly disciples of Mine**; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”*

John 13:34-35: *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. **By this all men will know that you are My disciples**, if you have love for one another.*

John 15:7-8: *If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, **and so prove to be My disciples**.*

Matthew 6: 12, 14-15: *And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.*

Luke 16: 13: *No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.*

Luke 6:26: *Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers used to treat the false prophets in the same way.*

Colossians 3:5: *Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.*

Let's look at the sobering qualities of a disciple mentioned in the passages listed above.

- While following Jesus and his teachings, a person must be willing to let his family members become his enemies. You must be willing to hate all of your family members, even your own life, or you **“cannot be”** His disciple. At what age can a child do this?
- Anyone who loves father, mother, son or daughter more than Christ is not worthy of Him. When following Christ, your family will make you choose between Christ and them. Christ must win or you cannot be His disciple. How many little kids **can** do this? At what age could you do this?
- Whoever does not take up their own cross and follow after Christ is not worthy of Him. Being a Christian is a self-sacrificing life. It is not one that wants to know “what’s in it for me?” Rather, it seeks to know “how can I be a servant of the living God today? How can I sacrifice myself for someone else?” A cross is an instrument of death. A disciple is willing to offer himself up to die in their service to Christ. *These are not childish concepts* – they are potentially brutal realities.
- He who has found his life will lose it, but he who has lost his life for Christ’s sake will find it. If you want to keep your life just the way it is, you will lose it (eternally). If you will give up your life, your plans, your dreams, your way of doing things, and

put Christ first, you will “be found”. A child can’t lose what they haven’t found yet! Children are still planning their lives, and certainly have not yet “found their life” in order to “lose it”. They don’t have a “manner of life” or “old self” to “lay aside”. See the following passages: [1 Corinthians 6:9-11](#), [Romans 6:6](#), [Ephesians 4:22](#), and [Colossians 3:9](#). You don’t have “an old self” without time, experience, and tons of mistakes.

- You cannot be a disciple of Christ unless you give up all your own possessions.

[Mark 10:28-30](#): Peter began to say to Him, *"Behold, we have left everything and followed You."* Jesus said, *"Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life."*

Peter left everything to follow Christ. Jesus didn’t dispute that. Yet, Peter owned a home ([Matthew 8:14](#)). Early Christians met in the homes of other Christians. Jesus’ point in [Mark 10:29-30](#) is not that you can’t own anything whatsoever, but rather that Peter’s first priority was not his home or even his family – it was following Him first, and at all costs. I wonder how happy his wife and children were with the amount of time he was away from the family. The concept of placing God first is difficult enough for adults to understand and practice, never mind a child!

- People will know you are a disciple if you imitate Christ’s love for us. Jesus allowed others to kill him so that we could be saved. He could have saved himself, but He didn’t. We are to live that example in our lives. *“Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends”* ([John 15:13](#)). Jesus laid down His life for *His enemies*, and we are to follow that example. Again, this is very challenging, even for an adult to accept and practice!

- A disciple cannot be ashamed of Christ or His words, even when mocked, ridiculed, derided, slandered, pressured, threatened with loss of property or life, or persecuted by sinful people.
- A disciple understands that they will be forgiven by God in the “same way” they forgive others! A disciple does not have the luxury of holding grudges, unless they want God to hold grudges against them.
- A disciple knows that you *cannot* serve both God and money. Although many will spend their whole lives attempting to prove this statement wrong, Jesus said IT CANNOT BE DONE! Living in the wealthiest country in the world, this is definitely something that a Christian must deal with and re-evaluate on a consistent basis. In fact, Paul said that greediness (materialism - or the desire to always want more, bigger, better, etc.) is idolatry ([Colossians 3:5](#)). Understanding the place of “things” in your life, and how they can lead to idolatry, is definitely not a concept for children; but it is one that every Christian must contend with.
- Being a disciple is not a personality contest. Jesus said: “A disciple is not above his teacher” ([Matthew 10:24](#)), and “You will be hated by all because of my name” ([Matthew 10:22](#)). The spiritual things you believe and say *will* upset people in the world, and even people who are worldly within the church. A disciple’s job is to tell people what they need to hear, *not what they want to hear*. If everyone speaks well of you, you are not telling them what they *need to hear* ([Luke 6:26](#)). False prophets tell people what they *want* to hear. Jesus told people what they needed to hear, and he was killed for that reason. They didn’t kill Him for the good works that He did, they killed Him because of the things He said. Think about it; how did it “work out” for the Old Testament prophets? ([Matthew 23:37](#))
- A disciple is surrounded by various strong temptations every day. The scriptures teach that the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour ([1 Peter 5:8](#)). We are relentlessly “set up” by an adversary that has dedicated himself to our destruction. As disciples, we are expected to be able to control our own bodies, desires, thoughts, and sensual feelings. We are directed to live in such a way that puts to death our evil

desires, and brings to life the ways and practices of righteousness. We are expected to live in such a way that the Spirit of God can bear His fruit in us.

Becoming a disciple and *then* a Christian is **THE MOST** important, life changing decision a person will ever make. Literally, their eternity depends upon it. No job, home, or personal relationship with a family member is more important, or will last longer than a relationship with Christ. A disciple's relationship with Christ lasts into eternity. The above mentioned demands of a disciple are very difficult for many adults to accept, believe, and follow. That is why "many are called, but few are chosen". It is not even rational to ask a child of any age to be accountable to such mentally, physically, and emotionally difficult standards of love, discipline, and devotion to God. That is why *He never did*, Old or New Testament. *Again, these are ALL adult concepts*. You may be saying to yourself: "When I was ten years old, I had been taught all these things and knew what I was doing. I wanted to be saved and to become a Christian." However, in order to be saved, you have to be lost! If you are not lost, yet still get baptized, you have accomplished nothing but getting wet. And if you have only "gotten wet", and now you are an adult, you need to be saved. *An unnecessary baptism cannot retroactively save you!*

An older age of accountability actually speaks of the mercy and longsuffering of God. It speaks of his mercy because childhood is a time of learning, experiencing, growing, and developing a sense of self and conscience. We learn limits, rational thinking, and reasoning. As time goes by, children have their senses trained to discern good and evil ([Hebrews 5:14](#)). God gives us the time to grow and learn without having to pay the ultimate price for our wrongdoing. Anyone with a six year old knows that a six year old "sins". They consistently "miss the mark". They take a cookie when they know they shouldn't. They lie. An older age of accountability speaks of God's longsuffering because we have been sinning all throughout our childhood. Yet, God gives us time to learn and grow until there is no doubt that when we sin, HE KNOWS we know better; *He knows* we can give the response *He* demands of all "disciples" for salvation! Instinctively, we know this, because *when we reach out in the world* to help someone become a Christian, we don't reach out to seven and ten year olds. We talk to their parents. We talk to adults, not children. But "*in the church*", when it comes to the children of Christian parents, there is a disturbing inconsistency here.

MORE EVIDENCE TO CONSIDER

Although the following scripture does not give us a definite age of accountability, it does give us a guideline to consider and ponder when we look at our children.

1 Corinthians 13:11: When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things.

The word “man” in this passage, is the Greek word “*aner*”, meaning “adult male”. Paul says that when he became an adult, he put away things that he did when he was a child. We have all witnessed in the church lots of children being baptized. There are many differing reasons why the parents thought this was the right decision. Some have taken the position that because their child has been baptized, that they are now “an adult”. Therefore, they no longer let their “adult” *child* attend children’s bible classes. Anyone who believes this has it backwards, because the bible teaches that you must first be an adult, capable of obeying the strict demands of discipleship in order to be baptized; not the other way around! So, now their “adult” is sitting in the pew next to them coloring in a coloring book, reading comic books and drinking from a juice box! They want to go play outside when church services are over. Of course they do, they’re a child. It is very clear that this “adult” has not done away with childish things. Addressing the position that states: “*Because a child performs an adult act, they should now be considered an adult*”, let’s consider the following. What if an eleven year old has sexual intercourse with a classmate? I can’t even believe that this is happening in our day and age, but working in a school district I have found that this is not as uncommon as you might think it is. Does the fact that they have participated in the adult act of having intercourse make them an adult? No. Suppose your thirteen year old goes to a friend’s house, and she and her friend go into the liquor cabinet and drink a bottle of wine together to get drunk. Does participating in the adult act of drinking alcohol MAKE them adults? No. If a young girl gets her menstrual cycle at age nine, does that make her an adult woman? There are some that say “yes” to this, which is shameful. When she is climbing on monkey bars and playing with dolls, she is practicing childish things. According to the Apostle Paul, along with any reasonable society, she is still a child. Yes, there are societies that will marry her off because they say “she is now a woman”, but it doesn’t matter what they say. She is a child. If her

parents (for whatever reason) participate in this child abuse, it doesn't make this little girl an adult. Cultures and customs do not determine right and wrong! One of the "cultural norms" of Sodom and Gomorrah was rampant and pervasive homosexuality. God fried them with fire from heaven. Remember.... Jesus called a twelve year old girl a "**little girl**". **I trust Him** over everybody else. If your thirteen year old finds your car keys and gets in the car and drives it without your knowledge, is she now an adult because she has participated in the adult activity of driving a car? No. *Be careful where **you** leave your keys!* You're the adult here. Remember how Josiah was a King and a child **at the same time**? Even if twelve year olds are physically capable of having a baby, does this make them adults? No way! If a six year old has a fight in the playground with another six year old and somehow kills them, committing the "adult act" of murder, does that make this six year old an adult? Should he be tried in court as an adult? No! Should he be punished? Of course! Should he be tried and executed as an adult *ought to be*, having committed the same crime? No. Children experiment with adult behaviors all the time. It is part of being a child. It's part of transitioning into adulthood. Some of these behaviors or acts have tragic consequences, but they don't make a child an adult simply because they have done these things. On the other hand, there are adults that occasionally commit childish acts. A thirty five year old man that plays Lego's with his nephew for three hours isn't a child simply because he is playing with Lego's, is he? Does that make him a child? No. There are adults that come home from work and spend many hours in front of a TV screen or computer monitor playing video games. Does that make them children because they are playing games for hours at a time? No. It may make them frustrating and extremely annoying to those around them, and maybe even irresponsible, but it doesn't make them children.

What [1 Corinthians 13:11](#) says is that children "walk the walk of a child". Adults "walk the walk of an adult". It is a matter of *manner of life*; an everyday way of living. The life of a child is not the same as the life of an adult. Adults put away childish things. Even an "emancipated minor" is still legally considered a minor (child), and does not have the full legal rights of an adult. It is important to note that [Hebrews 5:14](#) says: "*But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil*". Even though this scripture is talking to Jewish Christians that are already adults *who should know better*, it illustrates the fact that there *should be* a natural transition from spiritual infancy to spiritual adulthood and maturity; just

as there is a natural transition from physical infancy to physical adulthood. Although this scripture is not speaking to the subject of the age of accountability, it is addressing the concept of how someone achieves maturity. Becoming an adult is a step by step process that takes time and experience; something that a young child or even a teenage child doesn't yet have. Maturity comes from practice and training, both of which take time to develop. The ability to discern good from evil is not something we are born with. *That's why children have parents.* Since maturity takes time and practice, it therefore is not dependent upon a single act, even if that act is being "baptized". Childhood is a time for learning, experimenting, and making lots of right and wrong decisions. This enables them to develop a conscience. It is a time for figuring the world out. Men and women have gone through this process of training and survived it; coming out on the other side as adults.

Similarly, in an army, trainees are not expected to go to war until they have been fully trained. They have to go through boot camp, have their bodies physically trained to endure harsh conditions and circumstances, and learn to receive discipline from their superiors before they are ever considered *soldiers* that are ready for battle. They have to learn how to hold their rifles, and learn when to use them and when not to use them. Make no mistake about it, *spiritual warfare is no different*, and that is exactly what Christianity truly is, even though "we do not war against flesh and blood" ([Ephesians 6:12](#)). We are told that we are to put on "the whole armor of God" ([Ephesians 6:11](#)). There is rigorous training, study, and work involved ([2 Timothy 2:15](#)). Part of this training is simply enduring life while experiencing its harsh realities over a period of time, and learning from those experiences.

Now, we know that when it came to physical combat, God enlisted those that were twenty years old and older. What would make someone think that being enlisted in *spiritual warfare* ([Ephesians 6:16-17](#)) would allow a younger age of enlistment? Is spiritual warfare less demanding or more demanding? Is it easier to fight against an enemy that can be seen, or an enemy that cannot be seen? *It is always easier to fight against an enemy that you can see.* So the "catch-22" that exists within the church is that we have a more difficult type of warfare to wage (spiritual warfare), yet for those who would baptize children, there is seemingly *no regard* for the ability of those enlisted to fight in it!

Hopefully, having now established some critically important biblical principles and truths, let's return to the original discussion of a child being "baptized". A child who has been immersed in water in order to become a Christian *has not become a Christian*. They are a wet child. Their sins as a child have not been counted against them, so there is no sin to be forgiven. Tragically, the overwhelming number of children "raised in the church" fit this description. Then, when they become an adult, *they trust in that baptism that accomplished nothing*, and are not re-baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. They go on to become church leaders, teachers, deacons, elders, preachers, etc; and they aren't even Christians in reality.

THE PRECEPTS OF MEN

In discussing this topic with some, a point is brought up that I would like to briefly discuss as this study comes to a close. When you read the writings of those who are called the "early church fathers", you will notice that adults were being baptized, but also that infants and children were baptized as well. There were discussions in the second and third centuries as to why adult baptism was necessary, and also why some felt infant baptism was necessary. Actually, in a short period of time, infant baptism became the norm, and adult baptism was not as common. It is important to note that these are not inspired writings, nor were the people writing these letters apostles or prophets of Jesus Christ. They were ordinary human beings, like you and I. Their discussions of infant baptism also include their belief that sin is passed down from Adam, and eventually this became the doctrine of "original sin". Infant baptism became the answer for that man-made problem. Of course, if that is the problem of mankind, the sooner you baptize your infant the better. Many believed this idea, so they felt that in order to protect them, you should baptize your infant the same day they are born. In addressing this point, I want you to keep in mind a central theme that spans the entire Bible, both Old and New Testaments. The theme is that *people only remain faithful to God for a short period of time*. What do I mean by that?

As Moses received the tablets of stone written with the finger of God, he reads God's commands to the people. In [Exodus chapters 20-32](#), we have the account of God's people being brought out of Egypt. Please read the account. I am going to condense the message for the purpose of brevity. God calls Moses up on the mountain and tells him to command

the people to follow Him and be a holy people. Moses speaks to the people and reads the book of the covenant to them. Contained in those words was the command from God to not have any other god before Him, and to not make idols. There were other commands as well. In [Exodus 24:3-8](#), the people said: “All that the Lord says we will do”. Moses goes back up the mountain and stays up there for forty days. After forty days, God tells Moses to go down the mountain because the Israelites had quickly turned away from their faithfulness to Him. They had **Aaron** build them a golden calf, and the people were dancing around and worshipping the golden calf, saying that this idol was their god that led them out of Egypt! This is the very same Aaron who was the mouthpiece for Moses that spoke to Pharaoh on behalf of God; a leader of God’s people. It took less than *two months* for God’s people to abandon Him, even after seeing all the miracles that had occurred in Egypt. They saw God separate the waters so that they could walk through the Red Sea on dry land, and saw God come down in a cloud with lightning and thunder to speak to Moses. **LESS THAN TWO MONTHS!** Unbelievable, but it’s true. Didn’t anyone stand in the way and say: “STOP, this isn’t RIGHT”? NO! Not even Aaron! This is surely the most shocking example of people wanting to go back to what they were “comfortable with”, rather than what God had in mind for them. Whenever you have a departure from God’s way, Old or New Testament, you have God’s people wanting to slide back into their old way of doing things, whatever that was. Here, the Israelites wanted to go back to Egypt, the place that had them in cruel bondage and slavery. Hadn’t they prayed for years for God to deliver them? Yes. And what happened after God did deliver them? They wanted to go back! I guess He didn’t deliver them *the way they* wanted to be delivered. It was not a painless deliverance, that’s for sure. Unfortunately, his people were choosing to go back to slavery over having God’s freedom and His daily presence with them everywhere they went.

Unfortunately, King Solomon is another Old Testament example of this principle. When he was a newly appointed King, he asked God for wisdom so that he would rule God’s people wisely. God granted his request, and more. Solomon spoke directly with God on two occasions. He knew that God existed. He had no doubt about that. And what did he do with all his wisdom and blessings? As he became older, HE TURNED TO IDOLATRY! He left the true and living God, THE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE, and served man-made IDOLS that can’t create anything, can’t speak, and can’t do ANYTHING! See [1](#)

[Kings 11: 1-12](#). How could such a wise man act so foolishly and unfaithfully? Wouldn't you think that someone like him would *never* become a victim of such folly? Yet, he did. And when the king builds high places for idols, it is obvious that others were strengthened to do and practice the same. God's people have consistently and systematically replaced the true and living way, for the worldly and temporary. "[Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away](#)".

So, the fact that infant (child) baptism would quickly be introduced by a strong Jewish influence in the early church comes as no surprise to a bible student. It simply shows that once again, they were merely seeking to go back to their comfortable practice of infants being included as members of God's covenant. This is *no different* from many other aspects of the Old Law that they were attempting to bring into the New Covenant (religious holy days, festivals, new moons, circumcision, Sabbath observance, food regulations, etc - [Colossians 2:16-23](#); [Galatians 5:1-3](#)). God condemned them for doing this, since these practices were never meant to be permanent. They were just "a shadow" of the reality.... Christianity.

There are many, many other Old Testament examples which demonstrate the principle that people only remain faithful to God for a short period of time. Whatever their reasoning happened to be, God's people had the truth, but then quickly turned back to what made them more comfortable. We have included a few Old Testament scriptures here for those that would like to look more deeply into some examples of this concept: [Judges 2:1-15](#); [Leviticus 10:1-3](#); [Judges 3:1-8](#); [Judges 10:6-16](#); [Nehemiah 9:6-37](#). To further demonstrate the apparent *necessity* many people have to "improve upon", add to, or change God's perfect plan, we also want to bring up two New Testament passages. These two passages predict and reveal that even within the lifetime of the apostles, people would become unfaithful to God as they tried to improvise, and that this unfaithfulness would begin with the leaders of the church.

[Acts 20: 17-35](#): *From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and **called to him the elders of the church**. And when they had come to him, he said to them, "You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable,*

and teaching you publicly and from house to house, solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, bound by the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will no longer see my face. Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God. **Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.** Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes. You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me. In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

Paul warns the elders of the church at Ephesus that they themselves were going to begin an apostasy in the church that would NOT SPARE THE FLOCK. What does that mean, "not sparing the flock?" It means that the Christians under their leadership would no longer be following God, but would instead be following the man made teachings of these elders, referred to in this passage as "perverse things". The end result of this tragedy is that they and their followers would not survive! They would not be Christians! The leadership of these elders, no matter how sincere or religious they may have seemed, wouldn't be leading people in the church in the right direction, but they would become like a pack of savage wolves that would spiritually kill the Christians that were following them. Paul said he knew that this was going to happen, and of

course, it did. The fact that he said they would be speaking “perverse ***things***” indicates that there would be more than one thing taught that wouldn’t be right. The eventual teaching of infant baptism, the change in the organizational structure of the church, and many other perverse teachings crept into the church in a very short period of time. As we will see in the following passages, *not even the apostles* themselves were immune to sinning and consequently leading others astray. Thus, Paul rightly warned the church to be on the lookout for false teachers and false teachings, rebuking them when they were clearly being carried away by them.

Galatians 1:6-9: *I am amazed that you are **so quickly** deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; **only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.** But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!*

Here is another example of teachers in the church that were leading others astray. The false teachers were having their desired effects on the Christians there, because they were convincing them to desert the real gospel for a distorted one; even soon after their conversion. Paul lets us know that these teachers *intentionally* wanted to distort the gospel. Even though the Galatian Christians were taught the true gospel by an apostle, that didn’t prevent them from falling victim to a distorted one. Paul’s disdain for the efforts of these teachers is obvious. He says that if ***anyone, even an angel*** brings a different gospel, “he is to be accursed” (damned). Following the perfect pattern presented *in the scriptures* is the only way that we can determine if our practices are right or wrong; if our *gospel* is right or wrong.

As an example of this actually taking place, the apostle Peter himself was leading others away from the truth of the gospel.

Galatians 2: 11-21: *But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, **because he stood condemned.** For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of*

the circumcision. The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews? We are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles; nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified. But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be! For if I rebuild what I have once destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor. For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."

Let's briefly rehearse the history **leading up to** and surrounding this incident to see why this is such a serious issue. Peter was God's spokesperson on the day of Pentecost in [Acts chapter two](#). He brought the message of salvation in Christ to the Jewish nation. On that day, a miracle took place; the apostles were speaking fluently in languages that they had never learned. Thousands of Jews became Christians that day. From that day on, until the conversion of Captain Cornelius in [Acts chapter ten](#), the gospel was only being preached to those that were Jewish or to Jewish proselytes (converts to Judaism). In [Acts chapter ten](#), we have the account of the conversion of the first non-circumcised Gentile(s) to Christianity. It is important to note that the apostle Peter was also chosen to be God's first spokesperson to the *Gentile* world. Several miracles occurred surrounding this conversion account. These miracles occurred to confirm that this new direction was coming from God, not man ([Mark 16:20](#)). The first miracle was the appearance of an angel to Cornelius. The angel told him to send for Peter. The second miracle occurred to Peter, who fell into a trance and saw a vision. He was instructed three times in the vision to eat animals that are forbidden for Jewish people to eat. The third miracle was the Spirit telling Peter to go without any fear or reservations with the Gentile men that came to the house looking for him. As a Jew, he would not have otherwise done this.

Therefore, he was told by the Spirit that the men had been sent to him by God. So Peter went, and brought with him several Jewish men from Joppa. After Peter arrives at Cornelius's house and begins preaching the gospel to him and his invited guests, another miracle happens. All of those that were listening to Peter's message began speaking in tongues; and amazingly enough to the Jews with Peter and to Peter himself, even the Gentiles were speaking in tongues! Peter then said to the Jews that accompanied him: "We can't refuse the water to baptize these Gentiles. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have". So, Cornelius and his household were baptized into Christ. This event should have conclusively proven to anyone and everyone that the only thing necessary for anyone to be saved, Jew or Gentile, was the gospel (not circumcision + the gospel). Certainly, Peter should have understood that message loud and clear, right?

Beginning in [Acts chapter 11](#), the conversion of these Gentiles caused a lot of problems within the community of Jewish believers. The problems stemmed from the continued conviction that Gentiles could not become Christians until they first became Jews. They believed that once the Gentiles were circumcised, they could then be baptized into Christ; no problem. The problem with this belief is that THIS IS NOT THE GOSPEL. The apostles and elders in Jerusalem understood the gospel. When they heard about these conversions, they sent to Antioch a man named Barnabas to help strengthen and encourage them. Barnabas encouraged his new Gentile brothers and sisters in Christ and taught the gospel in Antioch to many people for a period of about one year, alongside his cousin the apostle Paul. He even went on an extensive missionary journey with Paul. This should have been the end of the *incorrect* teaching that insisted you must become a Jew first before you become a Christian. However, this was not the case. In [Acts 15](#), men from Judea went to Antioch teaching the Gentile Christians there that they must be circumcised according to the custom of Moses in order to be saved. Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, not wanting that cancer to spread within the church. The church in Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to speak to the apostles and elders regarding this issue. The final consensus of that discussion was simple. These false teachers that were "unsettling people's souls" by binding circumcision were not sent from the church in Jerusalem. Their message was not true, and it shouldn't have been believed or practiced. A note from the apostles and elders in Jerusalem stating this was given to Paul and Barnabas, and they returned to Antioch with it. They shared the

message to the church there, bringing those Christians great joy. Certainly, Peter, Paul, and Barnabas should have understood the message loud and clear; Gentiles can be saved without being circumcised... right? Unfortunately, only Paul got the message.

Now that we have a grasp on the history leading up to this confrontation between Paul and Peter, here are the absolutely disturbing facts that [Galatians 2:11-21](#) addresses:

Fact #1: *The apostle Paul found it necessary to confront the apostle Peter (Cephas) on the issue of Gentile salvation without circumcision.* It mentions the issue using slightly different language in Galatians, but this was the exact same issue rearing its ugly head again. It says “*he was not being straightforward about the truth of the gospel*”, and “*he used to eat with the Gentiles before certain men came from James, but now he was keeping himself aloof*”. It also states: “*If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?*” The reason Paul needed to confront Peter is because Peter was withdrawing himself from the Gentiles due to fear. Fear of what or whom? *He feared the party of the circumcision (the Jewish Christians).* These particular Jews had to be a group of very intimidating people. No one has the right to intimidate fellow Christians in order to get their way on a particular matter. This is unacceptable behavior. And yet, *their intimidation was working*, even with an apostle; with Peter of all people!

The church is the one place on earth where God’s will should be known, accepted, and practiced. “[Thy kingdom come, THY WILL BE DONE](#)”. Considering everything that God did regarding the conversion of the Gentiles, it is very clear that what this group of men were attempting to do WAS NOT GOD’S WILL. This was a clique, a division in the church that had some very serious players in it. It was a group *from James*. The church is not a place for cliques. People who want to be part of a group where they can have their will done, and have things done their way, should start their own club and become the president of it. Yet, even though Peter knew better, he still desired their acceptance. I want to make it clear that Peter wasn’t *teaching* error. He simply didn’t stand up against it. He allowed the Judaizers to continue distorting the gospel by not stopping them from bullying others into a position that he knew to be wrong. The end result of this in-action was that Peter also started *participating* in their bullying tactics. He started distancing himself from

the uncircumcised, Gentile Christians; the very Christians that God used *him* to save in the first place! The Judaizers were pressuring Jewish Christians into treating the Gentile Christians like they really weren't the same "kind of Christian" that *they* were. Their hope was that by shunning them, they would persuade them to be circumcised and "become a Christian the right (real) way". Peter *acted* in a way **that he knew** was against what *he himself* taught first on the day of Pentecost ([Acts 2:14-21](#)), **and** also when he converted Captain Cornelius ([Acts 10](#)). He gave into peer pressure. He yielded to a powerful group in the church, the "Judaizers", rather than stand with the truth. Being raised as a Jew, this would personally be a more comfortable position for him to take. In the church, Christians should never yield to what is wrong. There is little doubt that these men from James believed that they were doing the right thing. They weren't trying to be unfaithful. They were sincere in what they were doing. But being sincere doesn't determine right from wrong. They were sincerely wrong!

Fact #2: *Others joined Peter in this hypocrisy.* So here we have undoubtedly a trusted, beloved leader of God (Peter), and those that followed his example were participating in his error. Peter's apostleship did not prevent him from experiencing fear and pressure, and subsequently living hypocritically.

Fact #3: *Even Barnabas got caught up in this wrong.* Barnabas was called "the son of encouragement" in the gospels. He understood more than others in the church that what was happening was wrong. He taught against this very thing during his missionary journeys with Paul, but he didn't encourage Peter to do the right thing here, did he? No, he got carried away by the error also.

Fact #4: Peter and those following him *were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel.* What Peter chose to do was so sinister, that he was actually undermining the very gospel message that Christ sent him out to preach! It appears that none of the Christians that were with Peter understood the serious implications of his actions. Barnabas should have, but followed along anyway. Thankfully, Paul saw Peter's behavior for what it was....evil. In [verse 21](#), Paul states that *Peter's actions were nullifying the grace of God, which would make Christ's death a needless act!* So the apostle Paul had a face to face meeting with Peter because "he stood condemned". This shocking section of scripture might as well have been titled: "Aaron and the Golden Calf - Part II". There are so

many similarities between the two accounts that it's frightening. Both Aaron and Peter were spokesmen for God. Both had seen many miracles performed by God. Both were looked up to for guidance and were major characters in the working of God for the salvation of His people. Both of them knew what the right thing to do was. Both of them chose to do the wrong thing, even when so much depended upon them and their example. Peter was the one that opened the door of salvation through Christ to the world, to the Jews first, and later on to the Gentiles. He possibly could have been responsible for the closing of those doors as well.

Fortunately for the church, Peter did repent after this confrontation with Paul, and subsequently corrected this sin. Aren't you glad Peter didn't exhibit a prideful rebuttal, dismissing Paul's concerns by retorting: "Don't you know who you are talking to?" Or, "how dare you question me and my motives?" What would have happened to the church, Peter's influence within it, and the salvation of the world if Paul didn't take this brave action in front of everyone? Thankfully he did. So, the scriptures make it clear through example after example that no one is immune to sin. Anyone is capable of helping others to believe and practice error as well. Are there any "apostle Paul's" in the church today, confronting those who are in error *to their face*? Are there any "apostle Peter's" in the church today who are being intimidated by others, or are themselves intimidating others into accepting a false doctrine or practice?

The reason for bringing up this scripture in relation to our study on accountability is very simple. God ordained for there to be leaders in the church. By design, a leader has followers. However, a leader of God only has the authority to lead when and where they are following *the word of God*. No one should ever **blindly follow** anyone because of who they are. Jesus said it simply when he said: "...if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit" ([Matthew 15:14](#)). It is **up to us** to **make sure** that our guides are sighted (not blind). In the days that this incident happened with Peter, the Christians that were following him didn't have their own copies of the New Testament to compare his behavior to the scriptures the way we can today. So, even though they were without excuse, we are even more without excuse! We must not trust **any leader** in the church to decide what is right and wrong on our behalf simply because they are a leader in the church, and they "say so". We need to look for a very clear "thus says the Lord" as the basis for any teaching or practice. Just because "old brother so and so" believes in

baptizing children doesn't make it right. If every adult you know in the church says that they don't see anything wrong with baptizing teenage children, does that make it right? Remember, truth is not determined by the number of people who believe it. The New Testament writings are our guide so that we won't be lead into apostasy. They are a perfect pattern for all time ([Jude 1:3](#)); a standard of faith that forever enables us to recognize both truth and falsehood when we see it. The moment we leave the scriptures to believe anything of a spiritual nature, we step into the realm of "perverse things" that ultimately don't spare us or the flock. Why do we insist on making the same mistakes over and over again? Why do we fall into the same trap that God's people have continually fallen victim to throughout the centuries; substituting the truth for a lie, and what is real for what is fake? There is a saying that goes something like this: "Those that don't know history are doomed to repeat it". We need to learn these lessons of history so that we can stop falling into the same pit-falls time and time again.

DO YOU HAVE A DECISION TO MAKE?

After you read this study, if you are convinced that you need to be baptized into Christ for the remission of your sins, a logical first step may be for you to speak with church leaders or people who you trust where you are a member. *But be careful!* They may tell you that you can be baptized "again", yet try to discourage you because they don't see any need for it. They may tell you (without any scriptural reference) that being baptized as a teenager or younger is totally fine, *for any number of reasons*. Some have even used subjective methods of intimidation, by saying things like:

- "Do you realize what **you** are saying?"
- "Don't you understand that **you** are condemning most of the people who attend church here?"
- "What about 'so and so'? He was baptized as a child and now he's dead! Are **you** saying he is in hell?"
- "I was baptized when I was twelve... are **you** saying I'm lost?"

Could they possibly be posing these questions because they never really studied this subject? Could they simply be reiterating what they have heard others say? Could they be giving into peer pressure just like Peter, in an effort to not “make waves” by “needlessly upsetting” people in the congregation? Could it be possible that they have been swept away by the hypocrisy of others without realizing it? It is important to note that **none** of above bulleted questions deal with the biblical evidence. They do however perfectly represent some of the intimidating tactics that **you will** undoubtedly encounter when presenting the information in this study to those who baptize children. These types of questions are also entirely unhelpful in determining the state of your salvation, *or anybody else’s!* Our faith is NOT based upon the opinions of men; it is based upon proper obedience to the Gospel. *Isn’t it?*

You need to remember that if you were baptized as a child and therefore **need** to be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins as an adult ([Acts 2:38](#)), your eternal soul is in the balance. So the all important question is: “*Will you act upon the passages that you have read in this study, or will you instead do nothing simply because it is an easier or more comfortable path to take?*” If you choose the latter option, you may be following the example of many in the bible who have done just that; but the end result was not good for them ([Matthew 15:14](#)).

CONCLUSION

We submit to you that children are not said to be HELL BOUND – NOT EVER! *The Kingdom of heaven BELONGS to them.* If anyone is going to heaven, the children are! Isn't that what this passage in [Matthew 19](#) means?

[Matthew 19:13-15](#): *Then some children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, “Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” After laying His hands on them, He departed from there.*

In a general sense, children naturally want to do the right thing. They want to please their parents. “*Children obey your parents in the Lord for this is right*” ([Ephesians 6:1](#)). Notice it doesn't say: “Children obey the Lord”. This passage says that children are accountable to their

parents and not directly to God *when they are children*. The authority figure in a child's life is their parent, who they *can see*; not God, who is invisible and cannot be seen with human eyes. In the denominational world, Jesus has often been described to children as "their special, invisible friend", almost putting Him on the same plane as "The Tooth Fairy" and "The Easter Bunny". Heaven forbid... At age twelve when Jesus thought He should be in the temple serving His Father, Mary and Joseph came along and basically said: "This is not going to fly". He then went back home with them. Parents are in control and are responsible for their children until they are old enough to take on that responsibility and accountability for themselves – when they become an adult. This was true even in the case where the boy Jesus was concerned. I hope that you will give this point a lot of thought and consideration, because it is a powerful one.

So then, let's say that YOU were baptized when you were nineteen years old or younger. Should you get re-baptized? Yes. It is true that there is no scripture in the New Testament that says: "Baptize someone on their twentieth birthday". However, it is also true that since men and women were baptized, when someone becomes a man or a woman, this is the time for them to be baptized (assuming they meet the other criteria for belief, repentance, discipleship, etc). So, on your twentieth birthday would be a good place to start!

We also know that re-baptism is scriptural ([Acts 19:1-5](#)). When the apostle Paul was in Ephesus, he found some disciples that were immersed in water, but had not received the baptism of Christ. These disciples had been baptized with John's baptism. Although John's baptism was an immersion in water for the forgiveness of sins, it was an Old Testament baptism that was no longer in effect. The New Testament came into effect at the death of Christ. A new will (covenant) necessitates the death of the one who made it ([Hebrews 9:16](#)). Under the New Covenant, there is only one baptism ([Eph 4:5](#)), so after Paul spoke to these disciples, he baptized them into Jesus Christ. Someone may say: "But they had been immersed in water already, wasn't that good enough?" No, **the reason for their baptism was NOT RIGHT**, so they needed to be immersed into Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. The *reason why* you are baptized matters. Therefore, if the reason for your immersion was not right, you must be baptized into the death, burial and resurrection of Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. If you believed you were already saved before your baptism, your baptism was not the

“one baptism” into Christ that the New Testament speaks of; the one which is necessary in order to receive the forgiveness of sins ([Acts 2:38](#)). In this case, you need to be re-baptized to be saved. If you were baptized as a child, you had no sins held against you that needed forgiving. So now that you are an adult, the time to make it right is *now*! Really, what do you have to lose? Maybe pride. What else? On the other hand though, you have eternal life to gain. It is not at all an unbiblical concept to make your “calling and election sure” ([2 Peter 1:10](#)). It is our prayerful hope that if after reading this short book you feel that you were baptized too young, or you believed you were already saved before you were baptized, that you ACT ON IT. Do not let time and circumstances distract you. Become baptized into Christ as an adult, so that there is no reason to doubt where you will spend eternity. You have nothing to lose, and everything to gain.

If you feel that we have spoken anything unscriptural, please feel free to email us with an intelligent, scripture based response at isthebiblesilent@gmail.com. We are willing to listen and consider any evidence presented. Our position, which we believe is closely aligned with the scriptures, is one of mercy and fairness. The other position (which would require children to be baptized) leads to the unmerciful conclusion that many children, even very small children who die outside of Christ, are going to hell eternally.

On a side note, I want you to know that all three of my children were later re-baptized into Christ when they were in their twenty’s. I also want you to know that our beautiful daughter-in-law Stacy, Brian’s wife, was also re-baptized as an adult in a bathtub. Although we miss her more than words can say, we know that she is now living in the Paradise of God, in a beautiful land of rest, free from all suffering and pain. I know that Stacy knows she made the right decision when she was baptized as an adult. According to what we can clearly see in the scriptures, my children and Stacy had just “gotten wet” earlier. We are very thankful that they did not continue trusting in a baptism to save them that wasn’t necessary or Biblical. Praise God! It is our hope that this study has somehow touched your heart and mind, and encouraged you to further seek out the truth found in God’s word. May God bless you.

SCIENTIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

In our studying this subject, we came across some scientific information on the human brain that we wanted to make available to you. In particular, scientists (who have no interest in spiritual matters per se) have studied the human brain from infancy to early adulthood, using MRI's in a decade long study of brain development. Although in the recent past it was felt that the human brain stopped growing at a fairly early age, more recent tests have shown that the most intricate functions of the brain consisting of judgment, self control, reasoning, and problem solving develop *last*, and are not complete until a person is in their early twenties. Please see the below articles for more information. We are not saying that the following information is inspired or infallible, but it is interesting that science also corroborates the fact that a teenager's brain is simply not done being formed yet. In their own words....

*"It's sort of unfair to expect teens to have adult levels of organizational skills or **decision-making** before their brains are finished being built..." Jay Giedd, M.D. - Chief of Brain Imaging at the Child Psychiatry Branch of the National Institute of Mental Health*

http://www.edinformatics.com/news/teenage_brains.htm

http://www.actforyouth.net/resources/rf/rf_brain_0502.pdf

http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/publishing/criminal_justice_section_newsletter/crimjust_juvjus_Adolescence.authcheckdam.pdf

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~news/releases/2006/02/06.html>

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/the-teen-brain-still-under-construction/complete-index.shtml>