

Genesis 17; Lord's Day 27

THE BAPTISM OF BELIEVERS' CHILDREN

1. The Biblical basis.

1. First, children are included with their believing parents in the covenant and in the Church.
2. Second, God's promise of redemption and forgiveness is directed to children as well as to adults (Luke 18:15,16).
3. Thirdly, God promises the Holy Spirit, the author of faith, also to His called children of believers (Acts 2:38,39).
4. As infants they partake of condemnation in Adam without conscious knowledge, so they can partake of God's grace without conscious knowledge (cf. Ps. 139:13; Jer. 1:3; Luke 1:15; Mark. 10:13-16).
5. The infant of a faithful believer is baptized not because of its response, but because God promised to be the God of His people and of their children (Gen. 17:7 and Acts 2:39).

• The Biblical practice.

1. The apostles practiced the baptism of new believers and their household.
2. Water baptism, like circumcision, is commanded of us; it is not an option.

• There is the difficulty that not all the children of believers are saved.

1. Serious errors have arisen in the attempt to deal with this difficulty.
2. First, our not knowing who are elect and regenerated does not affect the practice of baptizing because God commands us to do so, whether professing adults or the children of professing believers.
3. Second, Scripture answers this problem by pointing to the Israelites who did not believe (Romans 9:1-8).

• The biblical responsibility.

1. In obedience to God's commands we baptize and we teach them the truth along with the command of God to obey.

2. Teach our children to consider themselves saved only in the way of their believing and repenting.
3. Constantly praise God for His goodness to us and our children, praying He will not cut us off in our generations.