



INFANT BAPTISM

Where is that in the Bible?

John 3:5 ... Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the **kingdom of God**

Christians have baptized infants since the earliest times, and there are solid biblical principles on which this practice is based.

Catholic Perspective

Jesus spoke of baptism as a second birth. Paul tells us that Baptism removes the stain of original sin (Rom. 5:15) and in the case of older persons it also removes actual sin. This new birth through baptism is salvific (Titus 3:5, 1 Pet. 3:21), giving us new life, and incorporating us into the Body of Christ.

Jesus calls everyone to baptism. This includes infants, who need original sin removed from their souls. There is no biblical prohibition against infant baptism. Moreover, infant baptism was an accepted practice in the early Church.

Common Objections

—BABIES CAN'T MAKE AN ACT OF FAITH.

REASONING

An adult should decide to be baptized when one becomes of age. Babies can't make an act of personal faith.

RESPONSE

Although infants can't make an act of personal faith, they bring to baptism the faith of their parents (or

those who bring the child to baptism). Benefiting from the faith of others is not unjust. In Matthew 9:2, a paralytic is healed because of the faith of his friend, and in his First Letter to the Corinthians, Paul testifies to the sanctifying faith of spouses and parents (7:14).

Furthermore, circumcision in the Old Testament was applied to infants and adults as a sign of personal faith in the Messiah promised to Abraham. In the New Testament, baptism is "the circumcision of Christ" applied to infants and adults as a sign of personal faith in Christ (Col. 2:11-12).

—THERE ARE NO BIBLE VERSES THAT REFERENCE INFANT BAPTISM.

RESPONSE

Several biblical passages refer to the baptism of whole households and families. In Acts 2:38, Peter tells a gathered crowd, "Repent and be baptized every one of you." In Acts 16:15, Lydia is baptized "with her household." In Acts 16:33, a jailer is converted "with all his family." And in 1 Corinthians 1:16, Paul mentions that he baptized "the household of Stephanas."

Certainly, children were included in these baptisms, since they were counted as members of the household.