

The Age of Accountability

Introduction:

1. Having studied the finished work of Jesus Christ this morning, we can and should study this subject.
2. It is our privilege from heaven to take the word of God and destroy the vain strongholds of heretics.
3. If Elijah could have fun at the expense of Baal worship, we shall have some fun against this idolatry!
4. Man's presuppositions are Legion in order to make God and salvation "fair," though all the reasoning and rationalization in the world cannot help at all to identify the truth, which is known only by revelation – the written record God has given of His will and deeds (Is 8:20; II Tim 3:16-17).
5. It is amazing ... and blasphemous ... for people to reason by feelings what constitutes God being fair.
6. How can clay argue with a Potter, especially with a deceitful and desperately wicked heart (Jer 17:9)?
7. When the emotional and sentimental elements of grieving parents are added to the mix, false teachers and Rome's priests have invented all sorts of convenient doctrines to comfort their silly women.
8. It is disgusting to read the modern drivel about children being so important to society, as when there is an accident or fire, and the only statistic that seems to matter is how many children were involved.
9. Children are not any more special or deserving of God's grace than adults, just take a moment to consider the Flood, Egypt's firstborn (Ex 11:5), chastening Israel (Deut 32:25; II Kgs 18:12), the Canaanites (Num 31:17; Deut 2:34; 3:6; 20:16; Josh 11:14), the Amalekites (I Sam 15:3), David's infant son (II Sam 12:14-15), 42 children (II Kgs 2:23-24), Psalm 137:9, etc., etc.
10. I withheld an excellent book on child training by the Pearl's for their heresy about children and sin.

What Is It?

- A. Since most teach eternal life is conditional based on deciding for Jesus, the question arises, "What about babies?" The age of accountability was invented to get all babies into heaven, since women will reject preachers who do not preach all dead babies into heaven.
- B. The "age of accountability" is a manmade age i.e. 13 or 20 that determines whether a person goes to heaven based on their innocence (babies and children under that age) or based on conditional salvation by deciding for Jesus as Saviour (children above that age and adults).
- C. Those not deciding for Jesus as Saviour after the age of accountability go to the lake of fire, even though they would have gone to heaven, if they had died before reaching that age.

How Did It Originate?

- A. It originated with the heretical premise that eternal life hinges on man's free-will decision, which then requires other heresies to cover its inconsistencies with the word of God.
- B. It originated in the same way baptism of infants, baptism by sprinkling, baptism by pouring, baptism of desire, baptism of blood, baptism for the dead, private baptism, and intrauterine baptism originated, by swallowing the false premise that baptism is necessary for salvation.
 1. Once a person believes baptism is necessary for salvation, logical gymnastics will follow.
 2. Many children once died in infancy or childhood, so baptism of infants was invented.
 3. Immersion can be difficult, so affusion (pouring) or aspersion (sprinkling) were invented.
 4. Miscarriages happen to many women, so intrauterine baptism was invented for women.
 5. Because water may not be available for baptism, baptism of desire is done by faith only.
 6. Because water may not be available for baptism, baptism of blood is done by martyrdom.
 7. A baby may be dying, so private baptism without any parental approval was invented.
 8. Because many relatives were born before Joe Smith, baptism for the dead was invented.
- C. It originated just like Limbo, because a place for infants dying without baptism was needed.
- D. It originated the same as the immaculate conception of Mary to approximate the virgin birth.

What Does the Bible Say?

- A. The age of accountability was 20 in Israel, which were those numbered for war (Num 14:29).
 - 1. Numbers begins with the numbering of all the tribes from 20 years upward (Num 1:1-3).
 - 2. Because the nation refused to take Canaan, God used 40 years to kill all these 20+ adults.
 - 3. This age of 20 has nothing to do with eternal life at all. It was merely useful for Moses.
 - 4. Moses called those under 20 little ones and children, not knowing good or evil (Deut 1:39; Num 14:31), which is a general reference to children before majority (Jonah 4:11).
 - 5. We describe children or youth with all sorts of limiting terms, indicating their immaturity and lack of knowledge and experience, not their total incompetence or moral inability.
- B. In Moses' tax system, the age divisions were 5,20,60, which made 4 divisions (Lev 27:1-8).
 - 1. The proportionate tax indicates the value of various ages and sexes for comparisons.
 - 2. However, 5 or 20 or 60 have as much validity as any other for eternal life, because eternal life is not under consideration here in any way, shape, or form.
- C. Paul taught that sin and death passed on all from Adam, even over those between Adam and Moses who did not have the Law, even babies and others without any laws (Rom 5:12-14).
- D. All die in Adam. When are we in Adam (I Cor 15:22)? At conception. Consider miscarriages.
- E. David declared he was conceived in sin and shaped in iniquity in his mother's womb, which indicates an age of accountability of nine months before birth, or at conception (Psalm 51:5)!
- F. David further declared that the wicked go astray morally with lies right from birth (Ps 58:3).
- G. Nothing born of a woman can be clean before God, for all our sinners (Job 25:4-6; 15:14-16).
- H. Children are responsible for their actions and to be judged according to them (Prov 20:11).
- I. God could have saved Sodom for all the "innocent" children, but He did not (Genesis 18:32)!
- J. The character of man, without any regard for age or mental ability, is entirely corrupt and under the reigning power of sin and death (Rom 3:9-18; 5:19-20; Eph 2:1-3; Titus 3:3).
- K. Salvation is based entirely on the good pleasure of God's own will, not on age or any other factor of human character or action (John 1:13; Rom 9:15-16; Eph 1:3-12; II Tim 1:9; etc.).
- L. Men are accountable even for sins of ignorance, as under Moses (Num 15:28; Ps 19:12-13).
- M. There are no child or youth programs in the Bible, indicating Paul's lack of concern about any age; he and the other apostles addressed adults without the modern inventions for youth.

Why It Cannot Be True?

- A. Babies and children continue to die, just as they always have, because they are definitely accountable and considered as sinners in the sight of God (Rom 5:12-14; Psalm 51:5; 58:3).
 - 1. The wages of sin is death; sin causes death; babies are sinners before God (Romans 6:23).
 - 2. They die by the millions in the womb through miscarriages before they can even be born.
 - 3. They die in infancy, childhood, immaturity, idiocy, and so forth without any distinction.
- B. If Psalm 51:5 and 53:8 are true, the age of accountability is at conception, sometime before 13 or 20, for these two texts describe unborn and just born infants as iniquitous sinners!
- C. If children under 13 or 20 are not accountable, then parents must stop reproofing or beating them, for they are not accountable for their actions (Proverbs 13:24; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; etc.).
- D. A decision does not make us sinners, for we are sinners by the first Adam; and a decision does not make us righteous, for we are made righteous by the second Adam (Rom 5:15-19).
- E. No one is saved by age. Salvation is only by the free grace of God in the choice of His will for the praise of His glory, so any scheme allowing sinners into heaven apart from God's will is patently false (John 1:13; Rom 3:23; 9:15-16; Eph 1:3-12; II Tim 1:9; Titus 3:3-7; etc.).

What Are Its Logical Consequences?

- A. Loving parents should euthanize their children before the age of accountability to save them from hellfire; they can then confess murder for a good reason and end up in heaven as well. Confessing the sin of murder is nothing compared to a child ending up in the lake of fire!
- B. The most successful evangelistic tool with the most new names in the Book of Life are the abortion clinics, since every aborted baby goes to heaven before it grows up to go to hell.
- C. If the above is true, then Flood, Egyptian, and Canaanite babies and children were elect, though their parents were not, and God's judgment was actually the means of their salvation.
- D. Since all babies go to heaven according to this scheme, then only elect babies miscarry and only elect infants and children die, which has no foundation in the Bible at all.
- E. If the above is true, then God's choice to let saved babies become unsaved adults is cruel.
- F. If the age of accountability is 13 or 20, then decisions under 13 or 20 cannot be valid for accepting Jesus, yet this is the age group where decisions are stressed and programs invented.
- G. Sunday School, Junior Church, AWANA, Joy Clubs, and other inventions are a horrible travesty, for its purpose is to extract decisions from children before the age of accountability!
- F. If all babies are saved, and you cannot lose your salvation, then why are not all adults saved? In other words, how did these babies lose their salvation, since they were once safe in Christ?
- G. If you saved by age, then you are not saved by a decision for Jesus; if you are saved by a decision for Jesus, then you are not saved by age. You cannot have it both ways.
- H. The "age of reason" is not the issue, for the heart is the problem; the problem with infants is not their inadequate reasoning, but rather their depraved hearts (Ps 10:4; Jer 17:9; Rom 1:20).

What about Objections?

- A. Why does Romans 9:13 say Jacob and Esau had not done any good or evil in God's plan?
 - 1. God had made the choice between Jacob and Esau before any actions by the two boys.
 - 2. In the womb they had no actions as of yet, though both sinners in Adam and both ready to speak lies at birth (Ps 58:3), because God's choice was as a Potter over the same clay.
 - 3. Compare to John 9:3, where the elliptical construction indicates God's sovereign choice.
- B. Why does Matthew 19:14 say that the kingdom of heaven is made up of little children?
 - 1. The idea that this passage fills heaven with miscarriages and babies is far from its intent.
 - 2. The children here were believers, so they are past the age of accountability (Matt 18:6).
 - 3. The Lord's lesson is to teach adults on earth to act with the humility and trust of children.
- C. Why does Deuteronomy 1:39 say that those under 20 do not know between good and evil?
 - 1. This passage cannot contradict Psalm 58:3; Proverbs 20:11; 22:15; and related verses.
 - 2. This is a general description of the vanity of children and youth (Isaiah 7:16; Jonah 4:11).
- D. Why does II Samuel 12:23 say that David would go to see his young son that had just died?
 - 1. This text does not teach all babies in heaven, and it should not be used for such comfort.
 - 2. David was a prophet and a man after God's own heart, whose son was saved by grace.
 - 3. David could have met nothing more than the grave, where all men meet after death.

Conclusion:

- 1. The age of accountability is conception! When all men are permanently in Adam and accountable for his sin and their sin nature and their sins that begin immediately at birth at the latest.
- 2. Stop thinking about what is fair ... about your children ... about having your eternal destiny in your hands ... and leave them in the hands of the Potter, Who is infinitely just. There is no unrighteousness with God. Put your trust in your faithful Creator, Who cannot do wrong (Deut 32:4; I Pet 4:19).

3. The blessed God is a great Savior, Who saved John Baptist in his mother's womb and filled him with the Holy Ghost, which caused him to leap for joy when meeting Mary and Jesus, and He is just as able to save any other child or adult of any age or condition (Luke 1:15,39-47). Trust Him.
4. The LORD made all things for Himself and His pleasure (Pr 16:4; Rev 4:11). Leave everything there!

For Further Study:

1. The study, "Unconditional Salvation," ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/bible/salvation/unconditional/seven-proofs.htm>.
2. The study, "Five Phases of Salvation," ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/bible/salvation/when-were-you-saved.htm>.
3. The sermon outline, "The Two Adams," ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/two-adams.pdf>.
4. The sermon outline, "The Book of Life," ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/book-of-life.pdf>.
5. The sermon, "Why Preach the Gospel?" ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/why-preach-the-gospel.pdf>.
6. The sermon, "Was Cornelius Saved?" ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/when-was-cornelius-saved.pdf>.
7. The sermon, "John 3:16 Revisited," ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/john-3-16-revisited.pdf>.
8. The sermon, "Once Saved, Always Saved," .. <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/once-saved-always-saved.pdf>.
9. The sermon, "Salvation By Works," ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/salvation-by-works.pdf>.
10. The Catholic Encyclopedia about intrauterine baptism ... <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02258b.htm>.