
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: **Are all people innocent at birth?**

Once I did a Google search on the phrase “Age of Accountability.” I was surprised to see so many articles on the web which denied the Bible taught an “age of accountability.”

The “age of accountability” is a doctrine which says babies are born innocent and pure. If they should die, they would not be lost in hell or suffer torments because they *ARE* innocent and pure and God only sends lost sinners to punishment. In time each child begins to grow and mature and eventually reaches an “age of accountability.” Now they are considered accountable for their actions. Now if they do something sinful or wrong it will be held against them.

Those articles on the internet which deny the doctrine of the “age of accountability” are written by Calvinists. Calvinists believe that babies are born in sin. They believe babies inherit the sin of Adam – that it is passed on from one generation to the next. Although Calvinists rarely say this, they actually believe babies who die are lost and deserve to go to hell unless they are one of the elect. No one but God knows if a baby is elect. Therefore, no parent could ever know if their child went to paradise or if they went to torments.

So the question before us is simply this: **Does the Bible teach babies are born into a state of innocence?** The answer to this is most emphatically **yes**.

Jonah 4:11

¹¹ And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left ...

God did not want to destroy the city of Nineveh because, by destroying it, 120,000 people who could not discern between their right hand or their left would die in the process. This refers to children and others who are not mentally responsible. In other words, this refers to innocent people.

Deuteronomy 1:39

³⁹ 'Moreover **your little ones and your children**, who you say will be victims, **who today have no knowledge of good and evil**, they shall go in there; to them I will give it, and they shall possess it.

“no knowledge of good and evil” – a reference to innocent souls who are not accountable.

These little ones had no knowledge either mentally or experientially about good or evil. They were innocent from birth.

Isalah 7:16

¹⁶ For **before the Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good**, the land that you dread will be forsaken by both her kings.

Again, this passage envisions a time in childhood when the child is not accountable.

Ezekiel 28:15

¹⁵ You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you.

Here God was speaking to the King of Tyre. He, like everyone else, was born innocent, but eventually reached an age when God held him accountable for his actions.

Matthew 18:2-3

² Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them,
³ and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

“a little child” – not sure how *“little”* this child was, but the point is, he was innocent and not corrupt with sin already.

Matthew 18:10

¹⁰ "Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven.

This passage is sometimes used to teach "*guardian angels*." However, the word "*angel*" is sometimes used to simply mean the spirit of a person:

Acts 12:15

¹⁵ But they said to her, "You are beside yourself!" Yet she kept insisting that it was so. So they said, "**It is his angel.**"

"his angel" – here the word "angel" is referring to Peter's "spirit."

Putting this together with Mt 18:10 means that when little children die, their "*angels*" (i.e. "*spirits*") go immediately to heaven and "*behold the face of the Father.*"

The point is: Children are innocent and fit subjects to enter directly into heaven when they die.

Matthew 19:13-14

¹³ Then little children were brought to Him that He might put His hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴ But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

"of such is the kingdom of heaven" – Jesus meant the society of heaven is composed of people like little children. Jesus could not have said this if children were depraved and corrupted with sin.

Romans 9:11

¹¹ (for **the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil**, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls),

This describes Esau and Jacob. One was chosen and one rejected as the father of the Jewish nation before either reached an accountable age.

These type of passages are all saying: *There is an age of innocence.*

FOOLISHNESS IN THE HEART

Although little children are innocent, they have foolishness in their hearts:

Proverbs 22:15

¹⁵ **Foolishness** is bound up in the heart of a child;
The rod of correction will drive it far from him.

“Foolishness” – *not sin* – an important difference. A rod can drive out the foolishness, but a rod cannot drive out sin.

Children learn foolish things that will eventually lead to sin, but they are not held responsible before God yet.

Parents are urged to use a “*rod of correction*” to drive out the foolishness while the child is still “*teachable.*”

I used to drive a school bus for insurance. I can assure you of two things:

#1: *Foolishness permeates elementary school children.*

#2: *Evil begins in middle-school – when children reach puberty.*

One final passage will suffice for this present study:

Romans 7:9

⁹ I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.

Paul is here speaking of himself. Early in life (as a child) he was alive without the law – i.e. he was unaccountable to the law.

“when the commandment came” – Paul reached an age when he became accountable to the law. The law now applied to him personally.

“sin revived” – “*sin sprang to life*” – **not** “*revived*” as though sin were present all along (Calvinism).

So, Paul was innocent, but he reached an “*accountable age.*” No, people are not born sinners. They are born innocent.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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