

Newspaper Article on Infant Baptism

The following is the Newspaper article mentioned in my book, *Church Doctrines: Right or Wrong? (You Decide)*, and my response.

The first article appeared in the Baxter Bulletin Newspaper of July 21, 2007, Mountain Home, Arkansas.

Infants can benefit from baptism

From David A. Kapler, Pastor
Trinity Lutheran Church,
Mountain Home:

In Huch Kusner's "Calvary Corner" on Saturday, June 30, he wrote, "Babies are unable to repent of anything, and there is nothing in scripture instructing us to baptize infants." Huck referred to Acts 2:38, where Peter was speaking primarily to adults.

There Peer told the people, "Repent and be baptized every one of you." Since baptism is "for the forgiveness of your sins," a person who believes God's promise of forgiveness in baptism will repent of his sins.

Those who are not aware of their sins, however, are not omitted from the blessings of baptism. In his great commission, Jesus instructed us to "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

Babies are part of all nations. Jesus puts no further restrictions in his institution of baptism beyond that. In Acts 2, Peter continued in the next verse by saying, "This promise (forgiveness of your sins through baptism in Jesus' name) is for you and for your children." And on a number of occasions in the early Christian church, entire households were baptized (see Acts 16:15 and 33).

Through baptism, the Lord pours out numerous blessings on people from all nations: salvation (1 Peter 3:21 and Titus 3:5), forgiveness/cleansing/washing away of our sins (Acts 2:38, Ephesians 5:25-26), God's pledge that we can have a good conscience toward him (1 Peter 3:21), rebirth into a life of faith that trusts in Jesus, redeeming grace (Titus 3:5-7), the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38 and Titus 3:5), being clothed with Christ (Galatians 3:27), unity with Christ into his death and resurrection (Romans 6:3-6), new life in Christ (Romans 6:4).

Even though infants have no idea of what is going on in baptism, the Holy Spirit pours out these blessing on infants as well as adults.

Adults cannot fully fathom all of these blessings either. However, adults still benefit from baptism as well because of what Jesus did for us by his perfect life, sacrificial death and triumphant resurrection.

When we see what God intends in baptism, why would we deny these blessing to adults or children? "Baptism now saves you also" (1 Peter 3:21).

He (God) saved us not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us by the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

Here is my response that appeared in the above Newspaper on July 31, 2007.

Disagrees with infant baptism letter

From Ken Fortier,
Lakeview:

In a letter to the editor on July 21, 2007, Pastor David Kapler of Trinity Lutheran Church said that the benefits he listed as being from baptism benefited infants. Meaning no disrespect, but admiring him in putting forth his personal views, I do think it would be more admirable for him to do a basic exegesis on this topic before setting forth his own viewpoint.

The pastor attempt to link infants to Mt. 28:19 by referring to “all nations” in the verse and saying that infants are a part of all nations (a true but misleading statement). In doing this the pastor insinuated that infants also fall under the definition of being disciples. The word translated as “disciple” in the original Greek is “Matheteuo,” which means “to become a pupil,” also carries the meaning of “to enroll (as a student),” and is translated “to teach or teaching” in other versions of the Bible.

The word disciple has a rich meaning and comes to our English language from the Latin “discipulus” which means a “pupil:” the root of which means “to learn.” In English it is a noun referencing “one who embraces and assist in spreading the teaching of another;” “an active adherent” or follower. This hardly applies to an infant.

Then he says that “Jesus puts no further restrictions in his institution of baptism beyond that.” I take exception to that: Mark 16:16 quotes Jesus as saying “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved...” Belief comes before baptism. Also, the pastor tries to back this up by trying to link Acts 2:38 and 39 to infants when he quotes it and said that the “promise” is for the “forgiveness of your sins.” What sin has an infant done? He should study further to see that the “promise” spoken about is the “Holy Spirit,” and read verse 41 where it says “those who accepted his message” were the one’s baptized.

One would think that as a pastor he would be better informed as to what the Bible really says in its original meaning before putting forth his personal view. Perhaps the pastor will check this out for his own “benefit.”

Thus ended our public discussion on the benefits of infant baptism. But this was not the end of the discussion on the Newspaper’s discussion forum via their Internet Web site. It produced many pages of comments and discussions. I responded to most of them, and in my last post in the forum I challenged anyone to produce one solitary verse wherein Jesus or his Apostles even insinuated that infants were to be the subject of baptism—and if produced, I would rethink my position. Suffice to say, that sort of ended all discussions on the topic. Not a single one attempted to produce a single verse. Read over the section on “infant baptism” in my book to get an idea of how I responded to all the queries my article in the newspaper produced.

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