

## Question 1: Why are there no examples of infant baptism in the New Testament?

1. First, there is not an example of an infant being born into a covenant home and then baptised because all the examples of baptism relate to the progress (spread) of the gospel into new territories. For example, you have Acts 2 where Jews come to faith and are baptised. Then you have the Ethiopian Eunuch (which is significant as he carried the word to Ethiopia) in Acts 8. This is followed by the Samaritans' baptism in Acts 8 (very significant as Samaritans were not accepted by the Jews). Then you have Paul's baptism in Acts 9; then you have Cornelius, the Gentile, whose whole household complete with servants and friends (almost a whole church really) was baptised in Acts 10. Then you have Lydia and her household, showing the gospel breaking into Macedonia, and you have several households at Corinth in Acts 18—showing the gospel advancing to the Greeks. All of these are missionary baptisms where the gospel is breaking into new territory. None of them are baptisms in a local church that is already established. This being the case, it comes as no surprise that there are no examples of a child being born and presented for baptism.

2. It is interesting to me that credo Baptists sometimes raise the matter of example. It should be pointed out to them that there are no examples of a child growing up in a Christian family and being baptised upon profession of faith either (for the same reason—no baptisms are recorded in established churches). But the omission of such an example is actually fatal to the position of credo baptism because if an example is going to be expected, it would be that of an entirely new concept—a covenant child entering into the covenant upon profession of faith when he is mature enough and receiving the sign at that time. The only practice that was known prior to the NT was of children being admitted into the covenant community at birth and being given the sign at birth. So if there is a change in this practice (as credo-baptism claim), there ought to be at least one example of the new practice. If an example is needed, it would surely be the example of what was unique to the NT: the example of a child from a believing family being baptised upon personal profession of faith. Where is the example of this? There is not even one! It is a new thing to have women given the covenant sign, so we do have an example of a woman being baptised with Lydia.

3. And I would add that for all intents and purposes, there *are* examples of infant baptism in the NT. In every case that is recorded where a household is involved, the entire household (including the servants) is baptised. To suppose that the large group that gathered in Acts 10 consisted of no children is quite a supposition! To suggest that the children were excluded when we are not told so is also quite a supposition to make! Now I will readily admit that *if* the inclusion of infants and little children was indeed a new thing (not already long established in the OT), we might indeed want a specific statement that "even the little children and the infants were baptised," but as the idea of a household believing and receiving the covenant sign was already a long established practice from Gen 17 onward, there is no need to explain that a household consists of the parents, the servants, and all the children. We would assume this to be the case unless told otherwise.

4. Finally, we must see there are examples of infants being given the covenant sign in the Bible. There is the command given in Genesis 17 that infants be given the OT sign of the covenant: circumcision. And then there are a few examples of this that follow (but as we

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would expect, not very many—in fact, there is not one example of infant circumcision outside of the books of Moses if my memory serves me here). But those examples of infants receiving the covenant sign ought to be sufficient for us unless at some point we are told that children are no longer included in the covenant with their parents. But this is never the case. Instead, the NT constantly treats them as part of the church: They are addressed in Eph 5 as among the saints at Ephesus, Peter refers to them as recipients of the promise in Acts 2 when he first brings the Jews into the covenant, there are numerous examples of household baptisms with no mention of infants being excluded, and there is the express statement of Jesus that "of such is the kingdom of heaven." It is a species of special pleading on the part of credo-baptists to suggest that Jesus is only holding up the children as examples of what the members of His kingdom ought to be like, but that the very children themselves are nothing more than examples and are not themselves members of His kingdom; that He only receives them and blesses them, not because they are blessed, but because they are examples of what the members of His kingdom ought to be like. No, He is justifying his blessing of them—He does so because they belong to His kingdom, just as the children of believers always have.

So, there is some food for thought. The conclusion is that an example is not given because an example is not needed. The children are included as members of the household, just as they always had been.

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