
Baby's Christening

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You have brought your little one to be Christened, that is to be named with the Name of Jesus, the promised Saviour and King, in the hope that the Lord will say of him "That is My child", just in the same way you write your name in a book and say "That is my Book".

It is a lovely and good thing for parents to bring their children to God to be dedicated to Him. Children are a gift from God, and they too are included in those for whom Christ died. Since it is certain that the Lord Jesus died for children as well as for grown-ups it is most fitting and proper that they should be brought to be publicly dedicated to Him and sealed as His, named with His Name and marked with His Cross, which is the sign and symbol of our salvation.

Parents who bring their children to be baptized should consider three things.

(1) When the Lord was eight days old He was circumcised according to law, and His name was called Jesus. By that solemn rite He was admitted into covenant relationship with God, as were all male infants of Old Testament days, although as tiny babes they could take no intelligent part in the ceremony. Thus we see the principle that uncomprehending infants can be received and blessed by God.

(2) About a month after the Child Jesus was born His parents took Him to Jerusalem to present Him to God, that is, to dedicate and consecrate Him. What thoughts, do you think, were uppermost in the heart of the Virgin Mary at that time? We may be sure that in the first place there was a deep gratitude to God for the gift of a child. And then there was, without doubt, the intensest sincerity in dedicating that child to God. And also, we can say with confidence, there was strong resolution and

determination to bring Him up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord", that is to do her part, so far as was humanly possible, to ensure that her child would be taught the things of God and trained to know and love Him.

(3) In due time the Lord Jesus grew up and went about doing good, healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, making the deaf to hear, the dumb to talk and the lame to walk, cleansing lepers, casting out devils and raising the dead. He was busy, but He found time to take children in His arms and bless them. It is one of the best known and most loved stories in the Bible. "They brought young children to him that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall not enter therein. And he took them, up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them". It is a beautiful story. There were the eager parents, longing that the Lord should bless their little ones. But the disciples were anxious about the Lord. Perhaps they thought he had more important business to attend to, or that He was too tired to be bothered with babies, or perhaps they felt that as infants could not understand His teaching it was useless for them to come. Whatever the reason, they rebuked the parents and tried to drive them off. Young men are not very wise sometimes! When the Lord noticed what was happening He was indignant and commanded the disciples to let the children come. Then were uttered those beautiful words,

full of tenderness and love, words that will live in the hearts of men and women everywhere as long as the world shall last:

"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God".

These three things teach us that God can and does receive infants; that the Lord Jesus loves little children; and that parents who bring children to baptism must recognize that they are gifts from God. They should come with gratitude, with the utmost sincerity and with determination to bring up the little ones in the Christian faith, knowing and loving God and trusting in the Lord Jesus. Too often it would seem that parents bring their children to be Christened just because it is the custom. Where there is no real faith in God, no earnestness in seeking Him, no intention of keeping the promises made, a solemn rite is changed into an empty mockery and a sacred service becomes a babble of vain words, unreal and lifeless.

How can God bless when He is mocked like this?

"Without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him". But come with faith, with sincerity, with your whole trust in the Lord Jesus Who died for you, and Who is the One Mediator between God and man, and you will find that He is waiting to be gracious.

"The child Jesus grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him".

"Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and Man".

May this be true of your child also.