

If We Have A Loving God, Why Does He Allow Little Children To Die?

Pastor Steve Jones

Sunday 7th December 2003

Prayer

Answering Tough Questions

Today's issue is challenging for the Church intellectually, theologically and particularly emotionally.

Emotionally because almost all of us have that resident internal compass that drives us to seek to protect children. When a child has died in a fire, in care, in a swimming pool we want to know WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

The issue was writ large for me in the early hours of one morning when, as a policeman driving a emergency response car, I was called to a new born infant who stopped breathing. I had no answers for the grieving parents.

Becoming a pastor has driven me into the Word of God to find out what His answers are. I have stopped being interested in man's opinions about God. I want to hear from God directly on the issue. Those answers can only be found in God's Word; the Bible.

In my study I have found answers that have lifted my heart, caused me to praise God for His wonderful provision for each of us in this world and that have satisfied me as a follower of Jesus Christ. I now feel equipped for the task before me; to expound to you God's response to the question posed.

1. What happens to young children when they die? Do they go to Heaven or Hell?

A review of the last few weeks will remind you that faith in Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven. That is an exclusive claim in an all-inclusive world. God has given each of us the free will to either accept Him or reject Him. Last week we learned together that those who reject God face an eternity separated from Him in Hell.

Problem: If Jesus is the only way to heaven, and we can't get into heaven unless we repent of our sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, what then happens to babies and young children who can't yet comprehend God and make that choice before them?

Does this mean that all babies and young children who die before professing a faith in Christ go to Hell?

Understanding Hell & Sin

Hell is the place reserved for those who reject God and turn their backs on Him (Matthew 5:22; 2 Peter 2:4).

You choose to follow Him or you choose to reject Him. **A decision not to choose Him is a decision to reject Him.**

Sin is having an awareness of God and turning from Him to do **your own thing**.

Side Question – What about those who have never heard of God?

What about people who have never heard of God. The Bible teaches that all men and women mature enough to appreciate the world around them are aware of God

Romans 1:18-24 [ESV Church 1131 Compact 939]

The Bible teaches that children are innocents. They have not rejected God because they can't yet fully comprehend Him. Whilst they have original sin (Romans 3:23) they have not practiced sin.

Neither are they imputed with anyone else's sin practice.

Deuteronomy 1:34-40 [ESV Church 175 Compact 146] They would enter in because they were sinless

Jonah 4:11 The 120,000 were the children

Children have always been God's

Ps. 139:13-16

For you formed my inward parts;

you knitted me together in my mother's womb.

14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Wonderful are your works;

my soul knows it very well.

15 My frame was not hidden from you,

when I was being made in secret,

intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

16 Your eyes saw my unformed substance;

in your book were written, every one of them,

the days that were formed for me,

when as yet there were none of them.

Ps. 22:9-10

Yet you are he who took me from the womb;

you made me trust you at my mother's breasts.

10 On you was I cast from my birth,

and from my mother's womb you have been my God.

Jesus treated children differently

One day children were brought to Jesus by their parents for Him to bless them

Mark 10: 13-16 [ESV Church 1020 Compact 846]

“To *such* belongs the Kingdom of Heaven”

Never a record of Jesus blessing a sinner – Jesus blessed the children/

Babies and children don't go to Heaven because they are sinless, but because God is gracious.

Confirmation in the Life of David

2 Samuel 12:14-23 [ESV Church 316 Compact 263]

2 Samuel 18:31 – 19:4 [ESV Church 325 Compact 270]

So children who are aborted, still born, infant deaths or die before they can choose God are instantly in Heaven with God.

Who qualifies as a child? What about those with mental incapacities?

What is the age of accountability?

Jewish culture. Bar and Bat Mitzvah (Son of the Law and Daughter of the Law). Different for every child, but in the region of 12 or 13.

Summary

Children go straight to Heaven until they reach the point of understanding God's presence and reject Him by doing their own thing. Then they sin and face Hell.

2. Why would God allow children to die?

3 major characteristics of God: omnipotence (all powerful), omnipresence (everywhere all at the same time) and omniscience (all knowing).

Even though God gives us free will to choose or reject Him, He can see into our future and knows who on this earth will accept Him. He also knows that some people will face a life of pain, suffering and trials through choices made for them and by them.

For some children possibly God *rescues* them to Heaven before their heart hardens against Him under the influences of the world. For others perhaps He *rescues* them from a life of pain and trauma which is coming, but which they can't possibly see. For others He seems to take them home and in the process *reveals Himself* to others in this world.

We simply don't know why He takes some and not others.

His ways are not our ways (Isaiah 55:8-9). We see dimly now; then we will see fully (1 Corinthians 13:12). One day we will know **for sure**.

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