

Bible Trek Ministries

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Q. DO CHILDREN WHO ARE INCAPACITATED* OR AS A RESULT OF AN ACCIDENT AND THEY ARE IN A COMA OR DIE PREMATURELY** BEFORE THEY CAN MAKE A DECISION TO ACCEPT JESUS CHRIST AS THEIR SAVIOR, GO TO HEAVEN?

A. YES! how do I know?

* by mental retardation [regardless of actual body age]

** either by abortion, disease or an accident

[For the purpose of this paper the word
Children and Child will refer to all of the above]

I. God's love and infinite mercy tells me that to send a child to hell who cannot make a decision is incompatible with his nature:

*EPH 2:4 But because of his great love for us,
God, who is rich in mercy,*

*EPH 2:5 made us alive with Christ even when
we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace
you have been saved.*

*EPH 2:6 And God raised us up with Christ and
seated us with him in the heavenly realms in
Christ Jesus,*

*EPH 2:7 in order that in the coming ages he
might show the incomparable riches of his
grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ
Jesus.*

EPH 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--

EPH 2:9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

According to this scripture:

1. God saves us because of his "great love" and "mercy".
2. Salvation is a "gift of God" – it is nothing that you have earned or have done to deserve it.
3. Why does God save us? Not because of our faith but because of his great love. People who are incapable of exercising faith cannot be condemned to hell because God saves on the basis of his love not on our performance

JOH 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

JOH 3:17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

According to this scripture:

- "God so loved the world"
- "He gave" (his action not ours)
- Did God give his Son to condemn... NO! to SAVE!

Q. If God saves us because he loves us, would he condemn someone who cannot choose him due to mental capacity, injury or premature death? A. NO!

II. THE BIBLE CONTINUALLY SAYS THAT TO BECOME SAVED (REDEEMED FROM THE ETERNAL CONSEQUENCE OF BEING ETERNALLY SEPARATED FROM GOD-OR ASSIGNED TO HELL) YOU MUST CHOOSE TO ACCEPT GOD'S "FREE GIFT".

JOH 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

*JOH 3:18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever **does not believe** stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.*

... "

To "believe" is an act of choice, something that requires a person to consciously make a decision based on the information at hand and then acting upon those conclusions. The word for believe in the original Hebrew meant to "trust". In John 3: 18 the act of "not believing" is a conscious act.

Having been confronted with the gospel of Jesus Christ and then making a conscious effort to reject it means that YOU are choosing to take your chances with some other belief (including Atheism, which is the "Belief" in No God). When you are confronted with the information that God has revealed through his son Jesus, the responsibility then falls on you to choose from that point on unless... see #3 above.

Not having the ability mentally* to disregard this information does not constitute "rejection of the gospel".

** being in a coma or you die before you have the knowledge of God and understand that information*

Note: there is no mention of being baptized as an infant as an insurance policy in the Bible. Why? It is not necessary (See V following...).

In the Old Testament the Jewish children were innocent until " The age of accountability" generally regarded as 12 years of age. This is when a child in the Jewish faith went through the Bar (or Bat if a girl) Mizpah or the rite of passing from a child into an adult (still done today). It was at this time that the child was considered old enough and wise enough to understand the principles of God and therefore held accountable as an adult and able to take their rightful place in Jewish society. This pertained not only to social status but also to the consequences of disobeying the Law that was personally given to the Jews by God. In the case of an infraction of the law, they would be tried as an adult.

Let's look in the Book of Nehemia (OT-people were under the law), Nehemia has brought a remnant of Jews back from captivity to Jerusalem. He brings the people all together so they can be told God's law and requirements. Prior to the verses below he has numbered all those in the crowd (42,360 people plus numbers of servants, camels, horses etc.) who were present at the reading of the Law (and who would make a covenant with God to live under his Law and guidance).

Neh. 8:1-2

all the people assembled as one man in the square before the Water Gate. They told Ezra the scribe to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded for Israel.

*[2] So on the first day of the seventh month Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up of men and women **and all who were able to understand.***

*[3] He read it aloud from daybreak till noon as he faced the square before the Water Gate in the presence of the men, women and **others who could understand.** And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law.*

Also in:

Neh. 10:28

*"The rest of the people--priests, Levites, gatekeepers, singers, temple servants and all who separated themselves from the neighboring peoples for the sake of the Law of God, together with their wives and **all their sons and daughters who are able to understand--***

In the Neh 8:1-2 passage above:

1. All the people gathered as ONE MAN (united) at the square which was in front of the Water Gate and they asked Ezra the scribe to bring forth the book of the Law of Moses which the Lord had given to Israel.
2. Then Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men, women and all who could listen with understanding.
3. Nehemiah reads the Law (the Mosaic Covenant which detailed the salvation/day to day living and worship that this remnant of the Tribes of Israel was under) in the presence of men and women and " **and all who were able to understand.**" (also in Neh 10:28)

According to these verses, no children are mentioned (although in the former chapter Nehemiah counts the "sons of...." (or offspring) as being present when they gathered together). However, what is mentioned is: vs. 2 " **and all who were able to understand.**", vs. 3 " **others who could understand.**"

Since men and women are already mentioned in these verses, these can only be young people who were considered to have the mental capacity to understand and enter into a covenant with God. The rest were not counted. I believe this is a clear that those who cannot understand (regardless of the reason; age, incapacity, premature death etc.), are not held accountable in God's eyes...after all, it was God himself who gave these instructions to the Jewish people.

I Ia.) The story of the Israelites who after being miraculously brought out of Egypt by God's hand and then refusing to obey God when he told them to go into Canaan and take the land, is a picture of eternal life.

By that I mean, it was a real occasion, but God wants us to see more in the story than just a little history. This story shows us an eternal picture of how God deals with his people. God says in:

Hebrews 13:8

*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today
and forever.*

God is "the same yesterday, today and forever." therefore, he will treat us the same "today" as he did the Israelites "yesterday". In the account

of the people refusing to go into the land of Canaan because of the Giants in there, the people consciously rejected the command of the Lord and therefore they reaped the consequences and were denied access to "the promised land". Only Joshua (which by the way is Jesus name in Hebrew (Jesus is the Greek translation) and means "Savior") and Caleb were allowed to "enter the promised land" because they believed by faith that even if the enemy were giants, God could defeat them. This is a very obvious picture of our salvation. Yes, there are giants out to thwart us but God has promised to bring us to "the promised land" or "eternal life" in heaven if we but have the faith to believe he can do it .* The Israelites who consciously CHOOSE not to believe God's promise (Deut 1:32) and accept God's plan (even though it looked like a humanly impossible situation) were not allowed to enter the promised land (Deut 1:35) and had to wander for 40 years in the desert until they all died out.

HOWEVER, Moses, before he dies reiterates what the Lord himself spoke to the Israelites. It starts in Deuteronomy 1:19 and by Deut 1:35 God says that since they (those who rejected his promise) did not believe the Lord, they would not be allowed to enter the Promised Land (heaven). Only Caleb and Joshua who "followed the Lord" (vs. 36) were saved. Then **God himself** says in:

Deut 1:39:

*"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.*

These children were not old enough to know good from evil and even though their parents and families disobeyed God, these "children and little ones" were not held accountable (but those who willingly chose were!) and were allowed to enter the promised land.

**Remember, 40 years later when they did finally enter the promised land, the first battle the armies of Joshua did no fighting took place. The Jewish People contributed no physical effort other than blowing a trumpet to announce they were there - again a picture of us gaining heaven not by works but by God alone.*

III. ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE, CHILDREN ALL HAVE GUARDIAN ANGELS WHO WATCH OVER THEM (IN A SPIRITUAL SENSE). WOULD LOST OR UNSAVED CHILDREN HAVE A HEAVENLY ANGEL? NO!

*MAT 18:10 "See that you do not look down on one of these **little ones**". For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.*

Note: this is Jesus himself speaking!

*obvious reference to a young child....before the age of accountability.

IV. FURTHERMORE, JESUS ALSO TELLS US THAT HE HAS A SPECIAL PLACE IN HIS HEART FOR CHILDREN-AGAIN, TO SEND THEM TO HELL FOR NOT CHOOSING IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH HIS NATURE.

MAT 19:14 Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

LUK 18:16 But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

LUK 18:17 I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

V. ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING SCRIPTURES, GOD ENTERS US INTO HIS "BOOK OF LIFE" BEFORE WE ARE BORN. TO GET OUT OF IT WE HAVE TO MAKE A CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO REMOVE OURSELVES BY "DISREGARDING THE TRUTH".

PSA 139:15 My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth,

*PSA 139:16 your eyes saw my unformed body.
All the days ordained for me were written **in
your book** before one of them came to be.*

*REV 3:5 He who overcomes will, like them, be
dressed in white. **I will never blot out his
name from the book of life**, but will
acknowledge his name before my Father and
his angels.*

*REV 20:15 If anyone's name was **not** found
written in the **book of life**, he was thrown into
the lake of fire.*

*PSA 69:28 May they be **blotted out of the
book of life** and not be listed with the
righteous.*

If it were not possible to be blotted out , it certainly would not be presented as a possibility. God's will is for all to be saved,

*Matt 18:14 Even so it is **NOT** the will of your
Father which is in heaven, **that one of these
little ones should perish.** (note: Jesus is
speaking) KJV*

*2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his
promise, as some men count slackness; but is
longsuffering to us, not willing that any should
perish, but that all **SHOULD*** come to
repentance. KJV*

*conditional- it is not will come

We start out written into God's book of life, but as we grow up, at some point we choose not to accept his free gift. Just as Adam and Eve, we have then chosen to "take our chances" and God has no choice but to "blot us out" of the book. It is our action not his. People start out in God's book, are removed (-our choice not his, because of the work of Satan and his demonic horde) and then God brings all the power of heaven to work in your life (through friends, allowing circumstances

{some not good}, even Pastors ha!) to get you to turn back to him. The word repent means to turn around and go the other way or; once you were going the right way (towards God) then something happened in your life and you turned the other way (away from God) and God says to repent or turn back to him (to turn back means you once were there). Only once in the Bible does Jesus say "you must be born again", in every other instance he says "Follow me!"
In addition all our tears are recorded here also (for those who have raised these children i.e. retarded or handicapped children)...

*PSA 56:8 thou hast taken account of my wanderings: Put my tears in thy bottle; are they not **in thy book?***

*PSA 56:9this I know, that God is for me.
NAS*

VI. THEREFORE, THERE ARE OBVIOUSLY THOSE WHO START OUT IN THE BOOK OF LIFE AND ARE NEVER REMOVED.

These would be: **ALL** children too young to make a decision, **ALL** children who are incapacitated either mentally or physically (i.e. in a coma) or die prematurely (before the mental capacity is there to make a decision) through an accident , disease or abortion. Or in the case of the future event the Rapture of the church; these children would immediately go to heaven. By default, children are in the " Book of Life". Anything that might happen to them before they are able to choose will not negate their position. God assures us that if we are his (written in the Book of Life) that "nothing can separate us" from him.

ROM 8:37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

ROM 8:38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,

*ROM 8:39 neither height nor depth, **nor anything** else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

VII. EVEN THOUGH WE ARE FAITHLESS, HE IS FAITHFUL FOR HE CANNOT GO AGAINST HIS OWN NATURE*

** which is EPH 2:4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy - already reviewed.*

2TI 2:13 if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

VIII. FINALLY, CHRISTIANS BECOME CHRISTIANS BY ACCEPTING THE "NEW COVENANT" WHICH IS SUMMARIZED AS FOLLOWS:

1. The penalty of sin is death (Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23).
2. God, because he loves us and is merciful, paid that price by substituting Jesus Christ in our place (John 3:16, John 1:12, I John 1:12).
3. We become "saved" when we accept this substitutionary sacrifice and "trust" our eternal salvation to Jesus Christ.(John 1:12, I John I:1, John 10:28).
4. The Old Covenant was the LAW, the New Covenant is GRACE (which means unmerited favor).

ROM 3:20 Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

***CAN AN INCAPACITATED CHILD BECOME CONSCIOUS OF SIN?
NO!***

*ROM 4:15 because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is **no transgression**.*

Therefore, for them there is no Law, so God counts them as having no transgressions.

*ROM 5:13 for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. **

- God is fair and just and merciful, You and I are aware of the LAW therefore we are accountable to God under this standard (and Jesus paid the price for this, calling us who accept him by free choice, "JUSTIFIED" or "just as if I'd never sinned").
- All who have the mental capacity (not mentally handicapped) grow up (grow to an age where they are accountable for their action) and must make a choice.
- Not making a choice after they have reached the age where they can understand God is the same as rejecting the gospel since it means to accept your present condition: which is a sinner under the penalty of death – blotted out of the Book of Life - separated from God.
- An incapacitated child who has not yet been confronted with the Gospel is NOT aware of the law, is not held accountable to it and therefore is also deemed "JUSTIFIED" or "Just as if they'd never sinned".

SO WHAT IS THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION:

DO CHILDREN WHO ARE INCAPACITATED (EITHER BY MENTAL RETARDATION OR PREMATURE DEATH: ABORTION, ACCIDENT, DISEASE) GO TO HEAVEN?

The answer is a resounding ... YES!

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