

Is My Child in Heaven? (*Back to the Bible*)

There's nothing quite so agonizing as the death of a child. As someone said, "The death of a child is like a period placed before the end of a sentence." It is ironic that every day of the week, many of us walk out our door and never look back, figuring everything is forever, including our children. Often we are too busy to realize that the most precious things we have also can be the most fleeting.

Those who experience the loss of a child are often filled with questions. At Back to the Bible we frequently get letters from grieving parents. The answers they receive from secular sources are often emotional, but rarely biblical. Sometimes Christians give answers that are biblical, but not very helpful. This pamphlet is designed to be both helpful and biblical in answering grieving parents' questions about what happened at the death of their little child. Here are some of the most commonly asked questions.

Are Babies Innocent of Sin?

In the hunt for answers at the loss of a child, many people say that babies simply cannot understand sin and therefore are innocent. But that's not what the Bible says. Understanding sin is not required for being under the penalty of sin. Two passages in Psalms tell us about the true nature of children. One says, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity" ([Ps. 51:5](#)). The other reads, "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies" ([Ps. 58:3](#)). There are no exceptions. All of us are born with a sin nature; even though we have not yet done anything wrong, our nature is sinful. Every baby needs a Savior, just as every adult does.

The Bible addresses a baby's need through the blood of Christ. Jesus' blood was provided for the salvation of mankind--men, women and children. Until we reject the promise of God's salvation, the benefit of His death is still available to us. Even though babies are not innocent, they have not rejected God's salvation. The blood of Jesus Christ is there for them.

Does God Deal with Children the Way He Does with People who Have Never Heard the Gospel?

Not at all. God has given the heathen a revelation of Himself both in nature and in their own conscience. [Psalm 19:1](#) says, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork." Intelligent minds are not without knowledge of God's existence, even in people groups that have never heard the Gospel explained to them. [Romans 1:18-21](#) says that God's wrath is against those who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, "because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them" (v. 19). God has revealed Himself both in external creation and in man's internal conscience. But when the heathen suppress what they can know about God and choose to

worship what they create with their own hands rather than their Creator, they are without excuse.

But this is not true of a child. Babies do not have minds that can comprehend nature around them or a conscience within them. We cannot treat the question, "Is my child in heaven?" the same way we treat the question, "Is the heathen in heaven?" Adult men and women have had the opportunity to consider and to reject the witnesses that God has given of Himself. Babies, on the other hand, are guilty of having a sin nature, but they have not weighed the evidence and rejected God. They have not been condemned by their own actions as the heathen have.

What About the Age of Accountability?

Some people say that there is an age when children become accountable for their actions. But the Bible does not mention an "age of accountability." Children are culpable for sin when they draw their first breath, but are they accountable at that moment as well? I don't think so. We must make a distinction between culpability (liability for their sin nature) and accountability (liability for their sinful actions). Isaiah said, "For before the Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you dread will be forsaken by both her kings" ([Isa. 7:16](#)). It's evident that little children do not have the ability to make moral decisions and to take responsibility for their sins. Still, they are sinners and need a Savior. Perhaps the "age of accountability" should be called "the age of moral awareness." Children come to a point where they become morally aware; that is, they understand what's right and what's wrong.

So what happens if your child dies before he is aware of what is morally right or wrong? He is still guilty of his sins and must pay the penalty for his sins. That's where the blood of Jesus Christ comes in. Young children have not rejected the blood of Jesus as the heathen have. It is there for them, covering their sins, washing them clean, even though they have not had the ability to exercise faith in Jesus, which is required for the salvation of men and women who understand the consequences of their sin. A child's lack of understanding doesn't deter the power of Jesus' blood. Only rejecting the blood deters its power, and babies haven't done that.

Has God Chosen My Child?

If your child dies and goes to heaven, is that evidence that God loves your child and has elected him to salvation? I think that is a valid conclusion. [Ephesians 1:4](#) says that we are chosen "in Him before the foundation of the world." Babies as well as adult believers are chosen in Him before the world began. If they die before they can understand and reject the Gospel, that doesn't change God's choice. They are as much a part of God's family as adults drawn to faith by the Holy Spirit. The blood of Jesus Christ has covered them and washed away their

sins, just as it has ours. Just because babies cannot make a decision for God does not prohibit Him from making a decision for them.

What Will My Little One Be Like in Heaven?

Will infants and young children be infants and young children for all of eternity? I don't think so. The Bible doesn't say for sure, but it does say that when we go to heaven we enjoy privileges that require adult minds, such as praising and glorifying God in meaningful service to Him. J. Vernon McGee said it this way: "I believe with all my heart that God will raise the little ones such that the mother's arms who have ached for them will have the opportunity of holding them. The father's hand which never held the little hand will be given the privilege. I believe that little ones will grow up in heaven in the care of their earthly parents if they are saved." There is no biblical proof for this one way or the other, but it seems logical that babies will not have to endure eternal infancy. If babies cannot fully enjoy this life, how could we expect them to fully enjoy eternal life with God?

Will I Join My Child Some Day?

Have you grieved the loss of a child? If so, take heart from the Bible. David grieved the loss of his newborn son. He pondered, "Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" ([2 Sam. 12:23](#)). Your child was not innocent, because no innocent child can be born from two sinful parents ([Job 14:4](#)). But I believe your child is in heaven--not because he or she was baptized, but because your child was washed clean by the blood of Jesus. Christ's death made it possible for the salvation of all mankind, even newborn babies. Your child is in heaven!

The more difficult question is, "Will you join your little one in heaven some day?" Your baby or child could not make a decision to trust Christ's death for the payment of his sin. But as a morally responsible adult, you must make a decision. The children of born-again parents do not automatically go to heaven; neither do the parents of children in heaven automatically join them there. If you want to see your child and enjoy a heavenly reunion, you must be born again! [Acts 16:31](#) tells you how: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved." Thank God He has made it possible for you to see your child again some day, if you have received Jesus Christ as your Savior.