

Article: The Promise of Salvation through Baptism is for All!

The promise of salvation through baptism is for all. When the church was born, infants were included in baptism as well. Acts 2:38 says: *“Repent and let everyone of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”* And what does the very next verse, Acts 2:39, say? *“For this promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far away, all whom the Lord, our God, calls.”* The word for children used here is *“teknois”* which includes children of any age, even infants. But does that mean the people’s own children? If the promise is for their children, it would include their babies.

But could the promise here refer to their more distant descendants? In other words, could the promise refer to their descendants in general? In that case, age would not be the issue. But if that route is taken, the promise of the Spirit and forgiveness would be given *apart* from the person’s own repentance. A distant descendant would be given the Spirit and forgiveness on the basis of a distant ancestor’s faith! And who would propose that all of these people’s descendants through history would automatically be given these blessings? That wouldn’t make any sense at all of this passage!

Rather, Peter is relaying this promise to those present who had heard his gospel message and anyone else who will “repent and be baptised.” The promise of the Holy Spirit was also for the children and infants present. They were to be baptised with their parents. That way they would receive the Holy Spirit and the forgiveness of sins. They too would become members of God’s newly born church!

So, when Paul wrote to the Ephesian church (6:1-3), he wrote directly also to the “children” (*teknois*). Again, the word *“teknois”* includes infants. So infants are members of God’s church. And yet only a few verses before in Ephesians 5:25-26, Paul says: *“Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, that He might make the church holy, by making her clean with the Washing of water by the Word!”* Christ’s baptism is for the church. Infants, then, should be baptised and so cleansed by the *“Washing of water by the Word.”* In the same way, children are identified as members of the Colossian church (Colossians 3:20). And there too, membership in the church is given through baptism (Colossians 2:12,19).

Baptism, as Peter said in Acts 2:38, is full of God’s promises for the youngest. In baptism, they receive the full forgiveness of their sins, sins of which they are unconscious. And they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit who preserves them in the Lord Jesus. And God is always faithful in His promises. For this, parents can only rejoice and praise the Lord, a Lord who cares for all, even the tiniest of people!