

Do Infants Go To Heaven?

Status of Children

- Preborn are treated in Scriptures as fully human, not clumps of cells.
 - The punishment for killing a preborn child – Exodus 21:22-25
 - David wrote about God dealing with him in the womb – Psalm 139:13-16
 - Jeremiah was told that God knew Him before he was born – Jeremiah 1:5
 - The interaction between the preborn John and Christ – Luke 1:39-44
- We inherit a sin nature at our conception – Psalm 51:5
 - This nature began with Adam and was passed to his descendants – Genesis 5:3, Romans 5:12
 - This sin-guilt is upon us even before we could ever choose to sin.
- God acknowledges that infants are incapable of choosing between right and wrong – Deuteronomy 1:39, Isaiah 7:16, Jonah 4:11
 - Another verse that hints at this is Romans 1:20, which links understanding with having no excuse before God.

Possible Solutions

- There are passages that support that, at least on the surface, state that infants are treated as if they are saved and granted eternal life,
 - David says such about his son – II Samuel 12:23
 - Christ compares children to saints – Matthew 18:3-5, 19:14
- There have been multiple proposed answers to what happens when an infant dies.
- The four most popular are:
 - Infants are saved by being in a state of innocence, which contradicts the inherited sin nature we each have.
 - Infants are saved by pedobaptism, which is unscriptural and counter the Gospel of faith in Christ.
 - All people are saved anyway, which contradicts Revelation 20, etc.
 - Infants are granted grace because, even though they are condemned sinners because of their inherited sin nature, God grants them mercy because they are unable to comprehend or respond to the Gospel.

Age of Accountability

- In attempt to balance the inherited sinfulness of infants with the grace God shows on those who cannot comprehend right and wrong, theologians promote what is called the “Age of Accountability.”
- There is no verse or passage that explicitly states this position, so it is based on a combination of other, clearer doctrines.

- All men, including infants, are sinners and deserving of God's judgment – Romans 3:10, 5:12
- God acknowledges that some are not capable of understanding their guilt or the Gospel of Christ – Romans 1:20
- God may sovereignly exercise His grace upon those that are incapable of understanding – Genesis 18:25
 - The problem here is that sin must be dealt with. But the Bible teaches that Christ died for all (I John 2:2, etc.), so God could choose to save those who are incapable of exercising faith (as required for salvation in Ephesians 2:8-9, etc.) by granted them grace.
 - In this way, an infant is not “saved” but they are “safe.”
- There does not seem to be a set age for a child to become accountable for their sinfulness. It is likely different for every individual as decided by the Righteous Judge of all men.
- There is a variation to this that teaches that the child is “safe” if their parents are Christians. To me, this violates the element of personal responsibility in salvation. The only two parties that are involved in the transaction of salvation are the individual and God. To place this on anyone else is counter to the Gospel message.

SUMMARY

- Yes, I do believe that those who are incapable of understanding both their guilt or the Gospel are under a state of grace. While not explicitly stated in Scripture, the overall teaching of the Bible shows a God that is both just but also gracious. He provided a way for mankind to escape their sin debt through Christ's vicarious sacrifice on the Cross. I believe He has provided a way for escape for those unable to respond to the Gospel, but providing salvation through Christ's blood and exercise of His prevenient grace.
- This does not apply to those who have the ability to understand but no clear Gospel presentation. These are held accountable by the general revelation of God's truth – Romans 1:18-32