

Doctrine of Family

The Child in Covenant

1. For many concerned Christian parents, the Achilles' Hill for the non-Paedobaptist is the place of children within the family. "How is the child of Christian parents to be viewed when the child is not baptized as an infant, and given the sign of salvation?"
2. The Paedobaptist can point to the fact that infant children were included in the Abrahamic Covenant, but are excluded by those who do not embrace infant baptism, and ask, "Why?" "What is to be done with the unbaptized child?" "What is their relationship to God?"
3. It is a lovely thought to teach children they are part of a Covenant relationship with God, just like mom and dad. That is the teaching.
4. It is a comforting thought to believe that if a baptized infant that dies suddenly in childhood is assured a place in heaven based on their Covenant relationship within a Christian family.
5. Of course, the relationship of the child who is viewed as being part of a Covenant with God is not "just like mom and dad", for they may not be truly converted. They may, in fact, be more of an Ishmael, than an Isaac. A child can receive the sign of the Covenant, and never partake of the blessings of that Covenant.
6. Furthermore, the sign of circumcision given to Abraham was different than the reason the children were circumcised. Their circumcision was of limited value, and, as an object lesson, was removed.
7. This should not be alarming, because prior to Abraham, children came to faith in Christ, children grew in grace, and in knowledge of the Lord, children grew to be adults who walked with God without the sign of circumcision being given to them, illustrated in Abel, Seth, Enoch, and Noah.
8. In the New Covenant provision, all children are embraced according to promise. The promise of salvation is not limited to children of covenanted parents, but to Gentile children as well, *"even as many as the Lord our God shall call"*.
 - *Acts 2:39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*
9. A Christian father wants to teach the children what is in the Scriptures.
10. One important verse is Ephesians 6:1. This is the call of God upon the life of a child.
 - *Ephesians 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.*
11. This is a simple, and straightforward Scripture, which is easy to understand, and yet, is often violated, just like adults disobey the Lord.

12. In this text, children are relieved of many cultural burdens.

- They do not have to clarify their value system.
- They do not have to wrestle with the mysteries of life.

13. What children must do, is to do whatever their parents tell them to do. It is that simple.

14. Children are rebellious, but they were made for obedience.

15. The hard part for a child comes in remembering the severe consequences of the commandment.

- *Ephesians 6:3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.*

16. While it is true that children are not to be provoked to anger, the wrath Paul says they are not to be provoked to, is an eternal wrath. This is avoided by bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

- *Ephesians 6:4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

17. Failure to bring children up in the Lord, is what brings them to God's wrath.

18. Failure to discipline children, is to bring them to wrath, for they will become lawless. The rod will help a child learn to obey.

- *Proverbs 22:15 Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.*

19. Punishment is designed to rehabilitate, and to provide training in righteousness. Therefore, children should not be disciplined as a form of venting one's wrath.

20. Parents do provoke their children to wrath under the following conditions.

- There is failure to administer a just discipline.
- There is a form of retributive injustice.
- There is no punishment, because of a desire for friendship.

21. Children need parents to protect them from others, and from themselves.

22. The first command, with a promise, is for children to obey their parents.

- *Ephesians 6:2 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise ;)*

23. Parents are to bring their children up in the “nurture and admonition” of the Lord.

- Nurture (paideia, pahee-di'-ah), tutorage, i.e. education or training; by implication, disciplinary correction.
- Admonition (nouthesia, noo-thes-ee'-ah), calling attention to, i.e. (by implication) mild rebuke or warning.

24. The world has a view of what the church should be. But there is a Christian culture as well. That is where the child is to be reared. So teach the children. Sing to the children. Instill in the children the Word of God. Give the children an identify in a Covenant relationship.