

heaven” in reference to children . The Bible speaks of those who cannot discern between the right hand and the left hand. According to **Isaiah 7:16**, a child knows not to “refuse the evil and choose the good”. In **Isaiah 10:19**, showing that youth had limitation, that is, a child is limited in his understanding of large quantities. Also, Job said, that if he had died in infancy he would be at rest (not hell).

Infants are innocent, without the knowledge of good and evil. They are covered by the blood of Christ if they die before becoming morally accountable. God is just, loving and merciful. Infants are not in unbelief, they cannot repent nor truly follow the Lord. This is why we do not baptize babies. We dedicate them to the Lord’s protection and care, but we do not baptize them. Infants cannot be judged according to their works (**Revelation 20:11-12**). There is no statement in the Scriptures that says infants are lost. Even though, according to **Psalms 51:5**, a baby is born in sin and has a sinful nature, they are not held accountable until they are able to choose. If Adam’s sin can be put to their account, so can Christ’s death be put to the child’s account (**Romans 5:12-14, 17-19**).

We should never hinder a child from coming to the Lord. At the same time, do not push them to be saved when they are not ready and truly able to understand the gospel. Parents are responsible for their children and should keep them exposed to the truth throughout their life while praying for them.

The purpose of this article is not to debate a controversial issue but to show the awesome responsibility God has given to parents. In our society children are turned loose and set free long before they should be. We must keep them under our rule and protection until they become mature enough to make their own decisions and properly walk with the Lord. I pray this has been of some help to the reader.



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***"And they said, Believe on the
Lord Jesus Christ,
and thou shalt be saved" Acts 16:31***

The RICHES

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OF GRACE

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"hath appeared to all men." Titus 2:11

The Age of Accountability

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

I Corinthians 13:11

The Bible does give us an age in which one is considered accountable for what one does. God makes a difference between childhood and adulthood, and upon reaching this age of accountability (adulthood) most people are ready to settle down and put away childish things. Even though there is a gradual development of accountability from infancy to maturity in which we begin to understand what sin is and to know good and evil, God still gives us an actual age.

Can parents be comforted in the death of a little one in knowing where they are or will they ever see the child again? The answer is yes. The age of accountability is probably older than you think. Consider the millions of children who have died from natural causes, starvation, war, abortion, etc. None of these children shall perish, for they are covered by God's mercy and grace.

CHILDHOOD VERSES ADULTHOOD

There is an age when God considers children no longer children, **I Corinthians 14:20** "Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men." The Bible speaks of Moses "coming to years" in **Hebrews 11:24** and **Proverbs 22:6** speaks of "training up a child," and when he is "old" (grown) he will not depart from it. God makes a distinct difference between children and adults. It is true that some mature quicker than others. We see this in the Scriptures and also in our own circle. It even seems reasonable that the age of accountability varies from individual to individual and from society to society, but the Scriptures teach that God does recognize an actual age.

THE ACTUAL AGE

I believe the age of accountability, according to the Scriptures is twenty years old. Some believe it is thirteen years old from a faulty reading of **Luke 2:42**. The problem is that the Scriptures do not recognize such a date.

Bar-mitzvah, meaning "son of the covenant," is celebrated by the Jews today, but this is solely based on religious traditions.

Now, let us examine the Scriptures that point to the age of accountability being twenty years old.

First, the Lord forbade Israel from entering the promised land because of their rebellion. They wandered in the wilderness for forty years until every adult Israelite was dead except for Joshua and Caleb. According to **Deuteronomy 1:39**, their little ones, or children, which had no knowledge between good and evil, did enter into the land. They were not held accountable for sin as the adults were even though they may have murmured as their parents. In **Numbers 14:29**, all under twenty years of age went in to possess the land and all

twenty years old and above were accountable. Again, those nineteen years and under were considered as not knowing between good and evil. In other words, they had not reached maturity. There is a difference between knowing right and wrong and good and evil.

Second, according to **Numbers 1:3**, Israelites were considered accountable for military service at age twenty and not before, "From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel: thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies." By this age, they could be relied upon to assume responsibility in military duty.

Third, in **Numbers 4:1-3, 23**, the Levites at age thirty began their work in the tabernacle. In **Numbers 8:24**, the age twenty-five is given. Probably at this age they were guided by the older experienced Levites. But in David's time they began training and service at the age of twenty (**I Chronicles 23:24-27**). This is also true after the Babylonian captivity according to **Ezra 3:8**. My point is, the age twenty shows up again in the life of the Levites who ministered to Israel, God's people. The Lord Jesus Christ and John the Baptist's ministry began at the age of thirty.

Fourth, according to **Exodus 30:12-16**, when the tribes were polled, only those twenty years old and up were to pay a tax or ransom for his soul. They paid a half-shekel tax in acknowledgement of their responsibilities as Israelites. It appears that Christ supported this tax also (**Matthew 17:24**).

By the age of twenty young people should be mature and able to marry and establish a home apart from their parents.

Infant Salvation and the Death of a Child

When the son of King David died, David said in **II Samuel 12:23**, "But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." David knew he was saved and going to heaven one day and knew that his son was there. This gave David great comfort. The Lord Jesus said in **Matthew 18:14**, "Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones (children) should perish," And in **Matthew 19:14**, "But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of