

The following is another of many topical studies and Biblical Chain References written by Dr. Kent A. Field starting in 1976 to the present day. Do you question the validity of topical studies? Think again! Consider the very purpose of the New Testament Letters. The Book of 1John was a topical study combating Gnosticism; Galatians combats the binding of circumcision; and so on...

Baptizing Children ? Really ???

By Dr. Kent A. Field © 1994

The following are a set of extremely thought provoking questions that I humbly submit and believe **MUST** be addressed if we're ever going to learn or practice the truth with regards to infant vs. adult baptism. **PLEASE!** Can you honestly answer these questions in good conscience before God and not be as challenged as I am? Please print out this short survey and be sure to write your answers in the spaces provided so that you can later refer back to them.

1. What age do you think is too young to be baptized? _____
 - Why? _____
 - What are your reasons? _____
 - Could these "reasons" be applied by others to children of an older age than you listed? _____
 - What is the age? How old or young a person can your reasons be consistently applied to with any Biblical confidence? _____
 - Are there any age limitations to your reasoning? _____
 - What are your "cut-off" points or ages and why? _____
 - Could your same approach be used by someone else to an age **BELOW** your "cut-off"? _____
2. Considering Jesus's call to *discipleship*, at approximately what age is a person **ABLE** to answer that call? ____ (It is not enough to say "that different in each case" when you are practicing a religious view with eternity in the balance for that soul).
 - What is that age, as far as you understand it? and practice it? _____
 - Is that based solely upon a person's intellectual ability or willingness to respond? _____
 - Do you believe that God's requirements of discipleship also involve a person's ability to respond in physical actions and not just emotional or intellectual commitment? _____
3. Mustn't it be at the point **WHEN**, in a person's life, they are **ABLE** to answer (not just intellectually) the calls of *Matt. 10, Mark 10 & Luke 14* and a bunch more? Doesn't it sound like Jesus is requiring a Life Response and not just an intellectual response to His call? _____
4. About *when* is that in general human development, as you observe it? 5? 8? 10? 13? 18? 21? _____
5. Do you believe that there are any *optional* portions of this *discipleship* call, where it can still be "conditionally answered"? Or are they unconditional? _____
6. In this regard, do you think that there are ANY 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12 year olds that are not only *willing* with their childlike faith, who are **ABLE** to give the *disciple's life response* that Jesus so clearly demands?

7. Am I reading too much into those demands or conditional statements of discipleship in the NT? _____
 - If so, specifically... How?

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8. **At about, (or specifically if you know), what age or point in time in one's life are they ready for the Master's Call of Discipleship?**

- Please illustrate with an 8, 10, 13 year old leaving their home, mother, father, children, etc.. _____
- Please describe the circumstances of a child faithfully disobeying their parents in order to Worship and serve our Christ? _____
- Even unto death or imprisonment? _____
- Do you truly believe that God would hold a child "accountable" to this standard of discipleship? To be willing to sacrifice life, family, home as they did in the 1st century? _____
- How young? At what age does God hold such young children accountable? _____
- If you might respond, "Of course not!", then are you saying that they would NOT be accountable? _____
- Then why baptize them? _____

9. **Considering the nature of a child's faith (trusting nature & impressionable), doesn't it, of necessity, require more than a mere subjective level of "willingness"?** _____

- Mustn't there also, of necessity, be a level of ability to give the demanded response with one's life? _____
- Aren't all Christians required to assemble with the saints each Sunday? _____
- But weren't there times when Paul couldn't because he was in a prison cell? _____
- Was God holding him accountable to "go to church" then? _____
- No? ____ Why not? _____ Because he wasn't able, in his life's circumstance, to give the response to the call to assemble with the church while in prison chains? _____
- Would it be fair to say that God wouldn't hold him accountable under such circumstances? _____

10. **Applying the same logic and understanding of the Scriptures then,.....**

- Would you agree that God doesn't hold people accountable to respond in ways that it is just plain impossible? _____
- If a child would not be held accountable to respond to God by "hating his father or mother", or "leaving his home or possessions", or "hating his own life", then to that degree, would you then agree that they are NOT ACCOUNTABLE to be the DISCIPLES Jesus describes in the NT? _____
- And would you now like to take the position that someone can be accountable for their sin, but not accountable for the disciple's response? _____ Just wondering!?!? _____

11. **If it's just the intellectual knowledge and desire???... If that's all there is to it, then why aren't we actively, by faith in answer to our mission, reaching out to, and bypassing parents where necessary, :**

- for every child at every young age, as they are "ABLE, to his or her degree"?.... _____

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- **convincing even 5 year olds that there is a God, Heaven and hell?,** _____
 - **convincing them that they do wrong things, that they are therefore “sinners”?,** _____
 - **that their “sins” separate them from God?,** _____
 - **that they are therefore hell-bound?,** _____
 - **that they need to give their life to God?,** _____
 - **regardless of what Mommy or Daddy may think?,** _____
 - **that they need to be baptized immediately?,** _____
 - **and worship faithfully with the saints?, no matter what the cost?,** _____
 - **regardless of any family opposition or threat?,** _____
12. **I'm obviously having a hard time with that. Don't you think I should? Why? _____ Why not? _____**
13. **Do you believe that there are children that are being baptized "too soon" or before they need to? _____**
14. **What do you do with that? _____**
15. **Wouldn't that make their “baptism” without correct biblical authority, or “*unbiblical*”?**
16. **If so, will that “baptism” do them any good later on when they do need it? _____**
17. **If so, how? _____**
- **Please provide the verses in support of your position? _____**
18. **Would a child, needlessly baptized “*too soon*”, be a *true Christian* as outlined in Rom.6 or Gal.3? _____**
19. **Do you think that the deacons, elders and preachers “in the church” that were baptized at 10 and under, really ever became Christians through their child or infant baptism? _____**
- **Please provide the verses in support of your position? _____**
20. **If they are, somehow “retroactively” Christians, apart from CLEAR biblical teaching, why would it then matter what a person believed before they were baptised? ☹ _____**
21. **Otherwise, if people ARE being baptized BEFORE they actually needed to be... Wouldn't we therefore have people who are NOT children of God, in leadership positions in the Church? _____**
22. **Presuming you see why I'm asking these specific questions, ... Do you believe it is possible that many 1000's are trusting in an unnecessary and unbiblical baptism? _____**
23. **Where does that leave them spiritually? _____**
- **Are they saved anyway? _____**
 - **How? Verses Please!? _____**
24. **When they are Preachers, Elders, Deacons or otherwise self-appointed "leaders", isn't it fair to expect them to have the matter resolved on the issue of their own salvation? _____**

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- **Don't they fall under a stricter judgment?** _____
 - **Isn't it fair to expect *them* to know better?** _____
 - **If not, Why not?** _____
25. **Hence, isn't it right to talk with them differently than I would a non-Christian or new convert?** _____
- **With a greater passion?** _____
 - **With a greater sense of urgency?** _____
26. **I know that some have said that if we weren't supposed to baptize children, then the Bible would be more clear on the subject.... But considering the fact that the Bible only says that "men and women were baptized".....**
- **Could it be that the Bible is very clear?** _____
 - **Could it be that our understanding is what is unclear?** _____
 - **What would you think is the cause for such a lack of clarity in understanding?** _____
27. **Some, if not most, denominations make the same statements and take the identical positions in regards to the lack of the ultimate necessity for biblical baptism at all!.... "Leaving it up to God's Grace".**
- **Is that because the Bible is unclear on the subject?** _____
 - **Isn't the Bible Clear that those who were baptized, or added, or persecuted, over and over again were said to be "men and women alike"?** _____
28. **How are we reading too much into that? (Because that's a key issue, besides discipleship itself)?**

29. **Now, one final exercise for this discussion..... A Woman was in a terrible car accident with both her children in the car with her. Two boys. One was 8, the other 16. The 16 year old was never baptized yet, though he faithfully attended church with his family. He just didn't feel he truly had the ability to make that kind of commitment Jesus asked of his disciples. His younger brother was 8 when he was baptized earlier that year. Both brothers died in the crash, along with their mother. Though the preacher tried, the father of the boys was inconsolable. You see, he dreaded that his 16 year old went to hell, based on something the preacher taught and practiced. The preacher tried to explain to the father that we shouldn't be so sure that he went to hell. "After all, he was just a 16 year old boy!" Then the father asked his minister a few questions.....**
- **"But didn't you baptize my 8 year old because you believed that he was a 'hell-bound' sinner?"** _____
 - **"Both my boys were 'normal' kids, who developed normally for their ages. Are you saying that there was something 'wrong' with my 16 year-old's ability to understand?"** _____
 - **"Don't you believe that my 8 year old would have 'gone to hell' if you hadn't baptized him?"** _____
 - **"Then how can you bring yourself to say that 'maybe' my 16 year old could still go to heaven?"** _____
 - **"Preacher, I know that the only differences between my 2 loving boys was that one was twice as old as the other, and that you baptized the 8 year old as a 'hell-bound sinner', and my 16 year old didn't yet take that step... So tell me, Mr. Preacher, what do you have to offer from your theology, that is consistent with your practice, that can give me comfort?"** _____

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- **"If there is a 'good chance', as you put it, that my beloved 16 year old is 'in heaven right now, because God is a merciful God Who doesn't hold children accountable to the same standards as adults', then WHY did you baptize my 8 year old? _____**
- **Thus, haven't you caused me to fret for my 16 year-old's soul needlessly? _____**

30. Do you now see any difficulties with the preacher's position? _____

Thanks again for sharing your valuable time in taking this survey and discussing it with others as together we "search the Scriptures daily to see whether these things are so".