



The Christian Courier

October, 2009

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The Age Of Accountability

A dear brother recently posed a question via email regarding the age of accountability. Is it a scriptural concept or not?

After all, the flood destroyed children as well as their parents, and the same was true with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

I made a partial answer, as did a couple of other brethren. In this article, we hope to combine these partial answers to reason together about this important subject.

First of all, you will not find the words “age of accountability” in the scriptures. But if we study together, we will find the concept there – the

comfort that if a child dies they will go to Heaven, not Hell.



We will look at three things in this article that establish this concept, especially when taken together. We will first look at sin, and how one becomes accountable to God for it. We will then look at the plan of salvation from sin and see that it is something the very young cannot do. Last, we will look at some of the things Jesus Himself

said about children.

Let’s look first, then, at sin, and how a person becomes accountable to God for it.

The two examples posed illustrate a concept that children in the past sometimes shared the punishment for their parents' sin. God later reminded His people of that principle when He gave the 10 commandments, especially the command against idolatry, Ex. 20:5-6, *"Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."*

But in Ezek. 18:4 and 20, the Lord through Ezekiel prophesied of a time when children would no longer bear the sins of their parents. First of all, look at verse 4, *"Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die."* Verse 20 expands on this thought. *"The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."*

So if a baby or young child that died would not go to Hell for their parents' sin, whose sin would cause that result? Would Adam's? No. Instead, according to Rom. 5:12, Adam opened the door for sin to come into the world, but we as individuals are sinners because of our own sin. *"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:"*

Luke 19:10 says, *"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."* It is by our own sin that we are lost, that we are separated from God. Isa. 59:1-2, *"Behold, the LORD's*

hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

So if only our own sin will keep us out of Heaven, when do we sin? James 4:17, *"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."* This is the heart of the concept of the age of accountability. A baby or young child does not know good from evil, so cannot sin at this age by the definition James gave. And we cannot give a certain age as this "accountable age", because people mature at different times in their youth. Some are born with a mind that stays child-like, and so never have the mental capacity to know right from wrong, and therefore sin. Without sin, why would they go to Hell?

Further, a baby, infant, or young child is unable to complete the requirements to have sin forgiven.

Heb. 11:6 instructs us, *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."* We often speak of a child-like faith, and work with our kids to try to develop their faith, but it is not intellectually possible in babies, and only building in young children.

Where does faith come from? Rom. 10:17, *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."* Can a baby or young child hear so as to understand the preaching?

We must turn from our ways to God's way, which is called repentance. Jesus taught in Matt. 21:8-9, *"But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and*

said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.” Aside from the fact of nothing to repent of, can an infant or young child understand and apply the concept of repentance, of this change of heart that leads to a change of action and direction?

A sinner must confess their faith in Christ Jesus, Rom. 10:9-10, “*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*” Again, this would be difficult for one who has not yet learned to talk.

A sinner must be baptized to forgive their sins, Acts 22:16, “*And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*” Yes it is physically possible to baptize babies, but the scriptures tell us that hearing, faith, repentance and confession are necessary before being baptized. So if a young child cannot complete the prerequisites, why would they be baptized? And why baptize to forgive sins they do not have?

Finally, let us consider some of the things Jesus said about children.

Jesus said in Matt. 18:10, “*Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in Heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in Heaven.*” Oh, I can see that this passage does not say explicitly that a child that dies will go to Heaven, but it certainly indicates that children belong to God, not the Devil.

Remember what Jesus said in response to his disciples in Matt. 19:13-14, “*Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should*

put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

Finally, Jesus told us in Matt: 18:1-4 that in fact we need to become like children in order to go to Heaven ourselves. “*At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*” We need to be as little children, not the other way around.

In summary, children are not accountable for sin because they do not know right from wrong. Babies and children cannot complete the prerequisites for being baptized to have sins washed away. And Jesus said Himself that little ones have guardian angels in Heaven, that of such (little children) is the kingdom of Heaven, and that in fact if we want to go to Heaven ourselves we need to become like little children.

So, no, the words “age of accountability” are not in the scriptures. But the concept that a baby or child who dies will go to Heaven, not Hell, is there. It is an important truth, and a great comfort.

In Christian love,
Bro. Terry Warford
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Des Moines, WA 98198
turtlet64@comcast.net

Prayer

How many times has someone asked you to pray for them, but when the time comes to pray you really don't know exactly what to say? Of course if they are specific such as for sickness it is simple, but when they just ask for prayers what are we to say? The Bible gives us many suggestions such as the Lords Prayer, but where else? Let us turn to our Bibles for other suggestions. Turn with me to **Colossians 1**, starting with **verse 9**, "*That ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom.*" What better place to start than by asking God to fill them with knowledge and to help them make the proper decisions in their lives. Most of the time when people are asking for prayer, there is a problem in their lives. **And spiritual understanding;** We are to ask God to give them help to understand the scriptures, and how the scriptures can help them in their time of need. **Verse 10**, "*That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.*" We are to not only pray for them to have spiritual understanding of what God wants them to do, we are also to pray that they will actually do what the scriptures teach. **Being fruitful in every good work.** Pray that

their lives will be fruitful, and that they may accomplish a lot for the Lord. **And increasing in the knowledge of God.** We are to pray that they will continue to study and gain in knowledge. **Verse 11**, "*Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power.*" We are to ask God to give them strength with all his power to overcome whatever obstacles come in their way. **Unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness.** Pray that they may have patience to accept Gods time line. **Verse 12**, "*Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.*" To pray that they may understand that their tribulation will make them stronger when they overcome. Pray that they may understand that when they live their lives for God they will have an inheritance with the saints.

There are many things that we can help others with in prayer. I pray this will assist you in you future prayers.

Written in love
Robert Farley

We received the following note from Jeanne Boroff of the Glenwood, WA, congregation:

Anyone in the brotherhood interested in moving to Nevada and helping start a church please contact me at:

3702 Hunt St. NW, Spc 59
Gig Harbor, WA 98335

God bless, Jeanne Boroff

Definitive Descriptions

Tertullian (204 A.D.) wrote: “The church of Christ composed of baptized believers, does...meet each Lord’s day to...partake of the Lord’s Supper.

This statement is an accurate description of the church of Christ in 204 A.D. This statement is also an accurate description of the church of Christ in 2009 A.D. There are four definitions in this statement that are descriptions of the church of Christ.

- The name, church of Christ
- Composed of baptized believers
- Meet each Lord’s day.
- Partake of the Lord’s Supper

How did this man know these things about the church? There are two ways he could have known: By observation and by personal contact with Christ’s teaching through preaching and/or study.

Rom. 10:14, “*How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?*”

First, let us consider the name; where did it come from?

Matt. 16:18, “*And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build **my church**; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*”

Rom. 16:16, “*Salute one another with an holy kiss. The **churches of Christ** salute you.*”

I have been told that Rom. 16:16 does not mean only the churches of Christ, but all churches. This is not true, as the church of Christ was the only church in existence when Paul wrote to the Romans. The plural “churches”

means the many congregations of the one church in existence at that time.

Next to consider is the composition of the church. The church of Christ is composed of baptized believers only.

Mark 16:16, “*He that **believeth and is baptized** shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*”

Gal. 3:27, “*For as many of you as have been **baptized into Christ** have put on Christ.*”

Col. 1:18, “*And **he is the head of the body, the church**: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that **in all things he might have the preeminence.***”

An unbaptized Christian is not entertained in the New Testament. The name “Christian” is reserved for those having been baptized into Christ.

Next to consider is the meeting time. The church of Christ meets on the first day of the week.

Acts 20:7, “*And upon the **first day of the week**, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.*”

1 Cor. 16:2, “*Upon the **first day of the week** let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.*” [The Greek literally says, “**κατα μιαν σαββατων**” – “**first day of every week**”, and was translated as such by James Macknight, F. W. Grosheide, & Charles Hodge, as well as several others. – Ellis Forsman, TCC editor]

There are numerous evidences that the church is to meet on the first day of the week, both in

scripture and in history. We have only shown a small portion from each.

Next to consider is the Lord's Supper. The church of Christ partakes of the communion each Lord's day.

Acts 20:7, "*And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.*"

To collect money each first day of the week and eliminate breaking bread each first day of the week is not consistent with scripture. Each subject is "upon the first day of the week" and therefore must be treated the same.

So, we conclude the statement by Tertullian concerning the church. "But wait a minute"; one

may say, "there is only one scripture given to verify breaking bread on each Lord's day; one scripture does not prove the point." There is only one scripture in the Old Testament that gives the birthplace of Christ (Micah 5:2). Does not one scripture prove his birthplace? And the communion is a complete lesson itself.

The point in this writing being a brief description of the church of Christ.

In Christian love,
Jack Warford
409 S. 1st
Stilwell, OK 74960

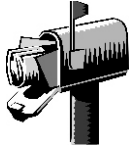
Precious Memories

The Christian Courier, October, 1969. 📖 The Yuma, AZ, congregation reported on their meeting with Bro. Sammy Boen. 📖 Bro. Tom Broadway, Grants Pass, OR, mentioned they had a number of visitors during the summer. He also reported that Bro. Rex & Tiny Mickey had moved to Farmington, NM. 📖 Bro. W. A. Nelson, Somerton, AZ, was happy to report of the baptism of Laura Ferguson and was sad to report of the passing of Sis. Armesa Smith of Aztec, NM. 📖 Bro. Claud Perigen, Bellflower, CA, reported on his meeting at Furnish Canyon, OK. 📖 Bro. George Vanderpool, Bohannon

Mt., AR, announced a meeting in October with local and guest speakers.

The Christian Courier, October, 1979. 📖 The Bellflower, CA, congregation listed some recent visitors. 📖 Bro. L. E. Arnett, Waterford, CA, reported that Bro. Holmes had suffered a series of strokes. 📖 Bro. Jerry McCay, Yakima, WA, reported on the camp meetings in Oklahoma and California. 📖 Bro. Cliff Brockman, Chico, CA, announced a weekend meeting in November with guest speakers.

The family and friends of Sis. Bonnie Bryant, Oakdale, CA, desire the prayers of the church on her behalf because of her medical problems with cancer. She is due to have surgery soon for removal of a mass on her stomach and to drain several pockets of fluid in her body cavity.



Cards and Letters

Baron, OK

Greetings from the Baron, OK, congregation, We have just finished a weekend gospel meeting featuring Bro. Stanley Goodwin from the Newcastle, TX, congregation. Should you have the opportunity to hear Bro. Goodwin, please do. You will come away feeling refreshed from the word of God. He is a wonderful speaker.

Friday, we heard about the "Mountain View" that only a few men have seen. But they wrote about that event to benefit our "Valley" living. Saturday, we heard about "The Sin That Will Not Be Forgiven". It was explained in simple detail that was a benefit to all that heard. Sunday, "The Church of the Bible" was explained and proven in such a biblical manner that there could be no confusion.

Members from several congregations were in attendance for which we were very thankful. The singing and fellowship were a joy to share.

Until Christ returns,

The brethren at the Baron Church of Christ.

Glenwood, WA

The 2009 meeting is history now, but the memories linger. We were blessed with crowds of 80 to 85 at each assembly. We began on Saturday with a barbecue followed with congregational singing,

Brethren Kevin Lamb of the Glead, WA, congregation and Eric Harper of the Sacramento, CA, congregation were the speakers. Their lessons were well presented from the scriptures and beneficial to all.

There were two baptisms: Rachael and Leah Shepherd of Vancouver, WA. (Following the meeting, Aug 23, another baptism, Kerry Stacy took place. Kerry is the son of Bro. and Sis. Greg Stacy of our congregation.) We rejoice in the Lord for these blessings and all praise be to the Lord!

Thanks to all who came so far and worked so hard to help in the Lord's vineyard.

Since the meeting Sis Jeanne Boroff had hip replacement surgery and is recovering well.

In the weeks following, some of us were able to attend the meeting at Glead, WA, with Bro Eric Harper speaking, with one baptism (Tristin Bryant), and the week following at Yakima, with Bro Jerry McCay speaking. Good lessons and attendance at both congregations.

Just a word about the speakers: Most are aware of the ability of Jerry; his lessons were well prepared and delivered. Eric and Kevin are both young men who are badly needed among the congregations of the faithful. We appreciate the efforts of both, along with their enthusiasm for the work of the Lord. We need to gather behind them and put their abilities to good use. We heartily recommend either to any who are planning meetings in the future.

For the Glenwood congregation,

J D Logan

(Note - The letter was missed in the last printing. For this we apologize - The editors)

Harlingen, TX

Dear brethren,

I hope that on receiving this letter you are enjoying the rich blessings of God. Many thanks for this valuable help and participation with the evangelists for the work of the Lord in Mexico and Guatemala.

I communicate that during the month of August we visited some churches to encourage the brothers to and to study with those that preach in the local congregations.

In the church of Veracruz, Mexico, we studied two days with the brothers and also with some new people. Some of these people have an interest for learning more of the scriptures, and we will visit them again in September.



Also, we visited the churches in Tanlajas and La Labor, Mexico, to encourage the brothers to continue in the faith and also to help in the evangelizing in this area.

The brothers in Roswell, NM, invited me to preach a series during 3 days and we visited and helped with the evangelizing in this city. In this congregation they have some problems with doctrinal points, but after studying the scriptures these problems were solved.



The churches in Mexico continue firm and the new congregation in Vallehermoso (In USA near the Mexican border) continues growing and is confirmed in the sound doctrine. Also, I have information that the churches in different areas of Mexico continue firm in the truth.

Brethren, again we thank you for your help; we were encouraged this month.

I hope God will continue to bless you in everything.

I send a photo of the church in Roswell, NM, and one with a study with different people in my house.

Your brother in Christ,
Otto Alvarez

Lorenzo, TX

Greetings to all from the Lorenzo, TX, congregation,

By way of news this month:

Bro. Ellis & Sis. Lynell Forsman are back from the weekend meeting at Baron, OK, with Bro. Stanley Goodwin. Bro. Stanley did a fine job and the meeting was well attended. The Forsman's then rushed to Flora Vista, NM, with Bro. Gene & Sis. Joan and their daughter, Sis. Angela Boling for the funeral service of Bro. Rex

Mickey. Rex passed away on Oct. 8th, and the funeral service, which was conducted by Bro. Dennis Davis of the Yuma, AZ, congregation, was on Oct. 14th. Rex will certainly be missed by many loved ones and friends.

Sis. Reba White fell and suffered a break in her leg bone, which required surgery. Please keep her in your prayers as she still faces a long rehab.

Sis. Jaetta Loftis is fighting a severe infection in her left shoulder.

Wynetta McCay is recovering from knee surgery and infection.

We received word of the baptism of Sadaf Maredia of Georgetown, TX, on Aug. 16th. God bless her in this decision.

Sis. Olene Howe is currently visiting Bro. Bill & Sis. Earlene Jared of Valparaiso, IN.

Some from Lorenzo plan on attending the fall weekend meeting in Broken Bow, OK, scheduled for November 13-15. Everyone is invited to attend and enjoy the fellowship, singing, and above all, listening to God's Word.

Love and peace to you all from the brethren at Lorenzo, TX.

In Loving Memory of Bro. Rex L. Mickey



Bro. Rex L. Mickey, 86, of Flora Vista, NM, went home to be with his Lord and Savior on October 8, 2009. He was born on May 27, 1923, in Acumen, CO, the son of Charlie and Madge Mickey.

Rex was a man of God, serving as a minister in the church of Christ for more than 55 years. In 1946 Rex married the love of his life, Tiny; and

through their 63 years together they raised their daughter, Anna Cutler, and sons, Dallas Mickey and Timothy Mickey, who preceded his dad in death.

Rex also has 7 grandchildren and numerous great and great-great-grandchildren.

Rex was a rock hound and incorporated his love of rock hunting into jewelry and furniture. Several people have mementoes of his work.

He was also quite the singer. On road trips, if he forgot the words to a song he would just make them up.

He was a friend and mentor to each person who came into his life. He will truly be missed, but not forgotten.

Memorial service was performed by Bro. Dennis Davis of the Yuma, AZ, congregation on October 14th, 2009.

On-line condolences can be sent to www.danielsfuneral.com or to the family.

In Loving Memory of Sis. Leola Mae Taylor



Our mother, Leola Mae Taylor was born Sept. 1, 1932, and married Howard Taylor on Dec. 25, 1949. They had 3 children, Teresa (Barnes), Karla (Jones), and Clif Taylor, 5 grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren, several nieces & nephews, and many,

many friends. After 58 years of marriage, our dad, Howard Taylor, passed away in Feb. 2008, and Mama had no heart for living on this earth without him. Her decline from Alzheimer's was gradual until she fell and broke her hip in March 2009. She moved to a nursing center for rehab. In May, she broke the other hip. Actually, between January and May, she broke a foot, 2 hips, her pelvis, a wrist, and had a heart attack.

Mom passed away at 12:10 AM on Monday, Oct. 19th. We received the answer to our prayers, in that she just peacefully didn't take another breath. We are truly blessed, not only for that but for having this most wonderful woman as our mother.

Thank you all so very much for your love and support over the years. Mama and Daddy

cherished their many friends, as do we 3 children.

Karla Jones
580-252-9004

Editor's note — Sis. Leola was baptized as a teenager and was a faithful Christian all of her life. She and Bro. Howard often went to church meetings. They supported these meetings as often as possible until about two years ago when their health started declining.

Leola was a warm, loving, out-going lady who's smile will be missed by all who knew her.

2 Tim. 4:7-8, tells us the reward for all Christians who are faithful, "*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*"

Leola was lovingly laid to rest on Oct. 23, 2009. Her sons-in-law, Richard Jones & Audley Barnes conducted her funeral service.

Online condolences may be sent by email to comanche@pdi.net

We received word just before printing *The Christian Courier* that Sis. Oma Taylor, 104, of Comanche, OK, passed away yesterday. October 22nd. Sis. Oma was Sis. Leola's mother-in-law. Details of her life will appear in the next issue of *The Christian Courier*.

Our hearts & prayers go out to the Taylor family for this double loss they have endured.

Online condolences may be made at www.bailespolkfuneralhome.com

Fall Meeting
Nov. 13, 14, & 15
Cypress Lake Church of Christ Camp
Broken Bow, Oklahoma
Friday 7 p.m.
Saturday 6 p.m.
Sunday 10 a.m.

We will have some great guest speakers all three days,
Saturday Morning all that want to go are attending the folk

Festival at Beavers Bend. Saturday night we are having our traditional Hay ride and Weiner roast after services. Sunday after services we will serve lunch and then have a little singing. It will be a little cool, but we do have accommodations at the camp for anyone that would like to stay. We will also gladly have anyone be guests in our homes.

Info: Doug Ferguson (580)306-1579
Dan Treat (580)584-2377

Editor's Note — If you plan to stay at camp, you might consider bringing bedding and clothing suitable for fall weather, as well as towels, etc.

We also just received late news about the passing of Louise (Orendorff) Ballenger (95) of Searcy, AR, on October 9th. She had been in a nursing home for some time. Louise was the sister of Horace and Wes Orendorff. This was submitted by William Ballenger.

BULLETIN BOARD

Meetings

November 13-15, 2009 Broken Bow, OK

Guest speakers

Baptisms

Julie Fuson	Broken Bow, OK	July, 2009
Sadaf Maredia	Georgetown, TX	August 16, 2009
Kerry Stacey	Glenwood, WA	August 23, 2009

Passings

Rex Mickey	Flora Vista, NM	October 8, 2009
Louise (Orendorff)	Ballenger Searcy, AR	October 9, 2009
Leola Mae Taylor	Comanche, OK	October 19, 2009
Oma Taylor	Comanche, OK	October 22, 2009

Prayer of Faith for those in need

Minnie Davis	Broken Bow, OK	In nursing home
Ruth Johnson	Broken Bow, OK	In nursing home
Rita Queen	Broken Bow, OK	Heart attack & surgery
Ericka Ferguson	Clinton, NJ	In prison
Tony Schell	Cedaredge, CO	Heart irregularities
Lavetta Boling	Citrus City, AZ	Alzheimer's disease
Carol Bauer	Gleed, WA	Fighting cancer
Robert Farley	Gleed, WA	Severe pain
Felicia Geho	Gleed, WA	Back pains
Betty McKinney	Gleed, WA	Back pain
Gene McKinney	Gleed, WA	Heart trouble & diabetes
Ola McKinney	Gleed, WA	Eye cataract problems
Jeannean McSwane	Glenwood, WA	Severe infections
Christy Burkhart	Goshen, AR	Back pain
Marvin Daniels	Goshen, AR	Lost ground
Melvin Daniels	Goshen, AR	Bad heart & lungs
Joan Boling	Lorenzo, TX	Heart problems
Jaetta Loftis	Lorenzo, TX	Shoulder infection & hip pain
Nell McCay	Lorenzo, TX	Eyesight & balance problems
Reba White	Lorenzo, TX	Surgery for broken Femur bone
Wynetta McCay	Lorenzo, TX	Knee surgery & infection
Bonnie Bryant	Oakdale, CA	Fighting cancer
Bonnie Johnson	Pleasant View, OK	Ill health
Vivian Baker	Waterford, CA	Fighting cancer
Florence Fuller	Yuma, AZ	Fighting throat cancer
Jean Orendorff	Yuma, AZ	In nursing home