

**Contrasting Views of Infant Salvation:
in Light of the Cross,
not
in Shadows Cast by Earned Wages**

**A study comparing biblical and Augustinian-sourced teachings
on the
Age of Moral Accountability**

"Christians have struggled with the issue of the eternal status of infants.
Yet nowhere does the Bible directly treat the issue.
Hence, we are left to arguments based on general principle and inference from Scripture." ¹

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I Introduction

The August 2008 issue of **Travelers Advisory**² introduces the topic researched here. In that issue I wrote, "I have been asked to share my understanding of whether the Word teaches that babies and children who die are automatically exempt from suffering hell, considering they did not live long enough to declare saving faith. I admit I've always **assumed an 'age of exemption'**, but without fully studying God's Word to know **why**. At this point, I am not fully convinced of a distinct revealed doctrine on this question..." [This original description of the question has been influenced considerably by many hours of study and research, starting with a re-statement of the primary question.³ This research also includes extensive citations from other authors, several of whom do not agree with my analysis. The reader will see this question legitimately concerns the student seeking a complete doctrinal understanding of why and how we are saved, not just grieving parents seeking consolation. Dallas Theological Seminary founder, L. S. Chafer, rightfully states that no doctrine of salvation is complete if the fate of deceased infants and young children is ignored. Prior to completing this research, I wondered if the perspective shared by one ministry director⁴ was the most I could expect --that we might very well be dealing with a **BIBLICAL MYSTERY** --and we should be content with leaving the question there. After my study of God's truth, I no longer believe we need to say this is a mystery on which God's Word is silent. I believe the fact of infant salvation is directly tied to and determined by God's revealed character.

In a 2005 research paper,⁵ I include this statement: "When a child dies young, they are under the age of accountability" [meaning they are therefore not lost, i.e., are not suffering]. For nearly thirty-six years I've believed the term "age of accountability" is legitimate.⁶ But after studying in more detail the teachings of pastors, theologians and laypersons I came to question the reasons for my understanding of this concept. Or I should say, I began to question my understanding of **how** safety for deceased infants and young children (hereafter referred to as "little ones") is taught in the Bible. In order to comfort those who grieve, we must base that comfort on truth.⁷

II Restating the Question

I think Paul's Letter to the Romans reveals a better way to state this question than by use of "age of accountability" or "age of **CONSCIENCE**". Romans 6:23 leads us to consider whether little ones under a certain age do earn, and are paid just wages for sin.⁸ Specifically, let's ask, "Do babies and young children collect the wages of sin when they die prematurely?"⁹ Using an analogy from this life, we find the answer to the question is, "NO". Obviously, babies and young children do not work, and therefore cannot be paid wages. (Although in a well run home even very young children do some chores to prepare for their future as independent **RESPONSIBLE** adults; yet these are still under the protection of their parents¹⁰ or caretakers.) In this analogy, anticipated payment of wages awaits the time until the child actually does perform in exchange for pay. When we ask whether Paul's declaration¹¹ of "paid wages" applies to little ones, we are not able to point to a specific series of Scriptures to answer the question. Instead, we agree with Dr. Geisler's conclusion. We must "infer from Scriptures"¹². We correctly infer that God **cancel**s **payment**¹³ of yet-to-be-earned wages when a little one dies. Why and how is this? This cancellation is applied by virtue of Christ's shed blood on the Cross. In light of Christ's Cross, little ones whose lives are cut short are not required to stand in the shadows cast by even anticipated wages earned for sin. The principles revealed in Scripture certainly infer **DIVINE GRACE** stands in the way of these little ones suffering eternal loss. Even our courts model decisions after God's law, recognizing divine mercy. When asked by MN Governor Quie, "What's the difference between justice and mercy?" Deborah Hedlund, 2008 candidate for MN Supreme

Court Justice, answered, "Justice is what we deserve, but mercy is what we need."¹⁴ (Failing to win the election, Judge Hedlund nonetheless earned "crown jewels" with her astute answer.)

III Style, Method, and Significance of this Research; Terms Defined; Ancillary Topics

A typical feature identifying my style of writing is extensive use of references and addenda material. May I suggest the reader skip the Endnotes and Appendices until after reading the information through once. Every reader will likely bring their own perspectives to their first reading. But I would caution on dismissing these references altogether. No thoughts are unique. King Solomon reminds us "there is nothing new under the sun".¹⁵ We can only build upon, correct, or tear down what is written and taught before us. I believe there is a common body of revealed truth available to the entire Body, by virtue of the indwelling witness of the Holy Spirit. (And likewise, there is an uncommon, continually morphing body of error that seeks to engulf biblical truth but only manages to confuse many, taking them down dead end rabbit trails.) Elucidation of God's truth must flow from other valuable teaching and writing, and must be credited to its first known source. Cited work assures we acknowledge the integrity and interdependence of the Body. That said, many layers of truth are best learned by peeling back, in a consistent manner, one layer at a time. I urge the reader not to skim this work if you desire to appreciate its value. Reading the entire material is essential to gain the entire meaning. Finally, because of the sensitive and personal nature of this topic, I have chosen to address the reader in first person, singular. This is not a topic that lends itself to clinical third person expression. The reader will also note there are additional points teaching other doctrines in this research. They are included in the Endnotes. And my [commentary] or [clarification] about others' writing on age of accountability appears [in brackets within their writing.]

Systematic research of this question began by me asking selected international ministries to share their perspectives on Age of Accountability. I also surveyed fifty references from the **Corrie's Reference Library**¹⁶ collection. Only after sufficient inquiry elsewhere did I determine to investigate what is posted on the Internet.¹⁷ I found many more Internet postings than not, which claim an age of accountability is not biblical. I consider most of what I read on-line no more conclusive or convincing than what any Spirit-filled, biblically-informed believer should be able to determine from their own study and meditation of Scripture. But a word of caution is in order. Even though knowing God's Word is not limited to the few "privileged and qualified",¹⁸ we must be careful to not self-confirm our private Bible study. Otherwise we become our own final authority.¹⁹

The significance of this research is not limited to offering closure and comfort to grieving parents. Ultimately, anyone who seeks a thorough understanding of the doctrine of **SOTERIOLOGY** must address the question of Age of Accountability. At least two camps of belief are clearly evident when one explores this topic, but I believe the truth of one outweighs the error of all the others. (Specifically, I can't imagine even the most hard shell Calvinist being so crass as to think or say, while holding their baby, "Should you die, my precious child, **before** you make a confession of faith, I may not see you in eternity. I know I **am** chosen, but we do not yet know whether **you** are chosen."²⁰ (Despite claims of special election) this is what Calvinists are left with when they believe **total DEPRAVITY** and **LIMITED ATONEMENT** are biblical. Ultimately, considering all views on accountability, the question sifts down to asking what we believe the Bible teaches about God's sovereign grace, mercy and justice. If we incorrectly believe at any of these points, all else flows down hill from there, ending in skewed thinking, traceable to **SPIRITUAL ERROR**.

Appendix A is a list of defined terms. Throughout this writing these terms are identified in **BOLD CAPITALS**. It is important to understand what I believe a term means. The reader may not agree with my definition of a term, but will at least understand what I mean to convey by its use. Finally, two ancillary topics are also important to consider. They are discussed only briefly. How the death of a non believing adult family member may hinder a surviving member making a

confession of faith (page 13, number 9), and whether children under a certain age who've not made a confession of faith will be taken in the Rapture (page 14, number 10), are allied concerns indicated by this study of the age of accountability.

IV Infant Salvation from Seven Perspectives with [commentary]

As an introduction to the following beliefs about infant salvation (some contradictory), I've included what theologian Dr. Norman Geisler considers as all possible categories of saved infants.²¹ He categorizes saved little ones as either:

1. Baptized infants only 2. "Elect infants" only²² 3. Infants God "Foreknows"²³ 4. All infants and, 5. Infants in Limbo. Geisler's full review of these is not included here. Refer to Appendix D for some of his abbreviated thoughts. Perspectives I've included represent the most common I encountered in my research. [My research concludes "all infants" is the revealed biblical truth.]

A. 2 Samuel 12:23 Perspective

The most common text cited as proof deceased children are with the Lord is Samuel's recounting of King David's lament after the loss of his illegitimate son. Many agree with this Berean Call response: "David could speak with certainty of where his son would be (2 Sam 12:23)..."²⁴ But others feel this text is inconclusive in proving babies are **SAFE**. From Midnight Call is this response: "I see no evidence that David would be reunited with his child in heaven. I rather think that he meant the grave. Just like the child died, he would die too. This [David's confidence he would join his son] does not teach salvation doctrine."²⁵ I agree this Scripture does not teach about salvation. **SOTERIOLOGY** must teach **basis** of salvation. I believe this passage teaches about the repentant condition of David's heart, in light of his son's death. Calvinist Ken Matto writes, "David pleaded with God to spare the life of the child, but God's [**JUDGMENT**] was firm and could not be reversed. The child eventually died. Verse 23...is the main verse used...to "prove" the age of accountability. [Granted], if we isolate this verse and remove it from its context, we can easily make it say what we want it to...[but] if you read the entire passage of Scripture, you will see that it plainly deals with God's judgment on sin. God is not a respecter of persons, for all that sin will face judgment...[David] is united with the child in the fact of death [in the grave], which all humans must face."²⁶ But some, strongly objecting, claim David would have no reason to rejoice at such a thought --the grave --therefore, he must be referring to heaven. Yet, I agree this text is a weak link if it attempts to demonstrate age of accountability. Pastor Greg Watson believes this passage may "not indicate the [little ones] are saved as you and I are, but that they **are** safe."²⁷ And an answer posted at gotquestions.org concurs: "David's response [in 2 Samuel] can be seen as an argument that those who cannot believe are safe in the Lord."

B. "Do not yet know good from bad" Perspective

Newby responds again: "Concerning accountability, James 4:17 instructs us that "...to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." This verse would seem to imply accountability based upon knowledge to do good."²⁸ I agree this perspective acknowledges babies are not guilty of **PRESCIENT SIN**, and based on that, are likely not **ACCOUNTABLE**. Yet we must

maintain that the child is conceived in sin, and does in fact, from a very early age, exemplify that sin.²⁹ But the issue here is whether a deceased little one is eternally punished for their Adamic nature. Newby continues, "Nevertheless, we may with confidence echo Abraham's rhetorical question, 'shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' (Genesis 18:25)."³⁰ **This is KEY:** How we understand this question is based on **how we assess God's character.** We attempt to prove God does wrong, i.e., we claim He is morally wrong, if we strip His attributed actions from His

perfection. A perfect God is never found guilty of injustice.³¹ But Calvinists (the main objectors to exemption due to age) have an odd way of understanding **DIVINE JUSTICE.** Ken Matto writes regarding charges of divine cruelty directed toward "...a certain group of people...the retarded, illiterate, deaf and blind, or those who possess a learning disability." [Matto says this special group] "may never understand the difference between good and bad. [He continues:] The question then remains, will God keep them under the blood for their entire life and not require their accountability since they are incapable of understanding? The answer is a resounding no for two reasons: First, no human is ever granted salvation based on their physical handicaps; and secondly, this type of salvation is nowhere taught in Scripture."³² [In the alternate], theologian Erickson writes, "There are several indications in Scripture that persons are not morally responsible before a certain point, which we sometimes call 'the age of accountability.'" In Deuteronomy 1:39, Moses says, "And the little ones that you said would be taken captive, your children who do not yet know good from bad --they will enter the land"...[and] In the messianic prophecy in Isaiah 7, there are two references to the time when the boy "knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right" (vv. 15, 16).³³ Pastor Watson clarifies: "The age of accountability **relates to three issues:** **WHEN** the child begins to discern right from wrong; **WHEN** they express meaningful awareness of the gospel; and **WHEN** these lead the child to recognize conviction by the Holy Spirit. These are necessary before there can be a decision for Christ."³⁴ This perspective is also found in an answer posted at gotquestions.org: "A child has **passed** the age of accountability **once** he or she is **capable** of making a faith decision for **or** against Christ." If we accept this definition, it is clear we must also accept only the Lord knows His criteria for whether each child has, in fact, reached this critical point. But, we must be willing to admit that with every passing year, it is less likely the growing child is considered **under** the age at which God expects him to make a decision for Christ. Still, contrary to Calvinist theology, drawn inference from all Scripture, in context, reveals a broad and generous protection for deceased little ones, not a blind application of divine justice merely requiring punishment.

C. Generational Curse Perspective

"There is a false teaching which has permeated much of the Christian Church...that there are generational curses... the **SINS** of the fathers are inherited by their children to the third and fourth generation. This is not true!"³⁵ Based on Exodus 20:5-6 and 34:6-7, (speaking only of the sins of the father),³⁶ this 'curse' teaching fails to take into account Ezekiel 18:20: "The soul that sins shall die. The son **shall not bear the guilt of the father**, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself."³⁷ [But] "a baby cannot sin intentionally; it cannot sin in the womb; it cannot sin until it is several months old; it does not have the motor skills or thought processes to sin."³⁸ Moses reminds of God's mercy "...your little ones and your children, who you say will be victims, who today have no knowledge of good and evil, they shall go in there (to the promised land); to them I will give it, and they shall possess it" (Deut 1:39). While these texts teach principles of the dispensation of law, God's character is consistent in every **DISPENSATION.** Yes, the sin nature conceived in the womb is at work, accruing wages daily. (The 'terrible two's' often arrive earlier than anticipated!) But the biblical pattern we observe in all dispensations

reveals **payment of these wages** (earned or anticipated) is (temporarily) postponed for the living, and is cancelled for deceased little ones. Anticipated, due wages are "held in trust" and later paid to non-repentant, accountable adults. But payment is cancelled for deceased little ones³⁹ not previously 'cursed'.

D. "Heaven is Full of Babies" Perspective

Ed Newby writes, "[Jesus]...left us with a strong implication that a sizeable portion of...heaven's population is made up of children (i.e., those who died as children)."⁴⁰ But regarding Luke 18:15-17, Calvinist Matto writes, "verse 16 states that the kingdom of God contains little children. If we were to isolate the verse, we could safely say [this verse means] that little children are in the kingdom of God, meaning they are all saved....[but] verse 17 goes on to state that the kingdom of God must be received with a child like perspective...in other words, Christ is making a statement...that every believer must have the faith of a child...Jesus is speaking in **parabolic language** [here]...we cannot build the teaching of the age of accountability on [this and other verses]....It is clear that the age of accountability is a created doctrine with no biblical foundation....created out of an emotional belief that God would not send a child to hell, but we must keep in mind the whole human race is in rebellion against God and respect for age plays no part in that rebellion."⁴¹ Calvinists claim **SELF WILL** must end in the **SECOND DEATH**. But Erickson counters with: "While the status of infants and those who never reach moral competence is a difficult question, it appears that our Lord did not regard them as under condemnation. Indeed, he held them up (as an *example* of the type) of person who will inherit the Kingdom of God (Matt 18:3, 19:14)...it is difficult to maintain that children are to be thought of as **SINFUL**, condemned, and lost."⁴² [Further, LK 18 does not teach one of Christ's 39 Parables.]

E. "God Saves *Some* in the Womb" or "...Brings Them to Faith *in* Heaven" Perspectives

One of the most presumptive perspectives offered to explain what happens to **only some** deceased little ones is enumerated in the **1689 London Baptist Confession**: "Elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit; who worketh when, and where, and how he pleases; so also are all elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word."^{43 44} How is it explained that some infants qualify for special status? Calvinist Matto declares, "Now it is true that God saves some right in the womb." Jer 1:5 reads: "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations". [But to clarify], this text **specifies** the prophet Jeremiah, **not others**. Second, the point of the passage, in context, is Jeremiah's foreordained mission as a prophet of doom. Last, Jeremiah's **identity** is not in view here. It is his being **set apart** for God's use that is in view --his sanctification. Matto also offers examples of "Womb Wonders" in the Apostle Paul and John the Baptist. Paul? Slayer of many of Christ's Body? Saved in the womb? Matto cites Paul's words in Gal 1:15, "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and **called me by His grace**..." But Paul declares he is chief among sinners. He was no more saved in the womb than the man in the moon! (I am confident he will tell us so when we meet him in the clouds.) Paul had to receive a personal, engraved invitation from Christ Himself on the Damascus Road before his soul was saved! This Galatians text is about Paul's consecration, not his salvation. What about John the Baptist? Matto cites Luke 1:15 "For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord...and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb." Being filled with the Holy Ghost is not the same thing as being sealed or baptized by the Holy Ghost. Matto's theory is not born out by proper use of Scripture explaining Scripture. Matthew writes in chapter 3, verses 13 and 14, "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" "John the

Baptist **obediently** baptized Jesus" [evidenced in Luke 1:15 by the Spirit's filling that evoked John's **obedience**] "while acknowledging that **he** needed to be cleansed by Jesus, and not the other way around."⁴⁵ The **London Baptist Confession** statement, as well as Matto's are supposition. "Calling", as described here, certainly s-t-r-e-t-c-h-e-s the means of Spiritual indwelling granted by Christ's **IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS**. Here's another supposition: "The Lutheran theologian, on the other hand, is not so sure about the status of non baptized infants. [Lutherans teach] there is a possibility that God has a means, not fully revealed to us, of producing faith in the non baptized children of Christians." [This elitist theory of "us but not them" is not Scriptural.] Finally, the idea of deceased little ones brought to faith **in heaven** is posited by Norman Geisler and Woodroll Kroll. (See Appendices D and G for their rationale and [my commentary]). I ask if these 'womb' and 'heaven' theories suggest support for belief in a type of purgatory or limbo? I think they do.]

F. **Limbus infantium (Latin for infants in limbo)**

"In Roman Catholic theology, non baptized infants who die cannot enter into heaven. They are consigned to a place called *limbus infantium*. There they do not suffer the pains and deprivation of hell, but neither do they enjoy the benefits of the blessedness of heaven. (Pieper, **Christian Dogmatics**, vol. 3, p. 278).⁴⁶ [The following Catholic writers speak only of non-baptized infants.]

In a series of articles over several months in the **New Oxford Review (NOR)**, one writer begins the discussion of *limbus infantium*: "The Vatican [speaking through a Commission review of 2,000 years of research] has reconsidered...the fate of children under the age of reason who die without [Roman Catholic] baptism and are therefore **condemned by** the "common **doctrine** of the [Catholic] Church" [to enter the state of] **Limbo** -- a "state" of being in which they are [lightly] punished... The Commission recognizes that ... "people find it increasingly difficult to accept that God is just and merciful **if** He excludes infants, who have no personal sins, from eternal happiness, whether they are Christian or non-Christian"... "The Vatican...squandered the opportunity to definitively proclaim that there is indeed a way to salvation provided by the Church, one which will free those children from Limbo, and their parents from grief and feelings of guilt... In the case of non baptized infants, if there is a roadblock barring their entry into Heaven, it was created by the [Catholic] Church herself and not by Jesus Christ."⁴⁷

A **NOR** reader responds to Mr. Baruch: "At death we all go through a "particular judgment." In the particular judgment, aborted or non baptized infants...will receive the "natural bliss" of feeling and responding to God's infinite love, but without a supernatural knowledge of all His infinite perfections. In other words, original sin, for them, is not a thing that blocks Heaven, but a deprivation that prevents a fully supernatural comprehension of the BEATIFIC VISION.⁴⁸... "If God has made us all for Himself, then our souls will not rest until they rest in Him. ...we can speculate that limbo is a part of Heaven, where God's love is felt and returned, even though comprehension of the beatific vision is limited to a natural, not supernatural, capacity. I believe...that the [Roman Catholic] Church can eliminate the need for a separate limbo by incorporating it into Heaven as described above."⁴⁹ [Does this statement by Heitzman, "...God made us **all for** Himself, then our souls will not rest until they rest in Him"...border on embrace of universalism? I think so.]

Another response: "Hurd Baruch's article...illustrates...the dangers of the Protestant notion "every man his own theologian"⁵⁰... Baruch seems to believe that the [Catholic] Church could send the souls of non baptized infants straight to Heaven if she would simply "accept responsibility...for finding a way around the roadblock [of limbus infantium]... The Church cannot send a condemned soul to Heaven or a redeemed soul to Hell; nor can she by fiat empty Limbo, if

indeed there be such a place. The only power the Church has over the souls that have passed beyond her earthly jurisdiction is to aid them with her prayers.⁵¹ It is a hard teaching, but true nonetheless, that the newborn babe we hold in our arms, pure as driven snow, is not born a friend of God. The Sacrament of Baptism [**BAPTISMAL REGENERATION**] rectifies this lack and makes us children of Heaven and heirs of the Kingdom, not by right but by adoption.^{52 53} [But it is God's mercy, not adoption by water baptism, that accounts for these little ones being in heaven.]

Baruch answers his critics: "And people were bringing children to Him that He might touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this He became indignant and said to them, 'Let the children come to Me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these' (Mk. 10:13). **Jesus did not say**, "Hereafter, let **only** those children who are baptized come to Me. [Therefore, Limbo] has no clear foundation in revelation,...[In] the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1992) the theory of limbo is not mentioned. Rather, the Catechism teaches that

infants who die without baptism are entrusted by the Church to the mercy of God...⁵⁴" [Baruch goes on to explain the Roman Catholic history of Limbo, including Augustine's teaching that "...infants who die without baptism are consigned to Hell." There certainly is no evidence of **PERSONAL SALVATION**⁵⁵ in explanations of Augustinian, Roman Catholic theology.]

Another Catholic refutes Baruch's ideas about Limbo, "First of all, I must say that I do not believe in limbo -- I do not think it is necessary. Secondly, I include as "non baptized persons" all good people who would desire baptism if they realized the need for it.[!] This includes those who have attained the use of reason and those who have not. Those who have not include aborted babies and zygotes conceived in a Petri dish...God wills the salvation of all humans. Can you imagine Jesus, who is God, penalizing human persons who never had a chance to serve or reject Him by leaving them in limbo? I believe that Jesus grants as a free gift eternal salvation and happiness to all such infant persons...In no way does this oppose the teaching of Jesus and His Church that formal baptism is necessary for those who have been preached to and realize its necessity for their salvation...There are formal members of the Mystical Body, and they can be statistically counted from baptismal records. But there are informal members of the Mystical Body, about whom only Jesus knows. We will meet them in Heaven. There is no need for limbo!"⁵⁶

A final critic writes, "Through the centuries, far greater minds than [Baruch's] (e.g. St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Augustine, et al.) have grappled with the problem of where non baptized infants go, and Limbo was the best they could do...Until recently, Catholics have accepted this solution [limbo] as the only theologically tenable one in the face of **God's...silence on the subject**, trusting in His infinite mercy and justice. **It's a mystery that God has not chosen to reveal**...There has always been agreement that non baptized children do not enter Heaven. This has been believed always and everywhere by the whole [Roman Catholic] Church...[and] is binding. The only dispute has been about whether or not non baptized children enjoy natural happiness (Aquinas) or suffer the pains of Hell (Augustine).⁵⁷ [I do not agree the answer to this question remains a mystery. While Scripture may be silent, that silence is not void.]⁵⁸

G. Paid Wages Perspective, or RCH (Raw Calvinist Hubris)

Matto's Internet post showcases thinking that sources to the **DOUBLE PREDESTINATION** view of so many who claim limited atonement is biblical: "[Age of Accountability] is...built upon the emotionally based belief that a loving God would not send anyone to hell without the opportunity to accept or reject Christ."⁵⁹ [Matto makes it clear, he feels emotions only cloud our

thinking. He claims it's pretty straight forward, if we'll just deal with the facts he claims are biblical: **all** except the pre-selected elect are damned, no matter that the deceased has no clue he or she is not selected! Agreement of this means any souls not on the 'short list' simply **cannot** make the team! (my paraphrase, but you get it.) Matto continues, "Does the Bible reveal at what age we are considered sinners by God? The answer is yes, *at birth!*⁶⁰ Age is not a factor because the baby's lack of cognitive grasp of their own selfish nature is irrelevant."⁶¹ [This leads to error. All of us **are** declared sinners at conception. But Matto's error confuses **SECOND DEATH** with **EARTHLY CONSEQUENCE**. He declares infants **earn** wages they **must** be paid, regardless of whether they are ever "notified" they're on the payroll!! Souls are notified, but only **when** they are intellectually able to understand the convicting influence of the Holy Spirit. Yes, many do spend a lifetime ignoring the Spirit's gentlemanly call, eventually waking up in hell. But this is a different question than whether or not God can and does withhold judgment, which He has every right to as the Divine Sovereign.] Matto sums up: "The question is not whether God is merciful. The only ones under the blood of Christ are those whom God has chosen before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4)."⁶² [Calvinist Matto reflects the **SOVEREIGNITE view** rather than the **BIBLEVIEW™**.⁶³ Sovereignites are usually caught with their RCH showing. And RCH is traced to heresy sourcing to Augustine and Roman Catholicism. "That way madness lies" applies here.

IV Urgency to Know Balanced with Inability to Know

The above seven perspectives have presented a range of beliefs on this question. But mature confidence in the Lord's provision leads us to seek a balance between our urgency to have confirmation that a deceased child is with the Lord and our continuing inability, in this life, to know what the Lord does not specifically address in His Word.⁶⁴ We must admit our knowledge of the fate of deceased little ones is no different from knowledge of our **own** hope of eternal life. Yes, as spiritually mature and biblically grounded believers we claim we know for sure we are saved; it is normative for those who embrace the truth of the gospel to rest in the assurance saving faith provides. But until we actually are translated to glory (from the grave or from this life⁶⁵) we will not experience the tangible evidence of belief.⁶⁶ We therefore exercise mature, patient contentment, resting in the promises clearly revealed in God's Word. We do not speculate with privately held convictions. But failing to know the details of those promises does not cause us to be discontent.⁶⁷ Resting contently in promises revealed in the Word can elicit exasperating reactions from some to whom believers witness. By simply claiming there is a literal heaven and hell and that all who are born again are promised heaven --with this conviction based entirely on what we believe is revealed in the Bible --this perspective just doesn't make sense to carnal minds. Yet this is the real and tangible substance of saving faith, described in Hebrews 1:11. Faith that deceased little ones are safe is sourced to the same revealed promises of Godly justice and mercy. Spiritual reality (perceived now only intangibly) is more real than the paper you hold. Only time stands between parents and their little ones who spiritually rest in the Lord. Soon, time will be no more and spiritual will become tangible.

V Conclusions and Life Application

Concluding this study, I believe the Word of God reveals the following about God and man:

1. Our personal beliefs reveal **what we attribute to God** for His motives and methods in dealing with man, far more than they reveal **what we believe about the consequence of man's sin nature**. Therefore, whatever eternal fate we decide to assign to aborted babies, premature infants who do not survive, deceased toddlers⁶⁸ or murdered preschoolers⁶⁹ first reflects our assessment of **DIVINE CHARACTER**. **KEY:** any view of God's nature that attributes to Him:

His right to condemn but not His desire to pardon;
His pledge to judge but not His promise to extend mercy;
His sovereign power but not His ability to withhold that power

is a false view of the Most High that can only source to the father of lies. I am reminded of the scene in the film, "Schindler's List" as Amon and Oskar are seated face-to-face in an intimate discussion about Amon's role as judge, jury and executioner in the death camp.⁷⁰ Oskar very carefully tries to plant seeds in Amon's thinking, reminding him that the ultimate expression of sovereign power is choosing to withhold that power.⁷¹ **This is the ultimate expression of grace.** Divine grace allows God to demonstrate the power of His mercy. God held back nothing by unleashing His supreme power to judge sin, as His Son willingly hung on the cross. Our Triune God did so in order that deceased little ones don't have to suffer separation in eternity.

2. There are no Scriptures that declare a deceased baby or child under their age of accountability is lost, notwithstanding the Scriptures that declare all humanity *is* conceived in sin. Therefore, it is the tradition of men, not God's Word, that teaches deceased little ones are automatically lost because they are conceived in sin. We are directed to discard all tradition⁷²

contrary to the revealed truth of Scripture, whether that tradition is codified, disguised or reprised in Calvin's Institutes, the Westminster Confession or the London Baptist Confession.

3. The **WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD** is our guide in understanding this question. This counsel affirms in Deuteronomy 29:29 "The secret *things belong* unto the LORD our God: but those *things which are revealed belong* unto us and to our children for ever, that *we* may do all the words of this **LAW**" and in Rev 16:7 "And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous *are* thy judgments." Psa 116:5 declares "Gracious *is* the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God *is* merciful." We must choose which opinion we say the Bible declares about God: Either He is evil or He is good. We cannot have it both ways. Therefore, we do not have to believe God condemns little ones to also believe He does condemn non-repentant souls.

4. The most constructive result that comes from any parents' relieved grief, knowing their child is safe, is their ability to answer in the affirmative the question, "Am *I* saved?" Answered in the negative, this certainly means they will suffer eternal separation from their safely-departed child. Answered in the affirmative, their genuine faith offers the best solace in time of greatest grief. A parent submitted to a life dead in Christ will certainly see their little one in eternity.

5. **SAFETY** for deceased little ones is assured, but this safety may not signify these souls are included in the **BODY OF CHRIST**. (Understand this statement does not mean there are multiple ways one can be saved or born again.) What it does mean is that correct application of Scripture requires we accurately identify "who" and "what" dispensation is the focus of any Scripture. Daily I read material written by well meaning persons who make no distinction whether, for example, a text in Deuteronomy (Law) applies to us today (Church) or whether a text in 1 Peter refers back and applies to our study of the Old Testament canon. The Bible is not a 'one size fits all' revelation. The entire Word of God is for us, offering nourishment for our spirits in every jot and tittle. But not every jot and tittle applies (in the same way) to every soul, irrespective of the dispensation in which they lived. The Bible Christ read was the 39 Books of the Old Testament. The 27 Books of the New Testament were penned by inspired men after His death, burial, resurrection and ascension.⁷³ It is not a heretical idea to consider deceased little ones are safe, but possibly not included in the Body of Christ. I, and others wonder how these

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safe little ones can be of the Body of Christ, without the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Case in point, "the Anabaptists stressed that the church is composed only of believers; hence, because infants are incapable of believing, they are not a part of the church."⁷⁴ Backtracking to section IV, E, remember that some teach (erroneously, I believe) this bodily indwelling by the Spirit is possible even before one is born. But in this dispensation, I believe the indwelling Spirit is consonant with a conscious change of mind⁷⁵, possible only as a response to conviction. If we claim little ones can be converted by a selective touch (which supposedly extends from pre-eternity⁷⁶), we are speculating beyond what the Word reveals. We can certainly claim safety for those who've not made confessions of faith, but only if the mechanism granting that safety is divine mercy, meted out by the sovereign God. We will need to wait until eternity to know whether deceased little ones are members **of** Christ's Body, or whether He holds them safe **in** His arms. Herbert Lockyer offers a clue that might indicate the answer. "The Greek participle that Mark uses for "when [Christ] had taken [children] in His arms (both in Mark 9:36 and 10:16) actually means that Jesus was sitting with the little child(ren), [with them resting] **on** His knee and **in** the crook of His arm... [**next**] to His heart!"⁷⁷ Perhaps this signifies deceased little ones are not **of** His Body but are nonetheless safe, **in** His arms. While this may be considered an **ARGUMENT FROM SILENCE**, I am satisfied these souls are not disembodied in Limbo or suffering out of Christ's care.

6. Regarding Calvinist perspectives on this topic, I conclude these views err in correct explanation of at least three points: mechanism of sin; vehicle of sin; consequence of sin. The Calvinist perspective is deficient in explaining some points of Theology Proper, as well as doctrinal points of **HAMARTIOLOGY**, **SOTERIOLOGY** and **ECCLESIOLOGY**.⁷⁸ Although we must agree every soul is conceived in sin (and each depraved nature is independent of the parent's depraved nature), there is no agreement that God cannot and does not exercise mercy for little ones by withholding from them the same judgment due others who've reached sufficient age, granting their need to receive Christ. I believe many explanations offered by Reform and Covenant Theology actually presume upon God rather than acknowledge His autonomy. This presumption claims He does not apply gracious compassion as the **DIVINE SOVEREIGN**.

7. Why do Roman Catholics insist that non-baptized deceased babies are in Limbo? In simplest terms, because they believe the Roman Catholic **physical** rite of water baptism grants eternal **spiritual** life. But it is the regeneration of the washing by the Word that grants eternal life. Failing to agree with this biblical truth, Roman Catholicism teaches a deceased little one, not having benefited by this physical ritual, is 'left out' of eternal life in heaven. I believe the Bible teaches water baptism has no regenerative effect on the soul of a baby, or for that matter, any soul. The place for and purpose of water baptism is a public witness of spiritual faith in Christ's redeeming work on the cross. This witness requires a certain level of intellectual capacity. But practicing infant baptism most certainly does produce an effect in the mind of the adult participating in the ritual. When a parent believes he or she can 'arrange' spiritual regeneration by participating in this man made rite, that parent, in effect, attempts to usurp God. Their error is believing they've been delegated divine authority. In the absence of this performed rite for every baby ever conceived, according to Catholicism, a mechanism is necessary to compensate for the intolerable idea of deceased little ones going to hell. Hence, Limbo is determined as the preferred, alternate 'location' for these millions of souls.

A correction of the man-devised practice of infant baptism is the **appropriately applied** practice of baby dedication. By virtue of the clear distinction between limited human responsibility and un-

limited divine authority, pastors and parents acknowledge a child is not a blank slate, innocent until their actions prove otherwise. Baby-dedicating parents accept their precious child inherits his or her sin nature from them. By entering into the commitment of baby dedication, parents assume their responsibility to pray for, raise up, train, guide, protect, correct and discipline their child, up to and even beyond that moment in time when their child voluntarily responds to the conviction of the Holy Spirit to receive by faith Christ's atoning sacrifice.⁷⁹ But the critical step so many well meaning parents skip over is fervent and consistent prayer, agreeing with God for their child to respond to Holy Spirit conviction, leading to "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21). Parents ought to begin at the beginning instead of singing lullabies and reading books about Jesus, telling the child Jesus loves them, and failing to instruct the child that disobedience impedes their beginning and continuing relationship with Christ. Discussing the sin nature is not a pleasant subject. But the child's need to be free from bondage of sin⁸⁰ is the primary reason that a parent should desire their child seek Christ. That Christ loves children and has a purpose and plan for their earthly life is not the biblical basis of child evangelism, despite Sunday School curriculum and Bible School programs to the contrary. Purpose ≠ salvation.⁸¹ If we would simply do a word study on 'purpose' we would see this.

8. Not much research I read explores in detail the specific question of whether babies are in fact "innocent", or by what gauge **INNOCENCE** is defined. Most writers state one of two extremes: Either that it is **impossible** for babies to sin or that babies are conceived **in** sin; therefore they cannot help **but** sin. Many parents believe the so called scientific⁸² and psychologized view of human behavior --especially views offered by nefarious "Christian Psychology". Variable

theories range somewhere on the continuum of "nurture" at one extreme and "nature" at the other. The "nurture" theory claims babies are 'blank slates' --that whatever the parent pours into the life of the child will be what emerges. The "nature" theory claims the child is conceived and born with a particular personality and predisposition. The latter theory is closer to the biblical truth. But it is clear the Calvinist perspective takes the nature theory too far. This false perspective has no problem asserting aborted babies and other deceased little ones are in hell.

Scripture declares all **are conceived** in sin. Babies **exit the womb** as hell bound creatures.⁸³ Exactly how do infants and very young children exemplify their sin nature? By demonstrating entirely narcissistic self-absorbed behavior. They do not orient to anything but their own needs and desires. They exemplify little ability to postpone gratification or endure any dislike, displeasure or discomfort --all expressed by crying at will, exhibiting negative facial expressions; moving at will between rigid or limp posture, in attempts to control their environment and those who care for them. Every parent experiences the sustained effort by their child to exert themselves, from the first few days of life. Fortunately, both for parents and children, God designed offspring to evoke strong positive responses in parents --accommodation and complete acceptance of the child. Why did God make babies so adorable (at least adorable to the normal individual)? Because babies are entirely vulnerable; there is zero latitude for babies to advocate for themselves in any coherent manner or to defend themselves if their care is not adequate. The Lord clearly designed the process of conceiving, birthing and nurturing babies to evoke tender and positive behavior by the parents as they bond with and learn how to parent their child. It is typical for the majority of parents to have little trouble accepting (by excusing) most aspects of their child's behavior. This is as it should be for the benefit of the child.

However, parents must not confuse the necessity to preserve a vulnerable life with claiming their baby is innocent, and this is why they parent so lovingly. Parents must exercise considerable self-discipline to move beyond emotional response to their child and instead appropriately

discipline them in the fear and admonition of the Lord, as he or she continues to display their entirely willful and self-centered nature. Otherwise, they fail to model for their child that he or she must answer to God one day. We've all observed the sad cases of parents who never come to the point where they objectively recognize their child is not only capable of sin, but does in fact sin on a daily basis. Without this objectivity, it becomes a stumbling block for the child to interact outside the home where their behavior must fit into civilized society and where there will be, from time to time, the need for the parents to discipline their child for their normal failures.

Divine mercy in no way alters the fact that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" -- necessitating the need for salvation. However, as has been argued, original sin is not held against deceased little ones by our merciful God. By His just, merciful, omniscient care He withholds **ETERNAL PUNISHMENT** from these, while **ETERNAL REWARDS** await His Body.

9. While it can create tension leading to estrangement among family members --it is imperative, for the sake of members surviving a family death --that responsible parents not be influenced by the adversary's pressure to ignore the urgent need for them and their children to respond to God's grace before it is too late for them also. Nothing hinders confession of saving faith like the memory of a deceased, accountable adult who failed to confess faith in Christ. Some cannot bear to reconcile the incongruity --the need for the living to receive Christ, while at the same time recognize they will never again see their lost loved one if they and the rest of the surviving family receive Christ's pardon.

10. (Perhaps more relevant under eschatology) is the controversial question whether children under a certain age will be translated at the Rapture, if they've not yet made a confession of faith. There are a range of interpretations of Scripture about this. Some believe the parents' spiritual condition determines the child's fate. Others believe in an inclusive rapture of all children under a certain age. I asked a Grace Bible Church pastor in Florida if all young children will be raptured -- even from families with one or both unsaved parents. He told me, "No, Old Testament examples reveal children of the lost are also lost."⁸⁴ But Dr. Grady McMurtry reminds that "the age of personal accountability was 20 in the desert" and "in Jewish tradition, the age of personal spiritual accountability [is] 13".⁸⁵ A variant belief is that of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints' teaching that the age of accountability is eight.⁸⁶ If we maintain a consistent dispensational perspective, during this Church age, **individually** applied accountability is the standard, not a blanket specific age, as under the Law. (And, **after** the Rapture, delusion marks **accountable** souls.)

11. Finally, I realize the deepest longings of grieving family members do not reflect the technicality or extent of the arguments presented in this research. The fundamental need is to have answered, "Can I know my little one is not suffering? Can I know they are at peace? Can I know God has not forsaken them? Of these, I believe the entirety of Scripture assures us.

Summary

For most of my life I relied on simple logic to explain my presumption of exemption from **ETERNAL CONSEQUENCE** based on age. After researching this topic I understand there are at least two distinct perspectives on this topic. There is the **BIBLEVIEW**,TM and there are all man's views, sourcing to the father of lies. The **BIBLEVIEW**TM recognizes God's sovereign, loving character and will. Augustinian-sourced views⁸⁷ claim deceased little ones serve no better purpose than to "give glory to God" by their ill-fated, short, meaningless, discarded lives. But the accurate view of God revealed in His perfect Word infers deceased little ones are seen in the light of the cross rather than in the shadows of anticipated earned wages of sin and death. The

premise has been presented that all outside of Christ are lost. Therefore, deceased little ones must also be outside unless **some other mechanism** brings them inside Christ's care. **This mechanism is mercy.** This fact does not erode God's sovereignty or certainty of adult accountability.

All that's been demonstrated still does not identify **a specific age** of accountability for any given child; and it may very well be a **younger** age than many find comforting. But the divine purpose of the age of accountability does not suggest that license accompanies this grace period. It provides limits that satisfy God's order and justice. Therefore, it behooves parents to expose their children from an early age to the gospel truth --that they are sinners in need of their Savior.

A fitting close for this study are the words of Dr. J. Vernon McGee. Reprinted in the December 2008 issue of **May I Say!** is this from "Q and A with McGee":

Q: Will our children still be ours in heaven? **A:** This is a question that isn't answered in Scripture. ...this should not disturb us for the very simple reason that God is going to work it out in a way that will be entirely satisfactory to everyone. If you think that in heaven you're going to move into a house with your family..., know that it's going to be an altogether different situation. I think heaven is going to be so wonderful --we're *all* going to be the children of God through faith in Christ. We're all going to be members of one family. I think that this physical family division will be...broken down...every person there is going to be your brother or your sister. There are certain things...I have wondered about, but I have no answer for them. For instance, what about a child that dies in infancy? Mrs. McGee and I lost our first child, and I've always entertained the rather sentimental notion that maybe the Lord will let us have this child to raise her under ideal circumstances...Whatever He arranges, it's going to be the very best that could possibly be. So this is a question that ought not to worry you at all. Just turn it over to Him and He'll work it out."

Appendix A: Use of terms in **BOLD CAPITALS** defined. (Observe copyright to cite)

| <u>Term</u> | <u>Definition</u> |
|------------------------|---|
| Accountable | Legally, logically, ultimately answerable for personal and Adam's sin |
| Argument from silence | May be plausible, logical, but not declared in revealed Scripture |
| Baptismal Regeneration | False belief & practice claims water baptism provides spiritual life |
| Beatific Vision | Per Roman Catholic theology, perfect communion with God |
| Bibleview™ | Bible perspective proscribes culturally-Christian, religious worldview |
| Biblical mystery | Scripture is silent or does not reveal a specific doctrine on this |
| Body of Christ | All souls born into Christ's Body from Acts 2 to 1 Thess 4:15-17 |
| Conscience | Inner sense of what is right or wrong with one's motive, conduct |
| Consequence, earthly | Having temporary, earthly positive or negative effect |
| Consequence, eternal | Never ending positive or negative effect of earthly consequence |
| Depravity | Divinely defined corrupt state of all souls;requires God's intervention |
| Dispensations | Distinct historical ages with man failing in each, yet Grace endures |
| Divine Character | Perfect, all-loving, all-just cause of God's motives, intents, actions |
| Divine Grace | Freely distributed, unmerited favor, sourced to divine character |
| Divine Justice | God's righteous judgment based on His divine, sovereign character |
| Divine Sovereign | God as exclusive, supreme Creator, Arbiter, Sustainer of all reality |
| Ecclesiology | Study of Bible's revealed doctrines on the Body and Bride of Christ |
| Eternal Punishment | Endless, all-suffering consequent experience of unredeemed souls |
| Eternal Rewards | Endless, all-joyful consequent recognition of works deemed worthy |
| Hamartiology | Study of Bible's revealed doctrines on Satan, rebellion, evil, and sin |

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| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Imputed Righteousness | Christ's perfection substituted for mans' filthy rags righteousness |
| Innocence | Adam and Eve's irretrievably lost condition; enjoyed prior to their sin |
| Judgment | God's righteous verdict and sentence on man's life and conduct |
| Law | God's perfect standard fulfilled in Christ; perverted if lacking grace |
| Limited Atonement | Christ's atoning sacrifice does not offer redemption per John 3:16 |
| Predestination, Biblical | Divine certainty that Christ abides in each believer & they in Him |
| Predestination, Double | False premise: God limits, by #, all who are able to abide in Christ |
| Prescient sin | Known, understood, willful, unrepentant trespass of the Law |
| Responsible | Answerable for what is in one's power, control or management |
| Safe | Secure existence, free from personal liability for prescient sin |
| Salvation, Personal | Rescue, deliverance, remedy...from sin (Basic Theology , p. 630) |
| Salvation, National | Future redeemed condition of national Israel in Promised Land |
| Second Death | Follows physical death: eternal damnation of body, soul, and spirit |
| Self-will | Man's rebellious thought, word or action independent of will of God |
| Sinful | The condition of man irrespective of compensating personal merit |
| Sins | Self-willed, individually committed or omitted thought, word or deed |
| Soteriology | Study of Bible's revealed doctrines of man's salvation in all ages |
| Sovereignite, A | One who misapplies divine attributes: omnipotence and sovereignty |
| Spiritual Error | False affirmation sourced to father of lies, contrary to revealed truth |
| Whole Counsel of God | Only true canon of divine revelation in 66 books of the Bible |

Appendix B: Partial List of Applicable Scriptures

| | | | | | |
|------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|---------------|
| Gen 18:25 | Num 14:29 | Deut 1:39 | Deut 29:29 | 1Sam 12:23 | Psa 51:5 |
| Psa 38:3-4 | Psa 116:5 | Isa 7:16 | Ezek 18:29 | Matt 19:14 | Mark 10:14-16 |
| Luke 18:16 | Rom 5 | James 4:17 | Rev 16:7 | | |

Appendix C:

Excerpts from "Infant Salvation" in List of Doctrines, Lewis Sperry Chafer, **Systematic Theology**, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, 1948, volume , pp. 197-199.)

"Like all salvation issues the doctrine [of infant salvation]...must be correctly stated and harmonized --[with] election, Anthropology, the fall of the race, Soteriology, together with redemption...No theology is...complete which does not account for the salvation of those who die in infancy...Being unable to respond to God's proffered grace in Christ, [KEY]: the child, if saved at all, must be saved on other terms than those imposed upon the adult portion of humanity..."
[KEY: The "other term" that allows the child safety is God's grace, His mercy.]

"...when [a **SOVEREIGNITE** places] disproportionate emphasis on the lost estate of men...there may well be a tendency to think of all children as if they were born reprobate. That they are unregenerate at birth is certain; yet God likewise has in great mercy provided for the unsaved [for] whom it is His purpose to save." [This is a provision of **BIBLICAL PREDESTINATION**.] "Earlier, extreme Calvinists asserted that hell is a place paved with infants...because of this sort of teaching and as a heritage from Rome came about the belief in baptismal regeneration. To such a position, of course, the Word of God gives no sanction either directly or indirectly".

..."As infants cannot possibly respond to the terms of faith imposed upon the adult portion of the race, God may and does act directly in behalf of those who die in infancy. No unrighteousness

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can be found in this outworking of God's purpose and will." [While an attribute of God *is* mercy, this does not contradict His sovereign attributes. These attributes are not mutually exclusive.]

"The whole subject of infants being saved, though it introduces many and varied theological problems, is first of all somewhat established by the fact that in Scripture little ones are seen in heaven, and are recognized as being there (cf. 2 Sam 12:23; Matt 18:3-5, 10, 19:14)."

[KEY:] "Certain problems [with infant salvation] require consideration [and must be rejected]:

a. That infants are saved by reason of being innocent. This is a universal belief, especially being entertained by parents of a deceased child; but innocence can save no one when all are born depraved."

b. "That proper baptism will save all (those so presented). **But** if baptism can save any, or at all, Christ's death was in vain. Why should He die?" [Rhetorical, yet refutes baptismal regeneration.]

c. "That (in so far as) Christ died for all, all are saved thereby...(Romans 5:17-18)...but here (in this text) God speaks to reasonable adult persons; still, He is nonetheless free to save as He will." [Chafer was a Calvinist, as he intimates here. Despite this bent, his teaching is valuable.]

d. "That infants belong to the election.⁸⁸ Are infants who die in infancy necessarily of the elect? It is evident that they are (if saved at all.)⁸⁹ Is a child fortunate, then, who dies in infancy because more sure of heaven than if he were to continue and perhaps be unwilling to be saved even in later years?⁹⁰ **OF THAT NONE CAN SPEAK. (BOLD CAPITALS ADDED).** God guides and works out His own plan in every life which is lived on earth. It is probable that the elect company, in order for it to be from every kindred, tribe, and people, will be built up in part out of those who die in infancy." [Dr. Geisler also asserts this possibility in Appendix D.]

[When does accountability begin? Chafer does not specify an age; yet assumes it in this last paragraph:] [KEY:] "If may be definitely asserted, in conclusion, that infants who die before accountability begins are saved through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." [Chafer can claim this based on the light of the Cross.]

Appendix D

Excerpts from "Salvation of Infants" by Norman L. Geisler, **Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics**, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, 1999, pp. 360-366. [Geisler uses "If/Then" logic.]

"If faith is not absolutely essential [in determining the deceased child's fate], **then** a distinction must be drawn between personal innocence and conscious rejection [of Christ] by adults. **If** so it makes more sense to speak of all infants being saved. **If** faith is an absolute essential for salvation --and numerous Bible passages seem to affirm that it is --there is no heaven for those who cannot believe. All must believe to enter. In this case, belief that infants will mature in heaven and be given a chance to believe makes more sense...The Bible seems to say that God genuinely offers salvation to all. **If** so, **then** it would follow logically that those who **would** believe, if they die before they **can**, will be given a chance after they die.⁹¹ God's love and/or justice would seem to demand that this be so." [Geisler posits infant innocence, of which I disagree.] [Regarding]: "**Inherited Depravity and Condemnation.** **If** innate, radical depravity is inherited from the womb, **then** it would seem that only baptized infants or elect infants might go to be with God. **If**, however, one's own personal decision in rejecting God's message is needed before one goes to hell, **then** [these arguments] lose plausibility. The salvation-for-all view depends on the fact that children have not had the opportunity to reject Christ, and that makes the difference. [KEY:] It is worth noting that the views that allow for the possible salvation of all infants are not only

compatible with God's justice and love, but they also help solve the problem of heathen salvation. Since God is just and since one cannot be saved without the Gospel...and since many heathen lands have not had the Gospel, it is reasonable to infer that God's elect will be taken from every tribe, kindred, and tongue [and] could have been **taken from the infants who die**. Since it is estimated that in heathen countries one-half of the babies born die before the age of accountability, then it follows that there will be innumerable heathen in heaven who never heard the Gospel --possibly all the infants who died before they could even understand the Gospel."⁹²

Appendix E:

Excerpts from "Original Sin: A Biblical and Contemporary Model, Millard J. Erickson, *Introducing Christian Doctrine*, Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, 2001, pp. 208-210.

"...there is no condemnation until one reaches the age of responsibility. If a child dies before he or she is capable of making genuine moral decisions, there is only **INNOCENCE**⁹³, and the child will experience the same type of future existence with the Lord as will those who have reached the age of moral responsibility and had their sins forgiven as a result of accepting the offer of sal-vation based upon Christ's atoning death....We become responsible and guilty when we accept or approve of our corrupt nature. **There is a time in the life of each one of us when we be-come aware of our own tendency toward sin.**" [Remaining aware, unrepentant souls are lost.]

Appendix F:

Excerpts from "**Are Men Born Sinners?**", A. T. Overstreet, www.gospeltruth.net.

[The Bible does not give] "a certain age at which children become accountable, since reason will develop earlier in one child than another according to his gifts and circumstances. But when a child's reason has developed to the point that he knows to "refuse the evil and choose the good," he becomes a moral agent and is accountable for his deeds....God alone knows and is the judge of when a child reaches the "age of accountability. He alone knows the thoughts and the intentions of the heart." [This restates Pastor Watson's perspective in Section IV B. Watson's "when...when...when" chain describes the sequential path describing age of accountability.]

Appendix G

Excerpts from Woodroll Kroll at www.backtothebible.org.

"Understanding sin is not required [by the child] for [them] to be under the penalty of sin." [We must ask, "Does this therefore lead to the conclusion the child must pay that penalty?" **This is KEY:** "Even though babies are not innocent⁹⁴, they have not rejected God's salvation."]

"Some say that there is an age when children become accountable for their actions. But the Bible does not mention Age of Accountability. Children are culpable for sin when they draw their first breath, but are they accountable at that moment as well?" [Must they collect the wages?] "If your child dies and goes to heaven, is that evidence that God loves your child and has elected him to salvation? ⁹⁵ I think [election] is a valid conclusion....Just because babies cannot make a decision for God does not prohibit Him from making a decision for him."⁹⁶

"Will infants and young children be infants and young children in eternity? I don't think so...There is no Bible proof of this one way or the other, but it seems logical babies will not have to endure eternal infancy."⁹⁷ [This is an argument from silence.]

Appendix H

Tom Benedetti, First Red Bank Baptist Church, Sevierville, TN offers a perspective:

"This is a biblical approach in regard to the issue of infant salvation. Let's consider two biblical ideas. First, the book of life, and second, the unforgivable sin. Whose names are written in the book of life, and when are they written?...I believe God wrote the name of every human being in the book of life before He ever created the world. When is a person's name blotted out of the book of life?...when the time that God has allotted for a person to repent of the unforgivable sin has expired...the time expires at physical death...What is the unforgivable sin? Jesus answers... in Matthew 12:31-32...God has prepared a test which has one question..."Who do you say Jesus of Nazareth is?...God's test is...is given to a spiritually dead person, who cannot know the answer. Through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, God gives him the answer..."Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God." If the spiritually dead person does not believe the Holy Spirit's words, he is guilty of the unforgivable sin...**When [is] a person eligible to take God's test?** Is a fetus...eligible?...a 3 month old baby?...a 2 year old?...a mentally challenged 30 year old? I believe this is God's business, and we know He is a just and loving God who abounds with mercy.

Appendix I

Timothy Boyd writes at www.studylight.org:

"...the Bible indicates that **salvation is a deliberate act of faith** on the part of individuals. To exercise **this choice**, persons must be able to make certain distinctions. They **must be** aware they are sinners before God and be **able to repent**...obviously, an infant or young child cannot be responsible for making such a decision. There comes a time in the life of each child when that boundary of responsibility to God is crossed...it is impossible to set a particular age when this will occur...[Therefore], two extremes should be avoided in dealing with the age of accountability. The first is that of encouraging children to make a decision for Christ before they are fully aware of the requirements of salvation...The second extreme...is that of rejecting children who want to accept Christ because of preconceived notions about the inability of children to understand the gospel...Careful counseling should be employed to determine if real understanding is present." [While Boyd agrees with exemption for age, I think this description borders on error, having faith acquired as a conscious work, not solely by conversion through the persuasive work of the Holy Spirit. Specifically, "requirements for salvation" may lead away from sole power by the Spirit.]

Appendix J

Tony Warren writes at www.mountainretreat.org:

"...the age of accountability doctrine is the offspring of the well oiled myth that man must **Choose God** in order to be saved...new born babies and toddlers do not do this...so they [non Calvinists] had to come up with an additional teaching to bridge the gap..."

"...what of a retarded or mentally impaired man who is **over** the (supposed) age of accountability, and yet cannot understand fully his actions?...if this retarded person will be Saved, he will be Saved in the exact same way a baby will...by God's sovereign right to have compassion on who[m]ever He will..." [This is the Calvinist presumptive application of the sovereignty of God.]

"...since newborn babies "accept" by their free will, the Father must (as with us all) not only call, but choose, sanctify, and justify, making righteous! All by His sovereign good will and pleasure.."

"So either God [gives the] baby faith, or [the] baby is never going to be Saved..."

"The fifth problem of the doctrine of "age of accountability," is this idea that all babies are Saved. **If** that indeed were the case (which of course it isn't) **then All** grown people would be Saved,

because there is no loss of everlasting life once one gets it...[This is incorrect. It is mercy and not salvation that is the means by which deceased little ones are SAFE. Age of accountability does not negate the requirement that **all who reach their age of accountability** must be saved.]
"Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid! Therefore, God has the Sovereign right to Save whosoever He will regardless of who, what age, how, what they did or didn't do, or their understanding level...Yes, there is an age of accountability...CONCEPTION."
[This is a Calvinist statement, through and through...but it is based on mans' formulas, not on divine revelation. There is judgment for those accountable, and mercy for those not accountable.]

VII Endnotes

¹ Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, 1999, p. 360.

² Available for no charge, this bi-monthly teaching letter is mailed via USPS to interested persons. Call 865.774.7895 or write POB 4778, Sevierville, TN 37864. You must have a physical address or post box.

³ In an August 2008 *Travelers Advisory* article I suggest this topic may be understood as a balance of the doctrines of hell and heaven. Heaven's experience varies according to rewards and positions. Therefore, hell must also vary in degree of experience. I reason if deceased infants are not in heaven surely they do not experience the same suffering as that reserved for the most wicked souls. But based on further research it is clear there is no biblical support for believing deceased little ones are in hell. If we agree hell is a place and experience of total horror there can be no possibility of any blessing or safety there. Therefore, I now reason correct doctrine as regards deceased little ones is taught by **SOTERIOLOGY**, *not* **HAMARTIOLOGY**. Otherwise, we malign God's character by wrong inference.

⁴ Letter from Arno Froese, Director, Midnight Call Ministries, www.midnightcall.com.

⁵ "**Are All Lost Who Claim Baptismal Regeneration is Biblical?**" is posted at www.pprsinc.com.

⁶ I write in my Testimony of Christian Faith that I believe the Lord graciously sustained me **past** my age of accountability until I surrendered my life to Him at the age of 24. (See www.pprsinc.com "Who We Are")

⁷ Some parents believe they are able to influence or participate in the after-life existence of their deceased child. In desperation, even some professing Christians participate in superstitious, paranormal or other unbiblical practices. Sadly, several years ago a woman sought my professional editing services to help her write a book about her young son having been killed under a train. Because I could not dissuade her from her bitter blaming of God for her loss, I knew I could not continue to assist her effort to malign God's character.

⁸ "For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom 6:23).

⁹ Can we say any life actually ends 'prematurely'? If assessed only by what we see in the physical, yes. But the Author of spiritual life has His own pre-determined purpose and place for every soul created, even when that purpose and placement is mysteriously truncated. Our gracious heavenly Father makes no mistakes. Human heartache does not comprehend or change the unsearchable ways of God.

¹⁰ Jesus spoke of the devil as father of those who do not receive Him (Jn 8:42,44). But this cannot apply to little ones, for they have not yet received or refused to receive their heavenly father. It is only those who reject Christ that God finally gives over to the father of lies. (Titus 1:16, 2 Timothy 3:8, 2 Corinthians 13:5, Romans 1:28).

¹¹ On a side note, are we called to **debate** or to **declare** God's Word? Consider this. **Paul's method** of preaching is by **declaration**. Yet often he is mischaracterized as the master debater (as if his inspired words are primarily rebuttal arguments.) Paul brought his messages without entanglement with alternate views --Mars Hill the one exception. Yes, Paul was an attorney. As the master litigant, he leaves no room for argument or debate! He powerfully declares the truth. (See Ezek 40:4). His greatest oratory is declarative, allowing the Holy Spirit to persuade. Let us declare God's Word, rather than debate, knowing seeds planted either grow or die, according to the parable of the soils.

Contending for the faith does not engage and entangle with error's false power. It speaks truth to power.

¹² See endnote number 1 for source.

¹³ Webster *generally* defines 'cancel' as "neutralize, counterbalance, compensate for." But the *specific* (accounting) definition of cancel most accurately applies here: "To close an account by crediting or paying all outstanding charges". In the **sin-conceived life** of the little one, outstanding **charges do accrue**. And accrued charges **are debt**. Debt is **due for payment at a future time determined by the Creator**. For deceased little ones debt is paid by Christ. **Cancellation** for the benefit of little ones is **ordered when all past, present, and future debt is paid at the Cross**.

¹⁴ Article in "The Bible Friend", Osterhus Publishing, Minneapolis, October 2008, p. 8, www.deborahhedlund.com.

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¹⁵ There are 27 entries for "under the sun" in the Book of Ecclesiastes alone. See specifically verses 1:9 - 11. Often, we give ourselves too much credit, claiming our thoughts are original. Let us build on the best teachings available.

¹⁶ **Corrie's Reference Library** is the core ministry offered by the ministry **Paraclete Press Research Service, Inc.**

¹⁷ Google lists 9,470,000 entries for age of accountability, reducing the point-of-reference value of on-line research.

¹⁸ The individual priesthood of each believer is central to faith. Denial of this truth is a foundational error of Roman Catholicism. Direct access to interpret God's Word comes with the believer's priesthood. Truth is not subverted in an enclave of secrecy and ecclesiastical control. Yet this is exactly what Roman Catholicism proposes as valid.

¹⁹ This caution applies to all Bible study. There is One body of truth. We must seek concurrence with that truth, not privately deduced conclusions. Otherwise, only subjectivity reigns: "God speaks His Word according to how I hear."

²⁰ One of the significant "ah ha" moments in this research came as I understood *why* staunch Calvinists (who claim total **DEPRAVITY** and **DOUBLE PREDESTINATION** are biblical) *must also* claim Baptismal Regeneration is biblical. Understandably, they cannot bear to think of their child in hell should they die prior to confessing faith in the Gospel. Therefore, Calvinists *apply the mechanism of baptism to their babies*, as if they are God's agents in the matter of salvation. They are clear to note however, applied *regeneration by baptism is non effectual* for the *non-elect*, i.e., children must be born into elect families, such as their own. The audacity of this self-righteous assumption is lost on them, not to mention the error of their obvious circular reasoning applied to arrive at their conclusion.

²¹ *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, p. 360-365.

²² **Calvinist beliefs on this topic center on incorrect understanding of the meanings of 'elect'.** Of twenty election texts beginning with Isaiah 42:1 and ending with 2 John 1:13, none identify a system of **Sets** and **Subsets** as described by **DOUBLE PREDESTINATIONISTS** according to **Set (A)**: all persons; **Subset (A1)**: persons selected; **Subset (A2)**: persons unselected; or even **Subset (A3)**: persons deselected --and this selection, un-selection and/or deselection all determined prior to the creation of **Set (A)**. Further, attempting to identify "preselected" deceased little ones, i.e., "elect children of the elect" (per Calvinism), *is not in view* in the question "what is the fate of deceased little ones?" *What is in view is God's disposition. Divine character is the topic.* And consistency in divine holy and just character is unhindered by man's contrived identity of Sets and Subsets. God does not subvert election according to unjust standards.

(See Webster's Unabridged Dictionary let² "Chiefly law" definition.)

²³ See "in the womb", page 7.

²⁴ Letter from Edwin L. Newby, The Berean Call, POB 7019, Bend, OR 97708-7019

²⁵ Letter from Arno Froese.

²⁶ Ken Matto, www.scionofzion.com/age.htm.

²⁷ Greg Watson, Pastor, Glades Lebanon Baptist Church, Gatlinburg, TN, sermon, June 22, 2008.

²⁸ Letter from Edwin L. Newby.

²⁹ Parents observe evidence of their child's resistance to obey, i.e., seeking their own way very early in the child's life, often at less than one year of age. But their desire to parent with loving, forgiving, patient acceptance of their child's personality can inhibit their resolve to "train up the child in the way he should go". A child who does not consistently and early obey his/her parents will not consistently and early obey the Lord. They will be experience a life long struggle to surrender their will, based on their continuing sinful nature.

³⁰ Letter from Edwin L. Newby.

³¹ This point is conceded by Calvinists that God is never unjust; but in explaining that justice, they declare damning babies *is* God's justice! But they are quick to add --these damned are "non-elect" babies, not their *own* elected babies.

³² Ken Matto.

³³ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, second edition, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, 1983, p. 654-55.

³⁴ Pastor Greg Watson.

³⁵ Dr. Grady McMurtry, Creation Scientist, Creation Worldview Ministries, personal communication on file.

³⁶ A side issue indicated here is the mythical notion that the sin nature is inherited only from the father, based on the false notion that a baby receives its blood only from the father, and the sin nature is transferred through his blood. Yet, mother and father contribute equally in DNA for every cell of the baby's body. Yes, the baby has it's own blood supply, kept safe from intermixing with possible contaminants in the mother's blood. But there is no basis for limiting sin inheritance through fathers, based on myth which sadly, has been taught even by some well known Bible teachers.

³⁷ By this we are reminded that God has no grandchildren, i.e., we must stand on our own before the Lord.

³⁸ Dr. Grady McMurtry.

³⁹ At this writing, St. Johns, Arizona authorities are grappling with the tragedy of an eight year old boy suspected of shooting to death his father and another man. Child abuse is offered to explain his actions, as reported in a November

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10, 2008 AP story: "He's 8 years old. He just doesn't decide one day that he's going to shoot his father... *for no reason*". The biblical truth is, this child is accruing wages of sin, regardless of the circumstances. But in news videos showing interrogation of this child, we see clear indications he does not understand the morality of his actions. His age is critical. Certainly, if he matures to adulthood, God will hold him accountable for his actions. Only God's gracious mercy mitigates the facts. Under *his* age of accountability *now*, as this child continues to mature he must receive Christ's atoning sacrifice as payment for these accruing wages of sin.

⁴⁰ Letter from Edwin L. Newby.

⁴¹ Ken Matto.

⁴² *Christian Theology*, p. 654.

⁴³ Chapter 10: Of Effectual Calling, number 3., 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith.

⁴⁴ A false declaration is boldly stated here. *I* would fear what *I'd* hear at the Judgment Seat of Christ, *if I'd declared, as this Confessional Statement does*, that sinners are "incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word." On the contrary! This *is* exactly what calls sinners to faith: Hearing the Word! Also, this citation from the Confession of Faith lists John 3:3 and 5 for proof of election. Yet the subject is spiritual transformation, not election, in the words "Ye must be born again" (v. 3, 5, 7). Transformation is qualitative, not quantitative function.

⁴⁵ Harold L. Willmington, *Willmington's Bible Handbook*, Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, 1997, p. 525.

⁴⁶ *Christian Theology*, p. 1101.

⁴⁷ Hurd Baruch, a retired Arizona attorney quoted in *New Oxford Review*, April 2008.

⁴⁸ "Beatific vision" is cited as entry 2550 in *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

⁴⁹ Ed Heitzman, Pennington, New Jersey, Letters to the Editor, *New Oxford Review*, September 2008.

⁵⁰ See Endnote 18. Also important is this: Self confirmation does not validate self teaching. Teachers are needed!

⁵¹ Lighting candles and praying for the dead, while comforting those who grieve, have no effect in heaven's courts.

⁵² Hank Hassell, Flagstaff, AZ, Letters to the Editor, *New Oxford Review*, June 2008.

⁵³ Strong's Concordance lists five texts on adoption: Rom 8:15, 23, 9:4, Gal 4:5 and Eph 1:5. Mr. Hassell incorrectly uses the term 'adoption'. Deceased little ones, if saved from hell, are not 'adopted'. Adoption connotes the *mature* child of God. "Since spiritual adoption occurs at the time one is saved, and thus becomes a child of God, there is no childhood period recognized in the Christian's experience...babes in Christ" (1 Cor 3:1)...is a reference to limitations which belong to an unspiritual or carnal state. The believer who is carnal may have been saved for many years".

(L. S. Chaffer, "Adoption" in *Systematic Theology*, volume 7, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, 1948, page 10.)

⁵⁴ Baruch, *New Oxford Review*, September 2008

⁵⁵ For another study is the important distinction between **PERSONAL** and **NATIONAL SALVATION**. (See p. 15)

⁵⁶ Father Terence M. Tobin, O.F.M., Conv. Mwinilunga, Zambia, Letters to the Editor, *New Oxford Review*, September 2008. There are many false teachings about the identity, composition and condition of Christ's body. This is one. **Christ's body is spiritual, not mystical.** And water baptism does not provide membership in the body.

⁵⁷ Scila Hudson, Virginia Beach, VA, Letters to the Editor, *New Oxford Review*, June 2008

⁵⁸ Isaiah 55:11 "So shall my word be that goes forth out of my mouth; it shall not return to me void, but it shall do what I please and it shall accomplish that for which I sent it." God's silence loudly speaks His merciful character.

⁵⁹ Ken Matto.

⁶⁰ *ibid.* Matto's statement is technically true. But this does not substantiate **DOUBLE PREDESTINATION**.

⁶¹ *ibid.*

⁶² *ibid.*

⁶³ **BIBLEVIEW™** is the trademarked concept that corrects the now abused *cultural* term, "Christian worldview."

⁶⁴ Even professing Christians increasingly seek false security in the delusional claims of those who've claimed they've visited heaven or hell. Of superstition, these are false claims (occult) made by mediums, such as those on TV.

⁶⁵ "For our Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout and the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God; and those who died in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet our Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with our Lord." 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.

⁶⁶ Therefore, we are called to embrace Hebrews 11:1 truth: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Faith has substance, according to God's Word.

⁶⁷ A true life story is meaningful in this discussion. A friend recalls from many years ago the impending birth of her third child. Just days before the anticipated birth, after she returned home from a final check up, she suffered the loss of the child by stillbirth. She'd been told everything looked fine and the birth would be any day. Afterward, she remembered that as she drove home that day from the doctor she'd fervently prayed: "Lord, if this child is not going to know you; if, as he grows up he does not confess saving faith in You, please do not allow him to be born." She admits she does not know now whether the Lord was providentially, gently assisting her thinking to prepare her for what he

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alone knew was ahead. She has no answers now, but she firmly believes Jonathan is safe in the Lord. (She says she's heard a similar story from a few other women she's met over her life.) When she shared this with me several years ago, my first thought was to ask if she believes her son is now 'saved' even though he did live to confess faith in Christ. I asked whether she felt this was confirmation if Jonathan had lived, he would not have made a true confession of faith. But she does not ask the same questions I do. She knows what I have discovered only after this research. The issue is not whether Jonathan would have confessed his sins, seeking forgiveness. The issue is, in God's gracious mercy, does He require her child, having never actually committed sin, to suffer. Is her baby collecting wages of sin that are cast in the shadows of, rather than her baby being cared for in the light of the cross? My friend must wait until eternity to see the proof of her faith that her baby is safe. But for now, she has no reason to doubt.

⁶⁸ A paramedic asked me to research this topic. She'd attended a 16 month old boy at an accident scene who later died. The boy's death weighed heavy on her heart for some time. She wondered whether the spiritual condition of the parents had any bearing on the toddler's fate. The woman lives in the heart of Christian Reform (Calvinist) country. Common beliefs in those circles reflect a combination of reliance on infant baptism and whether the child was born into an 'elect family' to provide the answer regarding the child's fate. I trust this research may enlighten those with incorrect notions that it is only the man determined 'elect' infants who are safe in the Lord.

⁶⁹ As I complete this work, the search continues for the body of preschooler Caylee Anthony. She is **SAFE** in God.

⁷⁰ After this paper was written, the PBS documentary "Inheritance" was aired on 12/11/08. At one hour into the program, this fact of Amon Goeth singularly functioning as "judge, jury and executioner" is acknowledged.

⁷¹ Lest the reader jump to conclusions regarding why this Hollywood film is cited in a discussion of biblical truth, let me explain. I have many pages of notes taken after several viewings of *Shindler's List*. Others agree with me there is an allegorical sub-story in this production, albeit apparently there without the conscious planning of its makers or the author of the book on which it is based. Never could there be a more obvious "types and shadows" story than this with the inclusion of the little girl, "Red coat". Many don't even notice her when viewing the film. She is a 'type' of Christ. Simply viewing this 'type' (Red coat) brings transformation to Oskar's thinking (John 12:32). Schindler's 'transformation' is a 'shadow' of a transformed life in Christ. The on screen Accountant serves as the prodding, patient Holy Spirit in Oskar's life. Amon represents sin nature that cannot be anything but what it is: evil. Of course, Amon cannot follow through with extending mercy as Oskar suggests because Amon's soul belongs to the devil. The film depicts both the lost and the saved. Further, for a thorough study of the 'Theology of the Holocaust' contact www.ariel.org

⁷² "He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it written: This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men..." Mk 7:6-8a.

⁷³ The Word of God is the entire revealed Scriptures which cannot be abbreviated to 27 books (as some evangelicals do by separating out the New Testament in its own 'little Bible' for easier or less costly distribution). Likewise, the revealed Word cannot be expanded to more than its 66 books (as Roman Catholics do by adding Apocryphal, Pseudepigraphal or other works considered 'lost' or wrongfully missing from the canon.) Canon is the specific 66 Books.

⁷⁴ Paul Enns, *Moody Handbook of Theology*, Moody Press, Chicago, 1989, p. 453

⁷⁵ 1 Thessalonians 1:9 "For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye **turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God...**" and 2 Pet 3:9 "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, **not willing that any should perish**, but that all should come to [1 Thessalonians 1:9] repentance." After salvation, we are called to on-going repentance of **SINS**.

⁷⁶ This oxymoron demonstrates (by hyperbole) the complete absurdity of **DOUBLE PREDESTINATION**.

⁷⁷ Lockyer, Herbert, *All the Teachings of Jesus*, Castle Books, Edison, 1997, p. 234.

⁷⁸ Lest the reader ask why I don't attempt to rebut the deficiencies, one by one, suffice it to say minds indoctrinated by the error of **DOUBLE PREDESTINATION** don't respond to reason or revelation. Well oiled 'machines', they crunch through whatever is offered for their edification, often looking past what they read or hear, focusing on the extra-biblical canons they've grown to love as support for their theories. Whole libraries have been written that successfully dismantle this mis-teaching about our sovereign Lord and Savior. My words would add nothing to these many excellent works. As partial explanation for "Why Calvinism?", I believe there are those among these ranks who are not converted at all. They imagine themselves a member of the privileged "elect", all the while reaping what they will eventually sow when they hear from their Judge, "I knew you not." I pray those of this mind set will repent now.

⁷⁹ Another allied doctrine is misunderstood. At the moment of salvation, we are not relieved of our sin nature. We receive Christ's perfect nature, a new nature. Yet, until we are with Him, these **two natures war within us**. Paul's epistles explain this process of sanctification. Our sanctification succeeds **in spite of** our sin nature! 1 John 4:4.

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⁸⁰ For an entirely different study is the need to distinguish what *Christian freedom is and is not*. The global demand for political freedom, the supposed God-given right to live in a society providing liberty, democracy and free markets is *not an outworking of the gospel*. The freedom Christ's atoning death offers is freedom from sin, not political freedom. It is the bondage of sin that eternally damns souls. We are called to seek relief from this bondage. All other bondage (lack of freedoms) is merely "momentary light affliction." It does not hinder the gospel's advance. This is born out in documented history of great advances in faith under persecution, but rarely under conditions of largess.

⁸¹ Readers would be wise to avail themselves of the many excellent works that have been offered to correct "purpose thinking" that has crept into the body in the last ten years. *This* purpose does not teach truth but purports many lies.

⁸² 1 Timothy 6:20 "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called."

⁸³ I shared this truth with a newborn's mother. If we would acknowledge **DEPRAVITY** parenting would be easier.

⁸⁴ Calvinists like Matto and this Grace pastor refer to 1 Samuel 15:3 in support for their interpretation. "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." Matto claims, "God is showing [in this text] us a principle that unless a child is one of God's elect, they will be hell bound via false religions and philosophies" (www.scionofzion.com/age.htm). [But this text teaches the Dispensation of the Law, not the Church Dispensation. Law is *now* satisfied in Christ.]

⁸⁵ Dr. Grady McMurtry.

⁸⁶ The purpose of including this point is simply to provide examples of the wide range of beliefs. I do not agree the writings claimed by LDS are divinely inspired. Therefore, any particular point of LDS doctrine fails to impress with authority.

⁸⁷ I believe Matto and others are mistaken on this issue. But regarding Augustinian-sourced Calvinist doctrine, I hear these advocates claim non-Calvinists are not able to agree with the teachings because we don't actually *understand* the teachings --if we did understand Calvin, we'd agree with the teachings!! How's that for classic circular reasoning 101? Moreover, they claim *only some are able to understand what others are not qualified to understand*. On the contrary, anything God reveals in His Word is available to any normal, functioning, blood bought, born again, renewed, transformed mind, having the mind of Christ. The 'election' and 'predestination' definitions they claim are not biblically sourced. It does not require advanced education or understanding to know this.

⁸⁸ The doctrine of election is key in completing the whole picture of the doctrine of salvation. But for this narrow discussion of whether infants and young children who die are saved from hell, election is set aside since its application does not guide the sovereign will of God the Father to provide mercy according to His greater purpose for little ones.

⁸⁹ Evidenced by what? Calvinism is based on presumptive supposition. Man's a priori assumptions do not precede "In the beginning," revelation of His Word.

⁹⁰ See Endnote 67.

⁹¹ I would ask Dr. Geisler, "What if, in heaven, these 'matured' souls, when given the opportunity, fail to choose Christ? What then? Are these expelled from God's presence?" I say the Bible teaches there is no unrighteousness in heaven. Surely, God does not reintroduce factors which could result in rebellion again gaining a foothold in paradise. But any theory of deceased little ones being given "a *chance* to believe" leaves the door open to the possibility they won't. Would Dr. Geisler agree this a back door way to suggest possible value in the notions of purgatory or limbo?

⁹² This verifiable fact of millions of deceased infants throughout man's history *does* lend some credence to Geisler's premise that is criticized in Endnote 91. Still, I ask, "What about possible 'rejecters' of God's grace in heaven?"

⁹³ See Appendix A regarding "Innocence". The term used by Erickson is valid only if denoting *comparative* human good. According to God's standards, no man is good. Comparative human goodness is a Hindu, not a Christian idea.

⁹⁴ A fundamental contradiction discovered in my research is the lack of agreement among theologians on whether babies actually are or aren't 'innocent' in any agreed upon sense. Clearly, God's definition determines the answer. If total depravity and it's outworking is claimed for the mind and spirit of the infant, then innocence is certainly ruled out. If committed sin is the criteria, then there is no basis for claiming babies are guilty in the generally accepted sense of the word. I believe the definition of man's innocence forever died in the Garden at the moment disobedience entered in to the blood line of man. The gauge of innocence is God's perfection; That measure applies only to Him.

⁹⁵ On what basis does Kroll ask this question? Does anyone have the ability to verify 'spiritual location' of deceased souls? Obviously not. Kroll makes a leap of logic here, supporting Calvinistic predestination (election) but does so by presuming what cannot be known.

⁹⁶ This assertion is fine if Kroll means to indicate God applies mercy as the mechanism. But it is not so clear he can claim to demonstrate election, which is what he suggests.

⁹⁷ This is another example of an argument from silence. But we can ask if it is typical of a paternal perspective (rather than maternal, i.e., mine)? Why does Kroll assume infants in an eternal context would have to *endure* their

Infant Salvation in Light of the Cross

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infancy? Rather, it makes sense to me that infants have no ability or need to assess their existence, one way or the other. I don't see anything that indicates deceased little ones would be considered less than perfect unless they too 'matured' to 'adulthood'. If the gauge is eternity and not time, what can we say is the 'measure' of adult age in heaven? Further, if babies continue to age as Kroll suggests, will all persons continue to 'get older' in heaven? If so, how 'old'? As we can see, these questions veer off the path of revealed truth and enter the realm of wishful thinking and speculation.

NOTES