

THE LORD'S CHURCH IS UNIQUE IN THAT IT...

1. Was planned and purposed before time began Ephesians 3:8-11
2. Was built by and upon Jesus Christ, God's Son Matthew 16:16-18
3. Was purchased with the shed blood of Christ Acts 20:28
4. Has Jesus Christ as its Savior and Head Ephesians 5:23
5. Has no creed but the New Testament Acts 2:36
6. Has no rule of faith or discipline except Christ's word John 14:20-23
7. Has no earthly headquarters Ephesians 1:21-23
8. Is composed of all the saved Acts 2:47
9. Is sanctified and cleansed by Jesus Christ Ephesians 5:26
10. Works and worships in the name of Jesus Christ Acts 4:12
11. Urges the unity of all believers in Jesus Christ Ephesians 4:1-6
12. Will be gloriously presented unto Jesus Christ Ephesians 5:27

REQUIRES NO MORE FOR MEMBERSHIP THAN IS NECESSARY TO BE SAVED

1. Hear the word of God (Acts 15:7).
2. Believe in Jesus Christ (Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16).
3. Repent of sins (Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 17:30).
4. Confess Christ before men (Matthew 10:32).
5. Be baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:27).

All Spiritual Blessings Are Found in Christ! (Ephesians 1:3)

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Faithful Sayings

Olsen Park Church of Christ

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Services

Sunday: 9:30 a.m.
10:20 a.m.
6:00 p.m.
Wednesday: 7:00 p.m.

Elders:

Ken Ford
Charles Kelley
Pat Ledbetter

Deacons:

Dean Bowers
Eddie Cook
Bill Davis
Neil Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Fred Perez

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

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Is There An "Age of Accountability?"

Christians sometimes use phrases which describe concepts we believe are inferred in Scripture, in spite of the fact that the phrases themselves are not biblical. In doing so great caution must be used lest we give an authority to the phrase itself which exceeds the Scriptural evidence that supports it. It is generally wisest to simply use "Bible names for Bible things." Yet when a doctrine is evident, though not specifically named, such labeling may be unavoidable. An example of this is our use of the phrase "The age of accountability." We use it to describe the period we believe exists when a person moves beyond the innocence of youth into a position of accountability before God for personal misdeeds. Before this period we teach that baptism is unnecessary. After this period we teach that it is essential. Is this a Biblical concept?

(Cont. on pg 2)

“Is There An “Age of Accountability” (Cont. from pg. 1)

The Innocence of Youth

The first evidence which Scripture offers that infers an age of accountability is the very clear principle that children are innocent. In Jeremiah 19:4 when the Lord rebukes the kings of Judah for their involvement in child sacrifice they are said to have - **“...filled this place with the blood of the innocents”** (NKJV). When Jesus on two occasions encounters children He declares: 1. **“...of such is the kingdom of heaven”** (Matthew 19:14), and 2. **“...unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven”** (Matthew 18:3). In the context of the last statement Jesus goes on to warn those who would cause **“...one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin...”** (Matthew 18:6) that even a horrible death would be a better fate for them than to do so. All this makes it clear that there is a time in youth when sin is not reckoned.

“I Was Alive Once”

A second evidence comes from descriptions given in Scripture of coming to accountability. In Romans 7:7-9 Paul details the effect that Divine Law has upon man’s relationship with God. Paul points out that though Law is not sin itself, once it is declared it defines sin (7:7). Thus when an individual violates Law sin comes to life and they die spiritually (7:8,9). In the midst of this discussion Paul declares “I was alive once without the law...” (Romans 7:9). It is clear that Paul is not claiming innocence in ignorance (see Romans 3:19), he was born under Law (Philippians 3:3-7). So when would Paul have been “alive without the law?” Clearly, before he reached the moral maturity to understand Law and choose to violate it!

Along these same lines, the prophet Isaiah, in speaking of the childhood of the Messiah describes a time “...before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good...” (Isaiah 7:16). It is clear that there is such a time, as seen in God’s dealing with the children and adults who came out of Egypt. When they refused to enter Canaan God

forced them to wander in the wilderness forty more years. The adults died in the wilderness. Yet those under 21 years of age were not held accountable for this sin and were allowed to enter Canaan. This clearly illustrates that we come to accountability with maturity.

New Testament Baptism

The final evidence relates to what the Bible teaches about baptism. First we find that Scripture teaches that faith, repentance and confession are all prerequisites to baptism. Mark 16:16 teaches - **“He who believes and is baptized will be saved...”** Romans 10:10 declares - **“For with the heart one believes to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation.”** And finally Acts 2:38 commands - **“...Repent and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ...”** There is a time in a person's life when all three of these things are impossible. An infant cannot believe, confess or repent.

Second we find that Scripture is totally silent regarding the baptism of even a single child. Even when a large

group turns to to Christ we are told - **“...both men and women were baptized”** (Acts 8:12) yet no mention is made of the baptism of children. All these factors together makes it evident that there is an age of accountability.

When Is The “Age of Accountability?”

Having shown that Scripture infers an age of accountability it is much more difficult to identify when that age is for each person. Is the age of 21 used in Numbers 14:29 an appropriate pattern? Is it rather when one come to **“know to refuse the evil and choose the good”** (Isaiah 7:16)? Each soul must make these decisions for themselves. It seems that the important thing is for a person to have a mature understanding of what it means to obey God and repent of sin. The mental and emotional maturity required to keep one’s commitment to Christ is essential if we are to follow Him in truth.

By Kyle Pope