



It Takes a Church to Baptize: What the Bible Says about Infant Baptism

Scot McKnight

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The issue of baptism has troubled Protestants for centuries. Should infants be baptized before their faith is conscious, or does God command the baptism of babies whose parents have been baptized?

Popular New Testament scholar Scot McKnight makes a biblical case for infant baptism, exploring its history, meaning, and practice and showing that infant baptism is the most historic Christian way of forming children into the faith. He explains that the church's practice of infant baptism developed straight from the Bible and argues that it must begin with the family and then extend to the church. Baptism is not just an individual profession of faith: it takes a family and a church community to nurture a child into faith over time. McKnight explains infant baptism for readers coming from a tradition that baptizes adults only, and he counters criticisms that fail to consider the role of families in the formation of faith. The book includes a foreword by Todd Hunter and an afterword by Gerald McDermott.

It Takes a Church to Baptize: What the Bible Says about Infant Baptism Details

Date : Published August 21st 2018 by Brazos Press

ISBN : 9781587434167

Author : Scot McKnight

Format : Paperback 144 pages

Genre : Religion, Theology, Nonfiction

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From Reader Review It Takes a Church to Baptize: What the Bible Says about Infant Baptism for online ebook

Jonathan Latshaw says

In my current job, I am constantly having conversations with college students questioning whether or not they should be rebaptized. Most often these students were baptized as infants, walked away from the faith sometime in high school or early college, and then came back to their faith later in college. I found McKnight helpful in that he presented his infant baptist position from Scripture. He is sympathetic and fair to the credo-baptist position. I also found his personal testimony helpful. He formats his case by walking through an Anglican baptism service, which I could have done without, but that's ok. McKnight wrote frankly about common pitfalls of infant baptism but still presented a biblical, family-oriented, and compelling vision for infant baptism. A quick and helpful read.

Kelsey Ebling says

I read this book in preparation for my daughter's baptism. it clearly explained all of what baptism represents and its place in biblical history. i recommend this book to anyone who is interested in learning more about infant baptism.

Sean Fuentes says

An interesting perspective on baptism from a Reformed Anglican which is easy to follow. At points I would have preferred a more of an explanation, but overall it was a good introduction to infant baptism, especially with respect to the relationship between the church and its baptized members.

Sujit Thomas says

This book is an apologetic work that defends the practice of infant baptism. It is written for a general audience. Scot McKnight came from a baptist background and became Anglican and shifted his opinion on the issue of infant baptism. McKnight answers with a resounding yes on the vexing question of whether there is infant baptism in the New Testament. This is a straight forward work that can be helpful for anyone interested in the question of "Why infants are baptized"

Ayekah says

This short read is a exposition on infant baptism citing what the author pulls in as the biblical foundation for. While doing so he's also wound this around the sacrament of baptism as held in the anglican community, which I am well familiar with. The book is well put together in most respects and yet I wanted something more, I point to the title It Takes A Church. That is does. When we stand to witness the baptism of not just

infants but any one else, the church family and community, two very important factors that we hold to be be also promise that we collectively assume this role as well.

It does indeed take a church family/ community to uphold this covenant of faith. I absolutely understand what the author was trying to put forth, however the last quarter of the book took a curve that could have been placed earlier or not at all. It is by all means a very readable, easy to understand book, it does have somewhat of a scholarly approach but again easy straightforward read. It is a great book for those seeking to understand the broader view of baptism narrowed down.

I recommend it for any reader looking for a broader understanding or searching their own beliefs.

I received an arc from NetGalley and publisher for an honest review

Robert D. Cornwall says

I was born and baptized in the Episcopal Church, and later confirmed. In high school I moved to a Pentecostal church, and decided at camp to get rebaptized. So, I've done both. I have read widely on the subject as a result, and while I understand the reasons for adopting infant baptism, in the end I've found the reasons for believer's baptism by immersion to be more clearly rooted in scripture.

Scot McKnight is a New Testament scholar, a position in the church I respect. In this book McKnight, who started out life as a Baptist, defends infant baptism, arguing that while not explicitly stated in the New Testament references to circumcision and household baptisms imply infants and children are included. He may very well be correct, but then I still wonder why we don't see any references to inclusion of children until the third century. It is possible that everyone assumes that once the father decides everyone in the household gets baptized, and so there is no need for any directive. Still, you would think there would be something prior to Hippolytus.

In any case this is a brief read -- I read it through in a couple of hours. It covers the bases. So, if you're wanting to read a solid defense of infant baptism with a strong emphasis on the family, this will be your book. As for me, I will stay with believer baptism.

Deon Strydom says

Clearly stated

The main thesis is summarised by the author as this: "baptism is not what we do but something that God does to us." And that says it all!

Clearly stated and referenced from scripture

Well worth the read!

Samuel Kassing says

This was an enjoyable read. I could have done without all of the Anglican liturgy. But, I enjoyed McKnight's irenic style and his even handed approach to the topic. He asks really good questions and does a good job pushing back on the individualistic spirit of our age. I also appreciated his explicit evangelical

emphasis and commitment to the scriptures. This is a great entry book if you want to understand the covenant baptism view.

Paul Kurtz says

If you are a Christian with a baptist (adult only baptism) background and want to understand why some traditions baptize infants, then I highly recommend this book. It is fairly easy to read and gives cogent explanations of the paedobaptism position.

Carl Jenkins says

I grew up Methodist and was sprinkled as an infant. At the age of 17 I joined the Churches of Christ and was immersed in water as an act of believer's baptism. I also love Scot McKnight and his books and so this one quickly caught my interest.

McKnight's approach to arguing in favor of infant baptism is unique for sure. As an Anglican he guides the reader through the Common Book of Prayer as if they were attending worship with him on a Sunday that a baptism was happening. The reader is able to take a deeper look into the liturgy and have a better understanding of why it is approached the way that it is.

Near the end McKnight breaks from this in order to write about what the Bible teaches about baptism, and then to work to provide a scriptural case for infant baptism before returning to the liturgical baptism.

Almost thou persuadest me, Scot. Almost. Scot focused primarily on covenants and the history of God bringing in not just one who receives the sign of the covenant (shown through circumcision) but how other males were also circumcised based on the faith of the patriarch whether slave or son, adult or infant. I think he makes a good point, and it's always bothered me how many Christians have raised their children as kids that have faith, participate in worship, confess, repent, and pray for forgiveness, and suddenly we tell them they need to get baptized and give their lives to Christ as if their lives so far have been a sham faith.

Perhaps I'm just not "there" yet, but I wasn't convinced that baptism is equated with circumcision to the extent that it copies the act of bringing people into God's family based on the faith of a family leader. The argument that "households" would most likely have kids and so we should assume they infants were baptized is more of a leap for me than anything, and his use of 1 Corinthians 7:14 to argue infant baptism seems very out of context.

That being said, I still highly recommend it. It prompted me to really consider what we do as a church that practices believers baptism to show that we care deeply about our children and helping them find their place within the family of God as early as possible.

I received a free copy from Netgalley for my honest review

Steve Hailstone says

Wow. Excellent read. My reason for purchasing this was to truly understand "Why infant baptism?" McKnight helps me get it. My follow up question, "What does this really mean?" wasn't really dealt with until the final pages, and then by quoting John Stott. Stott gives me a satisfactory answer, but I don't see that answer squaring completely with Article 27 in the Thirty-nine Articles, where applying what is said in the first paragraph to infants and children seem to be too strong. I wish the book had devoted more time to this aspect.

Rocky Woolery says

I very much appreciate the view of infant baptism from one who previously accepted beginner's baptism. Even though in the end I do not agree with all of Scot's conclusions, I found much that I would agree with him on in contrast to the beliefs of many who practice beginner's baptism. In particular that baptism is an act that engages the Spirit of God to bring us into a relationship with Himself. I would also agree that baptism needs to be seen as a church family related matter, I believe it takes a church to help mature a new follower of Christ.

As with any point of view that is different from that which a reader holds Scot's presentation of the Anglican view of infant baptism caused me to consider my beliefs and why I hold them. It also gave me a new respect for the beliefs of others who do not see this issue as I do.

Josh says

Good take from an Anglican position

Thomas says

A clear, succinct defense of infant baptism and of the biblical teaching on baptism in general, centered around the Anglican liturgy. Though it would be most persuasive for someone sympathetic toward paedobaptism or in need of a refresher regarding the basic arguments, the lightness of style as well as the clarity of the argumentation would be of benefit for the committed credobaptist as well.

Janae says

This little book is an excellent introduction to infant baptism.

I read it while researching the topic of baptism for an academic paper. I like everything he has to say, but I wish he would have gone into more depth (for the sake of my research).

This book is the author's personal journey to a better understanding of the sacrament of baptism.

