

1. Did Jesus become sin on the cross?

(John 1:1) *"In the beginning [before all-time] was the Word (Christ), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God Himself. He was [continually existing] in the beginning [co-eternally] with God. All things were made and came into existence through Him; and without Him not even one thing was made that has come into being."* Jesus is Holy – Holy God without sin.

(John 1:14-18) *"And the Word (Christ) became flesh, and lived among us; and we [actually] saw His glory, glory as belongs to the [One and] only begotten Son of the Father, [the Son who is truly unique, the only One of His kind, who is] full of grace and truth (absolutely free of deception).¹⁵ John testified [repeatedly] about Him and ^[e]has cried out [testifying officially for the record, with validity and relevance], "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ^[f]has a higher rank than I and has priority over me, for He existed before me.'" ¹⁶For out of His fullness [the superabundance of His grace and truth] we have all received grace upon grace [spiritual blessing upon spiritual blessing, favor upon favor, and gift heaped upon gift]. ¹⁷For the Law was given through Moses, but grace [the unearned, undeserved favor of God] and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has seen God [His essence, His divine nature] at any time; the [One and] only begotten God [that is, the unique Son] who is in the intimate presence of the Father, He has explained Him [and interpreted and revealed the awesome wonder of the Father]." He took on our form as a man so that God would have a vessel to pay for our sins. He was fully God and fully man. Christ is Amazing! This is why we celebrate so great a salvation. He took on our sin on the cross.*

(Romans 6:1-11) *"What shall we say [to all this]? Should we continue in sin and practice sin as a habit so that [God's gift of grace may increase and overflow? Certainly not! How can we, the very ones who died to sin, continue to live in it any longer? Or are you ignorant of the fact that all of us who have been ^[b]baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We have therefore been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory and power of the Father, we too might walk habitually in newness of life [abandoning our old ways]. For if we have become one with Him [permanently united] in the likeness of His death, we will also certainly be [one with Him and share fully] in the likeness of His resurrection. We know that our old self [our human nature without the Holy Spirit] was nailed to the cross with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin. For the person who has died [with Christ] has been freed from [the power of] sin.*

Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live [together] with Him, because we know [the self-evident truth] that Christ, having been raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has power over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin [ending its power and paying the sinner's debt] once and for all; and the life that He lives, He lives to [glorify] God [in unbroken fellowship with Him]. Even so, consider yourselves to be dead to sin [and your relationship to it broken], but alive to God [in unbroken fellowship with Him] in Christ Jesus."

(2 Corinthians 5:20,21) - *"So we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making His appeal through us; we [as Christ's representatives] plead with you on behalf of Christ to be reconciled to God. He made Christ who knew no sin to [judicially] be sin on our behalf, so that in Him we would become the righteousness of God [that is, we would be made acceptable to Him and placed in a right relationship with Him by His gracious lovingkindness]."*

Christ was punished as a sinner—though He was not a sinner, He was and is Holy God (*Hebrews 13:8*). In our language He was sinless – He paid for our sins, He satisfied God's holy standard required for sins to be erased (paid in full). Similarly, when we submit our lives to Christ and become obedient from the heart to his teaching (*Romans 6:17*), we are delivered from sin. God accounts us as righteous (i.e., receive the blessings and inheritance of a righteous one) even though we were slaves to sin.

2. Where do I find the age of accountability in the Bible?

The concept of the "age of accountability" is that children are not held accountable by God for their sins until they reach a certain age, and that if a child dies before reaching the "age of accountability," that child will, by the grace and mercy of God, be granted entrance into heaven. Is the concept of an age of accountability biblical? Is there such a thing as an "age of innocence"?

Frequently lost in the discussion regarding the age of accountability is the fact that children, no matter how young, are not "innocent" in the sense of being sinless. The Bible tells us that, even if an infant or child has not committed personal sin, all people, including infants and children, are guilty before God because of inherited and imputed sin. Inherited sin is that which is passed on from our parents. In *Psalms 51:5*, David wrote, "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." David recognized that even at conception he was a sinner. The very sad fact that infants sometimes die demonstrates that even infants are impacted by Adam's sin, since physical and spiritual death were the results of Adam's original sin.

Each person, infant or adult, stands guilty before God; each person has offended the holiness of God. The only way God can be just and at the same time declare a person righteous is for that person to have received forgiveness by faith in Christ. Christ is the only way. *John 14:6* records what Jesus said: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, except through Me." Also, Peter states in *Acts 4:12*, "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." Salvation is an individual choice.

What about babies and young children who never attain the ability to make this individual choice? The age of accountability is the concept that those who die before reaching the age of accountability are automatically saved by God's grace and mercy. The age of accountability is the belief that God saves all those who die never having possessed the

ability to make a decision for or against Christ. One verse that may speak to this issue is *Romans 1:20*, “Since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.” According to this, mankind’s guilt before God is based, in part, on the fact that people reject what they can “clearly see” of God’s existence, eternity, and power. This leads to the question of children who have no faculty for “clearly seeing” or reasoning about God—wouldn’t their natural incapacity to observe and reason provide them with an excuse?

Thirteen is the most common age suggested for the age of accountability, based on the Jewish custom that a child becomes an adult at the age of 13. However, the Bible gives no direct support to the age of 13 always being the age of accountability. It likely varies from child to child. A child has passed the age of accountability once he or she is capable of making a faith decision for or against Christ. Charles Spurgeon’s opinion was that “a child of five can as truly be saved and regenerated as an adult.”

With the above in mind, also consider this: Christ’s death is presented as sufficient for all of mankind. *First John 2:2* says Jesus is “the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.” This verse is clear that Jesus’ death was sufficient for all sins, not just the sins of those who specifically have come to Him in faith. The fact that Christ’s death was sufficient for all sin would allow the possibility of God’s applying that payment to those who were never capable of believing.

Some see a link between the age of accountability and the covenant relationship between the nation of Israel and the LORD where no requirement was imposed on a male child to be included in the covenant other than circumcision, which was performed on the eighth day after his birth (*Exodus 12:48–50; Leviticus 12:3*).

The question arises, “Does the inclusive nature of the Old Covenant apply to the church?” On the day of Pentecost, Peter said, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself” (*Acts 2:38–39*, NAS). The word *children* here (*teknon* in Greek) means “child, daughter, son.” *Acts 2:39* indicates that forgiveness of sins is available to one and all (*Acts 1:8*), including future generations. It does not teach family or household salvation. The children of those who repented were also required to repent.

The one passage that seems to identify with this topic more than any other is *2 Samuel 12:21–23*. The context of these verses is that King David committed adultery with Bathsheba, with a resulting pregnancy. The prophet Nathan was sent by the Lord to inform David that, because of his sin, the Lord would take the child in death. David responded to this by grieving and praying for the child. But once the child was taken, David’s mourning ended. David’s servants were surprised to hear this. They said to King David, “What is this thing that you have done? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept; but when the

child died, you arose and ate food.” David’s response was, “While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, ‘Who knows, the LORD may be gracious to me, that the child may live.’ But now he has died; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.” David’s response indicates that those who cannot believe are safe in the Lord. David said that he could go to the child but could not bring the child back to him. Also, and just as important, David seemed to be comforted by this knowledge. In other words, David seemed to be saying that he would see his baby son (in heaven), though he could not bring him back.

Although it is possible that God applies Christ’s payment for sin to those who cannot believe, the Bible does not specifically say that He does this. Therefore, this is a subject about which we should not be adamant or dogmatic. God’s applying Christ’s death to those who cannot believe would seem consistent with His love and mercy. It is our position that God applies Christ’s payment for sin to babies and those who are mentally handicapped, since they are not mentally capable of understanding their sinful state and their need for the Savior, but again we cannot be dogmatic. Of this we are certain: God is loving, holy, merciful, just, and gracious. Whatever God does is always right and good, and He loves children even more than we do.¹

¹ <https://www.gotquestions.org/age-of-accountability.html>