

Discussion Questions

Lecture 3: What the Early Christians Believed about Infant Baptism and Believers Baptism.

Use these questions after watching the complete lecture. Each prompt is grounded in the teaching and is designed for personal reflection, family study, or group conversation.

1. Why does Lecture 3 separate emergency baptism, baptism of responsive small children, and infant baptism before evaluating the sources?

Another way to ask: Why must we separate three different kinds of young-person baptism?

2. What is the difference between a baptism based on a child's own emerging faith and one based on vicarious faith or the rite's operation?

Another way to ask: How is a child's faith different from parents believing for an infant?

3. Tertullian recommends delay so little children can know Christ. What does his reason contribute beyond the bare fact that he discusses children?

Another way to ask: Why is Tertullian's reason for delaying baptism important?

4. In the Apostolic Tradition, little children answer when able and a parent answers when needed. What interpretations fit that evidence, and what goes beyond it?

Another way to ask: What can and cannot be proved from a parent helping a child answer?

5. How does distinguishing inherited "stain" from inherited guilt change the way Origen's comments are used?

Another way to ask: Why is Origen's "stain" not automatically Augustine's doctrine?

Continue the Conversation

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6. Why is Cyprian's AD 250 discussion so important, and why should its plague-era North African setting still be considered?

Another way to ask: Why is Cyprian both clear evidence and evidence that needs context?

7. The grave inscriptions record ages, "received grace," neophyte status, and baptism near death. What can those concrete details establish that a general theological statement cannot?

Another way to ask: Why are the ages and dates on the tombs important?

8. Gregory of Nazianzus advised waiting, absent danger, until a young child could listen and answer something about baptism. Why does Lecture 3 classify that as child believers' baptism rather than newborn baptism?

Another way to ask: Why is Gregory's responding child a different category from an infant?

9. How can translating *paidia* or *parvuli* as "infants" change the apparent history of baptism?

Another way to ask: Why do the exact Greek and Latin words matter here?

10. Infant baptism, child baptism, and mature believers' baptism coexisted without the later coercive division. How should that fact affect the use of one third-century quotation?

Another way to ask: Why can one pro-infant or pro-believer quotation not describe every church in the century?

Return to the lesson page for transcript-linked audio and the full Discussion Jumpstarters.