

DO UNBORN BABIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN GO TO HEAVEN?

Daily Devotions by Mark Driscoll

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." –Matthew 19:14

This is one of the questions the Bible does not answer for us. The best biblical response is this: *"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?"*¹⁶⁵ We can trust the God who died so that His enemies could be saved to do what is right in the case of infants who die.

Some appeal to David's statement after his son died: *"I shall go to him, but he will not return to me."*¹⁶⁶ The argument is that David knew he was going to heaven, so the baby must be there. However, the point of David's statement is that the baby is in the grave. David will visit the grave, but the baby will not come back to life no matter how much he agonizes in fasting and prayer.

Many agree with Millard Erickson that the universal atonement pays the penalty for all Adamic guilt and condemnation, so babies who do not commit personal sin will be in heaven by application of the atonement.¹⁶⁷ Others argue that death in infancy is a sign of special election. Some believe that children spend eternity with their parents. But none of these theories have clear biblical warrant.

Grace and I enjoy five children. We would have enjoyed six but, like many couples, we suffered a miscarriage. Because we love children, it was very difficult for us, and I often tear up when I talk about that loss. Our children and friends have asked me what I think happened to the baby and whether or not I believe the baby is in heaven. My simple answer is that I do not have a clear biblical answer as much as I have God who is a loving and gracious Father whom I trust. The fact that John the Baptizer was known and named by God in the womb and filled with the Holy Spirit before his birth gives me much comfort.¹⁶⁸

What painful part of your life are you looking forward to coming to an end in eternity?

165 Gen. 18:25.

166 2 Sam. 12:23.

167 Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998), 654–66.

168 Luke 1:5–25, 39–45.

For more content, please check out a blog I wrote on “My baby brother died.”

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MARK DRISCOLL

Pastor Mark Driscoll is a Jesus-following, mission-leading, church-serving, people-loving, Bible-preaching pastor. He’s grateful to be a nobody trying to tell everybody about Somebody. [Read More](#)