

# Redemption 304: The Age of Accountability



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## The Age of Accountability – Parallels between Adam and Eve and Children

1. Opening Question: When was Paul “alive once without the Law”?
  - a. Notice how the description parallels Adam and Eve’s in Genesis 3 (especially verse 11).

**Romans 7:7** What shall we say then? *Is the law sin?* God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for **I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.** 8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin *was* dead. 9 For **I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.** 10 **And the commandment, which *was ordained* to life, I found to be unto death.** 11 **For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.**

2. **Comparison 1: Shame about Nakedness**
  - a. Right from the beginning, the bible curiously and deliberately goes out of its way to depict shame regarding nakedness as the primary indication of innocence or sin and guilt.

**Genesis 2:22** And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. 23 And Adam said, This *is* now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. 24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. 25 **And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.**

**Genesis 3:6** And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, **she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.** 7 **And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.** 8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. 9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where *art* thou? 10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and **I was afraid, because I was naked;** and I hid myself. 11 **And he**

said, **Who told thee that thou *wast* naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?**

- b. The New Testament picks up on this seemingly obscure theme and continues it, especially the book of Revelation.

**2 Corinthians 5:2** For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be **clothed** upon with our house which is from heaven: **3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.** **4** For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

**Revelation 3:3** Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. **4** Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have **not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.** **5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment;** and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels... **18** I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; **and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear;** and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

**Revelation 6:9** And when he had opened the fifth seal, **I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God,** and for the testimony which they held: **10** And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? **11 And white robes were given unto every one of them;** and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they *were*, should be fulfilled.

**Revelation 7:9** After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, **clothed with white robes,** and palms in their hands... **13** And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, **What are these which are arrayed in white robes?** and whence came they? **14** And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, **These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**

**Revelation 16:15** Behold, I come as a thief. **Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.**

**Revelation 19:7** Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and **his wife hath made herself ready.** **8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.**

- c. It's hard to imagine that the repeated, peculiar mention of being ashamed to be naked as an archetypical effect of sin and guilt is not intended to invoke and connect to young children who are so often utterly unconcerned with clothing.
  - d. The use of such imagery by biblical authors attests to their understanding that young children are in a state similar to Adam and Eve before sin.
3. **Comparison 2: Knowledge of Good and Evil**
- a. Isaiah uses the exact same language as applied to Adam and Eve's condition before sin to speak of the time between birth and a later point in life when a child does not yet know how to distinguish good and evil.

**Genesis 2:9** And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of **knowledge (01847) of good (02896) and evil (07451)**... 17 But of the tree of the **knowledge (01847) of good (02896) and evil (07451)**, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die... 3:5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened (06491) (8738), and ye shall be as gods (0430), **knowing (03045) good (02896) and evil (07451)**... 22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, **to know (03045) good (02896) and evil (07451)**: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

**Isaiah 7:14** Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, **a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son**, and shall call his name Immanuel. 15 Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know **(03045)** to refuse the evil **(07451)**, and choose the **good (02896)**. 16 For before **the child (05288) shall know (03045)** to refuse **the evil (07451)**, and choose **the good (02896)**, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

#### **01847 da'ath**

**from 03045**; TWOT-848c; n m/f

AV-knowledge 82, know 6, cunning 1, unwittingly 2 + 01097 2, ignorantly + 01097 1, unawares + 01097 1; 93

#### 1) **knowledge**

1a) knowledge, perception, skill

1b) **discernment**, understanding, wisdom

#### **03045 yada**

a primitive root; TWOT-848; v

AV-know 645, known 105, knowledge 19, perceive 18, shew 17, tell 8, wist 7, understand 7, certainly 7, acknowledge 6, acquaintance 6, consider 6, declare 6, teach 5, misc 85; 947

#### 1) **to know**

1a) (Qal)

1a1) to know

1a1a) to know, learn to know

1a1b) to perceive...

- b. The comparative language demonstrates that in Isaiah's understanding, children were not born with the perception or knowledge of good and evil that was immediately present in Adam and Eve when they sinned and was immediately characterized by Adam and Eve's shameful awareness that they were naked.

4. **Comparison 3: General Comparisons to Children as Models of Innocence and Divine Acceptance**

- a. Children who die are considered innocent in Psalms 106

**Psalms 106:37** Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, 38 **And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed** unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood.

- b. Ezekiel explicitly refutes the idea that children bear or inherit the guilt of their fathers

**Ezekiel 18:2** What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? 3 **As I live, saith the Lord GOD, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel...** 19 **Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father?** When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, *and* hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. 20 **The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son:** the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

- c. Jesus directly affirms that children are innocent

**Matthew 19:13** Then were there brought unto him **little children**, that he should put *his* hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. 14 But Jesus said, **Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.**

**Luke 18:16** But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, **Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.** 17 **Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.**

- i. Jesus suggests that little children will be allowed into the kingdom of heaven, which is intriguing since sinners and guilty persons will not be allowed into the kingdom.

**Matthew 18:1** At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? **2 And Jesus called a little child (3813)** unto him, and set him in the midst of them, **3 And said,** Verily I say unto you, **Except ye be converted (4762), and become as little children (3813),** ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. **4** Whosoever therefore shall humble himself **as this little child (3813),** the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. **5** And whoso shall receive **one such little child (3813)** in my name receiveth me. **6** But whoso shall offend one of these **little ones (3398)** which believe in me, **it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.**

### **4762 strepho**

strengthened from the base of 5157; TDNT-7:714,1093; v

AV-turn 11, turn (one's) self 2, turn (one) 1, turn again 1, turn back again 1, turn (one) about 1, be converted 1, vr turn 1; 19

#### **1) to turn, turn around**

2) to turn one's self (i.e. to turn the back to one

2a) of one who no longer cares for another)

2b) metaph. **to turn one's self from one's course of conduct,** i.e. to change one's mind

### **3813 paidion**

from dimin. of 3816; TDNT-5:636,759; n n

AV-child 25, little child 12, young child 10, damsel 4; 51

1) **a young child,** a little boy, a little girl

1a) **infants**

1b) children, little ones

1c) **an infant**

1c1) **of a (male) child just recently born**

1d) of a more advanced child; of a mature child;

1e) metaph. children (like children) in intellect

For Synonyms see entry 5868 & 5943

### **3398 mikros**

apparently a primary word; TDNT-4:648,593; adj

AV-little 14, least 6, small 6, less 2; 30

1) **small, little**

1a) **of size: hence of stature, of length**

1b) of space

1c) **of age: less by birth, younger**

1d) of time: short, brief, a little while, how little!

1e) of quantity: i.e. number, amount

1f) of rank or influence

ii. Verse 3 – Jesus equates the person who has turned from sin to a child.

iii. Verse 6 –

1. If children were already guilty at birth, why would they need someone to lead them into sin?
2. And why would anyone be punished for leading a child into sin if the child is pre-programmed to automatically sin anyway simply by virtue of being descended from Adam?
3. Jesus' statement presupposes that the initial condition of the child:
  - a. **is sinless and guiltless**
  - b. **without knowledge of sin and therefore needs someone else to lead them into sin**

#### 5. **Conclusions:**

- a. Practically speaking (since sins are defined by covenants), the only sin that children can even conceivably commit is disobedience to parents once they are at an age where they are old enough to control their body's actions and understand what their parents are asking. This precludes sin prior to when a child comprehends language. And even most of the commands that parents give in the early years do not pertain to actions that are moral in their own right, such as "sit still, stop crying, or don't touch that, etc."
- b. These passages affirm:
  - i. The initial state of children is one of innocence.
  - ii. Children acquire knowledge of good and evil and the accompanying shame of nakedness sometime during or after early childhood.