



Secret Baptism

A grandparent's right—or wrong?

Introduction

- Jesus' institution of Baptism is quite simple. In English it consists of all of 25 words (Matthew 28:19). And yet, sometimes situations involving Baptism are anything but simple. What are some examples?

The Situation

- A child has been born.
- The parents have not had the child baptized.
- The grandparents have spoken repeatedly to the parents about this.
- The parents still have no intention or desire to have the child baptized.

Can the Grandparents Baptize?

Matthew 28:19

1. In order to have a valid baptism, what is necessary in terms of . . .

the person baptizing?

the words spoken?



the earthly element used?

2. Would a baptism by a grandparent without the parents' knowledge meet those requirements?

1 Corinthians 14:33,39,40

3. Just because someone has the ability to do something doesn't always mean that they should do it. What characteristic of God does Paul highlight when reminding the Corinthians of this?
4. How does this most commonly show itself in the way Baptism is administered?

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

5. As a general rule, to whom has God primarily entrusted the spiritual care of children?

John 15:5-8

6. In addition to being grafted into the vine at baptism, what else is necessary for the ongoing spiritual well-being of a child?
7. On the basis of these passages, what answer(s) can we give about the question above: Can the grandparents baptize?

What Can Grandparents Do?

1. Pray. Pray for the physical and spiritual well-being of the child; pray also that the parents would have a change of heart. Prayer is powerful. (See 1 Timothy 2:1-4.)
2. Let your light shine. Let the love of Jesus be evident to your grandchildren in all that you say and do. (See Matthew 5:48.)
3. Share Jesus. The gospel is able to work faith in the hearts of children even from a very early age. (See 2 Timothy 3:15.)

BONUS MATERIAL

1. Even though the right to baptize belongs to every Christian, name some of the blessings that come from having a pastor or pastors baptize on behalf of the congregation.
2. How does the example of Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, and Esau add anything to this discussion (Genesis 25,27)?
3. Explain the statement: God has bound us to the use of the means of grace. He hasn't bound himself.

4. List some potential, unintended consequences that could come up down the road if grandparents were to baptize a grandchild against the parents' will and without their knowledge.

5. Why is it important to remember that there may be exceptions?

What if the parents are indifferent?

What if the grandparents have partial or complete guardianship?

What about in cases of an emergency?

6. What are some other situations when, even though a valid baptism *could* be performed, one probably *shouldn't* be?