

## [Will Children Be Raptured?](#)



By [Nathan Jones](#)

One of the most frequently asked questions coming into my Inbox involves the role of children in the Rapture. Will children be raptured? What about babies? The unborn? That question can extend as far as covering anyone who is mentally incapable of making a decision to accept Jesus as Savior.

In essence, the question extends even further than that, for the ultimate destination of the Rapture is Heaven, and people are wondering about the eternal destiny of these tender people if they die, regardless of the Rapture. Even graver, hanging onto the answer by a thread are people's views of the justice and loving nature of God.

I admit I wince every time I'm asked if children will be raptured. It is a question that hits very close to home for me.

I have three elementary-age children. My older two have asked Jesus to be their Savior and have proclaimed it in baptism. As a father it brings me great joy to see their love for the Lord expressed in cute prayer requests, joyful singing, surprisingly deep questions and an outpouring of love which are all fruits of the Spirit that have me convinced their acceptance of Jesus is genuine. Sure, I know they'll have some bumps along the way as they walk with Christ, and they may even fall away for a bit, but they are His and as Jesus said in [John 10:27-29](#), *"no one can snatch them out of my hand."*

My youngest boy, though, has autism. At age five Zachary still does not speak. While his gross motor skills are almost olympic in stature, he lacks the finest motor skills to put even his hands together to wash them. The simplest concepts grasped by a one year old seem to be beyond him. And certainly, there is no way that he could comprehend his need for a Savior, much less understand the words that explain that concept. Unless his brain is miraculously healed, Zachary will never *"confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead,"* and so be saved ([Rom. 10:9](#)).



Zachary Jones

The question asked of me about whether children will be raptured translates in my mind every time to, "Will Zachary be going to Heaven?"

### **What the Bible Says**

While the work of salvation was wonderfully completed by Jesus sacrificing Himself for our sins and overcoming death by His resurrection, people in turn must accept that salvation in order to be saved from judgment and its sentence of Hell. The decision to repent of our rebellion (sin) against God and in faith accept Jesus as Savior is therefore an act that requires a mental understanding and a decision made ([Jn. 1:12](#); [3:16,36](#); [Acts 2:21,38](#); [3:19](#); [Heb. 11:16](#); [1 Jn. 5:5](#)).

It does appear that Jesus teaches that children have and are exempt until an "age of accountability," when they can make their own decision to accept Jesus as Savior. A verse commonly used in support of a child's age of accountability is [Matthew 19:14](#), "*Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.'*" Jesus also said in [Matthew 18:3](#), "*I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.*"

The concept of the age of accountability can be verified by events in the Bible as well. King David recognized this when his baby born of Bathsheba died ([2 Sam. 12:23](#)). David responded, "*I will go to him, but he will not return to me.*"

And so, while the Bible doesn't clearly state whether children will be raptured, or that children who die automatically go to Heaven, the Bible does imply that children who have

yet to reach the age of accountability belong to the Kingdom of Heaven. The underlying theme still is the ability to accept Jesus and His salvation, so the line of reasoning is that the mentally disabled and the unborn will also never reach the age of accountability, and so also belong to the Kingdom of Heaven.

## **A Caveat**

While those who die before the age of accountability belong to Heaven, the Rapture is a promise to the Church, and minor children who have not accepted the Lord are not members of the Church. While all the little children are destined for Heaven, they may not be destined for the Rapture and so will have to endure the Tribulation — a horrifying thought!

Should that be the scenario, at the time of the Rapture the wombs will not be emptied nor all the children and mentally disabled be taken away with the Church. But (and it's a big "But"), the Bible does shine some hope upon the families of believers, for the Bible indicates that children who have a believing parent are especially protected.

Verses that support parental protection are like [1 Corinthians 7:14](#) which reads, *"For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy."* [Proverbs 14:26](#) also provides support. *"He who fears the LORD has a secure fortress, and for his children it will be a refuge."*

This concept is substantiated when God saved not just the righteous Noah but also all his household when He destroyed the Earth with water. Likewise, God saved not just the righteous Lot but also his two worldly daughters when He decided to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah ([2 Pet. 2:4-9](#)).

While my salvation cannot be my children's salvation, God may have extended his grace further (as He always does) by covering a believer's child and including them as an honorary member of the Church, and therefore be included in the Rapture.

While the Bible makes it clear there is an age of accountability, and that as a believer my children are protected, the children of the world may not be part of the Rapture. They may

have to grow up some through the Tribulation before they can make a decision on their own. That's hard and painful to think about.

## Trusting God

The answer I give people who ask me "Do children go to Heaven?" never fully satisfies them. Quite frankly, it doesn't satisfy me either. Too much is inferred and not directly stated on this subject.

In the end, though, I have to leave my questioning and doubts behind and trust in who God is. As [1 John 4:16](#) explains about God's love, *"And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him."* God is also inherently righteous in His judgments. As [Romans 1:17](#) proclaims, *"For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith.'"*

And so, I will live by faith, trusting that God loves Zachary more than I can ever love him, and that by His wonderful righteousness my boy will be with me forever and whole in Heaven.