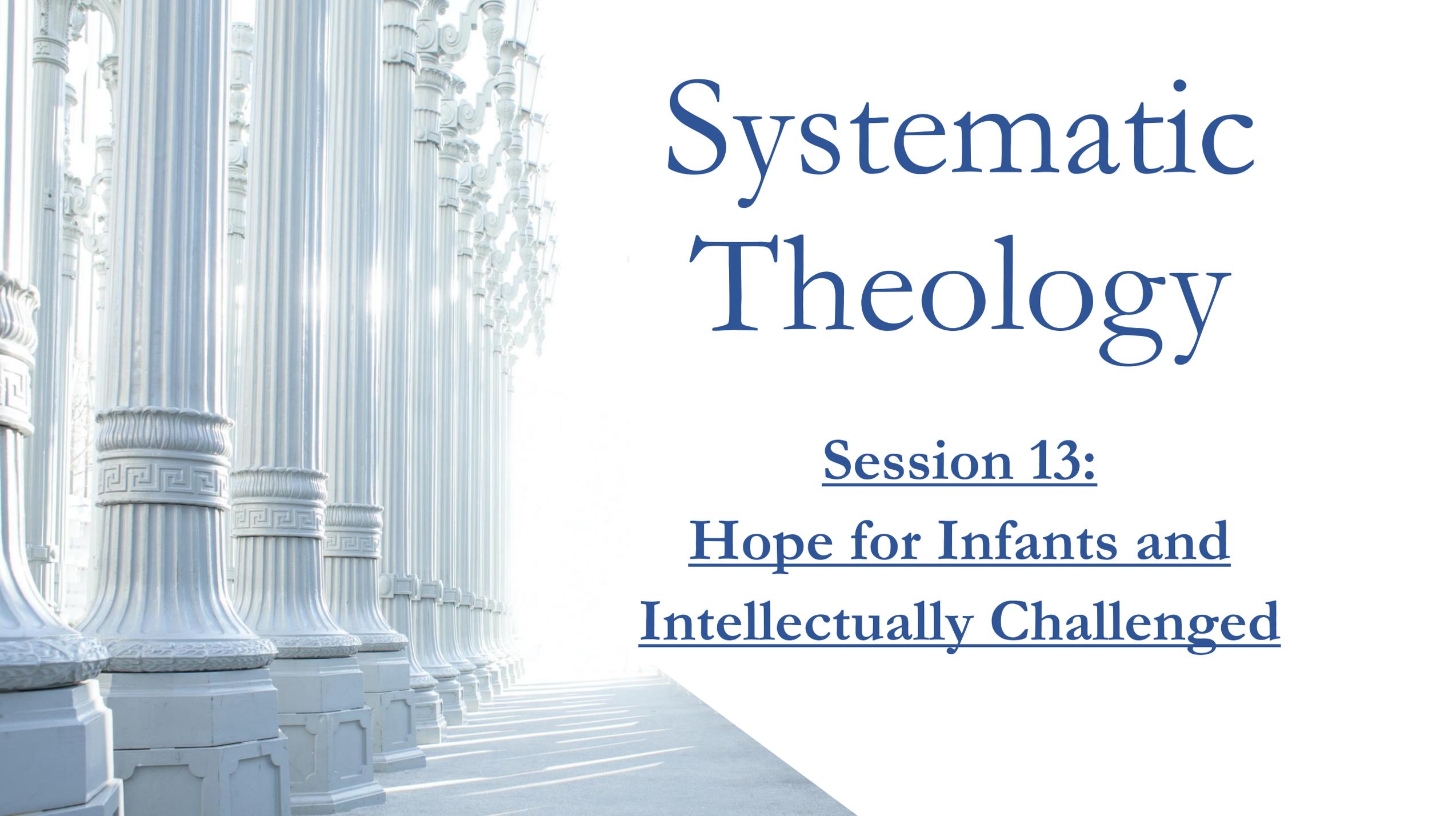




# Systematic Theology

A row of white classical columns receding into the distance under a bright sky. The columns are fluted and have decorative capitals. The perspective is from a low angle, looking down the length of the colonnade.

# Systematic Theology

Session 13:

Hope for Infants and  
Intellectually Challenged



# SINNERS FROM CONCEPTION

- The Bible is abundantly clear that sin is not limited to actions but to our very nature
- This nature is received at conception



# Genesis 5:3

When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.

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# Genesis 8:21

And when the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, the LORD said in his heart, “I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man’s heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done.



# Psalm 51:5

Behold, I was brought forth in  
iniquity, and in sin did my  
mother conceive me.



# Psalm 58:3

The wicked are estranged from  
the womb; they go astray from  
birth, speaking lies.



# Isaiah 48:8

You have never heard, you have never known, from of old your ear has not been opened. For I knew that you would surely deal treacherously, and that from before birth you were called a rebel.



# John 3:6

That which is born of the flesh  
is flesh, and that which is born  
of the Spirit is spirit.



# Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but  
the free gift of God is eternal life  
in Christ Jesus our Lord.



# SINNERS FROM CONCEPTION

- The Bible is abundantly clear that sin is not limited to actions but to our very nature
- This nature is received at conception
- Every human ever conceived has a sin nature and cannot abide with God.
- Infants who survive infancy will inevitably commit sins
- The fact that infants die is also an indication that they are under the curse



# THE NEED OF GRACE

- When we deal with the tragedy of infant mortality, we cannot sidestep the clear teaching of scripture
- Babies, from the moment of conception, need what EVERY human being needs for salvation, the Grace of God.
- The question is does scripture indicate that God provides grace universally to infants?
- When we look carefully at scripture, we find indications that God does provide this grace



# THE KINGDOM BELONGS TO INFANTS

- In the first century, a works based approach to entering the kingdom was common
- Because children could not accomplish good works, they were never considered in discussions of the kingdom
- This was so ingrained in the disciples thinking that they did not want Jesus to be “bothered” with these young children



# THE KINGDOM BELONGS TO INFANTS

- Upon seeing his disciples behavior, Jesus is provoked to anger and rebukes his disciples
- He calls out the disciples for not having the authority to limit who can come to Him
- He explains that the kingdom belongs to those who are like infants and to enter the kingdom one must receive the kingdom as one of these little children
- He then lovingly blesses the children

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# THE KINGDOM BELONGS TO INFANTS

- Jesus explains his strong reaction in anger in what he says to His disciples
- He gives two commands:
  - Let the children come
  - Do not forbid them
- The reason he wants the children to come to Him is because the kingdom already belongs to them!



# THE KINGDOM BELONGS TO INFANTS

- Jesus is enraged at the disciples forbidding of the children to come to Him because their right to the kingdom grants them rights to Jesus
- Jesus also uses them as an example to communicate that entrance to the kingdom and the right to come to Him is **NOT BASED ON WORKS** but solely on the grace of God.



# THE KINGDOM BELONGS TO INFANTS

- So this passage clearly shows us that Jesus considered that the kingdom belonged to babies.
- It teaches that God ordains a special grace for infants whereby he holds them safe until they reach a point where they can be held accountable for their actions



# JUDGMENT BASED ON KNOWLEDGE

- In Romans 1, Paul speaks of the wrath of God being upon humanity because they have knowledge and then suppress that knowledge

# Romans 1:18-21

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.



# JUDGMENT BASED ON KNOWLEDGE

- In Romans 1, Paul speaks of the wrath of God being upon humanity because they have knowledge and then suppress that knowledge
- This knowledge leaves them “without excuse”
- It would seem then that if someone is unable to attain this knowledge, then they would have an “excuse” and would not receive God’s wrath



# JUDGMENT BASED ON KNOWLEDGE

- In Romans 4:15, Paul speaks of a need for a law for their to be transgression and wrath

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## Romans 4:15-16

For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.  
That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,



# JUDGMENT BASED ON KNOWLEDGE

- In Romans 4:15, Paul speaks of a need for a law for their to be transgression and wrath
- Paul cannot be speaking of the Gentiles, otherwise his argument so far in Romans would be undone
- Does anyone exist who lives where there is no law?
- Those incapable of perceiving the law and its offense fit this description.
- If an infant were sent to hell, it would have no awareness of why it is suffering.

# J. I. PACKER



“Scripture sees hell as self-chosen . . . [H]ell appears as God's gesture of respect for human choice. All receive what they actually chose, either to be with God forever, worshipping him, or without God forever, worshipping themselves.”



# OT PASSAGES ON INFANT SALVATION

- Deuteronomy 1:39 shows God withholding judgment on the young in Israel because they have *no knowledge* of good and evil

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# Deuteronomy 1:39

And as for your little ones, who you said would become a prey, and your children, who today have no knowledge of good or evil, they shall go in there.

And to them I will give it, and they shall possess it.



# OT PASSAGES ON INFANT SALVATION

- Deuteronomy 1:39 shows God withholding judgment on the young in Israel because they have *no knowledge* of good and evil
- Jeremiah 19:4 speaks the sacrifice of infants as the killing of “innocents”



## Jeremiah 19:4

Because the people have forsaken me and have profaned this place by making offerings in it to other gods whom neither they nor their fathers nor the kings of Judah have known; and because they have filled this place with the blood of innocents.



# OT PASSAGES ON INFANT SALVATION

- Deuteronomy 1:39 shows God withholding judgment on the young in Israel because they have *no knowledge* of good and evil
- Jeremiah 19:4 speaks the sacrifice of infants as the killing of “innocents”
- In Ezekiel 16:20-21, God speaks of children sacrificed to Molech as “My Children”



## Ezekiel 16:20-21

And you took your sons and your daughters, whom you had borne to me, and these you sacrificed to them to be devoured. Were your whorings so small a matter that you slaughtered *my children* and delivered them up as an offering by fire to them?



# OT PASSAGES ON INFANT SALVATION

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- Jeremiah 19:4 speaks the sacrifice of infants as the killing of “innocents”
- In Ezekiel 16:20-21, God speaks of children sacrificed to Molech as “My Children”
- In 2 Samuel 12:22-23, David finds hope in the loss of His child that he will one day go to His child

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## 2 Samuel 12:21-23

Then his servants said to him, “What is this thing that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child while he was alive; but when the child died, you arose and ate food.” He said, “While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept, for I said, ‘Who knows whether the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?’ But now he is dead. Why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.”

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# OT PASSAGES ON INFANT SALVATION

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- In 2 Samuel 12:22-23, David finds hope in the loss of His child that he will one day go to His child
- In 1 Kings 14, God showed mercy and grace to the newborn child in Jeroboam’s house



# 1 Kings 14:11-13

Anyone belonging to Jeroboam who dies in the city the dogs shall eat, and anyone who dies in the open country the birds of the heavens shall eat, for the LORD has spoken it.” ’ Arise therefore, go to your house. When your feet enter the city, the child shall die. And all Israel shall mourn for him and bury him, for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found something pleasing to the LORD, the God of Israel, in the house of Jeroboam.

A row of classical columns, likely from a government building, receding into the distance. The columns are white with a Greek key pattern on the base. The sky is bright and overcast. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

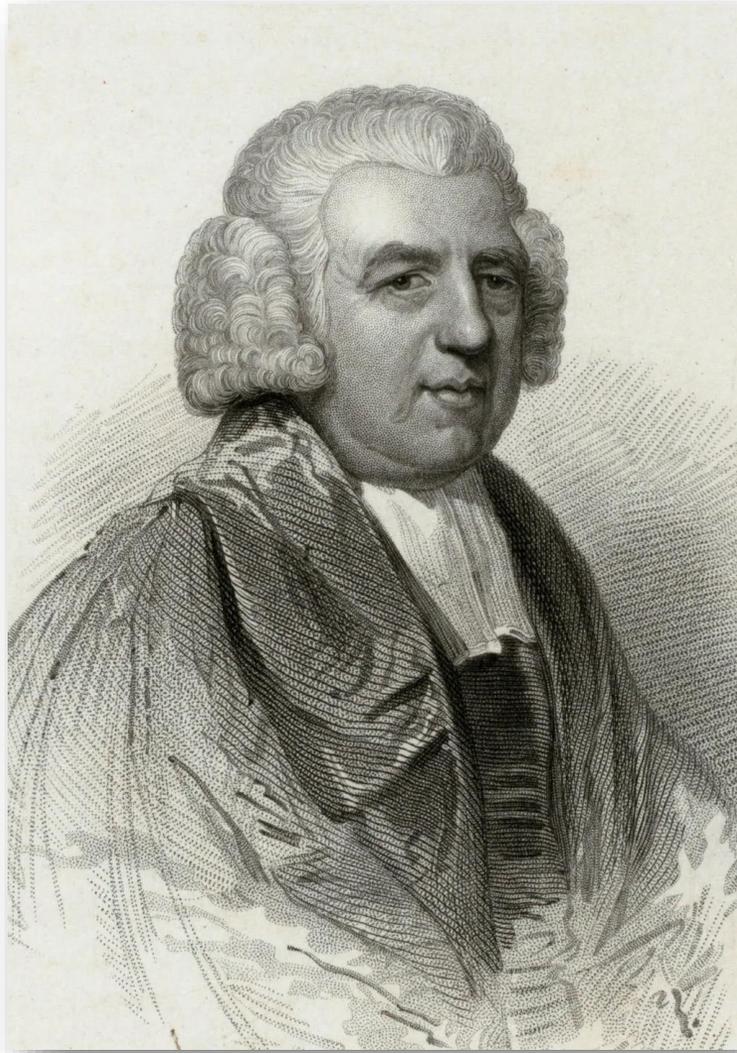
**TRUSTED VOICES ON  
THOSE WHO DIE IN  
INFANCY**

# John Calvin



“Those little children have not yet any understanding to desire His blessing, but when they are presented to Him, he gently and kindly receives them and commends them to the father by the solemn act of blessing. It would be cruel to exclude that age from the grace of redemption. It is an irreligious audacity to drive from Christ’s fold those whom he held in His arms and shut the door on them as strangers when he did not wish to forbid them.”

# John Newton



"I hope you are both well reconciled to the death of your child. I cannot be sorry for the death of infants. How many storms do they escape! Nor can I doubt, in my private judgment, that they are included in the election of grace."

# Charles Hodge



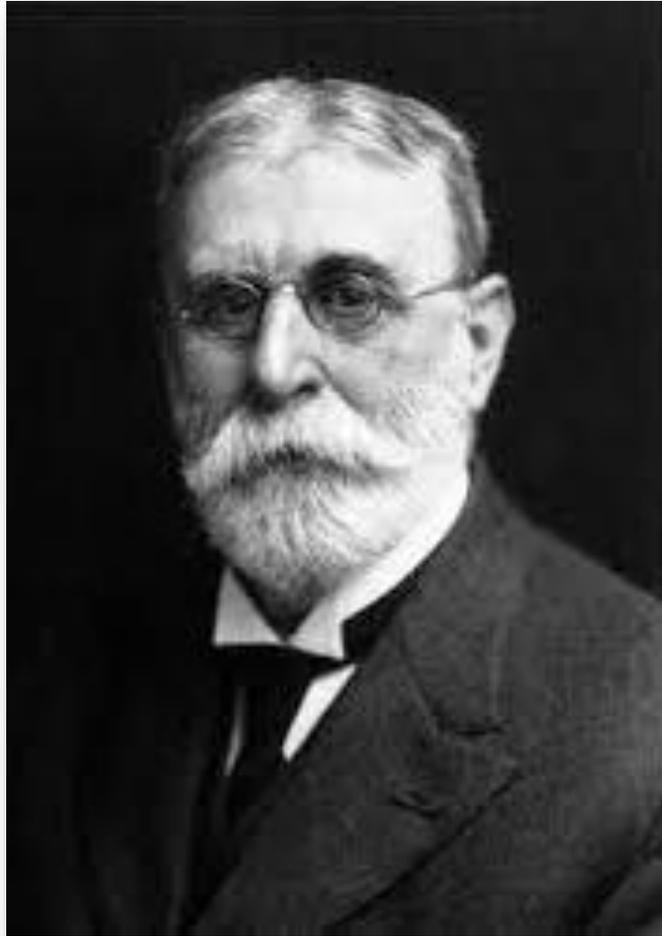
“He tells us of such is the kingdom of heaven as though heaven was, in great measure, composed of the souls of redeemed infants”

# C. H. Spurgeon



"Now, let every mother and father here present know assuredly that it is well with the child, if God hath taken it away from you in its infant days."

# B. B. Warfield



“...it is assuredly God, in His providence, that selects this vast multitude to be participants of His unconditional salvation. This is but to say that they (infants) are unconditionally predestined to salvation from the foundation of the world.”

# R. C. Sproul



“Any time a human being dies before reaching the age of accountability (which varies according to mental capacity), we must look to special provisions of God’s mercy.”

# John Piper



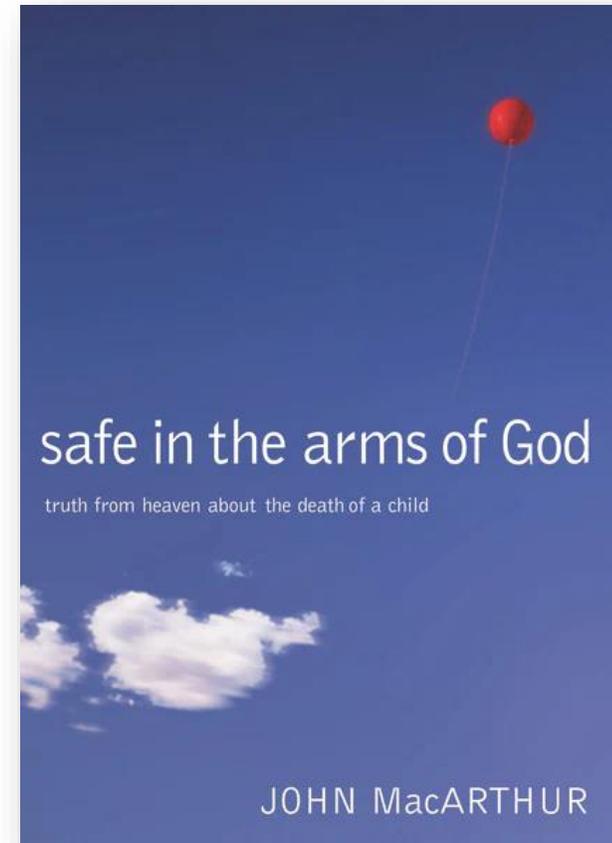
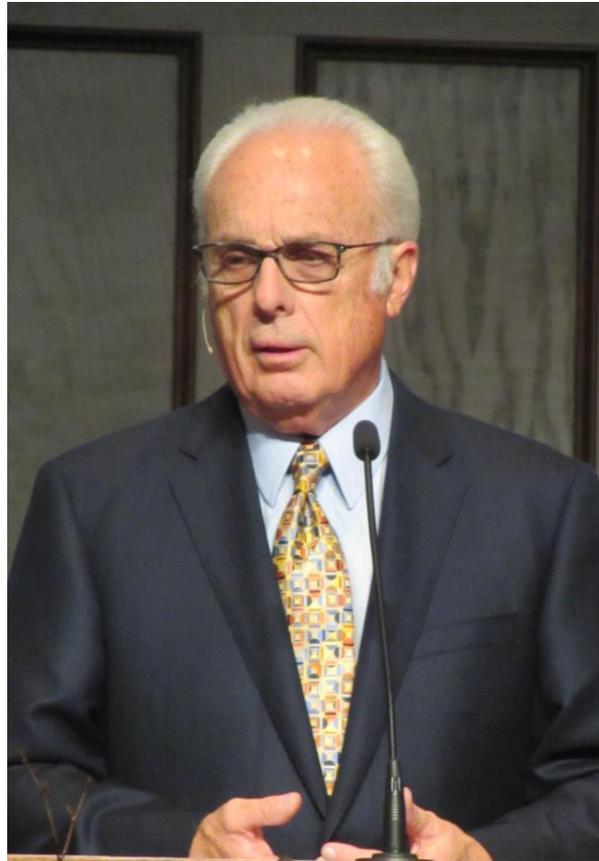
“And God will not condemn them (infants) because he wants to manifest openly and publicly that he does not condemn those who did not have the mental capacities to put their faith in him.”

# Al Mohler and Danny Akin



We believe that our Lord graciously and freely received all those who die in infancy – not on the basis of their innocence or worthiness – but by his grace, made theirs through the atonement He purchased on the cross.”

# John MacArthur



# CONCLUSIONS

- The Bible indicates that God universally saves infants and the intellectually challenged
- They are not saved because they deserve it but they are saved by the grace of God who lovingly receives them
- We too enter the kingdom the same way
  - Not by our works
  - Solely by the grace of God



## Matthew 18:1-4

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, “Truly, I say to you, *unless you turn and become like children*, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.



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- They are not saved because they deserve it but they are saved by the grace of God who lovingly receives them
- We too enter the kingdom the same way
  - Not by our works
  - Solely by the grace of God
- God's grace is unsearchable



# Systematic Theology