

The Sacraments: A Reformed Perspective

Chapter 3: Additional Arguments for Paedobaptism

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The fact that the Bible teaches that there is an essential unity of the covenant of grace is foundational to the doctrine of infant baptism. (There is one method of salvation and one church that exists through both covenantal administrations. Believers are “the seed,” “the children of Abraham,” the “true Israel” [Mt. 3:9; Rom. 4:12-17; Gal. 3:7]. God always intended to bless all nations in Abraham [Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; Gal. 3:8-9]. The New Covenant church is not a new, separate tree but is grafted onto the *one* olive tree.)¹ Covenant theology and paedobaptism are also supported by a number of exegetical and theological arguments. Note the following considerations:

(1) That the promise of the covenant of grace is not only for the generation that receives it, but also their children is explicitly set forth by Peter in Acts 2: “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call” (vs. 38-39). Peter preaching in the New Covenant says plainly that the promises of the New Testament include the children of believers. “The phrase *for you and your children* is an echo of God’s promise to Abraham to be a God to him and his descendants for generations to come (Gen. 17:17).”² J. A. Alexander writes, “The promise was addressed to themselves and to their children, as in the covenants of the Old Testament, an expression favouring the supposition that their children were to be baptized with them, but not necessarily requiring it, as some, though less naturally, understand these words of later generations. But Peter is here dealing with the contemporary race, as represented by his hearers, and would therefore seem to mean by their children those already in existence, and especially those present upon this occasion.”³

The Baptist response to this passage is to argue that the phrase “as many as the Lord our God shall call” indicates that the passage is not concerned with visible church membership or external covenant privilege but rather with the external and internal call of God to sinners where the gospel is preached and hearts are drawn to Christ by the Holy Spirit. Baptist apologist Paul K. Jewett writes, “The paedobaptist ear is so attuned to the Old Testament echo in this text that it

¹ “Well: what about this olive-tree? Was it cut down? No. Was it rooted up? No. Just the contrary is stated. It remains where God planted it. “*Thou*,” says the Apostle, “Thou partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree.” *Branches* may be excluded but the *trunk* remains firmly rooted in its original soil, and able to make new branches out of Gentile grafts. Strip the argument, and you have the naked doctrine, that the visible church stands still in the Abrahamic Covenant. If you say, dear Objector, that the root is not in this soil, but in some other, you cannot get rid of the fact that, in that case, the Jews could not be considered *natural* branches at all any more than Gentiles, which is contrary to the Apostle. Now as the cutting off of branches does not destroy the root, so the excision of the Jews did not destroy the Old Testament Church. And as the ingrafting of new branches presupposes vigorous life in an old trunk, so the establishment of Gentiles in the room of excommunicated Jews, proves the **IDENTITY** of the New Testament *Church of God* with the Old Testament *Congregation of the Lord*, rooted in the Abrahamic Covenant of Circumcision.” (W. R. Gordon, *The Church of God and Her Sacraments* [New York: Board of Publication of the Reformed Church in America, 1870], 34-35).

² Simon J. Kistemaker, *Acts* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 107.

³ J. A. Alexander, *Acts* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, [1857] 1963), 86.

is deaf to its New Testament crescendo. It fails to perceive that the promise is no longer circumscribed by *birth* but by the call of God, by the anointing of his Spirit which secures the *new* birth, according to the covenant as newly administrated in Christ. The children of the New Covenant are those who, having received a new heart and a new spirit (Ezek. 36:26), become children of God (and of Abraham) by faith.”⁴ Another Baptist author David Kingdon concurs. He writes, “What that call involves is plain to see, the inward work of the Spirit who enlightens the mind and renews the heart....Plainly the mention of children in this context provides no warrant whatever for infant baptism.”⁵

The Reformed Baptist interpretation of this passage must be rejected for the following reasons. (a) It completely ignores an important principle of biblical interpretation which is: What did Peter’s statement mean to the original audience? The apostle was not speaking to modern individualistic Americans but to Jews and Jewish proselytes. When they heard the phrase “to you and your children” they would have immediately been reminded of God’s promise to Abraham and all the promises in the Old Testament related to covenant continuity between parents and their children that we discussed earlier. (b) There is no grammatical or exegetical reason to impose baptistic presuppositions on this phrase because of the expression “all who are afar off.” The word *makron* (translated “afar off”) refers to space, not time and simply indicates that the covenant promises will extend to the Gentiles. God is going to save Gentiles and their children as well as Jews. (c) If we accept the Reformed Baptist interpretation that Peter is discussing the need of an internal call, then the mention of covenant children is superfluous. Why would Peter even mention the children of believers? Further, (as noted) would not such an Old Testament covenantal statement be easily misunderstood to a Jewish audience? (d) The Reformed Baptist emphasis on the internal call or work of the Holy Spirit in conversion does not prove radical change in the treatment of covenant children in the New Covenant era for the internal call of the Holy Spirit was necessary in the Old Testament era as well. Although there is a greater effusion of the Spirit in the New Covenant administration, Old Covenant prophecies do speak of the Spirit’s power to transform its participants from within their hearts in the New Covenant era (Jer. 31:33; 32:40; Ezek. 37:14, 23), this fact does not somehow alter or abrogate God’s promises given to the children of believers. Reformed Baptist authors have not demonstrated how such passages exclude covenant children.

(2) The Old-Testament practice of including infants is reflected in the New Testament household baptisms. In Acts 16:15 we read that Lydia “and her household were baptized.” In Acts 16:33 the Philippian jailer “and all his family were baptized.” In 1 Corinthians 1:16 Paul says that he “baptized the household of Stephanas.” The point of these passages is not that we have an explicit reference to infant baptism.⁶ (In two of the passages we do not know the age of

⁴ Paul K. Jewett, *Infant Baptism & The Covenant of Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 122.

⁵ David Kingdon, *Children of Abraham: A Reformed Baptist View of Baptism, the Covenant, and Children* (Cambridge, England: Carey Publications, 1973), 89.

⁶ J. A. Alexander’s comments on the use of the household passages is helpful. He writes, “*Her household*, lit. *house*, supposed by some to mean her family, by others her assistants in her business. Both being mere conjectures, and entirely compatible with one another, there is nothing in the text to decide the controverted question, whether children were baptized on this occasion. Both parties reason in a circle from foregone conclusions; one contending that as infants are incapable of faith, there either were none, or they were excluded from the ordinance; the other, that as households include children, we have no right to except them from the general statement. *The real strength of the latter argument lies not in any one case, but in the repeated mention of whole houses as baptized....* The whole dispute, however, rests on grounds entirely independent of these cases, and every reader will interpret these according to his views of those. He who believes in the perpetuity of the patriarchal covenant, with a change in the accompanying seal, will need no proof that children were baptized with their parents upon such occasions; whereas,

the children. The context of the passage about the Philippian jailer indicates that his children were probably older because it says he believed “in God with all his household” [Ac. 16:34].) The point is that whole households or families are still included in the covenant. Gordon writes, “*The house* means the FAMILY proper, exclusive of servants; and *family* means CHILDREN, exclusive of parents. Gen. 18:19; Numb. 16:27, 32; Ruth 4:12. This use of the term is transferred from the Old to the New Testament. ‘Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their *children* and (even) their own *houses* (families) well.’ 1 Tim. 3:12. ‘I will that the younger women marry, bear *children*, guide the house,’ or *family*. 1 Tim. 5:14. These passages interpret the meaning of others which speak of ‘houses’ in connection with the administration of Baptism, Acts 16:15, 34; 1 Cor. 16:15; showing to every candid mind that young children are *chiefly* meant whenever a family is spoken of.”⁷

Murray writes, “There is ...the representative principle [regarding covenant households] which is imbedded in the Scripture and is woven into the warp and woof of the administration of grace in the world. When we appreciate this we can understand how readily the apostles would apply the principle in the dispensing of the ordinances of grace. Household baptism would be a perfectly natural application. And this would inevitably involve the baptism of infants comprised in the household whenever and wherever there were such.”⁸

(3) In 1 Corinthians 7:14 Paul, writing under divine inspiration, teaches that the children of even one believing parent are *holy*. He writes, “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.” When Paul gives the reason why a believing husband or wife must not put away an unbelieving spouse he argues that the unbelieving husband or wife is sanctified or set apart in some special way because they are married to a believer. He arrives at this position by appealing to the fact that the children of such unions are not unclean, that is, they are not to be regarded as little heathen but as holy. The word “holy” (*agioi*) in this context does not entail subjective holiness. It does not mean they are regenerated or rendered morally pure, but that they are consecrated or set apart. “Any child, the circumstances of whose birth secured it a place within the pale of the theocracy, or commonwealth of Israel, was, according to the constant use of Scripture, said to be holy. In none of these cases does the word express any subjective or inward change.”⁹ Therefore, “The children of these mixed marriages are universally recognized as holy, that is, as belonging to the church.”¹⁰ The children of even one believing spouse are born within the pale of the church. Hodge writes,

The principle in question, however, was not a new one, to be then first determined by Christian usage. It was, at least, as old as the Jewish economy; and familiar wherever Jewish laws and the facts of the Jewish history, were known. Paul circumcised Timothy, whose father was a Greek, while his mother was a Jewess, because he knew his countrymen regarded circumcision in such cases as obligatory, Acts 16, 1-3. The apostle constantly assumes that his readers were familiar with the principles and facts of the Old Testament economy...The child of a Jewish parent had a right to circumcision, and to all the privileges of the theocracy. So the child of a Christian parent has a right to baptism and to all the privileges of the church, so long

he whose very definition of the ordinance excludes children, will of course deny their actual reception of it in all given cases” (*Acts*, 2:113, emphasis added).

⁷ W. R. Gordon, 53.

⁸ John Murray, *Christian Baptism*, 69.

⁹ Charles Hodge, *1 & 2 Corinthians* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, [1857, 59] 1959), 116.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

as he is represented by his parent; that is, until he arrives at the period of life when he is entitled and bound to act for himself. Then his relation to the church depends upon his own act. The church is the same in all ages. And it is most instructive to observe how the writers of the New Testament quietly take for granted that the great principles which underlie the old dispensation, are still in force under the new. The children of Jews were treated as Jews; and the children of Christians, Paul assumes as a thing no one would dispute, are to be treated as Christians.¹¹

The great objection to the use of this passage for infant baptism is that the same reasoning could be used to argue for the church membership and baptism of the adult believer. Are not both the unbelieving spouse and the children said to be sanctified or set apart in some manner? While there is no question that both are said to be sanctified, there are other biblical considerations that are brought to bear in the case of the adult unbeliever that does not apply to infants. Even though heathen spouses are set apart in such a manner that the marriage must be maintained, the word of God requires a credible profession of faith before any adult can be baptized and join the church. Such is not the case for infants of such unions. “Thus, from the divine appointment of the *family relation*, from the *position of children under former dispensations*, and from the distinct *Scripture statements*, we conclude that the children of church members fulfill the first condition prerequisite to baptism: they have *membership* as a birthright in the *visible Church*.”¹²

(4) The New Testament completely supports the Old Testament teaching that God does not merely deal with people as individuals but also as families. Peter says that Noah and his entire family—“eight souls, were saved through water” (1 Pet. 3:20). The apostle even refers to this experience as a type of baptism (v. 21). We have already considered Acts 2:38-39 where the covenant promises of the Old Testament (e.g., Gen. 17:7; Dt. 29:10-13) are explicitly carried over into the new covenant era and the household baptisms (Ac. 16:15, 33, 34; 1 Cor. 1:16).

God has always treated families as covenantal societies, as an organic unity. In the Bible the household includes everyone who is part of the covenantal family unit. This point is true both positively and negatively. In Genesis 7:1 Noah enters the ark with everyone in his household. God saved Noah and his whole family. In Genesis 12:17 Jehovah plagued Pharaoh and his house. When God saved Abraham and set him apart his whole household received the sign and seal of the covenant of grace (cf. Gen. 17:12-13, 23, 27; Rom. 4:11). In Genesis 19:16 God saved Lot and his household from the destruction of Sodom. When God was displeased with Abimelech He closed fast all the wombs in his household (Gen. 20:17-18). In Exodus 12 God ordered the Israelites to kill the Passover lamb “according to your families” (v. 21); and, to spread the sacrificial blood on the lintel and two doorposts of *each house* (v. 22). Each family was ordered to stay in the house until morning (v. 22). Thus, God “struck the Egyptians and delivered our households” (v. 27). God saved the whole congregation of Israel (i.e., whole families) from their bondage in Egypt (Ex. 14, 21, 22, 29, 30). Paul says that all Israel was “baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (1 Cor. 10:2). In the book of Joshua, Achan as well as his whole house was destroyed because of his sin (7:20-21, 24-26). In Joshua 24:15, we

¹¹ Ibid, 116-117.

¹² Erskine N. White, *Why Infants are Baptized*, 44. “Paul teaches that the sanctification of the believing partner extends to the unbeliever. He reinforces this by citing the position of the children of the marriage. If the believer’s sanctification extended no further than himself, his children would be *unclean*. The word is used of ceremonial uncleanness, ‘that which may not be brought into contact with the divinity’ (AG). This is an unthinkable position. Clearly Paul regards *now are they holy* as an axiom. Until he is old enough to take the responsibility upon himself, the child of a believing parent is to be regarded as Christian. The parent’s ‘holiness’ extends to the child.” (Leon Morris, *1 Corinthians* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958], 110).

read that Joshua spoke for his entire household when he said “As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” In 2 Samuel 12:10 we read how David brought judgment upon his whole house because of his adultery and murder. We have already noted that covenant headship is built into the fabric of God’s holy law (Ex. 20:5-6; Dt. 4:9; 6:7; 7:9; Ps. 78:4-6; 103:17-18).

Jesus and the apostles continued the covenantal concept of the family. When Christ fed the multitudes, families were counted by covenant heads. “Now those who ate were four thousand men besides woman and children” (Mt. 15:38). When the apostles preached the gospel they specifically addressed the men—the covenant heads: “men of Judea” (Ac. 2:14), “men of Israel” (Ac. 2:22). His command to these heads of households was “Repent...be baptized.... the promise is to you and your children” (Ac. 2:39). When Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus he presupposed the covenant status of children when he included them among the saints (Eph. 1:1; 6:1). If the children of believers were not given covenant status in the new covenant era as paedobaptism teaches then: a) It would have been a radical departure from thousands of years of divine command and church practice; and, b) One could reasonably expect to find warrant for this radical change in the New Testament. Not only is there no evidence of a radical change but the status of covenant households and children remains the same.

(5) The synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) all record Jesus’ specific teaching on the relationship of little children and babies of believers to God’s kingdom. When the apostles rebuked parents for bringing their children and babies to Christ to receive a blessing, our Lord rebuked the disciples. The account in Mark reads: “And they were bringing to him children, that he might touch them, and the disciples were rebuking those bringing them, and Jesus having seen, was much displeased, and he said to them, ‘Suffer the children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the reign of God’” (10:13-14, Young’s Literal Translation of the Bible). Mark and Matthew have *paidia* (little children) while Luke has *brephe* which refers to infants or babies (cf. Lk. 18:15).¹³ Covenant parents were bringing their little children and babies to the Savior so that He would bless them. “The disciples’ attempt to turn the children aside because they were unimportant is one more instance of a persistent tendency to think in wholly human, fallen categories which Jesus had rebuked on earlier occasions (chs. 8:33; 9:33-37). The kingdom of God belongs to children and to others like them who are of no apparent importance because God has willed to give it to them. That is why these children are given access to Jesus...”¹⁴ Our Lord uses this occasion to set forth these children as examples to the adults. “‘Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.’ And He took them up in His arms, put His hands on them, and blessed them.” (Mk. 10:15-16).

Baptists respond to this section of Scripture with two common responses: first, they like to point out that parents are to bring their children to Jesus not the baptismal font; and second, they argue that children are chosen only in a figurative or metaphorical sense to serve as examples for adults (e.g., child-like humility, etc.). To these objections we respond with the following considerations. First, if the children and infants of believers are not truly members of God’s kingdom in some sense, then they could not be examples for adults. It would be absurd

¹³ Henry Barclay Swete writes, “*Paidion*, though used of a child twelve years old (v. 39, 42), could be applied to an infant eight days old (Gen. xvii. 12 [LXX]) or at the breast (4 Macc. iv. 25), or the child who is learning his first lessons at his mother’s knee (2 Tim. iii 15). Those who were brought to Jesus were doubtless of various ages, from the infant in arms to the elder children still under the mother’s care” (*Commentary on Mark* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, [1913] 1977], 219-220).

¹⁴ William L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 360.

and deceitful for Christ to frame an example of something that was not really true. Murray writes, “To suppose that our Lord was not speaking directly of the little children and affirming their membership in the kingdom of God would do plain violence to the actual facts of the situation. It was with little children the disciples were concerned, it was with little children Jesus was concerned, the disciples to forbid them and Jesus to receive them. Little children were in the focus of attention and interest, and it is therefore of the little children themselves that Jesus proceeds to speak.”¹⁵ Second, although it is true that one cannot find an explicit reference to baptism in any of the accounts that is not the point asserted by paedobaptists anyway. The relevant point is that the Son of God Himself regards the infants of church members to be members of His kingdom. Such is not the case with the heathen. Most Baptists have a vague understanding of this point and thus present their infants before the pastor of their church to be dedicated unto Christ. Presbyterians have their infants baptized not because baptism makes them a member of the kingdom but because they already are. They are entitled to the covenant sign of the kingdom of grace. “And it ought to be observed that Christ came not into the world to curtail privileges of his church, but to enlarge them.”¹⁶

The Biblical Connection between Circumcision and Baptism

One of the chief arguments against infant baptism is that there is a major difference or at least enough of a difference between these two ordinances to warrant a new and different practice (i.e., believer baptism) in the new covenant era. The basic argument of Reformed Baptists is that circumcision had an earthly, Jewish, national aspect that does not carry over into the new covenant era because these aspects ceased with the ceremonial law and Israel’s special covenant status as a nation.

Before we analyze the Reformed Baptist argument, let us first consider the essential unity of meaning between these two ordinances.

(1) Both ordinances point to regeneration or new birth. “And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live” (Dt. 30:6; cf. 10:16; Is. 52:1; Jer. 4:4; 9:26). “When you brought in foreigners uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh...” (Ezek. 44:7; cf. v. 9). “You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart...” (Ac. 7:51). An uncircumcised heart is a heart still enslaved to the filth and pollution of the flesh. “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.... unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (Jn. 3:3, 5-6). “For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit” (Rom. 2:28-29).

(2) As an aspect of regeneration both ordinances represent the internal purification of the sinner and the washing away of sins. In Isaiah 52:1 the uncircumcised are equated with the unclean. “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols” (Ezek. 36:25). “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (Jn. 3:5). “Arise and be baptized, and wash away

¹⁵ John Murray, *Christian Baptism*, 63.

¹⁶ John Brown, *The Systematic Theology of John Brown of Haddington* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2002), 538.

your sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Ac. 22:16). “According to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit” (Tit. 3:5).

Both ordinances point to our union with Christ and our death to sin. “You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart... You always resist the Holy Spirit” (Ac. 7:51). “Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead...even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:3-4; cf. vs. 5-18). “In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands...” (Col. 2:11). “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27).

(4) Both ordinances point to the new spiritual life received in regeneration. “In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses” (Col. 2:11-13). Jewett writes, “The use of the aorist passive throughout the passage...makes it evident that to experience the circumcision of Christ, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, is the same thing as being buried and raised with him in baptism through faith. If this be true, the only conclusion we can reach is that the two signs, as outward rites, symbolize the same inner reality in Paul’s thinking. Thus circumcision may fairly be said to be the Old Testament counterpart of Christian baptism. So far the Reformed argument, in our judgment, is biblical. In this sense ‘baptism,’ to quote the *Heidelberg Catechism*, ‘occupies the place of circumcision in the New Testament.’”¹⁷

(5) Both ordinances point to justification by faith. “And he [Abraham] received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe” (Rom. 4:11). “In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism” (Col. 2:11-12; cf. vs. 13-14).

(6) Both ordinances are initiatory rites that indicate membership in the visible church. “And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant” (Gen, 17:14; cf. vs. 9-13). “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt. 28:19). “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized” (Ac. 2:38). “When they believed...both men and women were baptized” (Ac. 8:12). “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph. 4:4-5).

(7) Both ordinances point to an inward reality “He is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart” (Rom. 2:29). “We are the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit” (Phil. 3:3). “In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism” (Col. 2:11-12). “The people of God have been circumcised with a circumcision made without hands. This involves the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh through the circumcision of Christ. And this is the same as being buried with him in baptism and raised with him through the faith of the operation of God. Nothing could be clearer than this identification of circumcision with baptism.”¹⁸

¹⁷ Paul K. Jewett, *Infant Baptism & the Covenant of Grace*, 89.

¹⁸ Herman Hanko, *The Reformed Doctrine of Infant Baptism*, 41.

(8) Both ordinances point to repentance or change of mind. “Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskin of your hearts, you men of Judah” (Jer. 4:4; cf. 9:25; Lev. 26:41b). “Repent, and...be baptized” (Ac. 2:38).

(9) Both ordinances were required for adult converts to the true faith; both pointed to a new beginning and separation from the world. “And when a stranger [i.e., a non Jew] dwells with you and wants to keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as a native of the land. For no uncircumcised person shall eat it” (Ex. 12:48). “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.... And immediately he and all his family were baptized” (Ac. 16:31, 33). ““See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?’ Then Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ And he answered and said, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’ So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him” (Ac. 8:36-38; cf. Rom. 6:3-22; 2 Cor. 6:14-18).

The Bible is crystal clear in its teaching that new covenant baptism is the counterpart and replacement for old covenant circumcision. “[U]nder the Old Testament, infants were circumcised as well as adults. Baptism occupies the place of circumcision in the New Testament, and has the same use that circumcision had in the Old Testament. Therefore infants are to be baptized as well as adults.”¹⁹ Reformed Baptists who believe in covenant theology accept the idea enumerated above, that there is a correspondence between the meaning of circumcision and baptism with regard to regeneration and all its facets as well as justification and the forgiveness of sins. Reformed Baptists, however, argue that there are some significant differences between the two ordinances that warrant the rejection of infant baptism in the new covenant era. We will now turn our attention to these arguments in order to prove they are mistaken.

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¹⁹ Zacharias Ursinus, *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, [1852] n. d.), 367.