

The Subject of Baptism (4th)

(We have studied the Greek words for baptism and their connection with the rite of water baptism in the New Testament. Today we will look at some of the other basic passages which the Protestants use to support the baptism of infants of believing parents.)

We want to remind you that our purpose is not to provide a detailed study of this subject; that is, the candidates for baptism. We are simply looking at the foundational arguments and verses used to support the differing views. While we differ from the protestants, it is not our intent to belittle them but to give instruction as to why we as Baptists cannot follow their practices. Our purpose is to support and instruct Baptists and not to tear down others, but the arguments of others must be considered since they are given as being opposite to our beliefs.

There are verses used by the protestants where they believe infant baptism is inferred where the Greek words for baptism are not included.

In an earlier study, we found that in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, it is stated that “the infants of one, or both, believing parents, are to be baptized.” For support of this statement, the following passages are referenced: Gen. 17:7, 9 with Gal. 3:9, 14; Col. 2:11-12; Acts 2:38-39; Rom. 4:11-12; I Cor. 7:14; Mt. 28:19; Mk. 10:13-16; Lk. 18:15.

We see that the protestants begin with Genesis 17 when the Lord made a covenant with Abraham regarding his seed and the land of Canaan. Let us remember, as Adoniram Judson said, “It does not follow that children are connected with their parents in every covenant because they were connected with their parents in one covenant.” *Christian Baptism*, p. 41. He further stated, “The whole strength of the argument now presented rests in the supposition that the covenant of grace, in which Christians now stand, is the same with the covenant of circumcision, in which children were connected with their parents.” *Ibid*. It is clear that Judson knew the arguments for infant baptism because he was a Congregationalist minister prior to becoming a Baptist. Also, we need to keep in mind that the new covenant clearly identifies that everyone in it is a child of God. Hebrews 8:10-13 makes this clear: “For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old *is* ready to vanish away.” Notice that God said regarding everyone in the new covenant: “I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” Those in the new covenant “know the Lord: for all shall know” Him “from the least to the greatest.” This is not what the Scriptures declare regarding children born into the world. Our Lord said that “that which is born of the flesh is flesh,” Jn. 3:6. Even Job said, “Who can bring a clean *thing* out of an unclean? not one,” Job 14:4. Believing parents cannot produce believing children. They can only produce unclean children of the flesh. Therefore, such cannot be in the new covenant. And since the protestant confession links Gen. 17:7, 9 with Gal. 3:9, 14, where it is stated that those “which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham,” and “the promise of the Spirit” is equally received “through faith.”

Next they give Col. 2:11-12 to support their belief of infants of one or more believing parent to be in the covenant and a candidate for baptism. The passage reads, “In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” As you can see, infants are not

mentioned in the two verses. As we saw in a previous study, the reformers assume that baptism took the place of circumcision. They assume in this passage that somehow the circumcision mentioned here has reference to children and, therefore, such are to be buried with Christ in baptism. Of this passage, the Baptist, B. H. Carroll said, “that in being united to Christ they received the real, or spiritual circumcision, and their baptism was in a figure both a burial and a resurrection with Christ. In other words, the antitype of circumcision in regeneration, and baptism symbolizes Christ’s burial and resurrection and pledges our own.” *An Interpretation of the English Bible*, 6 Volumes, “Colossians, Ephesians, and Hebrews,” Vol. 6, p. 50. There is nothing in this passage to support that infants or small children of anyone are subjects for baptism. It has to be read into the Scriptures with a preconceived idea. For such assumptions allow me to quote from Robert Shaw’s *The Reformed Faith: An Exposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith*, pp. 287ff.

Our Confession affirms, that “the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptised.” This might be confirmed by numerous arguments; but only a few of them can be here stated with the utmost brevity. 1. The infants of believing parents are to be considered as within the covenant, and therefore entitled to receive its seal. The covenant which God made with Abraham was substantially the same with that under which believers now are. This appears by comparing Gen. xvii. 7, where the covenant made with Abraham is expressed, with Heb. viii. 10, where the new covenant is expressed. In the one, the promise is: “I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee; and in the other: “I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. [Note: the author failed to quote that their sins and iniquity would not be charged against any included in this covenant. Obviously, all infants that are baptized are not saved. JKB The author continues.] We thus find, that when God established his covenant with Abraham, he embraced his infant seed in that covenant; and that the promise made to Abraham and to his seed is still endorsed to us [Even the land of Canaan? JKB] is evident from the express declaration of the Apostle Peter (Acts ii. 39): “The promise is unto you, and to your children.” If children are included in the covenant, we conclude that they have a right to baptism, the seal of the covenant. 2. Infants were the subjects of circumcision under the Old Testament dispensation; and as baptism under the New Testament has come in the room of circumcision [Another assumption, and of course females were not circumcised. JKB], we conclude that infants have a right to baptism under the present dispensation. That, under the Old Testament, the infants of God’s professing people were to be circumcised, cannot be doubted; for the command is express: “Every man-child among you shall be circumcised.”—Gen. xvii. 10. That baptism has now come in the room of circumcision is evident from Col. ii. 11, where it is called “the circumcision of Christ.” It must therefore follow, either that the privileges of the Church are now greatly abridged, or else that the children of the members of the Church now are to be admitted to baptism, as they were to circumcision under the former dispensation. 3. That the children of professing Christians are members of the visible Church, and therefore entitled to baptism, appears from the words of our Saviour (Luke xviii. 16): “Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God.” By “the kingdom of God,” we apprehend is to be here understood the Church on earth; and if children are members of the visible Church, it cannot be denied that they have a right to baptism, the sign of admission. [If children are members then they have a right to the Lord’s Supper as well, but that is not given to children/infants. JKB] But if by “the kingdom of God” be understood the state of glory, the inference is strong that, being heirs of eternal life, they ought not to be denied that ordinance which is the seal of their title to it. 4. The warrantableness of infant

baptism may lie inferred from the commission of the apostles to baptise “all nations,” which certainly includes infants; and from the practice of the apostles, who baptised “households,” upon a profession of faith by their domestic heads. Paul baptised Lydia “and her household,” the Philippian jailer “and all his,” and “the household of Stephanas.”—Acts xvi. 15, 33; 1 Cor. i. 16. “Now, though we are not certain that there were young children in any of these families, it is highly probable there were. [We have studied these passages previously and shown the author is only assuming what is not stated in the Scriptures and that only conscious believers were baptized in such households. JKB] At any rate, the great principle of family baptism, of receiving all the younger members of households on the faith of their domestic head seems to be plainly and decisively established. [Really? JKB] This furnishes ground on which the advocate of infant baptism may stand with unwavering confidence.” (Quote from Miller on Infant Baptism. From footnote in book.) 5. That the infants of believing parents ought to be baptised; and that it is sufficient if one of the parents be a member of the visible Church, is evident from 1 Cor. vii. 14: “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.”

From this selection of Shaw’s, we see that the arguments are based on what is affirmed, assumed, appears, apprehended, inferred, and, finally, concluded from quoting passages or partial passages out of context to support his case. However, our time is up for our study today. The Lord willing, we will take up here in our next podcast.