

Genesis 17:4-7, Acts 2:37-39

Sec 4. “Not only those that do actually profess faith in & obedience unto Christ, but also the infants of one, or both, believing parents, are to be baptized.”

A. Before looking at some Scriptures to support the practice of infant baptism, it is essential that we first look at the attribute of God’s immutability.

1. **Mal 3:6: “For I, the Lord, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.”**

2. That is what immutability means. God does not change.

3. There was never a time when God was not “infinite, eternal, & unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness & truth” (WSC 4).

B. God’s immutability should be considered when looking at His covenant made in the OT & how that compares to the NT.

1. In **Gen 17:7**, God promised Abraham, **“I will establish My covenant between Me & you & your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you & to your descendants after you.”**

2. Imagine you a Jew hearing this promise all your life to adulthood & then you hear Peter’s Pentecost preaching (**Acts 2**), this charge would have a beautiful & very familiar ring to it: **“Repent, & each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; & you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you & your children & for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself” (vv38-39).**

a. You could say, “Our God does not change; He still keeps His covenant between believers and their descendants after them as he told Abraham.”

b. This is the key basis for infant baptism.

1) The covenant sign of circumcision was given to a child at 8 days of age. A baby body could not give assent or agreement to accept that. Because of his circumcision & the family he was born into, he was raised as Jew. He wasn’t allowed to come of age & to evaluate the Hebrew Scriptures & decide whether or not he wanted to become a Jew & then take the sign for himself.

2) The covenant sign of baptism should be given to our infants. The baby can not give assent or agreement to accept that. Because of his or her baptism & the family he or she is born into, the child is to be raised as Christian. We don’t wait for the child to come of age & to evaluate the Holy Scriptures & decide whether or not he or she wants to become a Christian & then receive the sacrament of baptism.

3) In both cases, a circumcised baby & a baptized Christian infant who grows up & rejects the faith of his or her parents will be considered a covenant breaker.

c. If believer baptism was the case of the NT, a converted Jew would have been astonished, saying, “Has God changed? Is it no longer true when God promised Abraham to establish His covenant between believers & their descendants after them?”

C. Sec 4 says “ ...the infants of one, or both, believing parents, are to be baptized.”

1. This is an important truth given that divorce is so prevalent in our society. What do you do if you have one believing parent wanting a child baptized yet the other is an unbeliever?
2. This following verse is given in the context of such a mixed marriage. →Turn to 1 Cor 7:12-14

D. Sec 6 gives us some of the way we are to understand how God brings about salvation in a covenant child that is baptized as an infant: “The efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered; yet, notwithstanding, by the right use of this ordinance, the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited, & conferred, by the Holy Ghost, to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God's own will, in His appointed time.”

1. We would love it if our children could say, “I can’t remember a day when didn’t know & believe in the Lord. I believed in Jesus Christ & His gospel of for as long as I can remember.” We know that this is not the case of some covenant youth.
2. Some baptized infants grow up to reject the faith of their parents for many years yet later come to Christ after some difficult crisis. Their “baptism [was] not tied to that moment of time wherein it [was] administered.”
 - a. Jesus said: **“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water & the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God... The wind blows where it wishes & you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from & where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit” (Jn 3:5, v8).**
 - b. We would love to spare our covenant youth years of sorrow, sin, & unbelief yet His timing to bring salvation is “according to the counsel of God's own will, in his appointed time.”

E. Sec 7 tell us that “The sacrament of baptism is but once to be administered unto any person.”

1. Shortly after we purchased our house, we met a young man named David who was in his younger 20s. He had been baptized 3 times already. That was just over 11 years ago. I would not be surprised if he was baptized a 4th time.
2. Some see being baptized again a way to recommit one’s self to God after coming out of a period of apostacy.
 - a. In the OPC, if someone left the faith & returns, we have them give a public re-affirmation or testimony of their faith.
 - b. He or she should not be baptized again.
3. The repeating of baptism can be because of the error of various groups:
 - a. The modalism of the Oneness Pentecostals
 - b. The exclusive baptism of the Church of Christ.¹

F. Remember that salvation is found in the work of Christ alone through faith alone. Baptism point to the perfect work of Christ.

¹ This is covered in my previous message on this chapter. It is titled, “A Proper Baptism.”
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