



1

Responding to 1 Cor. 7:14

- Objection: Paedobaptists are inconsistent in their understanding and/or application of this passage because both the children and the unbelieving (adult) spouse are said to be holy/made holy by the believing spouse. And yet, paedobaptists do not consider the unbelieving spouse to be in the covenant, (rightly) refusing them baptism on account of their unbelief.
- Reformed Baptist Interpretation #1
- Reformed Baptist Interpretation #2
- Reformed Baptist Interpretation # 3

2

Responding to 1 Cor. 7:14

- On interpretation #3, the spouse/child comparison is one from **analogy**, not **causation**: in the same way that the children of the Corinthians should not be put away as bastard children from a principle of legitimate parenthood regardless of their unbelief (which could cause one to wonder if they are legitimate children under the Christian arrangement), so too an unbelieving spouse should not be put away by the believing spouse from a principle of legitimate spousal union (which given that the other is not “in the Lord”—1 Cor. 7:39—could otherwise cause one to wonder if they are in a legitimate spousal-union under the Christian arrangement).

3

John Dagg (mid 1800's)

“[Paul] examines the particular case of intercourse between married persons, and decides that a believer and unbeliever may lawfully dwell together... He maintains that the intercourse of a married pair with each other and that of parents with their children, must be regulated by the same rule. An unconverted husband or wife stands on the same footing with unconverted children. If intercourse with the former is lawful, intercourse with the latter is equally lawful. In this manner he shows that this Judaizing doctrine, if applied in its full extent, would sever the ties that bind parents to their children, and throw out the offspring of Christian parents into the ungodly world from their very birth, without any provision for their protection, support or religious education. By showing that this monstrous consequence legitimately follows from the doctrine, he has furnished an argument against it which is perfectly conclusive.”

4

Does Baptism Replace Circumcision?

- Rom. 4-11-12
 - Objection #1: The passage quite literally says that Abraham received the sign of circumcision “as a seal of the righteous he had by faith while he was still circumcised.”
 - Objection #2: It is difficult to understand how baptism as a distinct, Christian act is a “seal” of God’s promise to bless belief with justification when such a designation fails distinguish children in Christian homes from children in pagan homes—both have the same conditional promises of the Gospel extended to them.

5

Does Baptism Replace Circumcision?

- Objection #3: The most egregious paedobaptistic error here is to suggest that the passage is describing the general nature of circumcision for everyone who would receive it. Instead, the passage is clearly discussing *the relationship between circumcision and Abraham*—a man who stood at a unique place in redemptive history as father of both the circumcised and the uncircumcised.
 - As such, his circumcision designated something that circumcision could not possibly designate for any of his descendants: namely, that he was to be the father of all those who believed, Jews and Gentiles, circumcised and uncircumcised, not because of anything distinctively Jewish, but because of the faith he had *before he was circumcised* (4:12).

6

Does Baptism Replace Circumcision?

- Col. 2:11-12
 - Premise 1: Circumcision signified spiritual circumcision of the heart.
 - Premise 2: Baptism now signifies spiritual circumcision of the heart.
 - Conclusion: Because circumcision and baptism signify the same thing—spiritual circumcision of the heart—it stands to reason that baptism has now replaced circumcision and can be understood as identical in function and symbolic significance.

7

Does Baptism Replace Circumcision?

- A Parody Argument
 - Premise 1: My sister's "purity ring" signified her marital status.
 - Premise 2: My sister's wedding ring now signifies her marital status.
 - Conclusion: Because purity rings and wedding rings both signify the same thing—marital status—it stands to reason that her wedding ring has now replaced her "purity ring" and can be understood as identical in function and symbolic significance.

8

Does Baptism Replace Circumcision?

- Objection #1: Just like a “purity” ring and a wedding ring, the argument in Col. 2:11-12, at the very most shows an overlap between circumcision and baptism, not an identical function or significance. Baptists are as happy to admit an overlap in significance between circumcision and baptism as they are to admit the overlap between the sacrificial system and the Lord’s Supper. The Lord’s Supper, however, in no meaningful way replaced the sacrificial system. Similarly, overlap of circumcision and baptism does not equate to identity of function/significance.
- Objection #2: The passage draws a parallel between circumcision made *without hands*—a spiritual circumcision—and water baptism, not *physical circumcision* and water baptism. Baptists can easily accommodate the suggestion that circumcision of the heart (cf. Deut. 10:16; Jer. 4:4) is part of the fulfillment of circumcision (with the other part being the person and work of Christ, the Seed of promise)

9

Does Baptism Replace Circumcision?

- Objection #3: The passage explicitly clarifies that those who are baptized in light of this circumcision made *without hands* are raised through faith in God. Thus, the passage actually argues for believers’-only baptism and against paedobaptism given that paedobaptism (obviously) does not involve the faith of the recipient at all.
- Difficult Questions to Answers if Baptism Replaces Circumcision

10

Concluding Postscript

- What about infants at the covenant meal?
- What about the “halfway covenant?”
- The fundamental distinction between Reformed paedobaptists, Reformed Baptists and Dispensationalists can legitimately be boiled down to differences in understanding the fulfillment of promises and typology across the covenant and the resulting continuities/discontinuities.