

VARIOUS SCRIPTURES ON BAPTISM (PART 3 – PAEDOBAPTISM)

*"To baptize infants apart from faith threatens the theological foundations of evangelicalism."*¹

— Paul K. Jewett

Paedobaptism unwittingly introduces confusion into several areas of theology.

A. Theology Proper

1. **Attributing to God a role in baptism, the weight of which belongs to men**, 1Pet. 3:18-22

B. Hermeneutics

1. **Missing, in practice, the clear meaning of the word *baptism***, Matt. 3:16; Rom. 6:3-4

*"Dipping of the person into the water, is not necessary: but, baptism is rightly administered, by pouring, or sprinkling water upon the person."*²

— The Westminster Confession of Faith (A.D. 1646), 28.3

*"There were times when too many people were baptized to permit immersion. Acts 2:41 tells us that 3,000 people were baptized on one day in Jerusalem. It is hardly possible that in such a dry climate the Jews would allow Christians to use and to pollute the amount of water necessary for so many baptismal immersions."*³ — Chad Van Dixhoorn

2. **Finding unwarranted connections for New Testament baptism in the Old Testament**, Gen. 1-3 (creation); Gen. 7-8 (the flood); Ex. 13-14 (the Red Sea crossing)

*"A greater underlying theme...unites all of these passages and practices—the broader theme of new creation, which comes about through water and Spirit. This thesis is substantiated by moving forward to survey the creation, the flood, the exodus Red Sea crossing, the prophetic witness, the baptism of Jesus, and key Pauline texts. In so doing, the unifying theme of baptism as new creation emerges quite clearly."*⁴ — J. V. Fesko

3. **Changing the meaning of baptism to accommodate for infants**

"Baptism is a sacrament of the new testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized, into the visible church; but also to be unto him a sign, and seal of the covenant of grace, of his engrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of

¹ Paul K. Jewett, *Infant Baptism & the Covenant of Grace* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978), 162.

² Chad Van Dixhoorn, *Confessing the Faith: A Reader's Guide to the Westminster Confession of Faith* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2014), 368.

³ *Ibid.*, 371.

⁴ J. V. Fesko, *Word, Water, and Spirit: A Reformed Perspective on Baptism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2010), 204. Further examples of such unwarranted and even, at times, bizarre connections of biblical themes can be seen in Timothy Brindle's hip hop album and accompanying book both titled, *The Unfolding*.

life. Which sacrament is, by Christ's own appointment, to be continued in his church until the end of the world."⁵ – *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (A.D. 1646), 28.1

"As both Presbyterian and Reformed Baptist confessions affirm, baptism is a sign to 'the party baptized' of his 'ingrafting into Christ.'"⁶ – Joel R. Beeke

4. Vacillating on the application of First Corinthians 7:14

C. Eschatology

1. **Eschewing the differences between circumcision and baptism**, Gen. 17:10-25; Matt. 28:19-20

"The position of infant baptism can be summarized most concisely in just five words: baptism is what circumcision was. In other words, baptism has the same meaning and the same function in the New Testament Church as circumcision did in the Old Testament Israel."⁷ – Matt Waymeyer

2. **Diminishing the newness of the new covenant**⁸, Jer. 31:31-34

"[Jeremiah 31:31-34] indicates that life under the New Covenant will be different from life under the Old Covenant in precisely the way in which paedobaptists say it will be the same."⁹
– Matt Waymeyer

3. **Leaning heavily on a tenuous connection between circumcision and baptism not found in Scripture**, Rom. 4:11; Col. 2:11-12

"The New Testament never explicitly connects Christian baptism to God's covenant."¹⁰
– Joel R. Beeke

"Although circumcision is the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant, it is not clear from Scripture that baptism is indeed the sign of the New Covenant. Because the Bible does not use the word 'sign' in connection with the New Covenant, it is difficult to be dogmatic on this point, but the biblical data seems to support the conclusion that the Lord's Supper is the sign of the New Covenant, not baptism... As that which signifies the New Covenant and proclaims the death of Christ, the Lord's Supper appears to be the sign of the New Covenant. In

⁵ Chad Van Dixhoorn, *Confessing the Faith: A Reader's Guide to the Westminster Confession of Faith* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2014), 365.

⁶ Joel R. Beeke and Paul M. Smalley, *Reformed Systematic Theology, Volume 4: Church and Last Things* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2024), 216.

⁷ Matt Waymeyer, *A Biblical Critique of Infant Baptism* (The Woodlands, TX: Kress Christian Publications, 2008), 47.

⁸ See "Appendix: The Newness of the New Covenant" in Waymeyer, *A Biblical Critique of Infant Baptism*. On this very point, contrary to the prophet Jeremiah's insistence that there will be no need to evangelize members of the new covenant, one paedobaptist teacher insists (rightly) that parents must evangelize the already-baptized children; Patrick Hines, "Baptism, Faith, & Households" at <https://www.sermonaudio.com/sermons/127211839276931> (accessed November 21, 2025).

⁹ Waymeyer, *A Biblical Critique of Infant Baptism*, 112.

¹⁰ Beeke and Smalley, *Reformed Systematic Theology*, 523.

contrast, baptism is never explicitly connected to the New Covenant in the way that the Lord's Supper is."¹¹ — Matt Waymeyer

D. Ecclesiology

1. **Making members of the church indistinguishable from unbelievers**, Acts 2:37-47; 1Cor. 5:9-13

*"All those who have already been taught and made disciples of Christ through the profession of the truth ought immediately to be baptized, so that they may be ascribed as members of Christ's household."*¹² — William Ames

2. **Granting one ordinance (baptism) while withholding another (the Lord's Supper)**, 1Cor. 1:13-17; 11:17-34

*"Simply being a rightful recipient of one sacrament does not necessarily imply the rightful partaking of all sacraments."*¹³ — Joel R. Beeke

*"They keep back 'covenant children' from the covenant meal because I Corinthians 11:28 says, 'Let a man examine himself and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.' But why should not 'examine and eat' admit of the same exception as 'believe and be baptized'?... Since they do baptize infants who are incapable of faith, the plain New Testament requirement that one should confess his faith before he gets baptized does not apply to infants. Since they do not communicate infants, the plain New Testament requirement that one should examine himself before he takes communion does apply to them."*¹⁴

— Paul K. Jewett

3. **Cumbering the practice of church discipline**, 1Cor. 5:9-13

E. Soteriology

1. **Opening wide the door for confusion regarding the efficacy of baptism**, Mk. 16:16

*"[Baptism] worketh forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives everlasting salvation to all who believe, as the Word and promise of God declare."*¹⁵

— Luther's Small Catechism (A. D. 1529)

2. **Confusing the doctrine of election**, Acts 2:38; 1Pet. 3:21

*"We baptize our children in this bath because it would not be right to rob them of the fellowship or God's people [and]...because they are such as one should suppose may be elect of God."*¹⁶ — First Helvic (or Second Basle) Confession (A. D. 1536)

¹¹ Matt Waymeyer, *A Biblical Critique of Infant Baptism* (The Woodlands, TX: Kress Christian Publications, 2008), 55.

¹² Quoted in Beeke and Smalley, *Reformed Systematic Theology*, 522.

¹³ Beeke and Smalley, *Reformed Systematic Theology*, 534.

¹⁴ Jewett, *Infant Baptism & the Covenant of Grace*, 162.

¹⁵ Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom, Volume III*, fourth edition (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1877), 85.

¹⁶ Quoted in Jewett, *Infant Baptism & the Covenant of Grace*, 156.

"The Christian knows that his sins are forgiven and that he has received the Spirit; in the New Testament baptism is always linked with this knowledge.¹⁷ Apostolic baptism is a sacrament of eschatological realization. He who is baptized is one who has received the good news, acknowledged Christ as Lord, and begun the Christian life. To baptize one as a sign of things hoped for (and only hoped for) is to make it a sacrament of anticipation, whereas in the New Testament it is always the sacrament of fulfillment."¹⁸ — Paul K. Jewett

3. Circumventing the decisiveness of a choice to follow Jesus, Acts 2:38; 1Pet. 3:21



¹⁷ Though Jewett's larger point is valid, to say that New Testament baptism is *always* linked with this knowledge is an overstatement, since during the unique transition period of redemptive history recorded in Acts, some disciples do have an underdeveloped understanding of baptism who only know of John's baptism. The converts in Ephesus are especially noteworthy in this regard, having received the baptism of John but were still unaware that the Holy Spirit had been given subsequent to their repentance (Acts 19:1-7).

¹⁸ Jewett, *Infant Baptism & the Covenant of Grace*, 158.