

- o We have seen how the Baptist view of covenant theology does greater justice to the Bible's teaching than the model of the paedobaptists which depends heavily on supposed "good and necessary inference."
- Here, we will show in greater detail how the definition of the covenant and its presentation in Scripture refutes infant baptism in favour of the baptism of disciples alone.

### **I. The New Covenant defined.**

1. The first mention of the term "New Covenant" is found in Mt. 26:28 (also Lk. 22:20). The NC was established by Christ who laid down His life as Mediator for His people.
  - This simply means that our Lord came to establish the covenant prophesied in Jer. 31:31-34, the longest OT passage quoted in the NT (Heb 8:8-12; 10:16-17).
  - : According to 2 Tim. 1:9-10, the NC of our Lord is the final and purest earthly fulfillment of the eternal plan and purpose of God's grace. Theologically, the historical NC is the fulfillment of the eternal Covenant of Redemption.
  - The NC is also the prophetic fulfillment of the historical "covenants of promise."
  - : It fulfills the promise of Gen. 3:15 concerning a seed of the woman who would destroy the seed of the serpent.
  - : It fulfills the promises to Abraham and David that a seed would come, in which all included in it would have the faith of Abraham their father, whether Jew or Gentile (Rom. 4:16; Gal. 3:7, 14, 26, 29).
  - : It is a fulfillment of the Sinai Covenant, which was added temporarily to the Abrahamic Covenant "because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made" (Gal. 3:19).
  - : It is established by the headship of the Mediator who took on the conditions of the failed Covenant of Works and provided the atoning sacrifice needed to establish His NC with His prophesied seed (Rom 5:12-19). No one can be in the Covenant of Works and in the NC of Jesus Christ at the same time.
  
2. The NC is a divine covenant sovereignly established by God. It is a unilateral covenant that contains no conditions required by man to ratify or to break it, nor are there curses upon those in the covenant who refuse to keep any conditions.
  - The Lord is the Head of the NC who fulfilled the conditions of obedience in the Covenant of Works by His righteous life and endured the curse of that Covenant of Works by His atoning death on behalf of all members of the NC (Rom. 3:26; 5:12-19).
  - : The NC is not like the Sinai Covenant in that it is unbreakable because God supplies the circumcised heart in every member by which they will keep it (Dt. 10:16 cf. Dt. 30:6; Ezek 36:26; Jer. 32:40; Joel 2:28).
  - : God sovereignly writes the law upon the heart of every covenant member of the NC (Heb 8:10). By definition, *every* heart in the NC is circumcised by God (Jer. 32:40; Rom. 2:29; Phil. 3:3; Col. 2:11-12). That is why repentance and faith are required as evidence of NC membership and heart circumcision before every baptism (Acts 2:38-41).
  
3. The NC is a "new" covenant (Greek, "kainae"). Those who try to establish an exaggerated unity and continuity between the covenants as a basis for infant baptism do not emphasize this stated newness enough (Mt. 26:28).
  - The Sinai Covenant was a conditional covenant requiring obedience from the people (Dt. 5:33) To define the NC as a conditional arrangement of blessings and cursings for obedience or disobedience imposes a Sinaitic arrangement upon the NC. Likewise, to ignore the giving of a new heart to each and every member causes the New to remain like the Old. The Hebrew word "hadash" in Jer. 31:31 is used elsewhere to mean brand new, not "renewed" or "fresh," as claimed by some paedobaptists (e.g. Ex. 1:8; Dt. 22:8; etc.).
  
- = The NC is a prophecy fulfilled and instituted by Jesus Christ at His coming to raise up a new people of God. It is a better covenant, replacing the previous historical covenants of promise.

### **II. The New Covenant blessings "realized."**

1. According to Jeremiah 31:31-34, there are three major blessings or elements of the NC with the new Israel and Judah: (i) God will put His laws into their minds and write them upon their

hearts; (ii) They will all know the Lord from the least to the greatest of them; (iii) Their sins and their lawless deeds He will remember no more.

- Classical dispensationalists take Israel and Judah literally, so that they are driven to believe that the NC is meant for the Jewish nation in the NT. They concede to Gentiles the forgiveness of sins but rarely mention, if at all, the law written on the heart for them. This has led to their doctrines of the carnal Christian and the non-Lordship salvation. The NT church is regarded as a parenthesis in God's plan.
- Covenantal commentators agree that the church universal, of Jew and Gentile elect, is the typological fulfillment of Israel and Judah in this passage (Heb.8:8-12; Rom. 2:29; Phil. 3:3; Gal. 6:16).

2. Paedobaptists hold to the view that some people, viz. unregenerate covenant children, may be members of the NC yet not actually have an effectual mediator nor have the reality of the blessings of the covenant. They describe the blessings of the NC as potential in salvation history or awaiting future fulfilment in the members.

- Jeremiah 31:31-34 says that God *actually* will write His law upon the minds and hearts of Israel and Judah; He *actually* will remember their sins no more; and all will *actually* know the Lord by experience.

= The paedobaptists does violence to the text of Scripture which defines the NC as realized blessings in the hearts of every member of the NC.

### III. The New Covenant members.

1. Who is a member of the NC administration? They are those disciples of Christ who have the law written on their heart by the Holy Spirit, who know God experientially, and who possess the forgiveness of sins (Heb. 8:8-12). Christian baptism is a credobaptism; a baptism for disciples alone (Acts 2:38-41).

- The paedobaptist position that all physical infants of believers are in the NC does violence to the doctrine of particular redemption. No one can be in the NC without the effectual mediatorial sacrifice that establishes the covenant with every member (Mt. 1:21; Lk. 22:20; Mk. 14:24).

2. The promised blessing to Abraham and his children comes through his literal seed, who is Christ (Gal. 3:16). The children of Abraham are all those who have the same faith as him, viz. those who trust in Jesus Christ for salvation (Gal. 3:7, 9, 14, 29).

- Paedobaptists are wrong in transferring the promised blessing of Abraham and his seed to believers and their seed in the NC. Under the NC, Abraham has no organic grandchildren, only children - of his same faith.
- Paedobaptists who hold that baptism is the counterpart of circumcision are faced with the problem of Gal. 3:27, where all who were baptised into Christ have clothed themselves with Christ.

= Baptism must be applied only to the disciples who repent and confess faith as evidence that they are trusting in Jesus Christ's effectual atonement.

### IV. Paedobaptist objections refuted.

1. Paedobaptists wrongly appeal to certain NT passages to support the inclusion of possibly unregenerate infants in the NC who are entitled to its sign of baptism.

- Heb. 6:4-8; 10:29; Jn. 15:2, 6 warned individuals against apostasy in light of their profession of faith, not in light of their infant membership in the NC.

- Rom. 11 has been appealed to to support the idea that the visible church may consist of believers and non-believers, and therefore the possibility of including "covenant children." But Rom. 11:11-24 specifically deals with the issue of unbelieving Jews being broken off, and Gentiles being grafted in because of their faith (Acts 13:47-48). Faith, not ethnic origin, is the prerequisite of being engrafted into the root in the NC era, whether Jew or Gentile.

= The NC does not contain a blessing and curse formula like the Sinai Covenant, nor does it include organic relations (i.e. covenant members' children) as members. The final, clearer revelation of the NC positively institutes the signs of the covenant, baptism and the Lord's supper, for believers (2 Cor.1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30). Baptism is for disciples alone.