

- o Paedobaptists often claim that Jesus included the children of believers in the Covenant of Grace. The argument is that children are admitted into the kingdom of God, therefore they are entitled to baptism. Baptists, and many paedobaptists, disagree.
 - Other paedobaptists follow John Murray, claiming that Christian baptism is based on the Great Commission of Matt. 28:18-20, which is a continuation of the Abrahamic Covenant, and must not be linked to the baptisms of John and Jesus, in which disciples alone were baptised. John Murray is inconsistent when he argues for infant baptism by good and necessary inference from the OT circumcision, but denies the relation of John's and Jesus's baptisms to Christian baptism.

1. Matthew 18:1-10 (and Mk. 9:33-37; Lk. 9:46-48).

- o The disciples had come to Jesus with the question, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Christ used the example of a child to confront their pride.
 - In v. 2, the "paidion" (little child) responded to Jesus's call in the participle "proskalesamenos" (having called to Himself). This is the same verb used in Acts 2:39, in which the reception of God's promise is through repentance and faith by God's effectual calling. This means that the child was not an infant and was capable of responding to Jesus's call to Himself.
 - In v. 3, the word "otrepho" (converted, to turn or change) is a requirement for entrance into the kingdom of heaven, and is similar to the teaching on the new birth in John 3.
 - In v. 4, the child shows humble submission to the Lord, indicating that he was old enough to understand and obey. This was the lesson intended by the Lord for His disciples.
 - In v. 6, the clause "whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin" show that this child was a believer.

= This passage, and the parallel ones, do not support infant baptism.

2. Lk. 18:15-17 (and Mt. 19:13-15; Mk. 10:13-16).

- o Paedobaptists like to point out that, in v. 15, infants ("brephe") were brought to Jesus.
 - In vv. 16 & 17, however, the word used refers to little children ("paidia").
 - The parallel passages use the word for "little children" ("paidia").
 - In 2 Tim. 3:15, Paul reminded Timothy that he had known the Scriptures from a "brephous" (a babe), i.e. from infancy. The word "brephe" can refer to a child old enough to learn the Scriptures.
 - Neither Jesus nor the disciples baptised these children even though they had a perfect opportunity to do so. Instead, Jesus only blessed them (Mt. 19:13, 15).
 - Paedobaptists sometimes explain that infant baptism carries only the meaning of infant blessing or infant dedication. Actually, infant baptism implies much more than infant dedication. It means they are in the Covenant of Grace, and are to be treated as believers until proven otherwise in their later lives. Furthermore, it gives the children so baptised a false sense of security and withholds from them the responsibility to obey the Lord's command to all men: to repent and be baptised.

3. The connection between John's and Jesus's baptisms.

- o It is not possible to separate John's baptism from Jesus's baptism.
 - John baptised professing believers alone, upon condition of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Mt. 3:6; Mk. 1:4).
 - Jesus baptised only those who were made disciples, not infants (Jn. 4:1-2).
 - There is no mention, or evidence for, infant baptism of the children of those who were made disciples in either John's or Jesus's baptisms. We do not question the possibility of infants being regenerate from the womb, as in the cases of John the Baptist and Jeremiah (Lk. 1:15; Jer 1:5). Those are exceptional cases, and cannot be used to argue for infant baptism.
- o Another question is this: Who baptised Jesus's disciples into Christian baptism?
 - It could not have been Jesus (Jn. 4:1-2). Apparently it was John and/or other disciples. John baptised at least Andrew and another disciple (Jn. 1:35, 40), yet there is no record of their rebaptism by other disciples at Pentecost. Contrary to John Murray's position, the baptism of Jesus's disciples by John or by each other before Pentecost was accepted as their Christian baptism.

- Apollos was a baptised follower of John (Acts 18:24-28). There is no record of his rebaptism after Pentecost. Similarly, there is no record of the 120 men and women praying in the upper room being rebaptised at Pentecost. They must have been baptised by John or the twelve, and were not required to be rebaptised (Acts 1:15 cf. 2:41).
- The only place we have a possible rebaptism of John's disciples is in Acts 19:1-7. Calvin comments that this rebaptism was not necessarily by water but was rather Christ's baptism with the Holy Spirit. He points out that Paul's laying on of hands is mentioned but there is no mention of water in the passage. A more natural understanding of the passage is that these disciples did not have the complete message of John about Jesus and the Holy Spirit. In other words, they were sincere seekers, but had not come to true faith in Christ. They therefore received water baptism on profession of faith. This passage cannot be used to separate John's baptism from Christian baptism.

4. Jesus's baptism and Christian baptism.

- o Mark 1:1 describes "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ" as occurring with the coming of John in v. 2. Since the subjects of John's and Jesus's baptisms were of disciples alone, Christian baptism as well must apply to disciples alone.
 - In the Great Commission (Mt. 28:18-20), Jesus gives the command to make disciples, to baptise them, and to teach them all He had commanded them. There is no mention of the baptism of the infants of those who have become disciples.
 - Every use of the word "disciple" in the NT refers to a self-aware, willful follower of a teacher. Furthermore, in Mt. 16:16-19, 24-26, Jesus proclaimed that He would build the church based on confession of faith, exemplified by Peter's confession. This supports the contention that the intended subjects of baptism in His church were professing disciples alone.
 - Some paedobaptists claim that Christ was giving the Great Commission in a missionary situation where the first generation of believers were baptised. But this ignores the fact that Christ instituted baptism and practised it Himself (through His disciples, Jn. 4:1-2) long before the Great Commission. He clearly baptised only those made disciples, not including their infant children. Surely, the baptism of the Great Commission must be that of disciples only as well.
 - In Acts, a common designation for the church is "the disciples," showing that the membership was made up of baptised believers (e.g. Acts 11:26). The church visible is an assembly of baptised disciples, not disciples and their children.

- = John's, Jesus's, and Christian baptisms are not to be artificially separated. There is no sure evidence that the subjects of baptism after Pentecost were any different than the subjects before, viz. confessing disciples alone.

- = Baptism is a sacrament (or holy ordinance) instituted by Christ for the outward sign of admission into His confessional church. The baptism of disciples alone is clearly taught, while infant baptism is dubiously inferred from an application of the Abrahamic Covenant. Shouldn't we do what is clearly taught?

