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**Title:** Baptism and Lord's Supper in the PCA

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### **Introduction**

- Well, I'd like to take some time today to talk about our church's teaching on baptism - partly because we did talk about our philosophy of children's ministry already...so they do tie together
- But also, I wanted to teach on this because we have our membership vows coming up at our Dec 11 Preview Service and in that we'll have Asha's baptism
  - So I think its important for us all here to understand why we practice that - and I know from talking to many of you - you certainly have questions about baptism and I wanted to try and answer that here
    - \* I'll start with my own journey with baptism
- I grew up in the Church of South India (CSI) and I was there but I can't remember, but my parents do - but I was baptized as an infant in that church
- And I came to faith later in high school and a lot of my discipleship was in more non-denominational church settings
  - And the emphasis there was - hey you should be baptized AFTER you come to faith as a proclamation of your faith
    - \* And the basis was by showing that in the New Testament the only baptisms you see are of adults that come to faith and then are baptized - you see NO explicit mention of any infant being baptized in the New Testament
      - And here's the thing - that's actually true
  - And on top of that, I heard part of what led to infant baptism being introduced into the church was the fear from the Catholic Church that children that died without baptism would go to hell - so that's how that happened
    - \* And so, honestly, it felt like a slam dunk case to me - definitely baptism should be AFTER you profess faith in Christ
- So actually, Marilyn and I both got baptized as adults and shared our testimony afterwards - and so we're extra holy because we've had an infant and adult baptism!
- OK, BUT THEN, I ended joining Staff at my previous church CFC which was a Presbyterian church in its theology
  - And we had our first daughter Joy and I was wrestling because I didn't feel like we should baptize her and I told that to my senior pastor at the time
  - And he was like well, you probably should baptize her if you're a pastor at this church - but he didn't force me but asked me to read and listen to R.C. Sproul on the topic - and I had listened to him before on other topics and really respected him
    - \* And listening to Sproul's message really helped me understand the position of infant baptism for the first time - I wasn't like 100% though, but I felt like OK, well I think I can baptize Joy out of submission to my position at the church
  - But over time as I grew in my theology as a pastor in the PCA - I grew more and more convinced of this being the Biblical position and I'm glad to teach it and advocate for it

- BUT, I share all that to say - as I teach on this topic...know that I have a TON of respect and understanding and compassion for people who will conclude differently - because that's my own story
  - But I pray you hear with an open heart and mind still
- Outline
  - 1. Covenant Community
  - 2. Covenant Signs
  - 3. Spectrum of views
  - 4. Support for the Protestant Covenantal View
  - 5. Practical issues for Joy of All Nations

### **1. Covenant Community**

- The first place that I think is helpful to start with is this idea of a “covenant community”
  - Another way to say it is - the Church...we are a covenant community - because we are in a covenant relationship with God through Christ
    - \* A covenant is an agreement by two parties - in Scripture it seen by this phrase over and over again - “I will be your God, and you will be my people”
  - ***Revelation 21:3 “And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.”***
  - And yet this idea of God having a covenant people like this was throughout the Old Testament
    - \* ***Exodus 6:7 - 7 I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.***
- Now in that Old Testament that covenant people was known as the Israelite people
- In the New Testament - we call covenant people the Church of Jesus Christ
- Here's the next question - how did God define who belonged to His covenant people in both the Old and New Testament? - We see God ordained covenant signs to be given to mark off His people

### **2. Covenant Signs**

- The Old Testament had 2 covenant signs - circumcision and the Passover
- 1. Old Testament
  - 1. Circumcision
    - \* Circumcision was given as a sign to Abraham
    - \* ***Genesis 17:7, 10 - 7 And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you...10 This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised.***
      - So an important context to realize is - Genesis 12 and 15 we are told that Abraham believed God and was counted righteous before God

- So Abraham had real faith in God - and the sign of circumcision came on him as a seal and confirmation of his faith
- BUT, God also said - your children and all the people of your household are also my covenant people - so give the sign of circumcision to your male children
  - So 8 day year old males received the sign - even though they didn't have faith yet...but it represented the faith outwardly which they were meant to have inwardly later in their life
- 2. Passover
  - \* **Exodus 12:24, 27 - 24 You shall observe this rite as a statute for you and for your sons forever. ... 27 you shall say, 'It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.'**” *And the people bowed their heads and worshiped.*
    - Another major covenant rite was the Passover Meal - a meal which involved the sacrifice of a Lamb reminding them that the angel of death had passed over their homes because of the blood on their doorposts and they were delivered from slavery in Egypt
      - And while circumcision was once only (thank God for that), Passover was meant to be a yearly meal of eating and celebrating - and the idea is circumcision represents entrance into covenant, Passover represents covenant renewal
- 2. New Testament
  - 1. Baptism
    - \* **Matthew 28:19 - Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,**
      - We see that Jesus calls for making disciples from all nations and the new covenant sign to enter them IN was NOT circumcise them, but replaced with water baptism - for males and females - and not just a mark for Jews...but for people from any ethnic group that wanted to come to Christ
        - So analogous to circumcision - baptism represents entrance into covenant community and its meant to be once only
  - 2. Lord's Supper
    - \* **Luke 22:7 - 7 Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed...19 And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." 20 In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.**
      - So Jesus on the Passover celebrated the meal with his disciples the night before his crucifixion - and interesting there's no mention of a Lamb at this meal - and I think its because Christ is that Lamb. But they do have other elements of the meal - the bread and wine - and Jesus specifically calls for this to be a regular remembrance of his Body and Blood - and he calls it a NEW COVENANT

- So replacing the old covenant pattern of the Passover...is the Lord's Supper
  - And so analogous to Passover its a meal for covenant people for their spiritual feeding and nourishment
  - You can say baptism represents birth in the Christian life and Lord's Supper represents growth in the Christian life
- OK, so there is agreement between Christians OF ALL denominations basically that this is true - there's a covenant community and covenant signs in the Old and New Testament
  - But where is the disagreement then? - It really comes down to mainly - who are the NT signs of Baptism and Lord's Supper for and also what do they mean?

### **3. Spectrum of views**

- Let me share now a spectrum of views on Baptism and the Lord's Supper - the two New Testament Covenantal signs
  - 1. Orthodox
    - \* Baptism AND Lord's Supper - for believers and children
  - 2. Catholic
    - \* Baptism - believers and children
    - \* Lord's Supper - believers. Children confirmed around age 6-7 usually.
  - 3. Protestant - Covenantal and Reformed
    - \* Baptism - believers and children
    - \* Lord's Supper - believers. Children come whenever parents and Elders discern the child has faith. Can be young.
  - 4. Protestant - Baptist
    - \* Baptism - believers only, not for children
    - \* Lord's Supper - believers only. Similar where children come when child has faith.
- Now I also talked about the MEANING of baptism and Lord's Supper for each
  - I won't go through all of it - but a misunderstanding people make about PCA people is - well, you must believe that baptism for children equates to salvation
    - \* And the reason is that Orthodox and Catholics believe baptism for the adult and child is the way a person is regeneration...born again
  - In the PCA - we don't believe that
    - \* We would say when an adult believer is baptized who has faith - the outward sign points to an inward reality
    - \* But for a child baptized who has no faith - the outward sign points to our HOPED FOR inward reality
      - Forgiveness of sins and new birth that the water signifies WILL HAPPEN for this child when they have their own faith

	Baptism	Baptism meaning	Lord's Supper	Lord's Supper meaning
<b>Orthodox</b>	Believers + Children	Believers + Children - Baptismal regeneration (Baptism makes you born again)	Believers + Children	Transubstantiation (truly becomes the Body and Blood of Christ)
<b>Catholic</b>	Believers + Children	Believers + Children - Baptismal regeneration (Baptism makes you born again)	Believers only	Transubstantiation (truly becomes the Body and Blood of Christ)
<b>Protestant - Covenantal</b>	Believers + Children	Believers - an outward sign applied to those born again  Children - an outward sign applied to those we hope will be born again	Believers only	Spiritual Presence (Christ is spiritually present to nourish through the elements of Bread and Wine)
<b>Protestant - Baptist</b>	Believers only	Believers - an outward sign applied to those born again  Children - should not receive baptism until they are born again	Believers only	Memorial meal to remember Christ's sacrifice

#### **4. Support for the Protestant - Covenantal View**

- **1. Continuity from the Old Testament to New Testament of how God sees His “covenant people”**
  - So, why would Protestants baptize adults and children? - Well the crux of the argument is that we see that while there certainly IS a difference between the Old Covenant and New Covenant - large one being the signs changed - circumcision to baptism and Passover to Lord's Supper
    - \* BUT, we still believe God considers His covenant people to be believers AND their children - just as God did with Israel
  - Compare again how God gives the sign of circumcision to Abraham and his offspring to how God gives the sign of baptism to believers and their offspring as well

- \* ***Genesis 17:7, 10 - 7 And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you...10 This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised.***
- \* ***Acts 2:28-39 - 38 And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”***
  - Peter is using the SAME language as Genesis here...but with the new sign of baptism - the promise is for you and your children
- And so a Baptist who only believes baptism should come AFTER you profess faith in Christ
  - \* Is essentially saying - God not only changed the covenant sign from circumcision to baptism...He ALSO changed that the sign is now ONLY for those who profess faith, not for children anymore
  - \* And one of the main arguments for the covenantal or infant baptist view is - well, that’s a PRETTY big change - if God made clear the change of the sign - wouldn’t he also make clear - also...make sure you ONLY baptize believers, not children?
    - But there’s no verse in the New Testament that says God changed that practice
    - So the assumption for these New Testament followers of Jesus whose faith is BASED on the Old Testament promises and practices - would be...well, this sign must also belong to believers and their children
      - Which is why you see Peter talk the way he does in Acts 2 in his sermon
- **2. Consider the Baptisms in the New Testament**
  - 1. Verses where it seems baptism only follows professed faith (adult baptism)
    - \* ***The unnamed 3,000+ souls in Jerusalem - Acts 2:41 - 41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.***
    - \* ***Unnamed believers of the city of Samaria - Acts 8:12 - 12 But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.***
    - \* ***Simon (the sorcerer) - Acts 8:13 - 13 Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed.***
    - \* ***The unnamed Ethiopian eunuch - Acts 8:27-37 - 38 And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.***
    - \* ***Saul of Tarsus - Acts 9:18 - 18 And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized;***
    - \* ***The unnamed disciples of John in Ephesus- Acts 19:4-5 - 4 And Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who***

*was to come after him, that is, Jesus.” 5 On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*

- 2. Verses where it is possible where the believers and children were baptized
  - \* **Cornelius and unnamed members of his household - Acts 10:30-47 - 47** *“Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.*
  - \* **Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, and the unnamed members of the household - Acts 16:15 - 15** *And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” And she prevailed upon us.*
  - \* **The unnamed Philippian jailer and unnamed members of his household - Acts 16:32-33 - 32** *And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family.*
  - \* **Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and unnamed members of his household - Acts 18:8 - 8** *Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, together with his entire household. And many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized.*
  - \* **Crispus, Gaius, household of Stephanas - 1 Corinthians 1:14-16 - 14** *I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name. 16 (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.)*
- So the Baptist position has this working for them - there is definitely NO explicit verse that says - children or infants were baptized
  - \* And also there are definite verses where someone comes to faith in Christ and IS baptized - but a Baptist and a Presbyterian believe that should happen - we hope that happens in Joy of All Nations - Atheists, Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, Muslims - what a joy it would be to baptize adults from those faith backgrounds
  - \* BUT, the potential problem verses for a Baptist is where households are baptized - and the conclusion there is - well, it must be that those in the household WHO BELIEVED were baptized
    - It could be, but this is the paedobaptist argument...because the pattern in the Old Testament was believers and their children, but also just ancient cultures and even many cultures today in general followed this pattern - if the head of the household comes to faith - then the WHOLE household belongs now to that faith
- **3. Consider the mode of baptism**
  - I don't want to spend a lot of time here, but Baptists would believe the WAY to be baptized is immersion - and the reason for that is the word “baptizo” in Greek literally mostly of the time means “immerse”
  - But most Presbyterians practice water baptism with either sprinkling water or pouring of water over the head

- \* And the reason for that is - because Presbyterians are tying their convictions to baptism to the Old Testament - the ways ritual water cleansing were typically done was with the priest sprinkling water or pouring water to wash - there isn't many Old Testament Scriptures that speak of immersion
- ◉ That being said, in the PCA we aren't against doing immersion, but the typical practice is sprinkling or pouring - my own practice will be pouring
  - \* And I don't know - maybe its the old Baptist side of me that at least wants more water!
- **4. Consider the historical practice of Baptism**
  - ◉ I would just keep this brief, but in the historical church as far as we have records we see infant baptism practiced and the idea of infants not being baptized only came after the Protestant Reformation in the 1600s
    - \* And amongst Protestants there were splits of theology and one was amongst those who held to infant baptism and then Baptists than rejected that
      - And they believed the error of baptizing infants was due to the Roman Catholic Church's erroneous theology and there was a need for a return to the Biblical practice of baptizing adults when the profess faith in Christ
  - ◉ And I think the argument of the Protestant who kept infant baptism was this
    - \* Yes we did have significant difference in theology with Roman Catholics and we believed that was necessary...and even their theology of baptism we feel is faulty, we reject that a child is born again in their baptism
      - BUT, we don't reject the practice of baptizing infants - that is Biblical and historical is our conviction

## **5. Practical issues for Joy of All Nations**

- **1. As a PCA church we believe and advocate our view of baptism**
  - ◉ So we aren't going to be shy or pretend that this isn't our position or doctrine
    - \* We believe its Biblical
    - \* We love how this view honors the continuity of the Old and New Testaments
    - \* And we love how it tells children - just like Jesus did - hey you belong - you are part of the church, the covenant community...let the little children come to me
      - And it gives hope to parents - even when children are far away, struggling - there is a Gospel sign that has been administered to them...and we trust God that His goodness and mercy will follow them, chase them ALL the days of their life
  - ◉ So, we do hope and pray for you with unbaptized children
    - \* Consider the teaching here and consider baptizing your children if you have not
  - ◉ And also, if you have children of an age where they grasp the Gospel and you believe they can come to the Table for the Lord's Supper
    - \* We would want to meet with the children and confirm their faith and then invite them to the Table
    - \* So pray and consider that too
  - ◉ So we are convicted, but also...
- **2. We are open-hearted and do invite to membership and serving those with a different view of baptism**



- Some of you after hearing this - hopefully you'll respect this view and you won't speak against it
  - \* But you can 100% keep a Baptist view and be a member of our church and serve in our church and have all the blessings of being part of this community
- And also, if you decide - we won't baptize our child and you want to wait to baptize them until they believe in Christ - if that's age 12, 13, 15 or whatever - we'll baptize them then and then admit them to the Table as well
  - \* In that sense, we'd act in the same way as if you were in a Baptist church
- So we won't force this conviction on anyone
  - \* But that being said, there is one restriction we would need to keep
- **3. Elders and potentially other important leadership roles would be reserved for those who hold our view of baptism**
  - To be ordained as an Elder of the church and potentially other leadership positions of influence - for the sake of keeping the integrity of our theological convictions - some areas of leadership would be kept to those who hold our same convictions
    - \* And we hope you'd understand that as a standard we'd need to keep as a church