

# Why We Baptize the Children of Believers

by

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"Why does your church baptize infants?" This is a question that is often asked by visitors to Reformed and Presbyterian churches. Since the historic practice of baptizing the children of believers is largely a foreign concept to the vast majority of evangelicals today, accepting this doctrine can be a difficult hurdle for a family that wishes to join a confessional, Reformed church. Christians who are interested in Reformed theology and sincerely desire membership in Christ's church are often shocked to find out that the Reformed church they want to join teaches and practices infant baptism.

So, why do we baptize the children of believers? The answer is simple: We baptize the children of believers because they belong to the covenant and people of God. While this answer is simple, it is one that nevertheless requires some explanation. Often times, an evangelical may come to Calvinistic convictions with regard to the doctrines of grace (i.e. The so-called "*Five Points of Calvinism*," or "TULIP"), yet be completely unaware of basic covenant theology. Hence, the doctrine of infant baptism seems strange and exotic to him. Accustomed to looking for "proof-texts" in the Bible, he searches the Scriptures for a verse that explicitly prescribes the practice of infant baptism. Finding none, he is resistant to the practice, suspecting that Reformed and Presbyterian churches baptize the children of believers more so out of tradition and sentiment than from any serious biblical conviction. What he has yet to understand, however, is that our practice of baptism (both for the adult believer and his children) naturally flows from our theology of the church. This involves an understanding of the covenant that God has made with his people. Consequently, the question, "Why does your church baptize infants?" entails a more complex answer than many people are prepared to receive.

Where should we then begin? Scores of helpful books and articles have been written on the subject of infant baptism that the person struggling with this doctrine should consult (see the back of this article for a list of recommendations). Probably the most concise answer, however, is found in

the *Heidelberg Catechism*. After its five questions and answers that deal with the sacrament of baptism in general (qq.69-73), it includes one question and answer on infant baptism in particular. Question and Answer 74 (hereafter HC 74) states:

**Q:** Are infants also to be baptized?

**A:** Yes. For since they, as well as their parents, belong to the covenant and people of God, and both redemption from sin and the Holy Spirit, who works faith, are through the blood of Christ promised to them no less than to their parents; they are also by baptism, as a sign of the covenant, to be ingrafted into the Christian Church, and distinguished from the children of unbelievers, as was done in the Old Covenant by circumcision, in place of which in the New Covenant baptism is appointed.

Because this is not only a clear and simple explanation of infant baptism but also a confessional explanation of the doctrine, HC 74 functions as a ready and easy-to-remember template of the case for infant baptism, which can be unpacked and explained further in the following points:

1. there is one covenant and people of God;
2. in the old covenant, God included children into his church;
3. in the new covenant, God still includes children into his church;
4. there is a promise made in baptism that must be believed.

**1.** *There is one covenant and people of God.*

This is where we must begin. HC 74 makes the claim that the children of believers, "as well as their parents, belong to the covenant and people of God." We should ask, however, to what covenant is the catechism referring? Furthermore, what is a covenant in the first place? Michael Horton has summarized covenant very well when he says:

**[A]** covenant is a relationship of 'oaths and bonds' and involves mutual, though not necessarily equal commitments . . . some biblical covenants are unilaterally imposed commands and promises; others are entered into jointly. Some are conditional and others are unconditional.

The concept of covenant is important for Christians to grasp because it is the organizing framework of the Scriptures. The whole Bible, ultimately, is about

one thing: God redeeming a people for himself through Jesus Christ. And that message unfolds as a covenantal drama throughout redemptive history. While there are many different covenants of various natures and purposes recorded in the Bible, there is ultimately only one covenant in which the benefits of redemption are communicated to God's people, a covenant we rightly call the "Covenant of Grace."

The *Covenant of Grace* is first promised in Genesis 3.15, after Adam and Eve were expelled from the holy Garden and cursed for sinning against God. Adam broke that previous covenant in which God had placed him (i.e. The Covenant of Works) failing to meet its requirements of obedience and thus inheriting the curses of that covenant (spiritual and physical death), rather than its blessings (eternal and glorified life). Adam did not, however, bring these covenant curses upon himself alone. Rather, he brought them upon the whole human race, as he was our federal head and representative in the Garden. Because Adam broke this covenant, the way to the tree of life was barred from sinful man, guarded by mighty cherubim and a flaming sword. Mankind, therefore, needs another covenant federal-head, a Second Adam, one who will open up the way and lead us to the tree of life so that we can enjoy fellowship with God our Creator and the glory of the eternal Sabbath for which we were created. This is the context in which the *Covenant of Grace* is first promised. God puts enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, promising that the coming seed will bruise the head of the serpent (Gen 3.15).

This seed-promise unfolds through redemptive history as the Bible traces the lineage of God's redeemed people from Seth to Abraham. Once Abraham is brought into the picture, the speed of the story slows down. He is one of the main characters in the redemptive drama as God makes an important covenant with him recorded in Genesis 15 – one of the most important chapters in the Bible. There, we read of God promising Abraham (then Abram) at least two very important blessings: a seed numbered like the stars in the heavens, and a land in which his seed would dwell. God then seals these promises with a solemn covenant ritual involving the killing of animals.

In Abraham's day, it was common for two kings or rulers to enter into a covenant with each other in which oaths were taken, conditions were explained, and sanctions (blessing for obedience to the covenant; cursing for

disobedience) were promised. The lesser party in the covenant, known as the "vassal," would then take a blood-oath, such as the one recorded in Genesis 15. Animals would be killed and sometimes cut in two. The vassal-king would take an oath and walk between the pieces of the animals or do some other type of ritual in which they would promise to keep the conditions of the covenant. To pass through the severed carcasses was to walk through the valley of the shadow of death. The person taking the oath was placing himself in service of the greater party, known as the "suzerain," and promising that if he broke the covenant, he would become like that severed animal!

Abraham completely understood this ritual since this was how covenants were often ratified and made official in his day. But what is so amazing about this particular blood-oath in Genesis 15 is that God himself walked between the severed animals! The suzerain-king, not the vassal, took the blood-oath. God's presence was manifested in the smoking fire pot and flaming torch that passed between the carcasses. A cloud of smoke that arose from the fire pot and a soaring flame that came from the torch were symbolic forms of the Lord's presence, similar to the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire he used during the exodus. The Lord took a self-maledictory oath and invoked this bloodshed and death upon himself should he fail to fulfill his promise. This whole covenant was God's royal grant to Abraham and his seed.

As the Bible unfolds God's great plan of redeeming a people for himself, we see that the fulfillment of the promises he made to Abraham actually comes on two marvelous levels. On the first level, we witness the fulfillment of these promises (both seed and land) in the nation Israel. God gave to Abraham and Sarah a son, namely, Isaac. And from Isaac came Jacob, and from Jacob came his twelve sons who fathered the twelve tribes of Israel. As the story progresses, we learn how these descendants of Abraham all end up in Egypt where they continue to multiply generation after generation. In fact, the book of Exodus opens by telling us how the people of Israel increased greatly and grew exceedingly strong – so much that the land of Egypt was filled with them, causing Pharaoh a great amount of fear. So massive was Israel's size that Moses reminded them of God's fulfilled promise: "The LORD your God has multiplied you, and here you are today, as the stars of heaven in multitude." (Deut 1.10) God's promise to give Abraham a seed numbered like the stars was brought to pass.

Likewise, God's promise with regard to the land was fulfilled when Israel was given Canaan as an inheritance. Under the leadership of Joshua, Israel cleansed the holy promised land by driving out the heathen and took possession of what God had promised. We read in Joshua 21.43-45:

"Thus the LORD gave to Israel all the land that he swore to give to their fathers. And they took possession of it, and they settled there. And the LORD gave them rest on every side just as he had sworn to their fathers. Not one of all their enemies had withstood them, for the LORD had given all their enemies into their hands. Not one word of all the good promises that the LORD had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass."

As marvelous as these fulfilled promises were, however, they were only the first level of fulfillment. God's covenant with Abraham was far more reaching than what took place in the type and foreshadow of the nation Israel. There is a fulfillment revealed on the pages of the New Testament that is far greater and far more wonderful.

In Galatians chapter 3, in the middle of his argument against the Judaizers that salvation is not by works of the law but by grace alone, through faith alone, because of Christ alone, Paul is careful to show how it is that one becomes a true descendent of Abraham. In vv.7-9, he says,

"Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, In you shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith."

Justification comes in the same way to people of every tongue, nation and tribe, just as it came to Abraham, namely, by faith alone. The promise goes out to all the earth because of what Paul says in v.16: "Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, 'And to offsprings,' referring to many, but referring to one, 'And to your offspring,' who is Christ." Paul uses a play on words to draw an important conclusion: Christ is the offspring of Abraham, through whom all the promises come to us who believe. Even the law that was given through Moses 430 years later could not annul the covenant previously made to Abraham and ratified in blood (see Gal 3.17). That promise is fulfilled in Christ so that as Paul says in

v.29: "if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise." The message is clear: the great number of offspring promised to Abraham was only foreshadowed in the national Israel. But not all of national Israel is of true Israel. Those who are truly his are those who, like himself, are justified through faith alone.

But what about the promise of a land? How is that fulfilled on a greater level? Again, the New Testament reveals to us a reality that is fuller than the type and shadow of the Old Covenant. Notice what Hebrews 11 tells us:

"By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose builder and designer is God . . . These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city." (vv.8-10, 13-16)

The promised land of Canaan was temporary, not permanent. What is permanent, however, is the promised land that still awaits us, a land that is infinitely greater than any plot of real estate in this present age. What awaits us is the new heaven and new earth. While the nation Israel received a good land, ultimately it became corrupt, defiled, and it faded away. The greater promised land, however, is an inheritance that Peter says is "incorruptible, undefiled, unfading, kept in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1.4). And like our father Abraham, we look forward to this inheritance with hope.

What does all of this show us? It shows us that there is one plan of salvation for the one people of God, whom the Bible describes as the seed or offspring of Abraham (Gal 3.29). There is no other way to be a child of God than to be included into Abraham's covenant. Thus, when Reformed people speak of "the covenant," we are speaking of the one covenant of grace that runs from

its seed-promise in Genesis 3.15, was expanded in detail to Abraham in Genesis 15, fulfilled in Christ, and continues throughout time until the consummation. Anyone who has or ever will be saved – in any period of human history – is a member of this one covenant of grace. Salvation is always the same: by grace alone, through faith alone because of the one Mediator of the covenant alone, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**2. *In the Old Covenant, God included children into his visible church.***

Having looked briefly at the covenant of grace in redemptive history, we must now ask the question, if believers participate in the covenant and people of God, what is the status of their children? The Old Testament reveals that God not only allowed the children of believers to be brought into his covenant and visible people, but that he commanded them to be so. In Genesis 17 we read of God reminding Abraham of the promises he made in his covenant, which extended to his offspring:

"I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. 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. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God." (vv.6-8)

God then commanded that a covenant-sign be given to Abraham and his descendents. That covenant-sign was circumcision. In vv.9-14, we read:

"And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, both he who is born in your house or bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin

shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant."

Circumcision was a "sign of the covenant." The bloody ritual of cutting the flesh in the male reproductive organ signified the covenant that God made with Abraham and his descendants when he walked between the bloody animal halves. This was no mere formality; to be circumcised meant to receive a sign of the deepest spiritual significance. It was a sign carved in flesh as a constant reminder of God's promises to Abraham and his descendants.

But this sign also functioned as the official act of consecration that set an individual apart as a member of the covenant community. Every male in Abraham's household – whether sons or servants, as well as every male in the covenant community thereafter – was to receive this sign in his flesh if he was to be identified with God's covenant people. Conversely, anyone who rejected the sign of the covenant was to be cut off from the covenant community. To reject the sign of the covenant was to reject God's promises in the covenant. Ultimately, it was to reject fellowship with the God who walked between the severed animal halves and made an oath to his people.

**3.** *In the New Covenant, God still includes children into his visible church.*

Note that HC 74 says that the children of believers are "by baptism, as a sign of the covenant, to be ingrafted into the Christian Church, and distinguished from the children of unbelievers, as was done in the Old Covenant by circumcision, in place of which in the New Covenant baptism is appointed." The covenantal sign that is administered upon initiation into the visible church is no longer circumcision, but baptism (Col 2.11-12). Like circumcision, baptism is a onetime, initiatory sign and seal of God's covenant promise, which marks out an individual as belonging to God's covenant people. Like circumcision, baptism is for the believer and his children.

Of course, the Baptist often argues that children of believers should not be baptized until making a credible profession of faith because the New Testament never gives an explicit command or example of infant baptism. To this we must ask, however, where in the New Testament do we find an example or command to exclude the children of believers from the visible church? Defending the doctrine of infant baptism in his day, the great Princeton theologian B.B. Warfield put it in the most straightforward of terms when he said:



"The argument [of infant baptism] in a nutshell is simply this: God established his church in the days of Abraham and put children into it. They must remain there until he puts them out. He has nowhere put them out. They are still then members of his church and as such entitled to its ordinances."

Clearly, no such command to remove the children of believers from his covenant exists. On the contrary, we find Jesus saying, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 19.14).

More importantly, however, is the obvious trend in the New Testament of including people who once were excluded from the church. The greatest example of this, of course, is the gospel going out to the Gentiles. People who were not of the physical family of Abraham and were "separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Eph 2.12) are "no longer strangers and aliens, but . . . are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" (Eph 2.19). We also see this in the case of the initiatory covenant sign of baptism being applied to females as well as males (Acts 8:12), in contrast to circumcision, which was only for males. Thus, Paul says, "there is neither Jew nor Greek . . . there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3.28). While there is still a distinction between men and women with regard to their assigned roles in the family and the church, baptism shows that men and women are the same in terms of personal value and worth to God because both are created in His image (Gen 1:26-28). Christian women, therefore, are not to worship in a separate courtyard as in the Jerusalem temple, but in the congregation alongside men.

Considering these things, are we really to think that while God includes Gentiles into his covenant people and includes women more fully by extending to them the covenant sign in the same way as males, that he also takes an opposite position with regard to the children of believers? While God extends his grace more abundantly in the New Covenant by including those who once were excluded, why would he then exclude children who once were included? Indeed, first-century Hebrew parents that converted to Christianity would have been horrified at the suggestion that their children

were now outside of the Covenant of Grace. As Robert Strimple has ably argued, had the apostles ever made such a suggestion, the response of Hebrew parents clearly would have been, "I thought you were bringing me good news!"

But the apostles did bring good news to covenant parents! Preaching on the day of Pentecost, Peter proclaimed the gospel to a large audience of Jews and Gentiles and told them to repent and be baptized in Jesus' name. "For the promise" said Peter, "is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself" (Acts 2.39). Those who are "far off" are the Gentiles, now included into God's covenant. But notice that Peter specifically points out that the promise is also "for your children." Children of believers are not excluded from membership in God's covenant community, but included, just as they were since the beginning.

For this reason, Paul addresses the children of believers as members of the Covenant of Grace: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord" (Eph 6.1). He even reminds them of the Fifth Commandment in the very next verse, showing that New Covenant children have the same responsibilities and privileges as Old Covenant children. They are to be raised as disciples of Christ: "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Eph 6.4; cf. Deut 6.4-9). Clearly, these children are considered members of the visible church no less than they were in the Old Covenant. As such, they should receive the sign of the covenant and be baptized.

#### *4. There is a promise made in baptism that must be believed.*

The promise to which Peter referred in his Pentecost sermon is mentioned in HC74: "both redemption from sin and the Holy Spirit, who works faith, are through the blood of Christ promised to [the children of believers] no less than to their parents."

The Baptist, however, hears language like this and often assumes that Reformed churches believe that every baptized child is guaranteed to be one of the elect. "If this is true," concludes the Baptist, "then what are we to say about those cases in which a baptized child did not persevere in the faith? If God made a promise to the child in baptism, but the child apostatizes as an adult, what does that say about God's promise? Did his promise fail?"

Unfortunately, there are some Reformed churches that have contributed to this misconception by speaking of every baptized person in the church - "head for head" - as being truly elect and inwardly united to Christ. But it must be understood that membership in God's visible covenant community does not guarantee membership in God's elect people. This is Paul's point in Romans 9 when he defends the fidelity of God's promise to Abraham: "But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel" (Rom 9.6). In other words, not all in the visible church belong to the invisible church. This is why the Bible often speaks of another circumcision, a circumcision of the heart (Deut 10.16; 30.6; Jer 4.4; 9.25-26; Acts 7.51; Rom 2.28-29). Although he was consecrated to the Lord as a member of the covenant people of God, the Israelite male was still responsible to believe the promises signified in his circumcision, for the sign (circumcision) never became the thing signified (the promises of God).

While the visible church is no longer identified with a national, geo-political Israel, it still contains a mixture of both Jacobs and Esaus, that is to say, true believers and hypocrites. Like Esau, it is still possible for one to be in the covenant externally but not actually united to Christ through faith. This is why the writer to the Hebrews includes many warnings in his letter about the necessity of true faith; he doesn't want his readers to rely solely upon their membership in the visible church. In 3.7-4.11, he reminds them of the Israelites who fell dead in the wilderness; although they belonged to the visible covenant community and heard the gospel, they did not respond to it in true faith. Consequently, they did not enter the Promised Land. The writer deliberately uses this as a warning to the New Testament heirs of the same covenant of grace: "Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God." (3.12) Just as being circumcised was necessary for entrance into the visible church in the Old Covenant, so too is baptism necessary for entrance into the visible church in the New Covenant. But every baptized member still has the responsibility of embracing with true faith the promise made to him in his baptism, apart from which he will not enter the eternal Sabbath rest.

For this reason, parents must take great care to catechize, pray for and bring their children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. It is why we are required to take vows at the baptismal font, promising to the utmost of our power to teach our children and have them taught the doctrine of salvation.

Baptized children must not only grow up with the understanding that they have been "ingrafted into the Christian Church and distinguished from the children of unbelievers" (HC74), but must – in light of their baptism – be asked the question: do you believe the gospel? Do you trust that Christ's blood alone washes away your sins as certainly as you see water washing away dirt from the body? Do you believe what is signified in your baptism?

If he rejects the gospel, then the waters of baptism are not a sign of blessing, but a sign of judgment. Like the unbelieving Israelite whose circumcision symbolized the cursing of being "cut off" from the favor of God, the New Covenant child who rejects what is signified in his baptism will become like those unbelievers who perished in the floodwaters of God's judgment while Noah and his family were brought safely through (1 Pet 3.20-22).

On the other hand, the covenant child who believes the gospel with true faith is able to see in his baptism God's pledge and token that gives us assurance that "we are as really washed from our sins spiritually, as our bodies are washed with water" (HC73).

### **Some Common Questions**

**1.** Is a child saved as a result of baptism?

No. Salvation is always by grace alone, through faith alone, because of Christ alone (Eph 2.8-9). Faith, not baptism, is the instrument whereby the righteousness of Christ is received and imputed to the sinner. Baptism, however, is a sacrament of inclusion into the covenant of grace whereby God promises salvation to those who believe. It is a covenant seal that, for the one who believes, acts as a pledge and token which the Holy Spirit uses to give greater assurance of faith.

**2.** Won't a child who is baptized as an infant grow up with a false sense of assurance?

Not if the child is taught to look to and trust in what baptism signifies, namely, the finished work of Jesus Christ alone. A child must be raised to understand that he is saved only because of the obedient life, atoning death and glorious resurrection of his Savior. Baptism testifies to this, giving the covenant child a beautiful symbol that clearly signifies the blood of Christ that washes away our sins. In this way, baptism magnifies the grace of God and more fully declares the promise of the gospel.

**3.** If we still require children to make profession of faith before they come to the table, doesn't that make their baptism meaningless until they believe?

Not at all, for baptism includes the children of believers into the covenant of grace and visible church. It is in this context that these little ones grow up under the preaching of God's Word, the blessing of public worship and *catechesis* in Christian doctrine.

**4.** Why can't we simply dedicate infants to the Lord as many other churches do?

**First** of all, it is much harder to make a case from the New Testament for infant dedication than for infant baptism. The dedications that we do find in Scripture speak of unique situations, such as the Nazarite vow, that in no way replaced the covenant sign of circumcision (Numbers 6:1-21; Judges 13:3-5; 1 Sam. 1:11; Luke 1:13-17). But more importantly, baby dedication lacks two important elements that are present in infant baptism: first, the child is set apart as a member of the visible church by the covenant sign and seal.

**Secondly**, it has attached to it the promise of God. Whereas baby dedication is ultimately about what we do as parents, infant baptism encourages our children to trust in the work of Christ by visually symbolizing his work of washing away sins by his blood.

**5.** May we become members of a Reformed church and choose not to baptize our children?

Church membership is about submission to Christ. Christ has ordained officers – ministers, elders and deacons – in his church. Anyone wanting to join a congregation must be willing to submit to the governing officers in that church. Hebrews 13.17 tells us:

"Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you."

The officers in a rightly-ordered Reformed or Presbyterian church have formally subscribed to the confessional standards of the church, which are the Three Forms of Unity (in Reformed churches) or the Westminster Standards (in Presbyterian churches). Both of these confessional documents clearly confess that the Bible teaches that children of believers must be baptized – it

is not optional. The person who desires to join a confessional Reformed church must understand that the governing officers are duty-bound to uphold the doctrines of their confession and maintain the purity of Word and sacrament in the church. Thus, the person with Baptist-convictions should not expect the minister and elders to make an exception and gainsay what they have formally confessed to be true.

While ministers and elders are (or at least should be!) eager to help those with internal struggles over the doctrine of infant baptism and must exercise patience, the issue is essentially about submission. The person with Baptist convictions who wants to join a Reformed church is faced with a choice: submit to the ruling authorities who believe that children of believers must receive the covenantal sign of baptism, or find another church to which they can submit. In short, they cannot have it both ways. If they desire to join a Reformed church, their children must be baptized.

### **Some Recommended Material for Further Study**

Hyde, Daniel, *Jesus Loves the Little Children: Why We Baptize Children* (Grandville: Reformed Fellowship, 2006)

Kline, Meredith, *By Oath Consigned: A Reinterpretation of the Covenant Signs of Circumcision and Baptism* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1968) Murray, John, *Christian Baptism* (Phillipsburg: P & R, 1980)