

Monday -- Yesterday we learned that baptism is sign of the covenant made between God and His children...us! Remember, it is the SIGN of the covenant, not the covenant itself. The bible is built around our covenantal relationship with God, the first sign being a rainbow. (*Genesis 9:11-14;15*) Note that this covenant is between God and all His creation, not just with Adam & Eve. Later, (*Genesis 15:18*) God makes a covenant with Abram, promising the 'Promised Land'. In *Genesis 17:2-15* God reaffirms the covenant with Abram, changes his name to "Abraham-Father of Nations" and establishes the "sign of the covenant: Circumcision."

Tuesday -- In *Jeremiah 31:31* God foretells the coming of a new covenant, which Christians believe was established through Jesus (*Matthew 26:28*) when Jesus told us through communion that he is "the blood of the new covenant". For Methodists, we recognize two 'sacraments'... communion and baptism because they both are signs of the new covenant. Some ask, "How are circumcision and baptism linked together?" Paul explained it in *Colossians 2:11,12*. Paul said, "In Christ (The new covenant) you gentiles were also circumcised by a *spiritual* circumcision." In Judaism they practice circumcision; in Christianity we practice baptism as a sign of the covenant.

Wednesday -- So what is promised by God in the covenant? There are many things God is promising in your baptism, two of which are important for this study 1. God says, "I will forgive you" ...the water of baptism is a symbol of a bath. That's why our Baptist and Bible Church friends refer to 'Believers Baptism' or the 'Baptism of repentance'. (*Mark 1:4; Acts 1:38-40*). The water doesn't wash your sins away, God does. Water is just the symbol. There was a movement by some in the early church to wait to be baptized right before death because it was thought it was only forgiveness of past sins. God Promises to forgive us our sins...not just the past sins; but sins in the future too. Fortunately we have seen the power of God's forgiveness for our future sins as well! Some ask, "Why would you baptize an infant who could not yet have sinned?" For the same reason that Jesus, who never sinned, was baptized... it marks us as God's child.

Thursday -- The second thing we are promised in the covenant is to be "adopted as His child." (*Romans 8:23; 9:4*) "This one is mine." When baptized God claims you as his child...you may wander away but you are always mine. Water is a symbol not only of a cleansing bath, but also of the womb. We are born when our mother's water breaks...we are born through water! We don't go back in the womb...it is a spiritual thing; a symbolic thing. *John 3:4-16* What did Jesus hear when he came out of water? "You are my beloved son" That's what God says when we baptize your infant child. We ask the name and we name the child again in Jesus name. Baptism is both bath and a womb.

Friday -- At least 5 New Testament passages refer to the Baptism of entire 'households,' a Greek phrase which included children and servants. (*Acts 11:14-15 Acts 16:14-15, Acts 16:29-33, Acts 18:8, & 1 Corinthians 1:16*) As you have seen, the New Testament itself, while it does not explicitly say when (or whether) believers should have their children baptized, is not silent on the subject. Further, *Luke 18:15-16* tells us that "they were bringing even infants" to Jesus; and he himself related this to the kingdom of God. From Iraneus in 140 A.D. through all the early church Fathers, to Augustine, Luther, Calvin & Wesley, church history has understood that infant baptism is traced back to the apostles. It is not just a cute ceremony...it is bible based and a practice of the church since the beginning! For us, "infant baptism" and "confirmation" go hand-in-hand. At Confirmation, students study the faith, experience their own personal acceptance of Christ as savior, and then "confirm the vows made for them by their parents at their baptism."

Introduction: Baptism as an "outward & visible" sign of the covenant

I. Sign of the Old Covenant

- *"You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised..." Genesis 17:11,12*

II. Sign of the New Covenant: Baptism – *"What must I do to be saved?" Acts 2*

- *"In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead." Colossians 2:11-12*

III. How does this all relate to infant baptism?

1. Infant dedication & age of accountability
2. The New Testament & Adult baptism (conversion & profound stories)
3. The original Covenant & the New Covenant (8 days old)
 - *"We love because he first loved us." 1 John 4:19;*
 - *"He called us before the foundations of the world were set" Ephesians 1:4*
4. Places where Paul baptized a believer and his/her entire household.
 - *Acts 16:14-15* Paul converts Lydia *"and her entire household are baptized."*
 - Roman jailer in *Acts 16:29-33* *"...and his entire household."*
 - *1 Corinthians 1:16* *"I baptized the household of Stephanas"*
5. God & Children
 - Repent *"...For you and your children" Acts 2:38,39*
 - *"Your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy" 1 Corinthians 7:14*
 - *"To such belongs the Kingdom of God" Matthew*
 - *"I write to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name." 1 John 2:16*

IV. Church History: Back to the 100's -- Tertullian, Hippolytus, Irenaeus

- Origen...in the 200's. *"the practice of infant baptism goes back to the Apostles."*

V. Immersion: "History of Architecture & Baptism"

1. Christianity illegal: From 'outside' to 'inside'
2. Christianity tolerated: In 3rd century houses were being turned into churches.
3. Christianity becomes legal (325 A.D.)
4. The 'Didache' ("Teachings of the 12) from 110 A.D.