

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

A Baptist Perspective

This has been a very unusual conference. I think one of the best I have ever attended, in view of the fact that the Spirit of God has borne unusual witness to the unity of thought, and the clarity of presentation, on the part of these our brethren. Brother Donald Shadicks, who started the Conference, brother Gene Breed, brother Craig Cochran, brother Henry Breedlove, have all preached basically in the same vein, as I attempted to preach around the third petition of the Lord's Model Prayer, on the will of God in earth as it is in Heaven. The emphasis has been the evidence of one's salvation, the evidence of one's love to Christ through obedience. And I wish it had been possible for all who are here for the first time to have been here from the very beginning, on Tuesday morning. However, today, as I promised I am going to turn aside and treat this morning and again this evening the subject, 'The Abrahamic Covenant - a Baptist view.'

Now the reason I say a Baptist view is because no one person can speak authoritatively for all Baptists. We are churches with little 'c's' and not the church with a big 'C'. We do not identify the kingdom of God exclusively with the church nor the church exclusively with the Kingdom of God. And then again, there is such prevailing ignorance among the Baptists that I dare say that the great majority do not even know there is an Abrahamic Covenant, and as a result they could not have any particular viewpoint concerning this subject. But it is of great importance. And in these days, we who are Baptists, and who are moving in the tradition of the Reformed Faith while retaining our Baptist distinctives, must know the subject matter of the Abrahamic Covenant.

I want you to open your Bible please to Genesis chapter 17, verses 1-8:

And when Abram was ninety years old and nine,
the Lord appeared to Abram and said unto him,
I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be
thou perfect. And I will make my covenant
between me and thee, and will multiply thee
exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face; and
God talked with him, saying, As for me,
behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou
shalt be a father of many nations. Neither
shall they name any more be called Abram, but
thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many
nations have I made thee. And I will make thee
exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of
thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I
will establish my covenant between me and thee
and thy seed after thee in their generations
for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto
thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will
give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee,
the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the
land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession;
and I will be their God.

There are basically two hermeneutical systems that are founded upon the Abrahamic Covenant for their existence. Apart from which interpretation they give to the Abrahamic Covenant, their existence would be impossible. One system is that of Dispensational Pre-Millennialism, wherein the Abrahamic Covenant, with its emphasis upon the possession of the land of Canaan by the physical descendants of Abraham is a basic premise. The other position is the Paedobaptist interpretation and system that depends upon a continuity of circumcision in Christian baptism for its existence. I believe however, that both these systems result from a faulty biblical interpretation of the Abrahamic Covenant. On the other hand, once these systems of interpretation have been adopted, they then color every interpretation of other portions of the Word of God. As a traditional Baptist who stands on the doctrines of God's sovereign grace I am not able to accept either. Neither that of the Dispensational interpretation, nor that of the Paedobaptist with its interpretation upon infant baptism and a continuity of that circumcision given to Abraham in Christian baptism.

Let me share with you a quotation, and then play a guessing game, 'Who said it?' This quotation reads:

"Do let the little ones have their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life, even if they afterwards, choose to erase them. Being thus enrolled may be the means to their salvation."

Now would you say that was a quotation from a Calvinist, or an Arminian? Let me give it to you again.

"Do let the little ones have their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life"

therefore denying the eternity of the Lamb's Book of Life as being recorded in the Covenant of Grace,

"even if they afterwards, choose to erase them. Being thus enrolled may be the means to their salvation."

That quotation actually, may be found in Charles Hodge's Systematic Theology, volume three, page five hundred and eighty-eight. For here Hodge is speaking rather than as a Biblical expositor, but one who works from inside the Paedobaptist context with its faulty interpretation of the Abrahamic Covenant. You see how wild one who otherwise is basically sound in the faith may go in his interpretation of the Word of God once he tries to prove his system. Well, since we are picking on Hodge, let me give you another quotation:

Hodge says,

"If the father becomes a citizen of a country, he makes his children citizens. In like manner, when a man becomes a Christian,"

Now you get this! *Faulty analogy*,

"his children are to be regarded as doing the same. When a man becomes a Christian his children are to be regarded as also becoming Christians. When any foreigner became a Jew, his children became Jews. The church membership of infants of believers is therefore in accordance with the analogy of all human social institutions, and sanctioned by the approbation and command of God. By becoming an English citizen a man makes his infant children subjects to the English Crown, entitled to the protection and privileges and burdened with the obligations of English citizenship."

That is taken from The Princeton Review, volume 30.

Let me give you another quotation, taken from The Mode and Subjects of Baptism pages 41 and 43, by the same theologian. Hodge writes:

"To our faith," (now get the language), "the presumption," (right here showing that he believes in presumptuous regeneration), "we are to presume that one is regenerate until he proves otherwise." Whereas the Biblical view, and I am happy to say that R.L.Dabney was on this side of the fence, the

Biblical view is, to presume that one is lost until he otherwise proves differently. So here is presumptuous regeneration, and he uses the very language. He says:

"To our faith, the presumption should be that they, that is children, infants, are the Lord's, and that as they come to maturity, they will develop a life of piety."

In other words, that is salvation from infancy where they just gradually and progressively grow into an expression of it.

"Instead of waiting therefore for a period of definite conviction and conversion, we should rather look for and endeavor to call out from the commencement of moral action, the emotions and experiences of the renewed heart."

Now that destroys all evangelism. That destroys the necessity of Holy Spirit conviction in the salvation of sinners. But Hodge goes on to say:

"Such faith as this, is valuable beyond expression, that believes that the child of Christian parents is in the Covenant of Grace. It is fostered by the ordinance of baptism, without which it is not commonly formed."

What Hodge is here saying is, that Baptists have neither the same confidence or desire that their children will be saved as do Paedobaptists. And though I am not a Paedobaptist, I have the same concern and moral obligation, and sense of that moral obligation, as any man ever had who had a few drops of water sprinkled on the brow of his infant. Now you see then, that the approach to Christian education from our perspective would be entirely different from such as follow the teachings of Charles Hodge. For he would approach Christian education as teaching those children as being already converted, Covenant children through baptism. Whereas we would approach education as teaching children who are lost and in rebellion against the Lord God Almighty and start with the basic principles of the Gospel and of the necessity of their salvation and of their conversion. Well let me give you a statement by another, and this is by W.H.Griffith-Thomas. Now I use him because he is popular even among the fundamentalist Arminians. W.H.Griffith-Thomas in his Principles of Theology, page 378, writes:

"Surely, the truth is that all children are included in the great Atoning Sacrifice, and belong to Jesus Christ until they deliberately refuse Him."

My oh my! That is dangerous.

"This is the great spiritual fact at the root of the practice of infant baptism."

And he is right there. Presumptuous regeneration! Presuming that they are saved is basic to the practice of infant baptism.

"It is our testimony, or the believer's, that childhood belongs to Christ, and has its share in the great redemption. We baptise a child not in order to make it Christ's, but because it already belongs to Him by purchase of His sacrifice on Calvary."

Now what Griffith-Thomas does there is to make the Covenant principle totally irrelevant, and therefore of no meaning whatsoever.

It is this kind of an approach to the Covenant of Grace that has turned the average Baptist off! It causes him to recoil and refuse to hear anything else on the subject. On the other hand, I believe that these persons are not truthfully and Biblically expounding the teachings of the Word of God on the Covenant, because they get caught up into that Covenant so many things that do not rightly belong to it, and lose sight of the basic principle of man's total depravity, his complete lostness, and see him as a natural inheritor of the spiritual principles of salvation through natural birth, rather than through the new birth.

I want us to see then, having looked at something of the presentation of Paedobaptists in this matter, the Biblical teaching concerning the seed of Abraham. Now the reason Hodge could make such statements as he did, is because he saw the Christian as the seed of Abraham, and in this that the seed of Abraham carry the blessings of Abraham over to their posterity, over to their children, in a spiritual way. So we need to understand what is meant by 'the seed of Abraham.'

First of all, look at verse 7 of Genesis chapter 17:

"And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and thy seed after thee."

Now let us turn to the Epistle to the Galatians, chapter 3, for the New Testament interpretation of this. The seed of Abraham must be divided into three aspects. First of all the seed of Abraham has reference to the Messianic seed-line which culminates in the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Seed of Abraham. In other words, what God is establishing is a Messianic line, rather than an organic union between man and man in the realm of salvation. He is setting up that seed-line through which Messiah is to come into the world. So in Galatians 3:16, we read:

"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed which is Christ."

So that should settle once and for all that it was the Messianic seed-line which was being established in the Abrahamic Covenant. God had pin-pointed the particular family through which The Seed, who is the Christ, was to come, through Whom, all the blessings to the nations of the world were to come, and be realized and fulfilled. Lightfoot, and I quote Lightfoot because he is not a Baptist and people cannot say we are prejudiced, because you see, Baptists are far more willing to quote non-Baptists with reference to their view, than non-Baptists will quote Baptists. We have always been more tolerant! Lightfoot says, that in Him, that is in Christ, the race was summed up, as it were.

"In Him is fulfilled, that is the race, Abraham's seed fulfilled its purpose, and became a blessing to the whole earth. Without Him, its separate existence as a peculiar people had no meaning."

In other words what Lightfoot is saying is this, that the nation of Israel, that is the Hebrews which came out of Abraham's bosom, had no significant meaning other than as they were a race through which Christ was to come into the world, to bring the blessings of Abraham to all nations, not just to the Jews alone. He goes on to say:

"Thus was He not only the representative, but the embodiment of the race. In this way the people of Israel is the type of Christ, and in the New Testament parallels are set in respect of the one, to the life of the other."

So there is THE SEED, singular, which is Christ, through Whom the blessings promised to Abraham, come to the nations in general. It is not through Abraham these blessings have come. It is not through the Jews these blessings have come, but it is through THE SEED, Christ Jesus, our Lord, Who has made the atonement for our sin.

Secondly, there is the literal seed of Abraham, his physical descendants, his genetic offspring. Now follow me very carefully.

Wherever the New Testament speaks of these physical descendants alone, and apart from the consideration of salvation, they are always spoken of as Abraham's seed, or SPERMA. The sperm of Abraham. The word TEKNA, little children, is reserved, with reference to Hebrew or Gentile, only for believers!

Now if you see that distinction, then you are going to have no problem with the physical seed of Abraham. You are not going to get caught up in the Zionist movement, and try to get a bunch of kasars into Abraham's bloodline, who are not Hebrews at all, and say, to them belong the blessings of the

world, hooray, hooray, let us get on with the building of the Temple in Palestine. Well I am not interested in a temple in Palestine at all!

Let me give you some Scriptures. Turn to the Epistle to the Romans, chapter 9, verse 7:

"Neither, because they are the seed *SPERMA* [SPERMA] of Abraham, are they all *TEKNON* [TEKNOV] children; but in Isaac shall thy seed be called."

Now what is he saying? He is saying that simply because they are the sperm of Abraham does not mean that they are the children of Abraham. They may be the physical descendants of Abraham. They may be the *SPERMA*, but not the *TEKNA*, not the children of Abraham. It is only in Isaac, the child of promise, that the true seed will be called. Now turn to John's Gospel chapter 8, verse 37:

"I know that ye are Abraham's seed; *SPERMA* [SPERMA] but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you."

Christ is here speaking to the Pharisees, to those who have rejected Him, to those who despised Him, and who are excluded from the Kingdom of God. He says that they are claiming to be Abraham's seed, never being in bondage to any, and He says, "I know that you are Abraham's sperm, Abraham's seed, but you seek to kill me because my word has no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with My Father, and you do that which you have seen with your father." Look at verse 39:

"They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father."

Christ is saying that the devil is their father.
They say but Abraham is our father.

"Jesus saith unto them, if ye were Abraham's children," *TEKNON* [TEKNON, not *SPERMA* SPERMA]

He has already admitted that they are his *SPERMA* [SPERMA], but now He says, "if ye were his children, ye would do the works of Abraham." You can be his *SPERMA* [SPERMA] without being his *TEKNON* [TEKNON], without being his children.

Now I want to turn your attention to one other Scripture, the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 3, where we have the message of the Baptist. John the Baptist, standing between two different dispensations, introducing a new administration of the dispensation of God, says, in verse 9:

"And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children *TEKNON* [TEKNON] unto Abraham."

Essentially, what he is saying here is, "Don't you go around saying you are Abraham's *SPERMA* [SPERMA] and therefore you have him as your father, for God can raise up children from among these stones!" He is showing that there is no privilege in simply being a physical descendant of Abraham.

Then thirdly, there is not only the Seed, singular, which is Christ, and then the literal, physical descendants of Abraham called his seed, his *SPERMA* [SPERMA], in distinction from the children of Abraham *TEKNON* [TEKNON], but there is also the true, or spiritual seed. Now this has reference to the Elect of God, whomever they are. The Elect of God in every generation, whomever they may be. So there is a spiritual seed, and it is to these, and to these only, that the blessings of Abraham come through Christ, THE SEED. In Romans chapter 4, and I want to give you these Scriptures, because it is vitally important that you understand these general principles if you are going to give an answer in defense of our own position and faith in this day when the Baptists are again beginning to, more and more, come to a consciousness of their faith and its relationship to other systems of interpretation.

Look first of all at verses 16 and 18 of Romans chapter 4. Verse 16 reads:

"Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all;"

"Of us all. All of us believers. All of us who are the seed of Abraham spiritually. So in verse 18, Abraham:

"Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, (not simply of the Hebrew nation) according to that which was spoken, SO SHALL THY SEED BE."

'Thy seed shall be from out of all nations.' Then in verse 13, for those who want to limit the heirship of Abraham to a little plot of acreage over there yonder in Canaan, which is being struggled over, look at what the promise really embraces:

"For the promise, that he should be HEIR OF THE WORLD,"

Not just of Canaan. We are not satisfied just to limit Abraham's inheritance to Canaan, but we embrace the whole of the world, which will have its final realization on the New earth.

Furthermore, turn to Galatians chapter 3, verse 29, where we have this spelled out even more emphatically:

"And if ye be Christ's, (and if a person is Christ's, he is a saint. He is a child of God. He is redeemed) THEN (not before, not in any other way, only if you are Christ's) are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Therefore, the promise made to Abraham is the inheritance of those who are Abraham's seed, who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, THE SEED, singular. Of course, in 1 Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 18, we read of an "Israel after the flesh." And as there is an Israel after the flesh, so there is an Israel after the Spirit! But Paedobaptists advocate that there is not now only Israel after the flesh, but Christians after the flesh! As the physical descendants of Abraham inherited certain blessings from Abraham in their time, so the offspring of Christians inherit their blessings by natural birth.

As a matter of fact, two weeks ago, I was up in Alma, Michigan, speaking at the Family Conference there. Dr Leonard Verduin who wrote *The Stepchildren of the Reformation*, who is a Christian Reformed Minister, and quite a scholar, but who has nevertheless been the champion for the cause of the Anabaptists for many many years in his own historical studies, said to me, after we had discussed something of this concept of organic union, that it is simply because mother and father are in the Covenant, the children are presupposed to be in that Covenant also, and so receive baptism in infancy. He said that he went to Grand Rapids, (that is the central headquarters of Christian Reformed Churches in this Country), to his brothers, and tried to propose to them a revolutionary missionary program. But they would not listen to him. He said that he told them that if salvation is by race, and not by grace, then what we ought to do is start a gigantic program of artificial insemination in which we will take the sperm only of Covenant fathers, and therefore in time produce nothing but Covenant children on the face of the earth. Then all would be saved! What he said of course, made sense from the perspective of a Paedobaptist understanding of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Well let us see what the Holy Spirit said. Look at John's Gospel, chapter 1, verse 12 and 13. It is said here that:

"that as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them which believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, (you do not get salvation through blood. It doesn't come by Daddy!), nor of the will of the flesh, (it's not by decision), nor of the will of man, but of (which are born of) God."

Now if you had men, such as Charles Hodge, preach from that passage of Scripture, you would say Amen! to all they said. But when they get out of the context of Biblical exposition and into the framework of Covenant children, and Abraham's seed, then they go completely wild, through trying to

prove that which is extra-Biblical. So there is the true spiritual seed which is composed of the Elect of God. In the next place, we need not only to see something of the seed of Abraham, but the Covenant which God made with Abraham, to understand this. Turn to the Book of Genesis. Let me say first of all that God's Covenant with Abraham embraces far more than what we have recorded in Genesis chapter 17! For the Covenant which God made with Abraham began in chapter 12 and continues through chapters 15 and 17, and is consummated in chapter 22. For example in chapter 12 beginning with verse 2:

"And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee,"

It doesn't say anything here about blessing those who bless the Jews - it has reference to Abraham. It is a promise, to him.

"and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

and then in verse 7:

"Unto thy seed will I give this land."

So, in chapter 12 of Genesis, we have recorded the great promise of the Covenant as it was originally given to Abraham. Then in Genesis chapter 15, beginning with verse 9, the Covenant is solemnly ratified by sacrifice, meaning that through this sacrifice the Covenant was rendered inviolable. In chapter 17 we have the sign and seal of the Covenant given in circumcision. In Genesis chapter 22, verses 15 through 18, the very same Covenant, is confirmed by a Divine oath, which is Abraham's consolation. In verse 17 God says:

"That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gates of their enemies. And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;"

There again is the promise of the Covenant.

Now to open up and expound in more detail the Abrahamic Covenant from a Calvinistic, Baptist position and perspective, I want to introduce another thought. That is, that when we consider the Abrahamic Covenant, we must realize that there are NOT two distinct and diverse covenants made with Abraham. The one having respect to a spiritual blessing, and the other relating to temporal benefits. Rather there is only ONE Covenant. This Covenant, being only one, has a special spiritual object. The main thrust of the Covenant is spiritual. Now for the accomplishment of the spiritual objective, there is given a temporal arrangement with inferior and temporal privileges that were to be enjoyed by the nation of Israel, for the fulfilment of the superior and higher results contemplated, which were the spiritual promises. In other words, God simply gave certain temporal privileges and inferior blessings to prepare the way for the full manifestation of the spiritual objectives of the Covenant, which He made with Abraham. Therefore, the contents of the Covenant were of a mixed kind, involving both the natural descendants, and the spiritual seed of Abraham. This was necessary because there had to be a preservation of the natural seed of Abraham so that the spiritual seed might be brought in. In other words, the preservation of the natural seed, as the Messianic line, made it possible in the fullness of the time for the Seed of Abraham to be made of a woman, made under the Law, to fulfil the Covenant arrangements for our salvation. Therefore, the promises made to Abraham receive a minor, and a major fulfilment. There was to be a temporary accomplishment of these promises to his natural offspring here on earth in preparation for the realization of those spiritual benefits in the Elect of God throughout all eternity.

Now if we do not bear in mind this twofold aspect of the Covenant, it will be impossible to attain to a right and clear view. But we must at the same time sharply distinguish between the two. Otherwise we shall fall into the error of others who insist that the spiritual blessings belong not only to the natural

seed of Abraham, but to the natural offspring of Christians as well. For spiritual blessings cannot be communicated by carnal propagation. We need to emphasize that! And that we read from John's Gospel chapter 1.

Turn to the Epistle to the Romans, chapter 9, and let us see something of these blessings of the one Covenant. Verses 6 through 8 read:

"Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children; but in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is. They which are the children of the flesh, THESE ARE NOT the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed."

Do you see that? Children of the flesh ARE NOT the children of God! The children of PROMISE, the children of GRACE, are accounted for the seed! They are reckoned to be the seed. Now this tells us emphatically that all of Abraham's descendants did not participate in the spiritual blessings promised to him. As our Lord Jesus said in John 8:24:

"ye shall die in your sins,"

speaking to those who claimed to be Abraham's seed, thereby indicating that some of these had died in their sins, rather than being blessed. Esau, a natural descendant of Abraham, was even excluded not only from the spiritual blessings, but from the temporal blessings, enjoyed by the offspring of Isaac and Jacob. Nor do all the children of Christians, in like manner, enter into the spiritual privileges promised to Abraham. Only those who are eternally chosen unto salvation. They, and who they are, cannot be known until they believe.

Turn to Galatians, chapter 3, verse 7:

"Know ye therefore that they which are of FAITH, the same are the children *TEKNON* [TEKNON] of Abraham."

Now that infant is not of faith. The natural descendants of Abraham are not of faith. And if we stand on the authority of Paul, then that authority tells us that only believers are the children of Abraham. Some may be the *SPERMA* SPERMA, but they are not the children.

I do want to impress upon you the absolute importance of the fact that Abraham's Covenant was not only ONE Covenant, with a lower and higher blessing, but that Abraham's Covenant was strictly peculiar to himself. Abraham's covenant was strictly peculiar to himself! Neither in the Old nor in the New Testament is it ever said that the Covenant with Abraham was made on behalf of all believers, or all men, or that it was given to them. Well, what then is the Covenant of Abraham? The great thing that the Covenant of Abraham secured to Abraham, now follow me carefully in this, the great thing that the Covenant secured to Abraham was that HE, and not anyone else, but that HE SHOULD HAVE A SEED. When God made the Covenant, He said, "YOU ARE GOING TO HAVE A SEED!" And THEN THROUGH YOUR SEED the nations of the earth will be blessed. So the Covenant was given to Abraham to secure for him a seed, and that God would be the God of that seed. Now that's not applicable to Christians. It cannot be said to that extent, that this Covenant refers to Christians. Why? Because Christians have no warrant whatsoever in the Word of God that God will be the God of their seed. He only said He would be the God of Abraham's seed. Who are the seed of Abraham? True believers, through THE SEED, Christ, singular. Furthermore, it is not even promised to Christians that they will have a seed. Therefore, if the Covenant promise is made to Christians through Abraham, then this means that there could be no child of God without a seed! Simply given that Abraham himself would have a seed, and that God would be the God of that seed. It is something like the promise that God made to Phinehas, when He said that you will always have a seed to be a priest, or to David, that he would always have a posterity to sit on the throne. That was the Covenant. Securing a posterity! Well let us look at the original promises that were made to Abraham, and see if they are applicable other than to Abraham himself. Genesis chapter 12, verse 2 and 3:

"And I will make of thee a great nation,"

Has he promised that to believers? God nowhere has made a covenant that He will make a great nation of Griswoldites! But He DID say to Abraham I am going to make of thee a great nation of Abrahamites. And He did that, you see. We do not have that promise. Then He said:

"and I will bless thee, and make thy name great;"

Has God promised to make your name great? He may make it great, but He has not promised to do so. Most of us will die in obscurity, not known outside of our own small circle in our generation. He says:

"thou shalt be a blessing;"

Well, we may be a blessing in a small way but not in the way that all families of the earth shall be blessed in verse 3. The Messianic line is here established. Then look at chapter 17, for when we examine the contents of the Covenant, we see that they are peculiar to Abraham alone. In Genesis chapter 17 and verse 5, God says:

"Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee."

You and I have not been made fathers of many nations. He says, furthermore in verse 6:

"kings shall come out of thee."

How many kings have come out of the loins of average Christians? He says, "your descendants will occupy Canaan." You and I have probably never set foot on Canaan, with the exception of a few who may have toured the Holy Land. There are many who will have to mourn along with David, who cried, "though it be not so with my house." Furthermore, the Covenant made with Abraham established no spiritual relationship between Abraham and his offspring. There was a physical relationship, but no spiritual relationship. Still less, does it establish a relationship, a spiritual relationship between believers and infants. Abraham was not the spiritual father of his own natural offspring, for spiritual qualities cannot be propagated by carnal generation. If there was any spiritual relationship between Abraham and his carnal offspring, it was as the result of THE SEED, Christ Jesus, our Lord. Therefore it is by GRACE and not by RACE, that men are saved. And what is this blessing? Well turn back to the Epistle to the Galatians, chapter 3, verse 7:

"Know ye therefore that they which are of FAITH, the same are the children of Abraham."

verse 9:

"So then they which be OF FAITH are blessed with faithful Abraham."

Blessed *with* faithful Abraham, NOT *by* faithful Abraham! Abraham is not the spiritual father. We are not blessed BY Abraham, but we are blessed WITH Abraham, through the same means of grace, through Christ Jesus our Lord. FAITH, FAITH! Therefore the blessings of Abraham, come to us through Christ! Was Abraham Esau's father, spiritually? Or Ishmael's? Look at Romans, Chapter 4, verse 11:

"And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also."

Therefore, this is a household of faith, and not of natural generation. This means then, that Abraham rather than being the spiritual father of his own natural offspring, becomes the spiritual father only of

those who walk in the steps of his faith. And just as a believing father becomes a spiritual father only of those who walk in the likeness of his faith. Look at verse 12 of the same chapter of Romans;

"And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised."

There is the relationship. It is one of faith. But are not Christians under the Abrahamic Covenant? Again, if you will turn to Galatians, chapter 3, verse 14, you will see that the answer is, No!:

"That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit THROUGH FAITH."

Therefore, the Covenant made with Abraham, was to Abraham that he would have a SEED. That SEED being Christ would be the blessing of all nations, and that the blessing of the promise comes to us THROUGH CHRIST, and BY FAITH. What is that promise? The Spirit! The giving of the Spirit in regeneration.

So the blessings of Abraham consist, not in creating spiritual relations between believers and their infant offspring, but through the Spirit of God, given the exercise of faith. Paul makes it very clear that those who are blessed with Abraham are those who are of the faith of Abraham, and not those who receive a parental oath at the time of their baptism. So Galatians, chapter 3, verses 7 and 9 again:

"Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."

CIRCUMCISION AND BAPTISM

"And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham, thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant."

Genesis, chapter 17, verses 7 -14.

I said at the beginning that there are two Biblical interpretative systems, which we call hermeneutical systems, that are dependent upon the particular interpretation given to the Abrahamic Covenant.

One is Dispensationalism, wherein the Abrahamic Covenant is limited to the Jews and their prospect of occupying the entire tract of land promised to Abraham, called Canaan, at some future date. They shall be exalted as the head of the nations to rule over them.

Then secondly, there is that system of interpretation known as Paedobaptism, wherein infant children are sprinkled, called baptism, and by this signifying that they have the seal of the Covenant upon them, and are presupposed to be Covenant children, or the children of God until otherwise it is demonstrated, they are not in the faith.

My personal conviction is, that both of these systems of interpretation are faulty, and as a result, a clear understanding of the Abrahamic Covenant has not been forthcoming. Consequently we have been deprived of the benefit of clear, Biblical teaching in trying to understand the Word of God within this kind of framework. And you who do not have a background in this particular material, I hope to whet your appetite for a study of this nature. I for one, am thoroughly convinced of this in light of the fact that God is beginning to revive His work amongst the Baptists, and that the Baptists are coming back to those doctrinal truths, which they held in times past concerning the sovereignty of God, and His grace in salvation. We must be able to understand the Scriptures in order to be able to give a reasonable answer for the hope that is in us.

I feel then, that those Baptists who have labored in this area of Biblical interpretation have come closer to the Divine Truth than those who have tried to crowd the Word of God to fit into their presuppositional, philosophical system, whether it be Dispensationalism on the one hand, which is a relatively recent interpretative system of the Word of God, not dating over 100 years, or whether it be the Paedobaptists which is simply a continuation of the Sacredotalism of the Roman Catholic church, rather than a clear, clean break from it.

I quoted earlier from Hodge's Systematic Theology, the following statement:

"Do let the little ones have their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life, even if they afterwards, choose to erase them. Being thus enrolled may be the means to their salvation."

Now the most flagrant Arminian statements of the 20th Century cannot measure up to the statement of this profound Calvinistic theologian of the last century. For here he states that the names of little ones are actually recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life, resulting from their sprinkling, or so-called Baptism. We should bring them, and enrol their names in the Lamb's Book of Life, even if they afterwards should choose to take their names out of that Book! Now even our modern Arminians hold to at least one point of Calvinism, that is the preservation and perseverance of the saints, unless they are Methodists, Nazarenes or Pentecostals, not believing that they can choose to take their names out of the Book. Yet Hodge, the great theologian, is showing here a spiritual schizophrenia. For if you take his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, and read his exposition of chapter 6, you will find very little in his treatment of Baptism there that you could argue with. He makes Baptism an identification of the believer with Christ, there giving sound Biblical exegesis. As far as God had led him into a knowledge of the truth, he is far more honest in his treatment of the truth, than when he has such latitude of freedom as to depart from the truth in the context of his Systematic Theology. But this is the position we are led to, when we first of all try to adopt a system, whatever that system is, and then press our interpretation of the Word of God into its framework. What we had far better do, whatever our system may be, is to bring it to the Word of God, and wherein it does not measure up to the clear teachings of the Word of God, drop it and move on. For we owe no allegiance to any man, whomever he be. Our allegiance is first and foremost to God and His Word. Therefore we must have some understanding of the teaching of the Abrahamic Covenant, because as Baptists, although we can be covenant theologians in that we accept the Eternal Covenant of Grace, we are not covenant theologians in the sense in which it is sacerdotally interpreted by those who practice infant baptism, and believe that somehow or another this relates them to the saving grace of the Lord God Almighty. However, there are some more honest sacerdotals, such as R.L.Dabney, who shun Hodge's particular point of view and look upon Baptism simply as an ecclesiastical covenant, wherein one merely dedicates the child and pledges himself to bring that child up in the admonition of the Lord.

Now I have had a great deal of experience preaching among the Christian Reformed, the Dutch Reformed, the Netherlands Reformed and the Protestant Reformed people in Michigan. As a result it has put me on my toes constantly as sometimes I have been drilled all night long to give an answer as to how I could be a Baptist, and at the same time, believe in the Sovereign Grace of God in Divine Election. I have been drilled by the experts of them all such as, just a few weeks ago, we had Dr Homer Hoeksema, the son of the famous Herman Hoeksema, to preach for us in our congregation in Birmingham, and prior to that a professor in the Protestant Reformed church and his father drilled me on my views of covenant theology, not being able I believe, to get an inch ahead of me. Although I am sure they would have liked to have confused me and brought me over into their camp.

I was staying with a very dear friend of mine on one occasion when I was preaching for the Netherlands Reformed church in Grand Rapids. I just preach to all of those Dutch folks, whoever they may be, because you see, I want to see them Baptists! I was staying in this home and this man was trying to emotionally influence me away from my position and to his. He said, "When I went out sinning. When I was away from the Lord, there was always that mark of the Covenant on my brow that reminded me that I had been given to the Lord." I said, "Come on, John. You were no more than a few weeks old when that little bit of water was sprinkled on your forehead. You don't remember a thing about it!!" I said, "Now when it comes to me, I can remember every bit of mine because brother, I was plunged all the way down to the bottom of the pool, and then brought up." And there is a world of difference. I said, "I can remember mine. You can't remember yours." It is this kind of argument and reasoning that is given to us, you see.

We do not believe that the Abrahamic Covenant in any sense of the word, teaches an organic, spiritual union between believers and their children. You must not my dear ones, presume that because you are saved your children shall be saved, but you must look upon them in their total depravity, as they are born in corruption with Adamic guilt, under the wrath of God, that you might teach them, and preach to them, and admonish them as sinners to close with the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. I can see nothing but harm come out of the treatment of our children as recommended by Charles Hodge. Let me here remind you again what Charles Hodge said:

"To our faith, the presumption should be that they, that is children, infants, are the Lord's, and that as they come to maturity, they will develop a life of piety."

That is dangerous! If you look at that infant, however much you may think it to be an angel and say, "you little sweet rascal, I am going to presume that you're a child of God and I am going to nurture the piety in you," is to miss the mark. You had better look at that little fellow as a sinner, a Hell-bound sinner, unless the grace of God arrests him. I believe in total depravity, brethren. Look at what Hodge further said:

"Instead of waiting for a period of definite conviction and conversion"

Can you imagine that? Why I will tell you right now, if you have never had a definite period of Holy Spirit conviction when you saw yourself as lost, you may as well mark this down. You ain't never been saved!! Now Billy Graham takes this attitude towards his wife. Someone asked him, "Well now Dr Graham, when do you think your wife (whose father was a Presbyterian preacher of course, a missionary, a Presbyterian missionary. She is a Presbyterian to this very day. She is not a Baptist. I do not believe Billy Graham is a Baptist. He's not my kind anyway!) when was your wife converted?" He said, "Oh, she's always been a Christian." But as someone used to say, "Honey, that's too long!" If you have never been lost, you have never been saved. But Hodge says that we ought not to wait for a period of conviction and conversion. Rather we should look for and endeavor to call out from the commencement of moral action, watch this now, the emotions and the experiences of the (and he put this in bold letters) **THE RENEWED HEART**. How can you presume that an infant has a renewed heart if there has never been any conviction? There has never been a lost condition? And yet this is what they presuppose! Now our educational approach must be different from theirs. A sacerdotalist, whether he be Presbyterian, or otherwise will approach the child presupposing that he is a Covenant child. Therefore, safe if not, saved! We approach the educational process on the basis that all children are lost, and under the wrath of God, and must be instructed in the basic principles of the Gospel. There is a world of difference. That is why I think that sacerdotalism has filled the churches with hypocrites who have a false hope, but have never had an experience of conversion!

Now we come to consider the seal of the Abrahamic Covenant, because these same people tell us that circumcision as it was given to Abraham has its continuity in Christian Baptism. Therefore Christian Baptism is to the Church what circumcision was to the Nation of Israel. I want to examine what the Bible has to say about this. It is amazing how much you can learn from the Bible on these subjects! Well I want to examine certain passages of Scripture which treat the subject of circumcision. Turn first to the Epistle to the Romans, chapter 4 and verses 11 and 12:

"And he (Abraham) received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also (those who were not circumcised) And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, (that is not enough, Paul is saying) but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised"

Now examining this Scripture, we may note first of all, that Paul in Romans chapter 4, definitely establishes the unity of the Abrahamic Covenant. I said above that in order to understand the Abrahamic Covenant we must see that there was only ONE Covenant made, not two! Not one to an earthly seed, and one to a heavenly, but only one with two aspects, a lower fulfilment towards his natural posterity to make possible the higher spiritual fulfilment in Christ and the Elect. This may be seen if you will look at verse 3 of Romans Chapter 4:

"For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness"

Now that statement in verse 3 is a quotation from Genesis chapter 15, and not chapter 17. Therefore the Covenant in chapter 15 of Genesis, by the authority of Paul must be the same as that in chapter 17 of Genesis. For what we have read in verses 11 and 12 of Romans 4 is a direct quotation out of Genesis chapter 17, without any break in the continuity of thought, as the Apostle develops it. Therefore in chapter 15 of Genesis, the word Covenant appears for the first time with reference to Abraham. Now in this text he refers to Genesis chapter 17. What is the main difference? It is this. In Genesis chapter 15 we have the Divine side, the ratification of the Covenant, and in the other we have the human side, the keeping of the Covenant, or obedience to the Divine command in his circumcision. Again, looking at Romans 4, the next thing to be observed is that circumcision, not only the unity of the Covenant, but that circumcision was, "a seal of the righteousness of the faith which HE had." Not which his children have. But it was a seal of the righteousness of faith, look at it,

"And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised"

Dear ones, no where does the Scripture say that circumcision was other than a seal to anyone other than Abraham himself. You will search in vain to find anywhere where circumcision was a seal to Isaac. And in Abraham's case, circumcision did not communicate any spiritual blessing. It only confirmed that blessing already given in the promise of God Almighty, and which promise he had already believed for the accounting of righteousness unto him.

Arthur W. Pink, in his book on the Covenants says, "as a seal from God, it (that is circumcision) was a Divine pledge, or guarantee, that from him should issue that Seed which would bring blessings to all nations, and on the same terms as justifying righteousness had become his by faith alone." In other words circumcision was a pledge to Abraham that his SEED, singular would bring blessings to all nations, in the same way that he received justifying righteousness, which is, BY FAITH ALONE. The only true children of Abraham are believers! Pink goes on to say, "it was a seal of his faith, but of that righteousness which in due time, was to be wrought out by the Messiah, and Mediator." It was a seal of his righteousness. Which righteousness? That righteousness which was accounted his, which righteousness was to be worked out by the obedience of Messiah, the Christ, through Whom the blessings would come to all nations. "Therefore," Pink says, "circumcision was not a memorial of anything which had already been actualized, but it was an earnest, or a down-payment, or a foretaste of that which was yet future, namely, of that justifying righteousness which was to be brought in by Christ." That is a POWERFUL statement.

In other words just as circumcision was a pledge to the future that Abraham being accounted righteous by God because of his believing the promise, was accounted righteous then (at that time), because it was sure that Messiah, the Mediator of the Covenant would come and work out that righteousness for him. Well, we raise the question at this point. If that circumcision was only for Abraham. If it simply signified his righteousness, a pledge of that which Messiah was yet to do, why then did God enjoin that all the males of Abraham's household, and those of his descendants should be circumcised? Does it not

say in Genesis chapter 17, not only his sons and their sons, but even the servants which he bought, or to put it more in the Southern vernacular, the slaves which he purchased, he even had to circumcise the slaves. And by the way, those who are so zealous for circumcising babies at the wrong end of their anatomy by sprinkling water on their heads, I have never been able to figure out why they sprinkle water on the head of the female infants, because God limited circumcision to the male children. You say, "well, that's because girls can't be circumcised!" Well you do not know very much about girls! Oh yes, girls can be circumcised. You find many pagan tribes who do not circumcise boys, they just circumcise girls!! But God said you are not going to circumcise girls. Pagans do that. Circumcise the men children. I never understood how a few drops of water on this end circumcises either boy or girl! Well that is how we have got this whole thing messed up, you see, because we do not stay right with the Word of God. Well the answer as to why God required all Abraham's male descendants and servants be circumcised will confirm what we have already said with regard to the Abrahamic Covenant. Therefore we raise the question, "What did Abraham's circumcision seal to Abraham's servants and slaves?" Nothing! Now keep in mind, it sealed to Abraham, not his faith, but that righteousness imputed to him, that righteousness given to him in advance, that was to be worked out by Messiah, that became his through faith, as it becomes ours through faith. It did not signify anything to Ishmael, or any of the other descendants. Yet God commanded Ishmael's circumcision, and he was excluded from the Covenant altogether! Again circumcision was not submitted to voluntarily, nor given with reference to faith. It was compulsory, and that in every instance. Those who refused it, according to Genesis 17:14, were cut off from the people. How different this is with Christian Baptism. Christian Baptism is not compulsory, and it results from faith. I am not avoiding the answer to the question, but before I do answer it, I want to give you a quote from Alexander Carson, and I am giving these quotes because I am trying to lay down the solid, solid foundation of our doctrinal position as Baptists. Alexander Carson said:

"Circumcision neither signed nor sealed the blessings of the Covenant of Abraham to the individuals to whom it was by Divine appointment administered. It did not imply that they who were circumcised were accounted the heirs of the promise, either temporal or spiritual. It was not applied to mark them individually as heirs of the promise. It did not imply this even to Isaac and Jacob who are by name, designated heirs with Abraham. Their interest in the promises was secured to them by God's expressly giving them the Covenant, but was not represented in their circumcision. Circumcision marked no character and had application to no man, except Abraham himself. It was a token of this Covenant, and as a token or sign, no doubt applied to every promise in the Covenant, but it did not designate the individual circumcised as having a personal interest in these promises. The Covenant promised a numerous seed to Abraham. Circumcision as a token of that Covenant must have been a sign of this but it did not sign this to anybody else. Any other circumcised individual, except Isaac and Jacob to whom the Covenant was given by name, might have been childless. Circumcision did not import to any individual that any portion of the numerous seed of Abraham should descend through him. The Covenant promised that all nations should be blessed in Abraham. That the Messiah should be his descendant. Circumcision was no sign to any other that the Messiah should descend from him, even to Isaac and Jacob this promise was peculiarly given and not implied in their circumcision. From some of Abraham's race, according to the Covenant, Messiah must descend, and circumcision was a sign of this, but it was not signed by circumcision to any one of his race. Much less could circumcision sign this to the strangers and slaves who were not of Abraham's posterity. To such not even the temporal promises were either signed or sealed by circumcision. The Covenant promised Canaan to Abraham's descendants, but circumcision could be no sign of this to the strangers and slaves who enjoyed no inheritance in it. God ordained that circumcision be administered to all Abraham's male descendants. Why? For these reasons:

- Because circumcision was the mark that God Himself sovereignly selected to distinguish from other nations that people whom Messiah was to issue from.

In other words it was to set apart the Messianic Seed-line.

- Circumcision was to be administered to all male descendants of Abraham because it served as a continual reminder that from the Abrahamic stock, the promised SEED would spring. Hence soon after Christ appeared circumcision was set aside by God and you do not find it enjoined in the New Testament.

When Paul administered circumcision to his travelling companion it was only for expediency and not to foul up the mission work. Not out of Biblical command.

- Circumcision was enjoined on all male descendants because of what it typically foreshadowed. To be born naturally of the Abrahamic stock gave a title to circumcision and the earthly inheritance which was a figure of that title in the heavenly inheritance of those born of the Spirit.

What I am about to say may have been overlooked by many of you because so much of that which we study has a sacerdotal undertone, and some have accepted many things contrary to the Word of God. That is, look at this closely because many Baptists make a mistake in this very area, Circumcision DOES NOT, DOES NOT typify, or represent or foreshadow Baptism!! Therefore Christian Baptism does not continue circumcision and replace it. Circumcision was put away in Christ, not in Baptism. What then does circumcision typify?

Turn to Philippians, chapter 3 and verse 3:

"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

A man does not even need the New Testament to see what it means because over in the Old Testament, Moses speaks about God commanding circumcision of the heart, the ears and of the mouth. Therefore circumcision represents and typifies as a circumcision of the heart, rolling away the flesh of the heart, the work of the Spirit of God in our new birth and regeneration. Therefore the circumcised are those who are regenerate, and if you are not regenerate, your not circumcised and you can be baptised by every priest in the Roman church. You can be baptised by every minister in sacerdotal Protestant churches, and still not be circumcised. ONLY THE SPIRIT OF GOD CAN CIRCUMCISE THE HEART. We are the circumcision who worship God in the spirit. Not those who go to Jerusalem to the Temple.

Now the New Testament understanding of circumcision is in a threefold sense as corresponding to its threefold teaching of the seed of Abraham. We noted first of all that the seed of Abraham has reference to the SEED, singular Christ Jesus our Lord. Turn to Colossians, chapter 2, verse 11:

"In whom (Christ) also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ"

Therefore as the promised blessings to Abraham that all nations would be blessed through his SEED, singular, Christ, so circumcision has its realization in the circumcision of the Lord Jesus Christ. And of course the circumcision of Christ basically refers to the inward circumcision which consists in regeneration, the circumcision of the heart. But it also signifies that WHEN CHRIST WAS CRUCIFIED, HIS BODY, THE ELECT WERE CIRCUMCISED IN HIS DEATH WHEREIN THE BODY OF SIN WAS ROLLED AWAY, and we judicially died to the realm of sin. Circumcised with the circumcision of the Lord Jesus Christ. Look at Romans, chapter 2, verse 28-29, and let us see who a Jew is:

"For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God"

That seems pretty clear. It says that circumcision which I am talking about is not that circumcision which is in the flesh, but he is a Jew which is one inwardly. Circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God. You want to know who the true Jew is? Look right up in this pulpit! My name is *Aby Griswold Bronstein*. I am a Jew. I am a Jew circumcised in heart, one inwardly, whose praise is not of men, but of God. Here Paul is playing on words. You know Paul had a sense of humor. He was clever. Now look at what he says. He is a Jew, a Judaite, which is one inwardly and circumcision is that of the heart and not in the letter and one whose praise is not of men, but of God. Now the word Judah means praise of God, you see. Now he is saying here that he is a Jew,

one praised of God, whose circumcision is of the heart in the spirit, not in the letter. His praise is not of men but of God.

Oh No! Don't you think that the Jews are any specially privileged people. WE are the specially privileged people of God, is not that what he says? Why? Because we have the seal! We have been circumcised in heart. That's very clear is it not? Scofield just went right down in his popularity, right there!

I want you to note in the next place that there is not only this circumcision of Christ corresponding to the SEED, singular, but there is also a spiritual circumcision which corresponds to the spiritual seed of Abraham. Now what does Paul say in chapter 2 of Romans? 'Who are circumcised in heart, in the spirit.' Spiritual circumcision. Let me give you a quote from Abraham Booth. Abraham Booth was a Baptist. I have quoted those who were not Baptists, that it is time to hear from a Baptist! Abraham Booth said,

"the different state of things under the old and new economy, and the Apostle's distinction between the carnal and spiritual seed of Abraham being duly considered the argument from analogy will run thus: As under the old covenant circumcision belonged to all the natural male descendants of Abraham, so under the new covenant baptism belongs to all the spiritual seed of Abraham who are known to be such only by credible profession of repentance and faith."

And then a work that has become a real authority on Christian Baptism, to refute this circumcision concept, is Professor Paul King Jewett's Syllabus that is used in the Fuller Theological Seminary, which has not yet been published, but is available from the Seminary if you write. Paul King Jewett says,

"if in the typical age of the Old Testament all of the seed of Abraham is to be circumcised even if they be of the circumcision only then in the age of fulfilment all those who answer to the type as the true seed of Abraham shall be baptised, nobody else. And who are they? The New Testament gives an unequivocal answer. These who are of faith, these are the sons of Abraham. Therefore those who are of faith are to be baptised, which is just believers baptism.

I have said that it is a mistake to think that baptism has come in the place of circumcision. Regeneration has always been typified by circumcision. Now one has said,

'as that which supplanted the Old Testament sacrifices was the one offering of the Savior and as that which superseded the Aaronic Priesthood with the High Priesthood of Christ so that which has succeeded circumcision is the spiritual circumcision which believers have in and by Christ.'

Now turn to Colossians, chapter 2, verses 11 and 12:

"In whom ye also are circumcised made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:(being judicially dead to it you see) Buried with him in baptism, wherein ye are also risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead"

You say, 'Well right there, you see that baptism and circumcision are the same.' Oh No! You have two different subjects. Herbert Carson in his commentary on Colossians in the Tyndale Series written at the time he was an Anglican priest told me that with reference to that commentary, that if he had to re-write it, the only change he would make would be with reference to this Scripture. That is having confused circumcision and baptism, and he would point out now that baptism is for believers only, and that through immersion. Therefore the baptism spoken of in verse 12 is something additional to verse 11 and its subject of our judicial death in Christ and our circumcision in His death. Verse 11 declares that Christian circumcision is made with out hands. Now what is said in verse 12 cannot continue the thought, because Baptism is administered by hands. Furthermore, circumcision is the judicially putting off of the body of sin, as declared in verse 11 and has taken the place of circumcision with hands, whereas Baptism is simply the declaration of one's identification with Christ through faith. According to Eph 1:12, and 4:30, the Holy Spirit of God HIMSELF is the seal of the new covenant, and not circumcision, and not Baptism.

I conclude by quoting again from Arthur W. Pink. He says,

The grand design of God's Covenant with Abraham was to make known that through him would come the One Who would bring blessings upon all the families of the earth. The promises made to him were to receive a lower and a higher fulfilment, according as he was to have both natural and spiritual children. For kings shall come out of thee. Thy seed possess the gate of his enemies.

If you compare Rev 1:6; Col 2:15; Rom 8:37; 1 John 5:4, you have a New Testament interpretation of that. Abraham is called a father, neither in a federal, nor in a spiritual sense, but because he is the head of, and I like this, the faith clan. Abraham is the head of the faith clan, the prototype to which all believers are conformed. Christians are not under the Abrahamic Covenant, though they are blessed with him by having their faith accounted to them for righteousness, through that SEED Who would bring those blessings to us. So although New Testament believers are not under the Abrahamic Covenant, they are because of their union with Christ, heirs of its spiritual inheritance.

It only remains for me to point out where the Abrahamic Covenant adumbrated the Everlasting Covenant.

Firstly, it proclaimed the international scope of the Divine Mercy. Some out of all nations were included in the Election of Grace.

Secondly, it made known the ordained stock through whom the Messiah, the Mediator was to issue.

Thirdly, it announced that faith alone secured an interest in all the good God had promised.

Fourthly, Abraham being the father of all believers foreshadowed the truth that Christ is the Father of His Own spiritual seed.

Fifthly, in Abraham's call by God to leave his country and become a sojourner in a strange land was a type of Christ's leaving Heaven and tabernacling upon earth.

Sixthly, as the heir of the world (Rom 4:13 - not just of Canaan) Abraham foreshadowed Christ as the heir of all things (Heb 1:2).

Seventhly, in the promise of Canaan to his seed, we have a figure of the heavenly inheritance which Christ has procured for His people.

Therefore, I conclude, dear ones, that the Baptists without violating the Scriptures, and the practice of infant baptism are as strong as any denominational group on the ordinance of baptism. As a matter of fact, we see its value more so than do they. For we see it in its right relationship in the believers identification with Christ as their Head in His death, burial and resurrection. We believe sound exegesis and not tradition, and antiquity will show believers baptism by immersion was the Biblical method and that there is no Biblical warrant for infant baptism, nor a continuation of circumcision therein.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE

Someone has asked what material I have used in the preparation of this study. Let me first of all say that I have used what I have learned over twenty years of confrontation with the Christian Reformed churches, in Michigan in particular. At one time I used to go up at least once a month to preach to their congregations. From this I learned what their position was and also what my position must be in the light of the Word of God, being and Independent and one of those old Ana-Baptists. But if you want material which is available, at least I believe it is available, I received a great deal of help from:

My visits with Herbert Carson, who was a vicar in the Church of England at Cambridge in England, who enjoyed a position of considerable responsibility. One Lord's Day morning during the administration of Infant Baptism, having made a thorough study of the subject of Baptism, walked out of the Church and became pastor of a small Baptist church in Ireland. He has preached to my own congregation in Birmingham on the subject of Baptism.

[1] Johannes Werns, a German Greek scholar who wrote a Greek Text Book, not at all a Baptist but made an honest study of the subject of Baptism. His book republished by Klock, I believe, entitled Baptism, in which he establishes the Baptist position in light of the teaching of the New Testament. This is a very valuable book examining the teachings of the Reformers.

[2] Then there is Alexander Carson's great work, Baptism, its Mode and Subjects. Carson was a Presbyterian in Ireland who originally set out to disprove the Baptist position, only in his study of the subject to be converted thereto.

[3] Arthur W. Pink's book on the Covenants which I highly recommend for the study of the subject of the Covenants from a Biblical view.

[4] Witsius, a Dutch theologian whose two volume work on the Covenant was translated into English. A work of great value.

As I have said, if I were not a Baptist, having read most of the works of the Paedobaptists, for example the late John Murray, I would have become a Baptist. It is just amazing how they seek to establish a non-Biblical position having no real Biblical authority to do so.