

THE KINGDOM BELONGS TO SUCH AS THESE

An internet video series exploring *Family, Faith and Sacraments* from a Reformed and Covenantal perspective.

Volume #	Subject	Name
Volume 1	Paedofaith	"My God from My Mother's Womb"
Volume 2	Paedobaptism	"As It Is, They Are Holy."
Volume 3	Paedocommunion	"The Whole Community Must Celebrate it."

PAEDOFAITH - PAEDOBAPTISM - PAEDOCOMMUNION

All these issues center around the covenant community (in the Old Testament this was Israel, in the New Testament, it is the church), and how you treat the children of the covenant community.

Paedofaith - We expect naturally that covenant children will possess true and living faith.

Paedobaptism - We baptize the children of believers into the name of the trinity, ceremonially proclaiming the righteousness they have through faith.

Paedocommunion - We include all covenant members at the meal of covenant renewal.

Abraham

GENESIS 12, 15, 17 - ROMANS 4

Summary:

In the Abraham narrative we learn that God's plan for blessing and salvation to all families/nations comes through a **covenant**. And this covenant of **inheritance** is one that is given to Abraham **and to his offspring**. Abraham's children are IN with God.

Genesis 12:1-3 (ESV) - The Call: Abraham Must Start a New Family

- 1 Now the LORD said to Abram, "**Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house** to the land that I will show you.
- 2 And I will **make of you a great nation**, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that **you will be a blessing**.
- 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and **in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed**."

Genesis 15:1-6 (ESV) - Abraham's Faith is Counted as Righteousness.

- 1 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great."
- 2 But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"
- 3 And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir."
- 4 And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; **your very own son shall be your heir**."
- 5 And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."
- 6 **And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.**

- The passing of this covenant status before the Lord is an **inheritance**.
- What things are said to **belong to the offspring - as an inheritance**?
 - The covenant (the family relationship VOW - *like a wedding*)
 - The sign, circumcision (the token of proof - *like a wedding ring*) that they are considered righteous - that is "in" the family.
 - The promise of blessing
 - The land (a home)
 - Salvation: GOD IS THEIR GOD <<-- Abraham's Children are in automatic relationship with God. (the actual saving relationship - *like the marriage itself*)

[Note also that to reject circumcision is to "break" a covenant - this implies that they are in the covenant by default. They couldn't break a covenant they weren't in.]

Genesis 17:1-14 (ESV) - The Covenant between Yhwh and Abraham's family.

- 1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless,
- 2 that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly."
- 3 Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him,
- 4 "Behold, **my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations.**
- 5 No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.
- 6 I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you.
- 7 And I will establish **my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you** throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, **to be God to you and to your offspring after you.**
- 8 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.**"
- 9 And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall **KEEP MY COVENANT, you and your offspring after you** throughout their generations.
- 10 This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: **Every male among you shall be circumcised.**
- 11 You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and **it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you.**
- 12 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,
- 13 both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant.
- 14 **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.**"

Romans 4:9-12 (ESV) - Circumcision is a token of proof of RIGHTEOUSNESS AND FAITH

- 9 Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness.
- 10 **How then was it counted to him?** Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but **before he was circumcised.**
- 11 **He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised.** The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well,
- 12 and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

TORAH

DEUTERONOMY 6

The Law speaks as if it rules over these children as constituents of God's covenant.

The Law DEMANDS that parents DILIGENTLY instruct their children that ONLY Yhwh is their God, and that a whole-hearted love must be given him.

In the process of the command, we must say that God is *OURS* together ("ours" INCLUDES the children since the children have to say this), and we must tell them that they must love **THEIR God**, Yhwh.

Deuteronomy 6 (ESV) - the Sh'ma and the First and Great Commandment

- 1 **"Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the rules that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you,** that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it,
- 2 **that you may fear the LORD your God, you and your son and your son's son,** by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long.
- 3 Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.
- 4 **"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.** [see footnote *]
- 5 **You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.**
- 6 And **these words** that I command you today shall be on your heart.
- 7 **YOU SHALL TEACH THEM DILIGENTLY TO YOUR CHILDREN,** and **shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.**
- 8 **You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.**
- 9 **You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.**

* Or "Yhwh is our God, Yhwh alone."

Notice the consistency of inclusion language from one passage to the next.

THE PSALTER

PSALM 22 - PSALM 71 - PSALM 8

Psalm 22.9-10 (ESV)

- 9 Yet you are he who took me **from the womb;**
you made me **TRUST** you **at my mother's breasts.**
- 10 **On you was I cast from my birth,**
and **FROM MY MOTHER'S WOMB YOU HAVE BEEN MY GOD.**

Psalm 71.4-6 (ESV)

- 4 Rescue me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked,
from the grasp of the unjust and cruel man.
- 5 For you, O Lord, are **my hope,**
my trust, O LORD, **from my youth.**
- 6 Upon you **I have leaned from before my birth;**
you are he who took me **from my mother's womb.**
My praise is continually of you.

Psalm 8.2 (NIV [see footnote *])

- 2 **From the lips of children and infants**
you have ordained praise
because of your enemies,
to silence the foe and the avenger.

* Jesus quotes this verse by using the translation "you have prepared praise" (Matt 21.16).
This is why we have chosen the NIV reading of Ps 8.

Note that Israelites viewed infants as creditable of guilt and deserving God's judgment from the womb - even conception, too (Ps 51), even though they thought that a child can be too young to know good and evil (Is 7):

Psalm 51.5

5 Behold, I was **brought forth in iniquity,**
and **in sin** did my mother **conceive me.**

Romans 9.II (ESV)

II **though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad**—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls— [see also Romans 5.I2-2I]

Isaiah 7.I5-I6

I5 He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good.

I6 For **before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good,** the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted

It appears that the implication is this:

There is an age at which a child is still too young to be actively sinning; however, at the same time, children are *SINFUL*, as they are "children of Adam" from the womb. They are guilty as *sinful*, even if they are not active as *sinners*.

And yet, Ps 22, and Ps 71 say that these sinful infants can also trust, rely on, and have faith in the Lord in the womb.

- Being sinful is a matter of the nature of the soul. All people inherit sinfulness.
- Being a believer is also a matter of the nature of the soul. God normally regenerates within the covenant community.
- God changes hearts in the womb.

Neither one requires factual knowledge to start, but both develop into expressed characteristics with age development. Sin will become hands on - Faith will latch on to teachings.

All are born sinners - Covenant members are born saved/regenerate sinners by God-Given faith.

REGENERATE INFANTS IN SCRIPTURE

SAMSON (JGS 13), JOHN THE BAPTIST (LK 1)

Luke I.15-17 (ESV) - *Zechariah's Prophecy*

- 15 for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and **he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.**
- 16 And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God,
- 17 and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.

Luke I.39-45 (ESV) - *Mary visits her cousin, Elizabeth*

- 39 In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah,
- 40 and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.
- 41 And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, **the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit,**
- 42 and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!
- 43 And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?
- 44 For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, **the baby in my womb leaped for joy.**
- 45 And blessed is she who believed that there would be [g] a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."

Judges I3.3-7 (ESV) - *Samson's Birth Foretold*

- 3 And the angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, "Behold, you are barren and have not borne children, but you shall conceive and bear a son.
- 4 Therefore be careful and drink no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean,
- 5 for behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. No razor shall come upon his head, for **the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb, and he shall begin to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines.**"
- 6 Then the woman came and told her husband, "A man of God came to me, and his appearance was like the appearance of the angel of God, very awesome. I did not ask him where he was from, and he did not tell me his name,
- 7 but he said to me, 'Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. So then drink no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean, **for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death.**'"

TO SUCH AS THESE: EVEN INFANTS

LUKE 18, MARK 10, MATTHEW 19

Luke 18.15-17 (ESV) **Jesus Sticks Up for the Smallest Kingdom Members**

- 15 Now they were bringing **even infants** to him that he might touch them. And when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them.
- 16 But Jesus called them to him, saying, "**Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.**
- 17 Truly, I say to you, whoever does not **receive the kingdom of God like a child** shall not enter it."

Mark 10.13-16 (ESV) - **Jesus is Angry About Overlooking Children**

- 13 And they were **bringing children** to him that he might touch them, **and the disciples rebuked them.**
- 14 But **when Jesus saw it, he was indignant** and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.
- 15 Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."
- 16 And **he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.**

Matthew 19.13-15 (ESV) - **Let the Children Come to Me**

- 13 Then **children were brought** to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people,
- 14 but Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, **for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.**"
- 15 And he laid his hands on them and went away.

Questions with an admittedly paedofaith bias for the sake of examining the texts:

Abraham:

Circle the things pledged "to you and to your offspring" in Gen 17:

The Land, The Covenant, The Sign of the Covenant, The Relationship with God

According to Romans 4, circumcision was a seal of what?

Torah (Law of Moses)

According to Dt 6.4-7, did God want his people to teach their children that Yhwh was their God?

Psalter (Singing with David and Friends)

According to Ps 22.9-10, who is the source/cause of "trust" at nursing age?

According to Ps 22.9-10, how early does a relationship with God begin?

According to Ps 71.5-6, what are two synonymous verbs for "to hope in"?

According to Ps 71.5-6, when does the worshiper claim to have begun leaning on God?

Can you teach your children to sing these God-authored worship songs without causing your family to expect paedofaith in the covenant community?

Samson and John the Baptist*Judges 13*

Why did Samson's mother have to refrain from wine?

What job did call Samson to do?

When did this job description begin and end for Samson?

Luke 1

Consider whether you think John is being portrayed as a living believer or not.

Does the leaping with Joy because of the filling of the Spirit and the presence of Mary and Jesus intend to portay spiritual activity, just a coincidence or something else?

The Kingdom Belongs to Such as These*Matthew 19.13-15*

What are the two parts of Jesus' Command in verse 14?

Does the reason to welcome children go beyond a general need to be nice to children?

Luke 18.15-17

Which youngest class of members are emphasized by the Lukan account in verse 15?

What does it mean for the Kingdom to belong to

Mark 10.13-16

What exactly is the sin that makes Jesus angry?

Jesus is mad at the disciples; what is the expectation of those the disciples were stopping?