

Biblical Notes — Colossians 2:11-12

"No. Water baptism is the antitype of the Red Sea Crossing (1 Co 10:2); the antitype of circumcision of the flesh is regeneration, or circumcision of the heart (Col 2:11). Paedobaptists' presupposition that the NT church, like OT Israel, must inevitably contain both regenerate and unregenerate members is foundational to their apology for infant baptism. Each of those we surveyed argues for it at length. A church composed inevitably of both believers and unbelievers allows for the practice of infant baptism, which knowingly introduces unbelievers into the church's membership. This is not only an instance of their importing an OT construct into the NT with no warrant, however, but also involves a wrong understanding of the NT itself."

— Shawn D. Wright, Believer's Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ (Kindle Locations 4524-4528). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

Colossians 2:11 nowhere teaches that the sign of fleshly circumcision given to the Israelites would be *replaced* by the fleshly operation of Water Baptism in the New Covenant. The entire point Paul is making here is the understanding that "in regeneration" there is a link between circumcision of the heart (vs.11) and the washing of the Spirit (vs.12).

All of this links back to demonstrating our completeness in Christ.

Colossians 2:10 NASB

and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;

That completeness comes through the work of the Spirit to bring you from death to life (John 6:63-65, Romans 6:3-4, Ephesians 2:1), the circumcision of the heart (Romans 2:28-29, Colossians 2:11), and the washing of the Spirit (Romans 6:3-4, Titus 3:5, Colossians 2:12).

"This hermeneutical error, thus stated, inevitably leads to a twofold distortion of the relationship between the two testaments of the Bible. Paedobaptists simultaneously "Christianize" the Old Testament (read the Old Testament as if it were the New (3)) and "Judaize" the New Testament (read the New Testament as if it were the Old). In thus "Christianizing" the Old Testament, paedobaptists restrict the significance of circumcision to purely spiritual promises and blessings, while neglecting its national, earthly, and generational aspect. In thus "Judaizing" the New Testament, paedobaptists import Old Testament concepts of "covenantal holiness," "external holiness," "external members of the covenant," "external union to God," "covenant children," etc. into the New Testament, even though these distinctions are entirely abolished by the New Testament and completely foreign to its teaching."

— Greg Welty, A Critical Evaluation of Paedobaptism. <https://www.fivesolas.com/criteval.htm>

"Much could be said in response to this connection between circumcision and baptism but only a few remarks will be given. Circumcision and baptism are too different from each other to consider them related. Infants were eligible for the rite of circumcision because of physical birth. People are eligible for baptism because of a spiritual birth. Infants are not mentally capable of understanding what is going on. Candidates for baptism must have exercised faith in Christ. Circumcision was an external sign that this male baby is a Jew. Baptism is an external symbol for something that has already happened internally."

— Charles H. Ray, Systematic Theology and Premillennialism, in The Conservative Theological Journal.