

# “A Bridge Over Troubled Water”

Dr. McKay Caston

## INTRODUCTION: *My Personal Journey*

- ✓ Assumptions in seminary, ordination and my early years in the pastorate
- ✓ On vacation, I read Wayne Grudem’s *Systematic Theology*
- ✓ That led to three years of study & struggle
  - For at least a year I was solidly credo-baptist
  - But since, I have grown in my appreciation for both sides of the river

## I. THE ISSUES

- A. Sola Scriptura
- B. Partnering with and participating in a local church

## II. TWO GENERAL VIEWS ON BAPTISM

- A. Credo-baptism
- B. Paedo-baptism
- C. The question: *is there a “sola Scriptura” case for baptizing the infants of Christians*
  - 1. Not mere tradition or human invention
  - 2. We need to reject “straw men” arguments
  - 3. Intellectual and Biblical integrity
- D. My goal is not to *change* your mind, but to *open* your mind to the possibility that reformed, infant baptism is “Biblical” in the sense that it is rooted in the Bible

## III. LOOK AT THE BIBLE AS A WHOLE: *Old Testament & New Testament*

- A. The Lord establishes a covenant people
  - 1. The people of God in the OT (Israel)
  - 2. The people of God in the NT (the new Israel)
  - 3. Israel is the root, the New Israel is the fruit— there is both covenantal discontinuity and continuity (like a seed shedding its shell)
- B. The Lord establishes signs of the covenant
  - 1. Old Testament: circumcision & the passover
  - 2. New Testament: baptism & the Lord’s supper

Old Testament	New Testament
Circumcision	Baptism
Passover	Lord’s Supper

- 3. The outward rite did not save; it represented and preached the need for an inner reality
  - a) Circumcision of the flesh —> circumcision of the heart
  - b) Baptism with water —> baptism of the Spirit

#### IV. THE SPIRITUAL MEANING OF CIRCUMCISION

##### A. Two key texts

1. Genesis 15:6
2. Romans 4:11-12

##### B. Circumcision represents “faith righteousness” / “justification through faith”

1. Circumcision was a promise made to faith
2. Not a guarantee of salvation nor a regenerative rite
3. The same as with baptism

##### C. What did the Lord command Abraham to do with this faith sign?

D. So, the Lord was pleased to apply a faith sign to infants who could not yet express faith.

E. What is the potential implication for baptism?

#### V. AN OBJECTION: *the NT never commands the baptism of infants*

#### VI. HOW MIGHT A WHOLE-BIBLE PERSPECTIVE DEAL WITH THIS OBJECTION?

A. The covenant practice of applying the sign of the gospel (which is a sign of faith) to covenant children was never repealed

B. The NT deals with children of Christians covenantally

1. James 2:2 (assembly is lit. *synagogue*) and the Jewish-Christian context
2. Thinking like a Jew in Acts 2:37-39
3. Instructions for children in Ephesians 6:1-4 and Colossians 3:20
4. The unique status of children born to a believing parent in 1 Corinthians 7:13-14
5. The *oikos* baptisms

#### VII. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

A. 1 Corinthians 10:1-5, the baptism of Israel

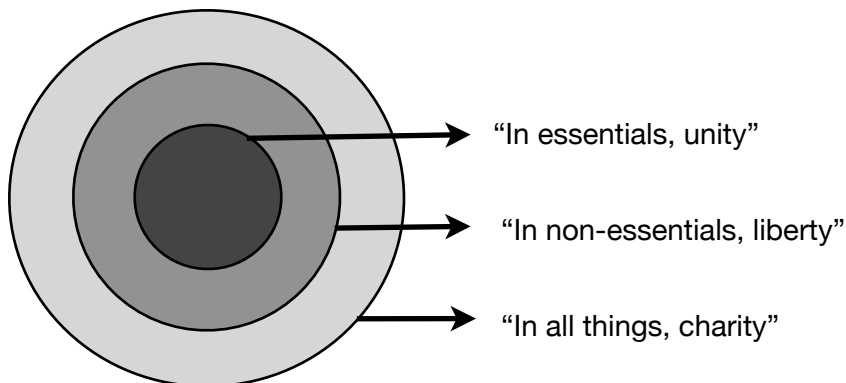
B. Consider those who are “cut off” from the Vine in Romans 11:17-24

C. Discipleship: watering with the gospel from the earliest days (ex: our vegetable garden / just produced baby tomatoes... but we’ve been watering since we planted them)

D. An illustration: *a fraternity “legacy”*

#### CONCLUSION: *the Moravian’s Motto*

- “In the essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all all things, charity” (Rom. 14:5-6)
- Concentric circles of theological commitment and unity



- Pursuing and experiencing an impassioned, yet humble orthodoxy