

Covenant Theology and the Church (April 6, 2025)

The Church—Visible or Invisible?

"The covenant of grace includes only the specific number of the elect given to the Son in the counsel of peace, but in its administration it affects far more men and women." (Stephen Myers, *God to Us*, 285)

- Romans 9:6–7
- Hebrews 6:4–6
- 1 John 2:18–19
- Acts 20:29–30

VISIBLE CHURCH	INVISIBLE CHURCH
Covenant community	Covenant people
External administration	Internal appropriation
Believers and their children	Believers only
Noncommunicant members	Communicant members
Baptism	The Lord's Supper

A Critical Word of Comfort

"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." (1 Tim. 1:15)

"Whom did Christ come to save? He came to save sinners. If you are a sinner, then you are entitled to come to Jesus, because Jesus came for sinners. And that same Jesus declares in His Word, 'The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out' (John 6:37). So as you come to Jesus, come believing that He will save. Being finite and limited, we must not look to things that we cannot discern. We look to, and we hear, Jesus." (Myers, 291)

Covenant Theology and the Sacraments

"Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace." (WCF 27.1)

"[Abraham] received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised." (Rom. 4:11)

Covenant Theology and the Meaning of Baptism

- Colossians 2:8–12
- Genesis 17:9–14
- Deuteronomy 10:16
- Romans 2:25–29

3 Biblical Arguments for Infant Baptism

1. NT's silence on who should be baptized

- "For something as pivotal as the sacrament of inclusion within God's visible people to have changed with no questions and no teaching would be peculiar, to say the very least. Later Christians are left to assume, then, that practices remained the same. The sign and seal of the covenant was administered both to believers and to their children." (299)
- "They shall be my people, and I will be their God; then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them and their children after them." (Jer. 32:38-39)

2. Household baptisms

- Acts 16:14-15
- Acts 16:30-34
- 1 Corinthians 1:14-16

3. Sanctity of family members of believers

- "For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy." (1 Cor. 7:14)

Covenant Theology and the Meaning of the Lord's Supper

- "For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed." (1 Cor. 5:7)
- "For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." (Matt. 26:28)
- "And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, 'Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.'" (Ex. 24:8)
- "Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself." (1 Cor. 11:28-29)
- "The blood of Calvary, represented in the cup, is not simply blood that takes away sin. It is blood that satisfies the covenant of works and fulfills the covenant of grace. It is a blood that both washes away sin and establishes righteousness. Through the lens of covenant theology, the meaning of the body and the blood being offered in the supper explodes." (Myers, 305)