Section: Divine Covenants (Covenant Theology)

Wednesday, March 25, 2020

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**TEACHING NOTES**

**Q59. What is the New Covenant?**

It is the covenant by which God saves the elect, by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. The New Covenant was planned before creation, promised in Genesis after the fall, and formally established by the blood of Christ when the work required of Him was complete.

**Jeremiah 31:31** “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah”

**Matthew 5:17** “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”

**Hebrews 8:6** But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises.

**Luke 22:20** And likewise the cup after they had eaten, [Jesus said], “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.”

**Hebrews 8:13** In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

**Hebrews 9:15** Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.

**Galatians 3:14** so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

(Further study: Genesis 3:15; Ezekiel 36:25-28; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ephesians 2:11-22; Hebrews 8; John 10:27-30; Hebrews 9:28)

**This covenant is sometimes called** the Covenant of Grace.

Tonight, we conclude our current series, studying Covenant Theology.

There were thoughts of adding more lessons since there is much more that could be said, but going from 4 lessons last time we taught this to 10 lessons seemed sufficient for now.

This lesson is part three of our New Covenant focus.

The NC is

**…** the covenant by which God saves the elect, by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

The New Covenant was planned before creation, promised in Genesis after the fall, and formally established by the blood of Christ when the work required of Him was complete.

* **God will grow (sanctify) a redeemed person surely and progressively in this first creation, and He makes the redeemed sinless in glory**

Let’s look again at our Hebrews 8 passage.

In speaking of the New Covenant mediated by Jesus Christ, God’s word says in:

**Hebrews 8:10-12**

**10**… I will put my laws into their minds,
    and write them on their hearts …
**11**And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor
    and each one his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’
for they shall all know me,
    from the least of them to the greatest.
**12**For I will be merciful toward their iniquities,
    and I will remember their sins no more.”

This portion speaks to more of the decisive difference in the New Covenant as compared to the Old Covenant.

It leads us to talk about more realities of the New Covenant tonight.

First, the law and our new covenant obedience to it…

We’ve studied before that God has written the moral law on the hearts *of all of mankind*—every single person.

In this passage though, *this is talking about a different type of writing law on hearts*.

It uses familiar language, but it is not the same thing by any means. When God says, “I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts,” His **effective,** sovereign work to sanctify His saved people is being spoken of.

This is an effectual writing on one’s heart.

It means that: **God will grow (sanctify) a redeemed person surely and progressively in this first creation, *and* He makes the redeemed sinless in glory.**

The blessing of this verse is *actualized* in each person at *new birth* when the Holy Spirit does His Covenant of Redemption work in giving each person new life by uniting them to Christ and beginning to grow him/her as a faithful adopted child, and it is *fully realized* in the consummation.

We see these elements in:

**Ezekiel 36:26-27** where God, through the prophet, explains regeneration and this sanctification. God says,

**26**…I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

**27**And I will put my Spirit within you, and ***cause you*** *to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.*

At conversion, in an altogether different and better way, *God puts His laws into the minds and writes them on the hearts* of the redeemed. As a blessing of the New Covenant, *God causes* the redeemed to walk in His statutes and be careful to obey His rules, by the ongoing effectual grace of the New Covenant. This is unique to the New Covenant.

Instead of giving the law externally as burden to be met before rewards enjoyed, in *this* better and different covenant God pours out the covenant blessings upon His elect at conversion—one of which is that He effectively puts His law—New Covenant law—inside of you *as a blessing for righteous living*. No other covenant offered or did this.

Adam had law as burden to obey *to earn* the eternal rewards.

Abraham’s line had law as burden to obey *to earn* the temporary rewards.

But for The Covenant of Grace, the law is **not** a burden to earn covenant rewards, *rather*, **it is a part of the covenant rewards**.

It is a blessing to have the Law (to KNOW GOD’S WILL for us) and to have God working obedience in us (CAUSING US TO DO GOOD WORKS FOR HIS GLORY AND THE GOOD OF OTHERS AND OURSELVES). What a blessing!

We see a helpful connection in Ephesians, as well; See that God first saves us (brings us into The Covenant of Grace), and then has us walk in the good works He has ordained for us:

**Ephesians 2:8-10**

**8**For by grace you have been saved through faith. **And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God**, **9**not *a result of works*, so that no one may boast. **10*For*** we are *his workmanship*, created in Christ Jesus *for good works*, **which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them**.

Notice the similarity, Ezekiel said “*I will* … **cause you to walk in** my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.”

And this Ephesians passage says, “we are ***his workmanship***, created … for good works … **that we should walk in them**.”

Notice as well, we are made new in Christ “for good works, *which God prepared* ***beforehand***…”

Prepared beforehand? What’s that remind you of?

The Covenant of Redemption, of course! Before time began, God planned and decreed all these things, ***including* the good works He would sovereignly cause us to do.** This all ties together. It’s amazing.

*In this life*, (on this first creation), we *grow* in obedience in the New Covenant; this is called Progressive Sanctification. Progressive sanctification is growing in holiness through obedience to the Lordship of Jesus and His word *from a right heart.* By grace, it is a lifelong process powered by the Holy Spirit to change us to become more like Christ.

**Being redeemed by** **the New Covenant, we progressively become more Christ-like:**

**Head:** Knowledge, Understanding, Wisdom, Worldview

**Heart:** Attitude, Emotions, Motives, Feelings, Desires

**Hands:** Actions, Relationships, Service, Sacrifice

Amazing blessings of the New Covenant! **Not** a burden to earn covenant rewards, *rather*, **it is a part of the covenant rewards**.

So, as our passages have said, God’s children are grown by God while we are called to do good.

Therefore, let us have Holy Spirit-Powered, Gospel-Motived, Faith-Fueled **Effort.**

In the gospel we learn that God has done everything required to save us, and in light of that and based on the gospel, **Scripture calls us** to set our minds, hearts, and hands to honor God.

Hear this reality in a couple examples of Scripture.

Scripture declares gospel truth, *then* calls us to gospel-motived *action*:

In Romans chapter 6, Paul says to believers:

“Having been set free from sin, [you] have become slaves of righteousness *(that’s the gospel truth)* . . .

[**therefore**] now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification *(that’s the imperative, that’s the* ***gospel-motived action we should set ourselves to****)*.

Hear this pattern as well in Galatians 5:

“Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (that’s the gospel truth),

**therefore**, “walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh” (that’s the imperative, that’s the **gospel-motived action we should set ourselves to**).

Book after Book in the New Testament we see this pattern: gospel truth, then the call to gospel-motived good work.

But what I want to encourage and comfort you with *in this lesson* is a deeper understanding that:

a blessing of the New Covenant is such that *God sovereignly causes* the redeemed to do good work, **by the ongoing effectual grace of the New Covenant.**

The New Covenant call to obey God isn’t about *you pulling yourselves up by the bootstraps!*

Yes, we should see the commands of God, and feel **the personal responsibility** to obey them…that’s right and good, but we must not think it’s a fleshly task. No, it’s a spiritual reality that plays out in the natural. **Holy Spirit-Powered**, Gospel-Motived, Faith-Fueled **Effort.**

A change has happened in us (by God’s work) and we continue to change (as God continues to work in us).

As we considered 2 weeks ago, see that God is always working in the redeemed, as Philippians 2:13 says,

**Philippians 2:13** … **it is God who works in you**, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

So, even when we consider the imperatives of Christianity (the commands, the calls, the law), it is God who works in us, because He has redeemed us *and He continues to carry us along by His power and grace.*

It is God who works in us, because Christ has done all that was required to earn our salvation.

It is God who works in us, because we have been set free to righteousness through the gospel.

**As a blessing of the New Covenant**, *God causes* the redeemed to walk in His statutes and be careful to obey His rules, by the ongoing effectual grace of God.

Now…..this point—these passages—about Christian obedience is not saying in this life—in this broken world—we will obey perfectly.

*In this life, (on this first creation), we* ***grow*** *in obedience* while we still have real temptations and we do still sin. *This is not okay*; sin is an affront to God. But it is our reality for this time.

When a Christian sins, a true Christian will repent of that sin. Sometimes God uses the means of Christian accountability and even dis-fellowship to bring that about, but a true Christian will repent and show his or her testimony of faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior to be true.

*In this life, (on this first creation), we grow in obedience* while we still have real temptations and we do still sin.

But, we **also** said that: **God makes the redeemed sinless in glory.**

That is a blessing of the New Covenant as well—one of the heights of the New Covenant!

The 1689 Confession of Faith says “The bodies of those who have died return to dust and undergo destruction. But their souls neither die nor sleep, because they have an immor**t**al character, and immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous are then made perfect in holiness and are received into paradise.

There they are with Christ and behold the face of God in light and glory *while* they wait for the full redemption of their bodies.”

To be clear:

Before the consummation, upon the death of a member of the New Covenant (a true believer), they go to be with the Lord and the person’s spirit (their soul) is made perfect—(made to no longer be marred by sin or commit sin).

And at the consummation, the souls of still-living members of the New Covenant are then also made perfect in holiness.

Then, with the consummation, God transforms all the mortal, physical bodies *of the saved* (that is, of those in New Covenant) ***to*** eternal, glorified physical bodies in which we will dwell forever in the new heaven and the new earth.

**God makes the redeemed sinless in glory!**

Church,

All of our growth (that is, Progressive Sanctification) in this creation *and our perfect obedience in the new creation to come* depends on God’s sovereign sanctifying power. It’s *His* gracious work in us and it does not earn us the New Covenant rewards, Christ as already earned the covenant rewards—instead, again, ***this is*** a reward of the covenant being experienced and enjoyed!

So, God puts His laws into the minds and writes the law uniquely on the hearts of the saved. What a blessing of the New Covenant!

* **What Law** **in the New Covenant?**

Let’s consider then, *what law*? What law from God is relevant to us living in this time in human history, living under and in *the formally established* New Covenant?

What law do we follow to glorify God in the New Covenant?

As mentioned previously, if you have not listened to the *Biblical Law lesson* I taught last year from the catechism, it would be very beneficial here, as it expands on what we’ll say in this lesson.

We have seen in prior lessons that God has always required mankind (regardless of which covenants they are in or not in) to obey His unchanging moral law. ***And*** we have seen that God issues other, particular laws, for certain people at certain times.

So, yes, we do have LAW to follow.

But **to be** clear here, in The Covenant of Grace we are **not** under law *as a covenant of works*. We are **not** under law *in such a way that we must obey it to receive the rewards or blessings* of the New Covenant (that should be clear from our prior CoR and NC lessons). No, we have the law as a blessing to us—as good and perfect instruction for how God’s chosen people should live and thrive for His glory and our good.

None of the covenanted rewards of The Covenant of Grace (the New Covenant) are earned by our law keeping, period.

With that, note that when Paul speaks in his writing of *not being under the law but under grace* he is referring to the law as a covenant of works. We are not *under the law (under a CoW) but under grace (under a CoG—THE CoG).* That, of course, is because we are redeemed and given all the rewards based on the life and death of Christ for us. We are in a covenant of grace, not a covenant of works.

*But* obedience to God’s law is good and right for those created in God’s image, and certainly those in everlasting covenant with Him.

Christ is our King—as His redeemed it is our pleasure to do His will.

The 1689 Confession of Faith makes these points when it says, “True believers are not under the law as a covenant of works, to be justified or condemned by it. Yet it is very useful to them and to others as a rule of life that informs them of the will of God and their duty. It directs and obligates them to live according to its precepts. ...

The promises of the law likewise show them God’s approval of obedience and the blessings they may expect when they keep it, even though these blessings are not owed to them by the law as a covenant of works.”

* **Something major changed in regard to certain laws**

With that clarity, let’s consider what law we have.

It should be plain to us in reading the New Testament that something major changed in regard to *certain* laws in the formal establishment of the New Covenant.

Consider a few helpful examples:

**1 Corinthians 5:9-13** Paul writes,

**9**I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— **10**not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.

**11**But now I am writing to you not to associate **with anyone who bears the name of brother** *if* he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. **12**For what have I to do with judging outsiders?

Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? **13**God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”

In this section, Paul explains what these *New Covenant* believers are required to do in the case of **unrepentant** sin in a professing believer in their midst.

This is a significant shift in things, a shift with life and death consequences.

*In the Old Covenant*, those in the covenant community who committed *certain* sins (like sexual immortally) were to be put to death by the people of the Old Covenant.

However, for certain sins, in the New Covenant it is not death, but relational excommunication/disfellowship by the people of the New Covenant, with hope for repentance through the relational disfellowship.

Paul says in verse 12, “Purge the evil person from among you.”

Different from the Old Covenant, this is not calling the covenant community to put the unrepentant in their fellowship to death, rather, verse 11, Do “**not to associate** with anyone who bears the name of brother *if he is guilty* (that is, if he is unrepentant).”

*Clearly, a change has happened in regard to* ***judicial type*** *of positive law God previously gave*.

And look at another example,

In the Old Covenant, God put certain restrictions on the eating of certain foods, but in the New Covenant, this category of law has also changed:

**Romans 14:14, 17, 20**

**14**I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself … **17**For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. **20**... Everything is indeed clean …

Again, the context here is primarily about food.

*Clearly, a change has happened in regard to* ***ceremonial type*** *of positive law God previously gave*.

Perhaps one of the more important examples of changes in law between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant *is seen and summarized* in the Old Covenant command to circumcise.

Circumcision was of critical importance in the Old Covenant, it was a defining law for a particular fleshly covenant people. *But* it was put away with haste by The Covenant of Grace: The Apostles make this very clear, for example, Paul in:

**Galatians 6:15**

For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

And in,

**1 Corinthians 7:19**

For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God.

*Therefore*, there are some commands that God previously issued that do not apply with the formal establishment of the New Covenant.

What, then, is the answer to our present question, which is: *What law from God is relevant to us living in this time in human history, living under and in the formally established New Covenant*?

* + **Universal Moral Law**

To answer this, we must know that the Old Covenant and all of its laws have been put away, *as a covenant*.

But, the Universal Moral Law that God expressed in that covenant *is* ***transcendent*** *of covenants* **as** it is law that **all of creation** is call to obey by nature of our creature-Creator dynamic.

This moral law is the eternal, foundational law that has and will always exist.

The Universal Moral Law was summarized in the Ten Commandments given in Exodus and summarized again in the New Testament, (for example, by Christ in Matthew 22 when He is asked about the greatest commandment).

This law is a blessing—it is God’s good moral design for mankind.

So, as image bearers, mankind in all times and places is under the Universal Moral Law *because it is based on the authority and character of God and our relation to Him as created creature*.

Christians are image bearers, therefore we are still obligated to obey the moral law, **but in regard to the New Covenant we are in, it is not required *as a covenant of works***……as we and the confession make clear.

To some of these things, Sam Renihan says, “The apostles rejected the Israelite laws of circumcision, food, and more.

But the moral law is reinforced for the people of Christ’s covenant and kingdom (Matthew 5:20-24).

Paul affirms that there is a continuity of [moral] law that transcends the covenants.

The law written by nature on the hearts of the Gentiles was written down for Israel [in the Old Covenant time] (Romans 2:14-15) and later Paul quotes the Ten Commandments as a reference for believers’ obedience (Romans 13:8-10).

John strongly argues that the children of God keep the commands of God (1 John 5:1-3).

All of this is consistent with God’s promise to cause them to walk in His ways (Jeremiah 31:33).

*That law* is “His” law, the moral law, written on tablets of stone by the finger (Spirit) of God in the Old Covenant, and written on tablets of flesh by the Spirit of God in the New Covenant.

The law and the gospel permeate the entirety of redemptive history, before, during, and after Israel. And they find their home in the New Covenant and kingdom of Christ among the children of God.” END Q

* + **Positive Law**

*In addition to the moral law*, like in previous convents, God (who sets the covenant terms and is the only lawgiver), has issued positive laws for those in the New Covenant.

Positive Law is *law and commands based on the will of God for a particular people, a particular purpose, and a particular time*.

Again, as with moral law, we are obligated to obey New Covenant positive law, but ***not*** *as a covenant of works*.

In the New Covenant, the covenanted rewards are not earned by our law keeping, period. That needs to be very clear to all of us.

But it is good and right for us to know and honor His law—including New Covenant positive law. Christ is our King—it must be our pleasure to do His will.

So, I want to highlight *two of the* commands that are unique to the New Covenant.

And these two things **are actually the signs of the New Covenant.**

These two commands—these two covenant signs—are Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

* **The two signs of the New Covenant are Baptism and the Lord’s Supper**

Those living before the New Covenant was formally established were not commanded by God to be baptized or partake in the Lord’s Supper.

These commands in the New Testament are a New Covenant reality *that apply to believers living* ***when and after*** *Christ commanded them and established the New Covenant*. *That means it is Positive Law for us in the here and now.*

The 1689 Confession of Faith says in agreement that “Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of positive and sovereign institution, appointed by the Lord Jesus, the only lawgiver, to be continued in his church to the end of the world.”

We’ll have full lesson content devoted to each of these New Covenant commands later in our catechism study, so we won’t take time in this series to cover *extensive depth* on these blessed gifts. But some key things about them are fitting for our studying.

We see these things commanded for the New Covenant in several places, but for time, we’ll look at just a couple of passages.

* **Lord’s Supper**

First, the Lord’s Supper:

**Luke 22:19-20**

**19**[Jesus] took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **20**And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.”

The Word of Truth Catechism says, “The Lord’s Supper is a holy, New Covenant ordinance from our Lord Jesus, whereby professing believers gather together regularly to remember, celebrate, and testify of the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ by the eating of bread and the drinking of wine, which symbolize the body and blood of Jesus. This is a regular practice and testimony for those who are saved by God.”

Of this ordinance, the 1689 Confession of Faith says “The supper of the Lord Jesus was instituted by him the same night wherein he was betrayed, to be observed in his churches, unto the end of the world, for

the perpetual remembrance,

and shewing forth the sacrifice of himself in his death,

confirmation of the faith of believers in all the benefits thereof,

their spiritual nourishment, and growth in him,

their further engagement in, and to all duties which they owe to him;

and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and with each other.”

The Lord’s Supper is such a blessing!

* **Water Baptism**

The other of the two signs of the New Covenant is water baptism.

An example of this being commanded to and for Christians is in:

**Matthew 28:18-19**

**18**[Jesus said], “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19**Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”

And an example of it being done biblically can be found in:

**Acts 8:12**

**12**… when they [the crowd] *believed Philip as he preached good news* about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

The Word of Truth Catechism says, “Baptism is a holy, New Covenant ordinance from our Lord Jesus, whereby a professing believer in Jesus Christ testifies of his/her faith in Christ alone for salvation and his/her union with Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection by the public testimony of immersion in water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is to be done once and in no way contributes to one’s salvation.”

Of this ordinance, the 1689 Confession of Faith says “Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ,

to be unto the party baptized,

a sign of his fellowship with him, in his death and resurrection;

of his being engrafted into him;

of remission of sins;

and of giving up into God, through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life.

Those who do actually profess repentance towards God, faith in, and obedience to, our Lord Jesus Christ, *are the only proper subjects of this ordinance*.

The outward element to be used in this ordinance is water, wherein the party is to be baptized, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

As noted on the next page of your notes, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are the distinct signs of the New Covenant, *commanded for those in the New Covenant*. These things are only to be done by those who are testifying to saving faith in Jesus Christ. Only those considered to have New Covenant membership should partake of the signs of the New Covenant.

As we said in past content, while we cannot know for certain who God has saved**, only those with personal testimony** of new birth and saving faith *should be considered by us to have New Covenant membership.*

Those who partake of the signs of the covenant who should not, are sinning against the Mediator of the covenant—the divine Lawgiver. We may not allow any person (young or old) to partake in these New Covenant signs *if they are not personally testifying* to faith in Jesus.

* + **The unbiblical practice of infant baptism**

In light of that, related to what we discussed last week, this is another area where our beloved confessional Presbyterian brothers and sisters error.

The error Presbyterians make in thinking that children of believers are, (in some way), in the New Covenant leads them to believe that children of believers should be baptized ***prior to*** their professing personal credible faith in Christ Jesus.

As a side note, the unbiblical practice of infant baptism exists in a number of various groups—and some, like Roman Catholics, actually *heretically* believe that

*through baptism one receives the Holy Spirit, is freed from sin and reborn as a son of God; becoming a member of Christ.*

Catholics believe that baptism has *salvific effects*. That is outright, damnable heresy. It’s dangerous and concerning how many people are deceived by the false Roman Catholic religion.

Confessional Presbyterians, however, do not believe baptism has salvific effects, to be clear.

But since confessional Presbyterians (who we align with on so many other things) are our closest friends that hold to paedobaptist errors, we want to address that a bit more this time teaching through Covenant Theology.

In this consideration, it is helpful to see the Presbyterian confession’s words to see how they declare these things. The **Westminster Confession** says:

Baptism is a sacrament of the new testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible Church; but also, to be unto him a sign and seal

of the covenant of grace,

of his ingrafting into Christ,

of regeneration,

of remission of sins,

and of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life.

Which sacrament is, by Christ's own appointment, to be continued in His Church until the end of the world.

Their confession goes on to say…

Not only those that do actually profess faith in the obedience unto Christ, *but also the infants* of one, or both, believing parents, are to be baptized.

So, they claim that Baptism … of the party baptized [is] … to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration,of remission of sins, and so on.

*And then* they also say that the infants of one, or both, believing parents, are to be baptized.

Do you see the problem with their own confession? Baptism cannot mean for unbelieving infants what it says in the first portion of their Baptism beliefs. Presbyterian paedobaptists say baptism is a sign and seal of being in Christ’ saving covenant, but then they baptize children who are not in Christ’s saving covenant—or at least, not claiming to be in Christ’s saving covenant. Surely not all the infants they baptize are saved at that time or at all in their lives. Baptism cannot be what they claim it is in their confession for those who are not personally claiming to be in Christ.

Church, Scripture has to be the authority on these things; In Scripture, **there is no biblical basis** to say that an infant (of a believing parent even) should receive *a sign and seal of the New Covenant*. Infant Baptism goes beyond Scripture. It goes beyond the terms of The Covenant of Grace, it goes beyond the commanded ordinance for New Covenant baptism, and it goes beyond the teaching of other biblical doctrine. Infant Baptism—in any shape or form—is an unbiblical practice.

**We have seen clearly in Scripture, that it is only by grace, through faith, in Christ that one is justified and adopted into God’s family.**

It is only by the work of God to regenerate a person and give them that saving faith **that a person is in the New Covenant**—The Covenant of Grace.

While God is free to save the elect in infancy,

**no infant can *testify* to saving faith**,

no infant can testify to a claim of New Covenant participation,

no infant can *express desire or consent* to being baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, an infant (of a believing parent even) should not be baptized—*they cannot testify unto the sign of covenant fellowship with Christ*.

A primary problem with Presbyterian-type Paedobaptists is a faulty view of some points of Covenant Theology in which they do not rightly see the differences of the Old Covenant and New Covenant.

In short, they believe the Old Covenant and New Covenant are of the same substance, therefore, in their view, God’s choice to work covenantally in a family line in the Old Covenant time, is maintained in the New Covenant time.

To them, since male children of Old Covenant members received circumcision, in their view, *all children* of those professing to be in the New Covenant should receive water baptism.

Infant Baptism is wrong, and that is seen in two primary ways:

First, better understating Covenant Theology (especially the differences between the covenants and the particular terms of the New Covenant),

and second, based on the Bible’s passages about baptism.

We have discussed the differences between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant at length in these lessons—I trust you know those things now, or you may return to the lessons again for a fuller understanding.

But let me briefly remind you, the Old Covenant (including the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic covenants) was a covenant of **specific purpose** to work through Abraham’s linage, **for specific reasons**.

The Old Covenant did not offer eternal life as a covenant reward to the family line in the covenant, it offered other things.

Since it was a covenant based on one family generation to the next, we can see why God clearly commanded the covenant sign of circumcision to be given to the children in the family line.

**But** it is wrong to take the operations of a generational family line type of covenant and use it as a basis for how covenant signs should work in a new and different covenant—**especially when that new and different covenant is not a generational family line type of covenant.**

We studied last lesson both how a person is brought into the New Covenant (it’s not automatic generational family line membership) and we also saw Jesus’ clear and bold words about dividing families.

The Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic covenants worked through families for specific reasons, **and those reasons do not exist in the New Covenant.**

God’s word tells us how **the particular people** God chose actually enter into the New Covenant: “Everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” (Acts 2:39) **That’s the way, not family line—not parent’s belief.**

Now, let’s take a moment to discuss the second point—that was the passages directly about baptism:

When the New Covenant commands to baptize *are considered*, as well as the clear New Covenant examples and biblical New Covenant evidence, **the testimony of Scripture is that baptism is for professing believers in Jesus Christ.** **Baptism is dependent upon personal testimony of a person’s faith in Christ alone.**

There is no biblical justification for infant baptism.

I cannot take you, in Scripture, to a command to baptize an infant, or a clear example of it, or clear evidence for it ***because* there are no such passages in Scripture.**

In effort to try to claim that there is examples or evidence in the New Testament of infant baptisms, some Paedobaptists point to a handful of passages in which the text states that those in a household were baptized. However, this is not a faithful handling of Scripture, **there is zero actual account** that either unbelieving children were in the home or that unbelieving children were baptized.

A Paedobaptist has to add or assume something of the accounts that Scripture does not say.

That is not proper hermeneutics, that is not the proper way to honor God’s word.

The Scriptures do not have any examples of unbelieving children being baptized, and there is no clear evidence of unbelieving children being baptized.

Many well respected Paedobaptist theologians and pastors do admit what I am saying, consider these statements from some of them:

Paedobaptist Geoffrey Bromiley wrote, Q “Parents are not disobeying any clear-cut command if they withhold baptism from their children.” Children of Promise: The Case for Baptizing Infants, 1979

Paedobaptist Charles Hodge wrote, Q “In every case on record of [the apostles’] administering the [baptism], it was on condition of a profession of faith on the part of the recipient.” Charles Hodge 1851–1878

Paedobaptist John Murray wrote, Q “We do not have an overt and proven instance of infant baptism recorded in the New Testament” John Murray (Christian Baptism, p. 66) 1898-1975)

Paedobaptist Bryan Chapell wrote, Q “…we who believe in infant baptism must confess that the lack of any specific example of infant baptism in the NT is a strong counterweight to our position.” Bryan Chapell

Paedobaptist Louis Berkhof wrote, Q “It may be said at the outset that there is no explicit command in the Bible to baptize children, and there that is not a single instance in which we are plainly told that children were baptized…the NT contains no direct evidence for the practice of infant baptism in the days of the apostles.” Louis Berkhof (Systematic Theology, p. 634) 1873-1957

*And finally,* Paedobaptist BB Warfield wrote, Q “It is true that there is no express command to baptize infants in the NT, no express record of the baptism of infants, and no passages so stringently implying it that we must infer from them that infants were baptized.” BB Warfield 1886–1902

Church, I don’t need to take you to a verse in which a baby is baptized or such thing is commanded, and then explain why that doesn’t apply today—**and that is because no such passages for such things exist.**

The only commands and clear examples of baptism in the Bible are for and of professing believers.

**In Scripture,**

**there are no commands to baptize infants,**

**there are no clear examples of infants being baptized,**

**and there is no other clear evidence for infant baptism in the Bible.**

With that being the case, how do those Paedobaptists/ Presbyterians who admit those points as true, still come to their position?

It’s back to what we said last week:

Their error is drawn primarily from them looking to Old Covenant realities.

The Presbyterian error is to look at how God work previously, in other covenants, and bring distinctives from the past into the New Covenant even if the New Covenant passages don’t make the claims they come to.

These Presbyterians don’t use God’s later, clearer, more applicable *instruction, examples, and evidence* from the New Testament for the New Covenant realities (New Covenant ordinances/signs), *they look to the Old Testament.*

The content of this series should have helped you understand why *that’s not faithful in this case*, so I won’t repeat it all again here.

But, what we have seen is that: It is not right to assume that a child of a believer is also part of the New Covenant in any way, *unless they personally testify to it*. *Scripture teaches plainly that only those saved by grace through personal faith in Jesus are in the New Covenant.*

**We are not claiming to perfectly know if someone has been regenerated by God, but we can see clearly that the marker spoken to in the New Testament is a personal profession of union to Christ through faith alone.**

Scripture puts forth (by command and example and evidence *and by the Covenant Theology of the Bible rightly known*) that **only those personally claiming to be disciples of Christ are to receive and partake in the signs of His covenant.**

Now, hear me clearly, we most certainly want to see children be saved: we’re committed to teaching the bible—to preaching the gospel—we go to great lengths to equip parents and partner with them to instruct the children according to God’s word.

Therefore, when a child understands and testifies credibly to saving faith in Jesus Christ, we rightly should celebrate that. We should be thrilled by God’s saving grace and their claim to it in their life. And we should welcome them in the adopted family of God—baptizing them as Scripture commands.

But until a child credibly testifies to personal saving faith, *biblically,* we cannot assume they are in the New Covenant.

Church, we have seen in our study that: Family line, blood, parent’s faith, Old Covenant methods…….none of these things can lead us to treat an unbelieving person (young or old) like they are IN the New Covenant. It’s really is as simple as that.

God does not issue New Covenant membership (or the signs of New Covenant membership) on the basis of family.

We saw specifically last week that Christ said he came to divide families (His words not mine), He did not say that he came to issue New Covenant membership to children of believers.

**We also saw specifically last week that a person is brought into the New Covenant but God’s effective call, not by family linage or any other factor other than God’s effective call.**

Christ made clear that He is not working New Covenant membership on the basis of family. Rather, a person is only brought into New Covenant membership through God’s effective call—and God only calls those who He preordained to before creation began.

As we said, Presbyterians claiming that children of a believing parents are in the New Covenant (in some way) prior to the children professing personal saving faith in Jesus…are not honoring Scripture.

While paedobaptists point to unclear passages in Scripture and/or Old Covenant realities to defend their position, the details that they cannot dispute are that:

In Scripture,

there are no commands to baptize infants,

there are no clear examples of infants being baptized,

and there is no other clear evidence for infant baptism in the Bible.

It is manmade tradition and/or a misunderstanding of Scripture that leads some to issue the New Covenant signs of Baptism and/or Lord’s Supper to those *who are not claiming to be personally united to Christ by faith alone.*

In light of the testimony of Scripture, we must not issue (or support the issuing) of baptism or the Lord’s Supper to anyone who does not personally testify to God’s effectual call that has produced personal faith in Christ as Savior and Lord.

There is no biblical justification for infant baptism—on the other hand, Scripture clearly commands, examples, and evidences baptizing those who personally testify to saving faith in Jesus.

As we said last week: It is in love that we want to bring these elements in and while I will speak boldly and decisively, that should not be interpreted as uncaring towards those holding those views.

We want to include these elements so that the people of our church have insight that may prove to be helpful now or in the future.

* **God causes increasing obedience over time, until He makes us perfect in glory**

Now…As we close out our law section of the lesson on New Covenant law, it’s worth repeating that, at conversion, in an altogether different and better way than that of by nature, God puts His laws into the minds and writes them on the hearts of the redeemed.

Because of the New Covenant, *by* God’s work in us, He causes us to increasingly obey over time, until He makes us perfect—without sin—in glory, that is, after life in this broken creation.

* **Truly and eternally redeemed by the New Covenant**

Now……let’s transition to focusing again on the glory of Christ and the blessing **of being** His through the New Covenant. Back to Hebrews 8.

The Jeremiah passage being quoted in Hebrews 8 ends with this comforting, *amazing* truth, God says:

**Hebrews 8:12**
“I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.”

The solution to our record of sin and separation from God is only found in the New Covenant Christ makes with the elect. This is our hope! **Jesus** is our hope!

The New Covenant actually provides what we need, Church!

God sees **all** the evil actions of men done openly or in the dark, we cannot hide our sin from God.

He knows **all** our iniquities.

And, He will **not** clear the guilty—those standing fallen in Adam, on their own record.

**I** have guilt and a record of sin that I should be judged by.

*You* have guilt and a record of sin that you should be judged by.

**BUT,**

God provided a way.

God planned a covenant of grace that would forever forgive our sin and reconcile us to God, **based the headship and record of the final Adam—Christ Jesus.**

For those who God has made alive in Christ—those who have been given saving faith in Jesus Christ alone—those who are in the New Covenant,

***God has forgiveness for us***—we have been predestined for mercy not wrath, because God had a plan and Jesus paid our debt—**He took our guilty record**. The New Covenant actually provides what we need!

So Church, when we see our sin, **let us see** even more ***the gospel***!

In turning to Christ, (for the first time or throughout the Christian life), we no longer bear the burden of guilt, remorse, sorrow, and despair.

*In the New Covenant God has brought us into*, we no longer bear the burden of guilt, remorse, sorrow, and despair.

The Apostle Paul declared this good news, Look:

**Colossians 2:13-14**

**13**You, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh,

**God made alive together with [Christ],** having *forgiven us all our trespasses*, 14by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

The New Covenant is the only solution to our sin!

The New Covenant is the only covenant of forever forgiveness.

The New Covenant is the only relief to our despair!

The New Covenant is the only way to have fellowship with God, now and forever!

Believer, do not doubt that God has forgiven you. He promised those in Christ that He is “ … merciful toward their iniquities, and…remembers their sins no more.” Christ paid our debt!

Those who have been effectually called by God, who trust in Christ alone: know that you are forgiven, forever in Christ.

Forgiveness for all your sin, **past, present, and future** was found in Jesus at your conversion—at your entrance into the New Covenant.

As we have seen, God has chosen Federal Heads for representation of people.

We learned in previously that Adam was a type, the proto-type, of the one who was to come, **the better, unfailing Federal Head Christ Jesus, who is the antitype.**

There are only two Federal Heads affecting *the eternity* of those they represent—Adam and Christ.

A person is condemned by the fall of Adam, or he is redeemed from that state because he is represented by Jesus Christ. Those are the only two possible realties.

We who have been chosen, effectually called, and given faith in Christ are truly and eternally blessed in Him, for we, by the New Covenant, have been transferred from the Federal Headship of Adam to the Federal Headship of Jesus. God changes our standing. **We have Jesus’ perfect record accounted to us!** We are blessed by this.

So, in your flesh, when you sin, run to Him in confession and repentance, accepting and knowing you are forgiven in Jesus.

We—the elect—are redeemed fully and eternally through the New Covenant. God is merciful toward our iniquities, and He remembers our sins no more!

We are washed clean by the blood of the New Covenant.

We are justified by the work of Jesus for this New Covenant.

By the decree that God covenanted within the Trinity (in the Covenant of Redemption) we are forever safe under Christ’s headship.

*Knowing this*, knowing our salvation and reconciliation is part of a grand enteral plan, *is beyond amazing.*

So, *what’s ahead for God’s New Covenant people?*

* **What is ahead for God’s New Covenant people**

While the work required of Christ in Covenant of Redemption has been finally and fully accomplished in history *and* God has been (and will continue to) effectually call the elect throughout human history, what remains for the elect **is entrance into** the ***consummated* covenant blessings**—the full rewards of Christ’s kingdom.

That will not fully occur until every last person chosen for Christ has been gathered in by God through the means of the preaching of the gospel to all nations. In this, we get to relish in the proclaiming of the good news *and look forward to what is ahead.*

Amazing, beyond comprehension blessing is ahead for those in the New Covenant.

Christians, our King is coming back for us—to bring about the consummation, look:

**Hebrews 9:28** says:

**…Christ,** having been offered once to bear the sins of many, **will appear a second time**, not to deal with sin but **to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.**

Christ is returning one day.

The new earth will be brought to be by God, which is the eternal land to which the temporary land of Canaan foreshowed and pointed. *The eternal land to come is the antitype.*

As God’s one, true, eternal people, *all those united to Christ* by grace through faith will be given *this eternal land*: a creation free from sin and brokenness, a new creation glorious and perfect, in which we’ll rule and reign with Jesus, *worshipping Him rightly forever.*

**We will be finally separated from all that is wicked, given made-new bodies, and kept sinless by God.**

**We will have the final and full Sabbath rest: the rest that Adam failed to enter into because he sinned and broke the Covenant of Works in the garden.**

**Best of all, we will have communion with God in ways we can’t even fathom at this time.**

*Those God called into the New Covenant will be graciously given* all the eternal ***consummated* covenant blessings** *because Christ Jesus earned it*.

**1 Peter 1:3-4** speaks well to these things:

**3**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his **great mercy**, he has caused us to be born again **to a living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **4to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.**

Jesus Christ is the key to this for us because He is the new Federal Head for the chosen ones—He did the work, He is the King of kings.

As **Ephesians 1:3** says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us **in Christ** *with every spiritual blessing* in the heavenly places”

*Let us close our look at Scripture* with a passage at the end of the book. We get a blessed glimpse into God ushering in the consummated blessings through the Apostle’s vision in

**Revelation 21:1-5**which says,

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. **2**And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. **3**And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “**Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.** **4**He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

**5**And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.”

Wow………By God’s power

we will no longer experience *anything* bad,

we will be kept free some sin,

we will have perfect unity in the body,

and best of all we will have communion with God in ways we can’t even fathom at this time. Beyond amazing.

So, my friends, this is it, the story behind every other story.

All of the stories in the Bible play a role in this grander, ultimate story.

The story of redemption and each one of our lives comes about because of God’s plan.

This story creates in us an awe and worship of the great, true God. He’s accomplished it all by His plan and decree.

*And worthy is the Lamb who was slain to make it all possible.*

Salvation for God's elect because of the work of Christ on our behalf for the New Covenant, because of the Covenant of Redemption.

**Praise be to God…**

* **Application**
* **Worship, Sanctification, Evangelism**

So, How does this lesson’s truth help us worship God / what does this mean for our sanctification / how does this lesson spur on evangelism?

We’ve said: Our God is perfect, wise, gracious, and just. *What’s your response to this lesson’s clarity?* **It must be AWE.** Are you humbled by His wisdom and power to accomplish His decree?

**We have unlimited reasons to worship Him!**

Remember that God has ordained and brings about true growth for all His saved ones.

Life here is not easy, but growth in sanctification does happen. Sometimes you can’t even see it at the moment, but look back a few months, and if you’ve been in good community, sat under good teaching, been faithful to His truths, and spent time in prayer, **you’ll be able to see the growth has God worked in you through those means.**

Remember:

**Ephesians 2:10**

For we are **his workmanship**, created in Christ Jesus **for good works**, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Know that God has planned and decreed your growth. Know that it’s His will for those who are in Christ. **1 Thessalonians 4:3** tells us, **“It is God's will that you should be sanctified.”**

Press into the gospel and **let it be** the foundation and reality for growth. And have the gospel be the news **you are known for sharing.**

Finally, I told you in our first teaching that these Covenant Theology “lessons will significantly benefit you in your understanding of God and His word.” With this **last one** considered, let’s ask… What does the truth in this study mean for my hermeneutic?

* **Bible Reading and Interpretation**

Our Covenant Theology study is founded in and points to *the gospel*.

The gospel is the good news of the grace and power of God to redeem undeserving sinners to eternal life through Jesus’

perfect, sinless life;

substitutional, sacrificial death;

and victorious resurrection from the grave.

These sinners are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus alone from the eternal wrath they deserved, **and they are reconciled into an eternally secure relationship with God.**

What we’ve studied in this series, you could say, is a deeper look at some of the technical elements of the gospel—what God has done before time and in time for the gospel, unto eternal redemption of the underserving elect for HIS GLORY.

**In light of the Covenant Theology understanding, our reading of God’s word should be an even richer blessing now knowing more about God’s great plan and work.**

In these lessons, we have surely gained some important hermeneutical tools!

We can more accurately understand the portions of the text we are reading if we remember the Covenant Theology we learned in this series.

*Oh*, how we hope you get more out of reading the word, and read it more often.

On this side of the cross, with the full cannon of Scripture, we get to see the unfailing, unchangeable plan and decree of God ***fulfilled****.* This is an excellent place to be. This should encourage us to spend more time in the word!

We truly hope this has been a blessing and will be a blessing for many years to come as the series audio is available for review anytime.

As we said, this study didn’t get to hit on everything Covenant Theology has to offer. So, keep on the journey with us, and we’ll continue to teach these things and be blessed by them.

Let’s pray.

TMOC 14 (remaining portions of the book)