

## The Covenantal Life: Being the Church

### Week 4 - Covenant Signs: Baptism

#### Romans 6:3-4

- Every covenant is sealed with an oath-sign
  - Typical of biblical covenants, including the New Covenant (Heb. 6:13-18, Gen. 15:10, 17-18, Gen. 17:1-2, 10, Ex. 24:6-8, Luke 22:20, Acts 2:38)
- Baptism is the sign of entry into the New Covenant
  - It is those who have been made “disciples” and “received” the word who are baptized (Matt. 28:19, Acts 2:41)
  - Similar to circumcision in some ways, but not identical
    - Circumcision was the sign of entry into the Old Covenant, testifying to the reality of all Abraham’s offspring being separated from the Gentiles
    - Pointed forward to hear circumcision, accomplished by faith and fully realized in the NC (Deut. 10:16, 30:6, Jer. 31:33-34)
    - Baptism signifies the reality of having received heart circumcision - reality for everyone in the NC (Col. 2:11-12)
  - Signifies blessings and curses of the NC
    - Represents the fact that our sins are forgiven (Acts 2:38)
    - Represents the fact that we are joined to Christ in death and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-4)
    - Represents the fact that Jesus fulfilled the whole law, underwent its judgment, and was vindicated (Matt. 3:15-17)
    - Represents our passing through judgment along with Christ (1 Pet. 3:18-22)
    - Represents the threat of severe judgment for those who dishonestly profess faith (1 Cor. 10:1-12)
- Universal sign of entry is only administered in particular local churches
  - Elders are entrusted with administering the sign
    - Matt. 16:19, 18:18 - Apostles given authority to bind and loose - pronounce judgment in accord with the heavenly court, discerned by God’s word
    - Proclaim by the standard of Scripture who is in and not in the kingdom
    - Baptising those who were “made disciples” was an affirmation of their status as being in the kingdom
    - Local elders now exercise binding and loosing authority (Acts 20:32, 1 Tim. 4:14, Titus 1:5-9)

- The elder professes before God and witnesses that the one being baptized is in the kingdom according to the standard of God's word
- The elder must know the person he baptizes
- Elder is taking responsibility, will give and account, must hold the baptized person accountable
- Congregation serves as covenant witnesses
  - Required to hold members accountable, testify as to whether or not they have fulfilled their obligations (Deut. 30:19, Is. 1:2)
  - Baptism is always administered before witnesses (Acts 8 is a possible exception)
- The one baptized is promising to live in a particular way
  - The Christian life is especially lived out in the local church (Eph. 4:1-6)
  - Promising our local church to walk with them as fits a follower of Christ