



**Deut 29:10-19**  
*The Covenant*

**10 " All of you stand today before the LORD your God: your leaders and your tribes and your elders and your officers, all the men of Israel,**

**11 "your little ones and your wives -- also the stranger who is in your camp, from the one who cuts your wood to the one who draws your water --**

**12 "that you may enter into covenant with the LORD your God, and into His oath, which the LORD your God makes with you today,**

**13 "that He may establish you today as a people for Himself, and that He may be God to you, just as He has spoken to you, and just as He has sworn to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.**

**14 " I make this covenant and this oath, not with you alone,**

**15 "but with him who stands here with us today before the LORD our God, as well as with him who is not here with us today**

God has always dealt with his children by means of Covenant and in the bible we find two great Covenants

*The covenant of Works - II. The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works,[2] wherein life was promised to Adam; and in him to his posterity,[3] upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.[4]*

Gen. 2:17 "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

*The second Covenant was the Covenant of Grace: - "III. Man, by his fall, having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second,[5] commonly called the covenant of grace; wherein he freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ; requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved,[6] and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life his Holy Spirit, to make them willing, and able to believe.[7]"*

Against the modern Hyper Individualism of the church – just me and God, it is the entire assembly that Covenants with God

Everyone was included, the leaders, the fathers, the mothers, the children, even lowliest of servants, even if they were not physically descendents of Abraham, they too were included in the assembly  
 Everyone was entering into the Covenant from the lowest to the highest

The Covenant they are remaking was essentially the same Covenant He had made with Abraham, the Covenant of Grace that went back all the way to Gen. 3:15 - 15 ***And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."***

The Covenant was not only made with them, but even with their descendents who were not there at the time

***Ge. 17:5 "No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations.***

***6 "I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you.***

***7 "And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you.***

***8 "Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."***

Acts 2:39 "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

In one sense we can understand these promises as being like an inheritance that God wishes to settle upon his people. Now let us say that I have a parcel of land, it is mine, but if I have heirs when I die that land doesn't become ownerless it is my children's inheritance. We understand this idea of inheritance and enshrine it in our laws, now that promised inheritance will do them no good if they do not take it up and possess it themselves, but nonetheless it is theirs by birthright.

I. The Children of believers are members of the Covenant Community, that is why they receive the sign of the COVENANT which in the OLD TESTAMENT WAS CIRCUMCISION and in the NEW TESTAMENT is BAPTISM:

***"Nevertheless, the question here arises, how the little children could have passed into covenant, when they were not yet of a proper age to learn (its contents) the reply is easy, that, although they did not receive by faith the promised salvation, nor, on the other hand, renounce the flesh so as to dedicate themselves to God, still they were bound to God by the same obligations under which their parents laid themselves; for, since the grace was common to all, it was fitting that their consent to testify their gratitude should also be universal; so that when the children had come to age, they should more cheerfully endeavor after holiness, when they remembered that they had been already dedicated to God. For circumcision was a sign of their adoption from their mother's womb; and therefore, although they were not yet possessed of faith or understanding, God had a paternal power over them, because He had conferred upon them so great an honor. Thus, now-a-days, infants are initiated into the service of God, whom they do not yet know, by baptism; because He marks them out as His own peculiar people, and claims them as His children when He ingrafts them into the body of Christ." - Calvin***

These children are federally holy, set apart, by God, that is why he Paul can write of them in ***1 Cor. 7:14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.***

I. Now being part of the COVENANT COMMUNITY, the CHURCH, or the ASSEMBLY is NOT the same as being saved. An individual may be part of the church and make a profession of faith and simply be a hypocrite, the greater part of many churches (certainly within the mainline) do not believe in or follow Christ, even if they may recite the creeds, this was the case the in the OT church as well:

***Isa. 29:13 Therefore the LORD said: "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths And honor Me with their lips, But have removed their hearts far from Me, And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men,***

It was certainly the case that when Christ came, the greater part of believers though outwardly in covenant with God did not believe.

We should remember therefore that the CHURCH in every age can be spoken of in two senses, the VISIBLE and INVISIBLE CHURCH (The invisible church is not the people who don't show up for worship incidentally)

WCF Chapter 25 (p.863)

I. The catholic or universal church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the Head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.[1]

II. The visible church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel (not confined to one nation, as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion;[2] and of their children:[3] and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ,[4] the house and family of God,[5] out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.[6]

**Application: I. God covenants with HOUSEHOLDS – He does that here and later when the covenant was confirmed under Joshua as they were crossing into the promised land.**

***Josh 24:15 "And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."***

This is why we must start thinking again of faith as household faith – **Acts 18:8 Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.**

**Lydia Acts 16:15 – “And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded us.”**

We could add Cornelius the Phillipian jailer and so on.

We must start thinking again of “family driven faith” as Voddie Baucham puts it. We must recover the CALLING of FATHERS, NOT MOTHERS to be the spiritual heads of their households.

We see in these verses Covenanting starting with the heads of tribes down to the smallest, but in the modern age its actually more likely to be the mom and the kids, and not the fathers. Only 35% of the church population is adult men!

No one is too great, no one is too small to covenant with God, for both great and small are in need of salvation – let us remember the cry of the lost in *Rev. 6 - 15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,*

*16 and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!*

*17 "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"*

Station or lack of it will not avail in that day.

Therefore parents it is YOUR responsibility to bring your children to CHRIST – “Observe, Even little ones are capable of being taken into covenant with God, and are to be admitted with their parents. Little children, so little as to be carried in arms, must be brought to Christ, and shall be blessed by him, for of such was and is the kingdom of God.”

## **II. There has only ever been one Covenant Community –**

WCF Chapter 7.6. Under the gospel, when Christ, the substance,[13] was exhibited, the ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed are the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper:[14] which, though fewer in number, and administered with more simplicity, and less outward glory, yet, in them, it is held forth in more fullness, evidence and spiritual efficacy,[15] to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles:[16] and is called the new testament.[17] There are not therefore two covenants of grace, differing in substance, but one and the same, under various dispensations.[18]

*Gal. 3:26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.*

*27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*

*28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

*29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

We are one body - *Those who cannot go up to the house of the Lord must keep up a spiritual communion with those that do, and be present in spirit when they are absent in body.*

## **III. Merely being a born member of the visible church will NOT suffice to save anyone, just as being a child of the covenant did not “automatically” save the children of Israel**

What was needed was not merely circumcision, but heart change:

**Deut. 10:16 "Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer.**

**Deut. 30:6** "And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

**Jer. 4:4** Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, And take away the foreskins of your hearts, You men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, Lest My fury come forth like fire, And burn so that no one can quench it, Because of the evil of your doings."

**Rom. 2:28** For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh;

29 but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.

**Phil 3:3** For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,

**Col. 2:11** In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,

12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

*When our standards say, "All baptized persons are members of the Church," this by no means implies their title to all sealing ordinances, suffrage, and office. They are minor citizens in the ecclesiastical commonwealth, under tutelage, training, and instruction, and government; heirs, if they will exercise the graces obligatory on them, of all the ultimate franchises of the Church, but not allowed to enjoy them until qualified. Yet they are, justly, under ecclesiastical government. The reasonableness of this position is well illustrated by that of minors under the civil commonwealth.*

*B.M. Palmer also said this noting that, "In the church, this ecclesiastical minority terminates only when the man is born again of the Spirit of God, it being known that a new and divine life is indispensable to fulfill the obligations of a Christian."*

"Believing on Christ must be personal; a man himself and in his own proper person must close with Christ Jesus—"The just shall live by his faith." (Hab. 2:4.) This says, that it will not suffice for a man's safety and relief, that he is in covenant with God as a born member of the visible church, by virtue of the parent's subjection to God's ordinances: neither will it suffice that the person had the initiating seal of baptism added, and that he then virtually engaged to seek salvation by Christ's blood, as all infants do: neither does it suffice that men are come of believing parents; their faith will not instate their children into a right to the spiritual blessings of the covenant; neither will it suffice that parents did, in some respects, engage for their children, and give them away unto God: all these things do not avail. The children of the kingdom and of godly predecessors are cast out. Unless a man in his own person have faith in Christ Jesus, and with his own heart approve and acquiesce in that device of saving sinners, he cannot be saved. I grant, this faith is given unto him by Christ; but certain it is, that it must be personal."

- William Guthrie, The Christians Great Interest