

Covenant Baptism: Covenant Administration

Lecture #2. *"The promise is to you and your children": Peter at Pentecost.*

I. OUTLINE

1. **"The promise" recalls God's Covenant (Acts 2:39)**
2. **Introduction to the Covenants God makes with Man**
3. **Who are the members of the Covenant of Grace? (LC 31)**
4. **Who does the Administration of the Covenant Cover? (LC 34, 35)**
5. **Introduction to Baptism as a Covenant Sign**
6. **Unnatural for Children to be Aliens to the Covenant (Malachi 2:15)**

II. WESTMINSTER LARGER CATECHISM

- A. **Q. 31: With whom was the covenant of grace made?** The covenant of grace was made with **Christ as the second Adam**, and in him with **all the elect** as his seed.
- B. **Q. 34: How was the covenant of grace administered under the Old Testament?** The covenant of grace was administered under the Old Testament, by promises, (Rom. 15:8) prophecies, (Acts 3:20,24) sacrifices, (Heb. 10:1) circumcision, (Rom. 4:11) the passover, (1 Cor. 5:7) and other types and ordinances, which did all fore-signify Christ then to come, and were for that time sufficient to build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, (Heb. 8,9,10,11,13) by whom they then had full remission of sin, and eternal salvation. (Gal. 3:7–9,14).
- C. **Q. 35: How is the covenant of grace administered under the New Testament?**
Under the New Testament, when Christ the substance was exhibited, the same covenant of grace was and still is to be administered in the preaching of the word, (Mark 16:15) and the administration of the sacraments of baptism (Matt. 28:19–20) and the Lord's supper; (1 Cor. 11:23–25) in which grace and salvation are held forth in more fulness, evidence, and efficacy, to all nations. (2 Cor. 3:6–9, Heb. 8:6,10–11, Matt. 28:19)

III. SCRIPTURE REFERENCE (NKJV)

- A. **Jeremiah 32** – “³⁸They shall be My people, and I will be their God; ³⁹then 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. ⁴⁰And I will make an **everlasting covenant** with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me.”
- B. **Malachi 2** – ¹⁵But did He not make *them* one [husband and wife],
Having a remnant of the Spirit?
And why one?
He seeks godly offspring.
“Therefore take heed to your spirit,
And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.
- C. **Acts 2** - ³⁹For 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.”

IV. COMMENTARIES

- A. **Thomas Ridgley, Commentary on the Larger Catechism, on a covenant child’s relationship to the covenant of grace:** “What I mean is, that they are included in the external dispensation of the covenant of grace: which must be reckoned a greater advantage than if they had descended from Indians, who are strangers to it.”
- B. **John Owen, Works, Volume 16** - 1. Children are still in the same covenant with their parents, or the truth of the **promises of God** to the fathers was not confirmed by Christ. 2. The right unto the covenant, and interest in its promises, wherever it be, gives right unto the **administration** of its initial seal, that is, to baptism, as Peter expressly declares, Acts 2:38, 39. Wherefore,— The right of the infant seed of believers unto baptism, **as the initial seal of the covenant**, stands on the foundation of the faithfulness of Christ as the messenger of the covenant, and minister of God for the confirmation of the truth of his promises.
In brief, a participation of the seal of the covenant is a spiritual blessing. This the seed of believers was once solemnly invested in by God himself. This privilege he hath nowhere revoked, though he hath changed the outward sign; nor hath he granted unto our children any privilege or mercy in lieu of it now under the gospel, when all grace and privileges are enlarged to the utmost. His covenant promises concerning them, which are multiplied, were confirmed by Christ as a true messenger and minister; he gives the grace of baptism unto many of them, especially those that die in their infancy, owns children to belong unto his kingdom, esteems them disciples, appoints households to be baptized without exception. **And who shall now rise up, and withhold water from them?**