

COVENANT MEMBERSHIP

UNDERSTANDING THE SIGNS OF COVENANT MEMBERSHIP

1. The church is a covenant community of believers who are marked off from the world by nature and by practice.
 - a. Believers are by nature different from the world.
Romans 8:15; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Ephesians 2:19
 - b. Believers are by practice different from the world.
Matthew 5:16; John 13:35; James 3:13; 1 Peter 1:15
 - c. There is an “in” and “out” of the church.
Matthew 18:17; 1 Corinthians 5:2, 12-13
2. Baptism and communion are given by God to the church as the visible signs that mark us off from the world as His covenant people.
 - a. Baptism: Matthew 28:19 and Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:11-12
 - b. Communion: Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 10:16-18; 11:18, 20, 33.
3. What is baptism?
 - a. It is a visible sign that portrays the spiritual realities of the new birth.
(Regeneration, washing, union with Christ, union with His body, etc.)
 - b. It is the “symbolic door of entry” into the church.
Matthew 28:19; Acts 2, esp. v 38, 41; 1 Corinthians 12:13
 - c. It is the church’s act of...
 - i. Affirming and portraying a believer’s covenant union with Christ.
Matthew 28:19; Romans 6:3 (“baptized *into* Christ”); Galatians 3:27
 - ii. Affirming and portraying a believer’s covenant union with the church.
Matthew 28:19; Galatians 3:27-28; 1 Corinthians 12:13
 - iii. Committing itself to the care of and for the believer.
Romans 12:4ff
 - iv. Publicly marking a believer off from the world.
Romans 6:3-4 (all baptized *into* Christ; newness of life)

- d. It is a believer's act of...
 - i. Publicly declaring faith in and covenant commitment to Christ.
 - ii. Publicly declaring union with and covenant commitment to Christ's people.
 - iii. Publicly marking himself off from the world.

4. Practical questions:

- a. Who should baptize? (Baptism is something done **to** you. You cannot baptize yourself, so who should do it?)
 - 1 Corinthians 12:13 (cf. Acts 8:14-15)
 - Acts 8:36-38 (The exception that creates space for irregular circumstances)
- b. Whom do we baptize?
 - Matthew 28:19 (disciples); Romans 6:3
- c. Do we *re-baptize* people?
- d. What about children?
- e. Is mode important?
 - Luke 23:43 (The exception that guards against making baptism **the** thing.)