

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 is like a believer’s birth certificate: Matthew 28:19 and Romans 6:3-5.
 - b. Communion is like the believer’s passport: 1 Corinthians 10:16-18; 11:25-27.
3. What is baptism?
 - a. It is the visible **sign** of our immersion into Christ that portrays the spiritual realities of the new birth. (Death and resurrection, washing, union with Christ, union with His body, etc.).
 - b. It is the **seal** of the Holy Spirit whereby He stamps our union with Christ upon our souls. Acts 2:38 with 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 and Ephesians 1:13; Romans 6:3-5.
 - c. It is the **church’s** act of...
[1 Corinthians 1:17 – Who was doing the baptisms?]
 - 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 (all one in Christ); 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. Public repentance and faith (Acts 2:28).
 - ii. Public commitment to Christ ("in His name").
 - iii. Public commitment to Christ's people ("I belong to you").
 - iv. Publicly marking himself off from the world (washing, cleansing).

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).

The church should baptize believers.

(Acts 8:36-38 is the exception that creates space for irregular circumstances)

- b. Whom do we baptize?

Matthew 28:19 (disciples); Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:26- 27

We baptize believers who have a credible testimony of faith in Christ alone.

- c. Do we *re-baptize* people?

- d. What about children?

This is a question for all who practice believer's baptism.

- e. Is mode important?

Luke 23:43 (The exception that guards against making baptism **the** thing.)