

2.1a Discussion: Covenant People OT to NT: who are the children of the covenant?

What is a Scriptural way to use the language “covenant children”?

1A. Covenant children are...

1B. The descendents of Abraham through election per the eternal covenant
Hebrews 2.16 in context

2B. The descendents of Abraham through Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob
OT-Genesis 17.15-19 (Sarah, Isaac); 28.13-15 (Jacob & the ladder)
NT - Acts 3.25; Rom 11.28

3B. The descendents of Abraham through Christ, believing Jews and Gentiles, Gal. 3.29
What is remarkable about this designation of covenant children?

How does this fulfill the promise to Abraham?

How does the present state of Israel as “not the people of God” (not my people, not my children, not my covenant children), display the wonder and unsearchableness of God’s purpose?

How is an accent put on faith per this definition of the children of the covenant?

Why do we need this argument for the right of the Gentiles to the sacraments?

Children of Abraham have the right to the sacraments

NT believers including Gentiles are the children of Abraham

NT believers including Gentiles have the right to the sacraments

In light of this accent on faith and with this definition of covenant children in view, what difference exists on baptism among those holding to reformed theology?

What is the new line of defense for infant baptism that arose during the Reformation, and why is it new?

In this argument, what is the specific usage of the language covenant children?

What does it mean to say that this specific meaning of “covenant children” is the linchpin in the argument for infant baptism (cf. WLC 166, infants *descended from parents, either both or but one of them professing faith in Christ, and obedience to him, are, in that respect, within the covenant, and to be baptized*)? Is this interpretation correct?

2A. How can we think of our children as covenant children?

1B. Are children of NT believers “the children of Abraham”?

One way to see the debate surrounds this question: Are the children of NT believers the children of Abraham? Since the parents are the children of Abraham, then does it follow that their children are the children of Abraham too?

Based on the citation of Galatians 3 in relation to Genesis 17, the Westminster divines conclude that the descendents of NT believers are within the covenant, which in turn mandates their baptism.

And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. ⁸ And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.” ⁹ And God said to Abraham, “As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations (Gen. 17.7-9)

So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. ¹⁰ For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” ¹¹ Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” ¹² But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” ¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us- for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”- ¹⁴ so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith (Gal. 3.9-14; cf. Acts 3.25-26).

By “within the covenant,” they must mean that the children of believers are “covenant children” or specifically the children of the Abrahamic covenant (the children of Abraham) because of the reference to Genesis 17. Is this interpretation correct?