

Scripture: Isaiah 45

CoF 34 (4)

Singing: 431:1, 3, 4 – 261:1-3 – 254:3-5 – 238:1-3

Intro: What have we *dis-* and *un-*covered about God's glorious covenanting?

A. God is a *covenanting God* (Jer. 31:3; John 17:24; Eph. 1:3-5; 1 Pet. 1:19-20)

B. God revealed Himself as covenanting God from Creation (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:15)

C. God's covenants with men are unique: no more unequal parties possible

D. God revealed His covenant of grace gradually in clarity and fullness

E. God always added tokens to His Word as 'signs/seals' of His covenant

F. God always includes the children in His covenants (Gen. 3:15; 6:18; 17:9; Acts 2:39; 16:15; 16:33; 1 Cor. 1:16; 7:14; Eph. 6:1-2)

What is the meaning of sign and seal of Holy Baptism within NT times?

A. It still is God's confirmation that *He has sovereignly chosen & bound Himself to us and our children as He did with Abraham and his seed*

1. The LORD considers all of you brought on the field of visible church in the same way that He considered Israel His people (Rom. 11:16; Acts 2:39)

2. He therefore exhorts you in Ps. 95:6-11 – repeated in Heb. 2:1-4; 4:1-2

B. It is also still God's two-fold message about the Gospel

1. It is His message confirming & personalizing **His Gospel invitation**

2. It is His message confirming and strengthening faith in **Gospel declaration**

Reflect: The message of Gospel invitation as signified in Holy Baptism

A. God's Gospel invite is *to every hearer of the Gospel*: Is. 45:20-25; Is. 55:1-3; Matt. 11:28; John 6:32b; 7:37

1. if you are not interested, your picture is Matt. 22:1-8 or will be Matt. 8:12

2. if interested, you may struggle to believe God's inviting offer (Is. 55:1-3)

a. if His Word in Is. 45:22 does not settle your doubts

b. then look at His sign/seal of His inviting offer in grace

B. Holy Baptism is God's *visible confession* of faithfulness to His Word preached

1. It is the sign/seal of what lives in His heart!

a. baptism says nothing *about* the child but everything *to* the child

b. baptism is *God acting and the child receiving* 'an extra assurance of the truthfulness and reliability of His promise' (Calvin)

C. You all are welcome to *at once take your refuge to the LORD God*: Is. 45:21b

In the sign and seal of baptism, God has gifted up a treasure of medicine of which we are permitted to make use of in faith. We must make our baptism profitable and comfort and strengthen ourselves with it when our sins and our conscience burden us. Especially then we are to say, "I am baptized!" Does that help then? Certainly, because baptism is nothing less than the sign and seal of God's covenant of grace, which means, the visible illustration and the reliable guarantee of God Who asked for us before we asked for Him and Who bound Himself with us long before we even yearned for Him. (Luther)

The ground of baptizing children is not the status of the baptized but in the grace-character and scope (breadth) of God's covenant of grace. (Teellinck)