

Trinity Reformed Church of Northwest Connecticut

Biblical, Traditional, Congregational

Lord's Day Worship for

February 22, 2026

*"Put me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm.
For love is as strong as death, jealousy is as severe as Sheol;
Its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the LORD." – SoS 8:6*



trinityreformedct.org

“*” = Please stand if you are able.

Welcome, Greeting & Announcements

Call to Worship – 2Timothy 2:19-22

Leader: Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal,

People: The Lord knows those who are His,

Leader: And, Everyone who names the name of the Lord

People: Is to abstain from wickedness.

*Leader: Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels
of wood and of earthenware,*

People: And some to honor and some to dishonor.

*Leader: Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for
honor, sanctified, useful to the Master,*

People: Prepared for every good work.

Leader: Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness,

People: Faith, love and peace,

Leader: With those who call on the Lord

People: From a pure heart.

Prayer of Invocation and Confession

Gospel Absolution Text – John 3:31-36

***Hymn #422** – “Twas on That Night When Doomed to Know”

Scripture Reading – Genesis 17:1-14

Ancient Creedal Proclamation – Apostles Creed (pg#845 in the red hymnal)

Offerings Presented

[Please put your tithe/offering in the plates before or after the service – Thank you!]

[Gifts labeled “Deacon’s Fund go to aid those in need in the congregation.]

***Doxology #731** (red hymnal)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;

Praise Him above, ye heavenly host: Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

***Prayer of Dedication**

***Sung Psalm #59B** – “I Wait For You”

Prayers of the Church & Lord's Prayer (sins)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Reformation Creedal Reading – Westminster Confession, 27.1

Leader:	<i>Sacraments are <u>holy signs and seals</u></i>	Rom 4:11
People:	Of the <u>covenant of grace</u>,	Gen 17:7,10
Leader:	<i>Immediately instituted by God, to represent Christ and His benefits;</i>	Matt 28:19; 1Cor 11:23 1Cor 10:16; 11:25-26
People:	And to confirm our interest in Him:	Gal 3:27,17
Leader:	<i>As also, to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the Church</i>	Rom 15:8 Ex 12:48
People:	And the rest of the world;	Gen 34:14
Leader:	<i>And solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ,</i>	Rom 6:3-4
People:	According to His Word.	1Cor 10:16,21

Ministry of the Word

Prayer of Illumination

***Sermon Text** – Genesis 3:15; Luke 22:20; Romans 4:11

***Gloria Patri #735** (red hymnal)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

Sermon – “Signs and a Seals of the Covenant of Grace”

A Topical Sermon Series on the Lord's Supper

***Hymn #345** – “Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken”

***Benediction**

Everyone is welcome to Coffee Hour Fellowship downstairs after church today

Announcements

- **Wednesday Night Study** (6:30 – 8:00 PM, at Pastor Doug's house) is starting a new topic:
 - On the 2nd & 4th Wednesday (when Gen-Alpha meets) we will be studying 1st & 2nd Thessalonians.
 - On the 1st, 3rd & 5th Wednesdays will be a general discussion, so bring any questions!
- **Ladies Fellowship** will meet at the Aldrich home on Saturday, Feb 28th, at noon. We will be discussing The Dawn of Redeeming Grace by Sinclair Ferguson. Lunch will be served. A sign-up sheet will be downstairs during Coffee Hour.
- The elders are looking into creating a **TRC ministry** that supports **Christian home-schooling** in this church. If anyone, especially the parents, have any suggestions on how TRC can support parents home-schooling their children we would like to hear your thoughts, ranging from small do-able ideas to larger long-term visions.
- TRC needs volunteers for two **support ministries**:
 - 1) Those willing to provide meals for temporary needs, such as emergencies or a funeral reception.
 - 2) Those willing to do casual/friendly visitations of shut-ins.If you are interested in volunteering for either, or both, please contact: Kim Simmons (860-309-9975; kimsimmons7@optonline.net)
- *Regular Studies & Gatherings*:
 - Sunday School** for all ages (9:00 AM) at the Grange.
 - Tuesday Study** (10:30 AM – noon) – Augustine's Sermons, at Pastor Doug's house.
 - Wednesday Study** (6:30 – 8:00 PM) – On 2nd & 4th: Thessalonians. On other: Free discussion.
 - Gen-Alpha Club** 2nd & 4th Wednesdays, at Pastor Doug's house.
 - Friday Young Adult Discussion Group** (6:30 PM) meets on 1st & 3rd Friday, at Pastor Doug's house.
 - Saturday Morning Prayer Group** at the Gabelmann's. (Please call Sheryl to confirm if the group is meeting that day, 860-309-7250.)

ONLINE RESOURCES

<i>TRC's Webpage:</i>	TrinityReformedCT.org
<i>TRC's Facebook Page:</i>	facebook.com/people/Trinity-Reformed-Church/61554974150922/
<i>TRC's Youtube Channel:</i>	youtube.com/@TrinityReformedCT
<i>Pastor Doug's</i>	youtube.com/simplyreformed
<i>Youtube Channels:</i>	youtube.com/@PilgrimsofPlunder

INTERNET PRAYER CHAIN

If you have any prayer requests for our prayer chain, please email them to Donna Ensminger at: trcnwprayer@gmail.com. (If you would like to join the Prayer Chain, also see Donna.)

LEADERSHIP

Elders:	Rev. Douglas Aldrich, pastor	860-379-1147	douglas_aldrich@sbcglobal.net
	Bob Ensminger	860-485-8738	robert.ensminger@arthurgrossell.com
	Rich Gabelmann	860-605-7852	rgabelmann0415@gmail.com
	Rev. Jonathan Haulenbeek	203-709-0784	jhaulenbeek@icloud.com
Deacons:	David Mattson (chair), Carl Bierce, Caleb Goodell, Mason Goodell, Dean Winters		
Sunday School:	Verna Aldrich	Music Coordinator:	Cindy Rines
Clerk:	Sheryl Gabelmann	Treasurer:	Cindy Rines

Trinity Reformed Church of Northwest Connecticut

Worship Starts At: 10:30 AM (9:30 AM in the summer)

Sunday Worship At: Winchester Grange (100 Newfield Rd; Winchester Center, CT 06098)

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 343; Riverton, CT 06065 – *Phone:* (860) 238-7399

Webpage: trinityreformedct.org – *Email:* trinityreformedct@gmail.com

Sermon Notes

Genesis 3:15; Luke 22:20; Romans 4:11
"Signs and a Seals of the Covenant of Grace"
A Topical Sermon Series on the Lord's Supper
February 22, 2026

Introduction

1) Notice how the great creeds of the Reformed Tradition define "sacrament."

a) Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 27.1a - Of the Sacraments
(Chapter 28.1 in the Savoy Declaration)

"Sacraments are holy **signs** and **seals** of the **covenant of grace**, (Rom 4:11; Gen 17:7,10) . . ."

b) Westminster Shorter Catechism, #92

Question: *What is a sacrament?*

Answer: *A sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein, by **sensible signs**, Christ, and the benefits of the **new covenant**, are represented, **sealed**, and applied to believers.* (Gen 17:7,10; Ex 12; 1Cor 11:23,26)

c) Heidelberg Catechism, #66

Question: *What are the sacraments?*

Answer: *The sacraments are holy **visible signs** and **seals**, appointed of God for this end, that by the use thereof, he may the more fully declare and seal to us the promise of the gospel, viz., that he grants us freely the remission of sin, and life eternal, for the sake of that one sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the cross.* (Gen 17:11; Rom 4:11; Deut 30:6; Lev 6:25; Heb 9:7-9,24; Ezek 20:12; Is 6:6-7; Is 54:9)

e) Belgic Confession, Article 33 - The Sacraments

*We believe that our gracious God, taking account of our weakness and infirmities, has ordained the sacraments for us, thereby to **seal** unto us His promises, and to be pledges of the good will and grace of God towards us, and also to nourish and strengthen our faith; which He has joined to the Word of the gospel, the better to present to our senses both that which He declares to us by His Word and that which He works inwardly in our hearts, thereby confirming in us the salvation which He imparts to us. For they are **visible signs** and **seals** of an inward and invisible thing, by means whereof God works in us by the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore the **signs** are not empty or meaningless, so as to deceive us. For Jesus Christ is the true object presented by them, without whom they would be of no moment.*

2) Clearly the "Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace."

3) This is all part of what is called "**Covenant Theology**."

a) Modern Christians, including many Calvinists, think the heart of Reformed Theology is the "Doctrines of Grace."

i) That God is completely sovereign in salvation.

ii) As summed up by the famous acrostic acronym TULIP.¹

b) Though they certainly believed in TULIP, the early Reformed theologians focused much more on what is called Covenant Theology.

¹ TULIP is the famous (or infamous) summary of the Reformed doctrine of salvation: that man is **T**otally depraved, election is **U**nconditional, the atonement is particular, or **L**imited, to the elect, saving grace is effectual and **I**rresistible, and the saints will certainly **P**ersevere (see John 6:35-50; Romans 8:20-9:33; Ephesians 1:1-2:10).

- c) Covenant Theology is the Reformed biblical framework that understands Scripture as the unified unfolding of God's redemptive purpose through the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace, culminating in Christ and the New Covenant established in Him, as taught in the Old and New Testaments.
 - d) A biblical covenant, simply defined, is: "*A bond in blood sovereignly administered.*"²
 - i) The covenants are between two parties: God and His people.
 - ii) They always require blood because they are **sealed** by a life-and-death oath, and blood signifies the penalty-**sign** for breaking it.
(Note that "sign" & "seal"!)
 - iii) When God makes a covenant, He does not ask, He imposes, because He is God.
- 4) Thus the New Covenant, the purpose of all creation and history, is established at the cross.
- a) And what was the event our Lord chose to announce and perpetuate this all important event?
 - b) A meal. His Supper.
 - c) As we read in the New Testament: "*While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it all of you; for this is My blood of the **new covenant**, in My blood, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.'*" (Taken from: Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; 1Cor 11:23-25)
 - d) So, Covenants are critical.
 - i) They are directly tied to the Lord's Supper, which is therefore also critical.
 - ii) Thus, Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace!
- 5) But what does it mean?
- a) What are a "Sign and a Seal"?
 - b) What is the "Covenant of Grace"?
 - i) Is that the same thing as the "New Covenant"?
 - ii) Or the "New Testament"?
 - c) I confess I have used these terms in a sloppy, imprecise manner many times – sorry!
 - d) Let's ponder!
 - e) But first, I need to take a bit and define some terms.

Old Testament & New Testament

- 1) These are the two great collections of books in the Bible: Old & New Testament.
 - a) Technically, the Bible is not a single book but a collection of 66 books.
 - b) The word "Bible" is from the Greek word for books, "*biblia*."
- 2) The **Old Testament** is the collection of the 39 books written before the birth of Jesus Christ.
 - a) Roughly between the years 1400 to 430 BC.
 - b) When the New Testament says "Scripture" it usually means the "Old Testament."

Matt 21:42; Luke 24:27,44-45; John 5:39
John 10:35; Rom 15:4; 2Tim 3:15-16

² This definition is from O. Palmer Robertson's excellent book The Christ of the Covenants (Presbyterian & Reformed, 1980).

- c) Because during the time of the New Testament the New Testament was being written and the church only had the Old Testament.
- d) Though there are a few verses in the NT that clearly refer to NT books as Scripture. 1Cor 4:6; 1Tim 5:18 (Luke 10:7)
2Pet 3:2,15-16; Rev 22:18-19
- 3) The **New Testament** is those 27 books written after the earthly ministry of Jesus by the first generation of Christians under Apostolic authority. John 14:26; 16:13
Acts 1:21-22; Eph 2:20
2Thes 2:15; 2Pet 3:15-16
- a) Roughly between 40 and 95 AD.
- b) With the death of the Apostles, those handpicked leaders by Jesus, the Bible becomes a closed book, because apostolic revelation has ceased. Luke 10:16; John 14:26; 16:13
Eph 2:20; 2Tim 3:16-17
Heb 1:1-2; 2:3-4; Jude 3
- c) You cannot add anything else to Scripture, because what else could possibly be added to the Word of God becoming incarnate and dying for the sins of the world. Deut 4:2; 12:32; Prov 30:5-6
John 1:14; 5:39; 10:35; 19:30
Heb 1:1-2; 9:26-28; 10:12-14
Jude 3; Rev 22:18-19

Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace

- 1) The **Covenant of Works** is the pre-fall covenant God made with Adam as the representative of the human race, promising life upon perfect, personal, exact, and perpetual obedience and threatening death for any transgression, with his guilt counted to all his natural descendants. Gen 2:16-17; 3:17-19
Hos 6:7
Rom 5:12-20; 10:5
Gal 3:10-12
1Cor 15:21-22; 45-49
- 2) The **Covenant of Grace** is God's post-fall redemptive covenant, wherein He freely offers and effectually applies salvation to the elect through the Mediator, Jesus Christ, which is received by grace alone, through faith alone, on account of Christ alone.³ Gen 3:15; Jer 31:31-34
Rom 3:21-24; 5:15-17
Eph 1:4-7
Heb 8:6-13
- 3) The Covenant of Grace, is not "Plan B", it has always been "Plan A."
- a) When was Christ crucified? From the foundations of the earth. Acts 2:23; Eph 1:4; 2Tim 1:9
1Pet 1:19-20; Rev 13:8; 17:8
- Ephesians 1:4a – *"just as He (God the Father) chose us (the saints) in Him (the Son) before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him."*
- b) And the first reference to the Covenant of Grace is way back in Genesis 3:15. Rom 16:20
Rev 12:17
- i) Genesis 3:15 – *"And I (the LORD) will put enmity (hostility) between you (Satan) and the woman (Eve), and between your seed (all who rebel against God) and her seed (Christ); He (Christ) shall bruise (or "crush", or "attack") you (Satan) on the head (the defeat of Satan), and you (Satan) shall bruise Him (Christ) on the heel. (hurting Him)"*
- ii) Where it is promised that the Christ will defeat Satan.
- iii) Though it is also promised that the Christ will suffer.
- iv) This is called the *Protoevangelium*, literally "the first Gospel" because it is the first clear reference to the Gospel in the Bible.

³ Gen 15:6; Ps 143:2; Is 43:7; 46:13; 53:10-12; Hab 2:4; Matt 16:16-17; Mark 10:52; 16:16; John 1:12-13; 3:16-18; 5:24; 6:28-29; 8:24; Acts 8:22; 10:43; 13:39; 14:6; 15:10-11; 16:14,31; Rom 1:16-17; 3:20-28; 4:3-5; 5:1; 9:30; 10:4-6,9; 11:6; Gal 2:16,21; 3:5-6,11,14,22-25; 5:4; Eph 1:5-8,13; 2:8-9; Phil 1:29; 3:4-11; 1Tim 1:16; 2Tim 1:9; 2:25; Titus 3:4-7; Heb 10:38; 11:7,38; 12:2; 1Pet 1:5,21; 1John 5:1,13.

- 4) Careful, the various covenants of the Old Testament are actually part of the Covenant of Grace.⁴
- a) Covenant of a land, seed and blessing with Abraham. Gen 12:1-3,7; 15:5-18; 17:1-8; 22:16-18
Acts 3:25; Gal 3:8,16
 - b) The covenant of the Law with Moses. Ex 19:4-6; 24:3-8; 34:27-28;
Deut 5:2-3; John 1:17; Gal 3:17-19
 - c) The covenant of a permanent kingdom with David. 2Sam 7:12-16; 23:5; 1Chr 17:11-14
Ps 89:3-4,28-37; Ps 132:11-12; Luke 1:32-33
- 5) These Old Testament Covenants, which are part of the Covenant of Grace, are the working out of that first promise found in Genesis 3:15, being revealed throughout Old Testament history with increasing clarity until their fulfillment in the New Covenant.
- 6) Which brings us to the question, "What is the New Covenant?"

Old and New Covenants

- 1) The **Old Covenant** is that covenant established by God with His people at Mount Sinai, where Moses received the Law of God. Ex 19-24
Ex 34:27-28; Deut 5:2-3
1Kgs 8:9,21; Heb 9:1,4
- a) Remember, this Covenant is *not* part of the Covenant of Works but is part of the Covenant of Grace.
 - b) It was just a temporary administration of the Covenant of Grace.
 - i) It was meant to govern God's Old Covenant Church, Israel, under laws, sacrifices and a priesthood. Ex 19:5-6; 24:7-8; Lev 1:1-4
Lev 16:29-34; Heb 8:6-9; 9:1
 - ii) All of which prefigure, and were shadows and figures, of the reality found in Christ. Luke 24:27; John 5:39; Col 2:16-17
Heb 3:5; 8:5; 9:8-12,23-24; 10:1
- 2) The **New Covenant** is the Covenant in Christ's blood in which God definitively forgives sins, writes His law upon the heart, and grants the Spirit to His redeemed people, constituting the final and climactic administration of the one Covenant of Grace. Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 36:25-27
Matt 26:28; Luke 22:20
Gal 3:13-14; 4:4-7
Heb 8:6-13; 10:14-18
- a) The New Covenant is established and formally inaugurated at the cross. Matt 26:28; Luke 22:20; John 19:30
Rom 3:24-26; Heb 9:15-17; 10:9-14
 - i) It is ratified in Christ's blood. Matt 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20
Rom 3:25; Heb 9:12-15; 13:20
 - ii) Thus, the importance of the Lord's Supper.
 - b) It is confirmed by the resurrection. Rom 4:25; 1Cor 15:17-23; Heb 13:20-21
1Pet 1:3-5; Acts 2:23-24,32-33; 13:32-34
 - c) And applied in power at Pentecost. Joel 2:28-32; Luke 24:49; John 7:37-39
Acts 2:1-4,16-18,33; 2Cor 3:6; Heb 8:10-12

⁴ In the narrow sense the Covenant with Noah (not to destroy the world again by water) is not part of the Covenant of Grace though it certainly has an important role in preserving the world so that God's plan of salvation could unfold. (Gen 6:18; 8:21-22; 9:8-17 Is 54:9; 2Pet 3:6-7)

It is different because: It is made with all flesh, not only the elect. It promises preservation of creation, not forgiveness of sins. It contains no mediator, no sacrificial administration, no gospel promise in itself.

It is subordinate to and supportive of the Covenant of Grace: It preserves the world so that redemption may unfold. It guarantees the stability necessary for the Abrahamic promise to be realized. It stands downstream from Gen 3:15 and serves that redemptive purpose.

- 3) This is why the New Covenant is a better Covenant.
 - a) Hebrews 7:22 – *“so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.”*
 - b) Hebrews 8:6 – *“But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.”*
 - c) Hebrews 12:24 – *“and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.”*
- 4) However, though we are redeemed in Christ, we still wrestle with the old man of sin, and therefore we can forget and become confused.

Rom 7:14-25; Gal 5:16-17
Eph 4:22-24; Col 3:9-10
1Tim 1:13; 2Pet 1:9

 - a) That is why, God in His grace, gives us signs and seals of the Covenant of Grace.
 - b) Clearly, the Supper, and the other sacrament, baptism, is a sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace.
 - c) But what does “sign” and “seal” mean?

Sign and Seal

- 1) We read in Romans 4:11 – *“and he received the **sign** of circumcision, a **seal** of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them,”*
- 2) Remember, Romans is the most detailed description of the Gospel in the Bible.
 - a) Romans 1:18 - 3:20 = The Problem - Sin
 - b) Romans 3:21 - 4:25 = The Solution - Justification
 - c) Romans 5:1 - 8:39 = The Outcome - Sanctification
- 3) The “he” in Romans 4:11 is Abraham.
 - a) Who made that great profession of trusting in God and thus was justified by his faith.

Gen 15:6; Rom 4:1-5; Gal 3:6-9
James 2:14,19,21-23; Heb 11:8-10
 - b) The key part of being in the Covenant of Grace is faith in Christ.
- 4) God, graciously, orders a visual sign to be put on His people to show that they are part of the Covenant of Grace.

Gen 17:7-11; Acts 2:38-39
Rom 4:11; 1Cor 10:1-2
Gal 3:27; Col 2:11-12

 - a) In the Old Covenant, it is **circumcision**.
 - b) That is why Paul writes in Romans 4:11 that Abraham *“received the sign of circumcision”*.
 - c) Which is a shadow and figure of the New Covenant sign of membership: **Baptism**.
- 5) This sign, for those who believe, and for their children, is:
 - a) It is a sign of God’s grace to us.
 - b) It is a sign to remind us that we belong to God.
 - i) To encourage us that we are under the Covenant of Grace.
 - ii) And to correct us to fear and obey the Lord.

- c) It is a sign to the world that we belong to God.
 - i) That we are God's covenant people.
 - ii) It marks us as belonging to God.
- 6) But circumcision, as like all the sacraments of the Covenant of Grace, are "*a seal of the righteousness of the faith.*" – Romans 4:11b
- a) Remember, circumcision and the Passover are the sacraments in the Old Covenant.
 - i) Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the sacraments in the new Covenant.
 - ii) Circumcision & baptism are the sacrament of union with Christ.
 - iii) While Passover and the upper are the sacrament of being sustained in Christ.
 - b) What does it mean they are a "seal"?
 - c) The word here for "seal" (σφραγίς, *sphragis*) refers directly to a signet.
 - i) An object that is used, with wax, to seal on an official document. Rev 5:2; 7:2
 - ii) To give the mark that makes it official.
 - iii) Like a notary's seal.
 - d) So, the sacraments are royal, divine, seals on us.
 - i) To ratify, authenticate, certify, and confirm God's gracious intention to us, in Christ.
 - ii) Circumcision is God's signet that Abraham had already been declared righteous by faith, not the cause of that righteousness, but the divine pledge authenticating it.
- 7) So, sign and seals are very similar, however, there is an important difference.
- a) All seals are signs.
 - b) But not all signs are seals.
 - i) Luke 2:12 – "*This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.*"
 - ii) This is the same word for "sign" as used in Romans 4:11 (σημεῖον, *sēmeion*).
 - iii) Surely the sign in Luke 2:12 is a great and godly sign!
 - iv) However, it is not a seal.
 - It did not ratify anything official, like a covenant.
 - There is no formal confirmation of an oath.
 - It simply pointed to, and identified, a glorious reality.
 - c) A seal confirms and authenticates the promise of authority.
 - d) And in the case of the sacraments, royal, divine authority.
- 8) The Covenant of Grace was limited only to a single nation in the Old Covenant.
- a) With the New Covenant, the Covenant of Grace is for all the nations.
 - b) Which is Paul's point in the rest of Romans 4:11.
 - c) When did Abraham receive the sign of being put into the covenant?
 - i) Before or after his profession?
 - ii) It was after.
 - Abraham makes his great profession in Genesis 15.
 - And he, and his household, are circumcised in Genesis 17.

- d) This shows the true entrance into the Covenant of Grace is not national identity but faith in Christ.
- e) Thus, Abraham had been justified by faith alone *“while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them,”* - Romans 4:11b

Conclusion

- 1) This is why understanding the direction of the sacraments are so important.
 - a) They are not from us to God, but God to us.
 - b) And what God is telling us in the sacraments is extraordinary.
 - c) They are His sign, and His seal, that we are in the Covenant of Grace by His Son.
 - d) And for that we should be very thankful and encourage each other to do good works.
- 2) It is easy, however, to make the mistake and think that the:
 - a) Old Testament = Old Covenant = Covenant of Works.
 - b) Or, New Testament = New Covenant = Covenant of Grace.
- 3) When you understand the differences, however, wisdom and insight follow.
 - a) That for God, there has been, and only ever will be, Plan A.
 - b) That He is bringing Himself glory through His Son and perfectly redeeming His chosen people. Is 43:6-7; John 17:1-4; Rom 8:29-30
Eph 1:4-6,11-12; Phil 2:9-11; Rev 5:9-13
 - c) That there is much grace, and Christ, in the Old Testament, more than you think.
 - d) And there are things we should be doing, good works, in this New Covenant.
- 4) Because as the Scripture teaches, all of creation, including the Old Testament, is really about Him.
 - a) John 5:39 – *“You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me;”*
 - b) Romans 11:36 – *“For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.”*
- 5) Thus the first question of the Heidelberg Catechism.
 - a) *Question:* What is your only comfort in life and in death?
 - b) *Answer:* That I am not my own, (1Cor 6:19-20) but belong body and soul, in life and in death (Rom 14:7-9) to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. (1Cor 3:23; Titus 2:14) He has fully paid for all my sins with His precious blood, (1Pet 1:18-19; 1John 1:7-9; 2:2) and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil. (John 8:34-36; Heb 2:14-15; 1John 3:1-11) He also watches over me in such a way (John 6:39-40; 10:27-30; 2Thes 3:3; 1Pet 1:5) that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven; (Matt 10:29-31; Luke 21:16-18) in fact, all things must work together for my salvation. (Rom 8:28) Because I belong to Him, Christ, by His Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life (Rom 8:15-16; 2Cor 1:21-22; 5:5; Eph 1:13-14) and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for Him. (Rom 8:1-17)
 - c) That is what the Lord’s Supper proclaims to us.