

REFORMATION PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Welcome to Reformation: Visitors' and New Members' Class

Lesson 1: What is the Gospel?

Lesson 2: Responding to the Gospel - Repentance and Faith

Lesson 3: The Church as the Family and Household of God

Lesson 4: Confessional Christianity

Lesson 5: Reformed & Reforming

Lesson 6: Covenant Theology

Lesson 7: Biblical Church Government - Presbyterianism

Lesson 8: Reformed Worship

Lesson 9: The Lord's Day: Living All of Life in Light of the Christian Sabbath

Lesson 10: Baptism

Lesson 11: The Lord's Supper

Lesson 12: Church Membership, The OPC, & Pastoral Care

LESSON 6

Covenant Theology: The Story of the Bible and How We Fit In

Introduction & Review

Reformation Presbyterian Church is a church that believes the Scriptures are organized according to God's covenantal dealings with man. To be *covenantal* means that we believe God has revealed Himself in history, that the Bible is a record of God's revelation of Himself in history, and that the way God reveals Himself in history is by means of covenant. We call this understanding of the Bible "covenant theology."¹

I. Covenant Theology: What is it?

A. Definition of "covenant"

Berkhof: "A covenant is a pact or agreement between two or more parties... It is generally confirmed by a solemn ceremony as in the presence of God, and thereby obtains an inviolable character. Each of the parties binds himself to the fulfillment of certain promises on the basis of stipulated conditions" (p. 264).

B. The essence of covenant theology: God's promise to dwell with His people forever in love

II. The Covenant of Works (Gen. 2-3)

A. The Context of the Covenant (Creation, Garden, Communion with God)

B. The Terms of the Covenant (Gen. 2)

C. Man's Breach of the Covenant (Gen. 3)

III. The Covenant of Grace

A. An eternal covenant? The Covenant of Redemption

B. God's covenant with man in Christ (WCF 7)

C. Old vs. New Covenants

D. Our place in the story

For Discussion

1. How does covenant theology help us understand the Bible? What errors does it help us avoid? 2. What are some practical implications of covenant theology for us today?

¹ See Berkhof, "The Dual Aspect of the Covenant" (handout); O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*; Edmund Clowney, *The Unfolding Mystery: Discovering Christ in the Old Testament*