

An Introduction to the Reformed Faith

Nov. 5. Introduction
Nov. 12. History and variations
Nov. 19. Heidelberg Catechism
Nov. 26. Westminster Standards

Dec. 3. Salvation, Election, Predestination, Providence
Dec. 10. Covenant; Christ as Prophet, Priest, & King
Dec. 17. Culture and Society

Two prominent Reformed themes that tie together creation, providence, redemption; this world and eternity; the biblical world (OT and NT) and the present.

(1) Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536-59), II.xv: "To know the purpose for which Christ was sent by the Father, and what he conferred upon us, we must look above all at three things in him: the Prophetic Office, Kingship, and Priesthood."

Shorter Catechism, 23-26 (p. 871). Also *Heidelberg Catechism* Q&A 31 (below)

Prophet. Isaiah 61:1-2 (Luke 4:18)

Hebrews 1:1-2

John 4:25

Matthew 17:5 ("listen to him")

--and the church carries on (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17ff.)

Priest. Psalm 110:4 (Hebrews 5:6; 7:15)

John 1:29

Hebrews 4:14-16; 7:28-8:2

--and the church carries on (2 Corinthians 5:17-21; 1 Peter 2:5-10; Hebrews 10:19-25)

King. Isaiah 11:2 (John 1:32, Luke 3:22)

1 Corinthians 8:6

Ephesians 1:22-23 ("all things")

But also John 18:36 ("not of this world")

--and the church carries on (Romans 14:17)

When not in balance

Overemphasizing prophet: moralism, rationalism (Anabaptist, liberal)

Overemphasizing priest: pietism, moralism (Lutheran and evangelical varieties)

Overemphasizing king: utopianism, apocalypticism (older Catholicism, Christian nationalism)

Heidelberg 31. *Why is he (Jesus) called "Christ" meaning "Anointed"?* Because he has been ordained by God the Father and has been anointed with the Holy Spirit to be our chief prophet and teacher who perfectly reveals to us the secret counsel and will of God for our deliverance; our only high priest who has set us free by the one sacrifice of his body, and who continually pleads our cause with the Father; and our eternal king who governs us by his Word and Spirit, and who guards and safeguards the freedom he has won for us.

(2) Covenant as an Integrating Biblical Theme

Westminster Confession, chapter 7 (pp. 852-53).

Puritan New England as an example of integration:

- Personal covenant: grace understood as the “new covenant”
- Family covenant: baptism as the NT expansion of OT circumcision (*West. Conf.*, 27.i and 28.i, pp. 864-65))
- The Lord’s Supper “seals” the saving benefits of the new covenant (*West Conf.* 29.i, p. 865)
- Church covenant: admission upon testifying of a work of grace; churches formed when believers covenant with each other
- Social covenant: church members the voters for civic officers
- National covenant: New England an analogy to OT Israel

(1) A great divide separates God from humans, but God himself takes the initiative to bridge the divide through promises he makes with humankind. The promises are conditional, but the conditions are fulfilled through the grace he gives.

(2) God established a “covenant of works” with Adam (Genesis 2:16-17; Galatians 3:12)

(3) God established a “new covenant” with humanity, fulfilled in Christ

- A new covenant (Genesis 3:15; 12:1-3; 15:18; 2 Samuel 7:11-13; Isaiah 42:5-7)
- In Christ (John 6:35-38; Romans 3:21-24; 5:15-21)

(4) Christ is the testator (guarantor) of the new covenant (Luke 22:20; Hebrews 9:15-17)

(5) The “Old” Testament points to/gives way to/anticipates the “New” Testament

- In general (Galatians 3:6-29)
- The Old Testament reveals Christ (Luke 24:27; 1 Corinthians 5:7; 10:1-4; Colossians 2:16-17)
- Abraham, David, and other OT saints were justified by faith (Romans 4:3-6)
- The New Covenant in Christ fulfills, rather than repudiates, the Old (Luke 1:54-55, 72-73; Romans 3:21-23, 30)