

Heidelberg Catechism 67-68–Signs that make Sense

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Aren't you excited when a baby or a new member is baptized? That is good. But far too many people see baptism in the wrong way. Some **see baptism as a Rite of Passage** – an important date to remember. Others see baptism as a ticket to heaven. These are wrong views of baptism. **Baptism must always be viewed in light of what and whom it represents: The sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Aren't you happy to take the Lord's Supper? Surely! But there are common errors regarding the Lord's Supper. Some believe **they must make extra special preparations for the Lord's Supper than they normally do for other Sabbaths.** But by making extra special preparation for the Lord's Supper they diminish减少 the importance of the preached Word, the primary means of grace. (This is one of the problems in not having the Lord's Supper frequently as was done in history.) But the Apostle Paul did not raise the level of the Lord's Supper above preaching when he prescribed self-examination before partaking. **He simply raised the level of the Lord's Supper to what it properly is, a means of grace. He wanted you to prepare for it as you would for preaching.** There is another common error that others make concerning the Lord's Supper. Some Christians feel **unworthy to take it.** But while you are not worthy of yourself to take the Lord's Supper, **you are made worthy in Jesus.**

Considering there are many errors regarding the Sacraments 圣礼, hear what the Bible teaches about them.

Our headings are:

The Nature of the Sacraments

The Number of the Sacraments.

Our goals are: **That you will not see the Sacraments in an individualistic or superstitious way, but that you will be drawn to the saving work of Jesus Christ when you witness or participate in the Sacraments.**

The Nature of the Sacraments

67 Q. ARE BOTH THE WORD AND THE SACRAMENTS THEN INTENDED TO FOCUS OUR FAITH ON THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS CHRIST ON THE CROSS AS THE ONLY GROUND OF OUR SALVATION?

A. Right! In the gospel the Holy Spirit teaches us and through the holy Sacraments he assures us that our entire salvation rests on Christ's one sacrifice for us on the cross.

1. The whole Bible focuses on your Redeemer's work on the cross.

Jesus made this clear in Luke 24. The law, the prophets, and the Psalms spoke of his life, death, burial, and resurrection. **Through his disciples proclaiming this message and men believing it, his kingdom will expand.** The earth will not be conquered by military might as the Jews and even some of Jesus' disciples believed, but by preaching the message of the cross.

2. In order to keep focus on this Good News of his life, death, burial, and resurrection, Jesus instituted the Sacraments. (Remember, Sacraments are holy signs and seals given by God to remember his covenant with your Covenant Keeper!)

Consider how the Scriptures bring the focus of the Sacraments on Jesus' work.

a. Romans 6, shows that baptism symbolizes 象征着 your unity in Jesus Christ's work on the cross.

Romans 6: 3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus **were baptized into His death?**

Your sins were washed away when Christ's blood was shed on the cross. The law previously covered Christians with guilt, but baptism points directly to the **protection – the covering – expiation- Jesus offered.** (Adam and Eve were covered with the skin of the sacrificed animals. This pictured our covering through the Lamb of God.) The cross brought new clothes.

Galatians 3: 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have **put on Christ**.

b. 1Corinthians 11, describes the Lord's Supper as a testimony that Jesus Christ died on the cross for sinners. The bread pictures his body and the wine pictures his blood – the means of your covering.

1Corinthians 11: 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

c. Now see a special case when baptism and the Lord's Supper worked in a united way to point to Christ.

1Corinthians 10:1 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, 2 **all were baptized into Moses** in the cloud and in the sea, 3 all **ate the same spiritual food**, 4 and **all drank the same spiritual drink**. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that **Rock was Christ**.

Israel were united (baptized) into Moses (who represented Christ). After that unity, they ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink (which represented Christ). **That food and drink stayed with them** all the way to the Promised Land.

So Jesus Christ is inextricably千丝万缕linked to the Sacraments. But don't treat the sign too highly or it would insult the one who is signified by the signs. The signs only teach of the thing (the one) they signify.

3. Properly understood, the Sacraments then become a means of grace from Christ and they cause you to stand more firmly on the Rock. They are holy, visible, sensible, signs of the invisible grace you receive.

4. Exactly how do the Sacraments become a means of grace?

The Sacraments scream out to you: "Jesus loves you, and this is what he did for you." The internalizing of the visible Gospel strengthens your faith. And you then respond: "I love to tell this story."

5. So when you are baptized or you see someone baptized, and when you eat of the Lord's Table, or you see someone eat at the Lord's Table, let your mind be drawn back to the cross where the Lord suffered and his blood dripped down...The Sacraments are about Jesus Christ.

This will move you to love him more and serve him better. You will tell the world that they too can be nourished营养by Christ. You will preach to the world and support the preaching of the Gospel so enemies of God will be conquered. You will invite others to come to church so they will hear the Gospel and be saved.

The Number of the Sacraments

68 Q. HOW MANY SACRAMENTS DID CHRIST INSTITUTE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?

A. Two: baptism and the Lord's supper.

1. Jesus commanded only 2 Sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Other religions and cults邪教that teach otherwise are wrong. Christians that teach otherwise are wrong. Look at the 2.

a. Baptism.

Matthew 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, **baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**,²⁰ "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you..."

b. Lord's Supper

1Corinthians 11: 23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread;

24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." 26 **For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.**

2. What are some other "Sacraments" that cults, other religions, and even some misguided Christians have, and why are they not properly called Sacraments?

a. Some Charismatic churches have a sacrament call foot-washing. They believe that when Jesus washed his disciples' feet and said that they were to do likewise, that Jesus was instituting a **new sacrament call foot-washing.** But Jesus was speaking of being humble and serving each other. He was not speaking of literally washing each other's feet. Sacraments are signs that point to the literal文字act of Jesus dying – where blood was shed- for the sins of his people. It is impossible to see how this would apply. Further, no other place in the Bible teaches this.

b. Roman Catholics have 7 Sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist圣餐, Extreme Unction油膏, Holy Orders, Marriage, and Penance苦修. One billion people believe this. But none of these so-called Sacraments represent what Christians believe, though there are some outward similarities

Baptism. Roman Catholics believe that baptism saves or regenerates. This is patently千真万确地false.

Confirmation. Roman Catholics believe that everyone (usually in his teenage years) has to become fully equipped with the Holy Spirit. Since this sign does not picture the work of Christ at his death, it cannot be a sacrament.

Eucharist, Thanksgiving or the Mass is the most shameful doctrine of Roman Catholicism. It is an abominable可恶sacrament. They believe that Christ is not symbolized by the bread and wine, but the bread and the wine are transferred into the literal flesh and blood of Jesus Christ whom they must sacrifice daily. Ironically, the word "mass" comes from the Latin phrase "Ite, missa est," which is translated: "It is finished." Yet they continue to sacrifice Christ daily, claiming that his once for all times sacrifice was not sufficient. (Hebrews 7:27, 9:28, 10:10)

Extreme Unction. Roman Catholics believe that anointing someone with special oil anyone who is sick or possibly facing death will give him special grace. But while it is important to pray for the sick, this does not picture the work of Christ's payment for sins. This was a great revenue maker for Roman Catholics.

Holy Orders. Roman Catholics have special positions in the church: bishops, priests, and deacons. Obviously these do not picture the work of Christ on the cross and no Christian needs a priest since we are all priests and Jesus is our High Priest.

1Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous奇妙light;

Marriage. Roman Catholics believe that marriage is a sacrament and since one may never refused the sacrament, there is no possibility for divorce. At the same time, a Roman Catholic bishop may permit a Roman Catholic to marry a non-Roman Catholic! Does that make sense? If marriage is supposed to be a sacrament that pictures Christ's pure love for his church, isn't that a corruption of the sacrament? And if Sacraments are not optional, why are priests not allowed to marry?

Penance. Roman Catholics go the priest to make acts of contrition悔悟verbally. The priest then absolves them. As a punishment, they are required to repetitiously重复pray certain prayers. But prayers are the chief means of showing our thankfulness to the Lord. How can it then be a punishment? Furthermore, you are to confess your sins to God. Unnecessary repetition of prayer is forbidden. And where is the work of cross pictured in this sacrament?

c. Mormons believe that they could baptize the dead by baptizing someone who is alive. It is lawful for them to baptize by proxy代理because they believe that baptism is required to enter into Paradise (baptismal regeneration). Of course no one can receive faith after he has died. After death is the judgment.

d. There are some who recognize the Sacraments of the Lord, but they themselves do not participate in them. They may simply pass the elements of the Lord's Supper around but no one would take it. They feel themselves unworthy. We'll examine this later.

Conclusion:

The Sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper, **focus like a laser on the saving work of Jesus Christ.** The Sacraments of themselves are **not to be inappropriately elevated,** or they will become sinful, as they take away from the thing (the one) signified. The Sacraments are not to be ignored, or the full meaning brushed aside, or you will rob Christ of his honor and you will rob yourself the grace that comes from them.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. When you see someone baptized or when you participate in the Lord's Supper, let it take you back to the cross and see the blood of Christ dripping to the ground...the blood that made you clean...and let that sink into your heart...eat it as spiritual food...that it might nourish you. Let the Sacraments scream out: "The Lord died for you," so that you never forget it.

2. Look forward to the Sacraments. Don't rob yourself of one of the greatest motivations to serving the Lord with vigor.

3. Let the Sacraments be a witness to the world. Let the world see you nourished...and live well...and then let them ask: How are you so peaceful in a world of strife? Tell them of your nourishment.

Finally, if you are not a Christian, you can't have this nourishment because you have a greater problem. You need to understand and accept the thing symbolized by the Sacraments...the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I pray that this greatest need of your life will be met today. Ask God for his help!