

Systematic Theology, Lesson 34: Ecclesiology: The Doctrine of the Church, Part 5

1. Ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper

a. Terminology:

- i. Ordinance = ordained by Christ.¹
- ii. Sacrament = sign and seal of grace.
- iii. Historically, some Protestant churches have preferred the term "ordinance" to distinguish its view of baptism and the Lord's Supper from the Roman Catholic view, which teaches that the sacraments convey grace apart from the faith of the recipient.² Other Protestant churches prefer the term "sacrament." If we understand the terms correctly (as defined above), "ordinance" and "sacrament" may be used interchangeably, each conveying different aspects of the Christian rites: ordinance for the origin, i.e., ordained by Christ; sacrament for the function, i.e., sign and seal of grace (see below).

b. Administrator: the church

- i. Baptism: **Matt 28:19**: Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- ii. Lord's Supper: **1 Cor 11:33**: So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat [of the Lord's Supper], wait for one another.

2. Baptism

a. Recipients: believers _____

- i. The Scriptures nowhere command believer's **only** to be baptized. However, every example of baptism in the New Testament involves believers. Thus, we infer that believer's only are to be baptized.

¹ For more on the ordinances as "ordained by Jesus," see the section on the marks of the church: Dan Burrus, "Systematic Theology, Lesson 31: Ecclesiology, Part 2," lecture available at gracelakeville.org.

² For more on the Roman Catholic view of the sacraments, see: Dan Burrus, "Systematic Theology, Lesson 31: Ecclesiology, Part 2," lecture available at gracelakeville.org.

1. **Acts 2:41:** So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.
 2. **Acts 8:12-13:** But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike. Even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip, and as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed.
 3. **Acts 8:36-39:** As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?” [And Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”] And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing.
 4. **Acts 9:18:** And immediately there fell from his [Paul’s] eyes something like scales [Paul’s conversion], and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized.
 5. **Acts 19:5:** When they heard this [the message of repentance and belief in Jesus], they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.
- ii. What about household baptisms (**Acts 10:44-48; 16:14-15, 32-33; 1 Cor 1:15-16**)? While Protestant paedobaptism (i.e., infant baptism) appeals to household baptisms as an example of infants being baptized, the argument is from silence. However, credobaptism (i.e., believer’s only baptism) cannot appeal to household baptisms to say believers only were baptized because it is also an argument from silence. Therefore, household baptisms in the New Testament are inconclusive as to whether or not infants were (and should be) baptized.
- iii. The symbolism of baptism (see below) argues for believers only baptism.
- b. Mode: _____
- i. The Greek word for baptize is *baptizo* (βαπτίζω) which literally means “to plunge, dip, or immerse.”

- ii. The prepositions *in*, *out of*, and *out of* are concomitant with immersion.
 1. **Mark 1:5**: And all the country of Judea was going out to him, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.
 2. **Mark 1:10**: Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him.
 3. **John 3:23**: John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there; and *people* were coming and were being baptized.
 4. **Acts 8:38-39**: And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing.

iii. Immersion most accurately portrays the symbolism of baptism.

c. Symbolism

i. Union with the death, burial, resurrection of Christ.

1. **Rom 6:3-4**: Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.
2. **Col 2:12**: having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

ii. Washing and cleansing from sin.

1. **Acts 22:16**: Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.
2. **Titus 3:5**: He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.

- iii. Therefore, since baptism symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and washing away sins, baptism is the gospel made visible (i.e., visible words).

d. Significance

- i. Baptism signifies the _____ rite into the Christian church.
- ii. Thus, baptism is not necessary for regeneration³ (c.f. **Luke 23:42-43**), but baptism is necessary for entrance into the Christian church.

e. Power: means of grace

- i. Since baptism is a picture of the gospel, as well as obedience to the Lord's command, when you experience baptism (personally and collectively), your faith is strengthened and nourished.
- ii. **Col 2:12**: having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

- f. **GCBC Statement of Faith**: ("The Church," paragraph 14): We teach that two ordinances have been committed to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Christian baptism by immersion is the solemn and beautiful testimony of a believer showing forth his faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and his union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to a new life. It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible body of Christ.

3. Lord's Supper

- a. Recipients: baptized _____ believers

- i. Baptized

- 1. Much like baptism, the Scriptures nowhere command baptized believer's **only** to take Communion. However, every example of Communion in the New Testament involves baptized believers. Thus, we infer that baptized believer's only are to take Communion.

³ For more on regeneration, see: Dan Burrus, "Systematic Theology, Lesson 25: Soteriology, Part 3," lecture available at gracelakeville.org.

- a. **Matt 28:19:** Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.
 - b. **Acts 2:41, 46:** So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. . . . Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread [i.e., Lord's Supper] from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart.
2. Since the Lord's Supper is the continuing rite in the Christian church (see below), then it follows that the Lord's Supper is for those that have first been baptized.
 - ii. Repentant: the Lord's Supper is not for professing believers who have been excommunicated from church membership through church discipline.⁴ **1 Cor 11:29-30:** Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.
 - iii. Believers: since the Lord's Supper is the continuing rite in the Christian church (see below), then it follows that the Lord's Supper is for believers only (**Matt 26:26; Luke 22:14-23; 1 Cor 10:16-17; 1 Cor 11:23-34**).
 - b. Elements: bread and wine⁵
 - i. **Matt 26:26-29:** 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 covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

⁴ For more on church discipline, see: Dan Burrus, "Systematic Theology, Lesson 32: Ecclesiology, Part 3," lecture available at gracelakeville.org.

⁵ Historically, wine was used in the Lord's Supper until the late 19th century. Since then, many churches use grape juice as a substitute for wine so as to not cause a believer who struggles with drunkenness to partake of the cup, leading them back to a lifestyle of drunkenness.

ii. How is Christ present in the elements? He is spiritual present.⁶

c. Symbolism

i. Christ's body and blood in death.

1. **1 Cor 11:24-25**: and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way *He took* the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me."

2. **1 Cor 11:26**: For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

ii. Unity of believers with one another in Christ's death. **1 Cor 10:17**: Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread.

iii. Therefore, since the Lord's Supper symbolizes the death of Christ and the unity of believers in Christ's death, the Lord's Supper is the gospel made visible (i.e., visible words).

d. Significance

i. The Lord's Supper signifies the _____ rite in the Christian church.

ii. Thus, Lord's Supper is not necessary for justification⁷ (c.f. **Luke 23:42-43**), but the Lord's Supper is necessary for continuing participation in the Christian church.

e. Power: means of grace

i. Since the Lord's Supper is a picture of the gospel, as well as obedience to the Lord's command, when you participate in the Lord's Supper, through faith God strengthens and nourishes you spiritually.

ii. **John 6:53-57**: So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in

⁶ For a defense of this position regarding the presence of Christ in the elements, including the idea of the Lord's Supper as a means of grace, see: Dan Burrus: "The Lord's Supper: Four Views," lecture available at GCBC semonaudio.com webpage.

⁷ For more on justification, see: Dan Burrus, "Systematic Theology, Lesson 27: Soteriology, Part 5," lecture available at gracelakeville.org.

yourselves. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever.”

- iii. **1 Cor 10:16:** Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ?

- f. **GCBC Statement of Faith** (“The Church,” paragraph 15): We teach that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of His death until He comes, and should be always preceded by solemn self examination. We also teach that whereas the elements of communion are only representative of the flesh and blood of Christ, the Lord's Supper is nevertheless an actual communion with the risen Christ who is present in a unique way, fellowshiping with His people.