

Discipleship: An Introduction to Systematic Theology and Apologetics

The Doctrines of Redemption: Key Protestant
Reformation Doctrines - Sacraments

The Heights Church June 10, 2018

2 versus 7 Sacraments - *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*

Confirmation:

- Luther saw confirmation as a good idea but not a sacrament commanded by Christ.

5.1 I wonder what could have possessed them to make a sacrament of confirmation out of the laying on of hands, (Mark 16:18; Acts 6:6, Acts 8:17, Acts 19:6) which Christ employed when He blessed young children, (Mark 10:16) and the apostles when they imparted the Holy Spirit, ordained elders and cured the sick, as the Apostle writes to Timothy, "Lay hands suddenly on no man." (1 Timothy 5:22) Why have they not also turned the sacrament of the bread into confirmation? For it is written in Acts 9:19, "And when he had taken meat he was strengthened," and in Psalm 104:15, "And that bread may cheer man's heart." Confirmation would thus include three sacraments – the bread, ordination, and confirmation itself. But if everything the apostles did is a sacrament, why have they not rather made preaching a sacrament?

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Confirmation:

5.2 I do not say this because I condemn the seven sacraments, but because I deny that they can be proved from the Scriptures. Would to God we had in the Church such a laying on of hands as there was in apostolic times, whether we called it confirmation or healing! But there is nothing left of it now but what we ourselves have invented to adorn the office of the bishops, that they may have at least something to do in the Church. For after they relinquished to their inferiors those arduous sacraments together with the Word, as being too common for themselves – since, forsooth, whatever the divine Majesty has instituted has to be despised of men – it was no more than right that we should discover something easy and not too burdensome for such delicate and great heroes to do, and should by no means entrust it to the lower clergy as something common – for whatever human wisdom has decreed has to be held in honour among men! Therefore, as are the priests, so let their ministry and duty be.

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Confirmation:

But we seek, instead of this, sacraments that have been divinely instituted, among which we see no reason for numbering confirmation. For, in order that there be a sacrament, there is required above all things a word of divine promise, whereby faith, may be trained. But we read nowhere that Christ ever gave a promise concerning confirmation, although He laid hands on many and included the laying on of hands among the signs in Mark 16:18 "They shall lay their hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Yet no one referred this to a sacrament, nor can this be done.

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Marriage

- Luther saw marriage as a model of Christ's relationship with the church (Ephesians 5), but is not commanded by Jesus. 1 Corinthians 7 says it is better to not be married and Jesus was not married. Marriage is common in all cultures and not uniquely Christian.

6.3 Furthermore, since marriage existed from the beginning of the world and is still found among unbelievers, it cannot possibly be called a sacrament of the New Law and the exclusive possession of the Church. The marriages of the ancients were no less sacred than are ours, nor are those of unbelievers less true marriages than those of believers, and yet they are not regarded, as sacraments. Besides, there are even among believers married folk who are wicked and worse than any heathen; why should marriage be called a sacrament in their case and not among the heathen? Or are we going to rant so foolishly of baptism and the Church as to hold that marriage is a sacrament only in the Church, just as some make the mad claim that temporal power exists only in the Church? That is childish and foolish talk, by which we expose our ignorance and our arrogance to the ridicule of unbelievers.

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Holy Orders

- Luther as well as most Protestants considered Holy Orders (ordination) to be a good idea but not a sacrament. There is not a command in Scripture to do it or any instruction on how it should be done.
- In addition Protestants did not want anything like a priest to stand between believers and God since all believers are priests and need only Jesus as an intermediary.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:9)

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Holy Orders

7.1 Of this sacrament the Church of Christ knows nothing; it is an invention of the pope's church. Not only is there nowhere any promise of grace attached to it, but there is not the least mention of it in the whole New Testament. Now it is ridiculous to put forth as a sacrament of God that which cannot be proved to have been instituted by God. I do not hold that this rite, which has been observed for so many centuries, should be condemned; but in sacred things I am opposed to the invention of human fictions, nor is it right to give out as divinely instituted what was not divinely instituted, lest we become a laughing-stock to our opponents. We ought to see to it that every article of faith of which we boast be certain, pure, and based on clear passages of Scripture. But that we are utterly unable to do in the case of the sacrament under consideration.

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Extreme Unction (Last Rites)

- Luther made the point that James 5:14-15 calls for having the elders pray for us when we are ill and anoint us with oil but there is no implication that it is reserved for the deathbed. In practice Rome made extreme unction a final work of salvation. Thus it must be rejected for the same reason penance was rejected (Rome elevated penance to a blasphemous necessary work for salvation which meant trusting in Christ's work on the cross by faith in Christ alone was somehow inadequate).

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Extreme Unction (Last Rites)

8.1 To the rite of anointing the sick our theologians have made two additions which are worthy of them; first, they call it a sacrament, and secondly, they make it the last sacrament. So that it is now the sacrament of extreme unction, which may be administered only to such as are at the point of death. Being such subtle dialecticians, perchance they have done this in order to relate it to the first unction of baptism and the two succeeding unctions of confirmation and ordination. But here they are able to cast in my teeth, that in the case of this sacrament there are, on the authority of James the Apostle, both promise and sign, which, as I have all along maintained, constitute a sacrament. For does not James say: (James 5:14 f.) "Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the **priests** of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall raise him up: and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him." There, say they, you have the promise of the forgiveness of sins, and the sign of the oil.

(Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the **elders** of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. James 5:14 ESV)

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Extreme Unction (Last Rites)

8.2 But I reply: If ever there was a mad conceit, here is one indeed. I will say nothing of the fact that many assert with much probability that this Epistle is not by James the Apostle, nor worthy of an apostolic spirit, although, whoever be its author, it has come to be esteemed as authoritative. But even if the Apostle James did write it, I yet should say, no Apostle has the right on his own authority to institute a sacrament, that is, to give a divine promise with a sign attached; for this belongs to Christ alone. Thus Paul says that he received from the Lord the sacrament of the Eucharist, (1 Corinthians 11:23) and that he was not sent to baptise but to preach the Gospel. (1 Corinthians 1:17) And we read nowhere in the Gospel of this sacrament of extreme unction. But let us also waive that point. Let us examine the words of the Apostle, or whoever was the author of the Epistle, and we shall at once see how little heed these multipliers of sacraments have given to them.

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Conclusion:

9.6 I hear a rumor of new bulls and papal curses sent out against me, in which I am urged to recant or be declared a heretic. If that is true, I desire this book to be a portion of the recantation I shall make; so that these tyrants may not complain of having had their pains for nothing. The remainder I will publish ere long, and it will, please Christ, be such as the Roman See has hitherto neither seen nor heard. I shall give ample proof of my obedience. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Lord's Supper - Protestant Unity:

- While Protestants have divided over The Lord's Supper, there is unity over the meaning of the Lord's Supper, and participation in the Lord's Supper.
- The meaning of the Lord's Supper
 1. **Christ's Death** – Broken bread *symbolizes* Christ's broken body; the cup *symbolizes* Christ's blood poured out for believers. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (1 Corinthians 11:26a)
 2. **Participation in the Benefits of Christ's Death** – Reaching out to take the elements symbolically says we share in the benefits Christ's death earned for all believers. Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. (Matthew 26:26-28)

The Lord's Supper - Protestant Unity:

3. **Spiritual Nourishment** – The Lord's Supper Spiritually nourishes us just as food and drink physically nourish us. 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 you. Whoever feeds on 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. Whoever feeds on 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 whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. (John 6:53 – 57)
 4. **Unity of Believers** – Christian participation in the Lord's Supper is a sign of unity. Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. (1 Corinthians 10:17)
- In addition participation in the Lord's Supper Christ affirms that He loves me and that all the blessings of salvation are reserved for me.
 - Finally participating the Lord's Supper affirms my faith in Christ.

The Lord's Supper - Protestant Unity:

- For these reasons most Protestants agree that only those who believe in Christ should participate in the Lord's Supper. For anyone who eats and drinks without **discerning the body** eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. (1 Corinthians 11:29 – 30)
- Protestants usually believe self examination is necessary for believers to take the Lord's Supper. Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an **unworthy manner** will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person **examine himself**, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. (1 Corinthians 11:27 – 28) In other words we need to reflect
 - discerning the body = understanding the unity and interdependence of people in the church (body of Christ)
 - unworthy manner = means not discerning the body
 - examine himself = do our relationships in the church reflect the character of the Lord