

The Ordinances

A look at the various ways Communion and Baptism are understood and practiced today

Terminology – Sacrament vs. Ordinance

- Sacrament is the Catholic term, Ordinance is typically the Protestant term.
- *Sacrament* is the Latin word used to translate the Greek *mysterion* (“mystery” in English). Because of the mysterious and almost magical power associated with the sacraments in Catholicism, most Protestants prefer “ordinance.”
- *Ordinance* derives from that Latin *ordo*, meaning “a row, an order,” emphasizing that these rites were ordained by the Lord, and are only symbols, not actual mysterious conveyors of grace.

Purpose of Ordinances

Roman Catholics—sacraments infuse grace and are necessary for salvation.

Many Protestants—sacraments/ordinances are a “means of grace” when received with faith.

Baptists and other Protestants—ordinances testify to God’s grace already received (not something God does in or for us).

Church History

- Catholic church had seven sacraments, (officially recognized in the 12th century):
 - Baptism
 - Confirmation
 - Eucharist (communion)
 - Penance
 - Marriage
 - Ordination
 - Extreme Unction (last rights)
- The Reformers rejected this Catholic definition of the sacraments because of how they “conveyed grace” to the practitioner.
- They rejected the list of seven and started over, finding biblical support for only two sacraments: Communion and Baptism.

Ordinance 1 Communion

Communion in the Bible

Instituted by Christ. On the night before His death, Jesus used the setting of the Jewish Feast of Passover to institute the Lord’s Supper, which He directly connected to His impending death. (Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:17-20; and 1 Cor. 11:23-26).

Practiced by early church (see Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7, 11).

Views on Communion

Catholic – **Transubstantiation**

Lutheran – **Consubstantiation / Sacramental Union**

Modern Evangelical – **Memorial**

Catholic – Transubstantiation

Transubstantiation

Aristotle had a huge influence on medieval Catholic theologians. His distinction between “substance” and “accident” was applied to the Eucharist (Communion) elements.

- The *substance* of something is its essential nature.
- The *accidents* are its outward appearances (color, shape, smell, etc.).
- Transubstantiation holds that the *accidents* of the bread and wine remain unchanged at the moment of consecration while the *substances* of bread and wine change to that of the actual body and blood of Christ.

Transubstantiation

This view was first affirmed in 1215 by the Fourth Lateran Council, and made official doctrine at the Council of Trent (c. 1550’s):

“By the consecration of the bread and wine, a conversion (or change) is made of the whole *substance* of the bread into the *substance* of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole *substance* of the wine into the *substance* of His blood; which conversion is ... called Transubstantiation.”

This is still the view of the Catholic church today.

Transubstantiation

Participating in the Eucharist infuses grace and is necessary for salvation.

Transubstantiation

- Major Problems

- Relies more on Aristotelian teachings than biblical teachings.
- Christ’s humanity (100% human) requires that his body be only in one place at one time. He is not and cannot be omnipresent (affirmed by the Council of Chalcedon, AD 451). Transubstantiation requires him to be in thousands of locations at once every Sunday.
- Teaches that Christ is literally re-sacrificed every Sunday in the mass. This denies the sufficiency of His single sacrifice for all time (Hebrews 9:28; 10:14)
- Teaches salvation by works. Grace is infused to the individual by doing this outward work.

Lutheran – Consubstantiation /
Sacramental Union

Consubstantiation / Sacramental Union

- Defined by Luther as the real presence of Christ “in,” “with,” and “under” the elements. Christ’s flesh and blood were truly present in them.
- Luther recognized Aristotle’s influence on Transubstantiation and rejected it, arguing that the bread and wine remained real bread and wine (no substance vs. accidents).
- Luther believed that communion was not a sacrifice but a sign of the sacrifice.

Consubstantiation / Sacramental Union

Lutherans today prefer the term Sacramental Union. They charge “Consubstantiation” as misrepresenting their view.

The Formula of Concord (1577) states:

“...we hold and believe, according to the simple words of Christ’s testament, the true, yet supernatural eating of Christ’s body and also the drinking of His blood. Human senses and reason do not comprehend. But, as in all other articles of faith, our reason is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ [2 Cor. 10:5]. This mystery is not grasped in any other way than through faith alone, and it is revealed in the Word alone.”

Consubstantiation / Sacramental Union

To modern Lutherans, Consubstantiation means Christ is physically present (which they reject), while Sacramental Union means that He is mystically, non-physically present.

“The eating and drinking are not physical, but *mystical* and *sacramental*.”
19th century Lutheran, Charles Porterfield Krauth

Consubstantiation / Sacramental Union

- Problems

- Christ’s real presence has very little biblical support. Luther relied completely on his own interpretation of “is” in **Matthew 26:26, 28**. (Luther, and Lutherans today, reject figurative explanations of Jesus’ sayings here.)
- *Consubstantiation* requires him to be physically in thousands of locations at once every Sunday (same problem as in Transubstantiation)
- *Sacramental Union* speaks of “the incomprehensible, spiritual mode of presence according to which he neither occupies nor yields space but passes through everything created as he wills” (Formula of Concord). This lacks Scriptural support.

Evangelical – Memorial

Memorial

- The celebration of the Lord’s Supper is a commemoration and remembrance of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross.
- Ulrich Zwingli, the Swiss Reformer was first to promote this view in the Reformation.
- Zwingli taught that “is” in Matt. 26:26, 28 meant “represents.” Christ could not be physically or mystically present, since he was in heaven at God’s right hand.

Memorial

- Breaks fully with Catholic thought. Holds fast only to the words of Scripture.
 - “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” (Luke 22:19)
- Recognizes that Jesus can and did often speak in figures: “I am the door,” “I am the vine.”

- Many include within a Memorial framework a “Spiritual Presence” view, that Christ is spiritually present with believers. (e.g. John Calvin)

Communion
concluding thoughts

Communion is a memorial – of Christ’s death and resurrection which established the New Covenant, bringing forgiveness of sins (Matt 26:28).

Communion is a proclamation of Jesus’ death until He comes again (1 Cor 11:26)

Communion is a sharing/participation in the blood and body of Christ. (1 Cor 10:16)

Communion testifies to the unity that Christians have in the body of Christ. (1 Cor 10:17)

Ordinance 2 **Baptism**

Baptism in the Bible

Participated in by Christ (Matt 3:13-17)

Commanded by Christ in the process of making disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19)

Practiced by the early church (Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12, 36-38; 9:18; 10:47; 16:14-15, 33; 18:8; 19:5; 1 Cor 1:14-16).

Views on Baptism

Catholic **Paedobaptism** (infant baptism)

Evangelical **Paedobaptism** (infant baptism)

Lutherans, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Methodists

Evangelical **Credobaptism** (believer baptism only)

Baptists, Pentecostals, and most Non-Denominational

(*Paedo* from the Greek *paidion*, meaning young child or infant. *Credo* the Latin *credo*, meaning “I believe.”)

Paedobaptism

Paedobaptism – Disclaimer

Many Paedobaptist denominations and individuals are dear brothers and sisters in the faith.

By holding to Paedobaptism, a person is not rejecting inerrancy or elevating tradition over the Bible. They are simply approaching the Bible with a different hermeneutic (way of interpretation).

We can have great and enduring fellowship with paedobaptists! (think John MacArthur and R.C. Sproul)

Paedobaptism beginnings

(NOTE: Paedobaptists will disagree with the next two slides.)

Baptism of infants began quietly in the mid 2nd century, grew in popularity and practice in the 3rd century, and exploded into near universal practice by the end of the 4th century.

Infant baptism developed on the heels of growing belief in baptismal regeneration—the belief that baptism saves an individual. (Sadly, many early church fathers began teaching that baptism saves.)

Paedobaptism beginnings

To ensure salvation for their children if they were to die young, parents wanted to baptize their kids. When children were terminally ill, some localized pastors (likely out of sympathy for parents) allowed the practice.

Death-bed baptisms for children eventually morphed into at-birth baptisms.

Paedobaptism beginnings

Augustine, a leading theologian of the early church (c. AD 400), championed infant baptism.

For Augustine, infants were not saved by their baptism, but once saved, their previous baptism was validated.

Augustine's teachings as a whole would shape much of Christianity all the way into the medieval era, including his position on infant baptism.

Catholic Paedobaptism

Catholic understanding of Paedobaptism

"The Catholic understanding is that baptism is a sign that effects what it symbolizes, bringing about several things. One of these effects is regeneration—God's very life comes into the person, taking away the guilt of original sin and infusing sanctifying grace into the soul, making the person a new creation."

"So, if someone asks, "Have you been born again?" don't reply, "Of course not, I'm Catholic!" We would much prefer that you refer some of the verses above, and let them know you were "born again" the Bible way—as an infant at baptism."

Jason Evert, CatholicAnswers.com, posted April 6, 2016

Catholic Paedobaptism

- Major Problems

Teaches that the act of baptism regenerates a person. In other words, saved by works.

Teaches that all people baptized as infants are saved, "born again." Regardless of how they live later in life, they are still saved because of grace "infused" in the baptism.

Evangelical Paedobaptism

Evangelical understanding of Paedobaptism

Baptism signifies initiation into the covenant community and union with Christ. (J. V. Fesko)

Baptism is a sign [for infants] and seal [for adults] of what is true of believers whenever they believe. (R. Scott Clark, The Heidelbergblog)

Baptism initiates them [children] into the visible assembly of God's people. (R. Scott Clark, The Heidelbergblog)

Evangelical basis for Paedobaptism

- Just as infants in the Old Testament were given the covenant sign (circumcision), so infants in the New Testament are to be given the covenant sign (baptism).
- Household baptisms in the book of Acts. "After [Lydia] was baptized, and her household as well..." Acts 16:15
- Jesus welcomed the little children who came to Him.
- It has been practiced throughout church history, including by the Reformers. (J. V. Fesko says that Early Church History "does not provide as "neat" an answer as either" side would like.)

Evangelical Paedobaptism

- Problems

- There is no biblical precedent for baptizing children.
- Early church history does *not* support infant baptism, contrary to paedobaptist's claims of neutrality.
 - Two paedobaptists turned credobaptists say they felt as if they and others paedobaptists were always "groping for proofs" in early church history. (Hendrick Stander and Johannes Louw)
- The Household Baptisms argument from Acts is easily debunkable. In 4 out of 5 "household baptism" references in Acts, it is perfectly clear through context that in some cases *either* no infants were baptized, or no infants were present. In the 5th case, it is reasonably clear.

Evangelical Paedobaptism

- Problems

Sign of the Covenant – the main Paedobaptist argument today.

This argument was first developed by Ulrich Zwingli in 1523. This was the beginning of Reformed "Covenant Theology." (Nick Needham, 2000 Years of Christ's Power, Part 3). For the first 1500 years AD, no one argued for infant baptism based on it being a "sign of the covenant." In fact, Cyprian and an entire African synod behind him explicitly *rejected* that infant baptism is linked to circumcision (AD 253).

Evangelical Paedobaptism

- Problems

Sign of the Covenant – Continued:

Historical reasons for infant baptism:

Group 1 (AD 2nd cent. to today), biblically based, says that baptism regenerates. (Cyprian)

Group 2 (AD 4th cent. to today) Rejects baptismal regeneration as biblical, claims tradition (it has always been this way). (Augustine)

Group 3 (AD 1523 to today), rejects tradition as sole authority, needs biblical basis, claims infant baptism is a sign of the Covenant. (Zwingli)

If infant baptism as a sign of the New Covenant is the main reason to baptize infants today, why did nobody give this reason for 1,500 years? Why were they baptizing infants?

Evangelical Credobaptism

Evangelical understanding of Credobaptism

Baptism signifies

identification with Christ,
washing away of sin,
death of the old life and resurrection as a new creature in Christ,
and identification with the church.

Baptism is a voluntary act of obedience to our Lord.

Baptism is an open declaration of faith in Christ.

Evangelical basis for Credobaptism

- “Peter said to them, ‘**Repent**—and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ—for the forgiveness of your sins.’” (Acts 2:38)
- “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.” (Acts 8:12)
 - Baptism is biblically connected to repentance and belief, nothing else.
- “Having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.” Colossians 2:12
 - Baptism is a sign of union with Christ, death to sin, and resurrection to new life.

Evangelical Credobaptism

- Minor Problems

- Infant baptism was virtually undisputed for nearly 1,100 years (circa AD 400 to AD 1500).
- Rebaptism of those baptized as infants was considered heresy by most Reformers (hence the Anabaptist separation).

Baptism

concluding thoughts

Associates a Christian with the triune God—Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19)

Represents identification with the major events of Christ's life—His death, burial, and resurrection (Rom 6:3-5)

Represents cleansing from sin as part of the New Covenant (Acts 2:38; 22:16; cf. Ezek 36:25).

Represents incorporation into and identification with the body of Christ, the church (1 Cor 12:13)

Baptism

concluding thoughts on our paedobaptist brothers

Many Paedobaptists are our friends and brothers, spiritually AND doctrinally.

When it comes to the Gospel and salvation, we can and often do have perfect agreement.

Our way of interpreting Scripture is different.

Paedobaptists see more figurative language in Scripture and make many OT to NT connections (called “continuity”).

Credobaptists have more stringent rules for calling a passage figurative, and make few OT to NT connections (called “discontinuity”).

Our view of Church History is different.

Paedobaptists claim Credobaptists have misinterpreted the facts of early church history.

Credobaptists claims Paedobaptists are ignoring the facts of early church history.

Questions