

Creeds, Confessions, & Sacraments

Westminster Confession - Sacraments

Chapter 27

The Sacraments

1. Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace. They were instituted by God along with that covenant¹ to represent Christ and his benefits, to confirm our position with and in him,² to demonstrate a visible difference between those who belong to the church and the rest of the world,³ and solemnly to engage believers in the service of God in Christ according to his word⁴

1. Rom 4.11, Gn 17.7, 9-11, Mt 28.19, 1 Cor 11.23, Ex 13.9-10, 12.3-20.

2. 1 Cor 10.16, 11.25-26, Gal 3.27.

3. Rom 15.8, Ex 12.48, Gn 34.14, 1 Cor 10.21, Heb 13.10, 1 Cor 11.27-29.

4. Rom 6.3-4, 1 Cor 10.2, 14-16, 21; see context.

2. In every sacrament there is a spiritual relationship or sacramental union between the sign and the thing signified. And so the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other.⁵

5. Gn 17.10, Mt 26.27-28, Ti 3.5.

3. The grace revealed in or by sacraments in their right use does not come from any power in them. Neither does the effectiveness of a sacrament depend on the devoutness or the intention of whoever administers it. Rather the power and effectiveness of the sacraments are the result of the work of the Spirit⁶ and rest on God's word instituting them, since his word authorizes their use and promises benefits to worthy receivers of them.⁷

6. Rom 2.28-29, 1 Pt 3.21, Mt 3.11, 1 Cor 12.13, 3.7, 6.11, Jn 3.5, Acts 8.13-23.

7. Mt 26.27-28, 28.19-20, Jn 6.63, Lk 22.19-20, 1 Cor 11.26.

4. There are only two sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord in the gospel: baptism and the Lord's supper.⁸ Ordinarily, neither of these may be administered by anyone but a lawfully ordained minister of the word.⁹

8. Mt 28.19, 1 Cor 11.20,23, 4.1, Heb 5.4.

9. See General Note.

5. The sacraments of the Old Testament signify and reveal in substance the same spiritual things as those of the New.¹⁰

10. 1 Cor 10.1-4, 5.7-8, Col 2.11-12.