



## STUDY GUIDE

“SACRAMENTS: CHRIST INSTITUTED TWO SEALS OF GOD’S COVENANT”

“BAPTISM: THIS RITE EXHIBITS UNION WITH CHRIST”

“THE LORD’S SUPPER: THIS RITE EXHIBITS COMMUNION WITH CHRIST”

(pg. 209-219)

### **What is the Main Takeaway?**

Christ has given the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper as a universal way to bless, encourage and unify His people – a depiction of initial union with Christ by faith and ongoing communion with Him.

### **What are the Potholes, the problems, the alternate views?**

Baptismal regeneration – particularly as practiced by some Campbellite (descending from Alexander Campbell) churches. These groups teach that it is not by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone that one is saved, but the righteous work of receiving baptism is required in order to be saved. A person may believe in Christ and make an authentic profession of faith, but if unbaptized and say, killed in a car accident on the way home from the church service, that person would be damned since he or she had not been baptized. In this case, it is Jesus + baptism that saves – this is not the gospel and is heretical. Within these movements (Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ, Christian Church), there is some diversity of belief in this matter.

Note: A heresy is a belief that fundamentally alters and corrupts the gospel of Christ. Those who knowingly follow such a corrupted gospel cannot then be saved by it. Common heresies alter the nature of God in some way (typically through a form of anti-trinitarianism) and/or require some form of meritorious work in order for a person to be saved (Jesus + something else – e.g. Roman Catholicism and some within the Campbellite tradition).

Infant baptism – not heretical, practiced by millions of faithful believers worldwide, nevertheless represents a misunderstanding of the key texts on baptism and obscures the meaning of the ordinance. The expansion of the ordinance to include infants incapable of expressing a credible profession of faith is due to an improper connection of the Old Covenant rite of circumcision with New Covenant baptism, instead of its proper New Testament connection with circumcision of the heart (Romans 2:9). The issues are more fundamental than this even – see the Additional Resources, below.

Refusing baptism – Either out of fear or otherwise, some believers who make a credible profession of faith do not pursue believer’s baptism.

Unworthy taking of the Lord’s Supper – The Apostle Paul gives instructions to the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 11:17-34) regarding the Lord’s Supper. He indicates that believers should examine themselves before taking the Lord’s Supper – recognizing the significance of the ordinance and what it represents. This passage teaches us that it is not a trivial thing to partake of the Lord’s Supper, and that some of the Corinthian believers had even died as a result of taking the Lord’s Supper in a “unworthy manner.” What the Apostle did not mean to communicate was that the Lord’s Supper was to be a somber undertaking. Many

Christians regard preparation for the Lord's Supper as a time of extreme introspection and sorrow over sin.

Transubstantiation – The Roman Catholic belief that in the mass the bread and wine become the literal body and blood of the Lord, as Christ is sacrificed again for sins.

### **What are some of the Gracious Answers for those who may push back?**

Those caught in the heresy of works righteousness of any kind, whether a Campbellite heresy or any other religious system that perverts the gospel of Jesus Christ, must be exhorted to repent and believe the gospel. Christ delights to save sinners by his grace, and bestows upon them the gift of faith and repentance, changing their hearts and nature to love the truth and to love their Savior. Any work performed is because of and not in addition to the grace of Christ. It is by faith that we are saved, not by our work of water baptism or any other work.

The New Testament knows nothing of an “unregenerate disciple.” The proof texts used to support infant baptism consistently assume things not found in the text – in particular the household baptism texts, in which the assumption is made that infants “had to have been” in certain households, and therefore, “must have” received baptism. But even those who affirm infant baptism will admit that there is no example of the practice in the New Testament. If Christ wanted one of the two ordinances of his church to include infants, why does his word not explicitly command it and give no example of it?

Those who have made a credible profession of faith must be baptized in obedience to the command to baptize disciples given by Christ in the Great Commission of Matthew 28. Those who refuse baptism refuse a great blessing, and if unrepentant, undermine the legitimacy of their profession. Baptism as an initial sign of being in Christ which every believer should pursue and be encouraged to pursue upon their credible profession of faith.

Self-examination and confession of sin is always wise; however, Christ intended the Lord's Supper to be a remembrance filled with joy and an awareness of the grace of God, in spite of our sin. To better understand what Paul intended to be understood by taking the Lord's Supper “in an unworthy manner,” look at the context of the passage beginning in 11:17 for how the church was observing the Lord's Supper.

Christ was sacrificed once for all, and that sacrifice is not repeated, as taught in the Catholic mass. As Hebrews 7:27 states, “He has no need, like those high priests (under the Old Covenant) to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. See also 1 Peter 3:18 – For Christ also suffered once for sins...”

### **What Applications arise from this study?**

We should encourage all those caught up in systems of works righteousness to turn to Christ for forgiveness and eternal life, abandoning their attempts at justification through the work of baptism or any other work.

True churches should not immediately accept the prior baptism of a person who has been converted after leaving a Campbellite church since some of the churches' baptisms are not connected to a true gospel proclamation. Due to the diversity of teaching that may exist within associated churches, further investigation is warranted.

The ordinances should be limited to those subjects warranted by Scripture, and not those perpetuated by the unscriptural traditions of the church. And those for whom the

ordinances rightly apply should pursue them with intentionality and without unnecessary delay.

The ordinances should be a delight to the believer, and rightly understood, stand as a great encouragement to his people.

Christ's death on the cross should be heralded as the final, once-for-all sacrifice for sinners, never to be repeated.

### **What are some Additional Resources?**

<https://founders.org/articles/baptist-identity-crisis/> - Overview of Alexander Campbell  
<https://founders.org/articles/an-analysis-of-reformed-infant-baptism/>  
<https://www.9marks.org/article/the-lords-supper-a-foretaste-of-the-heavenly-banquet/>  
<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/battle-table>