

### **TEACHING GOAL**

To establish that under the New Testament Christ instituted in His church only two sacraments.

### **DOCTRINAL STANDARDS**

- Q. Which are the sacraments of the New Testament?
- A. The sacraments of the New Testament are, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper.
- S.C. 93; L.C. 164; W.C. of F. XXVII; Savoy 28; Young 121-125

### **SCRIPTURAL BASIS**

**Study Passage:** Matthew 28:18-20, I Corinthians 11:20-26

**Support Passages:** Acts 2:32-8:4

### **BIBLE STORY**

Acts 16:11-15; The conversion of Lydia. Her whole household was baptized.

### **MEMORY ASSIGNMENT**

" And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."  
(Acts 2:42, ESV)

### **APPLICATION**

Spiritually healthy people take much pleasure in the means of grace and the fellowship of the saints as seen especially in their hospitality.

## SUMMARY

Of those who claim to be Christians, the vast majority hold that there are either seven sacraments or that there are only two. The Roman Catholic Church holds to seven sacraments: Baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, marriage, ordination, penitence, and extreme unction. Protestant and Reformed churches hold to only two: Baptism and The Lord's Supper.

The Roman Catholic Church bases its teaching of seven sacraments on the romanticized view that the sacraments constitute a series of supernatural acts that infuse supernatural grace into all of life from beginning to end.<sup>1</sup> The sacraments are said to be radiations into the here and now of history from the redemptive work that was finished at Calvary. Hence, (a) Baptism corresponds to birth, (b) Confirmation corresponds to the growth of the body, (c) Eucharist corresponds to nourishment, (d) Penitence corresponds to healing, (e) Extreme Unction corresponds to the destruction of the last remains of sin, a preparation for glory, (f) Consecration of the Priest and Marriage relate to perfection with respect to society. It is said that these seven represent seven mouths into which the stream of the divine grace, which has its meaning in the cross of Christ, empties itself in the wilderness of human existence through the hands of the priest.

On the other hand, the Protestants and Reformed churches rest their case for two sacraments on the Bible. Instead of appealing to beauty and harmony we must let the Bible define the meaning and nature of the sacraments which it does in the context of Christ's historical work of redemption. The Bible teaches that through the Word, baptism and the Lord's Supper and prayer, man receives all the grace he needs in life and death for time and eternity. That is not to say beauty and harmony are without value for they are but they are not saving graces. They do not communicate to us the benefits of redemption and are not made effectual to the elect for salvation.

The only sacraments mentioned throughout the book of Acts are baptism and the Lord's Supper so it is apparent that the early church recognized these two only as sacraments. For example Peter would have his hearers repent and be baptized in Acts 2:38. Following the conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch he was baptized.<sup>2</sup> Similarly Cornelius' whole household was baptized as was Lydia's and the Philippian jailer's.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, in Acts 2:42 and 46 we read of the practice of breaking of bread. The only other context in which we find this terminology *breaking of bread*, concerns the two disciples who walked with Jesus on the road to Emmaus. Their eyes were opened as Luke writes, "When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to

them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight." (Luke 24:30-31, ESV).<sup>4</sup> Therefore we believe that this is a reference to the Lord's Supper. The washing of feet practiced by some in connection with the Lord's Supper is not itself a sacrament and in any event there is no reference to it ever having been observed in the early church. Other than its main reference in John 13, it is mentioned in one other context in I Timothy 5:10 as a means of showing hospitality.

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<sup>1</sup> Berkouwer, *The Sacraments*, p. 27-42.

<sup>2</sup> Acts 8:38

<sup>3</sup> Acts 10:48, 16:15, 16:33

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<sup>4</sup> Luke 24:30-31