The Sacraments I

Sacramentology & Baptism
The Development of Sacraments

Sacraments, specifically Baptism, are mentioned throughout the New Testament; but the term “Sacrament”, and the concepts it entails develops later in history.

“Sacrament” derives from Tertullian translating the Greek word “Mysterion” or “mystery” into Latin. However, he not only translated it but expanded the concept.

Mysterion refers to the mystery of God’s saving grace for the whole world in general.

Tertullian created “Sacrament” from the Latin root Sacre- meaning “holy”, “set-apart”, or “sacred” and Sacramentum, which was a military oath taken by Roman soldiers (it literally means “sacred oath”).

When he was translating Greek theological texts and replacing Mysterion with Sacramentum he was accomplishing several things:

- Adding plurality to Mysterion, meaning that multiple signs (Baptism & Eucharist) are part of God’s saving grace
- Drawing connection between loyalty to God and the Church by using the common military oath
What is a Sacrament?

“An Outward and Visible Sign of an Inward Spiritual Grace”

- BCP 857
A sacrament is a physical or material element set before the external senses, representing by likeness, signifying by its institution, and containing by sanctification, some invisible and spiritual grace.

- Hugh of St. Victor
### Sign

**Conveys information**

What information does a red, hexagonal object with white letters convey at a road intersection?

**STOP!**

### Symbol

*A sign that participates in the reality it represents*

A Bible at an ordination: a tool to accomplish the work and represents connection to the Word of God.

### Ritual

*Patterned symbolic action using multiple symbols or compound-symbols*  

Baptism: Water is poured, oaths are taken, clothing, colors, etc.
Dotanist Crisis

- 4th-6th Century AD
- Happened in response to the latest round of Christian persecutions under Emperor Diocletian.
- Christians were forced to recant their faith and make an offering of incense to the cult of the Emperor or face punishment (usually death or exile).
- Many laity, priests, and a few bishops submitted but were later allowed to re-join the church after public repentance.
- *Dotanius Magnus*, the Bishop of Carthage argued that any sacraments performed by clergy who had offered incense instead of choosing martyrdom were *invalid*.
  - Baptisms, Eucharists, and Ordinations would have to be re-done by clergy who had not faltered.
Dotanism ultimately declared heretical.

*Validity of the sacraments derives not from the worthiness of the minister, but of the merits of the one who instituted it, Jesus Christ.*

This concept is one of the reasons the Epistle to the Hebrews made it into canon*

*Hebrews 4:14-16 “Christ our Great High Priest...”*

“Nothing more is accomplished by a good priest and nothing less by a wicked priest, because it is accomplished by the word of the Creator and not the merit of the priest. Thus the wickedness of the priest does not nullify the effect of the sacrament, just as the sickness of a doctor does not destroy the power of his medicine. Although the “doing of the thing” may be unclean, nevertheless the “thing which is done” is always clean”

-Pope Innocent III
What does a Sacrament do?

Restores a connection between the fallen Creation and God by the use of Signs, Symbols, and Ritual through the Incarnate Priesthood of Jesus Christ.
# How Many Sacraments are There?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Roman</strong></th>
<th><strong>Anglican</strong></th>
<th><strong>Protestant</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 Sacraments</td>
<td>2 “Great” Sacraments</td>
<td>2 Sacraments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptism</td>
<td>5 “Sacramental Rites”</td>
<td>Baptism Eucharist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eucharist</td>
<td>Confirmation</td>
<td>Instituted by Christ and Scripture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation</td>
<td>Ordination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordination</td>
<td>Marriage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage</td>
<td>Reconciliation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconciliation (Confession)</td>
<td>Unction (Anointing of the Sick)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instituted by Christ and the Church.</td>
<td>Confirmation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ordination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marriage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reconciliation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Baptism

The First Great Sacrament
The Word “Baptize” simply means “To dip”

- When Jesus is dipping the bread into oil and handing it to Judas during the Last Supper, the Greek reads of him “baptising the bread”. (John 13:26)

- It was a common practice in Judaism in the 1st Century as a sign of repentance and restoring ritual purity.
  - While John the baptist was unique in many ways, he was not doing anything particularly new outside the realm of a prophet by baptizing.

- From the earliest mentions in Paul’s Letters and in Matthew’s Gospel (28:19-20) Baptism became the core sacrament for Initiation into the Christian faith.
What Grace does Baptism Confer?

“Baptism is the sacrament by which God adopts us as His children and makes us members of Christ’s Body, the Church, and inheritors of the Kingdom of God.”

- BCP 858
Baptism is not “Fire Insurance”

- The concept that Baptism was the “magic words and water” that allowed the participant to escape Eternal Damnation, was based on a medieval misunderstanding of Augustine’s Concept of Original Sin.
- In Augustine’s writings, Original Sin is inherited through our parents, and we are unable to reunite with God unless we accept God into our hearts and participate in the sign of baptism.
- Both the Roman Catholic and Protestant denominations tied baptism closely to theology about Justification (The means by which we are saved through faith in Jesus)
- Current theology, and arguably ancient theology, has a different concept of Original Sin, as well as a different concept of the Grace Baptism confers.
Does Baptizing infants have a Biblical foundation?

- A sketchy one at best: Acts 16:15 mentions entire households being baptized, so it’s assumed that infants would have been part of it too.

**So How Can We Justify Baptizing Infants?**

The Grace conferred is Citizenship, Adoption, and Welcome into God’s family.

- The ancient concept of the Household
  - “In my Father’s house there are many rooms...” John 14:1-6
- Being baptized, you are being brought into God’s Household through Jesus, by sharing with Him His death and resurrection. (Immersion in water and returning).
The Baptismal Covenant

BCP 304. Q&A form of what famous prayer?
Apostle’s Creed

Baptism is Covenental, more like Circumcision.

God is always faithful to His promises.

What About Confirmation?

Historically, about education and a response to Protestant Criticisms.

Now it is about re-affirming the Covenant and taking on the duties as an adult.
Thanks!

Any questions?