

Sacraments - Baptism and the Lord's Supper

I. Introduction

- A. The ARP denomination understands Scripture to teach that a sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ where the benefits of Christ are represented, sealed, and applied to believers (WSC Q&A 92)
- B. There are only two sacraments in the ARP Church - baptism and the Lord's Supper
- C. The sacraments are signs and seals of God's grace in the person and work of Jesus
 - 1. Sign - represent the benefits promised to believers
 - 2. Seal - confirm these promises through the Holy Spirit's work

II. Baptism

- A. Initial Thoughts
 - 1. The sacrament of baptism in the name of the Triune God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) is commanded by Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20
 - 2. Baptism is a sacrament, wherein with the washing with water...doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's - WSC Q&A 94
 - 3. Baptism is the fulfillment of the Old Testament covenant sign, circumcision
 - a) Genesis 17:11 - "You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you."
 - b) Colossians 2:11-12 - "In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 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."
 - 4. Baptism is the sacrament of initiation into the covenant of grace and the covenant community (the church)
 - 5. Baptism signifies that we belong to God, not to ourselves
 - 6. In summary, baptism is not so much a sign of our commitment to God, but rather His commitment to us
- B. Why We Baptize Infants
 - 1. We see continuity between the the Old Testament and New Testament and the one covenant of grace throughout - the sign of the covenant (circumcision) was given to children then so there is no reason to think it would not be give to children now
 - 2. The promise is for believers and their children: Acts 2:38-39 - "And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."
 - 3. Children of believing parents are set apart: 1 Corinthians 7:14 - "For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving

wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.”

4. Family/Household baptisms in Acts - Acts 10, Acts 16, Acts 18
5. Infant baptism is not primarily a sign of the parents' faith or of dedicating a child to God, but rather God putting His name and claim on the child

III. The Lord's Supper (Communion)

A. Initial Thoughts

1. The Lord Jesus instituted this meal while celebrating the Passover with His disciples prior to His death on the cross (Luke 22:14-20)
2. In the Lord's Supper, Christ's death is showed forth, and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace - WSC Q&A 97

B. Four Views of the Lord's Supper

1. Transubstantiation (RCC) - elements physically become the body and blood of Christ and are re-sacrificed each mass
2. Consubstantiation (Lutheran) - Christ is physically present in, with, and around the elements
3. Calvin's View (Reformed) - Christ is spiritually present in the elements and we are brought up to Him by faith
4. Zwingli (most Baptists) - memorialism: it simply reminds us of Christ's death

C. What Happens

1. We remember what Christ has done
2. We proclaim Christ's death, resurrection and second coming
3. We spiritually feast on Christ, which gives nourishment to our soul
4. We long for heaven and the new heavens and the new earth

D. Practical Matters

1. We practice open communion - all who are believers in Christ and members in good standing of a Bible-believing church are welcome to Christ's Table
2. We observe the sacrament nine times each year
3. We fence the Table each time - warning for those who are outside of Christ, as well as children not admitted to the Table, that they will eat and drink judgment upon themselves
4. We are made worthy by Christ and not by anything we do
5. We serve both wine and grape juice so that folks have both options