



Of the Sacraments

**Westminster Confession of Faith
Chapters 27**

Growing in Christ, Witnessing to the World

What are the Sacraments?



Chapter 27 discusses the nature, purpose, and proper use of the sacraments in Christian faith. They are God-ordained means of grace meant to build up believers and point them to Christ. Thus, they are not mere rituals or empty signs.

Sacraments Defined



- Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of God's grace in Christ (27.1).
- God instituted them to represent Christ, confirm faith, and distinguish believers from unbelievers (27.1).
- By extension, they serve to strengthen our faith, increase grace, and oblige us to obedience (27.1).



What Makes Them Effective?

- The grace they represent is not tied to them in particular or to the moment they are administered (27.3).
- The Holy Spirit and the recipient's faith are necessary for the Sacraments' effectiveness (27.3).
- Their effectiveness is not dependent upon the holiness of the one administering them (27.3).



How Many Sacraments?

- There are only two sacraments instituted in the New Testament by Christ.
 - Baptism
 - Lord's Supper
- These New Testament sacraments correspond to those of the Old Testament.
 - Circumcision
 - Passover



Of Baptism

**Westminster Confession of Faith
Chapter 28**

Growing in Christ, Witnessing to the World

Baptism is a Blessing



Chapter 28 emphasizes the importance of baptism as a covenantal sign, applicable to both believers and their children, and insists on its necessity for membership in the visible church, while also highlighting that baptism alone does not save, but points to the deeper work of grace through faith.



The Mode of Baptism

- Baptism is administered in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (28.2).
- Baptism does not have to be administered by dipping a person into water (28.3).
- Baptism is properly administered by sprinkling or pouring water upon the person (28.3).



The Subjects of Baptism

- Baptism is to be applied to believers and their children (28.4).
 - Adult Believers
 - Children of Believing Parents
- Baptism does not save anyone.
- It is a sign of the faith of the recipient (Adult) and a sign of God's covenant promises upon a child, awaiting the time when he or she will profess faith in Christ (28.5).
- Baptism is to be applied once to a person (28.7).



The Significance of Baptism

- Baptism represents
 - the washing away of sin (28.1)
 - the believer's identification with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection (28.1), and
 - the believer's incorporation into the visible church (28.1).
- It is also a means of grace, signifying the believer's participation in the covenant promises (28.6).



Of the Lord's Supper

Westminster Confession of Faith

Chapter 29

Growing in Christ, Witnessing to the World

Union and Communion



Chapter 29 describes the Lord's Supper as a spiritual nourishment and a means of union with Christ. It is to be celebrated with faith and reverence, administered by an authorized minister, and partaken of by believers who have examined their faith. The bread and wine symbolize Christ's body and blood and are to be received in faith by Christians.

Elements and Benefits of the Supper



- The elements of the Lord's Supper are bread and wine (29.5).
- The benefits of the Lord's Supper are:
 - It strengthens and confirms our union with Christ and communion with one another (29.1).

Elements and Benefits of the Supper



- The benefits of the Lord's Supper are:
 - It reminds us of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection and the benefits he gives us.
 - Forgiveness of sins (29.1)
 - Eternal life (29.1)
 - Spiritual Sustenance (29.1,7)
 - The Holy Spirit makes these benefits present to those who partake of the supper in faith.



Who Should Partake?

- Only believers in the Lord Jesus who are members in good standing of a local congregation are allowed to partake of the supper (29.7).
- Unbelievers will bring judgment upon themselves when they partake of the supper without faith (29.8).



The Administration of the Supper

- The supper is to be administered by an ordained minister (29.3).
- The supper is to be administered when the Church has gathered for worship (29.4).
- The supper should be administered often enough to be considered part of the normal practice of the congregation.