

1. THE SPIRIT AND THE SCRIPTURES.

- a. The Scriptures are a witness by the authors
 - i. 1 Peter 1:12 – *It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in regard to the things that have now been announced to you through those who brought you good news by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look!*
 - ii. 2 Peter 1:20-21 – *First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*
- b. The Scriptures are authoritative through their message
 - i. 1 Corinthians 1:22-24 – *For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.*
 - ii. 1 Corinthians 15:3 – *For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures....*
- c. The purpose of the Scriptures is to bring us the message of salvation
 - i. John 20:30-31 – *Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.*
- d. The center of the Scriptures is Jesus Christ. Luther: “The Scriptures are the cradle in which Christ lies.”
- e. The Scriptures are not equally clear in all places; they are absolutely clear in their intended purpose—the message of salvation through Jesus Christ.
- f. The Holy Spirit worked in the authors to respond to God’s action in saving us.
 - i. John 14:25-26 - *“I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.”*
 - ii. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 – *All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.*
- g. The Bible is the inspired Word of God.
 - i. The principle by which books were considered inspired Scripture was the

- Christological principle—what teaches Christ and salvation through Him.
- ii. Use by the church also played a role in establishing the canonical books.
 - iii. We believe the Holy Spirit was active in the writing and selection of the books and letters that now form the Bible.
 1. Canon (comes from an Egyptian word meaning a reed used for measuring OR rule) – OT finalized by the Council of Jamnia (AD 90-100) and NT finalized by 4th Century by the time of the Council of Nicea
 - iv. “Inspired” means that we believe the Holy Spirit worked through the authors to bring us all we need to know about our salvation.
 1. The Word’s authority is not finally dependent on our intellectual belief. The Spirit works through it. (Example: Prayer is a two-way conversation with God that is begun by God’s Word.)
 - v. The means of grace (Holy Baptism, Holy Communion, the written Word, and the preached Word) are the means by which the Holy Spirit reaches people and works faith in them. It is in the use of the Word that we experience its power.

2. THE SACRAMENTS.

- a. It would be strange if God achieved our salvation through Christ and then provided no means for distributing the benefits.
- b. What makes a “sacrament”?
 - i. *Sacramentum* is a Latin word (not found in the Bible) which translates *mysterion* in the Greek.
 1. 1 Corinthians 4:1-2 – *Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mysteries. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.*
 - ii. There are two ways to define a sacrament.
 1. Use a philosophical definition.
 2. Begin with the ordinances God has given us and commanded us to use. This is the Biblical approach.
 - iii. A sacrament has 3 characteristics.
 1. Instituted by God. God established and commanded us to observe these actions.
 2. Sacraments promise and give God’s grace, the forgiveness of sins.
 3. Visible elements are involved. In baptism, water is involved; in the Lord’s Supper bread and wine are used.
- c. The sacraments are the means God established for giving and distributing the benefits of Christ’s death and resurrection.

3. HOW MANY SACRAMENTS ARE THERE?

- a. Roman Catholics recognize seven sacraments. Note: A sacrament for the Roman

Catholic Church is a point where grace is available.

- i. Marriage — lacks the visible element, has no command of God, does not promise or give the forgiveness of sins.
 - ii. Confirmation — lacks institution by God, has no visible element, no word and command of God for this practice, does not give or convey the forgiveness of sins.
 - iii. Extreme Unction — James 5 does mention anointing the sick with oil. (Oil is an ancient symbol for health.) James is talking about recovery rather than preparation for death. Unction has no institution by God, no word or command of God, does not give or convey the forgiveness of sins.
 - iv. Holy Orders — is the dedication of your entire life to the service of God. Here the unbiblical definition of sacrament becomes obvious. If “ordination” is a sacrament, there is a special grace from God not available to all Christians alike. No visible element is attached to holy orders, no promise of the forgiveness of sins is given by involvement in “holy orders.”
 - v. Penance (Jerome translated the Vulgate, Latin, “do penance”; he was wrong; metanoia) — is not to be confused with “repentance.” Penance assumes that acts of contrition are necessary for genuine repentance. There is no institution by God for “penance,” no visible elements, no command by God. The Lutheran Confessions maintain that confession and absolution might be called a “third sacrament” because of the forgiveness of sins that is announced.
- b. Lutherans recognize two sacraments — Holy Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.