

### **3.Charismata and Institution**

There has been debate not only over the precise nature of the charismatic gifts, but also over their place in the government of the church. Several functions of leadership in the church are described as “gifts” in Ephesians 4:11 : apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. They carried with them a degree of authoritative leadership. Moreover, as noticed earlier, that the churches referred to by Paul had a formal leadership is clear also from his appeal to the Thessalonians to respect those who “are over you (*prōstamēnoi*) in the Lord and admonish you” ( 1 Thess. 5:12 ). The same participle is used later on of bishops ( 1 Tim. 3:4 ), deacons (verse 12 ) and elders ( 1 Tim. 5:17 ), which leads one to conclude that *prōstamēnoi* designates the office/function of elders/bishops and deacons.

Addressing the issue as to how the institutional and the charismatic related to each other, some hold that the church needed no organization, since each believer was born of the Spirit and the recipient of at least one gift ( 1 Cor. 12:7 ; 1 Peter 4:10 ). In this view the need for institutional offices arose only when the charismatic ministry disappeared from the church, now unfaithful to its vocation. Others, pointing to the fact that several Pauline Epistles as well as the book of Acts attest to the importance of organization, maintain that the former theory simply glosses over the biblical data. It appears more tenable to assume that the *charismata* and the institutional ministries, such as elders, bishops, and deacons, existed side by side and that the mission of the church depended on both.

## **VI.The Ordinances of the Church**

For the new “way” His incarnation, life and death would inaugurate, our Lord had appointed beforehand certain definite rites that all born-again disciples would be called to observe, i.e., baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Some refer to them as ordinances, others as sacraments. Stemming from the Latin *ordo*, meaning “an order, a row,” an ordinance refers to a practice ordained by the Lord. Sacrament, deriving from the Latin *sacramentum* —which was applied to things sacred or mysterious—may be defined as a rite in which spiritual realities are set forth by visible signs, suggesting for some the thought of something beyond the rite itself, seen as a visible sign participating in that reality. Both terms are foreign to the NT , yet both rites are at the heart of the expression of the church’s faith.

### ***A. Baptism***

#### **1.Antecedents and Origins**

The ordinance of baptism may have derived its outward form from either Jewish proselyte baptism or from the rite administered by John the Baptist. Common to both was the presupposition of a break with the old life through the acceptance of the new. John’s baptism, however, was addressed to Jews and was a call to “repentance for the

forgiveness of sins” ( Mark 1:4 ). In the case of the Lord’s own baptism, the main emphasis was on commitment to a unique task, and consecration to His messianic ministry (cf. Matt. 3:15 ). Christian baptism expresses a radically new significance. Christ’s incarnation, life, and death fulfilled God’s salvation, and baptism in the name of Jesus indicates participation in this salvation through faith in Christ.

## **2.A Command**

The command to baptize was part of Christ’s Great Commission to the church to make disciples of all nations and to baptize them ( Matt. 28:19 ). The command of our Lord was faithfully carried out by the disciples. Actual baptisms are recorded in Acts 2:38 , 41 ; 8:12 , 13 , 16 , 36–38 ; 9:18 ; 10:47 ; 16:15 . The proclamation of the gospel called for a decision that ended in baptism. There is no trace in the NT of unbaptized Christians.

## **3.The Meaning of Baptism**

In essence baptism is a simple rite that reflects the meaning of the gospel and of the plan of salvation it sets forth. The term itself comes from *baptizō* an intensive form of *baptō*, to dip in or under. When referring to water baptism ( Matt. 3:6 ; Mark 1:9 ; Acts 2:41 ), it carries the idea of immersing, of dipping a person under water. At the same time, since *baptizō* is used in various ways in the NT , including washing ( Mark 7:4 ; Luke 11:38 ) and Christ’s suffering and death ( Mark 10:38 , 39 ; Luke 12:50 ), it may be unsafe to make its original meaning the final argument for the mode of baptism. One should not ignore, however, the additional significance of the fact that several incidences of water baptism recorded in the NT involved immersion (cf. Matt. 3:6 ; Mark 1:5 , 9 , 10 ; John 3:23 ), a conclusion further sanctioned by the theological meaning given to the rite by the NT writers.

For Paul the meaning of baptism is first and foremost bound up with the saving events of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection, intrinsically contained in the conception of dying and rising with Christ. “Do you not know,” asks the apostle, “that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” ( Rom. 6:3 , 4 ; cf. Col. 2:12 ). Paul’s interpretation finds its full significance in baptism by immersion alone.

What Christ did for all sinners at Calvary is appropriated by each individual Christian in his or her baptism. In baptism Christians die with Christ, are crucified with Him ( Rom. 6:6 , 8 ; cf. Col. 3:3 ). His death frees them from sin ( Rom. 6:7 , 18 ). Risen with Christ, they begin a new life (verses 11–13 ; 7:4–6 ; Col. 3:1 ). The immersion into water is the outward form of one’s immersion into Christ. The rising out of the water is the outward expression of the new life in Christ, of having “put on” Christ ( Rom. 13:14 ; Gal. 3:27 ).

Immersion into water is also the outward form of a vital inner commitment to Christ. This is vividly described in Romans 6, for instance, by several words compounded with the preposition *syn*, meaning “with.” We are buried together (*synetaphēmen*), we have become a single plant with Him (*symphytoi*); the old nature is crucified together with Christ (*synestaurōthē*). If we died with Christ (*syn Christō*) we shall also live together with Him (*syēsomen*; Rom. 6:4–6, 8). These various themes find a common focus in the fundamental thought of baptism as a drowning of the old life and an emergence into new life, a death and a resurrection.

#### **4. Baptized Into One Body**

Still, Christians are seen not only as baptized “into Christ” (Gal. 3:27) but also “baptized into one body,” the church, the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). If baptism is identification with Jesus Christ, it is at the same time identification with His body, the church. In Paul’s words, “By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body” (*ibid.*). Christian baptism is baptism “in the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 2:38; 10:48) or “in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 8:16; 19:5), which, rather than referring to differing baptismal formulas, seems to refer to the theological import of baptism. It implies more particularly that those baptized belong to Christ, involving once again the notion of incorporation.

#### **5. Believers’ Baptism**

It should be obvious at this point that this baptism is *believers’* baptism. If indeed it symbolizes the sinner’s death to sin followed by a new life—the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ—baptism is an act of faith and a public testimony that one has been united with Him in His death and resurrection, a testimony to one’s commitment to Christ. This explains why so often in the book of Acts proclamation, faith, repentance, and baptism are linked together. On the day of Pentecost, responding to the question “Brethren, what shall we do?” Peter replied, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:37, 38). It is “when they believed Philip as he preached good news about ... the name of Jesus” that inhabitants of a city in Samaria “were baptized” (Acts 8:12). In answer to the Philippian jailer’s question “What must I do to be saved?” Paul answered simply, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household” (Acts 16:30, 31). Soon afterward they were baptized (verse 33).

In each instance baptism was an expression of repentance and conversion, which implies that the household and families that at times are mentioned (cf. Acts 11:14; 16:15, 31–34; 18:8) met the conditions of baptism: they responded to the preaching of the word, confessing repentance and faith. There is no indication in the NT that infants were ever baptized. The general drift of the narratives is in a totally different direction. Immersion of believers was the practice in apostolic times. The introduction of any other form is unwarranted and bound to lead to misconceptions.

#### **6. Baptism and the Holy Spirit**

In various NT passages the gift of the Spirit is explicitly connected with water baptism, as in Acts 2:38 ; 8:14–17 ; 9:17 , 18 ; 10:44–48 ; 19:1–7 , and in the Gospels, as in Matthew 3:11 ; Mark 1:8 ; Luke 3:16 ; John 1:33 ; 3:5 . In some instances the granting of the Spirit precedes baptism ( Acts 10:44 , 47 ) ; in others it follows it ( Acts 2:37 , 38 ; Mark 1:8 ). On two occasions the biblical narrative associates the laying on of hands with the imparting of the Spirit ( Acts 8:12–17 ; 19:1–6 ). Yet one finds no NT teaching to the effect that the laying on of hands is the necessary condition or the moment when the Holy Spirit is imparted. In the case of Cornelius, the Spirit was given before baptism and without any outward sign such as the laying on of Peter’s hands ( Acts 10:44–48 ). Yet the apostle did not judge that after such an obvious mark of God’s favor it was unnecessary for Cornelius and his household to be baptized in water. The two go together.

In the NT the baptismal ceremony is a whole, a unit not to be analyzed in its component parts. It is in the whole action that the Spirit is bestowed. There is no biblical baptism without the Spirit. Baptism is always baptism in water and in the Holy Spirit. (See Ordinances I. )

### ***B. The Lord’s Supper***

The other biblically ordained rite for the life of the church is the Lord’s Supper. Instituted by Christ Himself on the night in which He was betrayed ( Matt. 26:20–30 ; Mark 14:17–25 ; Luke 22:14–23 ), the ordinance is referred to in the Scriptures as the “Lord’s Supper” ( 1 Cor. 11:20 ), the “participation [or “communion”] in the body of Christ” ( 1 Cor. 10:16 ) and the “table of the Lord” (verse 21 ). Some speak of the “breaking of bread” ( Acts 2:42 ; cf. verse 46 ), while others prefer the designation “eucharist,” derived from the Greek *eucharisteō*, the term used for the giving of thanks before partaking of the elements ( Matt. 26:27 ; 1 Cor. 11:24 ). It seems to have been part of a common meal, at least in Corinth, eaten in connection with the bread and the cup after the pattern of the Last Supper as described in the Synoptic Gospels.

The combined witness of the Synoptics leaves no doubt that the ordinance was instituted by Christ Himself. While there remain difficulties regarding the nature of the Last Supper and its relationship to the Jewish Passover, the Lord’s Supper has all the marks of the paschal meal, whether described by the Synoptists or by Paul ( 1 Cor. 10:14–22 ; 11:23–34 ), who writes that “Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed” ( 1 Cor. 5:7 ). What began as a Passover ritual commemorating the exodus from Egypt and the establishment of the covenant at Sinai ( Ex. 24 ) became the celebration of a new exodus, this time from sin, and the establishment of a new covenant to be sealed with Jesus’ own blood.

#### **1. The Meaning of the Lord’s Supper**

**a. A look backward.** Christ’s command “Do this in remembrance of me” ( 1 Cor. 11:24 ) sums up the primary meaning of the Lord’s Supper. It is first and foremost a memorial rite, not of all that Christ said and did, but more specifically of His redemptive

death. As the Jewish Passover was a look backward, a reminder of God's mighty act in which He delivered Israel from the Egyptian bondage ( Ex. 12:14 ; 13:3 , 8 , 9 ; Deut. 16:3 ), so the Lord's Supper, in which Christians partake of the bread and the wine, commemorates the decisive event that Christ effected at Calvary, the new "exodus" (cf. Luke 9:31 ), and His triumph over sin and death. The breaking of bread and the pouring of wine is the church's continual recollection of the fact and meaning of Christ's sacrificial death in which it originated ( Acts 20:28 ), and which is the basis of our salvation.

**b.A present reminder.** The Lord's Supper also sets forth a present truth. Those who gather at "the table of the Lord" ( 1 Cor. 10:21 ) to eat the "Lord's supper" ( 1 Cor. 11:20 ) express visibly their present union with one another because of their union with the head of the church, Christ Himself. "Because there is one loaf," those who are many are one body, for they "all partake of the same loaf" ( 1 Cor. 10:16 , 17 ). It is clear that for Paul the Lord's Supper provides a basis for unity. At the foundation of this ongoing relationship between God and His people is a covenant, a new covenant stressed in each of the accounts of the ordinance ( Matt. 26:28 ; Mark 14:24 ; 1 Cor. 11:25 ).

**c.A forward look.** As a memorial of the past and reminder of the present, as instituted by Christ the Lord's Supper is also a forward look, a look to the Lord's second coming. Paul writes, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" ( 1 Cor. 11:26 ). The same eschatological motif was expressed by Jesus when He said, "I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" ( Matt. 26:29 ; cf. Mark 14:25 ; Luke 22:16 , 18 ). As the Jews in celebrating the Passover not only looked back to their deliverance from bondage but to a new deliverance by the Messiah they longed for, so the Christian fellowship at the Lord's table is a proclamation that the One who did come and is present among us has promised to come again.

**d.Symbolic elements.** In the Lord's Supper there is a real communion with Christ, though not with the idea that Christ's body and blood are present in the elements. Christ's body and blood are no more present today in the elements of bread and wine than they were when the Lord instituted the ordinance, took bread and gave it to the disciples, saying, "Take, eat; this is my body," then likewise took a cup and gave it to them, explaining, "Drink of it, ... for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" ( Matt. 26:26–28 ). His instruction was clear: "Do this in remembrance of me" ( 1 Cor. 11:24 , 25 ). The unleavened bread and unfermented fruit of the vine—which alone can appropriately symbolize the sinless perfection of the person of Christ—are shared "in remembrance of me"; they speak of sacrificial death and salvation and proclaim them until He comes.

Aside from Paul's discourse in 1 Corinthians 10 and 11 , little is said in the Scriptures regarding the prerequisites for partaking of the Lord's Supper. Yet if by its very nature the ordinance denotes a spiritual relationship between the individual and the Lord, the Lord's table is set only for those who have a share in Him and in His salvation. A prerequisite may be inferred from Paul's urgent request that the church censure from the

body those known to be living in open sin ( 1 Cor. 5:1–5 ). Still, Christ’s attitude toward the disciple who betrayed Him should warn Christians against undue exclusiveness. (See Ordinances III. )

## **2.The Ordinance of Foot Washing**

From the biblical perspective the Communion service is incomplete without its foot-washing rite. Just as He gave a more profound meaning to the Jewish Passover service, Christ invested foot washing, the OT hospitality rite, with deeper significance and made it an integral part of the Lord’s Supper ( John 13:1–5 ). Not only did His example impress on the minds of those present His life of meekness and service, but the Lord also used the event to prepare the self-centered and proud disciples (cf. Luke 22:24 ) to take part in the Lord’s Supper.

The foot washing was to do more than clean their feet, soiled by the dusty and muddy roads, since after washing them, and referring to Judas, Jesus could say that they were clean, but not all of them ( John 13:10 , 11 ). A higher cleansing, a cleansing of the heart was part of Christ’s intention when He instituted this ordinance. Its institutional, or lasting character, is clearly stated in Christ’s instruction: “I have given you also an example, that you also should do as I have done to you,” further emphasized by His remark “if you know these things, blessed are you if you do them” (verses 15 , 17 ).

Does this ordinance have relevance to the present age beyond the clear lesson that the mark of Christian greatness is service? Christ’s explanation to Peter that “he who has bathed [*louō*] does not need to wash [*nīptō*], except but his feet, for he is clean all over” (verse 10 ) seems to address our question. Like the disciples whose sandaled feet became dusty and needed washing again, so Christians baptized in Christ and cleansed by His blood as they walk the Christian life stumble and need Christ’s cleansing grace to wash away the defilement. They need not be rebaptized: “He who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet.” The ordinance of foot washing is a much needed confession of our self-centeredness and our need of Christ’s grace as well as a renewal of our baptismal vows. The instruction to observe it, “I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you” (verse 15 ; cf. verse 17 ), is as clear as the command regarding the Lord’s Supper itself, “Do this in remembrance of me” ( 1 Cor. 11:24 ). The same verb *poieō* (to do) is used in both instances. There is no scriptural reason to understand either command in a merely symbolic sense. Jesus gave only two ordinances to the church, baptism and the Lord’s Supper, which includes foot washing. None has lost its relevance. Both have been given for the edification of the church and the equipment of the saints for ministry. (See Ordinances II. )

## **VII.Church Authority**

If the primary duty of the church is to worship and glorify God (cf. Eph. 1:3 , 5 , 11–14 ), the first task it was given by the risen Christ is that of evangelism ( Mark 16:15 ; Luke 24:45–47 ; Acts 1:8 ). The church is not merely a gathering of people who come