

WHAT ARE SACRAMENTS?

1. Text: II Timothy 1:13-14
2. Most of the religious world has much to say about sacraments. What is a sacrament? Is that a biblical term we should use?
3. Let's see how they developed.

I. **What Is The Definition Of A Sacrament?**

1. A religious rite that confers special grace.
2. An outward, visible sign which conveys an inward, spiritual blessing.
3. The channel by which God imparts divine blessedness.
4. The word comes from the Latin sacramentum meaning to consecrate or set apart as sacred. It originally was used of the oath of obedience a soldier gave his commander.
5. Roman Catholicism has seven: baptism, the Lord's Supper, confirmation, penance, extreme unction, orders, matrimony. Protestants have two: baptism and the Lord's Supper, though many prefer the term ordinances.

II. **How Do Historians View The Sacraments?**

1. "In the NT there is no word corresponding to sacrament nor do we find the word used in the earliest history of Christianity." (New International Dictionary of the Bible)
2. "They belong to the period of the elaboration of doctrine much later than the NT." (New Bible Dictionary)
3. "It is not a word used in Scripture, or one with a settled meaning in the early church." (New Dictionary of Theology)
4. "Their development occurred in the post-New Testament church." (Harper Collins Bible Dictionary).
5. "In the Greek NT there is no word nor even any general idea corresponding to sacrament nor does the earliest history of Christianity afford any trace of the application of the term to certain rites of the church." (ISBE)

III. **How Did The Sacraments Develop?**

1. A pagan named Pliny (A.D. 112) used the term but in sense of an oath or promise.
2. Tertullian at end of second and beginning of third century applied sacrament to baptism and Lord's Supper and some other activities. The term evolved and was used of many facts, doctrines, and ceremonies.
One writer claimed there were 30.
3. Jerome translated the Latin Vulgate at the end of the fourth century and in certain places translated the word mystery with Latin word sacramentum (Ephesians 5:32; I Timothy 3:16; Revelation 1:20; 17:7). This increased the word's use considerably. And for centuries discussion centered on what they did and how many.
4. Finally the Council of Trent in 1547 made it official: There were seven.
5. The Protestant Reformers rejected all but baptism and the Lord's Supper.

IV. **What Should Be The Response To All This?**

1. What a tragedy: something not even in Scripture has been a source of division, turmoil, dissension, discord.
2. Why not speak of Bible things in Bible ways? II Timothy 1:13 Hold fast the form of sound words.
3. Worthy goal: To speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where it is silent.
4. Truth: Roman Catholicism has seven; Protestantism has two; The New Testament has zero.
5. Call Lord's Supper and baptism ordinances instead of sacraments? If divisive don't use this either!
6. I Peter 4:11 If any man speak let him speak as the oracles of God.
7. What are baptism and the Lord's Supper?

Conclusion:

**A Sermon preached by Monte Ginnings
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