

Priesthood Study Series – Study #7

Ordinances & Sacraments of the Church of Jesus Christ

Why Ordinances?

- ♦ And thus all things were confirmed unto Adam by an holy ordinance; and the gospel preached; and a decree sent forth that it should be in the world until the end thereof; and thus it was. Amen — *Genesis 5:45*
- ♦ And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and thou shalt show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work they must do — *Exodus 18:20*
- ♦ It is the duty of the Twelve to preach the gospel, and administer in the ordinances thereof, **as is directed in the Scriptures which ye have received** — *D&C 122:3*

Without the Ordinances the church begins to lose the Authority to manifest the power of godliness!

- ♦ Therefore, **in** the ordinances thereof the power of godliness is manifest; and **without** the ordinances thereof, **and** the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh; for without this, no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live — *D&C 83:3c*
- ♦ If those ordinances depart from before Me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me forever — *Jeremiah 31:36*

Performances versus Sacraments

- ♦ But it shall not be according to the first (1st set of tablets broken by Moses), for I will take away the priesthood out of their midst; therefore My holy order, and the ordinances thereof, shall not go before them. But **I will give** unto them the law as at the first, but it shall be after the law of a carnal commandment— *Exodus 34:1&2*
- ♦ Ye must keep the performances and ordinances of God until the law shall be fulfilled which was given unto Moses — *2 Nephi 11:57*
- ♦ Therefore, there was a law given them, yea, a law of performances and ordinances — *Mosiah 8:7*
- ♦ But notwithstanding the law of Moses, they did look forward to the coming of Christ... Believing that they must keep those outward performances until that time that He should be revealed to them — *Alma 14:75*
- ♦ They did not walk anymore after the performances and ordinances of the law of Moses, but they did walk after the commandments which they had received from their Lord and their God — *4 Nephi 1:13*

Man has strayed and walked in his own way, and after the image of his own god

- ♦ For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts — *Isaiah 55:8,9*
- ♦ My people have gone astray from My precepts, and have not kept Mine ordinances, which I gave unto their fathers — *Genesis 17:4 I.V.*
- ♦ The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant — *Isaiah 24:5*
- ♦ Even from the days of your fathers ye have gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts...— *Malachi 3:7*

Arthur Oakman on the Ordinances

- ◆ “He (God) takes bread and wine — common elements of human existence — and under His blessing makes them food divine.
He takes water and makes of it a lave [*wash clean*] of life.
He takes our hands and therein conveys divine power to the sons of men.
These ordinances — **Baptisms**, the **laying on of hands**, and the **Eucharist** (or Communion of the Lord’s Supper, or Sacrament) — are divinely ordained acts through which a special and particular mediation of the divine life is vouchsafed [*granted as a special favor*] to men.”
O Worship the King, Oakman & Weddle, 1952, page 57

The universe is sacramental. The universe as a whole is the expression of the will of God

- ◆ “The sacrament of the Lord’s Supper — This ordinance is sacramental of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The same principle applies to Baptism, an act or drama which, when properly performed, conveys to the participants and to the church the spirituality which gave the ordinance birth.

While the term sacrament may be used in a wide sense to cover almost innumerable phases of the universe and of all experience therein, there is a **central core of meaning** to which we must pay attention if the sacraments of the church are to have any meaning for us. Some part of this central core of meaning is seen in the fact that the outward or visible order of the sacrament is necessary for the conveyance of the divine grace or nature.”
O Worship the King, page 59

This is My work and My glory, to bring to pass the immortality & Eternal life of Man.

- ◆ The distinguishing mark of a sacrament is the fact of its being instituted by Christ himself and enjoined by him upon His followers. “It is my personal opinion (Arthur Oakman) that baptism and the Lord’s supper are the only two rites for which this can be claimed, and the term baptism should be used to include spiritual baptism, thus entailing the laying on of hands.”

“These ordinances are God’s means of enriching the church.”

“They are of His own choosing, instruments of salvation and redemption.”
O Worship the King, pages 62-63

Key Terms in Latter Day Saint Theology

- ◆ The sacraments are divinely appointed channels of spiritual grace. External rites of divine appointment which when shared in the Spirit become the means of covenanted blessing. The sacramental act has the sanction of the Lord Jesus Christ and... is blessed by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

The sacraments are dramatic prophecies of the life toward which men and women of faith look forward together.
 - 1) Baptism is a dramatic portrayal of death and resurrection
 - 2) Laying on of hands typifies the bestowal of the Holy Ghost
 - 3) The Eucharist reminds us of the cost our redemption, and the nature of our lives as disciples

Every sacraments a. involves the gift of God; b. demand moral response; and c. tends to integrate the spiritual life of the individual with the fellowship of the body of Christ.

Priesthood Study Outlines, F. Henry Edwards, 1946

The Most Important Events Occurring in the Lives of the People of the Church center around the Ordinances and the Sacraments

- ◆ Each Sacrament involves a set of unique relationships: God to man, and man to his brother.
- ◆ Requires a personal decision: Acceptance of a set of conditions and a pledge of commitment to abide by them forever.
- ◆ Involves priesthood as intermediaries between God and man.
- ◆ Displays the exercise of the gifts of the gospel, appropriate to the occasion, for the benefit of the children of God.
- ◆ A challenge to all who receive the ministry thereof to practice virtue and holiness before God continually.
- ◆ An inherent revelation of God to all who participate in them worthily —
The Ministry of the Elder, Dwight DW Davis, pg 42, Herald House, 1953.

The Ordinance

- ◆ An ordinance of God is any decree or commandment of God which has to do with ordering the universe for the good of man. Some divinely instituted and commanded ordinances are an outward symbol to typify the essential processes of salvation to the soul of man — E.Y. Hunker, *Priesthood Study Outlines*, pg. 62
- ◆ The physical activity and objects used are the ordinance, while the spiritual effect in the life of the person receiving the ordinance is the sacrament — *Witnessing through the Sacramental Ordinances, Maurice Draper, 1951, page 9*
- ◆ “Hence when we talk of the ordinances of the gospel we are talking of that part of the teaching of our Lord which catches the eye but yet has a **deep spiritual meaning affecting our moral conduct**. Such doctrines as baptism, the laying on of hands, and the enactment of the Sacrament of the Lord’s supper are ordinances. They are ceremonial in nature, but underlying the ceremony there is a spiritual force influencing our behavior (response)” — *Restoration Beliefs, compiled by Sylvester R. Coleman, 1963. Material was written several years previously by members of the Council of Presidents of Seventy for the School of the Restoration.*

Is There a Difference between a Sacrament and an Ordinance?

- ◆ The word **sacrament** is of Latin origin and means oath or covenant. Later religious use of the term came to mean a solemn declaration of obligation to God in response to divine grace. It became a visible sign of an invisible relationship between a person and God.

The word **ordinance** means authoritative rule or law; a decree or command.

When combined with sacramental it means procedures which have covenantal quality, which bind two or more persons, and which are authorized by God. — *The Saints’ Herald, May, 1983*

Sacraments can also be Ordinances

- ◆ A Sacrament is an outward and visible means of divine grace and seems to be rooted in sacrifice. A sacrament of the church is a rite enjoined by God **in which is celebrated an ordinance employing an outward sign or symbol(s)**. It is administered by a member or members of the priesthood to a persons or persons **who signifies** or implies **a covenant or pledge with God** and thus partakes of divine grace — *Saints’ Herald, Chris B. Hartshorn, Vol. 108 (1961), pages 6-7 (918-919).*

- ◆ When the physical substances and activities of these symbolic ordinances reveal truth to men in such as to change their attitudes, inspire their intellects, and create within them a new standard of values, the ordinance has become a sacrament.” — *Witnessing through the Sacramental Ordinances*, M.L. Draper, pages 8-9

Defining the Sacraments & Ordinances of the church of Jesus Christ

- ◆ A Sacrament must
 - Be enjoined by God
 - Employ an outward sign or symbol
 - Be administered by the priesthood
 - Express or imply a covenant or oath
- ◆ Eight Church Ordinances Which meet these criteria are:
 - Baptism by immersion in water
 - Confirmation by laying on of the hands for the baptism of the Holy Ghost
 - The Lord’s Supper
 - Ordination
 - Administration for the Sick
 - Blessing of Children
 - Patriarchal Blessing
 - Marriage

Are There Other Ordinances that need Consideration?

- ◆ Special Circumstances:
 - Laying on of hands for special blessings.
 - Laying on of hands for the setting apart of missionaries being sent forth or a presiding officer or other officers of a restoration branch, etc.
 - Sealing blessings [Holy Spirit of Promise, etc.] — D&C 107:38; D&C 76:5d; Ephesians 1:13; 1 John 3:9; D&C 85:1c
 - Washing of feet — D&C 85:45-46
 - Baptizing for the dead — D&C 107:11b, 12b
 - Dedication of Homes

Preparation for the Sacramental Ordinances

- ◆ It must be centered around a setting of Worship in which both those that participate and those that are witnesses make the appropriate spiritual preparation to ensure that heaven and earth meet together for the benefit of all who gather to celebrate the holiness and sacredness of this sacred service. — REG
- ◆ “Those who witness them or have part in them should not do so lightly or thoughtlessly, or without an effort to apprehend their true significance.”

“Nor should levity or frivolity accompany, precede or follow in such a way as to mar the observance of the ordinance.”

“Repentance is a prerequisite for proper preparation in the ordinances of the gospel. This requirement is the protection God has against placing his seal on any fraudulent covenant. He does not participate with anyone who is coming to the ordinances in an ungentle approach. Only the repentant man has the promise that God will meet him there. God neither deals or dines with rebels.” — ***Whosoever Repenteth* Elder Wayne Updike**

Priesthood and the Ordinances

- ◆ “Those who officiate in the blessing of the emblems and passing them to others should be clean in person and mind, and pure in spirit, fully appreciating the solemn and holy nature of the duty that they should perform with joyful yet chastened hearts.” — **Elbert A. Smith, *Saints’ Herald*, Vol. 60, August 13, 1913, page 782.**
- ◆ “As we repent and participate properly in one of the ordinances, something happens which causes us to feel that our sins are remitted and there is no longer anything between us and God. This remission or forgiveness removes those sins which separate us from Him and, there now being nothing between us, we can see Him. This new view of Him we call revelation. In this order, things happen in our life. We repent, receive remission of sins, and an additional revelation of God. The ordinance is the point at which repentance is acknowledged, forgiveness is granted, and the new revelation of God is made possible.” — ***Whosoever Repenteth*, L. Wayne Updike, Pg. 92, Herald House, 1957**

In Conclusion

- ◆ Given the divine nature of the Ordinances and Sacraments and the vital role they play in the church of Jesus Christ, the Scriptural record appears incomplete and important aspects are left to inference and interpretation.
 - In attempting to come to an understanding of what the true nature, purpose and application of the ordinances and sacraments represent, we must be careful not to permit the traditions we have observed and become familiar with to “become a law unto themselves.”
 - The sacraments are the vehicles of God’s ACTION and REVELATION in the lives of His children, not our own private interpretation or preferences.
 - The sacraments are to be performed according to Christ’s purpose and instruction!
 - The Holy Priesthood of God must seek for divine guidance, by the power of the Holy Ghost, to more fully illuminate the areas in which there is not agreement in the manner and way the ordinances and sacraments of the church are conducted in order that there be no contention among them.