

Lesson 27 – The Ordinances of the New Testament Church

The Lord Jesus, during His personal ministry on earth, established two *ordinances* that we are to observe in the New Testament church. We do not observe these ordinances to be saved; we observe them *because* we are saved and are following Him.

Ordinances vs. Sacraments

1. A sacrament is a very important part in the process of salvation according to Roman Catholicism, Greek Orthodox Churches, and “High Church” Episcopalians.
2. A *sacrament* is a religious rite that is sometimes called a *means of grace*. It is supposed to dispense grace for obtaining and maintaining salvation, or a *state of grace*, as sacramentalists sometimes call it.
3. *Sacraments* are performed by *priests*, who are supposed to have special powers conferred upon them by the authority of their church denominations to give grace to their members.
4. *The Catholic Church* has 7 sacraments, including communion and baptism. Most other sacramental churches (except the Lutherans) follow the 7 sacraments of the Catholics.
5. An *ordinance* is a symbolic command given by the Lord in Scripture
 - a. It does not take away sins or bring salvation
 - b. It does not help to bring salvation, i.e., it is not part of the plan of salvation
 - c. It is not a *means of grace*
 - d. It is a symbolical act that portrays a spiritual fact
6. The city of Sacramento, California, is named for the sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Ordinances of the Church

1. Baptism

- a. The definition of Baptism
 - i. Greek – Baptize βαπτίζω (*baptízo*)
 - ii. The common word *to immerse*. It means to completely submerge the subject in a liquid.
 - iii. The Greek speakers in New Testament times never understood the word to mean the application of a small amount of water to the subject.
 - iv. Translation vs. transliteration of the word βαπτίζω (*baptízo*)
 1. Translation is using the equivalent word in another language. The literal translation of the word βαπτίζω would be immerse.
 2. Transliteration is the importation of a word from one language to another language, using its alphabet, The transliteration of βαπτίζω is baptize
 - v. There is nothing in the Greek word *baptizo* to justify the notion that it could mean anything other than immersion.
 - vi. The Greek language had another word for sprinkling, *rhantizo*, used in Heb. 9:19. These words are not interchangeable in Greek, and *Rhantizo* is never used in the Bible to refer to baptism.
- b. The mode of Baptism

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- i. The Roman Catholic church invented the idea of *sprinkling* or pouring water on infants in the place of immersion. They continued to use the Greek word *baptize* to refer to their new rite.
- ii. The Reformers – Luther, Calvin, etc. – continued to practice Roman Catholic “baptism,” and the denominations they founded follow the Catholic practice today. There is some evidence, however, that Luther approved of immersion for a short time early in his ministry as a Protestant.
- iii. Other Scriptures showing immersion...
 1. John the Baptist “. . . was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there.” (John 3:23) Immersion requires much water; sprinkling or pouring only requires a small amount.
 2. We were buried with Him through baptism – Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12
- c. The purpose and meaning of Baptism
 - i. It is the first step of obedience for a new believer
 1. The preacher of the Gospel has the duty to explain baptism to every new convert. – Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16
 2. Every believer is commanded to be baptized – Acts 2:38
 3. There is never any reason for a Christian to refuse or delay their obedience to the Lord.
 - ii. We are following Christ’s example – 1 Pet. 2:21
 - iii. It identifies us with Christ – Rom. 6:4-12
- d. The time of Baptism – as soon as possible after salvation. In the Book of Acts, everyone who got saved was baptized immediately.
 - i. The new believers on the Day of Pentecost – Acts 2:41
 - ii. The Ethiopian eunuch – Acts 8:36-38
 - iii. Paul – Acts 9:18
 - iv. The new believers in the house of Cornelius – Acts 10:47-48
 - v. The new believers in the house of the Philippian jailer – Acts 16:31-33
- e. The symbolism of Baptism (sprinkling destroys the symbolism) – Rom. 6:4-6
 - i. A symbol of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord
 1. Buried with Him in baptism unto death
 2. Raised in the likeness of His Resurrection
 - ii. A symbol of our life in Christ
 1. Our old life is buried with Him
 2. We are raised to walk in newness of life
- f. The offense of Scriptural Baptism
 - i. As the Catholic church began to evolve during the era from Constantine to Augustine, their teaching on baptism corrupted:
 1. It became essential to salvation by washing away original sin.
 2. Since it was essential to salvation, they wanted their babies baptized so they could go to Heaven
 3. They began to sprinkle babies and converts to their church. They called it *baptism*.
 - ii. Biblical Christians didn’t buy it. Whenever they would lead a person to Christ out of the Catholic church, they would administer Scriptural baptism.
 - iii. The Catholics were offended. They called the Christians *Anabaptists*, meaning “re-baptizers,” as early as 251 A.D.

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- iv. The Catholic church, under the teaching of Augustine, persecuted those they considered heretics. “Re-baptizers,” in their eyes, were heretics.
- v. Later, during the Protestant Reformation, the New Testament churches that did not accept Catholic or Protestant sprinkling were pejoratively called *Anabaptists*. Not only were they persecuted by the Roman Catholic Church, but they were also persecuted or banished by many of the Reformers – Luther, Calvin, etc. – and by their followers.
- g. Baptism and church membership
 - i. Since Scriptural baptism is a public identification and commitment to follow Christ, it is a requirement for membership in a Scriptural church.
 - ii. Some Baptist churches teach that baptism is “the door to the church.” That means that, when a new believer is baptized, he or she automatically becomes a member of that church. Other Baptist churches regard baptism and church membership as two separate steps, but that a believer has to be baptized (immersed) as a believer before they can join.
 - iii. I believe that Scripture is silent on this issue, and I can accept either one, but I tend to see it as two separate steps.
- h. “Alien immersion”
 - i. Some Baptists believe that baptism is only valid if it is done under the authority of a Baptist church.
 - ii. In those churches, baptized believers who want to join their church, but were immersed in a Protestant church have to be re-baptized in a Baptist church before they can join.
 - iii. Who believes this
 - 1. Some Southern Baptists used to believe this, but there aren’t many Southern Baptists that believe this today.
 - 2. Some Independent Baptist churches believe this.
- i. Scriptural justification of Catholics and Protestants for infant baptism.
 - i. Roman Catholics –
 - 1. Quote: “The earliest Christian writers point out that the words of Christ command **all** to be baptized; He makes no exception for infants.” (Canon Francis Ripley, *This Is the Faith: A Complete Explanation of the Catholic Faith*, p. 235)
 - 2. They seem to forget that the Lord did not command *everybody* to be baptized, only believers.
 - 3. Rome also assumes that, when the Philippian jailer and his family were baptized, there was one or more infant in the house who was baptized with them. This is doctrine by assumption.
 - ii. The Reformers
 - 1. Having received their theological education in the Catholic church, they use the Catholic argument for infant baptism.
 - 2. In addition, they try to equate baptism in the New Testament with circumcision in the Old Testament as a proof that babies are to be baptized. There are some problems with this view:
 - a. Scripture nowhere connects circumcision with baptism.
 - b. In practice they don’t even follow their own doctrine, because they “baptize” baby girls as well as boys.
 - 3. So much for the cry of the Reformers: “*SOLA SCRIPTURA.*”
- j. The false teaching of Baptismal Regeneration (Baptismal Salvation)

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- i. The official view of the Catholic Church, Eastern Orthodox Church, Lutheran Church, Episcopal Church, the United Pentecostal Church and the Churches of Christ. (There are some individual Lutherans and Episcopalians who do not believe this, and who are born again).
- ii. Proof texts
 1. Mark 16:16 – The person who believes and is baptized is saved. The person who does not believe is damned. It does not say the person who is not baptized is damned.
ILLUSTRATION: He who gets on the train and sits down will go to San Diego. What about he who gets on the train but does not sit down? He will get to San Diego too.
 2. Acts 2:38 – Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. The Greek word εἰς (*eis*) for carries the idea of “because of,” or *because of the fact that you have been saved when you repent*. For further study, see *Robertson’s Word Pictures of the Greek New Testament*, available free at www.e-sword.net
 3. 1 Peter 3:20-22 – The flood water of Noah is used to picture salvation. The problem is, Noah and his family – the only ones who were saved – *are the only ones who were not immersed* by the flood waters.

2. The Lord’s Supper – 1 Cor. 11:23-32

1 Corinthians 11

(23) For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread;

(24) and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

(25) In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me."

(26) For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

(27) Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks *this* cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

(28) But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

(29) For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

(30) For this reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and many sleep.

(31) For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.

(32) But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

a. The elements of the Lord’s Supper

i. Unleavened bread

1. The Lord’s Supper was instituted at the Passover. We know the bread is unleavened, because they ate unleavened bread for the Passover. Jews today used unleavened bread, called *matzos*, for

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their Passover dinner, but they don't have a clue why they eat it. – Exodus 12:15

2. Leaven is a type of sin
 - a. Jesus warned His disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees. And the Sadducees – Matt. 16:6
 - b. He explained that the leaven was their false doctrine that would lead people into sin – Matt. 16:12
3. The bread is a symbol of the body of Christ – 1 Cor. 11:24
4. Leavened bread would not be a fit symbol of our sinless Savior.
- ii. The fruit of the vine
 1. Nowhere in Scripture is it called *wine*.
 2. The careful use of the words, *fruit of the vine*, make it apparent that He was speaking of something other than fermented wine. – Matt. 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18
 3. Again, the fermenting (rotting) of the juice of the grape would not be a fitting symbol of the blood of our Lord Jesus.
- b. The purpose of the Lord's Supper
 - i. It is a time of remembrance of Jesus and what He did for us on the cross – 1 Cor. 11:24
 1. We reflect upon His suffering for us
 2. We reflect upon His shedding of blood to save us
 - ii. It is a time of self-examination and purification – 1 Cor. 11:28
 1. When we examine our lives, we ask God to make us aware of any unconfessed sin in our lives.
 2. We deal with that sin by confessing it.
- c. Eating and drinking unworthily – 1 Cor. 11:27-32
 - i. We are all unworthy, yet we are invited to partake at the Lord's Table. We only come by the grace of God.
 - ii. We are warned not to partake in an unworthy manner – that is the reason for the warning in 1 Cor. 11:27-32
 - iii. The admonition and warning
 1. If we partake in an unworthy manner, we are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord – v. 27
 2. Partaking in a worthy manner: We are to examine ourselves to make sure we are coming to Him in sincerity and without unconfessed sin in our lives – v. 28
 - a. The Lord's Supper is a time when we shut ourselves up from the cares and thoughts of the world and concentrate our entire being on the Lord.
 - b. It is a time for reflection on our walk with Him. A time of personal revival.
 - c. In examining ourselves, we need to ask...

Am I harboring any self-pity? Pride? Covetousness? Disobedience? Lustful thoughts? Love of sin? Love of the world? Do I spend quality time with God in the prayer and the Word every day? Have I kept my promise to pray for individuals? Is my secret life as pure and sincere as my public life when I'm in church? Am I guilty of

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presumptuous sin? Do I really love Jesus with all my soul, heart and mind? Do I love my neighbor as myself? Do I witness faithfully? If God has called me into His service, have I been disobedient to His call?

- d. It is a time to repent – to denounce our sins, to confess them, so that nothing hinders our fellowship with our wonderful Lord. That’s why we call it Communion.
3. The warning: not discerning the Lord’s body – 1 Cor. 11:29
 - a. We are not discerning His rightful place in our lives.
 - b. We are not discerning those things in our lives that are not pleasing to Him.
 - c. We are trifling with the Lord’s body when we are not serious about the condition of our lives and our walk with Him when we come to partake at His table.
4. The context of this warning
 - a. The church in Corinth was very carnal
 - b. People were self-seeking
 - c. There were divisions
 - d. There was a lot of pride
 - e. There was gross sin in their midst, and they condoned it – even adultery and incest – 1 Cor. 5:1
 - f. As a result, a lot of people in the church had been severely chastised of the Lord – 1 Cor. 11:30
 - i. Many had experienced sickness as a chastisement of the Lord. Not all sickness is God’s chastisement, but this sickness was.
 - ii. Some of their members had gone so far in sin as to sin the sin unto death – the word *sleep* in v. 30 means to die. (the ultimate destruction of the flesh). – 1 Cor. 5:5 see 1 John 5:16-17
 - g. We can avoid the chastisement of God by judging ourselves – 1 Cor. 11:31-32
- d. How often should we partake of it? Scripture is silent on this issue, but it does give some examples in the early church
 - i. Every day – Acts 2:47
 - ii. The first day of every week – Acts 20:7
 - iii. “As often as you drink *it*. . .” – 1 Cor. 11:25
- e. Closed, Close, Open Communion
 - i. Closed Communion – Only members of that particular local church are invited to partake. Members of other churches – even sister churches – may not partake.
 - ii. Close Communion – Only Scripturally baptized believers are invited to partake. This is the view of most Baptist churches.
 - iii. Open Communion – All born again believers – baptized or not – are invited to partake.
 - iv. Communion for all – This is what liberal churches mostly believe. Anybody and everybody is invited to partake, whether they are saved or not. In this type of service, the clergy are usually not born again.

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- v. The Sacrifice of the Mass – This is practiced in Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and “High Church” Episcopal churches. They believe they are actually eating Jesus’ body, and the priest is drinking Jesus’ blood, in order to be saved. They generally invite members of their denominations or members of other denominations that believe the same thing.
- f. Other views on the Lord’s Supper
 - i. Transubstantiation – means to change substance (Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, “High Church” Episcopal)
 - 1. The bread is magically changed into the real body of Christ that hung on the cross.
 - 2. The wine (they use real wine) is magically changed into the real blood of Christ that was shed on Calvary.
 - ii. Consubstantiation – Christ is present in the elements, but they are not magically changed into His real body and blood. Lutherans believe this.
 - iii. Symbolic
 - 1. The elements are symbols of the body and blood of the Lord.
 - 2. We believe this because it is what the Bible teaches.
- g. With whom should we partake of the Lord’s Supper?
 - i. With born again believers only
 - ii. In a church that believes the fundamentals of the Christian Faith as revealed in the Bible.
 - iii. We should never partake of the Lord’s Supper with unsaved people or in churches that are not faithful to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God does not categorize sin the way we do. He wants us to use the Lord’s Supper as a time to reflect on our lives and our relationship with the Lord. We need to search our hearts and repent of any sin in our lives. We are trifling with the Lord’s body and blood if we come to the Lord’s table with unconfessed sin in our lives.