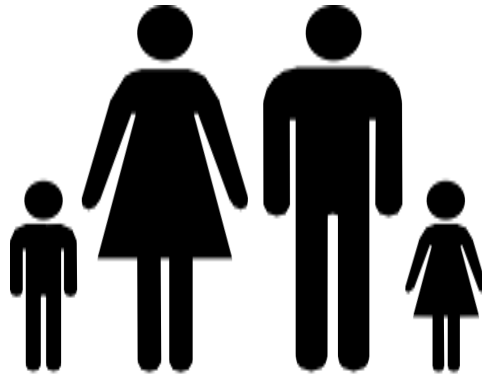


New Disciple's Class

Lesson 03 – THE ORDINANCE OF THE CHURCH



Enter to Worship

Depart to Serve

THE ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH

The Baptist tradition recognizes two ordinances of the Church:

1. Baptism

2. The Lord's Supper

They are called ordinances because Christ himself ordered that His followers take part and follow his example in these observances.

1. BAPTISM

A. Baptism by Immersion

As Baptists, we believe that the proper method of baptism is by immersion. The dipping or immersion of the candidate into the water so that the candidate's whole body is completely covered by water.

We believe that immersion is the method of baptism practiced in the New Testament. The Greek word "baptidzo" that is translated "to baptize" in the New Testament means to dip, plunge or immerse.

Aside from the use of the word "baptidzo" there are many scripture passages which strongly suggest that the New Testament mode of baptism was by immersion.

Matthew 3:5-6 - This passage states that John the Baptist baptized in the Jordan River. If sprinkling or pouring were the method of baptism used in this instance, it would not have been necessary for John to baptize "in the Jordan". The fact that he baptized in the Jordan suggests strongly that baptism by immersion was practiced rather than some other mode.

Matthew 3:16. Speaking of Jesus' baptism, Matthew says that when Jesus was baptized, he "went up straightway out of the water". If Jesus went out of the water, then he must have been in the water when he was baptized. Going into the water would only seem necessary if immersion were the method of baptism being used. The same is true in the case of Philip baptizing the Eunuch.

Acts 8:38-39. When Philip baptized the Ethiopian Eunuch, the text states that they both went into the water and came out of the water.

Romans 6:4-5, Colossians 2:12. In these passages Paul speaks of being buried with Christ by baptism and as Christ was raised from the dead, so in baptism we are raised to walk in the newness of life. If baptism is symbolic of a burial, then we would hardly think of a person being buried unless the whole body were covered. Paul's use of the image of burial seems to imply that the method of baptism was by immersion with the body being covered with water. On the basis of the above

scriptures, as Baptist, we do not believe sprinkling or pouring to be acceptable forms of baptism.

B. **The Meaning of Baptism** *(Romans 6:4-5, Colossians 2:12)*

Baptism is a public proclamation of one's belief in the Christ who died for our sins; who was buried and rose again. It is an open confession of Christ as Saviour and Lord. The immersion (burial) of the candidate under water symbolizes the person's death to the old life of sin. The rising out of the water symbolizes the rising or resurrection unto eternal life. Baptism is an outward symbol or sign of the inner cleansing that has happened inwardly in the life of the believer.

Baptism is not necessary for salvation (thief on the Cross - **Luke 23:39-43**). We follow Christ in baptism because he commanded us to do so but not in order to be saved. It is not a requirement for membership in the Kingdom of God, but is only an entrance requirement for membership in a local congregation or church.

Baptism is for believers only. It is for those who have repented of their sins and turned to God through faith in Jesus Christ. Hence, Baptist does not believe in infant baptism.

The verbal formula that is used during the act of baptism is found in **Matthew 28:19**. Baptism is performed in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

2. THE LORD'S SUPPER

A. **Scripture Passages Dealing with The Lord's Supper**

A number of passages in the New Testament refer to The Lord's Supper either directly or indirectly. The passages which speak clearly of The Supper are: **Matthew 26:20-30**, **Mark 14:22-26**, **Luke 22:14-20** and **I Corinthians 11:20-34**.

Matthew 26:20-30: According to the Matthew passage, the occasion on which Jesus instituted The Lord's Supper was that of the Jewish Passover **Matthew 16:17**. The Passover was a Jewish holiday, which celebrated God's passing over the first born of the Hebrew families while allowing death to strike the first born of the Egyptians **Exodus 12:1-20**.

While they were eating, Jesus took, blessed and gave bread to his disciples, requesting that they drink all of it. Jesus said this cup is His blood of the New Testament and that it was shed for the remission of sins **Matthew 26:26-28**. When Jesus commanded His disciples "drink ye all of it", the word **all** refers to the disciples and not to the wine in the cup. When The Lord's Supper was celebrated by Jesus, it was common for people to drink out of a common cup as well as eat from a common loaf of bread. The phrase "new testament" v.28 means "new will or covenant".

Mark 14:22-26, **Luke 22:14-20**: These passages have practically the same content as the Matthew's account. The only major difference is that the phrase "for the remission of sins" v.28 only appears in the Matthew version.

I Corinthians 11:20-34: The situation described here is one in which The Lord's Supper had become a raucous (pronounced - rôkus; meaning, rough-sounding and harsh - *boisterous and disorderly*), unruly meal with a circus-like atmosphere; some at the meal were even getting drunk. Many who came to The Supper were there for the sole purpose of eating all the food from those arriving later (v.21). The festival atmosphere was defeating the real purpose of The Supper. Against this background, Paul reminds the Corinthian church of the real meaning of The Lord's Supper. Paul then described what happened to Jesus on the night he was betrayed, emphasizing that the source of his account was Jesus Himself. The account itself is very similar to that found in the Gospels. The most obvious exception is that Paul, in his account makes use of the phrase "this do in remembrance of me" **vv. 24, 25, 26**. Paul also warns that any partaking of the bread and cup unworthy is guilty of the Lord's body and blood. Thus, Paul encourages everyone before partaking of The Supper to "examine himself". Paul further explains that to eat and drink unworthy is to invite judgment. As evidence of this judgment, Paul says that some are already weak, sick and even dead because they made a mockery of

The Lord's Supper. God judges us in order that we will not be condemned by the world. In coming together to eat, Paul encourages the Corinthians to wait for one another and that if one is hungry, he should eat at home to avoid condemnation

B. Basic Meaning of The Lord's Supper

A wide difference of opinion and interpretation exists between Protestants and Catholics on the meaning of The Lord's Supper. The Roman Catholic understanding is spelled out in their doctrine of transubstantiation or the doctrine of real presence". According to this view, during The Lord's Supper, The bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Christ. The sacrifice of Christ is supposedly re-enacted and Christ's body and blood are physically present. The scriptural basis suggested by Catholics for this view is the passages where Jesus speaks of the bread as being His body and the wine as being His blood **John 6:49-59**. Baptists have traditionally rejected this view for at least three reasons:

(1) When Jesus says, "this (bread) is my body" and "this cup (wine) is my blood", He is speaking figuratively and not literally. Just as when the Psalmist says, "God only is my rock and my salvation" **Psalms 62:2**, the Psalmist does not mean that God is actually a rock but he is using "rock" as a figure of speech in a similar way like John is using "bread" and "wine".

(2) If Jesus were speaking literally of the bread actually being His body and the wine His blood, that would mean Jesus would be offering up Himself as a sacrifice every time and every place The Lord's Supper is celebrated. However, **Hebrews 7:26-27** suggests very strongly that Jesus saw His sacrificial death as something other than what it is.

(3) Moreover, Paul's interpretation of The Lord's Supper as basically a memorial service ("in remembrance of Me") does not suggest a literalist interpretation of Jesus' words of institution. As Baptists, we believe that the bread and wine are symbols. Through the use of these symbols, The Lord's Supper acts out and depicts Christ's suffering and death upon the Cross. It shows how God provided for our salvation through Christ's death. The Lord's Supper is a memorial service in which we remember what God has done for us through Christ's death and we believe that the spirit of the resurrected Christ is the unseen host at the Lord's table.

Review Questions

1. What are the two ordinances of the Church which Christ Himself ordered?
2. What is baptism by immersion?
3. What are some passages which strongly suggest that immersion was the mode of Baptism practiced in the New Testament?
4. What is the meaning of baptism?
5. Is baptism necessary for salvation? Explain.
6. Who can be baptized?
7. By whom can baptism be administered?
8. What are four passages which clearly speak of The Lord's Supper in the New Testament?
9. According to **Matthew 26:20-30** what Jewish holiday was being celebrated at the time Jesus instituted The Lord's Supper?
10. According to Matthew's account, what did Jesus say and do when he instituted The Lord's Supper?
11. When Jesus said, "Drink ye all of it", what does "all" refer to?
12. What does the word "testament" mean?
13. Which Gospel writer uses the phrase "for the remission of sins" in his account of The Lord's Supper?
14. According to **I Corinthians 11:20-34**, What was the problem in the Corinthian Church which caused Paul to write about the purpose of The Lord's Supper?
15. What is the phrase that is peculiar to Paul's account of The Lord's Supper?
16. What do Roman Catholics believe about the basic meaning of The Lord's Supper?
17. What do we, as Baptists, believe regarding the meaning of The Lord's Supper?