

Discipleship Lesson 3 - Two Ordinances

Our purpose in this lesson is to determine what the Bible has to say about baptism and the Lord's Table.

- An "ordinance" is an established rite or **CEREMONY**.
- We do not refer to these as "sacraments" or a method of gaining God's **GRACE**.
- The **OBSERVANCE** of these ordinances *does not give salvation, help salvation or keep salvation*.
- The Bible does not promise grace or life through these activities, but **COMMANDS** them to be observed as memorials. Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24

I. Baptism

- Some churches baptize **CHILDREN**, while others baptize **ADULTS**.
- Some churches **SPRINKLE** or **POUR** while other completely immerse the person.

1. What is baptism?

The word "baptism" is from the Greek word "*baptizo*" which means "to **DIP** or **IMMERSE**".

- Baptism is the **OUTWARD** symbol that the believer has placed their faith in Christ as their Savior.

2. Who should be baptized and when?

- The Bible teaches that a person should believe on Christ as his Savior and then be baptized. This is what is often called **BELIEVER'S** Baptism. Acts 2:41 Acts 8:36-37 Acts 16:25-33
- Notice that these baptisms always took place **AFTER** the person had placed their faith in Christ!
- The fact that baptism follows salvation impacts the practice of **INFANT** baptism.
 - These churches will point to passages such as Acts 16:14-15 and Acts 18:8 which discusses entire households (including infants) being baptized.
- The majority of the passages referring to baptism detail the fact that a conscious decision for salvation was made prior to the baptism act. An infant cannot admit that they are sinners, believe in the name of God or confess their sins and therefore is unable to pray for salvation.

3. How should we be baptized?

- Churches typically baptize by one of three methods: sprinkling, pouring or immersion.
 - The only word for baptism used in the New Testament is the Greek word *baptizo*.
 - ✓ The methods of sprinkling and pouring were not used for baptism until the third century.
 - ✓ Both "sprinkling" and "pouring" come from different Greek words and are never used in the New Testament passages that deal with baptism.
 - A second reason why we believe that baptism by immersion is the correct method has to do with the **CONTEXT** of the passages that talk about baptism.
 - ✓ John the Baptist (Matt 3:6a) Christ's baptism (Matt 3:16a) Phillip baptizing the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:38-39)
 - A third reason that we practice immersion is because it best **PICTURES** the death, burial & resurrection of Christ. Romans 6:3-4

4. Why should we be baptized?

- Baptism is a scriptural way to publicly **PROFESS** our faith in Christ Jesus. Matt 10:32
- Baptism pictures the believer's **IDENTIFICATION** with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection--faith in His great salvation. (1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Romans 6:3-5)
- Baptism is necessary in the matter of **OBEDIENCE** to Christ. John 14:15, 21

II. The Lord's Table

Just before He was betrayed by Judas, Christ observed the Passover feast with His disciples and instituted the practice of Communion (Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20). Christ used bread and wine to symbolize His body that would be broken and poured out as the perfect Passover lamb. Paul records the pattern of the Lord's Table that we still follow today in 1 Corinthians 11:23-31.

1. **WHO** should partake of the Lord's Table?

- They must be **SAVED** Acts 2:41-42
- They must be walking in **FELLOWSHIP** with the Lord. 1 Cor. 11:27-30
- They must be **BAPTIZED**. Baptism is the first command of obedience for the new believer. To refuse to be baptized is an act of sin and disobedience that hinders fellowship. James 4:17

2. **HOW** should we observe the Lord's Table? 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

- There is no set scriptural **FREQUENCY** for observing communion.
- Acts 2:46 indicates that the early church observed it every day and Acts 20:7 shows that the frequency changed to once a week.
- We want to participate **OFTEN** enough to remind us of what Christ has done for us on the cross.
- We use broken pieces of crackers to serve as a symbol of Christ's sinless body that was broken for us. To represent the blood of Christ that was spilled on the cross, we use grape juice.
 - In and of themselves, the bread and juice are nothing more than **ORDINARY** things.
 - They do not become **HOLY** or a **LITERAL** part of the body and blood of Christ as some churches teach. They are simply reminders to us of Christ.

Our attitude and conduct should be that of reverence, worship, humility, and thankfulness. The Lord's Table should be a time of solemn remembrance of the **PRICE** that Christ paid on the cross for our sins. It is also a time of **REJOICING** because we can now have our relationship with God the Father restored through the work of Christ on the cross.

3. Why should we partake in the Lord's Table?

- It is important to remember that celebrating communion in no way **HELPS** a person to obtain salvation or the **FORGIVENESS** of their sins. If participating in the Lord's Table helped us to achieve salvation, we would be "earning" it. The Bible clearly teaches that we are saved by grace through faith in Christ and not by our works. Ephesians 2:8-9
- We celebrate the Lord's Table because it reminds us of the **SUFFERING** that our perfect Lord Jesus Christ went through as He died for us on the cross. 1 Corinthians 11:24-25
- The Lord's Table also reminds us of the need for constant **FELLOWSHIP** with Him and for periodic **SELF-EXAMINATION** when we should confess any selfishness, greed, bitterness, uncleanness, or sin of any sort. 1 Corinthians 11:28
- We are reminded of His return for us. Our love and anticipation are encouraged "till He comes". 1 Corinthians 11:26

Conclusion

- Baptism and the Lord's Table are both **MEMORIALS** for the Christian.
- Baptism is an outward sign of the **INWARD** change that God has brought into our lives through salvation.
- The Lord's Table is a reminder for all Christians of what the price that Christ paid on the cross so that we could have a **RESTORED** relationship with God the Father.
- Both baptism and participating in the Lord's Table are acts of **OBEDIENCE** and not a means to earn God's grace or **FAVOR**.