



# The New Testament Church

## *The Ordinances of the Church*

### I. LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

#### A. What Is an Ordinance?

1. The historical definition—“an authoritative direction, decree, or command” or additionally something “put in order”
2. The scriptural usage
  - a. The passover and feast of unleavened bread were “an ordinance for ever” (Exodus 12:14, 17), as were offerings (Numbers 15:15).
  - b. Israel was to be taught “ordinances and laws” (Exodus 18:20).
  - c. God’s rules of uncleanness were ordinances (Leviticus 22:9).
  - d. The trumpets and their uses were identified as “an ordinance for ever throughout your generations” (Numbers 10:8).
  - e. Rules given to men of war were called ordinances (Numbers 31:21).
  - f. David instituted a rule to give spoil to those who stayed by the stuff and it was identified as an ordinance (1 Samuel 30:25).
  - g. The various aspects of Old Testament worship were identified as “an ordinance for ever to Israel” (2 Chronicles 2:4; Hebrews 9:1).
  - h. The heavenly lights were called ordinances (Jeremiah 31:35-36).
  - i. In the New Testament, government was called “the ordinance of God” (Romans 13:2; see also 1 Peter 2:13).

#### B. A Biblical View of the Ordinances

1. An ordinance can be anything viewed as something having order or structure demanding adherence.
2. Although the New Testament identifies several things as ordinances, we are focusing primarily on Paul’s words to the saints at Corinth—“keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you” (1 Corinthians 11:2).
3. From this, we ought to take note of a few simple truths.
  - a. The word *as* suggests that there was a rule of law in keeping these ordinances. In other words, there were strict orders in these statutes that were to be completely obeyed.
  - b. The apostle Paul identifies multiple ordinances were given for the New Testament Church
  - c. As such, it is easy to see why we suggest there are two ordinances for the New Testament Church, but there could easily be more.

#### C. Commonly Identified Ordinances

1. Water baptism
2. The Lord’s supper



## II. WATER BAPTISM

### A. Introduction to Water Baptism

#### 1. What it is

- a. The meaning of the word
  - (1) The word *baptism* along with its various forms came into the English language in the 1200s.
  - (2) The most basic meaning of the word is *to immerse*.
- b. The historical record
  - (1) Baptism by immersion
    - a) Immersion was always performed in the earliest churches according to church historians such as Schaff, Mosheim, etc.
    - b) Immersion was performed in rivers and lakes, in private baths, in subterranean waters and later in man-made baptisteries
    - c) The sprinkling of water is spoken of by several of the early church writers (including Justin Martyr and Tertullian) as being purely heathen.
  - (2) Baptism for believers
    - a) Clement of Rome (c.96AD) said that “they are right subjects of baptism, who have passed through an examination and instruction.”
    - b) Clement of Alexandria (c.190AD) said, “The baptized ought to be children in malice, but not in understanding; even such children who, as the children of God, have put off the old man with the garments of wickedness, and have put on the new man.”
    - c) Tertullian (c.216AD) said that “adults were the only proper subjects of baptism, because fasting, confession of sins, prayer, profession, renouncing the devil and his works, are required from the baptized.” And, “The soul is sanctified, not by washing, but by the answer of a good conscience—baptism is the seal of faith; which faith is begun and adorned by the faith of repentance.”
    - d) The Lutheran church historian, Mosheim, in speaking of the first century after Christ, states, “Whoever acknowledged Christ as the Saviour of mankind, and made a solemn profession of his confidence in him, was immediately baptized and received into the church.” And, “The sacrament of baptism... was performed by the immersion of the whole body in the baptismal font.”
- c. The scriptural practice
  - (1) The baptism offered of John
    - a) There are some distinctions between John’s baptism and our baptism today.



- b) John's message and his purpose for baptism certainly show some distinction from our message and purpose.
  - c) We do know though, that the mode of John's baptism was the same as our mode (John 3:23).
  - (2) The baptism of the Lord Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17)
    - a) The Lord came to the Jordan to be baptized of John (Matthew 3:13).
    - b) When He was baptized He "went straightway out of the water" (Matthew 3:16), or as Mark said "straightway coming up out of the water" (Mark 1:10).
    - c) The Trinity approved of the baptism.
      - i) The Lord Jesus requested the baptism.
      - ii) The Holy Ghost descended from heaven like a dove (Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:32).
      - iii) The Father spake from heaven (Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22).
  - (3) The baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39)
    - a) The eunuch was reading Isaiah (Acts 8:28).
    - b) Philip preached concerning the Lord Jesus (Acts 8:35).
    - c) The eunuch desired to be baptized (Acts 8:36).
    - d) The eunuch asked about the requirements (Acts 8:36).
    - e) Philip gave the requirements (Acts 8:37).
    - f) The eunuch confessed his faith (Acts 8:37).
    - g) They "went down both into the water" (Acts 8:38).
    - h) Philip baptized the eunuch (Acts 8:38).
    - i) They came "up out of the water" (Acts 8:39).
2. What it is not
- a. It is not a means of salvation
    - (1) The history of baptismal regeneration
      - a) One of the earliest corruptions of Bible doctrine
      - b) Men as early as Justin Martyr (c.150AD) were teaching baptismal regeneration.
      - c) Even today, every major Protestant group, as well as the Roman Catholics, teach some form of baptismal regeneration.
      - d) Baptismal regeneration became the basis for a number of other false doctrines.
        - i) Pouring and sprinkling
          - (a) Baptism is necessary for salvation.
          - (b) The sick and afflicted
            - (i) Some people, because of sickness, etc., cannot be immersed.
            - (ii) Another way must be provided or these people will be lost.
          - (c) Infant baptism further reinforced the practice of sprinkling.



- ii) Infant baptism
  - (a) Infants are born polluted by sin and therefore need remission of sins for salvation.
  - (b) Remission of sins comes through baptism.
  - (c) Infants must be baptized so they will go to heaven if they die before they are old enough to believe.
- iii) Post-baptismal sins
  - (a) Further corruptions came about from a concern for post-baptismal sins which (it was believed) were not washed away in baptism.
  - (b) The doctrine of penance was eventually formed to atone for the sins that were committed after baptism.
  - (c) Later, extreme unction was added as a safeguard.
  - (d) Purgatory finally became necessary for those who failed to do enough penance.
  - (e) Indulgences and prayers for the dead were the results of the doctrine of purgatory.
  - (f) In this doctrinal environment, assurance of salvation became absolutely impossible.
  - (g) Note: Since all this corruption is the logical result of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration and since the Protestant churches never succeeded in ridding themselves of this belief, therefore the return of the Protestant churches to the doctrinal position of Roman Catholicism is only a matter of time.
- (2) The gospel according to Paul
  - a) Paul presented his gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.
    - i) How that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3)
    - ii) That He was buried (1 Corinthians 15:4)
    - iii) That He rose again the third day according to the scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:4)
  - b) He stated that his purpose was to preach the gospel, and contrasted that with baptism (1 Corinthians 1:17).
- (3) The thief on the cross (Luke 23:40-43)
  - a) If baptism is a requirement for salvation, the Lord Jesus had no right to tell the thief that He would be with Him in paradise.
  - b) Some have argued that this event took place before the death of Christ on the cross and that it changed when Christ died.
  - c) The problem with such a statement is that the thief outlived the Lord Jesus (John 19:31-37).
  - d) If baptismal regeneration were scriptural, the thief needed to be removed from the cross, baptized, and returned to the cross in order to be with Christ.



- b. It is not the baptism with the Holy Ghost
  - (1) The breakdown of this baptism (Acts 1:5; Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16)
    - a) The administrator: Jesus Christ
    - b) The subject: Believers at Pentecost
    - c) The medium: The Holy Ghost
  - (2) The historical event
    - a) To understand the baptism with the Holy Ghost, you must understand that it was an event.
    - b) Acts 1:6 teaches that the baptism with the Holy Ghost would occur “not many days hence.”
    - c) This baptism occurred in Acts chapter two on the day of Pentecost.
    - d) On that day, the believing Jews were brought into the baptism with the Holy Ghost.
    - e) Other groups were brought into the baptism with the Holy Ghost at a later date.
      - i) The day of Pentecost gave the Holy Ghost to the Jews.
      - ii) The Samaritans received the Holy Ghost in Acts 8:14-17.
      - iii) The Gentiles were baptized with the Holy Ghost in Acts 10:44-48.
      - iv) Finally, one little side group who had been following John’s baptism received the Holy Ghost in Acts 19:1-7.
- c. It is not the baptism of the Spirit
  - (1) The breakdown of this baptism (1Corinthians 12:13; Romans 6:3-4)
    - a) The administrator: The Holy Spirit
    - b) The subject: Believers
    - c) The medium: Jesus Christ
  - (2) Spirit baptism occurs at the point of salvation and is the event of the Spirit placing the new believer into Jesus Christ.
  - (3) Galatians 3:27 states: “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

## B. The Proper Mode of Baptism

### 1. By immersion

- a. Seen in the word baptism which means “to immerse”
- b. Seen in the connection to a burial
  - (1) Baptism is likened unto a burial (Romans 6:4).
  - (2) We are buried with Christ in baptism (Colossians 2:12).
  - (3) Note: It is not the contention of this class that these references of baptism are to water baptism, but that the word *baptism* in general is connected to burials.



- (4) With this being the case, it ought to be obvious that a baptism is to place somebody or something entirely into some other medium.
  - (5) Many of the old Baptists called the baptismal waters, the “watery grave.”
  - (6) The Lord Jesus spoke of His death as a baptism with which He was to be baptized with (Matthew 20:22-23; Luke 12:49-50; John 18:11).
- c. Seen in the baptisms in scripture
- (1) John baptized where there was “much water” (John 3:23). This would have been unnecessary if all John needed was to be able to pour a pitcher of water over the head of those being baptized.
  - (2) At the baptism of the Lord Jesus, John and the Lord both went into the water and came “up straightway out of the water” (Matthew 3:16).
  - (3) John baptized people “in the river of Jordan” (Mark 1:5).
  - (4) Water baptism, spirit baptism, and baptism of fire are mentioned together (Luke 3:16). No matter what the arguments are otherwise all should be willing to admit that the baptism of fire is by immersion (Revelation 20:14-15).
  - (5) Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch both went down into the water and the eunuch was baptized then both came up out of the water (Acts 8:36-39).
2. In the name of
- a. The meaning of this phrase
    - (1) To do something “in the name of” someone else means to do it by that person’s authority (Deuteronomy 18:5-7, 20-22; Esther 3:12).
    - (2) It can also refer to doing something in the place of another (Deuteronomy 25:6).
  - b. The words given by the Lord Jesus—“Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:” (Matthew 28:19)
  - c. The baptisms of the apostles
    - (1) “Be baptized...in the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 2:38).
    - (2) “They were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 8:16).
    - (3) “Baptized in the name of the Lord” (Acts 10:48)
    - (4) “They were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 19:5).
  - d. Conclusions
    - (1) We are to baptize converts under the authority of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but specifically the Lord Jesus Christ who gave the commandment.
    - (2) This is not meant to be a formula, but if it were, it would be wise to heed the words of the Lord Jesus and to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19).