

ORDINANCES

THREE ordinances for Christians to keep are taught in the Bible: Water Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and the Washing of the Disciples' Feet.

Water Baptism

Jesus commanded His disciples: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19, 20).

The Lord Jesus was immersed in the waters of Jordan, giving us an example that we should follow. We know that He was immersed, for the Word says, "Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water" (Matthew 3:16).

As soon as possible after souls are saved they should be baptized in water. When Philip preached to the eunuch, as soon as they came to a stream, the eunuch said, "Here is water ; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" "And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him" (Acts 8:36-38). When the jailer and his household were converted, they were baptized before day (Acts 16:33).

When Peter preached to the household of Cornelius and the Spirit fell upon them, they were baptized in water (Acts 10:47, 48).

If you are truly born of God you may be baptized in water. Infants and sinners are not candidates for water baptism, but regenerated souls are. Water baptism by immersion is a type of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death" (Romans 6:4). "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him" (Colossians 2:12). It represents actual death to the world and sin, and rising in newness of life. It is for the child of God who is dead to sin (Romans 6:11). Sprinkling and infant baptism are unscriptural.

We should baptize by one immersion (not three), a symbol of the death and resurrection of Jesus, and "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" — the Trinity (Matthew 28:19).

The Lord's Supper

"The Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me" (I Corinthians 11:23-25).

We thank God for this ordinance that points back to His death and forward to His coming again, for He said, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (I Corinthians 11:26).

The Word tells us what to do before we partake of the emblems of His Broken Body and Blood: "Let a man examine himself." Ask God, the Searcher of hearts, to reveal it if there is any sin in your life; and measure your life by the Word, for "whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" (I Corinthians 11:27).

If you eat this bread and drink this wine by faith, that is, "discerning the Lord's body," it brings you into contact with Him. If you are diseased or sick, you have the right to believe that His Blood will make you every whit whole. It is a wonderful privilege to take the Lord's Supper. We thank God for it, and look forward to it as a time of great power and blessing.

It is contrary to the Word of God to use water in place of wine. We should use unfermented grape juice. Christ and His disciples used the "fruit of the vine" (Matthew 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18). Nowhere in the Word can you find that Jesus used water as He broke bread with His disciples. God wants us to follow the Word.

Washing the Disciples' Feet

"He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded."

Then He said: "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. . . . If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:4-17).

You cannot afford to cut anything out of the Word. If you would have real faith and authority over the powers of the devil, keep every word of His commands. We must have all the teachings of Jesus wrought out in our lives if we would contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints, and have power with God.

Those who are truly saved may partake of these ordinances. They are not for sinners, but for born-again Christians. Jesus gave us the two ordinances the same night, and we do not separate them. The ordinance of Washing the Disciples' Feet always directly follows the Lord's Supper. For the washing of feet, the company of believers is divided, the sisters taking one side of the church and the brothers the other. A curtain divides the room.

It is a service of song and praise; the power of God falls, and sometimes souls are sanctified, are baptized with the Holy Ghost, and sick bodies are healed. The Spirit bears witness of God's approval, and brings great joy, as Jesus said (John 13:17).

Many divide and split the Word of God, saying it is not necessary to wash the disciples' feet or to be baptized by immersion or to take the Lord's Supper. But you should take the Word of God and keep it.

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway" (Matthew 28:20).