



Truth For These Times



20. NEW TESTAMENT ORDINANCES

In Old Testament times animals were sacrificed as part of the ceremonial system. The shed blood of these animals pointed forward to the shed blood of Jesus on the cross. When Jesus died, it was no longer necessary to sacrifice animals, nor to observe the ceremonies that surrounded the sacrificial system. These Old Testament ordinances (rites or ceremonies) met their fulfilment in Christ. However in New Testament times other ordinances were introduced for Christians to practice. First of all we will notice the ordinance of feet washing, recorded in John 13:4-17.

FOOTWASHING

John 13:10,14-15 Jesus said to him, “**HE WHO IS BATHED NEEDS ONLY TO WASH HIS FEET, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, YOU ALSO OUGHT TO WASH ONE ANOTHER’S FEET. For I have given you an example, that YOU SHOULD DO AS I HAVE DONE TO YOU.**”

Here is a definite New Testament command from the lips of Jesus. He made it very plain that we should practice this ordinance. To wash one another’s feet is not humiliating, but it is an act of humility. To render such a service to a fellow believer helps illuminate pride, and makes us tender hearted toward mankind. It places one in the right frame of mind to partake of the Lord’s supper – the bread and the wine. Jesus said plainly, we ought to wash one another’s feet. In verse 10 Jesus said, He who is bathed (baptised) needs only to wash his feet (or is not required to be rebaptised when he sins) but is completely clean (foot washing is all that is required to symbolise our cleansing from the sins of the world). Baptism is a symbol of washing away sin. Acts 22:16.



THE LORD’S SUPPER

Matthew 26:26-28 And as they were eating, Jesus **TOOK BREAD**, blessed and broke *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples and said, “**Take, eat; THIS IS MY BODY.**” Then He **TOOK THE CUP**, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, “**Drink from it, all of you. For THIS IS MY BLOOD OF THE NEW COVENANT, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.**”

After the footwashing service on the Thursday night before the crucifixion on Friday, Jesus instituted an ordinance in association with the feet washing – the communion service, or the Lord’s supper. The bread symbolised the broken body of Jesus – broken for sinful man. The wine symbolised His shed blood to cover man’s sin.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 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; 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.” 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.” FOR AS OFTEN AS YOU EAT THIS BREAD AND DRINK THIS CUP, YOU PROCLAIM THE LORD’S DEATH TILL HE COMES.



This is a memorial service, for it takes us back to the cross, but it also points forward to when the Lord will return. No specific time is given as to how often this ordinance is to be celebrated. To do it too often would cause the significance to be lost, while to do it at too great an interval would tend to make one forget its significance.

Unleavened bread (no yeast), and unfermented grape juice are used as symbols. Yeast is normally used in bread to make it rise, but in the Bible, fermentation is a symbol of sin. Alcohol is fermented grape juice and to maintain the symbolism, unfermented grape juice is used. Since there was no trace of sin in Jesus, it is fitting that only symbols of purity can be used to represent the Sinless One.

BAPTISM

Matthew 28:19,20 Go therefore and MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL THE NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.

Here is the next New Testament ordinance – Baptism. Jesus said people were to be taught the truths of the gospel, then be baptised. The teaching and understanding must precede baptism.



John the Baptist.

Mark 16:15,16 And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. HE WHO BELIEVES AND IS BAPTIZED WILL BE SAVED; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”

Baptism here becomes an absolute necessity for salvation. If one is to have eternal life he must believe and he must be baptised. The objection has been raised “the thief on the cross was not baptised, yet he was promised eternal life by Christ”. This is true, but the thief on the cross was unable to be baptised; God does not expect the impossible. There are exceptions to every rule. If the thief were able, he would no doubt have followed out the commands of Christ. This text applies to those who are able to be baptised, not to those who are in an impossible situation, such as the thief was on the cross.

Acts 19:4,5 Then Paul said, “JOHN INDEED BAPTIZED WITH A BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.” When they heard *this*, they were BAPTIZED IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS.

These followers of John the Baptist had been baptised, but were rebaptised when they came to a knowledge of Jesus. Rebaptism, when a greater understanding of truth has been attained, is Biblical. If however, one has been baptised on a previous occasion, acceptance into church membership is acceptable on “profession of faith”. It is left to the conscience of the individual.

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, “REPENT, AND let every one of you BE BAPTIZED in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

When one is converted to Jesus, the command is to repent, and then be baptised.

John 3:5 Jesus answered, “**Most assuredly, I say to you, UNLESS ONE IS BORN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT, HE CANNOT ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD.**”

Baptism by water and the Holy Spirit are absolutely essential if one is to enter the kingdom of God.

Ephesians 4:5 One Lord, one faith, ONE BAPTISM;

Many types of baptism are practised in Christian churches, such as sprinkling and pouring, but the Bible recognises only one way and that is by immersion. To baptise, means to dip, immerse, or to plunge. In Bible times it was the practise to “baptise” cloth for the purpose of dyeing. Complete immersion is necessary for this process.

Mark 1:9,10 It came to pass in those days *that* Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And immediately, COMING UP FROM THE WATER, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove.

Jesus did not need to be baptised, for He did no sin; but He gave His followers an example to follow. Notice that he came up out of the water, indicating that He went down into the water for baptism by immersion.

John 3:23 Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was MUCH WATER there. And they came and were baptized



To baptise by sprinkling and pouring requires “little” water; but baptism by immersion requires “much” water.

Acts 8:38,39 So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch WENT DOWN INTO THE WATER, AND HE BAPTIZED HIM. Now WHEN THEY CAME UP OUT OF THE WATER, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.

The text is clear. The eunuch was baptised by complete immersion. In fact, the sprinkling of infants has no Biblical basis, rather, it has a pagan origin. It was introduced into the church in the third century, and sanctioned in A.D. 416. It was a departure from the pure truth introduced by Christ. Furthermore, baptism is for adults, not for children. Belief, repentance, confession and instruction must precede baptism. This is not possible for a child. Baptism is an expression of faith that one is born again. Only those older in years make an intelligent decision in regard to the meaning of baptism.

Colossians 2:12 **BURIED WITH HIM IN BAPTISM**, in which you also were **RAISED WITH HIM THROUGH FAITH** in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.



Baptism points to the cross and what it means to us. Our life becomes bound up with His and we live His life.

Romans 6:3,4 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were **BURIED WITH HIM THROUGH BAPTISM INTO DEATH**, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so **WE ALSO SHOULD WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE**.

When one is baptised, he is showing his belief in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ almost 2,000 years ago. He is telling the world he believes Christ died for his sins and that He rose victorious from the tomb. He also recognises that baptism symbolises death to sin in his own life, and when he comes up out of the water he walks in newness of life and no longer walks the pathway of the world.

Galatians 3:27 **FOR AS MANY OF YOU AS WERE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST HAVE PUT ON CHRIST**.

Baptism is like a marriage service: we become united with Christ. Marriage is meant to last for life, but our uniting with Christ, symbolised by baptism, is to last for eternity.

Acts 22:16 And now why are you waiting? **ARISE AND BE BAPTIZED**, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

When we understand this requirement, God expects us to go forward into baptism. He appeals to our heart and asks us to make a total commitment. Baptism is Christ's solemn command. It does not save a man, but it is a sign that he has been saved; that he is born again. Remember the words of Jesus: "He who believes and is baptised will be saved". Friend, don't risk eternity with a counterfeit baptism. Rise up and follow Jesus. "Arise and be baptised, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord".



Review Sheet – New Testament Ordinances

Assignment : Read the Bible study carefully before answering the following questions.

1. What command did Jesus give His followers in John 13:10,14,15?
If I then, ..., have washed your feet, _____ ,
_____ . for I have given you an example, that _____ .
 2. What other New Testament ordinance is associated with footwashing? Matthew 26:26-28
Jesus took bread, ... and said, "Take _____ ; _____ ." Then _____ ...
saying " _____ , _____ ." _____
 3. What other New Testament ordinance was commanded by Jesus? Matthew 28:19,20
Make disciples of all the nations, _____
_____ ,
 4. How important did Jesus regard baptism? Mark 16:15,16
He who believes _____ ;
 5. Acts 19:4,5 tells of some followers of John the Baptist who had been baptised by him. Was it necessary for them to be rebaptised?
They were (then) _____ .
 6. Is a changed life necessary before baptism? Acts 2:38
Said to them, " _____ , _____ ... _____ ."
 7. What further emphasis did Jesus give concerning baptism? John 3:5
Unless one is _____ , _____
_____ .
 8. How many baptisms are authentic? Ephesians 4:5
One Lord, _____ , _____ ;
 9. What indication is given that Bible baptism was by total immersion? John 3:23; Acts 8:38,39
Baptising ...because _____ . And both Philip and the eunuch _____
_____ and he baptised him. Now _____
_____ ,
 10. How does baptism signify our faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ? Romans 6:3,4
Therefore we were _____ , ... even so
_____ .
 11. How is baptism like a marriage service? Galatians 3:27
for as many of you as _____ .
 12. After repentance and understanding, what appeal is made to the believer? Acts 22:16
And now _____ ? _____ ,
- Do you desire to unite with Christ and be baptised the Bible way? _____ .