

**I. Introduction.**

**A. What is an ordinance?**

1. An ordinance is an outward visible ritual prescribed by Christ which is an outward visible sign of an inward spiritual reality. Mt. 28:19 Luke 22:19
2. Christ has given two ordinances to the church – baptism and Communion. Mt. 28:28-29 Mark 7:7-8,13 Luke 22:19
3. Is there a difference between a sacrament and an ordinance?

**B. Are the ordinances merely what we do? Or is God also doing something?**

1. Roman Catholicism teaches that there is saving spiritual efficacy in the performance of the sacraments (sacramentalism and sacerdotalism).
2. Reformed Christians regard the ordinances (along with the ministry of the Word and prayer) as means of grace. Titus 3:4-7 Eph. 2:8ff

**C. Who should participate in the ordinances?**

**II. Baptism is the ordinance of initiation.**

**A. Baptism symbolizes our personal union (through the new birth) with Christ in His death and resurrection. Rom. 6:3-6 1 Co. 12:13**

1. Some teach that baptism is necessary for salvation – baptismal regeneration. Eph. 2:8-9 Luke 23:39-43 John 1:12 5:24 Acts 10:43-48 Gen. 15:6 Ro. 4:3,9-12
2. Why should you be baptized? Mt. 28:19-20 10:33 John 14:15

**B. Those who give a credible profession of having been united with Christ through faith should be baptized. Mt. 28:18-20 Acts 2:38,41 8:12,36-38 10:47-48 16:14-15,33**

1. Why do some people baptize babies? Col. 2:11f Acts 2:39 16:15,33-34 11:14 18:8 Mt. 19:14 1 Co. 7:14 1:16 Eph. 6:1-3
2. Under the New Covenant, believers are Abraham's true spiritual seed. Jer. 31:31-34 Heb. 8:8-13 John 1:11-13 Rom. 9:2-4 Gal. 3:7,29
3. Mere physical descent does not qualify someone for participation in the New Covenant or the sign of baptism. John 1:11-13 Mt. 3:6-9 Luke 3:7-8
4. What is the harm of infant baptism? 1 Co. 11:29f Lev. 10:1ff

**C. Under what circumstances should baptism take place?**

1. Baptism should be performed by immersion in water. John 3:23 Mark 1:9 Acts 8:38-39 Rom. 6:3-4 Col. 2:12
2. You should be baptized soon after you have believed. Act 2:41 8:36-38
3. The baptisms recorded in Scripture are performed publicly by a church leader. John 4:1-2 1 Co. 1:14-17 Acts 2:41 8:12,36-38 10:47-48 16:14-15,33-34
4. Must baptisms take place during a worship service? Acts 8:36-38

**III. Communion is the ordinance of continuing fellowship with Christ.**

**A. The Lord's Supper signifies the ongoing spiritual nourishment we receive through union with Christ.**

**B. The Lord's Supper has been the subject of much controversy. 1 Co. 11:17-22,27-30**

1. Some have turned Communion into a mystical re-sacrifice of Jesus. 1 Pe. 3:18 John 19:30 Heb. 9:28 10:10,14

2. Some teach that the elements become the literal body and blood of Jesus (transubstantiation). John 10:9 8:12 1 Co. 10:4 11:25
  3. Some restrict the cup to clergy. Mt. 26:27
- C. How is the Lord's Supper to be understood?
1. Communion is a proclamation of Christ's gospel in which you actively participate through sight, taste, smell, and touch. 1 Co. 11:26 2:1 9:14 Acts 4:2 13:15,38 15:36
  2. Communion should be accompanied by the verbal proclamation of God's Word.
  3. Partake with thanksgiving as you remember (and meditate upon) Christ's death for you. Mt. 26:27,29 15:36 Jo. 6:11,23 Acts 27:35 1 Co. 11:24ff 5:7 10:16
  4. The bread is a symbol of His body. v. 24 Mt. 26:26 Mark 14:22 Lu. 22:19 John 1:1f 6:31-35,41,48-51,58 Phil. 2:6-7 Isa. 53:4-5,12 1 Pet. 3:18
  5. The cup is a symbol of His blood. 11:25 10:16 Mt. 26:28 Mark 14:24 Lu. 22:20 Heb. 9:11,16,22 Mt. 20:22 27:27,39,42 Jo. 18:11 Eph. 1:7 Rev. 5:9
  6. Communion also symbolizes our unity with one another. 1 Co. 10:17
- D. What happens when we observe the Lord's Supper?
1. Celebrating the Lord's Supper is something we do – remembering Christ. Luke 22:17-20 1 Cor. 11:24-24
  2. Christ communes with us. 1 Co. 10:16 John 6:53-58
  3. We also commune with one another as we eat and drink. 1 Co. 10:16-17
- E. Who should participate in the Lord's Supper? 1 Co. 11:27-31
1. We use the same criteria for both ordinances – only believers who are participants in what the ordinances signifies should participate.
  2. What does it mean to examine yourself before you eat and drink? 1 Co. 11:28-31, 18-20 10:17 Ps. 32:1-2 1 Co. 11:28-31 Lev. 10:1ff He. 10:29
- F. What are the benefits of regularly participating in Communion?
1. The Lord's Supper is a means of grace by which God strengthens our faith.
  2. Participating in Communion expresses our unity with fellow believers. 1 Co. 10:17
  3. Celebrating the Lord's supper helps us to anticipate His return. 1 Co. 16:22 Rev. 19:6-9 22:20 Isa. 25:6-9
  4. How often should we include the Lord's Supper in our worship? Acts 2:42 20:7

#### IV. Concluding applications.

##### Discussion questions

1. What is an ordinance (or sacrament)? Which term do you prefer? Why?
2. What does God do for His people through the ordinances?  
What do we mean by the term "means of grace"?
3. How would you answer someone who claims that there is saving power in the ordinances?
4. Who should participate in the ordinances?  
How is it inconsistent to "baptize" babies but then to only offer Communion to those who are old enough to be confirmed in their faith?
5. What does baptism symbolize?
6. Who should be baptized? When?
7. Why do some people believe in infant baptism?  
Why is infant baptism unbiblical?
8. What are some wrong views about communion?
9. What does the Lord's Supper symbolize?
10. What are the benefits of regularly partaking of the Lord's Supper?  
How often should the church make Communion part of worship?