

The Ordinances of the Church

Baptist Churches observe ordinances

- There are two: Baptism and Lord's Supper
- Some Baptist Churches say 3—they include foot washing

What is an ordinance?

- Ordinance refers to something enacted by an authority
- They are different from sacraments, which are usually seen as a method of obtaining God's grace (a "means of grace")

Protestants have generally agreed upon the criteria necessary for something to qualify as an ordinance

1. A ceremonial rite, instated by Christ, for His Church.
 - A. Formal in nature (there are standard elements)
 - B. Occasional in nature
 - C. Symbolic in nature
2. They employ a material substance, which is specified by the Bible

3. They are visible and symbolic testimony to spiritual realities
 - A. They testify to some aspect of the saving work of Jesus
 - B. But they are not the reality of that aspect
4. They are to be done until Christ returns

Let's be clear

- We didn't invent the definition, then go looking for what fits it
- We derived the definition from the two events Christ commanded the Church that we (not the Bible) call ordinances
- Christ, the Head of the Church, commanded His Church to observe 2 rites that reflect saving truth

Baptism

- The rite is instituted in the Great Commission.
 - Matthew 28.18-20
- The first act of baptism by the Church is Acts 2.38
- The command to be baptized in the name of the Lord isn't about the formula of the words, but the authority behind baptizing

Baptism is

- Instituted by Christ. Matthew 28.18-20
- A ceremonial rite:
 - People were immersed in water. Acts 2.41, 8.12-16, 8.36-38, 9.18, 10.48, 16.15, 18.8
- Employing a material substance—water
- A visible testimony to a spiritual reality.
 - Romans 6.3-5
- Continued until Christ returns.
Matthew 28.18-20

Communion is

- Instituted by Christ. Matthew 26.26-29, I Corinthians 11.23
- A ceremonial rite. I Cor. 11.20, 33
 - The Church “came together” and ate the Lord’s Supper
- It employs material substance: unleavened bread and unfermented juice
- It is a visible testimony to a spiritual reality. I Cor. 11.26
- It continues until Jesus returns. I Cor. 11.26

Why isn't foot washing one?

- John 13.1-17
- Jesus did do it—as an example. John 13.15
- It represents no saving truth. John 13.9-10
- It is something for each other. John 13.14
- There is no reference to it in Acts or the Epistles as a ritual. I Timothy 5.10