

TWO ORDINANCES; THREE SYMBOLS

THE ONLY TWO ordinances that our Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the church to keep are the Lord's Supper and Water Baptism. The ordinances are illustrated by three basic elements of life on earth—bread, wine and water.

The Lord's Supper

It is clear, by Paul's word to us in 1 Cor.11:26, the bread and cup symbolize the death of Christ on the Cross. Paul says, "*For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup; you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.*"

With the bread and wine we have a picture of ***Christ dying for us***. He died in our place, not ***with*** us, but ***for*** us. It speaks of the New Covenant (Luke 22:20). The one-time sacrifice of Christ, God's Passover Lamb, established a New Covenant. This new covenant, in which we receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life through Christ's broken body and shed blood, is celebrated as we remember Him.

The Believer's Baptism

Water baptism was part of the last instructions Jesus left to the apostles prior to His return to heaven. 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.*" Amen.

With water baptism, we have a picture of our ***dying with Christ*** on the Cross. When He died there, we died there. Our old, sinful self died when Christ died for our sins. We were put to death on His Cross by God. Theologians call it co-crucifixion. All believers, of all ages— believers past, believers present, and believers future— died, nailed to the Cross with Christ, over 2000 years ago.

Furthermore, when Christ was buried, we were buried, and when Christ rose from the dead, we rose with Him. Every believer possesses resurrection life—His risen life.

The Lord wants believers to act upon both ordinances. I said believers. Both ordinances are strictly for believers. The newly saved person is invited and expected to take part in the remembrance of the Lord's Supper. He when participates, he demonstrates that he has been redeemed through the blood Christ and has received the forgiveness of sins and is in fellowship with the body of Christ.

Following conversion, as a disciple of Christ, the newly saved person is to be taught about water baptism and be encouraged to be baptized, in order to illustrate by immersion, his co-crucifixion, co-burial, and co-resurrection with the Savior (Matt. 28, Mark.16:16, Acts 8:26-40).

To God be the glory!

