

Ordinance or Sacrament?

Section 14

Terms to Define

Ordinance – is an authoritative order. Often laws passed by local governments are referred to by this term, such as, “This is a violation of city ordinance.” In terms of church practices, it means those rituals which Christ commanded the church to do.

Sacramentalism – teaches that “observance of the sacraments is necessary for salvation and that such participation can confer grace.” (Theopedia) Sacraments are acts that “a person performs, and through which, the grace of God is conferred to that person.” This term never occurs in the Bible.

Sacerdotalism – is a system whereby a *priest (sacerdot)* is a necessary go-between people and God. For instance, without a priest, Israel could not approach God. In Christ, however, we have only one priest, Jesus Christ, the only mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5). No other priests were established in the New Testament. The concept of a Christian priest was a later development in church history.

Section 14. Ordinances

There are two ordinances for the local church - Baptism and The Lord’s Supper.

This is an extremely simple statement without any Scriptures listed. The IFCA International (www.ifca.org) gives these verses in support of their statement:

Baptism

¹⁹ “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:19–20 (NASB95)

⁴¹ So then, those who had received his word were **baptized**; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. ⁴² They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:41–42 (NASB95)

⁸ Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being **baptized**. Acts 18:8 (NASB95)

The Lord’s Supper

²³ For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” ²⁵ In the same way *He took* the cup also after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me.” ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes. 1 Corinthians 11:23–26 (NASB95)

There are many other Scriptures relating to these two *ordinances*, but let's first consider these:

Did Christ order us to baptize (Matthew 28:18-20)?

If so, how and why (Acts 2:41-42; 18:8)?

Is baptism essential for salvation? Support your answer with Scripture.

Did they baptize infants or believers?

Why would someone baptize an infant?

Did Christ order us to remember Him at the table (Luke 22:19)? If so, how and why?

Pick one of these passages and report what it contributes to our understanding of the Lord's Table:

Exodus 12

Matthew 26:17-30

Mark 14:16-26

Luke 22:7-20

1 Corinthians 5:7; 11:17-34

How do you understand the difference between an 'ordinance' and a 'sacrament'?