

DOCTRINE

THE CHURCH

LESSON #12

ORDINANCES - The act of delivering over from one to another a precept or instruction.

I Cor. 11:2 - "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you." In the case of the ordinances given to the Church, they seem to be things to follow that are physical, or outward, acts that show a deeper inward truth. There are three ordinances given to the Church to keep. These are: Women's head covering, the Lord's Supper, and Water baptism.

I. WATER BAPTISM

According to I Peter 3:21, water baptism is "...the answer of a good conscience toward God..." meaning that this outward show of being baptized expressed something that was on the inside, that is, a cleansing. When we receive Christ as our Saviour, we are cleansed on the inside. John 13:10 - Therefore, water baptism expresses this outwardly. The use of the words, "good conscience toward God" shows the need in us to be expressive and have a testimony that is clear and clean, because it shows what has occurred on the inside. Notice also the word "answer" in vs. 21. This suggests the need to say to the world around us that we have now taken the side of the Lord and are willing to testify publicly to it. Baptism does not remove outward filth, but shows that inward filth has been removed. Note further, the word "baptism" means "immersion," that is, "fully wet."

Baptism Associated with Salvation - Matt. 28:19-20 and Mark 16:16. The disciples were told to teach men everywhere to believe and be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Notice in vs. 19, Jesus says to go into all the world, baptizing men in the name (singular) of the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost, which is JESUS.

Baptism in Jesus' Name - Acts 2:38-41. The Scriptures teach that men were to be baptized in Jesus' name, and Peter seemed to be completely aware of this doctrine. Where did he get it? I think he received it from Jesus before His return to heaven, in Matt. 28:19-20. If there were any baptisms, literally, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, I cannot find it in Scripture. It appears the disciples knew what Jesus meant in Matt. 28:19-20. Acts 8:36-40 - note, the eunuch was baptized after he believed. Acts 10:47-48 - Peter baptized the people of Cornelius' household in the name of Jesus.[PRESTON - see note in margin on original re Paul, Acts 19:5 and Vs. 16]

II. THE LORD'S SUPPER, OR COMMUNION

I Cor. 11:23-33 - This ordinance is so called because Jesus ate with His disciples for the last time just before He died. The bread and wine represented His broken body and His shed blood for the sins of man. Paul told them that as often as they did this, it would show Jesus' death until He comes.

Eating Unworthily - Vs. 27-30 - To eat unworthily would be to eat not understanding Jesus' death and suffering for us. In so doing, we would eat and drink damnation to ourselves, or judgment from the Lord. Wrong attitudes can creep into our liturgy and we eat in lightness or an uncaring manner, without recognizing the oneness of the body. This ordinance gives us the opportunity to express our personal separation from the world and our desire and love for the Lord. Paul tells us in vs. 31 that we may judge

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ourselves and not be judged with the world. There is no certain time to eat and drink; but when we do it, it is to show Jesus' death until He comes.

III. THE HEAD COVERING

I Cor. 11:1-16. In vs. 1 and 2, the Scripture says, "be ye followers of me" and "keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you." Then it is in this chapter, following the above exhortations, that Paul tells us of the two ordinances he wants us to keep. Some have said that this part about the women's head covering was just for that time. By using that approach, we could do away with almost any part of the Scriptures we wanted to.

What is the Head Covering? It is, "something thrown around one, something used to cover." This covering is used to express the place the woman has in God's household. That is, a place of submission, both to her husband and to the angels, or leaders, of the church. From the beginning, God had given the woman to the man to be a helpmeet for him. This place given her by God never intended that she be a second-class citizen, or less than the man, but submissive to him. When we attempt to alter a principle of God, we always cause trouble. Women's-libbers of today have made this mistake; and, as a result, have created much trouble for themselves. The covering is something other than the hair. See vs. 5-6. If the hair were the covering, then how could she be shorn if she isn't covered? It would be double talk. Also, if the hair is the covering, then the man would have to be shorn in order to be uncovered. The undergirding truth here is the show of our respect and love for our Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. In vs. 10, the indication is that when a woman is covered, then she has the proper authority to speak in the public meetings.

1. What is the meaning of the word "ordinance?"
2. How many ordinances have been given for us to keep, and what are they?
3. Where did water baptism originate?
4. What did Peter say it expressed?
5. How are we to baptize today? Give Scripture.
6. Who instituted the memorial of the Lord's Supper?
7. What does it show?
8. What should be our attitude when partaking?
9. Who instituted the ordinance of the head covering for the church?
10. What is this covering? Explain.
11. What does it represent?
12. What attitude should be involved here?