**Two Ordinances – Part Four**

**SCRIPTURAL TEACHING OF THE LORD’S SUPPER**

**INTRODUCTION:**

The ordinance of the Lord’s Supper naturally follows that of baptism, both in order of the time of its institution and in order of observance. It is referred to in the Scriptures as “the communion” (*I Corinthians 10:16*), “the Lord’s table” (*I Corinthians 10:21*), and “the Lord’s Supper” (*I Corinthians 11:20*). This ordinance is not efficacious in regard to our salvation, but neither is it an insignificant ritual. We will look today at what the Bible teaches about this ordinance.

1. **WHAT IS THE LORD’S SUPPER?**
   1. **Unscriptural Teachings**
      1. It is not the Baptist equivalent of the Catholic Mass. The “Mass,” the “Eucharist,” or “Holy Communion” are sacramental terms belonging to religious systems devoid of sound doctrine.
      2. It is not a transubstantiation, which is the Romanist view.
         1. Transubstantiation is the belief that, upon the pronouncement of the priest, the bread and the wine literally and actually change in substance to become the literal, real flesh and blood of Christ.
         2. This teaching is false because:
2. Jesus was speaking metaphorically, not literally.
3. Christ’s sacrifice was once and for all; it is not to be repeated. *Hebrews 10:10,12*
4. Christ is bodily in Heaven. *Hebrews 1:3*
5. Christ, the Creator, cannot be created.
6. Eating literal blood is forbidden by the Law. *Leviticus 17:10*
7. Idolatry is a sin, yet Catholics are basically taught to worship the “host” (the consecrated wafer).
   * 1. It is not a consubstantiation, which is the Lutheran view. This is a modification of transubstantiation, asserting that, although the elements of the Eucharist are not changed, the real body and blood of Christ are mystically present, so that both are in fact eaten.
     2. It is not the Christian Passover, the Covenant Theology view. Covenant Theology equates Israel and the “Church;” circumcision and baptism, and the Passover and the Lord’s supper. However, the Christian Passover is Jesus Christ Himself! The Lord instituted the Supper after the Passover meal (when Judas Iscariot had left the room), and He introduced a New Testament (new covenant).
     3. It is not a Sacrament, the Reformed and Protestant views. A sacrament is a religious rite that is considered to be a means of receiving grace. Here, as with baptism, the Lord’s Supper is considered to be a sign and seal of the covenant of grace.
     4. It is not a Fellowship, which is the popular view. Many see the Lord’s Supper as a specially designed time of fellowship and communion with other saints and the Lord. Early churches practiced “love feasts” but these were not observances of the Lord’s Supper. Paul rebuked the church at Corinth for apparently turning the Lord’s Supper into a regular meal. *I Corinthians 11:21-22,34*
   1. **Scriptural Teaching** 
      1. The emphasis here is that the Supper is the Lord’s. It is not man’s, nor even the church’s. Therefore, only the Lord has the right to specify who may, and who may not, come to His table.
      2. Scripture teaches that the Lord’s Supper is an act of obedience, of remembrance, of thanksgiving, of commemoration, of examination, and of communion. *Matthew 26:26-29, Luke 22:14-20, I Corinthians 11:23-34*
      3. When should we observe the Lord’s Supper? The Word of God gives only one positive statement as to the frequency of observance, in *I Corinthians 11:26*, *“as oft as.”* Baptist churches gather at the Lord’s Table frequently, occasionally, and annually. However, and whenever it is observed it should be a special time and taken very seriously by its members.
8. **THE LORD’S SUPPER IS A RESTRICTED ORDINANCE**
   1. **There are four ways the Lord’s Supper has been conducted by various Baptists:**
      1. Closed communion: The ordinance was given for each church to observe, and that only members of that particular church may come to the Lord’s table.
      2. Close communion: Observance of the ordinance is restricted to church members but is open to any visiting members of other Baptist churches of like faith and order.
      3. Open communion: The ordinance is open for “all who love the Lord in sincerity and truth” to partake. In other words, if you are saved you may partake.
      4. Clinic communion: The ordinance is administered privately by the pastor, usually to the sick and shut-ins.
   2. **Why Baptists must practice closed communion:** 
      1. Bible-believing Baptists impose upon themselves the same restrictions that they place on others. They insist it is the Lord’s Supper, not theirs, and no amount of brotherly love should cause them to invite those who have not met the requirements laid down in the Word of God.
      2. The Lord’s Supper is restricted:
         1. As to the participants - The Lord’s Supper is a church ordinance. This is evident from the fact that:
9. A church was instructed to “keep the ordinances.” *I Corinthians 1:2*
10. The supper was first instituted in a church meeting. *Luke 22:8-14*
11. The “Lord’s Supper Chapter” says so. *I Corinthians 11:17, 18, 20, 22, 33, 34*
    * + 1. To a united church – *I Corinthians 11:17-20*
12. A church that is experiencing divisions between its members must set aside its observance of the Lord’s Supper until harmony is restored.
13. If open communion is practiced, any meeting to observe the Lord’s Supper could be made up of people from different walks of church life, something that would very likely lead to “*divisions…and heresies among you.”* 
    * + 1. To those in fellowship - To partake at the Lord’s Table, each member must be in fellowship with:
14. The Lord – *I Corinthians 11:28*
15. One another – *Matthew 5:23-24*
16. The church – *I Corinthians 5:11*
    * + 1. To the elements – Only two are mentioned in the Word of God: the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine.
        2. To its design and motive - The Lord’s Supper is a symbol, not a sacrament. The purpose of the Lord’s Supper is to picture symbolically the Lord’s death and to serve as a reminder of it to the saints. It is not a social function, but a solemn occasion to remember the Lord’s death.
17. **THE MEANING OF THE ELEMENTS OF THE LORD’S SUPPER**
    1. **The broken bread** *– I Corinthians 11:23-24*
       1. This unleavened bread represents the body of the Lord Jesus Christ.
       2. As a church member partakes of it, he is reminded of several precious truths concerning the Lord:
          1. The incarnation of Christ – *Hebrews 10:5*
          2. The temptation of Christ – *Hebrews 4:15*
          3. The crucifixion of Christ – *I Peter 2:24*
          4. The resurrection of Christ – *Philippians 3:21*
    2. **The cup** *– Matthew 26:27-28*
       1. The fruit of the vine represents or symbolizes the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.
       2. When a church member partakes of it, he is reminded of several precious truths:
          1. The nature of our sin
          2. The cost of our salvation – *I Peter 1:18-19*
          3. The completeness of our salvation – *Colossians 1:1*
          4. The privilege of our salvation – *Hebrews 9:15*
          5. The fellowship attained and maintained through the blood
          6. Our blood-bought relationship to the Lord – *I Corinthians 6:20*

**CONCLUSION:**

The observance of the Lord’s Supper is very important and serious. This cannot be observed in a flippant manner, but must be done in reverence and respect as we remember what Christ did for us on the cross.