

## LESSON TWO

### I. OUR BELIEFS AND THE CHURCH

- A. The Bible is the inspired, infallible, and authoritative Word of God, without error in its original writing.
  - 1) Inspired – The Holy Scripture was given to us by God through human writers (2 Peter 1:21)
  - 2) Infallible – The Holy Scripture is not misleading and is a sure, safe, and reliable rule to guide in all matters.
  - 3) Inerrant – the Holy Scripture is free from all falsehood or mistakes and is entirely true and trustworthy in all its assertions (Proverbs 30:5; Matthew 5:17-18; Deuteronomy 8:3).
- B. There is only one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Deuteronomy 6:4 Matthew 5:17-18).
- C. The Lord Jesus Christ is fully divine and fully human. He was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, performed authentic miracles, died in the place of sinners to pay for our sin, rose bodily from the grave, and works as our Mediator in heaven (John 1:1, 14 ; 1 Timothy 3:16 ; Isaiah 9:6 ; 2 Corinthians 5:21 ; 1 John 2:1).
- D. For the salvation of man, spiritual life given by the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary. His ministry includes indwelling the believer, enabling him to live a godly life (John 3:3; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 6:19).
- E. Although man was created in the image of God, he sinned, causing physical death and separation from God. All human beings are born with a sinful nature, and those who reach moral responsibility become sinners in thought, word and deed (Genesis 1:27, Genesis 2:17, Romans 3:10, 23; Romans 6:12-14).
- F. The death of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only basis for the salvation of all who believe. Only those who exercise repentance and faith, receiving Jesus Christ as Lord, are children of God (John 14:6 ; Acts 4:12 ; Acts 20:20-21 ; John 1:12).
- G. The Lord Jesus Christ will return bodily to the earth to complete our salvation and establish His kingdom. All of the dead will experience a bodily resurrection, the believer to eternal joy with the Lord and the unbeliever to judgment and eternal punishment (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 John 3:2 ; Revelation 7:14).

### II. ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH

#### A. BAPTISM

- 1) Before one can adequately understand the biblical teaching of baptism, one must first understand the meaning of the word. The Greek word *baptizo* means "to immerse, dip, or plunge." The early Christian church practiced immersion. We believe, therefore, that the definition

of the word demands that water baptism by immersion be recognized as the proper method.

- 2) We believe that baptism is symbolic of burial. When one goes under the water and is raised up, the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus are clearly pictured along with the fact that the believer has died to sin and has been raised to new life in Christ (Colossians 2:12 ; Romans 6:3-5). Water baptism by immersion is a worship experience which reminds the believer that his sins have been cleansed because of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Savior and encourages us to die daily to self and live the new life.
- 3) We also believe that the New Testament teaches that only believers are to be baptized. This, of course, precludes infant baptism (sometimes called "christening"). The New Testament teaches the following facts: One must believe prior to baptism (Matthew 28:18-20). Faith comes before baptism (Mark 16:15-16). Receiving the Word comes before baptism (Acts 8:39-39). One must receive the Holy Spirit before he is baptized (Acts 10:47). Clearly, no infant can experience these works of grace (like repentance and faith) which should precede baptism. Therefore, the New Testament does not teach infant baptism.
- 4) Baptism is the believer's step of obedience (Matthew 28:19; Acts 10:48) an inward reality that has taken place in his life. Baptism does not help to save us; it shows that one has already been saved. While we consider baptism as important, we do not feel that it is necessary for salvation. In 1 Corinthians 1:14-17, the apostle Paul made this statement: "For Christ did me not send to baptize, but to preach the gospel." Many passages in the New Testament clearly states that our salvation is not dependant on any deed that we perform (like baptism) but comes only by God's grace (Ephesians 2:8-9 ; Titus 3:5 ; Galatians 2:16-21).
- 5) By now it should be evident that we think that New Testament baptism is the immersion of believers only in water. Why do we feel so strongly about this issue? We desire to be as strictly obedient to the Word as possible. Jesus said, "If you love me keep my commandments: (John 14:15). We realize that many sincere Christians who love th3 Lord and experience His blessings do not view this issue as we do. We certainly do not want to be perceived as a ministry seeking to produce division in the kingdom of God. We simply want to be known as a ministry striving to be as obedient to the word of God as possible, while at the same time seeking to love and cooperate with others who may differ.\

## B. THE LORD'S SUPPER

- 1) The Lord's Supper was instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ on the night before His crucifixion as a symbolic representation of the believer's participation in the benefits of His death (Matthew 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; John 18:28). He is called "our Passover" (1 Corinthians 5:7). After His crucifixion, the Lord's Supper clearly took the place of the Passover. The Lord's Supper was instituted BY Jesus, FOR His church, UNTIL He comes, IN ORDER THAT we might be properly reminded of His death and return (1 Corinthians 11:26).
- 2) The Lord's Supper is for born-again believers only (John 3:3; Acts 2:41-42). We invite all to participate with us in the observance of the Lord's Supper who have experienced saving faith in Jesus Christ. We do not believe that saving grace comes to an individual through the Supper, but that participation in the Supper is a sign that one has already received saving grace. Saving grace is experienced when a person realizes that his sin has made a separation between himself and an Holy God and that he is deserving of God's wrath and judgment (Romans 6:23 ; Exodus 34:7). We also must recognize that God expressed His love for sinners by sending Jesus to die on the cross to pay the penalty for our sin (John 3:16; 1 Peter 2:24). Our responsibility is then to repent of sin and trust Christ alone for salvation and crown Him as Lord of our lives (Luke 13:3; Acts 16:31). We can then begin to see changes in our lives in the areas of attitudes and actions (2 Corinthians 5:17). We invite all who have repented of sin, trusted Christ as Lord and Savior and experienced a changed life to observe the Supper.
- 3) It is our responsibility, as Christians, to examine ourselves, confessing all known sin so as not to partake of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner. The Lord's Supper affords us opportunity to introspect and search our Christian walk and thought to assure we are in alignment with God's Word and God's Spirit.
- 4) The Lord's Supper is primarily summed up in the command of Christ, "This do in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22:19). It is an act of symbolic obedience whereby members of the Church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of our Lord Jesus Christ and anticipate His Second Coming. Jesus not only died. He was raised from the dead to come again and the Lord's Supper points to both of these glorious events. The Supper is to be received with great reverence, gratitude, devotion and worship.