

# THE DOCTRINE OF THE BAPTIST

## CHAPTER 12

In our final chapter we are going to study the Doctrine of the Baptists. The reason for studying this is to show that there is a real difference between Baptist churches and other churches. In this day of ecumenicalism, most people think that all churches are alike. This is not so. Baptist Churches are different from other churches in their *Beginning* and in their *Belief*.

First, *Baptists are different in their Beginning*. Every other denomination known to man today can trace it's beginning back to some man other than Christ and to some date since Bible times. Only Baptists can trace their history all the way back to Bible times. Though they have not always been called Baptist, there has been a group of people in every generation that held the doctrines that Baptists hold today.

The second oldest denomination known today is the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church was started around 500 AD. If you had lived before 500 AD and were saved, you would have been called a Christian, but you would have been taught the doctrines which today are known as Baptist Doctrines. If you were a church member that lived between 500 AD and 1520 AD you would have had to be a Baptist or a Catholic.

Martin Luther left the Catholic Church and founded the Lutheran Church about 1520. Though he left the Catholic Church, he brought out many of its pagan religious practices with him. He then added some of the Baptist Doctrines to his pagan rituals and formed what is known as the Lutheran Church or denomination. This was the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. All the Protestant denominations were formed in this same manner. A group of people became dissatisfied with some things being taught and practiced in the church they were a part of so they pulled out. They brought with them some of the teachings and practices of the old church, and added some new teachings and practices to start another denomination. They are called Protestants because they were started by people who were protesting something.

The Baptists are the only denomination that can trace their beginning back to the life of Christ so therefore we must conclude that **BAPTISTS ARE NOT PROTESTANTS**. Baptists were never under the hierarchy of Romanism or any other church governing body. Baptists had their beginning during the days of Christ and his disciples, and even though Baptists were practically driven underground during the Dark Ages, God in His mercy has sustained a remnant through every generation who have taught and practiced the Baptist doctrines and principles.

*Baptist churches are also different in their Beliefs*. The following acrostic describes the Baptist position well.

B - Believes  
A - all  
P - precepts  
T - taught  
I - in the  
S - Sacred  
T - Text

In this section we will study five major areas where Baptists are different from other denominations. Some independent churches hold some of these doctrines and some denominations have incorporated parts of the Baptist doctrines into their doctrine to make them different from Catholicism, but basically all five of these doctrines are distinctively Baptist.

## I. SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH ALONE

As you study the teachings of the Protestant denominations on the subject of salvation you will find they fall into two groups. There is one group that adds to the grace of God to *produce their salvation*. These believe in order for a sinner to be saved he must add works, water baptism, or the performance of some church ritual, to God's grace in order to produce salvation. The other group adds something to the grace of God to *preserve their salvation*. They say a sinner is saved totally by the grace of God, but after he is saved by grace, he must add to the grace of God in order to stay saved. They teach that you must keep the law, keep the commandments, take the sacraments, or perform some religious practice in order to preserve your salvation.

Both of the above teachings are unscriptural. The Bible teaches in Ephesians 2:8-9, "***For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.***" Baptists have always taught that a sinner is saved BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH ALONE. Baptists do not teach that it is by grace alone, as the Hyper-Calvinist do, but BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH PLUS NOTHING, MINUS NOTHING. God in His grace takes the initiative, but the sinner must respond by faith. This faith is produced in the heart of the hearing sinner through the preaching of the Word of God, Romans 10:14-17.

Before I close this section let me ask you, what are you trusting in for your salvation? Is it in your water baptism? Is it your church membership? Is it your good works? Is it in your taking the sacraments or your being confirmed? This may be very personal to some of you, but I remind you, your eternal destination is at stake. Have you come to Christ as a sinner with repentance and faith, and received Him as your personal Lord and Saviour? If you are trusting in anything other than the Lord Jesus Christ you are still lost in your sins and will go to hell when you die, Notice I Timothy 2:5-6, "***For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all***" See also John 1:11-12, John 3:36, John 5:24.

## II. SCRIPTURAL BAPTISM

The word baptism comes from the Latin word "baptizo" which means to immerse, to bury, or to put under. From the meaning of the word we know that it is not possible to baptize one Scripturally by sprinkling or pouring on water. There are some Protestant denominations that baptize by immersion, but they still are not Scriptural since they baptize by the choice of the individual instead of baptizing in obedience to the command given by the resurrected Lord. Others baptize by immersion, but they baptize for the remissions of sins, or the receiving of the Holy Spirit.

Scriptural baptism must follow these Scriptural guidelines.

1. Baptism is for born again believers only, Acts 8:37. This eliminates the practice of Pedo-baptism (the baptizing of babies) and also the teaching of baptismal regeneration which makes baptism a part of one's salvation.
2. It is a church ordinance and must be administered by the authority of a local church.
3. Baptism is to be administered as a commandment given by our Lord, not as a choice of the convert.

Baptism identifies a person with Christ and His Church. It identifies the believer with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection. It also identifies the believer with the Church as one who has died out to the old life of sin and now walks in newness of life (Rom 6:3-6).

Baptists have always considered baptisms administered by other denominations as alien baptisms and therefore do not accept those into the membership of a Baptist Church who were baptized by other denominations.

### **III. THE MEMORIAL SERVICE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER**

Here is another one of the Baptist doctrines that many Protestant denominations embraced when they came out of Catholicism. The Catholic Church teaches communion as a sacrament. They believe that the bread and juice actually turn into the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ after it is blessed by a Church official. Baptists believe and teach that the Lord's Supper is a Memorial Service. We are taught in I Corinthians 11:23-32 that it is a time of remembering the suffering death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Baptists use unleavened bread and unfermented fruit of the vine for the ingredients in the Lord's Supper. Baptists teach that the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine are symbolic. The fruit of the vine is symbolic of the shed blood of Christ and the unleavened bread is symbolic of his sinless body that was broken for us.

### **IV. ETERNAL LIFE NOW**

Perhaps no other doctrine has brought such vicious attacks on Baptists as the doctrine of ETERNAL LIFE NOW. Some call it *the security of the Believer*. Others call it *once saved, always saved*. Others call it *the perseverance of the saints*. Call it what you may, the Bible calls it Eternal Life or Everlasting Life. The term Everlasting Life speaks of the quantity of that life, it is everlasting. The term Eternal Life speaks of the quality of that life, it is the very life of the Eternal God living in us right now, Galatians 2:20.

Baptists believe and preach that the moment a person is born again, he is saved forever. There is no mention in the Bible of the Lord giving conditional life to a believer. He gives them eternal life. All one has to do is simply read the Word of God and believe what it says. Notice

what the Word of God says in John 5:24. ***“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, HATH (right now, present tense) EVERLASTING LIFE, and SHALL NOT COME INTO CONDEMNATION (judgment as a sinner); BUT IS (present tense, right now) PASSED (already passed) from DEATH UNTO LIFE.”*** (Words in parenthesis are author’s words of explanation) See also John 3:15-16, John 3:36, John 6:35, John 6:37, and John 10:27-29

If there were no other teachings in the Bible than those listed above, this is enough for a person to understand that when God saves a sinner, He saves him forever. Let me just mention a few other thoughts. When God saves a sinner by His grace, the sinner is *Shut up in the Hand of God*, John 10:28-29. He is *Seated in the Heavenlies in Christ Jesus*, Ephesians 2:6 and Colossians 3:3-4. He is *Sealed with and by the Holy Spirit*, Ephesians 1:13 and 4:30. In order for the Devil to get one of God’s Children, He would have to ascend into heaven and find where we are ***“hid with Christ in God.”*** He would have to break the seal of the Holy Spirit, and then he would have to pry him out of the hands of Christ and God. The devil just is not able to do all of this. Another passage I need to mention is Romans 8:38-39. In these verses we read, ***“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*** These verses do not need any comments made on them.

One of the problems people have in understanding the doctrine of Eternal life now, is they do not clearly understand the doctrine of being saved by grace through faith alone. If salvation is something that is produced by man’s works, then I could understand man having to do something to keep himself saved. But salvation is not of man’s works. In Titus 3:5-7 the Bible teaches us, ***“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which was shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by His Grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of ETERNAL LIFE.”*** If man started his own salvation, I could understand him having to keep it going. True salvation commences by the grace of God; it continues by the grace of God, and one day it will consummate by bringing us into His eternal likeness, and it is all the work of God’s amazing grace, Philippians 1:6.

Thank God, when He saves a sinner, that sinner is saved forever. Again let me mention something we studied earlier. It is really not the perseverance of the saints that keeps a person saved. It is the perseverance of the sacrificial blood of Christ. It is the perseverance of the seal of the Holy Spirit and the perseverance of the great salvation that the Lord gives that keeps a sinner saved.

## **LOCAL CHURCH AUTONOMY**

One of the things that make Baptists different from all other Denominations is that Baptists have always believed in local church Autonomy. This means self-rule. Baptists have always believed the best way to govern a congregation is self-government without outside interference of the state or some religious board or system. They believe a church that provides

government by the congregation under the leadership of the Holy Spirit and the Man of God whom God places there as the Pastor is the kind of church that pleases the Lord. The Holy Spirit will always lead a church to operate according to the principles taught in God's Word. This is the way Paul set up the churches in the New Testament. He never set up an ecclesiastical board of any kind to rule over the local churches. He never formed a fellowship, association, or denomination. He left it up to the local church to pray, find the will of God, and then function in the way that pleased the Lord.

Outside of a few independent churches today that bear the name of some other denomination, Baptist Churches are the only churches that have this freedom. The Catholics have their Diocese, Lutherans have their Synods, Methodists have their Conferences, Presbyterians have their Presbyteries, and the Pentecostals have their Assemblies. These governing bodies chart the course for their churches to follow. Most of them select the Pastors for their churches, they own the properties where their churches meet, and a good portion of the church offerings must go to the denominational headquarters. In a Baptist Church, the local Church passes its own bylaws, provides its own buildings and properties, and runs its own business. We call our own Pastors, we handle our own finances, and we do not have to answer to anyone but the Lord Himself for the action of our church.

I recognize that even some Baptist churches and preachers have sold out this liberty for some position in the convention or some standing with the brethren. Some sold out for low-interest loans and educational assistance, but the traditional Baptist position is that every church should be self-governed by the membership of that local church. The Baptist position has always been that every local church is an independent body of believers, and that it is the responsibility of that local church to operate its business and conduct itself in a way that is pleasing to the Lord. Religious pride and position has been the downfall of many good churches and preachers. Again I repeat that some of the churches of the Protestant denominations have incorporated some of these Baptist Doctrines and practices into their way of doing business, but these five doctrines are known as ***BAPTIST DISTINCTIVES***.

Again I repeat Baptists are not Protestants. We are not protesting anything. Our responsibility is to equip the saints to live godly lives, worship God in spirit and in truth, and to reach the world with the Gospel of Christ. I am convinced that after the true church is "***caught up to meet the Lord in the air***," the protestant churches will reunite with the great harlot system that they came out of and become the one world church in the Tribulation Period. Sure some Protestants are saved, and those saved individuals will go in the rapture, but as the falling away of these last days increases watch for the protestant denominations reunite with their harlot mother system. Any church that hooks up with Rome is not a true Baptist Church.

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Did you read each passage of Scripture that is mentioned in this chapter? If you did not, do so right now.

2. Baptist Churches are different from other churches in their \_\_\_\_\_ and in their \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Baptist can trace their history all the way back to \_\_\_\_\_.
4. What is the second oldest denomination beside Baptist? \_\_\_\_\_, and when was it started?
5. Who started the Protestant Reformation? \_\_\_\_\_ and when was it started? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Why are the other denominations called Protestants?
7. Are Baptist Protestants? \_\_\_\_\_ Explain.

8. Give the acrostic of the word Baptist.

B \_\_\_\_\_  
 A \_\_\_\_\_  
 P \_\_\_\_\_  
 T \_\_\_\_\_  
 I \_\_\_\_\_  
 S \_\_\_\_\_  
 T \_\_\_\_\_

9. In the two different teaching of the Protestant Denominations, some add to grace and faith to \_\_\_\_\_ their salvation, while others add to grace and faith to \_\_\_\_\_ their salvation.

10. Baptists believe the Bible teaches we are saved \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ alone.
11. The word baptize comes from the Latin word baptizo which means to \_\_\_\_\_,  
 to \_\_\_\_\_, or to \_\_\_\_\_.
12. After considering the meaning of the word baptize, would sprinkling or pouring on be  
 Scripturally correct? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Who is to be baptized?
14. Name two things that baptism identifies us with?
15. The Lord's Supper is not just a communion service, but a \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_. It is a time for us to remember \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_.
16. John 5:24 teaches that at the moment God saves a sinner, He gives to them  
 \_\_\_\_\_.
17. List five Scriptures that teach that God gives everlasting or eternal life when He  
 saves a sinner.
18. Why do so many people have such a problem with the doctrine of eternal life?
19. What does local church autonomy mean?

*Be sure to study these questions until you know them well.*

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