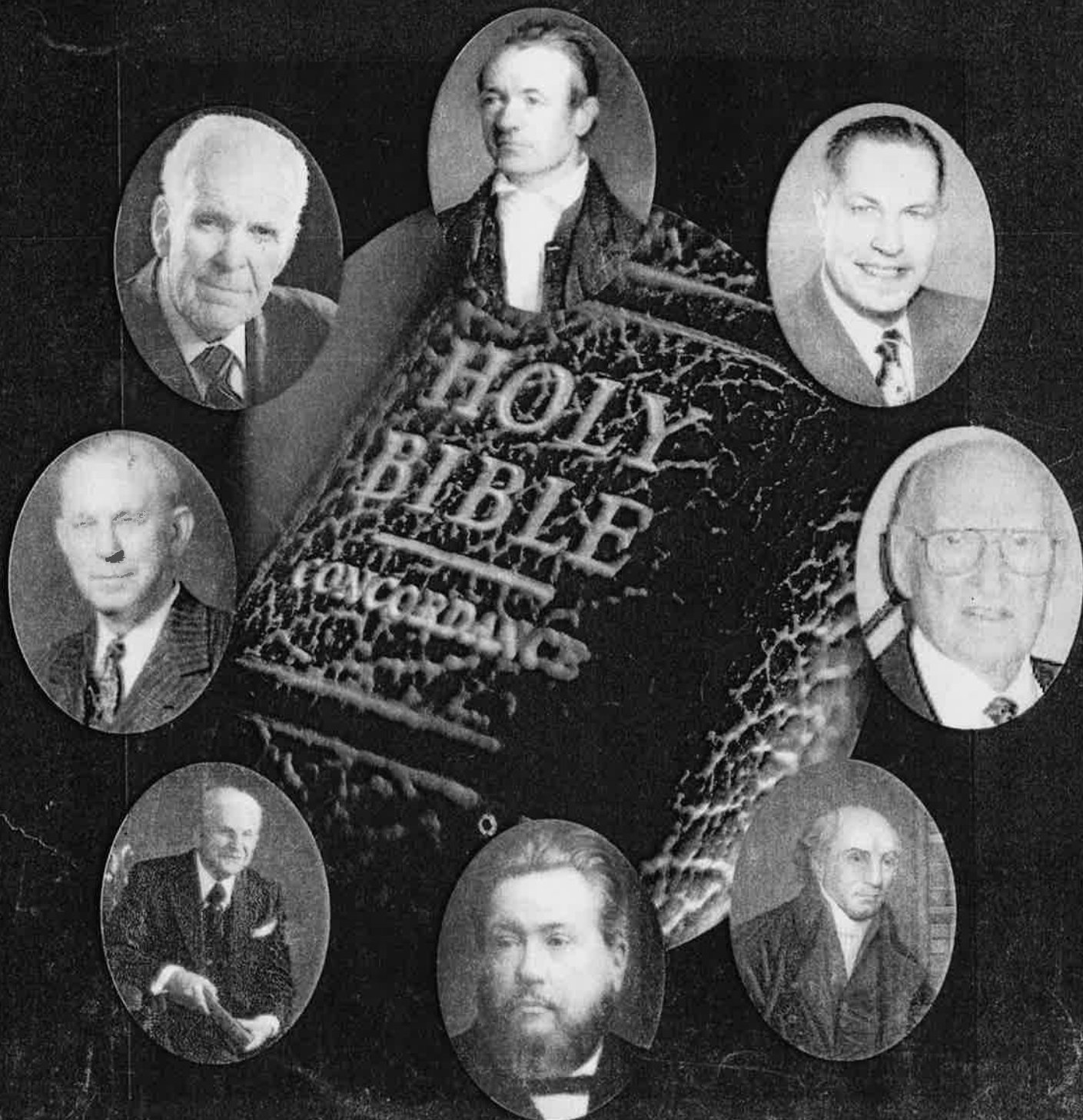


# BAPTISTS

## WHO ARE THEY?

BY TOMMY O'DELL



## DEDICATION

This set of lessons is the 8<sup>th</sup> set I have compiled on various Bible subjects over these past few years most of which have been taught at Trinity Baptist Church. I felt compelled in this latest entitled

### “Baptists - Who are They?”

to dedicate this series to some very special people who have impacted my life and ministry.

To my wife, Sandi, who has endured the many hours of my sitting cloistered in my office working on these and other lessons. She has been a faithful wife, a loving mother, grandmother, and a great pastor's wife.

To Bro. Aubrey Mitchell, the pastor I grew up under in Prichard, Alabama in the 40s, 50s, and early 60s. Long since with the Lord, Bro. Mitchell engrained in me a love for God's Word.

To Bro. Lloyd Willson, who took me under his wing after a move to Texas in 1968 and a move back to the Lord. Doc, as he was affectionately called, taught me a love for souls and soul winning even in the heat of those Corpus Christi summers.

To Bro. Leon Gray, my pastor while attending the Baptist Bible College, Springfield, Missouri, gave me the privilege of working at the great Berean Baptist Church. Bro. Gray called himself a “Baptist and a half” and through his teaching and preaching my Baptist roots were solidified.

  
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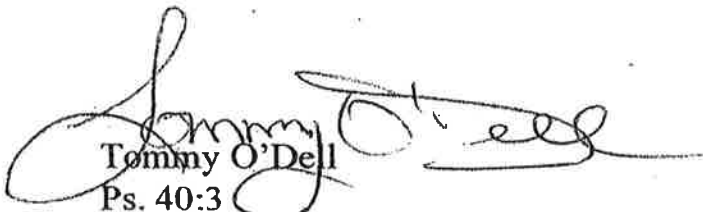
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As I began this series of lessons, I had no idea what a personal blessing it would be to me to learn more about the rich heritage I have as a Baptist. This series is being taught/was taught at the Trinity Baptist Church, Grand Prairie, Texas in 2009 in all of our Adult classes and Youth Dept. I have done my best to review the material for accuracy of dates, etc.; for sensibility, typos, and wrong references, but I am sure there are those who will find some. If they are serious enough, please contact me and I will attempt to edit them. Also, you may not agree with every bit of content or opinions. If that is the case, just use what you can and throw the rest away. No copyright has been obtained for these lessons but please use them for your own church or personal use. Additional copies are available for a nominal cost of \$ 10.00 each from the address below.

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# BAPTISTS – WHO ARE THEY????

## Lesson 1.....An Overview

Just the thought of embarking on a subject of such importance and timeliness has caused the author to painfully search his own heart as to why we are doing so. No one is fully qualified to tackle such a task, but with reverence to our God and a desire to put forth the truth about who we are, we will offer these lessons as the answer to the title – **Baptists – Who Are They?**

Let me begin by stating that “I am a Baptist.” Often, I have referred to myself as a “capital B” Baptist. Should I apologize for what I am? Absolutely not! I am an American and proud and thankful. I am not an “Irish-American” or “English-American”, just a plain American. I am equally proud and thankful that I am a Baptist – just a plain old (no laughing please), Baptist.

In these lessons, my goal is that we might become more fully aware of who we are as Baptists. This study will be divided into four (4) major sections. Keep in mind that to do a complete, exhaustive study of the subject is much too complex and time consuming.

The four (4) sections are:

1. **Baptists – *Their Chronicles*** - A 13 lesson study of the **EARLY** Church.  
(Emphasis on the church of the New Testament)
2. **Baptists – *Their Continuance*** – A 13 lesson study of the **EMERGING** Church.  
(Emphasis on the church throughout History)
3. **Baptists – *Their Covenants*** – A 13 lesson study of the **ENGAGED** Church.  
(Emphasis on the church and what binds us together)
4. **Baptists – *Their Characters*** – A 13 week study of the **ENRICHED** Church.  
(Emphasis on the prominent people who have carried the banner of Baptists)

Is such a study warranted? Is it profitable? The answer to both questions is a resounding YES! In this first lesson, we will survey God’s Word and see if we can find justification for such a study.

- I. The Bible is a Book about HISTORY – In fact, it is the **ONLY** book that can be said to furnish absolutely **TRUE** history. On the next page, we will look at the periods of Biblical History which shows us that God Himself was interested in recording events in His dealings with mankind and nations. Dates are given via “Ussher’s” chronology, but are not meant to be exact, but a general timeline of Biblical events.

<u>PERIOD</u>	<u>MAIN EVENTS</u>	<u>SECULAR HISTORY</u>
B.C. 4004-2234 (Period of Beginnings)	4004 – The Fall 2348 – The Flood 2234 – Tower of Babel	<b>Oriental Empires – records, dates, and events are totally unreliable.</b>
B.C. 2348-1706 (Period of Patriarchs)	1921 – Call of Abram 1760 – Jacob’s Flight 1715 – Joseph becomes Prime Minister 1706 – Jacob moves to Egypt	<b>Early  Babylonian</b>
B.C. 1706-1451 (Period of Egypt/Canaan)	1635 – Death of Joseph 1571 – Moses’ Birth 1491 – The Exodus 1451 – Crossing the Jordan 1451 – 1444 Canaan Conquest	<b>Empire</b>
B.C. 1394-1095 (Period of Judges)	1394-1354 Othniel 1249-1209 Gideon 1157-1117 Eli 1117-1095 Samuel	
B.C. 1095-975 (Period of United Kingdom)	1095-1055 Saul 1055-1015 David 1015-975 Solomon 1004 – Temple Dedicated	<b>Assyrian Empire</b>
B.C. 975-587 (Period of Divided Kingdom)	975-721 Kingdom of Israel (Captivity in 721) 975-587 Kingdom of Judah (Captivity in 587)	<b>Chaldean Empire</b>
B.C. 587-400 (Post-Exilic Period)	535 – Return under Zerrubbabel 516 – Temple dedicated 458 – Return under Ezra 445 – Return under Nehemiah	<b>Persian</b>
B.C. 400 – 4 (Interval between Old & New Testaments)	536-330 – Persian Empire 330-166 – Alexander the Great & his Successors 165-63 – Jewish Independence under the Maccabees	<b>Empire Greek Empire</b>
B.C. 27 -96 A.D. (Roman rule by Caesars)	4 B.C. – Birth of Christ 2 B.C. (?) – Birth of Paul 25-27 A.D. (?) – Baptism of Jesus 29-30 A.D. (?) – Crucifixion of Jesus 31-37 A.D. (?) – Conversion of Saul 45-58 A.D. (?) – Paul’s Missionary Journeys 61-68 A.D. (?) – Paul’s one or two imprisonments at Rome 70 A.D. – End of Jewish state; Jerusalem destroyed by Titus, Roman emperor 90 – 100 A.D. – Persecution of Christians by Domitian; Death of John and end of Apostolic Age.	<b>Roman Empire</b>

II. The Bible is a Book about HERITAGE – Exactly what do we mean by “heritage”? The dictionary defines it as “that which comes or belongs to one by reason of birth; an inherited lot or portion.” There are 30 Old Testament usages of the word and only once is found in the New Testament (I Pet.5:3). Generally, when we speak of our heritage, we are looking back at our fathers and forefathers which sometimes can be scary. Here is a twenty (20) question test to see just how much you know about Baptist Heritage:

(CIRCLE Y or N or ?)

- |     |   |   |   |   |
|-----|---|---|---|---|
| 1.  | Was John the Baptist the first Baptist?   | Y | N | ? |
| 2.  | Was John the Baptist an Old Testament prophet?                                    | Y | N | ? |
| 3.  | Was John the Baptist a New Testament preacher?                                    | Y | N | ? |
| 4.  | Was John’s baptism Christian baptism?   | Y | N | ? |
| 5.  | Did John the Baptist start the first church?                                      | Y | N | ? |
| 6.  | Have Baptists always been called Baptist?   | Y | N | ? |
| 7.  | Is Roman Catholicism older than the Baptists?                                     | Y | N | ? |
| 8.  | Do you know what apostolic and church succession mean?                            | Y | N | ? |
| 9.  | Do you know when Baptists first came to America?                                  | Y | N | ? |
| 10. | Does the name Baptist refer to a denomination?                                    | Y | N | ? |
| 11. | Do you know where Independent Baptists began?                                     | Y | N | ? |
| 12. | Do you know the difference between Independent & Southern Baptist?                | Y | N | ? |
| 13. | Are the Family of God, the Church of God, and the Kingdom of God the same things? | Y | N | ? |
| 14. | Do you know what the “Church Covenant” is?  | Y | N | ? |
| 15. | Do Baptist accept baptisms from non-Baptist churches?                             | Y | N | ? |
| 16. | Have you ever witnessed “church discipline”?                                      | Y | N | ? |
| 17. | Do you believe in the term – “Go to the church of your choice”?                   | Y | N | ? |
| 18. | Are Baptists “Protestant”?  | Y | N | ? |
| 19. | Do you know what “Ecumenicalism” is?  | Y | N | ? |
| 20. | Do you know what Baptists consider as their sole rule of faith & practice?        | Y | N | ? |

The above test is not designed to reveal intelligence or ignorance, but rather to whet the appetite for more knowledge about who we are as Baptists. In the age we are living in, our American history and heritage are under attack and constantly being revised. It is imperative that as Americans that we make sure our children and grandchildren know the truth about our history. Of course, the same is true about our Biblical History and Heritage. In Deut.4, we have a stirring portion of God's Word regarding the importance of both "history and heritage." In Deut. 4:9, we read,

*"Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy son's sons."*

## BAPTISTS – WHO ARE THEY????

### Lesson 2.....BAPTISTS – THEIR CHRONICLES.....*John, the First Baptist*

Text – John 1:6-8 If you were to write a paper on the subject of Creation, you no doubt to begin in Gen.1:1 where it all began. The same premise is true regarding the subject of "Baptists" – you would begin at the beginning. In the previous lesson, several questions were posed about the person of John the Baptist. Here are five of the more prominent ones:

1. Was John the first Baptist?
2. Was John the Baptist an Old Testament prophet?
3. Was John the Baptist a New Testament preacher?
4. Was John's baptism Christian baptism?
5. Did John start the first church?

In this lesson, we will endeavor to explain where John the Baptist fits in the grand scheme of God's plan for mankind.

- I. His Coming – *Prophesied* If we know anything about God's Word, we know that God gives us prophecies of "things to come" which surely will come to pass. There are three references that we will look at which tell us of the coming of this man named John, the Baptist.
  - A. Isaiah 40:3-5 Isaiah is divided into 66 chapters (same # of the books of the Bible) and we find the first prophecy of John's coming in Chapter 40 (39 books corresponding to the Old Testament canon and 27 corresponding to the New Testament). Notice in 40:3-5 we see that it speaks of someone who is called "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God....." It is no small thing that Isaiah's prophetic message changes from despair to hope in chapter 40. A careful look into the New Testament will show that this one crying in the wilderness spoke of John – Matt.3:3; Mk 1:3; Luke 3:4-6; and John 1:23 each of the writers of the Gospels attributing it to Isaiah except Mark.
  - B. Malachi 4:5,6 The last two verses of the Old Testament present a prophecy about the coming of Elijah before the "day of the Lord." That actual event is to be fulfilled during the Tribulation period as seen in Rev.11:3-6 – Elijah being one of the two witnesses. There is clear evidence that John the Baptist came in the spirit of Elijah and Elijah was actually a "prefigure" of John the Baptist. Notice several thoughts:
    1. Jesus spoke of John as being the fulfillment of Mal.4:5-6 in Matt.11:11-14 as Jesus is commending and assuring John that He (Jesus) was the one "that should come."

2. John, in John 1:21 when asked by the priests and Levites if he was Elijah, flatly told them, "I am not."
3. In Matt. 17:10-13, the disciples asked Jesus "Why... Elias must first come?" Jesus answer was plain – he will come and yet, he has already come. Was Jesus confused? NO! And neither were the disciples because in verse 14 we see that they understood that He spoke of John the Baptist.

C. Luke 1:5-25 Luke tells of the prophecy given to Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist. Time does not allow an in depth study of this great text, but it should be clear from 1:17 that he would come as Isaiah and Malachi had said in their prophecies.

II. His Coming – **Profiled** If we were to prepare a resume on John the Baptist, what do you suppose it would contain? Well, that is just what we want to do here.

A. His Name – We already know that his name, John, was given to him by the "angel of the Lord – Luke 1:11-13; 59-63. When he was born, his father, Zacharias named him a "junior" or a "2<sup>nd</sup>" (Luke 1:59), but his mother followed the Lord's command and named him John (Luke 1:60-63). There are 15 references in the N.T. where we see the name, John the Baptist. The very first time he is so-called, is found in Matt. 3:1 here we read, "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea." It is noteworthy that Jesus called him John the Baptist (Matt. 11:11,12; Mark 7:28,33. Jesus disciples knew him as John the Baptist – Matt. 16:14; Mark 8:28; Luke 9:19. Herod, Herodias, and her daughter all knew him as John the Baptist – Matt. 14:2; Mark 6:14,24,25. John's own disciples referred to him as "John Baptist."

B. His Qualifications – John's father was a priest so John would have by birth been in the priestly line. In Luke 1:8,9, we see a brief glimpse of the priestly duties – the burning of the incense in the temple. But, that alone was not what made John qualified to be what he is often called, "The Forerunner of Jesus." In fact, there are three primary qualifications that he held:

1. He was a "man sent from God...." – John 1:6 From Luke's record we are able to see the wonderful events that transpired to show clearly that John was not just any man, but "a man sent from God." When God gets ready to do a work, He calls a man with ample evidence of that fact found throughout both the Old and New Testaments.

2. He was "filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb" – Luke 1:15. It is recorded of Jeremiah that he was set aside "by God" – "for God" "before thou camest forth out of thy mother's womb" as seen in Jer. 1:5. On this subject most of the commentaries are silent as to exactly why this was so in the life of John the Baptist. John Calvin perhaps came close to explaining it when he wrote, "As the more plentiful influence of the Spirit was in John an extraordinary gift of God, it ought to be observed that the Spirit is not bestowed on all from their very infancy, but only when it pleases God. Let us learn from this example that, from the earliest infancy to the latest old age, the operation of the Spirit in men is free."

3. He was ordained by God for the work – John's father received from the angel, Gabriel, instructions as to the purpose of John's coming into the world. In Luke 1:16,17 (prior to his birth) and again in Luke 1:68-79 (at his birth), we read of the tremendous ministry that John was to have albeit a brief time of about three (3) years with much of that spent in prison. A key verse is found in Luke 1:80 where we see that what John was sent for involved a life of preparation as he "waxed strong in the spirit, and was in the deserts till the the day of his shewing unto Israel."

Much like the story of Jesus, once born, John simply fades out for much of his life. Then at the time appointed by God, John showed up "preaching in the wilderness of Judaea." At the beginning of the lesson, we posed five (5) questions. Some have been answered in the study itself, but now let's offer an answer to each briefly:

QUESTION # 1 Was John the first Baptist? All accounts of him indicate that this was the name given to him by God and referred to by others. Then, we can safely say that indeed, he was the first Baptist.

QUESTION # 2 Was John an Old Testament Prophet? Luke 16:16 states "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." This verse seems to state clearly that the "law and prophets" ended with John's arrival. Therefore, the answer is NO, John was not an Old Testament prophet.

QUESTION # 3 Was John a New Testament Preacher? Mark 1:1 states "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." That is strictly New Testament. In the following verses you see the ministry of John the Baptist. Therefore, we can say, YES, John was a New Testament preacher.



QUESTION # 4 Was John's baptism Christian baptism? Sufficient to say that Jesus submitted to John's baptism as did all of the apostles (Acts 1:22). Some object by using Acts 19 to prove that John's baptism was not Christian baptism. But, a careful study reveals that those disciples were not converted under the direct ministry of John the Baptist. The conclusion then is YES, John's baptism was Christian baptism.

QUESTION # 5 Did John start the first church? The answer is a simple NO! Jesus started the church, but used the material (disciples) that had been prepared by the ministry of John the Baptist.

Dr. S.E. Anderson in his great book, "The First Baptist" gives ten (10) statements about the person and ministry of John the Baptist:

1. **Divinely Praised – Matt.11:11**
2. **Clearly Prophesied – Mal. 4:5**
3. **Richly Endowed – Luke 1:15**
4. **Thoroughly Prepared – Luke 1:80**
5. **Widely Seen and Heard – Matt.3:5**
6. **Surprisingly Believed – Matt.3:6**
7. **Cruelly Martyred – Matt.14:10**
8. **Tragically Ignored – Matt.17:12**
9. **Hopefully Reviewed – Luke 1:15**
10. **Rewardingly Followed – John 10:41,42**

## BAPTISTS – WHO ARE THEY????

### Lesson 3.....BAPTISTS – THEIR CHRONICLES.....*Distinctive Baptist Principles # 1*

We must admit that the early church (defined as the church from its inception to the end of the Apostles – about 90 A.D.) did not carry the Baptist name. The first technical name of believers was "Christians" as seen in Acts 11:26. The people so-called were the members of the church at Antioch which was begun after the stoning of Stephen (Acts 11:19-26). Two other names appear in Scripture – (1) The churches of Christ in Romans 16:16; and (2) the church of God which is at Corinth in I Cor. 1:2 and II Cor.1:1.

While no "Baptist" name was associated with any of the New Testament churches, how then do we determine that they were indeed "Baptistic" or having principles that are akin to the Baptist church of today. An old professor of mine, Dr. Bill Dowell, stated once in class that "if you take hold of a chain and someone unseen to you has hold of the other end; if that person on the other end rattles the chain, you feel it on your end. Then we can safely state that there is a connection in the chain." There are some who teach "church succession" meaning that we MUST have an accurate record of history with one church birthing another and so on. That would be nice, but it is not necessary because we have Biblical principles which we can observe to determine the link of the early church and churches of today.

In Robert G. Torbet's classic book, "The History of Baptists", he states,

*"There follows, therefore, a survey of the background of those principles held by Baptists which were inherent within early Christianity when the spiritual ideal of the gospel was foremost, and which were preserved by minority groups when the medieval church subordinated that ideal to organization and rigid conformity. From such a study it will become evident that this spirit of freedom embodied in Baptists is rooted in the long succession of faithful witnesses to the spiritual ideal within Christianity down to the time of the Anabaptists of the sixteenth century."*

In the next few lessons, we will look briefly at principles clearly taught and believed by the early church which should be evident today in our church if indeed we have gripped one end of the chain.

There are three areas we will study:

1. The Principle of ORGANIZATION
2. The Principle of OPINION
3. The Principle of OPERATION.

- I. The Principle of ORGANIZATION – Some revolt immediately at the concept of the early church being an “organization”, yet it surely WAS! While there are many things we look at to determine the organizational structure of the early church, we will just mention four (4):
- A. Congregational in Government – In Luke 6:12-16, our Lord chose 12 men and named them “apostles.” In Luke 9, these 12 were sent out to preach with “power and authority.” Then in Luke 10, 70 were sent out two-by-two again with clear instructions as to their ministry. In Matt. 18, we begin to see the metamorphosis of church government as Jesus gave instructions for taking care of personal offenses ultimately to be determined by the “church” – 18:17. Then, in Acts 1:16-26, we see the congregational government operating in the choosing of the successor of Judas. Again, we see it take place in the choosing of the 7 servants in Acts 6 to take care of the ministry to widows. The conclusion is that the early church certainly practiced “congregational” government. We do the same today!
- B. Pastoral Leadership – The early church may have had a plurality of pastors for a time. In Acts 14:23, we see that Paul and Silas ordained “elders” in every church that they started indicating pastoral leadership as a regular practice. In Acts 15:13-21, James appears to be the pastor who takes charge as he presents the solution to the problem of circumcision of the Gentiles. Again, in Acts 20:28, we see that the elders of the church at Ephesus are said to have been made “overseers, to feed the church of God.” Titus was left in Crete for the purpose “to ordain elders in every city” – Titus 1:5. Peter identifies himself as being an elder as he exhorted other elders to be ensamples to the flock – I Pet. 5:1-3. The conclusion then is that the early church had pastoral leadership as we do today!
- C. Autonomous in Practice – The church at Jerusalem was the first church to have had a membership roll (Acts 1:15) and the first church to be empowered by the Holy Spirit – Acts 2:1-4. But, that did not make the Jerusalem church the dictator of others. In fact, it was another church – Antioch - that autonomously sent out the first missionaries. The conflict as recorded in Acts 15 does not teach any type of ecclesiastical hierarchy but rather church autonomy. Another indication of the autonomy of the early church is that they always operated free of the control of the civil government. While respecting the laws of government, they chose to obey the Lord. The head of each local church is the Lord Jesus Himself. Churches may choose to voluntarily associate with other churches for the work of the ministry, yet, they never gave up their autonomy to do so. That is exactly how it is today in our church!
- D. Restriction of Membership – The early church grew as people were “added to the church” – Acts 2:41,47. Note however that two requirements needed to be met for membership – SALVATION and BAPTISM. The Biblical formula still exists today and is practiced by our church and true Baptist churches. Here is an interesting analysis by S.E. Anderson in his book, “*The First Church*”:

*“Membership in a gathered church involves the greatest transformation possible for each member. A person must renounce all claim to self-righteousness; he must judge himself entirely unfit for the kingdom of heaven in his own merits; he must confess that he has sinned and has no claim on God’s mercy outside of Christ; he must pledge lifelong obedience to Christ whom he has never seen; he must plan his life to go contrary to the way of the world with all its allurements, sins, pleasures, temptations, sex ads, profanities, uncleanness, materialism, covetousness, and general ungodliness. He promises to cast in his lot with church-going, Bible-carrying, hymn-singing, tithe-giving, Sunday-keeping, tee-totaling, cross-bearing followers of Jesus of Nazareth.”*

- II. The Principle of OPINION – Now, before embarking on this section, let me say first that this is MUCH MORE than the normal usage of the word, opinion. Synonyms of opinion include **belief, conviction, tenet, dogma, and verdict**. The fact is that what makes a Baptist a Baptist is what he or she believes. What did the early church believe? There are ten (10) items we will list and define briefly:
- A. Bibliology: **The Doctrine of the Scriptures** - “The Bible, the inspired Word of God, is the fulcrum of the Christian faith. Since all intelligent faith in the supernatural rest ultimately upon the divine origin, plenary inspiration, and infallible authority of the Bible as the Book of God, it is only natural that this book becomes the very center of both the attack and defense of the whole system of Christianity.” Numerous references are made in the early church to Old Testament prophecies and even Jesus read from the Isaiah when He entered the synagogue at Nazareth – Luke 4:1-21 – and He referred to what He had read as “scripture.” The Bereans “searched the scriptures daily...” – Acts 17:11 – indicating their reliance upon God’s Word. Today, we are often called “Bible Baptists” – God help us to live up to our name!
- B. Theology: **The Doctrine of God** - Briefly, let’s give a few of the ideas of God:
1. Deism – Belief that while God created all things, He then dismissed Himself leaving it to the process of self-development. Deism says then, “God is the maker, not the keeper of the watch.”
  2. Atheism – Belief that denies God’s existence.
  3. Skepticism – Belief that doubts the existence of God, especially the God of revelation.
  4. Agnosticism – Belief that God cannot be known. Etymologically, “agnostic” comes from the Greek while the Latin word is “ignoramus.”
  5. Pantheism – Belief that nature is God meaning that “everything is God and God is everything.”

6. Polytheism – Belief in many gods.
7. Monotheism – Belief that there is but one God. Christianity, Judiasm and Islam claim to be monotheistic religions.
8. Theism – Belief in the existence of a personal God – Creator, Preserver, and Ruler of all things.

The early church certainly were THEISTS as well as MONOTHEISTS indicated by beliefs in Holy Scriptures with every book setting forth the existence of God and His works among men and His creation. One writer, John Howe, defined God as

*“An eternal, uncaused, independent, necessary Being, that hath power, life, wisdom, goodness, and whatsoever other supposable excellency in the highest perfection, in and of itself.”*

Baptist of today could certainly say AMEN to that!

- C. Christology: **The Doctrine of Christ** – What did the early church believe about the person of Christ? Again, the subject is much to vast to cover every aspect of what they believed about Christ, but, we will sum up this lesson by listing seven (7) things they believed about Christ:

1. He is the Son of God who has *Always Been* – John 1:1,14; 8:58.
2. He is the Son of God who had a *Virgin Birth* – Is.7:14; Luke 1:26,27,31,34, 35.
3. He is the Son of God who lived a *Sinless Life* – II Cor. 5:21; I Pet.2:22; I John 3:5; 4:15.
4. He is the Son of God who *Died for Sinners* – Is.53:6; I Cor.15:3,4; I Tim.2:6; Titus 2:14.
5. He is the Son of God who was *Raised from the Dead* – Acts 17:30; I Cor.15:4; Rom.1:4.
6. He is the Son of God who will *Come Again* – John 14:6; Acts 1:11; I Thess. 4:13-17; Phil. 3:20.
7. He is the Son of God who makes the difference between *Heaven and Hell* – Acts 4:12; John 14:6; John 1:11,12; John 3:16-18; 5:24.

Do these truths sound familiar? They should because that is exactly what we as Baptists believe today.

## BAPTISTS – WHO ARE THEY????

### Lesson 4.....BAPTISTS – THEIR CHRONICLES.....*Distinctive Baptist Principles # 2*

In this lesson, we will continue our look at the second area of *Distinctive Baptist Principles* -

### “The Principle of Opinion.”

Thus far, we have reviewed three (3) of the tenets of doctrine the early church held to. They are:

- |    |             |                           |              |
|----|-------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| A. | Bibliology  | The Doctrine of Scripture | (Lesson # 3) |
| B. | Theology    | The Doctrine of God       | (Lesson # 3) |
| C. | Christology | The Doctrine of Christ    | (Lesson # 3) |

- D. Pneumatology: **The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit** – The Old Testament saints seemed to know little of the Holy Spirit. While He certainly was active in the O.T., our focus is on what the early church believed about the Holy Spirit. There are at least six (6) ministries that the Holy Spirit played in the N.T. times. These in no way exhaust the entire work of the Holy Spirit.

1. The Ministry concerning the SAVIOUR – *Jesus was begotten of the Holy Spirit* – Luke 1:35; *anointed by the Holy Spirit* – Luke 4:18; *empowered by the Holy Spirit* – Luke 4:1; *offered Himself at Calvary through the Holy Spirit* – Heb.9:14; and *raised from the dead by the Holy Spirit* – I Pet. 3:18.
2. The Ministry concerning the SINNER
  - a. In the Matter of Conviction – The Holy Spirit according to John 16:7-11: (1) Convicts of sin [the sin of unbelief]; (2) Convicts of righteousness [the righteousness of Jesus Christ]; and (3) Convicts of judgment [the devil was defeated at Calvary.]
  - b. In the Matter of Conversion – The Holy Spirit (1) Births us into the Kingdom of God – John 3:3,5; (2) Regenerates us – Titus 3:5; and (3) Seals us – Eph. 4:30
3. The Ministry concerning the SANCTUARY – The apostles and the early church were not qualified to do the work of the Great Commission until they were endued with power – hence, the Holy Spirit – Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8. The fulfillment of this enduing took place at Pentecost – Acts 2:1-21. The Book of Acts teaches clearly that the entire world was affected by the church operating under the power of the Holy Spirit.

4. The Ministry concerning the SERPENT – Two verses stand out in the Holy Spirit’s ministry regarding the devil: (1) Is. 59:19 as a STANDARD against him; and (2) I Thess. 2:7-14 as a RESTRAINER of him during the age of grace.
5. The Ministry concerning the SCRIPTURES – In a brief statement, the Holy Spirit is the “author of the Word of God.” There are three basic steps He works in and through:
  - a. Revelation – Process by which He spoke to some 40 human writers with the message He wanted to transmit – Is. 59:21.
  - b. Inspiration – Process by which the Holy Spirit guided the hands of the writers so the message would be accurately recorded – II Tim.3:16; I Pet.1:21.
  - c. Illumination – Process whereby the written Word is transmitted to the minds and hearts enlightening the hearer of God’s truths – II Tim.3:15; I Cor. 2:13.
6. The Ministry concerning the SAINT – Once again, we must state that in these lessons, we are only able to scratch the surface of the facets of His ministry. In regard to the believer, the Holy Spirit:
  - a. Indwells the Believer – I Cor. 3:16
  - b. Fills the Believer – Eph.5:18
  - c. Prays for the Believer – Rom.8:26
  - d. Guides the Believer – John 16:13
  - e. Teaches the Believer – I John 2:27
  - f. Empowers the Believer for Witnessing – Acts 1:8
  - g. Imparts to the Believer the Love of Christ – Rom. 5:5
  - h. Confirms the Believer to the Image of Christ – II Cor. 3:18
  - i. Strengthens the Believer in the Inner Man – Eph. 3:16
  - j. Comforts the Believer – John 14:16
  - k. Reveals to the Believer Biblical Truth – I Cor. 2:10
  - l. Assures the Believer of Salvation – Rom.8:16
  - m. Gives the Believer Liberty – II Cor. 3:17
  - n. Dispenses Gifts to the Believer – I Cor. 12:4-7
  - o. Produces Fruit in the Believer – Gal. 5:22,23
  - p. One day will Quicken the Believer’s Mortal Body – Rom. 8:11

Again, this list is not meant to share all the ministries of the Holy Spirit, but rest assured that the early church KNEW of these ministries. The fact is these ministries are still active and true in the Baptist church today.

- E. Anthropology: **The Doctrine of Man** - Man is said to be the “*crown of creation.*” The following is but a brief summary of the subject of the “Doctrine of Man” from Paul’s sermon at Mars Hill recorded in Acts 17. Here we learn of three things about man:
  1. Man’s Dawning – Paul states clearly that man had his beginning and his very existence as a result of God – Acts 17:24-28
  2. Man’s Dilemma – In Acts 17, Paul was moved by the idolatry and ignorance of the people in Athens. This speaks of the fall of man as recorded in Gen.3 where man chose not to honor God. Romans 1 also serves as a commentary of man’s departure from and changing of God’s truths to the devil’s lies. This is further evidenced by Paul’s statement that “now (God) commanded every man to repent” – Acts 17:30.
  3. Man’s Destiny – The ultimate destiny of all men is to “face God.” In Acts 17:31, it is clear that the world (mankind) would be judged “in righteousness” by the only one who is truly righteous – “That man whom he hath ordained... in that he hath raised him from the dead.” Thus, man is headed for judgment – either the “Judgment Seat of Christ” (believers only) or the “Great White Throne Judgment” (unsaved only). Man then has two possible destinations – Heaven or Hell.

Sadly, we live in a society today that has “deified” man and tried to “humanize” God. But, true Baptists like the early church still believe in the above stated truths about man.

# BAPTISTS – WHO ARE THEY????

## Lesson 5.....BAPTISTS – THEIR CHRONICLES.....Distinctive Baptist Principles # 3

Continuing our study of the second area of *Distinctive Baptist Principles* -

### “The Principle of Opinion.”

Thus far, we have reviewed five (5) of the tenets of doctrine the early church held to. They are:

- |    |              |                                 |              |
|----|--------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| A. | Bibliology   | The Doctrine of Scripture       | (Lesson # 3) |
| B. | Theology     | The Doctrine of God             | (Lesson # 3) |
| C. | Christology  | The Doctrine of Christ          | (Lesson # 3) |
| D. | Pneumatology | The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit | (Lesson # 4) |
| E. | Anthropology | The Doctrine Man                | (Lesson # 4) |

F. Hamartiology: **The Doctrine of Sin** – The word “sin” is found hundreds of times in the Bible and of all the Bible doctrines, it is probably the easiest one to identify and explain. Let’s briefly see what the early church believed about sin.

1. Its EXAMINATION – Sin is expressed primarily in three (3) ways:
  - a. Transgression – This means to “go beyond the limit or to violate the law” – I John 3:14; Luke 15:29.
  - b. Iniquity – This means “lawlessness, wickedness, or crookedness” – Ps. 51:2; Matt.7:23; Rom. 6:19.
  - c. Sin – This means “to miss the mark or to deviate from the standard of moral excellence” – Rom. 3:23.
2. Its EXECUTION – How is it best defined?
  - a. It is a STATE of unlikeness to God.
  - b. It is a PRINCIPLE in opposition to God.
  - c. It is an ACT of transgression against God.
3. Its EXISTENCE – Where did sin enter into the world?
  - a. In the Angelic realm – Is. 14:12-17 *The Fall of Lucifer*
  - b. In the Human realm – Gen.3:1-7 *The Fall of Adam & Eve*

4. Its EXPANSION – Sin is progressive and never corrects itself.
  - a. From the Garden – Gen.3:1-7 EXPULSION
  - b. To the Field – Gen.4:8 EXPOSURE
  - c. Eventually to the World – Gen.6:5 EXTERMINATION
5. Its EXPERIENCE – A three-fold Indictment
  - a. We are sinners by CONCEPTION – Ps.51:5; 58:3; Rom.5:12
  - b. We are sinners by CHOICE – John 3:19; Rom.1:21,28
  - c. We are sinners by CONDUCT – Ecc.7:20; Titus 3:3; Gal. 5:19-21
6. Its EXPENSE – Sin COSTS!
  - a. Sin ENTICES – James 1:14
  - b. Sin ENSLAVES – Mark 5:1-5
  - c. Sin ENTAILS death – Rom. 6:23; James 1:15
7. Its EXPIATION – What can be done about sin?
  - a. Must be ATONED for – Rom. 5:6-11
  - b. Must be ACKNOWLEDGED – Ps. 51:3
  - c. Must be APPROPRIATED – Heb.10:10-18

There is a three-fold “imputation” regarding sin:

- (1) The sin of Adam is imputed to his posterity – Rom. 5:12-14
- (2) The sin of Man is imputed to Christ – II Cor. 5:21
- (3) The righteousness of Christ is imputed to the sinner if he will but believe – Gen.15:6; Ps.32:2; Rom. 3:22; 4:3,8,21-25; Philemon 17,18.

We as Baptists still believe what the early church knew and believed about the **Doctrine of Sin.**

- G. Soteriology: **The Doctrine of Salvation** – There are three primary reasons for Divine revelation concerning salvation to be known: (1) Personal salvation depends on it; (2) it is the one and only message which God has committed to the believer to proclaim to the world; and (3) it alone discloses the full measure of God’s love. Here are seven aspects of salvation as believed by the early church:
1. Salvation is from God and not from Man – Luke 3:6 It was *thought by the Father; bought by the Son; and taught by the Holy Spirit* and man had NO PART in the planning and purchasing of it.
  2. Salvation is through Christ alone – Acts 4:12; John 14:6

3. Salvation is strictly by Grace and not by Works – Eph.2:8,9; Titus 3:5
4. Salvation is for the whole man – II Cor. 1:10 presents a three-fold salvation:
  - a. PAST – We are saved from the PENALTY of Sin – Eph. 1:7  
(Our spirit is made alive unto God – Eph. 2:5.)
  - b. PRESENT – We are being saved from the POWER of Sin – Rom. 6:14; Phil.2:12,13.  
(Our soul gains ground as we have been sanctified and now can have victory over sins – Rom.6:13.)
  - c. PROSPECTIVE – We shall be saved from the PRESENCE of Sin – Rom. 13:11; I Pet. 1:5  
(Our bodies will be raised incorruptible – I Cor. 15:42-51.)
5. Salvation is Neglected at Fearful Cost – The sin of sins is UNBELIEF and that sin causes the wrath of God to abide on the lost soul – John 5:24. The unbeliever is already under condemnation in his unbelief – John 3:18.
6. Faith in Christ as the Crucified, Buried, and Risen Saviour is the procuring cause of salvation as unbelief is of damnation – Acts 16:31; John 3:16; Mark 1:15.
7. Salvation is eternally secured by a power greater than our own – I Pet.1:5; Jude 24; Rom. 8:29-39.

We can conclude from these seven (7) truths believed by the early church are exactly what we as Baptists believe today.

H. **Ecclesiology: The Doctrine of the Church** - Not to be redundant, but like the other tenets this is just a brief setting forth of the doctrines of the early church. Here are nine (9) items regarding what the early church knew and believed about themselves:

1. Established by Christ Himself – Matt.16:18 The early church KNEW the church existed before the day of Pentecost which today is widely believed as the beginning of the church.
2. Enjoined by a Commission from Jesus Himself – Matt. 28:19,20 is what we call “The Great Commission” and that was the marching orders of the early church and to date, we have received NO CHANGE OF ORDERS from Headquarters or our Commander.
3. Empowered by the coming of the Holy Spirit – In Acts 2, the promise of power to carry out their orders was received and still effective today.

4. Enlistment into the church was by salvation and baptism – Acts 2:41,47 – the same is true today.
5. Enhanced by an active outreach ministry – Acts 2:46; 8:4; 20:20,21. While there are many methods of church growth, the Bible way is still the best.
6. Enlightened by the Holy Scriptures – Acts 1:16-26 The manual for church business and truth was the Scriptures and remains so today.
7. Enriched by the freewill offerings of God’s people – Acts 4:32-37; 11:27-30; I Cor. 16:1,2; II Cor. 8,9
8. Enduring in spite of opposition – Matt. 16:18 promised the perpetuity of the church in spite of all that Satan may throw at it. Individual churches may fail, but the church will go on till Jesus comes.
9. Expectant of the soon return of Christ – The early church looked and were eagerly awaiting His return – Act 1:11 and so do we today – Phil. 3:20,21

# BAPTISTS – WHO ARE THEY????

## Lesson 6.....BAPTISTS – THEIR CHRONICLES.....Distinctive Baptist Principles # 4

This lesson will conclude our study of the second area of *Distinctive Baptist Principles* -

### “The Principle of Opinion.”

Thus far, we have reviewed eight (8) of the tenets of doctrine the early church held to. They are:

A.	Bibliology	The Doctrine of Scripture	(Lesson # 3)
B.	Theology	The Doctrine of God	(Lesson # 3)
C.	Christology	The Doctrine of Christ	(Lesson # 3)
D.	Pneumatology	The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit	(Lesson # 4)
E.	Anthropology	The Doctrine Man	(Lesson # 4)
F.	Hamartiology	The Doctrine of Sin	(Lesson # 5)
G.	Soteriology	The Doctrine of Salvation	(Lesson # 5)
H.	Ecclesiology	The Doctrine of the Church	(Lesson # 5)

These last two doctrines – Angelology and Eschatology – like the others we have studied are not meant to be exhaustive in their content. However, the basic principles presented are designed to give an overview of what the early church believed and how their beliefs coincide with ours today.

- I. Angelology: **The Doctrine of Angels, Demons, and Satan** – In order to properly treat this subject, much more time and space would be required than this lesson affords. Therefore, we will simply list four (4) facts in order to sum up the doctrine of Angels, Demons, and Satan.
1. The existence and ministry of angels (specially created spirits for God’s glory and work among men) is abundantly taught in Scripture.
  2. The evidence of fallen angels and demons (some hold that they are the same while others that they are not) is not only verified by many Scriptures but also by their work and worship in heathen lands yet today.
  3. The practice of “spiritualism” is documented in Scripture (Deut. 18:10-12; Is.8:19, 20) and it is said to be increasing in the last days (I Tim.4:1).
  4. The work of Satan and his evil spirits certainly is seen from cover to cover in God’s Word. Lest we pass over him too easily, let me list three thoughts about him:

- a. Satan’s Past Evil – Ezek. 28:11-15; Is. 14:12-15 In these references, we are taught of *his position, his pride, and his plummeting (his fall)*.
- b. Satan’s Present Endeavor – II Cor. 4:4; 11:3; 12:7 These verses offer a three-fold work of Satan today:
  - (1) The work of BLINDING - II Cor. 4:4
  - (2) The work of BEGUILING - II Cor. 11:3
  - (3) The Work of BUFFETING - II Cor.12:7
- c. Satan’s Prospective End – While defeated at Calvary – John 16:11 -, he is finally doomed for eternity in Rev.20:10.

There is NO DOUBT that the early church knew of and believed in the existence and ministry of Angels, Demons, & Satan. The same is true today!

- J. Eschatology: **The Doctrine of Last Things** – Often, we only think of this doctrine dealing with the coming of the Lord, but in reality, it covers so much more. There are actually five (5) areas we will pursue as to what the early church believed about the subject.
1. The Return of Christ – Often this is referred to as “The 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Christ” and while that is true, actually it’s in two (2) phases.
    - a. The Rapture – This is called the “catching away” and is described in I Thess. 4 and I Cor. 15. The early church knew little of it until the writings of Paul but it is clear that Jesus *will come “in the air” for His own*.
    - b. The Revelation – So many of the Scriptures relating to the return of Christ have to do with His literal return *“to the earth” with His own*. While the Rapture is imminent and the time and date uncertain, the Revelation of Christ is at the end of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> Week or what we generally call the Seven Year Tribulation Period and is described in Rev.19.
  2. The Resurrections – There are two mentioned in Scripture relative to last things. Even Daniel knew of this truth – Dan.12:2 – “some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”
    - a. The First Resurrection – This is the resurrection which takes place at the Rapture and may include the saved who are slain during the Tribulation Period – Rev.20:4-6. We know that just as Jesus was raised from the dead with a new body, so will we who are saved be raised – I Cor. 15:42-54.
    - b. The Second Resurrection – This will take place at the end of the 1,000 year reign of Christ upon the Earth – Rev.20:5. This resurrection is described as to its participants in Rev.20:12,13. This resurrection is ONLY for the unsaved.

3. The Judgments – Again, for individuals, there are but two judgments.
  - a. The Judgment Seat of Christ – II Cor. 5:10,11. This judgment is ONLY for the saved and will take place immediately after the Rapture. It is NOT to determine one’s salvation for ONLY the saved will participate. The purpose is described in I Cor. 3:12-15 and is for the purpose of rewards for service.
  - b. The Great White Throne Judgment – Rev. 20:11-15. This is the ultimate judgment for those who rejected Christ. It is the final straw as unbelievers are judged from the books especially the Book of Life where they will see their doom because their names were not found in the Book. In Matt. 7:21-23 Jesus spoke of this time of judgment.
  
4. The Millennium – Meaning 1,000 years, this is fulfillment of time as Christ rules and reigns upon the earth in peace. The devil is in the bottomless pit, but is released at the end to see if he can deceive those who are born during this time frame – Rev.20:7-10. Various positions are taken today about Christ’s coming and the Millennium.
  - a. Post-Millennialism teaches that we will evangelize the world and that will prompt the return of Christ. Most of the televangelists and many Pentecostals hold this position
  - b. A-Millennialism teaches that there is no literal 1,000 year reign upon the earth and they take most of Book of Revelation and spiritualize its teachings. Sadly, many Southern Baptists have taken this position as do many cults who believe in what is called “a general resurrection and general judgment.”
  - c. Pre-Millennialism teaches that Christ will come back in the two phases as previously stated – the Rapture and the Revelation and that He will literally rule upon the Earth for 1,000 years. We hold to this position as being Biblical as did the early church.
  
5. The Final State – According to Rev. 21, there will come a New Heaven and a New Earth at the close of the Millennium as the present earth and heavens will be destroyed by a fervent heat – II Peter 3:10-13. With that, eternity is ushered in and time as we know it shall be no more.

This concludes our study on “The Principle of Opinion” as to what the early church believed. While there may be minor differences among us Baptists today, overall, we believe that we as Baptists are closest to what the early church believed and taught about these ten (10) Doctrines.

Next we, will look at third and final section on “*Distinctive Baptist Principles*” which is

### “THE PRINCIPLE OF OPERATION.”

## *BAPTISTS – WHO ARE THEY????*

### *Lesson 7.....BAPTISTS – THEIR CHRONICLES.....Distinctive Baptist Principles # 5*

In previous lessons (Lesson 3 – 6), we looked at two of the three areas of study about

### *“Distinctive Baptist Principles.”*

The first was the “Principle of Organization” and the second was “The Principle of Opinion.” Now we will pursue the third area

### **“The Principle of Operation.”**

Here we will briefly look at “practices” of the early church and compare them to the practices of the Baptist church today. It is a general rule that what a man really believes, he acts upon. That is why we spent the past few lessons on the “doctrines” of the early church. If our doctrine is un-Biblical, then our practices will follow suit.

We will follow the outline from the previous lessons:

#### III. The Principle of Operation – We will feature ten (10) of the practices of the early church:

- A. Gathered – This may seem strange to list this practice FIRST, but it must be because to fail to gather together would go against the very meaning of the word “church.” The word is “ecclesia” meaning “a called out assembly.” The fact is that the church is ONLY the church when it is gathered. It is imperative that people who have been joined together by a common covenant to assemble together. The early church did just that. Of course, there were no church buildings in those days, but the church did gather together. Perhaps the earliest record is in Luke 6:12-16 where Jesus assembled with His disciples and at that meeting, He named the 12 Apostles. In the Upper Room with His church, Jesus instituted the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper – Mark 14:22-26. In John 20:19-29, Jesus assembled with them “post-resurrection” but notice – even back then - people “laid out of church” as Thomas was not present at the first meeting. Jesus assembled together with His church just before His ascension in Acts 1:4. The church at Jerusalem is said to have gathered “daily” – Acts 2:46. Acts 4:23 indicates they gathered “to their own company.” In Acts 12:5, the church was gathered to pray for Peter. One of the key verses is in Acts 14:27 where the church at Antioch “had gathered together” to hear the report of the 1<sup>st</sup> missionary journey of Paul and Silas. The church at Corinth met together in I Cor. 11:18-20 and 14:23. Of course, the most familiar verse about “assembling together” is Heb.10:25 where we are exhorted to not forget to assemble and even in that day like today some did not choose to assemble.



B. Disciplined – Again, this may seem strange to list so early in this study, but Jesus set the standard for the church to discipline its own in Matt. 18:15-20. Paul told Timothy in I Tim. 3:14,15 that “behavior in house of God” was important. Thus, we have the prescription for “discipline” for those who do not behave. The Scriptures give us *instruction for our behavior and correction for our misbehavior*. Keep in mind that discipline is NOT what you do “to a person” but rather what you do “for a person.” We will look at seven (7) scenarios in Scripture:

1. The Brother Overtaken in a Fault – Gal. 6:1 Here we have a case of a brother who has not deliberately sinned, but rather was the victim of a surprise attack. The meaning of the word, fault, is “one who is off guard when he should have been on duty; or one who fell when he should have been upright.” The purpose in discipline is RESTORATION of the fallen brother by one who is spiritual enough to do so.
2. Personal Offenses – Often in every church, people get hurt or offended. Here we have a three-fold procedure designed to resolve the matter either (1) privately; (2) before 2 or 3 witnesses; and finally, before the entire church. Failure to reconcile leads to treating the offender who refuses to get right as a heathen and not a brother.
3. The Brother who Walks Disorderly – I Thess. 5:14; II Thess. 3:6-15 These texts show us that such who “misbehave” should be rebuked and even avoided. This misbehavior seems to be violations of “traditions we have received of us” which may indicate Scriptural violations. However, he is not to be treated as an enemy but a brother. The private rebuke may not work which may necessitate a public rebuke – I Tim. 5:20.
4. Unruly and Vain Talkers – Titus 1:9-14 These seem to be the hirelings who are called “gainsayers” which according to 1:9 are those who seek to use unsound doctrine for their own profit or benefit. There is a three-fold process which is presented here: (1) First there is *restraint* – attempting to teach them right and better; (2) *rebuke* which is designed to “silence” them (1:11) and to “sharply” rebuke them (1:13); and (3) finally to *reject* them as a heretic – Titus 3:10.
5. Brethren Who Cause Divisions – Rom. 16:17,18 These are the smooth talkers who “by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.” These may be the gossipers, backbiters, and even the Biblical scholars (as they see themselves) who like to gather folks around them which ultimately can destroy the church. They are to be marked and avoided.

6. Serious Moral Offenders – I Cor. 5:1-13 The best teacher may be experience but it is also very costly. This man was not overtaken in a fault, but chose to continue in the sexual violation of fornication and adultery. Paul list other violations in 5:9-13 and each of these and many other moral offenses may result in being put out of the church as this man was – a far more serious matter than we might suppose – I Cor. 5:4,5. Thankfully, the man eventually repented and was accepted back into the fold though some had a problem with his reinstatement – II Cor. 2:3-8.
7. Doctrinal Evil – Ignorance of proper teaching needs to be addressed as we see in the case of Apollos in Acts 18:24-28. But Paul addressed the matter of willful spreading of false doctrine. In I Tim. 1:19,20, Paul spoke of two men who were guilty of such: (1) Hymenaeus who taught that the resurrection was past (II Tim. 2:17,18) and Alexander who forcefully took issue with Paul’s teachings – II Tim. 4:14,15. Both men were “delivered unto Satan, that they might learn (be disciplined) not to blaspheme” – I Tim. 1:20.

Ps. 93:5 might well remind us that discipline is both appropriate and needed as it states

***“Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, forever.”***

C. Bible Centered – The early church only had the Old Testament Scriptures – called the Septuagint – the Greek translation of the Old Testament. Those Scriptures were believed to have been inspired making one wise unto salvation, and profitable for doctrine, reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness – II Tim. 3:14-16. Biblical teachings were often called “the faith” or what they believed – Jude 3. Paul warned Timothy of the days when men would “not endure sound (Biblical) doctrine – II Tim. 4:3. Early evidence shows that it wasn’t long before traditions of men and heresies crept into the church – Jude 4; Gal. 1:6-9; I Cor. 11:19; I Tim. 4:1; II Pet. 2:1; 3:17. Cults always have had other writings of men to supplement their beliefs. Roman Catholicism says, “The Scriptures alone cannot be sufficient guide and rule of faith. They do not contain all the truths necessary for salvation.” Unfortunately, even many Protestants (Baptists are not Protestants as we will see in future lessons) offer writings of men about the Bible that supersede or add to clear Biblical teachings and doctrines. Even some Baptists today have elevated books, commentaries, and quarterlies above the Word of God. Also, the introduction and acceptance of the various versions of the Bible have further diminished the faith of God’s people that we have a divinely inspired, inerrant, infallible Bible. While we do not make it an issue, we still stand today behind and on the King James Version of the Bible as the preserved Word of God for the English speaking people of the world. God’s Word is our ONLY rule of faith and practice. And, NO, contrary what even some Baptist brethren state,

***Paul did not use the KJV.***

# BAPTISTS – WHO ARE THEY????

## Lesson 8.....BAPTISTS – THEIR CHRONICLES.....Distinctive Baptist Principles # 6

Continuing in our current study of

### “The Principle of Operation,”

we will look at other “practices” of the early church.

D. Evangelistic – What do we mean by “evangelistic?” Only three (3) times in the Bible do we find a form of the word with all three being rendered as “evangelist(s)” – Acts 21:8; Eph. 4:11; II Tim. 4:5. The Greek word is “EUANGELISTES” which is made up of two words – “eu” meaning “well” and “angelos” meaning “messenger.” Together, they literally mean “a messenger of good” denoting a “preacher of the Gospel. Other Greek words include “euangelizo” meaning “to proclaim glad tidings” and “euangelion” meaning “good news, the gospel.” Actually, in this section of study, we will divide it into two (2) parts – Evangelistic and Missionary.

1. Evangelistic – Having already defined the word, let’s see if the early church practiced this. While John the Baptist did not start the church, he DID prepare the material from which Jesus would start His church. How did he do that? According to Matt. 3:1, John came into the wilderness of Judaea preaching saying, “Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” That is being *evangelistic*. According to Matt.4:17, Jesus began to preach the same message as John. In Matt.10:7, Jesus instructed the 12 Apostles to preach the same message. In each of the four Gospels and in Acts, Jesus told His disciples to carry on the practice. Notice the progression:
  - a. Matt. 28:18-20 - The PLAN was to win them (make disciples), wet them (baptizing them) ,and warn them (teaching them).
  - b. Mark 16:15 – The PROGRAM was to “preach the Gospel” which is the only way we can win people to Christ.
  - c. Luke 24:47 – The PLACE was “among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” reminding us that it starts where we are.
  - d. John 20:21 – The PEACE can only come as we obey the Lord as He said to them, ...”even so send I you.” Disobedience will never allow us to have peace with the Lord.
  - e. Acts 1:8 –The POWER to carry out the job – “being witnesses” was given in the Holy Spirit’s coming.

Jesus taught His disciples to win people to Christ – evangelize – and showed them by personal example. The early church certainly followed the example as seen in Acts 2 with Peter’s classic message and then the church seeing perhaps hundreds and thousands saved – Acts 2:47. In Acts 6:1, we read that the early church experienced “great growth” prompting a problem when resolved resulted in even more people being saved – Acts 6:7. Hastening on to Acts 20:17-21, Paul spoke to the Ephesian elders about what he had taught them and shewed them – “repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” Baptist Biblically and historically have set the pace for being evangelistic with the ONLY message that will change both the destiny and destination of a sinner – the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Sadly, in these modern days, the Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses (without having the truth) are outstripping us in the practice of being evangelistic while many “Baptists” (having the truth) no longer do it at all

2. Missionary – Webster’s 1828 dictionary defines “missionary” as “one sent to propagate religion.” The word is never found in the Bible, yet the concept and practice is. Someone said, “*God only had one Son and He was a Missionary.*” In the strictest sense, John the Baptist was a Missionary since John 1:6 states, “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.” Earlier, we looked at the 5 step progression of our marching orders in the Gospels and Acts. Four of them are very specific about the fact that the Gospel was for all the world – every nation – every people – every tribe. Was the early church missionary in practice? Not really! In fact, the 1<sup>st</sup> Baptist Church of Jerusalem dropped the ball completely. Acts 1:8 stated that they were to be witnesses to Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth AT THE SAME TIME – the word “both” means that. But, they got so caught up in the success at Jerusalem that they failed to be missionaries in the other three places. That is why God allowed persecution to come – Acts 8:1-4 – thus scattering those early believers to other parts of the world. Then, Philip led the Ethiopian eunuch to the Lord thus bringing the Gospel to Africa. Finally, the Lord raised up the church at Antioch to be the first missionary sending church sending Paul and Silas out as missionaries. They went – the Gospel was preached – people were saved, baptized, and taught – churches were established – elders were ordained – and then those churches began to support the missionaries. You find these facts presented especially in Paul’s epistles most of which were written to churches he had established. The bottom line is that the early churches caught the vision – obeyed the commission – and became missionary in practice. Later, we will see how after the Apostolic Church age, the missionary vision faltered. In later centuries, it would be revived and thankfully it is alive and well today.

*“If a church is not mission minded, it has no mission.”*

E. Co-operative - This trait is somewhat akin to the practice of being evangelistic and missionary-minded. But, it is important that we spend a few moments on this matter of being "co-operative." We must, however, qualify this trait lest someone get the impression that we are here presenting the idea of being "ecumenical." The dictionary defines the word as "general, universal, pertaining to whole Christian church." That definition demands some further analysis. Baptists DO NOT believe in the church as being "universal" but local and visible. The move has been for decades to bring all religions together as one. That move is prophetic in the sense that the Anti-christ will accomplish it during the Tribulation. But, true Baptists have always resisted the "ecumenical" movement as we will see in later lessons where Baptists paid a price for doing so. In the truest sense, Baptists are NOT Protestants but we have always been known to "protest" error.

Exactly what do we mean by the church being "co-operative?" The fact is that the church at Jerusalem was the ONLY church for a while. But, as other churches began, there was not to be competition between the churches, but rather a spirit of co-operation in certain areas. The earliest record of an attempt of "lording" over other churches is in Acts 15 where a problem of "legalism" crept into the church at Jerusalem which caused some to try it to spread the church at Antioch. Thankfully, the matter was resolved by a spirit of co-operation which allowed both churches to continue acting independently of each other yet still in fellowship - See Acts 15:19-35 for the details.

It was another problem - a famine - where we first see the spirit of co-operation being practiced. In Acts 11:27-30, the members of the church at Antioch upon hearing of the "future famine" determined to help the brethren at Jerusalem. In fact, it was this spirit of co-operation that prompted other churches to get on board. In I Cor.16, we see that the church at Corinth was involved in collecting offerings weekly to help. Paul mentioned in Rom. 15:25-33 the co-operative work of Corinth and the Macedonian churches for the "poor saints which are at Jerusalem." The church at Philippi received special commendation for its support of Paul in his missionary efforts - Phil. 4:10-19. The conclusion is clear - no one church could do the job alone - it took a co-operative effort.

Thankfully, from these principles, today, we have an opportunity to do the same. In fact, the principles and practices of our modern missionary ministries have their foundations in the early churches. Even our Faith Promise Missions program is based upon the teachings found in II Cor. 8,9. Sadly, however, there is today a lack of real co-operation among some churches. Today, we have "camps, groups, fellowships, etc. that are exclusive to the point that there is little co-operation between many churches. Usually, it is not a matter of conviction of doctrines that separates these churches, but rather preferences of conveniences that cause the problem. Volumes have been written on things that divide us and little has been said about what unites us. In this study, we wish only to establish the fact that the early churches DID display a spirit of co-operation and we should do the same today.

## BAPTISTS - WHO ARE THEY????

### Lesson 9.....BAPTISTS - THEIR CHRONICLES.....Distinctive Baptist Principles # 7

Continuing in our current study of

### "The Principle of Operation"

Thus far, we have covered five (5) of the ten (10) practices of the early church:

1. *Gathered*
2. *Disciplined*
3. *Bible Centered*
4. *Evangelistic/Missionary*
5. *Co-operative*

F. Free - Right off the bat, someone might say that church isn't free because all preachers talk about is money, money, money. But, what we mean by this trait of the early church is "that it was not controlled by a civil government, by a religious hierarchy, or by ecclesiastical officials, by any human founder, or by traditions, customs, or laws."

There are several items that we can point out about the early church in regards to being free from outside control be it governmental or ecclesiastical. Immediately, we are prone to think of the ongoing battle in our own country of the separation of church and state. Rev. Isaac Backus, a prominent Baptist preacher in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century said, "When church and state are separate, the effects are happy and they do not at all interfere with each other: but when they have been confounded together, no tongue nor pen can fully describe the mischief that has ensued." Perhaps, later in the lesson, we will touch briefly on that point, but for now our interest is in what the early church practiced.

1. Governmental Controls - During the beginning of the church, the Romans were in power. Yet, with all of their idolatry they did not seem to be a threat to the workings of the church. It is true that later there would be an extended period of persecution from the government. In the days of Jesus' earthly ministry, we find limited but important references to the Christian's involvement with the government.

a. Lessons from Jesus – How did Jesus handle dealings with the government? In Matt.17:27, we see that he paid tribute (taxes). In Mark 12:13-17, we hear Jesus state, “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesars” indicating a citizen’s responsibility to the government. Even when Jesus stood before Herod and Pilate, He was respectful to those in governmental authority. Only on one occasion in Luke 13:32 did Jesus seem to show contempt for any one when he used the term ‘fox’ probably referring more to Herodias than Herod because the word “fox” literally means “she-fox.”

b. Lessons from the Early Church – John the Baptist somehow had access to governmental officials as he told Herod that it was wrong for him to have his brother’s wife – Matt.14:1-11. He violated no Roman law in doing so but the law of Herod’s conscience. Later in Acts 12, Herod decided to put the pressure on the Christians – killing James and putting Peter in prison – 12:1-4. Herod paid a terrible price for his sin as recorded in Acts 12:20-23. Paul actually used his Roman citizenship to appeal to the government for a fair trial – Acts 22:25-29; 25:10-12. In all of his defense before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa – all governmental rulers, Paul showed great respect for their position and used it as opportunity to witness to them of Christ. Later, both Paul and Peter would give inspired instruction about the relationship of the individual Christian to the government – Rom. 13:1-7; I Pet.2:13-20. John was banished to the Isle of Patmos for the preaching of the Word of God (Rev.1:9), yet eventually was released and died a natural death (according to history).

2. Ecclesiastical Control – Most of the Biblical accounts of the early church persecution were at the hands of the “religious” crowd rather than the government. The Sanhedrin (made up of 70 Jewish men of high standing) was the highest tribunal of the Jews. Presided over by the High Priest, they wielded great power and were allowed by the Roman government to punish people with imprisonment, scourging, etc. but were limited in capital punishment as seen by the fact that they had to bring Jesus before Pilate for trial. The Pharisees (law experts), the Sadducees (guardians of the Torah), and the Scribes (recorders of the law and traditions) were responsible for almost all of the persecution of the early church. It is clear that the early Christians were completely right to go against their authority. The main context that shows this is in Acts 5:17-33 and in verse 29 where we read, “We ought to obey God rather than men.”

There is a consensus found in Scripture that covers our responsibilities to government in general and that is that when a “Law of Man” takes issue with a “Law of God”, we are called upon to follow the law of God instead of the law of man. However, great care and much prayer should be rendered to make sure that God is pleased with our stand.

However, this matter of the church being “FREE” is so much more than just dealing with governments. Getting a little more personal and down home, here is a bit of history:

“The first Baptist sermon preached in Texas was preached in 1820 by Joseph Bayes after he crossed the Sabine River. That message was “illegal” because at that time Roman Catholicism was the official religion and no other preaching was allowed. Bayes was arrested, beaten, and taken to San Antonio to stand trial, but he escaped and later fought at the Battle of San Jacinto with Sam Houston. Also, the first church in Texas was illegal. In 1832, Daniel Parker, upon hearing that a church (non-Catholic) could not be formed in Texas, moved back to Illinois and started a Baptist church with seven (7) members and then moved the entire church to Nacogdoches settling in Austin’s colony.”

This trait of “free” is really about “religious liberty” and later in this series, we will see the high price paid by thousands for the cause of Christ. But, what does this “religious liberty” really mean? Here are four (4) thoughts:

1. We are free to believe or not believe in God.
2. We are free to worship according to the dictates of our own conscience.
3. We are free to join and support the church of our choice.
4. We are free to propagate our faith.

In fact, these four items describe the practice of the early church and we still hold to them today. Think about what it would be if we did not have these freedoms. As the church age progressed, churches began to lose these freedoms. Factionalism from within began to limit their freedoms by the traditions and teachings of men rather than the Bible. Later, freedoms were lost because of religion and government mingling. Perhaps, Backus’s earlier statement had more truth in it than we would first believe.

Paul Powell in his book “Back to Bedrock” states,

“Baptists believe in the absolute lordship of Jesus Christ (Rom. 14:9; Matt.23:10; Eph. 1:22), the Bible alone as the rule and guide for our faith and practice, every believer is competent to read and understand the Scriptures for himself. Therefore, one of our cherished beliefs and perhaps our greatest contributions to society is the conviction that every person should be free to worship God according to the dictates of his or her own conscience.”

# BAPTISTS – WHO ARE THEY????

## Lesson 10.....BAPTISTS – THEIR CHRONICLES.....Distinctive Baptist Principles # 8

Continuing in our current study of

### “The Principle of Operation”

Thus far, we have covered six (6) of the ten (10) practices of the early church:

1. *Gathered*
2. *Disciplined*
3. *Bible Centered*
4. *Evangelistic/Missionary*
5. *Co-operative*
6. *Free*

G. Fellowship – This trait has been defined as “two fellows in the same ship.” While that may be over-simplistic, yet, it does sufficiently state the fact of fellowship. Several definitions are found in the dictionary but the one that seems to best suit my taste is “a community of interests and tastes.” The Biblical word is “koinonia” meaning “communion, sharing in common.” In this study, we will look at a number of references in the New Testament where we find the phrase “one another” which will demonstrate the fellowship of the early church. In the list following, we will use the Amplified Bible to express the full meaning of what the verses express.

1. Rom. 12:10 “*Love one another* with brotherly affection – as members of one family – giving precedence and *showing honor to one another*.”
2. Rom. 12:16 “*Live in harmony with one another*; do not be haughty (snobbish, high-minded, exclusive), but readily adjust yourself (to people, things) and give yourselves to humble tasks. Never overestimate yourself or be wise in your own conceits.”
3. Rom.15:7 “*Welcome and receive (to your hearts) one another*, then, even as Christ has welcomed and received you, for the glory of God.”
4. Rom.15:14 “Personally, I am satisfied about you, my brethren, that you yourselves are rich in goodness, amply filled with all (spiritual) knowledge and competent to *admonish and counsel, and instruct one another* also.”
5. Gal. 5:13 “For you brethren were (indeed) called to freedom’ only (do not let your) freedom be an incentive to your flesh and an opportunity or excuse (for selfishness), but *through love, you should serve one another*.”

6. Eph.4:2 “Living as becomes you – with complete lowliness of mind – (humility) and meekness (unselfishness, gentleness, mildness), with patience, *bearing with one another and making allowances because you love one another*.”
7. Eph.4:32 “*And become useful and helpful and kind to one another*, tenderhearted (compassionate, understanding, loving hearted) *forgiving one another (readily and freely)*, as God in Christ forgave you.”
8. James 5:16 “*Confess to one another therefore your faults* – your slips, your false steps, your offenses, your sins; and *pray (also) for one another*, that you may be healed and restored – to a spiritual tone of mind and heart. The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available – dynamic in its working.”
9. I Peter 4:9, 10 “*Practice hospitality to one another* – that is, those of the household of faith. (Be hospitable, that is, be a lover of strangers, with brotherly affection for the unknown guests, the foreigners, the poor and all others who come your way who are of Christ’s body.) And (in each instance) do it ungrudgingly – cordially and graciously without complaining (but as representing Him). *As each of you has received a gift ( a particular spiritual talent, a gracious divine endowment), employ it for one another* as (befits) good trustees of God’s many-sided grace – faithful stewards of the extremely diverse (powers and gifts granted to Christians by) unmerited favor.”
10. I Peter 5:14 “*Salute one another with a kiss of love* – the symbol of mutual affection.....”

There are many other “one another” verses, but these will suffice to show forth the fact that the early church practiced fellowship as we should and hopefully do today. Scholars are still debating # 10 in the list especially in our American culture. Each of these are to be exercised with the motivation of a Christ-like love.

H. Benevolent – The word is used only once in Scripture – I Cor.7:3 where we read, “Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence; and likewise also the wife unto the husband.” The word literally means “good will” and in Eph. 6:7, the Greek word is translated “with *good will* doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:”. The fact is that the early church practiced benevolence in many ways especially in ways that we today would define the word. The dictionary defines “benevolence” as “the disposition of doing good; acts of kindness; and charity given.” Let’s cite some of the examples in the early church.

1. The Good Samaritan – In Luke 10:34,35, we see a prime example of stepping up and stepping in to offer aid to someone who is in need.
2. The Example of the Antioch Church – Acts 11:27-30 shows us how that an entire church showed benevolence toward the saints at Jerusalem in their need.

3. The Admonition of Paul to the Ephesian Elders – In Acts 20 :35, Paul advised the pastors to be benevolent in supporting the weak.
4. Two Rules that govern all benevolence – In Rom. 12:8, Paul mentioned that all “giving” should be with “simplicity” or without great fanfare; and II Cor. 9:7 reminds us that all benevolence should be done “cheerfully.”
5. The Commendation of the Church at Philippi – Paul praises the people at Philippi for several times meeting his needs – Phil 4:14-17.
6. The Test of Faith and Works – James addresses this matter in James 2:14-16 where he illustrates what we should do with a brother or sister in need.

We certainly could cite hundreds of cases where churches have been abused and taken advantage of by “swindlers.” Since we are stewards of God’s gifts, we should always take great care in assisting the needy but never to the point where we just turn a deaf ear to those who are truly in need.

An entire Epistle – III John – addresses this issue and presents the two poles that seem to be active in churches even today. John wrote to Gaius (perhaps, the pastor) about how faithful they had been in taking care of the needs of the brethren and strangers who came by. The context would seem to show us that these were perhaps traveling preachers or missionaries who needed a helping hand. The way a church treats God’s servants is generally the way God treats the church. But, the other side was a man named Diotrephes who was opposed to any assistance and literally tried to eject them from the church. Verse 11 shows both attitudes and it is clear that from that verse that the ones who wanted to help were saved and the others were not. Often, people in churches resent helping those in need as if the monies of the church belonged to them personally. How sad!!!!!!!

## BAPTISTS – WHO ARE THEY????

### Lesson 11.....BAPTISTS – THEIR CHRONICLES.....Distinctive Baptist Principles # 9

This lesson will cover our Ninth (9<sup>th</sup>) article on

### “The Principle of Operation”

Thus far, we have covered eight (8) of the ten (10) practices of the early church:

- |                          |                                   |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Gathered</i>       | 2. <i>Disciplined</i>             |
| 3. <i>Bible Centered</i> | 4. <i>Evangelistic/Missionary</i> |
| 5. <i>Co-operative</i>   | 6. <i>Free</i>                    |
| 7. <i>Fellowship</i>     | 8. <i>Benevolent</i>              |

- I. Separated – This subject is much too vast and wide to cover in even several lessons and surely would likely illicit a variety of ideas and standards of what separation involves. Yet, we do have a powerful portion of Scripture that sets forth the principle and practice of separation – II Cor. 6:14-18 where we read:

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? Or what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come our from among them, and **be ye separate**, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

1. The PICTURE - The Old Testament gives us the Picture while the New Testament gives us the PRINCIPLES and the PRACTICES. In Deut. 22:9-11, we see three areas of separation which are unusual to us and yet very pointed in their teaching:
  - a. “Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with diverse seeds” – 9:9. What is the lesson for us today. The seed of the New Testament is the Word of God and God help us not attempt to have mixed teachings.
  - b. “Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together” – 9:10. The plowing speaks of service, but there are three reasons for the prohibition:

- (1) The Humanitarian Reason – An ox and an ass have different gaits making their movements contrary to the other producing not only galled shoulders but great annoyance to both.
  - (2) The Ceremonial Reason – The ox was considered a clean animal with divided hoof and chewing the cud. The ass on the other hand was an unclean animal.
  - (3) The Scriptural Reason – These examples foreshadow the principle of the unequal yoke in our service to the Lord.
- c. “Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, as of woolen and linen together.” Garments are seen by everyone and thus speaks of our testimonies and everything we say or do should be for God’s glory.
2. The PRINCIPLE – Let us consider five spheres in which the Christian is sometimes enticed to enter into an unequal yoke – oft times to his sorrow, but always to his loss.
- a. The Commercial Yoke – This has to do with a believer and an unbeliever being in partnership in business.
  - b. The Matrimonial Yoke – This, of course, has to do with the marriage of a saved person to an unsaved person.
  - c. The Fraternal Yoke – Often Christians get involved in fraternal clubs which have their own system of beliefs which require vows and ceremonies which violate Biblical teachings.
  - d. The Ecclesiastical Yoke – Memberships with religious groups that do not believe the Bible and its doctrines are unwise and unBiblical.
  - e. The Personal Yoke – This is the individual believer who yokes up with worldly ideals and practices – we will discuss some of these in the next section of this lesson.
3. The PRACTICES – Rather than itemized all the “separation” standards that are mentioned today, let’s see if we can discern what “authentic” separation really is. Douglas McLachlan said in his book, “*Reclaiming Authentic Fundamentalism*” the following:

“The slide over two generations of time, from **Lordship** (where Biblical principles were understood and external standards were implemented) to **Legalism** (where Biblical principles were ignored and external standards were exalted) to **Libertinism** (where Biblical standards are forgotten and external standards are despised) had produced a scandalous variety of Christianity.”

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus made a statement that needs to be looked at (not just in the area of prayer, but in all of our lives as believers) where He said, “Be not ye therefore like unto them” – Matt.6:8. What was Jesus saying about believers – that we should be different from the world. Paul said it well in Rom. 12: 2 that we are NOT to be conformed to this world, but be transformed (to another world) by the renewing of our minds. There are two primary reasons why we are called to be different: (1) theologically – we are taught to become like Christ and (2) practically – lost people need to know that Christ in our lives have made a change in us that can also happen in them.

In this final section of this lesson we wish to cover the matter of personal separation. Rather than deal with the actual practices – dos and don’ts – let’s look at several “regulatory” principles that cover our Christian lives – in attitudes, aspirations, appetites, and activities.

- a. Expediency – I Cor. 6:12a – In erecting our system of values and priorities, we should never allow the *permissible* to become the enemy of the *essential*.
- b. Enslavement – I Cor. 6:12b – If anything tends to master or enslave us, the believer should abstain.
- c. Enrichment – I Cor. 10:23b – Paul states that all things in our lives should “edify” or build us up and not tear us down. If things make us impoverished rather than enriched, we must learn to say NO.
- d. Exaltation – I Cor. 10:31 – If the name of the Lord might be jeopardized or His reputation be compromised, the believer must avoid all such things.
- e. Endangerment – I Cor. 8:9-13 – As believers, we should lovingly defer to the well-being of other Christians (younger and weaker) rather than to demand the fulfillment of our personal rights.
- f. Entanglement – In II Tim.2:4, Paul reminds us that we are on active duty and should not get entangled in the affairs of this world. Then, in I Thess. 5:21,22, he warns us to abstain from things that “appear” to be evil and to “prove all things.” In other words, if an activity, appetite, aspiration, or attitude be GOOD, **hold it fast**; but if it be EVIL, **hold it off**.
- g. Equivocation – Paul, in Rom. 14:23, issues kind of a catch-all for the “grey areas” (those things that seem to be questionable and without a clear commandment to cover). To equivocate means to halt between two opinions, to be unsure, to be doubtful or uncertain. The rule is simple – If we have no standard or conviction growing out of faith to provide clear direction in a matter, the prudent course would to avoid or abstain.

On the last page of this lesson, we have a chart that will help us to see the three possible attitudes toward the matter of Separation:

<b>IDENTITY</b>	Classical Libertines (Left-wing)	Classical Legalists (Right wing)	Christian Lordship (Bible Based)
<b>DESCRIBED</b>	Carnal	Pharisaical	Spiritual
<b>EXPRESSED</b>	Throws out rules and principles	Creates and obeys rules with no understanding of principles	Understands principles and cherishes the rules which are built upon them
<b>ATTITUDE</b>	Anger	Pride	Meekness
<b>FOCUS</b>	Looks at Others	Looks at Self	Looks at God
<b>SCRIPTURE</b>	Jude 4	Matt.15:8	Gal.5:16

The balance in the matter of separation to which we all should strive and aspire to is expressed clearly in the following statement from Peter Kreeft's book, *"Making Choices"*

"So in waging spiritual warfare we must avoid both the ancient "hard" mistake and the modern "soft" mistake. Our ancestors were better than we are at the "hard" virtues, like courage and chastity. We are better at the "soft" virtues, like kindness and philanthropy. But you can no more specialize in virtue than in anatomical organs. The virtues are like organs in a body; independent. Compassion without courage ceases under pressure, and compassion without justice is wasted. Justice without mercy becomes cruelty; chastity without charity, coldness. The "hard" virtues are like the bones in a body, and the "soft" virtues like tissues. Bones without tissues are a skeleton; tissues without bones, a jellyfish."

## BAPTISTS – WHO ARE THEY???

### Lesson 12.....BAPTISTS – THEIR CHRONICLES....*Distinctive Baptist Principles # 10*

This lesson will conclude our study on

### "The Principle of Operation"

Thus far, we have covered eight (9) of the ten (10) practices of the early church:

- |                          |                                   |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Gathered</i>       | 2. <i>Disciplined</i>             |
| 3. <i>Bible Centered</i> | 4. <i>Evangelistic/Missionary</i> |
| 5. <i>Co-operative</i>   | 6. <i>Free</i>                    |
| 7. <i>Fellowship</i>     | 8. <i>Benevolent</i>              |
| 9. <i>Separated</i>      |                                   |

In this final lesson on the section called "The Principle of Operation", we will look at the one practice of the early church which may have well determined the success of all the others. An automobile is a wonderful invention with thousands of parts none of which will fulfill their function unless the vehicle runs and that requires a fully-charged battery. If it won't run, it's just a pretty museum piece. The is the last (by no means, do I mean that these are all the traits of the early church) of the Baptist distinctives and the one most required for a fully charged "spiritual" battery.

- J. Prayer – What is prayer? It can be defined in countless ways but let me list two (2) thoughts: (1) Prayer is the acknowledgement of humanity's limited perception – it is the brightest man saying to God, "I have no wisdom, I am ignorant." So we bring our ignorance up into the presence of God's omniscience and draw upon it; (2) Prayer is the acknowledgement of humanity's limited power – it is the strongest man saying to God, "I have no strength, I am impotent." So we bring our impotence up into the presence of God's omnipotence and draw upon it.

The first reference to Prayer in the New Testament in Matt. 5:44 where Jesus taught us to pray for those "who despitefully use you and persecute you." The last reference is found in Rev.8:4 referring to the "prayers of the saints" that were carried before the throne of God. The point is that prayer played a vital part in the lives of the early church. Let's list some of them:

1. The FOUNDATION of Prayer – It is in the Sermon on the Mount that we see the basis of prayer and that is "a relationship" which only comes through accepting Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour and God as our Father.



2. The FORMULA for Prayer – In Matt. 6:5-8 there are five (5) disciplines given regarding prayer:

- a. The Discipline of TIME – “When thou prayest” Notice Jesus didn’t say “If you pray” but “when you pray.”
- b. The Discipline of HUMILITY – “Enter into thy closet” Pray is to be “heard by God” and not “seen by men.” Interestingly, the Greek word for “closet” means “a storeroom where treasures are often kept.”
- c. The Discipline of the MIND – “Shut thy door” Genuine prayer requires undivided attention.
- d. The Discipline of INTIMACY – “Pray to thy Father” Again, we see that prayer is based upon our union with God through Christ.
- e. The Discipline of COMMUNICATION – “Use not vain repetitions” To repeat a request is proper, but to parrot words that are not expressions of the heart so as to gain favor or favors is impotent.

2. The FUNCTION of Prayer – What purposes do prayers play in our lives?

- a. For Needs to be Met – Matt.6:11
- b. For Forgiveness of Sins – Matt.6:12
- c. For Leadership in Life – Matt.6:13b; Acts 1:24
- d. For Deliverance from Evil – Matt.6:13b
- e. For Workers in the Harvest – Luke 10:2
- f. For God’s Will to be Done – Luke 22:42
- g. For Power for Service – Acts 1:14
- h. For Boldness in Witnessing – Acts 4:31
- i. For Setting Apart Workers – Acts 6:6; 13:3
- j. For Protection of God’s Servants – Act 12:5
- k. For Encouragements Sake – Acts 20:36; Eph. 6:18,19
- l. For Opportunities of Service – Col. 4:3
- m. For Wisdom to be Granted – James 1:5
- n. For Physical Ailments and Sickness – James 5:13-15

This list cannot even begin to note all the purposes of prayer, but should help us to understand what the early church purposed in prayer.

3. The Frequency of Prayer – The standard verses are Luke 18:1 – “..that men ought always to pray and not to faint” and I Thess. 5:17 – “Pray without ceasing.” Here is perhaps the best explanation the author has ever heard of these verses:

“So to pray without ceasing is to cultivate a frame of spirit that is habitually devotional having mind and heart attuned to God in all seasons and activities. And this is no depreciation of the offices of devotion. The spirit of prayer is created and fostered by frequent and deliberate approaches to the throne of Grace. We need our still hours, our stated seasons of communion, morning by morning, evening by evening; but these are not enough. It would rid us of many a vexation and deliver us from many a temptation if, amid our toil and fret, we would ever and anon remember Jesus and tighten our grip upon Him, and lift our heads into Eternity.”

4. The FERVOR of Prayer – The standard verse for “fervent prayer” is James 5:16b – “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” This is no doubt a reference to the prayer of Elijah (mentioned in the next verse) of how he prayed and stop the rain from the heavens and then prayed again and released the rain. From this we learn three (3) great lessons about the fervor of prayer:

- a. It must be fully recognized that all events in nature followed ordered laws. (They come from Father God and not Mother Nature.)
- b. It must be recognized that He who fixed the natural laws keeps control over the working of those laws.
- c. If then God is a being with will (and He is), that will must be subject to influence, otherwise, why have a will? Man’s prayer may be one of the influences affecting it.

5. The FOLLY of Prayer – There are rules for answered prayer and here we will simply list why many are not answered:

- a. Disobedience – Deut.1:45
- b. Harboring Iniquity – Ps. 6:18; Job 27:8,9
- c. Indifference – Prov. 1:24-28
- d. Neglect of Mercy – Prov. 21:13
- e. Despising of God’s Law – Prov. 28:9
- f. Stubbornness – Zech. 7:8-13
- g. Lack of Faith – James 1:5-8
- h. Wrong Motives – James 4:3

Thus, we have concluded the section of study on

1. The Principle of ORGANIZATION
2. The Principle of OPINION
3. The Principle of OPERATION

We will offer one more lesson which will be the transition from the Chronicles of the EARLY CHURCH to the Chronicles of the EMERGING CHURCH.

# BAPTISTS – WHO ARE THEY????

## Lesson 13.....BAPTISTS – THEIR CHRONICLES.....Heresies Arrive

As we close this first section of our study – Their CHRONICLES – we must do so by presenting the seeds of destruction that infiltrated the early church and sprouted many heresies that we are still dealing with today. William C. Irvine, in his classic book, *Heresies Exposed*, offered the following allegory which will introduce this lesson:

"I was walking along the streets of Vanity Fair the other day and had my attention drawn to huge edifice which was in the course of construction. Apparently there was a strike on, as something had happened greatly to hinder the work. On enquiring what was the trouble, I was told there was a dispute among the workmen. The men were holding a meeting, and as anyone was admitted, I went inside out of curiosity. Some had returned to their work, others were divided in opinion as to what was best to be done. It seemed that some were in fear that the building might fall, saying that some of the workmen were tampering with the foundations; the others were laughing them to scorn, vehemently asserting that their friends were but resetting the foundations: which they said, had never been truly laid. On further enquiry I found out that the building was called the CHURCH, and that the workmen were divided into two camps which some called "Fundamentalists," and "Modernists." The great fear of the former was that the latter would remove the foundations, and on examining the damage already done I was persuaded that there was much reason for alarm. I found several of the huge foundation-stones partly out of place. Indeed, one on which I had deciphered the words: - "The Virgin Birth" was more or less broken, and almost entirely removed from its place" if moved a little more a great part of the building would be in jeopardy. Another had an inscription which was partly obliterated by the workmen's tools; it read - **"..spirtion of .oly Scrip..re."** A third, which appeared to me to be the chief-cornerstone, was being vigorously attacked with pick and crowbar; it bore the words - "The Deity of Christ." I drew attention to some of those destructive workmen, many of whom appeared to be scholars, to a notice the builder had left nearby. It read: "If the FOUNDATIONS be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" But, they scoffed at me, and muttered something about "Progress" and "Modern Building Methods", and fell to with greater zeal than ever. I turned away sad in heart, feeling that this beautiful building was doomed. But, as I was about to step into the street, a young man in shining garments touched me on the shoulder, and gave me a letter from the Builder of the edifice, bidding me read it. I broke the seal and read: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure" and "I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Much comforted by these words, I passed on."

The words, heresy, heresies, and heretick, are only found five (5) times in the New Testament. The Greek word literally means "a choosing, a choice; then that which is chosen, and hence, an opinion, especially a self-willed opinion, which is substituted for submission to the power of truth, and leads to division and the formation of sects." The references in Scripture are Acts 24:14; I Cor. 11:19; Gal. 5:20; Titus 3:10; and II Pet.2:1.

Before enumerating the particular heresies that are seen in the early church, we must first look at two Parables Jesus gave us.

1. The Parable of the Sower – In Matt.13, Jesus spoke of the "seed" being sown in the hearts of men. Luke 8:11 states clearly that the seed sown was the Word of God which is "truth." Mark 4:15 reminds us that Satan comes and steals the seed. Of course, this parable has to be with the salvation of the sinner.
2. The Parable of the Tares – In Matt.13:24-30, the Lord reminds us that the enemy comes and sows "tares among the wheat" (13:25). According to 13:38, these tares are "children of the wicked one." This is where the perversion of truth comes into view prompting heresies that corrupt the church, weaken its power, and sown discord and division among the brethren.

The point is that while Satan knows that he cannot do away with God's Word (truth), he steals it from the hearts of the unsaved and then perverts it in the hearts of believers, thus creating division and confusion in the churches. He uses men who claim to have superior revelation from God which is just a brief picture of the strong delusion spoken of in the days of the Tribulation. Jesus warned about this Himself when He stated in Matt. 24:24, "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

We need to remember that Christians are not always going to agree on every Biblical issue. But, when it comes to the "doctrines", we had better be in line with the Word of God. In fact, here are 11 references in the N.T. which speak of doctrine – John 17:17; Acts 2:42; 13:12; Rom.1:16; II Cor. 13:5; I Tim. 4:6; 6:3; II Tim. 4:2; Titus 2:1; 2:10; and II John 9. What then are we to do with this thing called "doctrine?"

1. Read and meditate on it – I Tim. 4:13,16
2. Hold on to it – II Tim.1:13,14
3. Handle it carefully – II Tim. 2:15
4. Live according to it – Titus 2:10
5. Fight for it – Jude 3
6. Teach it to others – Titus 2:1
7. Preach it to everyone – Mark 16:15

In later lessons, we will see how these early heresies became more and more entrenched in the churches. However, for now let's look at six (6) clear passages of Scripture where the N.T. writers warned of the "denial" of truth.

- I. A Denial of "God and Saviour" – Jude 4 In this powerful verse, Jude warns of those who would pervert and deny the truth of the "Deity of Christ."
- II. A Denial that Jesus has come in the flesh – I John 4:3 warns that it is the spirit of antichrist to believe that Jesus had not come in the flesh thus denying the "Humanity of Christ."
- III. A Denial of the Atonement – In II Peter 2:1, we read of those who bring in "damnable heresies" acknowledging the Lord as a man but denying His Blood-Bought "atonement."

- IV. A Denial of the Power of Godliness – Paul addresses this denial in II Tim.3:1-5 which deals with the “power of Godliness” which offsets the list of sins mentioned in the verses. Godliness and sin cannot cohabit.
- V. A Denial of Sound Doctrine – II Tim.4:3,4 informs us of the time when men will “not endure” (but, deny) sound doctrine”, but instead be drawn to “fables” – the Greek word being the source of our English word, MYTH.
- VI. A Denial of Authority – Jude 8 introduces an entire section of descriptive terms of these who might be likened “to be men of their own making” acting on fleshly impulses and refusing to be under authority of anyone. Verse 16 sums it up as those who have great oratory skills all the while making merchandise of those who follow them.

These six (6) references certainly are not exhaustive of all the heresies that were present in the early church and have continued even to today. But, sufficient to say that what was sown in the days of the early church is still bearing fruit today.

Yet, there is a sense in which these heresies are a blessing. How, you say? In historical reflection, we see that the apostles rose to the occasion to REFUTE the heresies and then clearly defined the boundaries and intricacies of Biblical truth. Without the heretics, the foundations of Christianity might well have crumbled. Every time a new one arises, it challenges us to be “Bereans” – that is to “search the Scriptures” to see if what is presented is truth or error. Often, it is the heresies and heretics who unknowingly solidify our doctrinal beliefs. In the final analysis, we are able to obey the admonition of Heb.10:23,

“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith (which was once [for all] delivered unto the saints – Jude 3) without wavering: (for he is faithful that promised).”

## BAPTISTS – WHO ARE THEY????

Lesson 14.....BAPTISTS – THEIR CONTINUANCE.....An Overview

Text – Rev.1:19 As we begin this section of our study, we must be reminded again that the early churches were not called Baptists as we are today. However, the principles, practices, and precepts of those early churches are very similar and in most cases the same as we hold dear today. With that being said, let’s embark in this lesson on an overview of the church/churches from the standpoint of

### “The EMERGING CHURCH.”

John, the beloved Apostle, penned the words of our text – Rev.1:19 – while banished on the Isle of Patmos for the “word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” – Rev.1:9. The approximate date of the banishment and writing is 90-96 A.D. That means the New Testament church was about 60+ years old. John is said to have been the last of the Apostles and the only one who escaped a violent death.

We must be intellectually honest and state at the outset that all we know about the church from this point forward is from history and the writings of men. While only the Bible is inspired writing, these records of history certainly verify the prophecies of Scripture as we will see in these next 13 lessons.

First, we must look at the text verse which gives us the three (3) divisions of the Book of the Revelation:

1. “The things which thou hast seen”
2. “The things which are”
3. “The things which shall be hereafter”

Here is a brief a outline of what these divisions represent:

1. “Things SEEN” – This is what John has actually seen and heard as recorded in Rev.1:12-20. This led to the commandment to “write.”
2. “Things which ARE” – In 1:11, John was told to write letters to seven (7) churches which were represented by the candlesticks (1:12,13,20). Explanation of this is forthcoming.
3. “Things to COME” – From Rev.4:1 to 22:21, we have future events – things that have yet to happen even in our lifetime.

In Chapters 3 and 4, the letters to the churches have three (3) apparent purposes:

1. The Contemporary Purpose – In other words, these letters relate to seven (7) literal churches that were in existence in John’s lifetime.
2. The Composite Purpose – The traits and admonitions to these churches are meant to be applied to churches of all ages.
3. The Chronological Purpose – These churches portray the history of the church in prophetic terms of seven (7) great periods of time. (NOTE: This is what we will look at in the next few lessons and we must state that the dates given cannot be said to be exact.)

Here is the game plan: In the next couple of lessons, we will set forth the time frame of each of these seven churches as they correspond to the time frame of the church age; and the conditions which existed in their day with historical parallels of the time frame they represent. In future lessons as we look at each time frame, we will incorporate in them historical data which shows how Christianity fared and how the churches emerged. Again, we apologize for the fact that this will not be exhaustive. But, hopefully, we will be able to glean from the study the wonderful history we have with Baptist principles and practices being seen through the centuries. Also, we hope to see the price that thousands paid for the cause of Christ and truth.

- I. The Church @ Ephesus – 2:1-7 This church was, of course, begun by the Apostle Paul as recorded in Acts 19. Sadly, the church at the time of John’s letter had drifted from its moorings. While true to the Scriptures and busy in their service to the Lord, they had committed one main fault – “thou hast left thy first love.” This church was careful to maintain their *SEPARATION* but they neglected their *ADORATION*. Note also that there was a movement in the church called the “Nicolaitanes” which shows us that as previously taught how heresy can so quickly enter the church. (More about them later)

The time frame which Ephesus represents is **A.D. 30-100** and we would call it the

### **“Backsliding Church.”**

- II. The Church @ Smyrna – 2:8-11 Nothing is known of the founding of this church nor who served as its pastor. The city was located about 40 miles north of Ephesus. Like Ephesus, we see more heresy that was in the church – the “synagogue of Satan.” The church at Smyrna was the church that suffered like no other. In fact, they were said to endure ten (10) days of tribulation which would result in many being put to death. There is some debate about the 10 days as whether or not it was a literal 10 days of “blood-letting.” However, it would seem that history offers us a clear picture of 10 periods of tribulation and persecution that they would endure. These 10 periods of persecution were at the hands of Roman Emperors. They are:

- |                        |                               |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| A. Nero (67 A.D.)      | B. Domitian (81 A.D.)         |
| C. Trajan (108 A.D.)   | D. Marcus Aurelius (162 A.D.) |
| E. Severus (192 A.D.)  | F. Maximus (235 A.D.)         |
| G. Decius (249 A.D.)   | H. Valerian (256 A.D.)        |
| I. Aurelian (274 A.D.) | J. Diocletian (303 A.D.)      |

The above dates are taken from *Foxes Book of Martyrs* and show us a period of about 250 years of history where Christians were brutally slain for the cause of Christ. The most notable of these were Paul and Peter who were martyred in the persecution under Nero. In future lessons, we will also see other great Christians who gave their lives for Christ in these time frames.

The time frame which Smyrna represents is A.D. 100-313 and we would call it the

### **“Suffering Church.”**

- III. The Church @ Pergamos – 2:12-17 The time of persecution by the emperors of Rome was about to come to an end although one Antipas is listed as a martyr here. Yet, that relief became a burden of greater proportion as we will soon see. Pergamos was located 75 miles north of Ephesus and was considered to be the capital city of Asia. From the text, we see that while they held on to their faith, yet they were allowing heresies to actively work in the church. One was the “doctrine of Balaam” (from Num.22-25) which in essence was saying, **“if you can’t beat em, join em.”** That was the seed of compromise. Then we have the “doctrine of the Nicolaitanes” (before at Ephesus it was the only the “deeds” but now it’s the “doctrine”). What was this? The word means “to conquer the people.” This no doubt is the root of a rotten tree of the “clergy and the laity.” While elders and pastors were ordained in the churches, this took away the “priesthood of the believer” and led to what we see today in the Roman Catholic church – the priests, bishops, cardinals, and the Pope.

The one person who is the key to the departure of many was Constantine who was made emperor in 306 A.D. He claimed to have seen an image of the cross in the sky and to hear a voice saying, “By this sign, conquer!” In 313 A.D., he signed the Edict of Toleration which granted freedom to Christians. While Christians sighed a sigh of relief, millions of unsaved people joined the state sponsored and state sanctioned church. Loraine Boettner in his book on Catholicism says that it was during this time frame that the following heresies came about:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| A. Prayer for the dead (300 A.D.)      | B. Making the sign of the cross (300 A.D.) |
| C. Worship of saints/angels (375 A.D.) | D. Institution of the Mass (394 A.D.)      |
| E. Worship of Mary (431 A.D.)          | F. Doctrine of Purgatory (593 A.D.)        |

The time frame which Pergamos represents is 315-590 A.D. and we would call it the

### **“Compromising Church.”**

Here’s a quick review to see where this is headed:

- |             |   |                                    |
|-------------|---|------------------------------------|
| At Ephesus  | - | Rome <i>tolerates</i> the church.  |
| At Smyrna   | - | Rome <i>persecutes</i> the church. |
| At Pergamos | - | Rome <i>accepts</i> the church.    |

# BAPTISTS – WHO ARE THEY????

## Lesson 15.....BAPTISTS – THEIR CONTINUANCE.....An Overview(con't.)

We are still looking at “The Emerging Church” using the letters to the seven (7) churches of Asia Minor as recorded in Rev.2,3. Thus far we have studied:

Ephesus	“The Backsliding Church”	(A.D. 30-100)	Rome Tolerates the Church
Smyrna	“The Suffering Church”	(A.D. 100-313)	Rome Persecutes the Church
Pergamos	“The Compromising Church”	(A.D. 313-590)	Rome Accepts the Church

A pattern is developing with the church being infiltrated by and taken over by Romanism – today, we refer to it as the Roman Catholic Church. Yet, during all of these events, there was a remnant which held true to the teachings of the New Testament. It was these, often, unknown people who carried on the principles and practices of what we as Baptists are today. In later lessons, we will discover more about these people and groups.

Continuing the current outline, let’s go on to the last four (4) churches:

IV. The Church @ Thyatira – 2:18-29 This is the longest of the letters and Thyatira was the smallest of the seven (7) cities. The city was located about 35 miles southeast of Pergamos. Several things stand out in the first part of the letter: (1) this is the only letter what identifies Jesus as the “Son of God.” Perhaps, this was because that in Thyatira was a false god named Apollo meaning “the sun god”; (2) Jesus is described with His eyes being like a flame or fire and His feet like unto fine brass. These picture one thing – judgment. Romanism had reached adulthood during this time frame. The central offense of this church was that they allowed a woman to have spiritual authority. The name given her is “Jezebel” and while this may not have been her real name, she had come in the same spirit as the wife of Ahab in the Old Testament. Exactly what does this woman represent? Surely, the answer is obvious. The entire Romanist church is built around a woman who they call, Mary, the Queen of Heaven. An interesting thing is the name, Thyatira, which means “continual sacrifice” which is the root of all worship within the Catholic church. That’s why Jesus is still on their cross and they crucify Him every time they celebrate the Mass. Another noteworthy thing about woman was that “she refused to repent” (2:21).

In the midst of all this heresy in the church which they allowed, there was that “remnant” we spoke of earlier. That is who Jesus speaks to in 2:24-28 – that group of steadfast believers who held true to the Word of God which are seen throughout history even in the midst of gross idolatry and heresy. It was during this time frame that the first “popes” came into existence – the first legitimate Pope seeming to be Leo I often called Leo, the Great. During this time frame, there were great advancements of the Papacy and the Roman Catholic Church which we will see in future lessons.

The time frame which Thyatira represents is 590 – 1517 A.D. and we would call it

### “Unrepentant Church.”

V. The Church @ Sardis – 3:1-6 Sardis was located 30 miles south of Thyatira and was the capital of Lydia. The name, Sardis, means “escaped ones” which offers a real clue to the place this church represents in church history. Surely, it pictures what is called “The Protestant Reformation.” The text verses indentify it however as a church that “has a name that liveth, and art dead.” J. Vernon McGee offers a great commentary on this church:

“This is a picture of Protestantism. The great truths which were recovered in the Reformation have been surrendered by a compromising church. Although the great denominations and churches still repeat by rote (memory) the creeds of the church; in mind, heart, and life they have repudiated them. Imposing programs, elaborate rituals, and multiplication of organizations have been substituted for the Word of God and real spiritual life. There is activity, but no actions, motion without movement, promotion without progress, and program without power. Although the outward form remains, the living creature has vacated the shell.”

In future lessons, we will have an opportunity to study a little more about this time frame and those who stand out as the giants of the faith during this time.

The time frame which Sardis represents is 1517 – 1700 A.D. and we would call it the

### “Dying Church.”

Let’s summarize where we are in the church age:

At Ephesus	-	Rome <i>tolerates</i> the church.
At Smyrna	-	Rome <i>persecutes</i> the church.
At Pergamos	-	Rome <i>accepts</i> the church
At Thyatira	-	Rome <i>controls</i> the church

#### (Resulting in ROMAN CATHOLICISM)

At Sardis	-	Church pulls out of Rome.
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VI. The Church @ Philadelphia – 3:7-14 Of course, we are familiar with the name which means “brotherly love.” **This is the right name for the right church doing the right thing.** What was this “right thing?” The simple answer is MISSIONS! Notice, in 3:8, the Lord set before them “an open door.” Strangely, all of these seven churches came about because of the missionaries in the New Testament (though we do not know many names) and yet, in all of those centuries of time, missionary activity was almost non existent.

Surely, the church had not fulfilled all the Great Commission. Clarence Larkin said of this church, "It was like a person (with little strength) coming back to life." With Sardis in the preceding letter being a "dying church", this certainly fits the time frame with the revivals that swept cities and nations, and the resurgence of what we today call, "Modern Missions." Another thing that seems to fit the description is that there were some in the church (3:9) who opposed the ministry of God's people. That is still true today with some who oppose the work of sending out and supporting missionaries around the world.

The time frame which Philadelphia represents is 1517 – 1900 A.D. and we would call it the

### ***"Serving Church."***

(NOTE: One might have justification for extending the time frame of the Philadelphia church since we thankfully are still in a time (2008) of aggressive missionary activity. Yet, we cannot deny the attitude of the seventh and final church being prevalent in many churches today.)

VIII. The Church @ Laodicea – 3:14-22 I once heard a quote which went something like this, "We have met the enemy and it is us." Perhaps, this would describe the 7<sup>th</sup> of the churches and no doubt the one most familiar to the average Christian. The chief indictment against this church was their "complacency" – neither hot nor cold. Their lukewarmness made God sick enough to spue them out of His mouth. The underlying problem which caused the complacency was "prosperity" – rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing - self sufficiency. Surely, this pictures the church of today, yes, even our Baptist churches, and yes, perhaps even our church. For years as Baptists of our flavor were on the wrong side of track in our storefront buildings, we NEEDED God. But, as we slowly improved our status and became a force, we moved to the other side of the track and now find ourselves NOT NEEDING God quite so bad. The results are stated in 3:19 – Chastisement. How can or how could God choose to bless us when we have sinned against Him. Only repentance will do the job of restoring God's favor to us. In fact, the verse that is usually applied to soulwinning – 3:20 – states that the church during this age can function very well without the presence and power of God because here we see Christ at the door seeking entrance. How sad!

Each of the seven (7) letters all close with the same admonition – "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit sayeth unto the churches." While progressing through these lessons about *Baptists – Who Are They?*, I pray that we will indeed listen with our hearts and strive to be what the early church was – on fire for Jesus.

The time frame which Laodicea represents is 1900 – Present A.D. and we would call it the

### ***"Chastened Church."***

In closing, let's finish the little diagram we have been looking at:

At Ephesus - Rome tolerates the church.

At Smyrna - Rome persecutes the church.

At Pergamos - Rome accepts the church.

At Thyatira - Rome controls the church

### **(RESULTING IN ROMAN CATHOLICISM)**

At Sardis - Churches Pull Out of Rome

At Philadelphia - Churches Send Out Missionaries

At Laodicea - Churches Become Lukewarm

### **(RESULTING IN DEAD ORTHODOXY)**

So, we conclude our OVERVIEW of the section of study

### **"BAPTISTS – THEIR COUNTINUANCE."**

In the remaining lessons of this section, our goal is to show how the New Testament church continued to EMERGE throughout history and searching for those principles and practices that make us today connected to that early church.

# BAPTISTS – WHO ARE THEY????

## Lesson 16.....BAPTISTS – THEIR CONTINUANCE.....Definitions

Lessons 14 and 15 covered the introduction of the EMERGING CHURCH where we took a brief look at the seven (7) churches of Revelation 2 and 3 which serve as the guideposts of the church of the Jesus Christ throughout what is called “the Church Age. In this section – BAPTISTS – THEIR CONTINUANCE – our focus will be on the emergence of the church from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century through the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. The reason we have chosen to group these centuries together is that during these years, the name “Baptist” was unknown. In our final section of these lessons (40-52), we will study the history of Baptists as they were later called.

Through these next lessons, we will use many terms that you may not be familiar with, thus we will dedicate this lesson to explaining the meanings of these terms. There is no particular order of these terms but through this series, eventually, you will see these and it is imperative that we know what they mean.

1. APOSTLE – Literally means, *to be sent out*. Jesus personally selected twelve (12) of His disciples and called them “apostles” – Luke 6:12-16. In Acts 1:21,22, we read the qualifications of the apostle who would succeed Judas (Matthias was chosen – Acts 1:26). Paul was called an apostle “as one born out of due time” in I Cor.15:7-9. Since the last apostle (John) died, there have been no apostles. Thus, there is no such thing as “Apostolic Succession.”
2. SCRIBE – In the N.T. these were teachers of the law, but the term is important mainly because these were the people who copied the Word of God for future generations.
3. MARTYR – In Webster’s, it is defined as “to be put to death for adhering to what one believes to be the truth.” All of the Apostles except John died as martyrs.
4. BAPTIZE – Literally, it means to dip or immerse and was used to describe the process of dying a piece of cloth.
5. EFFUSION – The process of pouring water on a person for baptism (a corrupted practice) begun in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century
6. CLINIC BAPTISM – The so called baptism of a person who was sick or an invalid which like “effusion” surfaced in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century.
7. INFANT BAPTISM – The practice of sprinkling or pouring water over the head of an infant instead of those who professed faith in Christ. This practice was made popular by Cyprian in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century.
8. BAPTISMAL REGENERATION – The unscriptural belief that the act of baptism regenerates the soul and washed away sin.

9. SYNOD – In church history, a council or meeting of ecclesiastics to consult on matters of religion.
10. CHURCH FATHERS – This is primarily a term used to describe the ecclesiastical writers of the first centuries such as Jerome, Polycarp, and Clement.
11. BISHOP, ELDER, PASTOR – These are Biblical terms to describe the one who serves as the primary leader of a church.
12. DEACON – A servant of the church publicly commended for service as seen in Acts 6 where seven (7) men were chosen to take care of the needs of the widows.
13. METROPOLITAN – In the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries, this was a bishop who exercised power over several churches at the same time.
14. ARCHBISHOP – The eventual position of authority assumed by the “metropolitans.”
15. CATHOLIC – A universally (the basic meaning of the word) accepted belief or assertion. In the first three (3) centuries it was a belief that salvation was by grace through faith, and that baptism was for believers only by immersion. By the 5<sup>th</sup> Century, the belief system had been changed and today, we know the term to describe people who are Roman Catholic in faith.
16. SACRAMENT – A religious act that is thought to confer, bestow, or be a means to grace. Such acts are said to be “sacerdotal.”
17. ORDINANCE – A symbolic act in a Bible believing church that reminds us of God’s grace. In a Baptist church the ordinances are two (2): Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.
18. CATECHUMEN – Someone who has made a profession of faith and is awaiting baptism.
19. LAPSED – A word used to describe a backslidden believer.
20. TRADITORES – In 249, the emperor Decius required all Roman citizens to worship pagan gods. Many believers denied the Lord rather than suffer persecution. After Decius left the throne, many wanted to return to their churches. These were called “traditores.” These pleaded with those who remained faithful and some were granted “letters of mercy” allowing them to come back into fellowship of the church. This was the beginning of the false doctrine of “praying to the saints.”
21. CREED – In religious circles this means a summary of the articles of belief or a system of principles held to. The two (2) that are best known today are the “Apostle’s Creed” and the “Nicene Creed.”
22. ECUMENICAL – The original meaning simply means “empire wide.” Webster defines it as “the habitable world.” In our day, it pertains to the entire Christian church. We know it as the “coming together of all religions under one umbrella.”

23. HERETIC – Webster says, “a person who holds and avows religious opinions contrary to the doctrines of Scripture, the only rule of faith and practice.”
24. EUCHARIST – Literally meaning to be thankful, it came to be used to describe “the sacrament (see the definition # 16) of the Lord’s Supper.”
25. TRANSUBSTANTIATION – The belief that the bread and juice from the Lord’s Supper literally becomes the body and blood of Jesus Christ – believed by the Roman Catholic Church today.
26. CONSUBSTANTIATION – The Lutherans hold this position which says that after the elements (bread and juice) are consecrated, the blood and body of Jesus are substantially present with the bread and juice.
27. PURGATORY – A place where departed spirits go who must burn off some of their sins before entering eternal life.
28. APOCRYPHA – An extra set of books supposedly for the Bible, but rejected by the early church and its writers. The Roman Catholic Bible includes these 14 books. The word literally means “such things as are not published.”
29. CANON – A weapon used for many centuries (just checking to see if you are paying attention to this lesson). Seriously, The word from the Hebrew means “a cane, a reed, or a measuring rod.” When used to describe the Bible, it means “The genuine books of the Holy Scriptures, called the sacred canon, or general rule of moral and religious duty, given by inspiration.”
30. ISLAM – Strangely, the word means “peace or a peaceful path.” In 610, Muhammad claimed to have a revelation which began his transmission of the Koran, the Muslim holy book. The Koran records instructions of how to kill unbelievers (all non-Muslims) and the goal is and has always been “worldwide domination.”
31. INQUISITION – Literally meaning “to enquire”, it came to be used as “the institutionalizing of persecution.” Three major inquisitions are noted in history: (1) In 1231, by Pope Gregory IX called the “Papal Inquisition” ; (2) in 1478, by Pope Sixtus IV called the “Spanish Inquisition”; and (3) in 1542, by Pope Paul III called the “Roman Inquisition.” Today, there is still an official office of the Inquisition in the Roman Catholic institution.
32. EXTREME UNCTION – A Romanish doctrine that teaches there can be an anointing of a person ready to die which is said to remove sin.
33. AURICULAR CONFESSION – Confessing one’s sins into the ear of a priest.
34. PAPACY – Anything relating to the Pope.
35. CELIBACY – Forbidding Roman Catholic priests to marry.

There are hundreds more that we could offer, but these 35 seem to open the door for the upcoming lessons about the EMERGING CHURCH.

One final reminder – we still maintain that while the term “BAPTIST” was not found or used until around the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century, the principles of Baptist faith and doctrine were alive and well during these past centuries.



# BAPTISTS – WHO ARE THEY????

## Lesson 17.....BAPTISTS – THEIR CONTINUANCE.....2<sup>nd</sup> Century

In this lesson, we will begin a journey from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century (100-199 A.D.) to the 16<sup>th</sup> Century (1500-1599 A.D.). In these next lessons (#17 – 26), we will attempt to follow a pattern as follows:

1. The THrong – the **PEOPLE** A focus on the nations involved in each particular time frame.
2. The THREATS – the **PROBLEMS** Paying particular attention to both the heresies and the heretics that were prominent in each time frame. These are the enemies of the true Christian faith and church.
3. The THREAd – The **PRECEPTS** In every age, there has been a remnant like unto a slim thread that just keeps going and going and going. Here we will see how carefully, skillfully, and providentially preserved both His Word and His people. Remember that Jesus promised that the gates of Hell would not prevail against His church.

This is a continuation of a section we are calling “The EMERGING CHURCH” with this being the 2<sup>nd</sup> CENTURY.

- I. The THrong – At the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century, Rome was still the world power. As the Romans had conquered other nations, great roads were built almost as a sovereign move of God to prepare for the spreading of the Gospel. The 1<sup>st</sup> Century church took the commission of Jesus seriously and began to spread this new Christianity throughout the nations. It seems that the Gospel had been preached in almost every corner of the great Roman Empire. But, unlike Judaism which Rome had tolerated because it was “passive”, Christianity was very much aggressive and soon became a major threat to the Romans. What had begun on a small scale in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century now was wide spread in the 2<sup>nd</sup> – that of PERSECUTION. Here is a list of the Roman emperors during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century:
  - A. Trajan (98-117 A.D.) He was actively opposed to Christianity and thousands died.
  - B. Hadrian (117-138 A.D.) He was indifferent to Christianity, but supported a State-Church concept.
  - C. Antonius Pius (137-161 A.D.) Actually attempted to protect Christians from mob violence. But, one Roman jurist, Caecilius, charged the Christians of vile crimes – even cannibalism of their children.
  - D. Marcus Aurelius (161-180 A.D.) Both the government and the populace were guilty of gross and immoral treatment of Christians during this time. Mutilated corpses of believers were found lying everywhere.
  - E. Commodus (180-192 A.D.) While he was the cruel son of Marcus Aurelius, because of a concubine, he came to favor Christianity and conditions became more tolerable.

- F. Septimus Severus (193-211 A.D.) Fox’s Book of Martyrs records that Severus had recovered from a severe fit of sickness with the aid of a Christian and therefore, he took an unconcerned approach to the Christians. Yet, persecution at the hands of the people increased to the point that this statement was written about this period of history, “*Many martyrs are daily burned, confined, or beheaded before our eyes.*”

Someone said that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century was recorded in blood as it was a period of continued violence. Common persecutions included decapitation, crucifixion, burning at the stake, scourging to death, banishment, and being thrown to wild beasts.

- II. The THREATS – The amazing thing about physical persecution has always been that instead of hindering Christianity, it literally help. Tertullian purportedly said, “The blood of martyrs is the seed of the church.” While Satan continued to attempt to “Kill the Christians”, his M.O. changed to an effort to “Destroy the Scriptures.” We have to remember that with the death of the last Apostle, John, there were NO MORE inspired Scriptures given. Therefore, the work of the Apostles in giving us the Word of God lived on through their writings. The classic work of Baptist History is written by Thomas Armitage (The History of Baptists – 1886). He states that by the opening of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century there were from two-three thousand churches throughout the Roman Empire. When these “orphaned flocks” were left alone without these Apostles, they relied totally on what they had transmitted under the inspiration of Holy Spirit. Armitage reports that by 150 A.D. that all the New Testament books had been collected and “the first translation appears to have been Syriac called the “Peshito” (meaning literal) for its fidelity, rendered most faithfully into the common language of the Holy Land.” The presence of God’s Word SHOULD keep us straight, but the absence of it surely leads to perversions of both the PRACTICES and the PRECEPTS (doctrines). In our Lesson 13, we discussed the fact that “heresies had arrived” and what was then the seeds now has become the fruits.

- A. Practices – Pastor Robert Sargent in his study called “The Landmarks of Church History” lists three areas of practices among the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century church that were changed:

1. Sacerdotalism – One of the distinctives of the early church was the “priesthood of the believer.” You might recall in the letters to Ephesus and Pergamos, we saw the deeds and the doctrines of the Nicolaitaines which were the beginnings of the distortion of the priesthood of the believer – the clergy and the laity. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century, we saw the rise of a domineering clergy which was to lead to even further problems.
2. Sophistication – Sargent writes, “The simplicity and purity of the Gospel was left behind as men began to introduce images as a means of teaching these truths. Again, left to the imaginations of the sinful nature of man, such aids quickly degenerated into a motley mixture of human inventions.” Two that stand out are the “cross” and the “fish”. Tertullian stated that some had become “cross worshippers.”

3. Sacramentalism – If you recall in Lesson 16, we defined the word, sacrament, as being religious acts that are supposed to bestow grace – hence salvation. The main heresy that surfaced in this time frame was the misuse and misunderstanding of “baptism.” Sargent states, “The Scriptural balance between the substance and the symbol began to change.” The matter of baptism had added to it (1) long periods of instruction {catechizing}; (2) public renunciation of the devil; (3) recitation of a creed; (4) trine immersion {being baptized three times}; and (5) a brotherly kiss. While some of these are not necessarily in error, the event of baptism became ceremonial. Then, the second and by far the worst of the changes was baptism becoming a conveyor of God’s saving grace rather than an act of faith and obedience. One writer, Hermas (115-140 A.D.) said, “There is no other repentance than this, that we go down into the water and receive the forgiveness of past sins.”

B. Precepts – The main doctrinal error of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century is one which was present late in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century. It is called “Gnosticism” which literally means “to know or to have knowledge.” It is a very complex system which basically taught that knowledge was superior to and independent of faith. One writer said that it was “salvation by knowledge.” It seemed to focus more on the person of Jesus Christ as to exactly who He was and questioned His Deity and His dual nature among other things. Two things believed by the Gnostics stand out:

1. The three-fold division of mankind: (a) The SPIRITUAL who would be saved irrespective of their behavior while on earth; (b) The SOULISH who could be saved if they follow the Gnostic path; (c) The CARNAL who are hopelessly lost. (Bible students might recognize the similarity of these to Calvinism.)
2. The three-fold division of the universe: In Gnosticism, the universe is divided into three sections – (a) the Earthly Cosmos; (b) the Intermediate Kingdom; and (c) the Kingdom of God. Simply put, this allows for multiple places which can be attained which smacks of the Mormon doctrine of faithful Mormons being able to have and populate their own planets.

This certainly does not cover all the THREATS to the church in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century. But it does reveal to us that Satan was busy trying to distort and destroy the church by adding to the Word of God and we will see this become more prevalent in future lessons.

III. The THREAD – If such a thread actually existed, the color surely would be “scarlet” representing He is “the way, the truth, and the life.” In the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century there were many men who paid with their lives for the defense of the faith. We will look at this in two aspects:

A. Personalities – Most believers are never destined to be known or famous among men and it is the ordinary believer who holds to the truths and contends for the faith. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century, here are some of the more well known (often called “church fathers”) leaders.

1. Flavius Justinus (Justin Martyr) – He was perhaps the first Christian apologist defending the Christian faith. (His writings indicate that he did have some minor doctrinal quirks.) *{Justin was beheaded.}*
2. Ignatius – He is thought to be among the little children who came to Jesus in the Gospel account. He is known as perhaps the front rank of early Christian theologians. *{Ignatius was devoured by wild beast.}*
3. Polycarp – He was the bishop of Smyrna having been made bishop by the Apostle John. *{Polycarp was nailed to a stake, impelled with a sword and burned alive.}*
4. Irenaeus – Raised in Smyrna, he was a student of Polycarp. He is best noted for his writings against Gnosticism. *{Irenaeus was beheaded in 202 A.D.}*
5. Tertullian – A converted Roman lawyer, he became known as a great defender of the faith and has been called the “father of Latin Christianity.”

B. Protests – One man stand out among all in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century as the first general stand against the drift in church purity and spirituality. This man’s name was Montanus who was saved about 150 A.D. He is known in history as the founder of a movement called the “Montanists.” In most “church” histories, the Montanists are classed as heretics. Let’s see!

1. The Mission – Montanus undertook a crusade to get back to the basics. Their enemies sarcastically called them “Spirituals.” He laid great emphasis upon the person and work of the Holy Spirit and some historians charged them with being what we would call today, “holy-rollers.” He preached that the clergy had no franchise on the Gospel.
2. The Message – What is important is to see what Montanus thought to be the basics of simple Christian doctrine. There are seven (7) items:
  - a. A regenerated church membership.
  - b. Believer’s baptism
  - c. Holy living
  - d. Church discipline
  - e. The Trinity
  - f. The complete Word of God
  - g. Pre-millennial Coming of Christ

It is thus clear that the "scarlet" thread of the early church was alive and well in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century. Here are a few quotes from historians regarding the Montanists:

"Their emotionalism stemmed from their belief that a true experience of grace is evident in the believer's life, as many other teachers have stressed in much later periods of reform."

"Montanism was not a new form of Christianity; nor were the Montanists a new sect. On the contrary, Montanism was, simply, a reaction of the old, primitive church against the obvious tendency of the day - to strike a bargain with the world and arrange herself comfortably in it."

## BAPTISTS – WHO ARE THEY????

Lesson 18.....BAPTISTS – THEIR CONTINUANCE.....3<sup>rd</sup> Century

Continuing in our series of the EMERGING Church, we will follow the three-fold outline become in our last lesson – (1) The THRONG {the People}; (2) The THREATS {the Problems}; and (3) The THREAD {the Precepts}.

### "The EMERGING Church - 3<sup>rd</sup> Century"

Dr. Peter Ruckman, Bible Baptist Church, Pensacola, Florida is the author of a two volume set entitled, "The History of the New Testament Church." Among Baptists, Dr. Ruckman is either LOVED or HATED by most. But, his scholarship in these books is unquestionably valuable and filled with both the events of history but also INSIGHTS that are invaluable. He offers the following as insight into what he calls "the cycle" of church history:

"The cycle goes like this: (1) *Preaching*, which may be called 'Evangelism'; (2) *Teaching*, which may be called, 'Education'; (3) *Culture*, which means the introduction of science, philosophy, and tradition into the teaching; (4) *Apostasy*, which includes ecumenical overtures (compromise) with pagan religious systems or unsaved people; (5) *Paganism*, which means the original condition the populace was in before they were 'evangelized'."

Dr. Ruckman continues with an interesting format that seems to reoccur throughout church history:

"(1) *A Man*, this involves the preaching and evangelization; (2) *A Movement*, this involves the setting up of teaching facilities and institutions; (3) *A Machine*, this involves regimentation and patterning the system after the world's system of education (colleges and universities); (4) *A Monument*, this means the Holy Spirit has departed, abandoning the institution to paganism: discipline and academic standards are substituted for the liberty and power of the Holy Spirit; (5) *Materialism*, there is no shred of the movement left." He goes on to point out the following, "This circular pattern will explain what happened to European Christianity between 100-300 A.D.; what happened to the German Reformation between 1500-1800 A.D; what happened to the English Awakening between 1600-1800 A.D.; and what has happened to American Christianity between 1900-1990 A.D."

The author of these lessons wholeheartedly agree with Dr. Ruckman's assessment of history and the trend continues today into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Sad, but true! This information should prove to be very helpful as we proceed through these centuries of time and we see the continuance of the church that Jesus built and how wonderfully God protected His precepts and His people.

I. The THRONG – The Roman Empire was still spreading during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century. One historian notes that much of the persecution of the early Christians was "mainly local, sporadic, and more often the result of mob action than the result of definite civil policy." However, it is clear that this was done with the knowledge of the government primarily as they began to see that this new aggressive Christianity was not so much a part of the passive Judaism which they saw as no threat.

There was a variety of Roman emperors who ruled in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century and many were themselves passive about persecuting the Christians. The ones who were the most prominent in the time frame are:

- A. Caracalla (211-217 A.D.) He passed no new laws about Christianity but allowed the persecution to continue.
- B. Heliogabalus (218-222 A.D.) He was a vile worshipper of the Syrian "sun-god" but tolerated other religions hoping to merge them into his own.
- C. Maximinus (235-238 A.D.) Having assassinated his predecessor, Alexander Severus, and because of severe earthquakes which he blamed on the Christians, severe persecution ensued.
- D. Philip (244-249 A.D.) Like his predecessor, Gordian III, he left the churches alone which prompted many Christians to look at Christianity replacing paganism which was perhaps an early version of post-millennialism.
- E. Decius Trajan (249-251 A.D.) The peace did not last long and in 250 A.D., he issued an edict to eliminate Christianity altogether. The persecution was so intense that many "nominal Christians" recanted, many fled, and many were martyred. Among the Churches, a problem arose about what to do with those who "lapsed" when they wanted to come back to the church prompting what is so called the "Novatian Schism."
- F. Gallienus (260-268 A.D.) He led a long list of rulers who allowed Christianity to continue untouched making it a "legitimate religion." However, this led to several changes:
  - 1. "Nominal Christians" were accepted into the churches.
  - 2. Many churches became prosperous.
  - 3. Large, expensive church buildings were built.
  - 4. The ordinances became sacramental.
  - 5. Church discipline was lax.
  - 6. Quarrels and schisms were frequent.
  - 7. Spirituality was replaced by worldliness.
- G. Dicoletian (284-305 A.D.) We will look further at him in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century study.

II. The THREATS – The church like America in WW II fought the war on two (2) fronts. While churches were facing the persecution at the hands of the Roman Empire – Outwardly, they also had to fight the problem of heresy – Inwardly. Previously, we noted that the plan of Satan was to (1) *Kill the Christians* and then (2) *Destroy the Scriptures*, now he embarks on a more subtle plan to **Change the Scriptures**. Remember that the Syrian "*Peshito*" (all the New Testament books) was available and apparently widely circulated among the churches. A Latin translation called the "Italia Biblia" was being used by the churches in northern Italy and southern Europe. As already seen, as Christianity was "accepted", changes had already begun but the greatest threats were as follows:

- A. Church Officers – The N.T. church was led by a pastor, bishop, or elder being aided by the deacons (diakonoi – servants), but in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, some bishops rose to become "archbishops" and classes and sub-classes of offices were developed. Cyprian (200-256 A.D.) led the charge teaching "a priesthood of sacrificial works" and officially declared the doctrine of "The Church" outside which is no salvation.
- B. Church Government – The result of the change on Biblical teaching of church government was the rise of an ecclesiastical system which necessitated a headquarters and the idea of a "catholic" (universal) church which rose from a confusion of the "kingdom of God" and the "church of God." Because the church at Rome was one of the great churches, it became the natural place to house this hierarchy.
- C. Church Discipline – A class of Christians called "Penitents" – those who had been excommunicated but now wished reinstatement with contrition were allowed to come back into the church after certain punishments were appointed. This was the forerunner of the doctrine of "penance." Also, it was here that the two types of sin came into being – *venial* meaning trivial and *mortal* meaning deadly.
- D. Church Worship – Special days were set aside for fasting, etc and even seasons were identified such as Lent – at first voluntary but later mandatory. The church buildings followed the design of the Roman basilica and certain sections were designated for certain groups.
- E. Church Ordinances – Both Baptism and the Lord's Supper underwent changes in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century. Baptism which had always been as an act of obedience soon became the vehicle of conveying grace and forgiveness. "Clinic Baptism" came out of the African churches. Three names surfaced for the Lord's Supper in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century: (1) Agape which means a "love feast" where a meal was shared but even I Cor. 11 reveals that excesses were imminent; (2) Eucharist, meaning "thanks", (while a good name) because of the idea of sacramentalism, the simplicity and purity of the supper was violated; and (3) Mass – though the actual practice as it is today came later, the practice then was to dismiss the unbaptized before the supper was celebrated.
- F. Church Doctrines – What we believe as Christians comes from God's Word. Keep in mind the plan of Satan was to *Change the Scriptures*. Paul warned in Col. 2:8 to beware of man's philosophies. Remember Ruckman's five-fold cycle – in about 185 A.D. in Alexandria, Egypt an apostate Jewish/Greek thinker, Philo, began a school (a liberal arts type school with a religious branch). It was here that the perverted line of false Bibles had their beginnings. The purpose of the religious school was to systematize the study of theology. The path of literal interpretation of the Bible soon took an allegorical path allowing for pre-conceived ideas of men to determine meanings. The works of two men – Origen and Clement of Alexandria – led the **charge of change**. The early education and so called "deep thinking" of such men led them to "ever seek hidden meanings... which did much harm to the cause of correct interpretation of Scriptures and resulted in absurd and often unscriptural theological ideas." Origen's most noted deed was to preserve a group of "Bible" manuscripts which collectively have been called the "Alexandrian Text." (Note – almost all perversions of the Bible come from this text.)

# BAPTISTS – WHO ARE THEY????

## Lesson 19.....BAPTISTS – THEIR CONTINUANCE.....4th Century

The 4<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Century stand out as perhaps the most important centuries in regards to events that are pivotal in the history of God's people. According to *Christianity Today*, by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> Century (400 A.D.), approximately 19% of the then known world was considered Christian; of that number 64% were non-white and 36% white; approximately 39% of the world had been touched with the Gospel; the Scriptures had been translated into eleven (11) languages; and since 33 A.D., there had been almost 2 million martyrs.

It is essential that we remember that during the first 4 centuries, the church that Jesus had built was still going on without a name per se. As seen in past lessons, movements carried the names of the men who led them (Montanus and Novatian). However, it is also noteworthy that while the "germ" of the Roman Catholic Church was coming to life, there was no such church as yet. This is in spite of the Catholic's claim that Peter was the first Pope.

We will continue to follow the outline – The THRONG; The THREATS; and The THREAD.

I. The THRONG – We might do well to refer back to our Lesson # 15 where we saw how the seven church of Revelation forecast the church age:

At Ephesus	-	Rome tolerates the church	(33 – 99 A.D.)
At Smyrna	-	Rome persecutes the church	(100 – 313 A.D.)

In the 4<sup>th</sup> Century we see a great shift:

At Pergamos	-	Rome accepts the church	(313-590 A.D.)
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Also, remember that when we speak of "Rome" we are referring to the Roman Empire with its heathen rulers. The following list gives us some of the major players in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century.

- A. Diocletian – He ruled from 284 – 305 A.D. Seems like the devil saved "his best for last" since under this wicked ruler, three (3) edicts were issued against the Christians as we will see later.
- B. Maximilian – A co-regent of Diocletian issued an edict also, but mainly was responsible for carrying out the first three. He died in 310 A.D.
- C. Galerius – He was the son-in-law of Diocletian and was known as a cruel and fanatical heathen. He died in 311 A.D.
- D. Constantine – Called the "Great" (a name given by himself) is perhaps the main man in the history of this time period. He ruled from 312-337 A.D. More about him later.

III. The THREAD – It seems that often the "thread" of pure New Testament Christianity was slim, but thank the Lord, it never ceased to be. As we have seen, the trend toward Catholicism was swiftly taking place, yet there were still those who held to the truths taught and practiced the apostles and the early church. Most notable in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century was a man named Novatius or Novatian. In the mid 3<sup>rd</sup> Century, the pastor of the church at Rome, Fabian, died and there was a strong desire to have Novatian succeed him. However, two things stood in the way: (1) there was some evidence that while deathly ill, Novatian had submitted to "clinic" baptism therefore did not have Biblical baptism; (2) but more important was his strong stance on church discipline. Those who, because of severe persecution, had denied the faith and according to Novatian should not be allowed back into the church. The controversy led to Cornelius being installed as pastor of the church at Rome since he was more "lax" in his discipline ideas. This resulted in a schism as Novatian withdrew and began to form independent congregations who were called Novatianists and these churches existed well into the 5<sup>th</sup> Century. Both good and evil came out of these events:

- A. The Evil – Those who opposed Novatian joined forces in what is called the "Roman Synod" which ruled that these new churches had no right to exist. A by-product of allowing the apostates back into the church led to the practice of "confessions" allowing the preachers to determine the validity and sincerity of those confessions. A council of 60 bishops called by Cornelius in 251 A.D. voted to excommunicate Novatian.
- B. The Good – Because of the courage on the part of those who believed in the purity of church membership, the practice of church discipline, and the stance on baptism, these Novatianists carried the banner of the New Testament church in a dark time. Some say that these were the first to be called "Anabaptist" meaning rebaptizers. Strangely, another named was adopted by these people – they called themselves "Puritans."

It would seem clear that in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century a stout contest ensued between the traditions of men and the authority of Scripture. Thomas Armitage in "The History of Baptists" writes:

"Thus, by the close of the third century we have the absurdity of Baptism regenerating the soul, and the Supper feeding it, an episcopacy with which is lodged eternal life, a 'Catholic Church' outside of which all are heretics, and no salvation out of the church."

Another interesting item surfaced in researching the Novatians – a brand of Independent Baptists which exists yet today in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Mosheim, the great Lutheran historian, states,

"This sect cannot be charged with having corrupted the doctrine of Christianity by their opinions; their crime was that by unreasonable severity of their discipline they gave occasion to the most deplorable divisions, and made an unhappy rent in the church." It would seem that Mosheim is pointing out the mean-spiritedness of many today who split hairs about non-essentials of practices of believers. Another historian, Milner, eludes to this as he writes,

".....that the Novatians were the most respectable of all the dissenting churches; notwithstanding, he complains much of their narrow bigotry in things of no moment" (italics mine).

II. The THREATS – The threats of the 4<sup>th</sup> Century are best studied by the men who engineered them.

A. Diocletian – He became emperor at a time when Rome had eased up on Christians, but, because of the influence of pagan priests, he issued three (3) edicts on Feb. 24, 303 A.D. – (1) Christian buildings were to be pulled down; (2) Bibles and Christian writings were burned; and (3) All civil rights of Christians were forfeited. These eight years of some of the most sadistic and severe persecution affected Christianity in many ways. Two stand out: (1) Some Christians began to idolize those who gave their lives for the cause of Christ. Some survived the persecution and were called “Confessors” and were thought to have some special prayer powers; (2) Relics of the day, even the remains of some of the martyrs, became objects of worship.

Armitage tells of the extreme superstitions that came about – (1) the bones of Stephen being found and miraculous healings taking place while many made huge sums of money for the showing of the relics and remains. The bodies of Luke, Andrew, and Joseph of Arimathea were also found and revered. The most outstanding find was by Constantine’s mother who claimed to have found the actual cross on which Jesus had died.

B. Constantine – Under his rulership, the devil introduced a 4<sup>th</sup> device – Change the NATURE of the Church. Constantine was however the child of a Christian mother but rejected her faith until 311 A.D. when he supposedly saw a “flaming cross” in the sky and a sign which read “In hoc signo vinces” meaning “By this sign, conquer!” In 313 A.D., he issued the *Edict of Milan* which was to open the flood gate for major changes in Christianity.

1. Christianity was made the “State Religion” – The marriage had taken place and the results were swift and dramatic:
  - a. Christianity became a political force – “The religion supported the government and the government enforced the religion.”
  - b. Pastors were paid by the state from tax money and were exempt from military service.
  - c. Churches were filled with unbelievers as it was the “in-thing” to be a Christian. Slaves were freed if they agreed to be baptized. Many were bribed into the church.
  - d. A new Bible was authorized. A bishop named Eusebius (often called “the Father of Church History”) was assigned the task of producing this new Bible and 50 copies were to be done on the finest vellum. A man named Jerome was ordered to revise the *Itala Biblia* (the Latin Bible) which was completed in 382 A.D. – it is called the “*Vulgate*.” The new Bible however was corrupt as the Alexandrian scholarship was incorporated into it. It was at this point that the two streams of Biblical texts are evident in translations that are still effecting us today. They are often called (1) The Antiochian and (2) The Alexandrian texts.

e. The central government of both church and state were moved to a new city renamed Constantinople (today’s Istanbul).

2. Christianity was married to paganism – As unbelievers came into the church, they were allowed to bring with them their pagan gods and practices. The pagan mother-child worship of Fortuna/Jupiter was changed to the mother-child worship of Mary/Jesus.

3. Christianity became “Creedal” – An informal creed called “the Apostle’s Creed” had surfaced and was read by many churches in Europe and Asia and was pretty sound in doctrine. But because of a heresy which denied the Deity of Christ (called Arianism which is still held by the Jehovah Witnesses today) a council was called by Constantine in Nicene in 325 A.D. 318 bishops (pastors) attended and the result was the Nicene Creed – a formal, official document – which revealed the subtle changes in the nature of the church:

- a. The phrase – “one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church” thus giving approval of a church hierarchy.
- b. The phrase – “one Baptism for the remission of sins” thus declaring the universal doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Later in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century, the practice of infant baptism began. Constantine was baptized in May 337 A.D. shortly before his death in order that ALL his past sins could be wiped away in one moment.

These councils and synods were to become the main inroad to controlling the churches and the place where doctrines were espoused and birthed. Now that Christianity was the state church, these unBiblical doctrines and practices could be enforced as law. Christians who had been persecuted by the Roman EMPIRE would soon be persecuted by the Roman CHURCH. In the mid 4<sup>th</sup> Century, many church historians state that the “Dark Ages” had their beginning and would last for 1,000 years.

III. The THREAD - Recall the Novatians of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century objected to the lack of purity in the church and the laxity of church discipline. Now in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century with the official state church taking form, would anyone object to this “ecclesiastical authority?” Thankfully, God always has a man! No doubt, many of the churches resented and resisted the marriage of church and state, but a man named Donatus, a North African bishop became the main leader of the schism. The schism arose mainly as a result of the call of a new pastor at the church in Carthage, North Africa. Felix, a traditores, (See Lesson # 16 Item 20) consecrated a new bishop named Caecilian. Felix was believed to be an unworthy consecrator and this resulted in another group consecrating their own bishop named Majorinus. He died in 315 A.D. and Donatus was chosen to be the new pastor at Carthage. Thus two churches now existed – (1) The Catholic church pastored by Caecilian and (2) the Independent church pastored by Donatus. A pattern began – the pattern of believers separating from apostate churches. That pattern still continues today.

W.A. Jarrel in his book *"Baptist Church Perpetuity"* states,

"The Donatist controversy was a conflict between separatism and Catholicism; between ecclesiastical purism and ecclesiastical eclecticism (whatever best suits you); between the idea of the church as an exclusive community of regenerate saints and the idea of the church as the general Christendom of state and people. It revolved around the doctrine of the essence of the Christian Church, and in particular, of the predicate of holiness."

Dr. L.L. Clover in "Baptist History" said,

"The church government of the Donatist was substantially the same as that of the Baptist of our own time. We clearly trace among them the polity of the Apostolic and Baptist church. Independence of the hierarchy was universally maintained and no higher authority than the local church was acknowledged. In the first centuries of the Christian era, each church founded by the disciples had a unity and an independence of its own."

The Donatists suffered great persecution and were the first to suffer at the hands of the state/church. In 347 A.D. an all out war was launched against them called "The Macarean War" and for the next 42 years, they were hunted down, murdered or banished. In 377 A.D., Gratian published edicts against them depriving them of their buildings and forbidding them to assemble. Yet, by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> Century, their teachings had spread abroad to Italy and Spain. In 354 A.D., a birth took place in Tagaste, Numidia (Algeria) of a man called Augustine who would play a major role in the continued persecution of Christians as we will see in the next lesson.

## BAPTISTS – WHO ARE THEY????

### Lesson 20.....BAPTISTS – THEIR CONTINUANCE.....5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Century

In our previous lesson, we spoke of the Lord always having a man and in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century, we briefly looked at the man, Donatus, who was the man for that era standing true to the principles and practices of the New Testament church. Unfortunately, not only does the Lord have a man but so does the devil. We mentioned a man named Augustine, usually called Augustine of Hippo. He would play a major role in the continuing evolution of the Catholic church through his theological writings. In this lesson, we will get just a glimpse of some of his teachings and doctrines. Also, recall we mentioned that the "Dark Ages" had begun and would last for almost a millennium. The Catholic church now had official recognition by the Roman government; it had its own Bible – the Vulgate; and its own bishops which would soon lead to its first Pope.

- I. The THRONG – It was during the 5<sup>th</sup> Century that the Roman Empire failed. Numerous bands of what history calls "Barbarians" who actually were of various flavors – Visigoths, Vandals, Burgundians, Franks, Saxons & Angles, and Huns. Since Constantine had moved his headquarters to Constantinople, it had become the main point of the Eastern Empire while Rome was emerging as the headquarters of the Western Empire. Eventually, you had the Roman Catholic Church in the West and the Greek Orthodox Church in East. As the empire crumbled, it provided a perfect scenario for a religious/political leader to take center stage. The Council of Nicene had paved the way for the coming "papacy." Councils and synods would now be used for the formulation of the doctrines of the "great whore" such as the Council of Ephesus which ascribed primacy over the Catholic church to the bishop of Rome.
- II. The THREATS – Like an old time "Gatling Gun" in the late 1860s, multiple shots were fired in these two centuries which we can only mention briefly.
  - A. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 A.D.) – As previously mentioned, he would play an important role in the development of the doctrines of the Catholic church. Church historians differ whether or not he was a true believer but they all agree that he had a brilliant mind and was able to systematize teachings and religious dogma. Three things stand out:
    1. "Augustine thought that the dead must be saved by water in this world (baptism) or by fire in the next. The case of the thief on the cross perplexed him sorely. He could have gone to purgatory. Augustine found some relief in the thought, that no one knew that he had not been baptized beforehand (that is before he was on the cross)." One writer, Hare, stated that Augustine had a "morbid tendency" to 'twist and warp the simplest facts, to wrench and distort the plainest declarations of Scripture.'

2. A British preacher named Pelegius believed in free will – that man was a free, moral agent and must make his own choices for right or wrong, but he carried it so far that he believed some could overcome sin and merit salvation. Augustine took issue with him taking predestination to the extreme by saying that those not predestined were created for the express purpose of being damned to Hell. You might recognize the early seeds of Armenianism and Calvinism. Calvinists today often quote Augustine.

3. The Council of Carthage in 401 A.D. issued a canon declaring that infants should be baptized. Fifteen years later at the Council of Mela in 416 A.D., presided over by Augustine established *by law* “infant baptism.”

B. Monasticism – The movement of men and women into a seclude lifestyle for religious purposes. This developed into three stages:

1. Asceticism – This was the practice of self-denial of physical needs in order to give attention to spiritual concerns.
2. Anchoretism – These were the “hermits” who lived the desert in order to live a better Christian life.
3. Cloister Life – These are the monks who chose to gather together in monasteries that they might grow in love, devotion to God through prayer, reading, singing, and exercise of obedience. This movement later became an institution of the Roman Catholic Church and remains so today.

C. The Papacy – Many Baptists disagree about who the first Pope was. For our study, we will take the position that the first real Pope was Leo I also called Leo the Great. In 451 A.D. the Council of Chalcedon declared that Leo as the Bishop of Rome was “*the successor of Peter, the Chief of Apostles, and the Vicar of Christ.*” During the 5<sup>th</sup> Century there were at least five Popes and at one time two Popes served at the same time. Thirteen Popes served in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century but the one most notable was Gregory I or Gregory the Great (590-604 A.D.). He was the first “monk” to become a Pope. Two things stand out in his reign:

1. The Organization of the Papal Government as it exists pretty much today.
2. The Evangelization of Britain – Seeing some fair headed slaves (Angles) being sold in Rome, he sent Augustine (of all people) to evangelize these people in England. He baptized Ethlebert, the Saxon king, which was the beginning of the Romanism of England. Later, Augustine was consecrated as “The Bishop of England.” This took place in the late 6<sup>th</sup> Century (596-597 A.D.).

D. The Major Apostasies of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Centuries:

- |                                     |                             |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Worship of relics                | 2. Infant Baptism           |
| 3. Candle lighting for the dead     | 4. Celibacy of clergy       |
| 5. Worship of the Eucharist         | 6. Prayer to the saints     |
| 7. Observance of Lent (forced fast) | 8. Prayers for the dead     |
| 9. Purgatory                        | 10. Bible reading forbidden |
| 11. Auricular Confession            | 11. Veneration of Mary      |

III. The THREAD – The Donatists were still a major influence for true Christianity in spite of the persecution especially at the hands of Augustine who was said to “hate them.” But, in Asia Minor many churches still existed as result of the Apostles and in Armenia there were many from whose roots would come the missionary minded Paulicians (studied in a later lesson). However, the most interesting “thread” is found in the person of a man named “Patrick.” The Saxons had invaded Britain driving the Angles (Anglos) into Wales. Before Augustine, before Leo, and before the rise of the Papacy, a young man was born in 387 A.D. along the banks of the River Clyde, in Roman Britain, now a part of Scotland. His father was a deacon in a Christian church and his grandfather a “presbyter” in the same church. At the age of 16 having ignored the spiritual teachings of his family, he was taken captive by pirates and taken to Ireland where he was sold to a chieftain and made a swine herder. After about 7 years of captivity, he escaped and made his way back to his home. He came to know the Lord and according to his testimony received a Divine Commission from the Lord and returned with 12 men back to Ireland in about 432 A.D. His first sermon was in a barn and later a church was built on the sight and called “Patrick’s Barn.” The building faced north and south and it never dawned on Patrick that a church had to face east and west in order for the sacraments to be effective (a Catholic teaching). Dr. J.A. Wylie in his book “*The History of the Scottish Nation*” wrote, “Patrick died near the place where he began his ministry, an old man and full of days. He did not perform miracles as his later biographers claim, except the conversion of an entire nation.”

Roman Catholicism has succeeded in laying claim, though a false one, to Patrick as one of their patron saints. But, Catholicism did not reach the Ireland for over 100 years after Patrick had begun to evangelize the Irish.

Like our previous lesson which closed with the mention of the birth a man (Augustine) who would play a major role in our studies, in 570 A.D. another man was born in Mecca who still plays an active part in our world today in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.



# BAPTISTS – WHO ARE THEY????

## Lesson 21.....BAPTISTS – THEIR CONTINUANCE.....7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, & 9<sup>th</sup> Century

Robert J. Sargent, in his book, “*Landmarks of Church History*” offers a three-fold division of Church history as follows:

- A. Primitive Church History
  - 1. Apostolic 0 -100 A.D.
  - 2. Post-Apostolic 100 – 300 A.D.
  - 3. Rise of Papacy 300 – 600 A.D.
  
- B. Medieval Church History
  - 1. Growth of Papacy 600 - 1100 A.D.
  - 2. Power of Papacy 1000 – 1300 A.D.
  - 3. Decline of Papacy 1300 – 1500 A.D.
  
- C. Modern Church History
  - 1. Reformation 1500 -1650 A.D.
  - 2. Development of Protestantism 1650 – 1900 A.D.
  - 3. Twentieth Century 1900 +

As we proceed in the section entitled “**Baptist – Their Continuance**”, it is necessary to combine centuries and to minimize some of the sections of study for the sake of teaching time. We will endeavor however to focus less on the **THRONG** and the **THREATS** and more on the **THREAD**.

Looking back briefly, we see at the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> Century (600-699 A.D.) that the Roman Catholic church has become fully organized and entrenched as the religious force of the then know world – primarily the Roman Empire which had begun to crumble from within.

- I. The **THRONG** – In Lesson # 15, we saw that the progression of Christendom would seem to follow a time line that coincides with the seven (7) churches of Revelation 2 and 3. The 4<sup>th</sup> time frame is 590 – 1517 A.D. – the church at Thyatira – where

### “Rome Controls the Church.”

Keep in mind the exceptions to that term “controls the church”, of course, were the Christians and groups who were still holding true to the New Testament principles of the Apostolic church. We know them as *Donatists*, *Montanists*, *Novations*, and soon as *Paulicians*.

At the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> Century, Catholicism was enjoying mostly unimpeded expansion in Asia, Asia Minor, the Near East, North Africa, and even into Eastern and Western Europe. But as mentioned in the close of our last lesson, a man was about to come on the scene who would play a major role in the religious world.

- II. The **THREATS** – Two men surface in this time frame who were instruments of expansion of their particular religious persuasions – Charlemagne and Mohammed.

- A. Mohammed (570 – 632 A.D.) – Orphaned at the age of 7 yrs, Mohammed traveled with caravans most of his early life. He married at age 25 (later he would take multiple wives) and in the year of 610 claimed to have had a revelation from Gabriel which began the transmission of the holy book called the Koran. Like most eccentric religious leaders, at first, he was rejected and fled in fear for his life. However, in 630, he led a band of Muslims against the Meccans who surrendered to him without a fight. While he died in 632, his followers (leaders were called caliphs) captured Jerusalem and spread their terror throughout the a huge portion of the empire. A Frenchmen named Charles Martel (meaning ‘hammer’) was able to defeat the Muslims and keep them from entering France in 732 A.D. Sargent in his book lists three (3) reasons for the rise of Islam:

- 1. The decline of the true church.
- 2. Lack of evangelistic zeal in the Arab peninsula.
- 3. The outlawing of the Paulicians by the Catholic church.

- B. Charlemagne (742-814 A.D.) – His father, Pepin, was a great military leader who to spread Catholicism in Germany. His son, Charles, the Great, (later called Charlemagne) with 52 military campaigns welded together an area of what is now Germany, France, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Belgium, Spain, and Italy for the Catholic church. He saw himself as a “protector of the papacy” and was crowned by the Pope on Christmas Day in 800 A.D. as “Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire.” Thus, there was then the “spiritual” arm (controlled by the Pope) and the “political” arm (controlled by the king) of the Roman Catholic Church. After his death, a system called feudalism developed which brought with it an unceasing struggle between the Popes and the kings for supremacy over the people and lands.

- III. The **THREAD** – God will not leave the world without a witness and during these centuries, that witness was known as the “Paulicians.”

- A. Their **HISTORY** – While the name did not come into use until the 7<sup>th</sup> Century, it is plain to see that the name identified them with holding to the truths of the Apostle Paul. One of their writings, a book called “*The Key Of Truth*” was discovered in 1891 which allowed us to know more about them. In the classic book, “*The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*,” Gibbons says that the faith of the Paulicians stem from the 1<sup>st</sup> Century and was a branch of Antiochan Christianity. These Paulicians were primarily located in the mountainous region called Armenia (where Mt. Ararat is). The amazing thing about their name was that it was given them by their enemies much like those in the Antioch church where “they were first called Christians.”

B. Their HEROES -- Several men stand out in their history.

1. Constantine -- In the mid-7<sup>th</sup> Century, he sheltered a Christian deacon who was fleeing from Islamic persecution. Constantine was involved in a questionable religion at the time. The deacon gave him a copy of the four (4) Gospels and the Epistles of Paul. Through the Scriptures, he was saved and joined the Bible believers in the region. Changing his name to Silvanus (after the companion of Apostle Paul -- I Thess. 1:1), he won many to Christ during his 27 years of service. His greatest dispute with the Catholics was that "he had the pure Word of God." His death was ordered by the emperor who sent Simeon to carry out the deed. Simeon ordered the Paulicians to stone their leader but they refused. Justus, Constantine's adopted son, finally carried out the sentence -- about 684-687 A.D.
2. Simeon -- Yep, you guessed it! This is the very man who was sent to kill Constantine. His conversion to Christ was called by the Catholics as "a clear case of demon possession." He changed his name to Titus and led the Paulicians for 3 years. Strangely, Justus became his accuser resulting in Simeon being burned alive with many of his followers. A Catholic writer said of Justus, he was a "highly privileged instrument of divine vengeance, whose name agrees with his deeds."
3. Sergius -- Sergius (later called Tychicus) was converted at a young age through the witness of a Paulician woman who encouraged him to study the Scriptures for himself without the aid of a priest. He began preaching around 810 A.D. and was a leader of the Paulicians for 34 years and was known as a traveling missionary. He said, "I have run from East to West, and from North to South, till my knees were weary, preaching the Gospel of Christ." He was martyred under the persecutions of the Empress Theodora in about 844 A.D. being cut in half with an axe.

Between the years of 842-867 A.D. over 100,000 Paulicians paid the supreme price for their faith in the cruelest of fashions -- beheadings, burnings, and drownings -- without pity. Three facts tell us of the great contribution these Paulicians made to the continuation of the true Christian faith: (1) The huge number martyred; (2) the extreme measures undertaken to destroy them; and (3) The depth of antagonism by their enemies in presenting extreme false accusations against them.

C. Their HABITS -- What did they believe? Until the discovery of the book "Key Of Truth" all we knew of their beliefs were from the writings of their enemies which was all bad. Here is a summary of their beliefs (habits):

1. They claimed to have originated with Christ and the Apostles.
2. They accepted the Word of God as their rule of faith.
3. They recognized and practiced believer's baptism.
4. They rejected "transubstantiation."
5. They rejected all forms of ceremonialism.
6. They rejected penance and thus the doctrine of purgatory.
7. They had no hierarchy, clerical officials, or associations.
8. They opposed all image worship.
9. They believed in holy living.

From the summary above, They sound like "Baptists to me!"

As mentioned previously about the depth of the antagonism of their enemies and the false accusations against them, we might conclude this lesson by listing a few:

1. They made cakes from meal and the blood of infants.
2. They conducted prayer meetings while naked.
3. They practiced incest.
4. They taught marriage was a sin, as bad as adultery or incest.

Thankfully, these were false. But, like so many Baptist churches today, there were undoubtedly errors. In fact, in the book "Key Of Truth" they show some leanings toward the universal church concept that is so prevalent today. Yet, we can be thankful for the great stand that these Bible believers took with a willingness to even give their lives for what they believed.

# BAPTISTS – WHO ARE THEY????

## Lesson 22.....BAPTISTS – THEIR CONTINUANCE...10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, & 12<sup>th</sup> Century

Prophetically, we are still in the age of the Thyatira Church (590-1517 A.D.) where Rome controls the church. During these three centuries, there is much history to study but so little time and space in these lessons. A warning – most church historians SUPPORT the Catholic perception of the church and it is well known that even in the U.S. the media presents the Catholic church as the “church” from which all others come from.

In this lesson, we will see three subjects which best describe the time frame – Schisms, Struggles, and Scholastics . As before, we will use the three fold outline – The THRONG; The THREATS; and the THREAD.

I. The THRONG – The lines were clearly drawn around this time frame with the Holy Roman Empire; the Eastern Orthodox Church; and the Islamic Movement – all attempting to spread their religions. The Roman church was having convulsions within (immorality and the practice of simony) which brought to the surface a man named Hildebrand who is called “The Reforming Pope” and assumed the name of Gregory VII (1073-185 A.D.). Through his efforts, he successfully “cleaned up the clergy” and established the papacy as independent from any secular power. However, because of his conflict with the rulers, many wars were fought and he was driven from Rome and died in exile (1085 A.D.). Another pope who played an important role in this time frame was Innocent III who was the first pope to claim to be the “Vicar of Christ.” In his inaugural address, he stated, “The successor of Peter stands midway between God and man; below God, above man; Judge of all, judged by none.”

II. The THREATS – It is here we will look briefly at the three “S’s” mentioned above.

A. Schisms – The breakup which led to the church at Roman church and the Greek church became official in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century and is called “The Schism of 1054.” Many differences existed between the two groups:

1. The Roman church (called the West) was more inclined to consider practical matters of polity and forming dogma (doctrines). The Greek church (East) was more interested in solving theological problems along philosophical lines.
2. The West practiced celibacy for all clergy while the East allowed all clergy under the rank of bishop to marry if they so chose to.
3. Disputes even arose over the growing of beards – the West could shave, but the East had to wear a beard. (Sounds like they would have made good Independent Baptists.)

4. The final straw was the “Schism of 1054” which was caused by the West’s use of “unleavened bread” in the Eucharist. The contention was so strong that on July 6, 1054, the patriarch of the Greek church and all his followers were excommunicated. The Patriarch, not to be outdone, pronounced an “anathema” on the pope and all his followers. Strangely, the mutual sentences remained in effect until Dec. 7, 1965 when removed by Pope Paul VI and Athenagoras.

B. The Struggles – Because of the spreading of Islam, the Roman church set forth to recapture lands taken especially Jerusalem. During the period called “The Crusades” there were seven (7) major crusades (the first began in 1099 A.D.) mounted – all financed by the extreme taxation by the Popes. It was during this time that many military and religious orders were formed including “The Templar Knights.” The Crusades lasted until the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> Century. One of the most important victories of the Crusades was that Europe was kept free from Islam. The Crusades were noted for extreme cruelty and savage butchery and some of the persecutions were against the Jews (who were called by the Catholics as the “killers of Christ”).

C. The Scholastics – During the 12<sup>th</sup> Century, a revival of a systematized theology was begun. Using the earlier writings of Augustine (354-430 A.D.), a Catholic dogma was formulated. Those involved in this multi-century endeavor were not “seeking” truth from Scripture, but rather seeking to organize a body of accepted truth so as to determine if it (truth) came *by faith from revelation or by reason from philosophy*. From this revival of so-called learning, schools, universities, and monasteries sprang up throughout the empire. Great cathedrals were built during this time as well. Time and space in this lesson does not allow for even mentioning the unScriptural religious atrocities that were penned, taught, and propagated by the Roman church during this time frame. One historian (non-Baptist) states of this time, “God used the Roman Catholic church to further His own ends in spite of its failure at so many points when it is compared with the true church, depicted in the New Testament.” This historian is offering great credence to the time of “Scholastics” which may not be deserved.

III. The THREAD – In our last lesson, we briefly looked at the group of Christians called the “Paulicians” and we saw that they were very “Baptistic” in their beliefs. We must here remind the reader that while none of these Christian groups were called Baptists, yet the principles of the Apostolic church and the Baptists of today are amazingly similar is not exactly the same. In Western Europe in the early 11<sup>th</sup> Century another group is seen. This group is called “The Catharist Group.” The word, cathari, means “pure” and these people were given the name because of their holy lifestyle. Four particular groups are noteworthy:

A. Petrobrussians – This group was named after Peter de Bruys (c.1104-26 A.D.) and was based in France. The name was given to them by the Catholics who listed the following “heresies” of the group: (1) They taught believer’s baptism and rebaptism of those who joined them from the Catholic church; (2) they opposed the adoration of images and rejected the uses of the cross; (3) they denied transubstantiation; (4) and rejected prayers for the dead. **And all the Baptists said, AMEN!**

- B. Henricians – The successor to Peter de Bruys was Henry of Lausanne, Switzerland. He was best known for his fiery street preaching as one historian said of his preaching, “women of loose morals repented and young men were persuaded to marry them.” His stand against the rituals and vices of the Catholic church led to him being starved to death in prison.
- C. Albigenes – Their name came from the town, Albi, where the center of their worship activity was. Because of their doctrine and practice of New Testament Christianity – pastor led congregations; rejection of infant baptism; and accepting Scripture over tradition, they paid a high price at the hands of their persecutors. Two Catholic councils condemned them as heretics and in one crusading battle in the town of Beziers, almost 20,000 people were slain at the orders of the papal legate who said, “kill them all, the Lord know His own.”
- D. Waldenses – There is some question about the founding of this group. Some say that they sprang from a wealthy, converted Catholic merchant in Lyon, France named Peter Waldo. No doubt, he was a great leader among them with an especially strong love and stand for the Scriptures. In fact, he had the Bible translated into his own native language. But, the consensus is that this group may date back to the 4<sup>th</sup> Century. The name may have come from the Italian word, valdesi, or the French word, vaudois, both meaning “valley” because of the region where they resided. None the less, their doctrines were purely Biblical and naturally anti-Catholic. There is strong evidence that it was this group who would play a major role in the Divine preservation of God’s Word. Persecutions were frequent and severe from 1179 A.D. when the “Poor Men of Lyon” (a group headed by Peter Waldo) were forbidden to preach without permission of the Catholic clergy. Persecution is recorded even into the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. The Waldenses still exist today in many cities in Italy but sadly fell into the Protestant camp and now are known to be Pedobaptists (infant baptizers).

A Quaker poet, Whittier, penned the following tribute to these Waldenses saints:

“O, lady fair, I have yet a gem, which a purer luster flings  
 Than the diamond flash of jeweled crown on the lofty brow of kings;  
 A wonderful pearl of exceeding price, whose virtue shall not decay,  
 Whose light shall be as a spell to thee and a blessing on thy way.  
 The cloud went off from the pilgrim’s brow as a small, meager book,  
 Unchased with gold or gem of cost, from his folding robe he took.  
 Her, lady fair, is the pearl of price, may it prove as much to thee.  
 Nay, keep thy gold, I ask it not, for the word of God is free.”

## BAPTISTS – WHO ARE THEY????

Lesson 23.....BAPTISTS – THEIR CONTINUANCE.....13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> Century

In this section of study, I have relied on many authors much smarter and wiser than I, but I have learned that the dates, events, and personalities involved in “church history” are difficult to nail down EXACTLY. What I have determined to do in these studies is to try to give an overview of the whole with a few details of each century that seem to be the most interesting and applicable. Until you venture into an in depth study of “church history” you never realize what an awesome task it is. I am not as interested in those groups and peoples who seem to occupy most of the space in church historian’s writings, but rather those who are seldom mentioned and little known for it is these who are the “torch bearers” for New Testament Christianity and the forefathers of the Baptist faith.

We will continue to follow the outline of (1) The THRONG; (2) The THREATS; and (3) The THREAD.

- I. The THRONG – The Holy Roman Empire during this span of time was in a downward spiral though it was a slow decline. We might do well to recall a past lesson (#18) where we saw Dr. Ruckman’s excellent insight to the stages of church history – (1) PREACHING; (2) TEACHING; (3) CULTURE; (4) APOSTASY; and (5) PAGANISM. The early church had strayed so far from New Testament principles that there had been the birth of the Roman church which now saw itself as the “true” church. But now, it is beginning to decline for for several reasons:
  - A. The Failure of the Clergy – With the rise in “clergy power” came corruption of morals. The edict of “celibacy” was doing a number on men who had natural instincts for physical relations with women. Many priests indulged in concubines and illicit sexual affairs with women in their congregations. (Note: Today, we have witnessed a shocking number of priests who have been involved in pedophilia and homosexuality.)
  - B. The Failure of the Papacy – The papacy scene shifted to France with many of the popes being French. These popes were weak morally and became subjugated to the French kings. Another factor was the increase of financial requirements placed upon the people for the welfare of the church, especially the papacy.
  - C. The Rise of Nation-States – What had been the Holy Roman Empire was slowly becoming “unholy” and filled with many “holes” as the people joined together as nation- states opposed to the “sovereign” rule of the pope over them. This led to a strong defiance of papal authority.

- D. The Rise of Mysticism – If you recall in Lesson # 22, we spoke of the “Scholastics” where people judged truth by reason rather than by faith. Now the pole has swung to the other extreme – mysticism. One well-known mystic of the era was Catherine of Siena who claimed that God spoke to her in visions and she always used these visions for good, practical purposes. Even today, we see the same mysticism with people seeing the virgin Mary on pieces of bread, in clouds, or other strange mediums.

This era is a part of what we call “The Dark Ages” and indeed it was a dark time. You must remember that the Bible had been taken from the people and is it any wonder that it was dark because it is God’s Word that gives LIGHT – Ps. 119:130.

- II. The THREATS – When things are going wrong, what do most people do????????? If your answer is *look for someone to blame*, you are “right on.” That is exactly what the Roman church did. Lateran (meaning the residence of the Pope) councils were called by several popes. These councils were generally called to confirm and establish the teachings of the “church” many of which were already believed and practiced but not made official. Out of these councils however came indictments against those who did not agree with their teachings. One such was the Council of Toulouse in 1229 which called for the extermination of the Albigenses. In 1232, under Pope Gregory IX, the first of three general “Inquisitions” was authorized. The word, inquisition, means “to inquire.” However, the purpose was to identify, hunt down, and do away with the heretics. Remember, we had previously mentioned the formulation of religious orders – Dominican, Franciscan, Jesuits, etc. These inquisitors were part of these groups and these horrors of the persecutions brought by them should not only make us weep, cause us anger, and make us sober to serve God in face of such hatred. Two more “Inquisitions” (Spanish–1478 and Roman-1542) were added to this which precipitated many thousands of torturous deaths of Bible believing Christians. Yet, today, in the Roman Catholic Church, there is an “Office of Inquisition.”

- III. The THREAD – The Abligenses and the Waldenses were still thriving even in the midst of severe persecution. The seeds of what was to become the “Reformation” was sown in this era. Three men stand out:

- A. Arnold of Brescia – Arnold is perhaps one of the classic cases of a “puritan” since he, being a “Catholic”, attempted to purify it while remaining a part of the church. While his actions were commendable, yet, he failed to “come out from among them” as we still see many do today. He did have a following named, “Arnoldists”, who joined with the Catharist movement. Eventually, he was excommunicated by the Lateran Council II and later was hanged, burned and his ashes were spread over the Tiber River.

- B. Walter Lollard – In 1315, he began a great ministry of preaching and brought revival to the Albigenses. The Lutheran historian, Mosheim, remarked that Lollard was a “Dutchman, and was a chief among the *Beghards*, or ‘brethren of the free spirit’.” His ministry ended in 1320 when he was burnt, but the truths he taught and lived produced a document called “*The Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards*” in which he refutes twelve (12) heresies of the Roman church. This document has been preserved in its original English form.

- C. John Wycliff (c1320-1384) – Wycliff came under the influence of the Lollards early in his ministry later becoming one of their leaders. He is often called “The Morning Star of the Reformation.” He was an Englishman educated at Oxford University graduating around 1350 A.D. He may well be likened to a “pit bull” because in 1377 he sent a list of 19 heresies to Pope Gregory XI who excommunicated him and issued five (5) “papal bulls” against him. That only intensified Wycliffe’s opposition to Rome. His greatest contribution however was that he wanted to get the Bible into the hands of the people. This led him to give the world the first English translation of the Bible. He suffered a stroke while preaching on Dec.28, 1384 and died 3 days later.

One of the best evidences of a man’s testimony and effectiveness is seen from his enemies. Several of Wycliffe’s friends were burned at the stake with Bibles hung around their necks. The Synod of Oxford in 1408 forbade the reading of Wycliffe’s Bible. In 1428, 44 years after his death, Pope Martin V ordered that Wycliffe’s bones be exhumed, judged, condemned, burnt, and scattered in the River Swift. His influence was so lasting among the Lollards that ten (10) years after his death that if you met two men on the street in England, one of them was a Lollard.

What a great heritage we have!

# BAPTISTS – WHO ARE THEY????

## Lesson 24.....BAPTISTS – THEIR CONTINUANCE.....15<sup>th</sup> Century

In our section called “Baptist – Their Continuance”, we have three lessons left including this one. We are approaching a time when the name “Baptist” was about to surface. We also see the seeds sprouting that would bring the “Protestant Reformation” in Europe. It must be noted and stated however that those who held to New Testament principles and practices were NEVER a part of the “Reformation.” Those who are known as “reformers” were right and just in attempting to correct the heresies of the Catholic church, but the sad truth is that when they parted from her, they brought with them two (2) of the most serious heresies – baptismal regeneration and infant baptism.

We are about to close out the section called the “Medieval Church History” – 600 – 1500 A.D. which closes with the “Decline of the Papacy.”

- I. The THRONG – As previously stated, the Roman church was busy with their councils where they were attempting to solidify their doctrines, teachings, and traditions. During the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, four(4) of these councils are noteworthy revealing the internal strife among them.
  - A. The Council of Pisa (1409) – The period of 1378-1447 is known as the “Great Schism” of the papacy. In 1378, a new pope was elected, an Italian, who took the name, Urban VI. Because of his insolence toward the cardinals who had elected him, they elected another pope, Clement VII, a Frenchman. Thus, the Council of Pisa was called hoping to depose both popes, but alas, a third pope was elected named, Alexander V. (I’m trying hard not to laugh as I write this because we Baptists have done the same thing – hence all the fellowships with our own Popes.) Three (3) terms were used to describe these three serving popes – (1) *Pope*, the one at Rome; (2) *Anti-Pope*, the one at Avignon; and (3) *Counter-pope*, the 3<sup>rd</sup> one. Interestingly, Alexander was replaced by John XXIII, but since he was not legitimate, in 1958, Pope John was elected and he is called John XXIII. How’s that for Catholic trivia?
  - B. The Council of Constance (1414-1418) – This council was called to correct the failure of the one at Pisa and also to deal with the reforming spirits caused by Wycliffe and John Huss (discussed later in this lesson). The results were that all three popes were deposed and Martin V was elected. Also, John Huss was tried and condemned as a heretic.
  - C. The Council of Basel & Florence (1431-1449) These two councils actually produced nothing other than an end to most councils. Because of a plague, the council at Basel was moved to Florence. Attempts were made to unite the Eastern(Greek) and Western (Roman) churches, but it failed. It was however successful in declaring the “Seven Sacraments” as official in the Roman church. One writer stated,

“Although the reforming councils had failed in the attempt to set up a constitutional monarchy in the Roman church, they had saved it from the disorder of the Great Schism. The lack of success in securing effective reform destroyed the last chance of reform of the Roman Catholic church within by mystics, reformers, or councils. From this time the Protestant Reformation became inevitable.”

- II. The THREATS – In our earlier studies, here, we focused on what was happening to the Bible believers – *persecution*. It is important, however, at this time to point out the threats to the Roman church which led to the Reformation and following events that would set the stage for an expansion of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We will focus our attention on four (4) particular items.
  - A. The Renaissance – This was NOT a spiritual movement, but it plays a vital part in the furtherance of the Christian faith in several ways. The dates are generally said to be from 1350 to 1650 although it was not called the Renaissance until about 1854. The term describes a “revival of learning.” The “Scholastics” and the “Mystics” had run their course in the Dark Ages and now light was springing up. The Roman church had done its best to keep men in darkness by making intellectualism an exclusive matter of the clergy. That was about to change. Because of the Crusades, the world was open to travel and exposure to other cultures. During this time frame, men desired to search out new lands and exploration of unknown lands began (Columbus, Magellan, etc.) Another important element of this era was the “Fall of Constantinople” in 1453 at which time many ancient writings and manuscripts were discovered including Greek texts of the Bible. There was a great increase in the desire for learning and writing which about to get an injection that would forever change the world.
  - B. The Invention of the Printing Press – The darkness of Romanism had been shattered by the rebirth of learning but still most people had little or no access to writings even the Word of God. But Hans Gensfleisch invented a movable type printing and began to publish books – the first being the Latin Vulgate Bible. By the way, Hans is better known by his family name - Johann Gutenberg. The revival of learning, the newly discovered writings, and the printing press were vital parts of an awakening of the common people which would reek havoc within the Catholic church.
  - C. The Rise of Humanism – The humanists of the Renaissance era were NOT the same as humanists today which are man-centered, atheistic, and evolutionary. These men of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century did INCLUDE God in their beliefs and writings. A man by the name of John Colet (1467-1519) was Dean of St. Paul’s Cathedral in London. He introduced a student by the name of Erasmus to the study of Scripture. Erasmus would later be called the “Prince of the Humanists.” He was the most prolific writer of the Renaissance with many of his writings exposing the ignorance, superstitions, and heresies of the Roman church. His greatest work was the Greek New Testament first published in 1516. This was to become the basis for what was later called the “Textus Receptus” from which we have the King James Version of the Bible. Erastus wrote in a preface to one of his five (5) editions of the Greek N.T.,

"I wish that the farm worker might sing parts of them (the Scriptures) at the plough, that the weaver might hum them at the shuttle, and the traveler might beguile the weariness of the way by reciting them."

- D. The Emergence of the Middle Class – In countries still controlled by Catholicism, two classes still exist – the Upper Class and the Lower Class. Romanism still attempts to keep people under control by ignorance of the truth. In England, for several centuries, a system of government was emerging from the signing of the Magna Charta by King John in 1215. Over several centuries, a new class of people came into existence – the Middle Class. Through representative government, this class of working people soon became the norm in England making England the world power for many centuries. We can be thankful for this bit of history as it is this middle class that made America great. **A note of warning – we are slowly loosing our place as the middle class as we get further and further from the truths of God's Word.**

Though we have used the this section to highlight the THREATS to the Catholic church, that certainly does not mean that the persecution was over. One such persecution is what is called "The Christmas Tragedy of 1400." J.A. Wylie in his book, *"The History of the Waldenses"* tells of the inhabitants in the Valley of Pragelas being attacked by an armed troop led by Borelli. Many were slain while many attempted to flee to the mountains. Because of the intense cold and snow, the following morning many were found frozen to death – as many as 80 children clutched in the frozen arms of their mothers who perished along with their babies.

III. The THREAD – Three men stand out in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century who continued their quest for Biblical truth.

- A. William Sawtre – Sawtre was a Lollard (a follower of Wycliffe) and was the first English martyr burned alive because of his opposition to the Roman church and the papacy. On Feb. 12, 1401, he was brought before his accusers where several points were made:
1. "He would not worship the cross upon which Christ suffered, but only that Christ suffered upon the cross."
  2. He opposed "Transubstantiation" preaching that the bread used never ceased to be bread.
  3. He also favored a redistribution of the wealth of the Roman church which did not set well with the priests, bishops, etc.

Because of his beliefs and fiery preaching, a law was passed allowing heretics to be burnt and Sawtre was the first one to suffer at its hand.

- B. John Huss (1371-1415) Huss was a Bohemian who as an ordained Catholic priest taught at the University of Prague. He came under the influence of the writings of Wycliffe and began to attack the papacy referring to the pope as "the successor of Judas Iscariot." He was excommunicated in 1410 but was then summoned to the Council of Constance thinking that he would be heard, but instead was arrested, condemned and burned at the stake. However, his followers, took up the cause and continued the fight. In 1457, some of his followers joined with the Waldenses to form the seeds of the Moravian Church. From this came the name, *"The Church of the Brethren."*

- C. Jerome Savonarola (1452-1498) An Italian of royal birth, he was destined for a career in medicine but at the age of 23 became a Dominican monk. Through the study of Scripture, he became what we might call today, a "prophet" whose main calling is to expose sin. He did just that preaching against the sensuality and sin of the people in Florence and the entire city reportedly repented. He was excommunicated in 1497 after refusing a "cardinal cap" from the pope. He was finally arrested, tried, tortured for a week and then hanged and burned in the city square.

S.H. Ford (whose last pastorate was Central Baptist Church, Memphis, Tn – mid 1800's) in his book, *"Baptist Origins"*, quoted a letter written in 1519 to Erasmus from Bohemia describing the people:

"These men have no other opinion of the Pope, cardinals, bishops, and other clergy than of manifest Antichrists. They call the Pope sometimes the beast, and sometimes the whore, mentioned in Revelation. Their own bishops and priests, they themselves do choose for themselves, ignorant and unlearned laymen that have wife and children. They mutually salute one another by the name of brother and sister..... They own no other authority than the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament."

Ford stated,

"Thousands upon thousands in the mountain fastnesses, amid the sheltered valleys of the Alps, in the deep forests of Illyricum, and the obscure glens of England were Baptists. The torch of truth, which lit their places of concealment, revealing the blackness of the deep rayless night which surrounded them, flashed unnoticed into the cell of the hermit and the monk, and under God's guiding eye, directed priests and scholars to His holy word. That torch, which these Baptists borne steadily aloft and handed down along their blood-tracked path, at length lit up the world in the blaze of splendor, which burst forth at the Reformation! That became an epoch, a milestone, in the march of Christ's witnesses. Beyond it, before it, we have found these witnesses, these Baptists."

# BAPTISTS – WHO ARE THEY????

## Lesson 25.....BAPTISTS – THEIR CONTINUANCE.....16<sup>th</sup> Century

Generally speaking, when one mentions church history of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, immediately we are prone to think mainly of the period called “The Reformation” and granted it does occupy a vital place in church history. However, the focus of our study is NOT on those who broke with the Roman church but rather those whose roots go back even to the time of Christ – those who today we know as Baptists. The basic difference is as one writer put it –

*“The Protestants sought to reform Rome using the Bible and the Baptists sought to replace Rome with the Bible.”*

Because of all the events of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century and the little time and space, we will only be able to offer a sketch to the reader.

- I. The THRONG – The term, “Anabaptists” means “re-baptizers” and it was a term of derision given by their enemies but refused by the **real** Baptists because the only **real baptism** comes after a true profession of faith in Jesus Christ. Many other names were used by those who were a part of the “Anabaptists.”
  - A. Catabaptists – Meaning “down-dippers” or “immersionists.” The Greek word, kata, means “down.”
  - B. Neo-Donatists – Just as the Donatists of the 4<sup>th</sup> Century, these were a thorn in the Roman church, but soon to be a thorn in the newly-formed Protestant churches as well.
  - C. Staff Carriers – This name was given to the Anabaptist pastors who carried canes or a staff – in contrast to the sword and bishop’s crook of the Roman church clergy. The term became synonymous with “heretic.”
  - D. Winkler – The German term means “out of the way” indicating the practice of holding clandestine and unauthorized meetings.
  - E. Communists – This simply meant that they were willing to share what they had with others. One Anabaptist, Hans Scherer stated, *“If a man has a big income and with this drives a poor man from his homestead or field, such a man is more wicked than a thief, in God’s sight.”*
  - F. Agitators – This name was given to the Anabaptists by Martin Luther calling them “Rottengeisters” or clique-makers because of their beliefs.

We must also state that some who were called “Anabaptists” were NOT true Baptists. Some claimed to have direct, divine revelation from God. Segments were radical and became great persecutors of the Catholics and Protestants. Others denied the Trinity and some propagated a Post-Millennium position. Sadly, today there are many who claim the name, Baptist, while holding to doctrines and practices that are unscriptural.

- II. The THREATS – One may be surprised when you see who became the persecutors of the Anabaptists. They include:
  - A. Martin Luther – Luther came out of the Roman church but brought with him the belief that baptism and the Lord’s Supper were “sacramental” or a “means of grace.” In fact, in 1536, Luther signed a memorandum assenting to the death penalty for the Anabaptists.
  - B. Ulrich Zwingli – In 1521, as a Catholic priest, he broke away from the Roman church and began a Bible study group called “The Zurich Ten.” However, Zwingli later recanted of his opposition to infant baptism and later became a great persecutor of the Anabaptists. He said in any angry outburst, “Let those who talk of going under go under indeed” which led to the practice of drowning the Anabaptists.
  - C. John Calvin – While a great proponent of “systematic theology”, Calvin was never a friend to the Anabaptists as seen in his statement, “Anabaptists and reactionists should alike be put to death.” A.H. Newman in his *“A Manual for Church History”* stated, “Calvin’s fiercest theological conflicts were with... Servetus... the Anabaptists, the Socinians, etc...heresy he could away with, and he soon decided that the only efficient argument against it was the fagot ( a bundle of sticks used in the burning at the stake) or the sword.” Later, in history, we will see even more severe persecutions at the hands of the Calvinists.
  - D. Holland had become a gathering point for the Waldensian believers and by 1553 the Anabaptists were the most prolific. The Jesuits in 1555 brought the Inquisition to Holland and the Duke of Alva undertook the persecution from 1567-1573 when great atrocities took place. Under Ferdinand I in Austria, many Anabaptists were burnt and drowned.

In 1524 A.D., Balthasar Hubmaier published a tract stating the Baptist opinion on persecution:

*“The burning of heretics cannot be justified by Scripture. Christ himself teaches that the tares should be allowed to grow with the wheat. He did not come to burn, or to murder, but to give life, and that more abundantly. We should, therefore, pray and hope for improvement in men as long as they live. If they cannot be convinced by appeals of reason, or the Word of God, they should be left alone. One cannot be made to see his errors either by fire or by sword.”*



# BAPTISTS – WHO ARE THEY????

## Lesson 26.....BAPTISTS – THEIR CONTINUANCE.....17<sup>th</sup> Century

This is the final lesson in the section on “Baptists-Their Continuance.” We began in Lesson # 14 with the aim of looking at “The Emerging Church” from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century church to the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. Two things we need to be reminded of – (1) The name “Baptist” was not used exclusively in describing churches who held to the principles of the Apostolic church; and (2) our overall purpose in these lessons is not to focus on “church history” as a whole but rather to single out those who were true to those principles of the early church. We need to refresh our minds at this point to see where we are in the scope of the “Church Age” as previously seen in the “Letters to the 7 Churches in Rev.3,4.”

Ephesus	30 - 100 A.D.	The Backsliding Church	Rome Tolerates the Church
Smyrna	100 - 313 A.D.	The Suffering Church	Rome Persecutes the Church
Pergamos	313 - 590 A.D.	The Compromising Church	Rome Accepts the Church
Thyatira	590 - 1517 A.D.	The Unrepentant Church	Rome Controls the Church
Sardis	1517 - 1700 A.D.	The Dying Church	Churches Pulls out of Rome
Philadelphia	1700 - 1900 A.D.	The Serving Church	Churches Send out Missionaries
Laodicea	1900 - Present	The Chastened Church	Churches Become Lukewarm

In Lessons 27-39, we will look at “Baptists-Their Covenants” where we will study the “Engaged Church” looking at the confessions and covenants that bound them together as churches. In Lessons 40-52, we will go back into History and pickup where the 2<sup>nd</sup> Section left off and study briefly “Baptists-Their Characters” or the “Enriched Church” as we focus on the prominent people who carried the banner of the Baptists from the 18<sup>th</sup> Century until today.

Now, with all those reminders, let’s focus on the events of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century (1600-1699 A.D.)

Henry C. Vedder in his book, “A Short History of the Baptists”, states concerning the 17<sup>th</sup> Century:

“With the first decade of the seventeenth century we reach solid ground in Baptist history. Before that we must proceed by conjecture from one isolated fact to another, and many of our conclusions are open to doubt; but after 1610 we have an unbroken succession of Baptist churches, established by indubitable documentary evidence.”

We need first of all to set the stage for future lessons by presenting the fact that the Baptist in England were in two different “camps” – The General Baptists and the Particular Baptists. The “General Baptists” held the belief in a *general atonement* – that salvation was available to all men. The “Particular” Baptists believed in a *limited atonement* – that salvation was available ONLY to the elect. Basically, history refers to each of these as “Arminians (General Baptist) and “Calvinists” (Particular Baptists). These same groups brought their controversies to the shores of America. Sadly, Baptists today have been polarized by the teachings of men. Extremes of either are divisive and unscriptural.

III. The THREAD – As always, God has a remnant and a witness for the truth. Some of the most well known of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century actually came out of the Roman church into the Protestant church and finally joining themselves with the Anabaptists. While the Reformation primarily happened in Germany, other countries were greatly affected by it as we will see in the list of those who truly “stuck by the stuff.”

- A. Conrad Grebel – A Swiss, he was a part of the “Zurich Ten” but broke from Zwingli and became an Apologist for the Anabaptists. He died of the plague in 1526 A.D.
- B. Felix Mann – In 1527, he was placed in a rowboat with his wrists tied and passed over his cocked knees and a heavy piece of wood thrust between his bent knees and elbows. He was rowed out into the river and tossed overboard while his persecutors made light of the method of his death as being what he was guilty of – baptism.
- C. Balthasar Hubmaier – Having fled Switzerland after 6 months of torture, he came to Moravia where he is said to have baptized over 6,000 believers and published 16 books. He was called the “great apostle of the Baptists of Moravia” and was burnt at the stake in 1528.
- D. Michael Sattler – He was the first German Anabaptist to be martyred. After his tongue was cut out, he was tied to a wagon, and his flesh torn asunder by a pair of red-hot blacksmith’s tongs.
- E. Menno Simons – He is best known as the “father of the Mennonites” – a term which came about years after his ministry. His teachings on pacifism and beliefs about the humanity of Christ coming from Mary placed him on the outer bands of the Anabaptists of his day. More later about the Mennonites.

As we close this lesson, we must briefly mention two movements that were surfacing in England during this century – The PURITANS and the SEPARATISTS. Henry VIII had officially broken from the Roman church and formed his own “Church of England.” The corruption within this church led to a group who were militant calling for the reform of the church and they were called “Puritans” because they sought to purify the church from within. Another group surfaced who broke completely away from the “Anglican” church and formed independent churches and they were called “Separatists.” Robert Browne became a Separatist for many years later recanting, but his writings and his earlier influence help spread the movement. He is often called the “Father of Congregationalism.” On June 25, 1549, Bishop John Hooper (Church of England) wrote, “The Anabaptists flock to this place (London) and give me much trouble.” The Bishop of London, Ridley, sent out a letter to all London ministers to find out if:

“Whether any speak against infant baptism. Whether any of the Anabaptists’ sect, or other use notoriously any unlawful or private conventicler (churches), whether they do use doctrine or administration of sacraments, separating themselves from the rest of the parish.”

Surely, the above quote makes it obvious that fully organized churches (of Baptist beliefs) were in London by the year of 1550.

For this last lesson on this section, we will depart from the three-fold outline (The Throng; The Threats; and The Thread) and simply try to give an overview of what has now been woven from a "thread" into a "piece of cloth."

We will approach the events of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century with three major sections: (1) Churches; (2) Covenants and Confessions; and (3) Conflicts.

### CHURCHES

- I. Pre-17<sup>th</sup> Century Churches – At least ten (10) Baptist churches existed in England before 1600 A.D. – Hill Cliff (1522); Eythorne, Coggershall, Braintree (1550); Farrington Road (1576); Cowl, Ephworth (1599); Bridgewater. Oxford, Wedmore (1600).
- II. Early 17<sup>th</sup> Century Churches – Two congregations in England – The Scrooby (led by John Robinson and Richard Clifton) and the Gainsborough( led by John Smythe and Thomas Hellwys) congregations moved to Holland in the early 1600s seeking religious liberty from the Church of England's persecution. It was the Scrooby congregation (led by Pastor William Brewster) that eventually sailed to the New World in 1620. These Pilgrims were not Baptists, but were related to them. Two types of churches soon emerged – the Separatists and the Puritans which would soon bring much persecution to true Bible believers.
- III. Mid-17<sup>th</sup> Century Churches – Congregational churches (governed by the congregation) had sprung up in the Colonies but they had fallen into the State/Church philosophy we saw in the days of Constantine in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century. In Massachusetts, a law was passed forcing new citizens to allegiance to government and the church. One man, Roger Williams, took issue with this "Oath of a Freeman" which caused him to be banished. In November 1636, he went into an uncharted area of New England with his wife, 2 children and 11 followers and founded a new colony called Providence. In August of 1638, he drafted the Providence Compact, a document establishing government without interference in religious matters. Some historians credit Williams as founding the first Baptist Church in America. However, it is very clear historically that the first Baptist Church in America was begun by Dr. John Clarke. Here is an interesting bit of history about those who joined with him in 1637 establishing the first Baptist Church in Newport (the church still exists today.)

Two people – John Wheelwright, a preacher, was banned from Boston for preaching a doctrine called "experimental religion" which meant that a person could have the assurance of salvation based upon the Scriptures alone after experiencing the conviction of the Holy Spirit (later this doctrine was called "being born again). Ann Hutchinson was banished for conducting ladies Bible studies in her home. She along with Wheelwright and 18 other families moved eventually settling on what they called the "Isle of Rhodes" (today's Rhode Island). It is noteworthy that they were known by their enemies as "Opinionists" (Wow! does that ever well-describe true Baptists).
- IV. Late 17<sup>th</sup> Century Churches – Most of the churches that were established in this time period were in the Massachusetts colony, but they were under constant harassment from the Congregational churches and the government until Feb.1681 when the courts granted them legal standing allowing them to meet as churches should.

### COVENANTS AND CONFESSIONS

The Baptists of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century began to spring up and while they were "independent" congregations, they naturally migrated to one another for fellowship which produced what became known as "associations." The Particular Baptists were prone toward a loose organization structure while the General Baptists took more kindly to a more centralized organization uniting churches into annual assembly meetings. The glue that held these churches together was the matter of a "Confession of Faith" which we will pursue in more detail in future lessons. Each church however drew up and adopted their own covenant (to be studied further shortly).

### CONFLICTS

Time and space does not allow for an in depth treatment of the conflicts of these early Baptist churches in the New World. In England and other European countries, persecution from the Church of England and the Roman church continued. In America, the conflicts centered around the matter of personal liberty to preach and teach the Word of God and to assemble as an independent church. The struggle for these new Baptist churches was intense and was gendered greatly by their stand against infant baptism. These Baptists were dismissed (by the religious authorities of that day ) as "diseased, incendiaries, madmen, insane, cowards, and other adjectives."

Here we might do well to hear from some from that hour:

One writer, Mr. Winsor, Librarian of Harvard, wrote in his "*Memorial History of Boston,*"

"Anabaptists received grievous treatment from the magistrates of the Puritan commonwealth....Our rulers were more perplexed and dismayed by the experience already referred to, namely, the alarming increase in the colony of unbaptized, because their parents were not members of the Church....It is a sad story. Most pure and excellent and otherwise inoffensive persons were the sufferers, and generally patient ones. But the struggle was a brief one. The Baptists conquered in it and came to equal esteem and love with their brethren. Their fidelity was one of the needful and effective influences in reducing the equally needful but effective intolerance of the Puritan commonwealth.

In 1692, in Salem, Massachusetts, a sad chapter in American history was written – *The Salem Witch Trials* – where 20 people were executed because of supposed witchcraft. The issue arose over a dreaded "blood fever" in the community. One involved in these executions, Michael Wigglesworth, wrote:

"I fear (among our many other provocations) that God hath a controversy with us about what was done in the time of the Witchcraft. ***Ifear that innocent blood hath been shed;*** and that many have had their hands defiled therewith. I believe that our Godly Judges did act Conscientiously, according to what they did apprehend then to be sufficient Proof: But since that, have not the Devil's impostures appeared? and that most of the Complainers and Accusers were acted by him in giving their testimonies. Be it then that it....was done ignorantly." Some of those executed were, in fact, Baptists, but later proven not to be witches.