

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. All of us have been asked why we are Baptists, or why we attend a Baptist Church
- B. Many of us have been told that other churches are suitable alternatives, and have had to explain whether or not this is the truth.
- C. Often we have seen churches, missions agencies, and pseudo church ministries who do not include the word “Baptist” in their name, and have wondered if this matters.
- D. We would like to examine the importance of being Baptist, and not just “Baptist” but Baptist in the right way.
- E. We would also like to consider some of the issues surrounding different kinds of Baptists, and where we should stand in relation to the Biblical position on these issues.

II. SOME QUESTIONS WE WOULD LIKE TO ANSWER

- A. Does it matter if you are a Baptist? How much?
- B. How important is it to be a Baptist?
- C. What is a Baptist? What are the traditional distinct doctrines of Baptists?
- D. Where did Baptists come from? Where did any church come from?
- E. Why is this church (or any church) a Baptist church?
- F. When does someone become a Baptist?
- G. Do we believe in Apostolic succession?
- H. Do we believe in church genealogy?
- I. Where do we get our authority to Baptize?
- J. What is an historic Baptist?
- K. Should a church have Baptist in the name?
- L. What is the Baptist Bride?
- M. What is Landmarkism and why does it matter?
- N. Are all Baptists OK?
- O. What about General and Particular Baptists?
- P. Are Baptists Fundamentalists? Are Fundamentalists Baptists?
- Q. Are Baptists Protestants?
- R. What makes Baptists different regarding their view of prophecy?
- S. Should Baptists work with those who are not Baptist?
- T. To what extent can we work with those who are not Baptists?
- U. Should our church support missionaries who are not Baptist?
- V. Can someone be saved who is not a Baptist?
- W. What about the “Southern Baptist Convention”?
- X. If we were not Baptists, what might we be?
- Y. Are we a denomination, since we are Baptists?
- Z. Have there always been Baptists?

III. SOME TOPICS WE WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS

- A. Doctrines that can truly be claimed to be distinctively Baptist
- B. Overview of the doctrine of separation
- C. Brief history of denominations
- D. Brief history of Baptists
- E. What is local church authority; from whence is it obtained?
- F. Landmarkism and the Baptist Bride
- G. Brief history of Fundamentalism
- H. Methods of Biblical Interpretation and their impact on doctrine

IV. LESSONS

- A. Lesson 2 - Baptist Identity & Doctrine (two weeks)
 - 1. Introduction to denominations
 - 2. Origins of Baptist doctrine
 - 3. Overview of Baptist distinctives
 - 4. Importance of the various Baptist distinctives

- a. How we use the Bible
 - b. How we interpret the Bible - particularly ref. Prophecy
 - c. The autonomy of the local church vs. hierarchy
 - d. No priests
 - e. Believers baptism
- B. Lesson 3 - Fundamentalism
 - C. Lesson 4 - History of Baptists (overview)
 - D. Lesson 5 - The importance of being a Baptist in the context of denominations
 - E. Lesson 6 - Authority

I. SOME INTERESTING QUESTIONS

- A. What is a Baptist?
- B. Where did Baptists originate?
- C. Why are we Baptists?
- D. Is the name “Baptist” a legitimate label for a church to use? To protect?
- E. What differences are there between Baptists and denominations?

II. THE DISTINCT ATTRIBUTES OF NAMED GROUPS (i.e. Denominations)

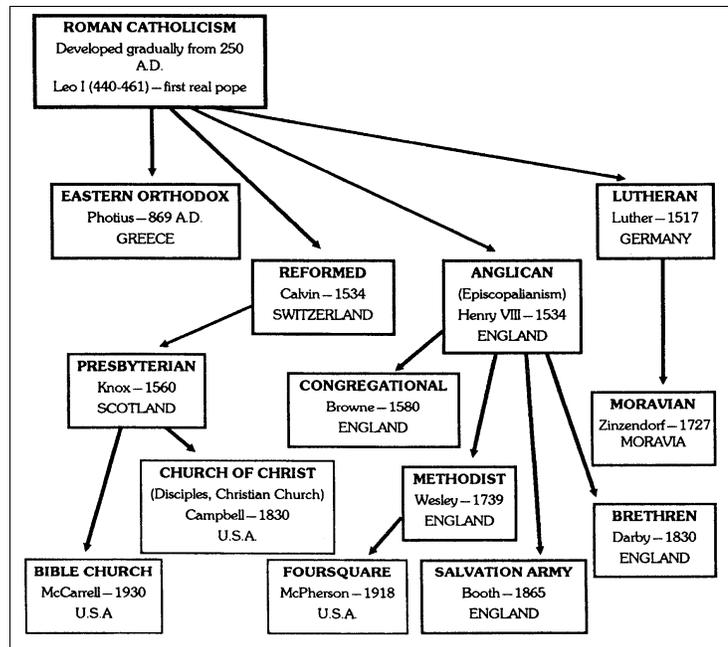
- A. Words like “Presbyterian”, “Methodist”, “Episcopalian”, “Baptist”, etc. are representative of a certain collection of doctrines and/or doctrinal positions.
 - 1. These words don’t tell the whole story, but they give a good starting place
 - 2. Each of these groups (i.e. denominations) has a history of beliefs
 - 3. Additional labels are sometimes added which clarify the position further
 - a. “Fundamental”
 - b. “Independent”
 - c. “Evangelical”
 - d. Thousands more

- B. In our day, many churches have reduced the importance of doctrine to the point of obscurity (so that their name means very little)

- 1. Social programs are used as a substitute
- 2. Not standing for doctrine means less conflict and controversy for them
- 3. We do not agree with this one bit! (Titus 2:7 In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness)
- 4. Doctrine is important
 - a. The Bible is all about doctrine – 2 Ti 3:16 All

- b. scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine
- b. The Bible speaks of those who will not “endure” doctrine – 2 Ti 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

- C. Some have labeled themselves in an attempt to avoid disclosing their identity
 - 1. “Non-denominational” – (a refusal to be identified)
 - 2. “Inter-denominational” – (whatever you are is fine with them)
- D. To wear a name is to be willing to identify with the doctrines that name reflects. The label “Baptist” signifies a scripturally accurate doctrinal position.
- E. It is very important to remember that any time a group labels itself, there is a reason. Likewise, when a group rejects a label there is a reason for that as well.



III. THE ORIGINS OF BAPTIST DOCTRINE

- A. There is not now, nor has there ever been, a single authoritative human organization or entity which defines what Baptists officially believe
 - 1. i.e. no Pope, President, or Potentate
 - 2. There is no individual historic figure (other than Jesus) who can be named as the

- founder of Baptist doctrine
- B. There have been a number of groups which can be traced all the way back to the time of Christ which held to, and documented, doctrines consistent with the Baptist position
 - 1. These groups are much older than the Reformation in the 1500's and therefore Baptists are not Protestants (Baptists did not originate in the Catholic church)
 - 2. While these groups did not use the word "Baptist" in their label, we identify with them because they held the same doctrinal position that we hold.
 - 3. Examples are too numerous for this lesson, but include the Donatists in the Fourth Century AD, the Paulicians in the Eighth Century AD, and the Waldenses in the Twelfth Century AD.
 - 4. Be very careful when you research these groups as they have been slandered by history and are often accused of many beliefs and practices of which they are not guilty.
 - C. As in our present day, many who held to the doctrines that we call Baptist were often found in error in one or more issues. Still, the doctrines that we believe were largely upheld by these groups.
 - D. *We must plainly state, that our sole source of doctrine is the literal grammatical interpretation of the Bible, and nothing else!*
 - 1. Don't be confused into thinking that the Bible is not clear in its teaching. The reason people hold false positions on doctrine is not because they cannot understand the Bible, but because they won't listen to it.
 - 2. Most groups (i.e. Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, etc.) have taken the writings of one man and used them as a foundation for their doctrine. They then subject the Bible to these writings and part from it when it disagrees.
 - E. We do not refer to a definitive document other than the Bible to certify our beliefs. While there are several "confessions of faith" that are good reference material, we rely on the Bible to settle all disputes and doctrinal questions.

IV. THE DISTINCT DOCTRINES OF HISTORIC BAPTISTS

- A. A particularly common and simple list of distinct beliefs of Baptists is as follows:
 - 1. Sole authority of the Bible
 - 2. Autonomy of the local church
 - 3. The believer's direct access to God
 - 4. Ordinances limited to Baptism and The Lord's Supper
 - 5. Individual liberty to believe as one chooses
 - 6. Church members are only those who are saved and baptized
 - 7. The only two offices in the church are pastor and deacon
 - 8. Neither church or state should exercise dominance over one another
- B. First and foremost, each of these eight distinct positions held by Baptists are in direct opposition to the position held by the Roman Catholic Church.
 - 1. As Protestant churches are decedents of the Catholic Church, these "distinctives" also separate the Baptist position from them
 - a. For example, any church which has priests is in conflict with item #3
 - b. Baptists take a unique and scriptural position of baptism which typically sets them apart from others
 - 2. As the Catholic Church was the dominant influence since the Fourth Century AD, it would seem reasonable that the items which identify Baptists would contrast most with the Catholic position.
- C. Other lists of distinct Baptist doctrines are used, but typically are similar to this one.
- D. There are many other points of doctrine that are important to Baptists but not addressed by this list.

BAPTIST DISTINCTIVES

Bible as sole authority
Autonomy of the Local Church
Priesthood of the believer
Two Ordinances – Baptism/ the Lord's Supper
Individual Soul Liberty
Saved Baptized church membership
Two offices only – Pastor and Deacon
Separation of Church and state

V. **ARE THE UNIQUE POSITIONS HELD BY BAPTISTS IMPORTANT?**

- A. Sole Authority of the Bible
 - 1. As mentioned above, many denominations (Presbyterians, Methodists, Lutherans, etc.) hold the unique position of one man. (Acts 5:29 – we ought to obey God rather than man).
 - 2. Cults refer to other writings like the Book of Mormon or the writings of Ellen G. White
 - 3. The Catholic Church insists that tradition and the church have precedent over the plain teachings of the Bible.
- B. Autonomy of the local church
 - 1. There is no Biblical model or example of churches answering to other churches, organizations, etc. A church should answer directly to God.
 - 2. Most groups do not even hold the truth that the church is the local assembly
 - 3. Even some Baptists have failed in this area
 - 4. If God wishes to directly rule His local church, and if men interfere with this method, the opportunity for a church to be properly led is compromised
- C. Believer's direct access to God
 - 1. There are no more priests: the Bible makes it very clear (see Hebrews) that the Lord is the last and only priest
 - a. Priests have only two jobs – offer sacrifices and mediate between God and man
 - b. Jesus was the final sacrifice (the priests can no longer offer anything)
 - c. Jesus is the only mediator between God and man – priests no longer have authority to do this job
 - d. 1 Tim 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus
 - 2. Any man who claims to be a priest is usurping the office which belongs exclusively to the Lord Jesus Christ
- D. Ordinances are only Baptism and the Lord's Supper
 - 1. They do not save
 - 2. They are not a way of "administering grace"
- E. Individual liberty to choose what to believe
 - 1. Men cannot be mandated to hold certain beliefs
 - a. Mormons once killed those who did not believe as they did (the Danites)
 - b. Catholics are infamous for the Inquisition wherein many hundreds of thousands of souls (if not tens of millions) were killed for their beliefs
 - c. The Bible is clear on this issue: you can't force a man to believe
 - 2. We are accountable to God, not man
 - a. In the early days of our country, it was against the law not to attend church.
 - b. In order to attend a church other than the state church (Virginia, 1775) you needed to appear before a court and get a license to be absent from the state church
- F. Church members only those who are saved and Baptized
 - 1. Salvation comes before church membership, not as a result of it
 - 2. Infants cannot be members of a church
- G. Offices in church limited to Pastor and Deacon
 - 1. While several different words are used (i.e. elder, bishop, etc.) the leader(s) of the church are not divided into separate positions in the Bible
 - 2. Deacons are qualified and described in the Bible. They are not optional.
 - 3. No office other than these two is given a description, qualifications, etc.
- H. Separation of Church and State
 - 1. The church has no place in government and the government has no place in church
 - 2. Churches are not to be supported or mandated by government
 - 3. While religion is in the best interest of the state, the state should not interfere with individual soul liberty

- I. *The above distinct positions held by Baptists are of utmost importance as they weigh on matters such as salvation, the evangelism of the world, the function of the church, etc.*

VI. A PROPER RESPONSE TO THE FACTS

- A. If God plainly teaches a doctrine in the Bible, who are we to object? Are we not rather to defend it?
- B. As we are obligated to uphold the truth (II Tim 3:16) we do so first by taking a name (“Baptist”) that is identified with that truth.
- C. We do not run from that name when it offends others; we stand up for it by presenting a good example that others can associate with it
- D. We add “Fundamental” and/or “Independent” to the name “Baptist” to further distinguish us from groups that use the name “Baptist” but hold different views on other doctrines
1. For example, the Southern Baptist Convention has become increasingly liberal in its theology and no longer takes a stand on certain Baptist distinctives
 2. Historically, Baptists were what we (Odenton) are. Recently (the past 200 years) there has been a “watering down” of Baptist distinctives in Baptist churches.
- E. Baptists have historically been the group that identifies with the Bible rather than with the teachings of men.
- F. The Bible defines the limits of our doctrinal stand. We cannot stand for more, and we surely cannot stand for less.

Many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us. Luke 1:1

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. If you were to go to a web site named “Fundamental.org” and look at the directory of Fundamental Baptist Churches in the world, you would find Odenton Baptist Church listed as one of the more than forty “KJV, independent, fundamental Baptist churches in Maryland.”
- B. This week, the Pope called on Christians, Muslims, and Jews to “root out” religious fundamentalism. Is he talking about us?
- C. What is a “*Fundamental*” Baptist church? What does it mean to be a “fundamentalist?”
- D. The truth is that few people understand of the history of Fundamentalism, while many Baptists understand that rejecting the title “Fundamentalist” is a bad thing.
- E. Some well known pastors have preached that Fundamentalism is nothing more than a concept, rather than a movement – that it simply ties us to the First Century Churches. This is wrong.

II. IN THE LATE 1800's, LIBERAL THEOLOGY REARED ITS UGLY HEAD

- A. In the late 1800's (perhaps 1870), liberalism became more and more widespread and infiltrated many “denominations” from within.
 - 1. Primarily, liberalism challenged the word of God from every angle
 - a. Higher criticism - Asking who wrote the Bible and when
 - b. Authenticity - Asking if the Bible was really God’s word
 - c. Accuracy - Asking if the Bible was filled with errors
 - d. Any way it could - Science, psychology, culture, etc.

Liberalism Says	The Truth Is
The Bible contains the word of God	The Bible IS the word of God
Sin is of the environment	Sin is of the individual
We should relate to man by love	We should relate to God by faith
We are saved by service	We are saved to serve
The kingdom is on earth	The kingdom is in heaven
The “church” will save the world	The world will come to a cataclysmic end
Individuals are transformed by education, legislation, etc.	Individuals are saved by a new birth
The Bible is figurative and allegorical	The Bible is literal and historical
Jesus Christ was a good man	Jesus Christ was ‘God with us’

- B. Liberalism was a product of German Rationalism
 - 1. Absolute reliance upon reason as the sole source of knowledge and understanding
 - 2. This is opposed to walking by faith and not by sight (see Prov 3:5-7)
- C. Liberalism peaked by the time of the First World War (1914-18)
- D. Many denominations and schools were totally consumed by liberalism

III. FUNDAMENTALISM IS A RESPONSE TO LIBERALISM

- A. The definitions and descriptions of Fundamentalism vary depending upon the source.
1. Some place the rise of Fundamentalism in the late 1800's; others in the early 1900's. George Dollar places the "first important conference for Fundamentalism" in the late Fall of 1878 in New York City at the Church of the Holy Trinity.
 2. Some consider Fundamentalism a scourge (i.e. Modernists) while others think of it as a total solution
- B. Fundamentalism meant to stop liberalism and its inroads into schools and churches.
- C. It was a cooperative interdenominational effort which involved many denominations (i.e. Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, and others)
- D. The early emphasis of men called Fundamentalists was prophecy and the Bible
1. Prophecy, because literal fulfilment of Bible prophecy is the opposite of liberal thought.
- E. The 1878 conference passed resolutions on the following topics
1. Absolute authority of the word of God
 2. The imminent second coming of Christ
 3. The impossibility of the entire world being "converted" before His return (i.e. no post millennial return)
 4. The duty of the church to preach the gospel (not social programs)
- F. Men who preached at an 1886 "Fundamentalist" conference included Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, the Reformed church, and Baptists
- G. It is interesting to note that D. L. Moody was not so theologically particular that he could easily be claimed by the Fundamentalists. It was said that he "deftly avoided any entanglements in creeds and platforms." After his death there was a great debate about which "camp" he belonged to (Fundamental, or other).
- H. According to George Dollar the "highwater mark" of the battle between Fundamentalism and Liberalism was in the 1920's.

In 1973, George W. Dollar wrote a famous work on Fundamentalism entitled, "A History of Fundamentalism in America." Dollar was born in 1917 in CT. In 1956 he founded the Southwide Baptist Fellowship. He was the chairman of Religious History at Dallas Theological Seminary, and at Bob Jones University. He passed away in 2006.

IV. NEW EVANGELICALISM IN RESPONSE TO FUNDAMENTALISM

- A. New evangelicalism was then, a response to Fundamentalism
- B. The New evangelical said that we should have dialogue with those in error, rather than separate from them.
- C. The most notable difference between a Fundamentalist and a Neo-evangelical is that the Fundamentalist will separate from error while the Neo-evangelical will have dialogue with it.
- D. New evangelicalism is to liberalism what the counter reformation was to Catholicism
- E. New evangelicalism has several notable characteristics
1. Admiration for science and education
 2. A casual approach to worship
 3. Lower standards of dress, entertainment, and other forms of separation
 4. Disdain for taking a doctrinal stand that would differentiate them from the main stream
- F. Today, new evangelicalism has been eclipsed by the emerging church movement.

V. THE EMERGING CHURCH MOVEMENT IS NEW EVANGELICALISM'S PRODUCT

- A. The EC Movement is "Salt without Savor." It is a shadow of Christianity with no reality.
- B. To be lost, unchanged, unrepentant, and without Christ, but to claim to be a Christian, is the essence of the emerging church movement.
- C. This movement stands for almost nothing, accepts almost anything, and changes almost nobody.

VI. "THE FUNDAMENTALS"

- A. What could possibly be called "the defining event" in Fundamentalism took place in 1917 when over three million copies of a four volume set called *The Fundamentals* was published and distributed.
- B. This printing was paid for by a wealthy man and the copies were distributed for free.
- C. They were edited by R. A. Torrey and A. C. Dixon
- D. The doctrinal issues addressed by these books reveal the nature of early Fundamentalism.
- E. Doctrines addressed by *The Fundamentals* included . . .
 - 1. Higher criticism (one entire volume dealt with this subject)
 - 2. Inspiration of the Word of God
 - 3. The deity, virgin birth, person and work of Christ
 - 4. Sin, atonement, salvation, and the true work of a missionary
 - 5. Evolution, cults, and testimonies of true conversion
- F. There was even an article on Mormonism written by the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Salt Lake City in the late 1800's.
 - 1. He readily credits Sydney Rigdon (a man licensed to preach as a Baptist) with the creation of the Mormon "religion"
 - 2. He labeled Mormonism as "strongly anti-American," "anti-Christian" and counterfeit
- G. Authors of *The Fundamentals* included men from many denominations (i.e. Presbyterian, Southern Baptist, Episcopal, etc.)
- H. Articles in *The Fundamentals* include doctrinal defense of the universal church theory, and respect for lower criticism (i.e. Modern versions).

VII. MORE ABOUT FUNDAMENTALISM

- A. Historic Fundamentalism and modern fundamentalism are very similar but not identical.
- B. Historic Fundamentalism was inter-denominational from its very start (so is modern).
- C. Historic Fundamentalism's primary objective was to attack liberalism and keep it out of the denominations. It was a defender of the denominations as much as a defender of the faith.
- D. Fundamentalism believed in a universal church from the beginning.
- E. It was never intended to be an exclusively Baptist movement and, in fact, was orchestrated mostly by men who were other than Baptists. However, many of the "big names" of later Fundamentalism were Baptists – Shields, Riley, Norris, Straton. Ultimately, Baptists became a large part of Fundamentalism; today they are a very large part.
- F. The foundation of Fundamentalism was "separation from error." Everyone else (i.e. liberals, denominations, schools) was embracing error and Fundamentalism held that error must be shunned, confronted, identified, and publicly condemned.
 - 1. Unfortunately, the definition of error was confined to those things which liberals rejected.
 - 2. But, many valuable doctrines (i.e. the Virgin Birth, Authority of Scripture, and Literal interpretation of Prophecy) were upheld by Fundamentalism.
- G. The Northern Baptists (as a convention) and the Presbyterians (as a denomination) lost the fight against liberalism in the 1920's, as did the Methodists.
- H. By the end of World War II, Fundamentalism was a "non-denominational" movement characterized by men and schools such as Bob Jones University and Moody Bible Institute.
- I. The word "Fundamentalist" as applied to Christianity has become an icon for something that many people find sacred, although they have little idea what it really stands for.
- J. Those who are informed realize that Fundamentalism has become an icon for such organizations as the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship, and groups with a similar stand.
 - 1. They are not defenders of Baptist distinctives.
 - 2. They are not proponents of the purity of the King James Bible or its exclusive use.
- K. The lasting value of Fundamentalism is rejection of and separation from doctrinal error.

VIII. SUMMARY

- A. To be a Fundamentalist is not a bad thing, but there is more to being a Baptist than simply being a Fundamentalist.
- B. While most Fundamentalists are now Baptists, that was not always the case. It is just that the other denominations lost the battle to liberalism.
- C. To most who are informed, to say you are a Fundamental Baptist is to say that you hold firm to historical Baptist doctrinal distinctions, and that you do so in the spirit of the early Fundamentalists who denounced error, shunned those who promoted error, and taught that error was wicked, dangerous, and contagious.

And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. Acts 11:26

I. HISTORY OF THE NAME 'BAPTIST'?

- A. God himself labeled the man named John as "John the Baptist"
 - 1. Matthew 3:1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea
 - 2. The word "Baptist" appears 15 times in the Bible and each one refers to John
 - 3. It means, "one who baptizes"
- B. The name "Ana-baptist" was attached to groups in the 1500's who "re baptized" converts who had formerly been baptized by the Catholic church.
- C. In the 1640's the prefix "ana" was dropped and the name Baptist came into popular use.
 - 1. It was identified with decedents of the Separatists, but not exclusively
 - 2. The lineage of Baptists prior to this era could only be traced by doctrinal methods.
- D. A Baptist is a Baptist because of what he believes and practices, not because of his genealogy or name.
- E. Historically, Baptists have had distinct traits called "distinctives" which belong exclusively to them and separate them from other groups. Many contrast them from the Catholics.
- F. Today, the name "Baptist" is used by many groups that range from the liberal American Baptists to the conservative/liberal mix in the Southern Baptist Convention to the scriptural positions of many Fundamental Independent Baptist Churches.

BAPTIST DISTINCTIVES

Bible as sole authority
Autonomy of the Local Church
Priesthood of the believer
Two Ordinances – Baptism/ the Lord's Supper
Individual Soul Liberty
Saved Baptized church membership
Two offices only – Pastor and Deacon
Separation of Church and state

II. THE DEFINITION OF A BAPTIST FROM THE CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA¹

- A. "The Baptists consider the Scriptures to be the sufficient and exclusive rule of faith and practice.
 - 1. In the interpretation of them, every individual enjoys unrestricted freedom.
 - 2. No non-Scriptural scheme of doctrines and duty is recognized as authoritative.
- B. General creeds are mere declarations of prevalent doctrinal views, to which no assent beyond one's personal conviction need be given.
- C. The two principal Baptist confessions of faith are the Confession of 1688, or Philadelphia Confession, and the New Hampshire Confession.
 - 1. The Philadelphia Confession is the Westminster (Presbyterian) Confession (1646) revised in a Baptist sense.
 - 2. It first appeared in 1677, was reprinted in 1688, approved by the English Baptist Assembly of 1689, and adopted by the Baptist Association at Philadelphia in 1742, a circumstance which accounts for its usual name.
 - 3. It is generally accepted by the Baptists of England and the Southern States of the Union, whereas the Northern States are more attached to the New Hampshire Confession.
 - 4. The latter was adopted by the New Hampshire State Convention in 1833. Its slight doctrinal difference from the Philadelphia Confession consists in a milder presentation of the Calvinistic system.
- D. Baptists hold that those only are members of the Church of Christ who have been baptized upon making a personal profession of faith.
 - 1. They agree in the rejection of infant baptism as contrary to the Scriptures, and in the acceptance of immersion as the sole valid mode of baptism.
 - 2. All children who die before the age of responsibility will nevertheless be saved.

¹ <http://oce.catholic.com/index.php?title=Baptists>

- E. Baptism and the Eucharist, the only two sacraments, or ordinances as they call them, which Baptists generally admit, are not productive of grace, but are mere symbols.
 - 1. Baptism does not bestow, but symbolizes, regeneration, which has already taken place.
 - 2. In the Eucharist Jesus Christ is not really present; the Lord's Supper merely sets forth the death of Christ as the sustaining power of the believer's life.
 - a. It was instituted for the followers of Christ alone; hence Baptists, in theory, commonly admit to it only their own church members and exclude outsiders (closed communion).
 - b. Open communion, however, has been practiced extensively in England and is gaining ground today among American Baptists.
- F. In church polity, the Baptists are congregational
 - 1. Each church enjoys absolute autonomy.
- G. Its officers are the elders or bishops and the deacons.
 - 1. The elder exercises the different pastoral functions
 - 2. The deacon is his assistant in both spiritual and temporal concerns.
 - 3. These officers are chosen by common suffrage and ordained by councils consisting of ministers and representatives of neighbouring churches.
- H. A church may, in case of need, appeal for help to another church; it may, in difficulty, consult other churches; but never, even in such cases, can members of one congregation acquire authority over another congregation. Much less can a secular power interfere in spiritual affairs; a state church is an absurdity."
- I. It can be clearly seen, from this definition, that Baptists have been around longer than the 500 years that the name has been in use.

III. TESTIMONY TO ANCIENT BAPTIST HISTORY

- A. "When Gesenius (1786-1842), the great German Hebraist and Biblical critic, first learned what Baptist churches were, he exclaimed: 'How exactly like the Primitive Churches!'" (Armitage, p. 149.)
- B. "Ypeig, who prepared a History of the Netherlands Reformed Church for that government, said, 'We have now seen that the Baptists who in former times were called Anabaptist . . . [and] were originally Waldenses . . . may be considered the only religious community which has continued from the times of the Apostles.'" (Armitage, p. 149)
- C. Armitage points out that the doctrine of baptism is not the most important distinction between Baptists and other groups, but rather, "The living and underlying principles of Baptist Churches, relate to
 - 1. The sovereign and absolute headship of Christ in his Churches;
 - 2. To the exclusive authority of the Scriptures, as containing his law for their direction in all things;
 - 3. To the supernatural regeneration of each Christian forming the Churches; and
 - 4. To the liberty and responsibility to God of each individual conscience".
- D. Sharon Turner estimates that there were about 500,000 Christians at the close of the First Century. Armitage claims, "They cherished the sacred principles here set forth." Additionally, he states, "These doctrines are still as fresh as ever and are as soundly reproduced in the Baptists of the nineteenth century as in those of the First."
- E. "The Baptists are the only body of known Christians that have never symbolized with Rome." (Sir Isaac Newton, quoted in *Trail of Blood*)
- F. "The "twelve hundred years" were the years preceding the Reformation in which Rome persecuted Baptists with the most cruel persecution thinkable." (Cardinal Hosius, 1524)
- G. "It must have already occurred to our readers that the Baptists are the same sect of Christians that were formerly described as Ana-Baptists. Indeed this seems to have been their leading principle from the time of Tertullian to the present time." *Tertullian was born just fifty years after the death of the Apostle John.* (Edinburg Cyclopedia -Presbyterian)

IV. RECENT HISTORY OF ORGANIZED BAPTISTS (i.e. Conventions, etc.)

- A. There have been groups of Baptists who have worked together since the early 1800's
 - 1. In the first years of the 1800's there were almost no groups at all, but rather a few loosely connected associations of churches
 - 2. By 1850, apart from those who were still completely independent, most Baptists belonged to the Southern Baptist Convention” or were loosely associated in the name of missions (in the North).
 - 3. In 1907 the Northern Baptist Convention was organized, making almost all churches either Northern or Southern Baptists (except those who remained independent).
- B. By the end of World War II there were several (about five) large groups of doctrinally sound and unsound Baptists in this country
 - 1. The Southern Baptists
 - 2. The Northern Baptists
 - a. The Bible Baptist Union (formed 1923 within the NBC)
 - b. The Fundamentalist Fellowship (formed 1920 within the NBC)
 - 3. The World Baptist Fellowship (founded by J. Frank Norris 1928) outside the NBC
- C. Further division resulted in more distinct and new groups in the late 1900's
 - 1. The Fundamental Baptist Fellowship formed in 1967 from the Conservative Baptist Fellowship which had been formed in 1947 from the Fundamentalist Fellowship.
 - 2. The Bible Baptist Fellowship formed in about 1950 splitting off from the World Baptist Fellowship
 - 3. The GARBC formed in 1932 from the Bible Baptist Union and exited the NBC
 - 4. The Southern Baptists and Northern Baptists continued to be present
 - 5. Other groups of Baptists formed along racial, doctrinal, and other lines
- D. Today, as always, there are Baptist Churches which are *completely independent* and do not belong to any affiliation, association, fellowship, “club”, etc.

V. ODENTON BAPTIST CHURCH HISTORY

- A. Odenton Baptist Church was organized in 1967 as a completely independent Baptist church with no fellowship affiliations of which we are aware.
- B. We are Baptists concerning Baptist Distinctives and the Catholic definition
- C. We were organized as a Baptist Church.
- D. We are Fundamental as we actively stand against liberalism, neo-evangelicalism, and other “isms” of the 1900's.
- E. We are Independent as we are not a part of any convention
- F. We are Unaffiliated in that we belong to and cooperate with no fellowship, association, or group like the BBFI, FBF, CBA, GARBC, WBF, NTA, etc.
- G. We are a local church: we do not stand with those who believe in the existence of any form of universal church (otherwise known as a ‘catholic’ church)
- H. We are separated as we separate from sin, the world, worldly entertainment and dress, alcohol and tobacco, etc.

VI. CONCLUSION

- A. Unlike Lutherans, Methodists, Anglicans, and Presbyterians, you cannot trace the beginning of the Baptist churches to any one man or to any one event.
- B. Unlike the Church of Christ, Assembly of God, Bible Church, and other groups started in the last two centuries, you cannot trace the beginnings of Baptist churches to recent history.
- C. Unlike non-denominational and inter-denominational groups, Baptist stand strongly for specific doctrine.
- D. Baptists are unlike Catholics in doctrine, organization, and lineage.
- E. Baptists are truly unique in that there have been churches (local assemblies) holding to Baptist doctrine and practice that span the past nineteen hundred years.

1 Tim 1:3 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine.

Mt 16:18 Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

I. INTRODUCTION TO DENOMINATIONS

- A. The word “denomination” goes back to Middle English in the late 1300's.
- B. One modern dictionary defines “denomination” as, “a religious group, usually including many local churches, often larger than a sect: i.e. the Lutheran denomination.”
 - 1. *Webster's 1828 Dictionary* defines “denomination” as, “a class or collection of individuals who are called by the same name . . . like a religious denomination.”
 - 2. The root of the word has to do with being named or called something.
- C. Using the acceptable definition that denomination is “a religious group with a name” . . .
 - 1. Non-denominational means, “I don't want to be identified; I don't want a name.”
 - 2. Inter-denominational means, “I have lots of names” or “any name will do” or “guess who I really am.”
 - 3. Denominational means, “I have a name, and I accept that name and what it means” or “I am not afraid for you to know who I am and who I am not.”
- D. Being “non” or “inter” denominational are simply various forms of compromise (not taking a stand for certain things).
- E. In the Bible, and usually in life, names do more than label – they describe.
 - 1. Computer's compute; waiters wait, teachers teach, etc.
 - 2. In the Bible, “Jesus” means, “Jehovah Saves”; “Christ” means, “Messiah” or “Anointed” and “Jehovah” means, “self existent one.”
 - 3. In religion, “Catholic Church” means, “Universal Church”, “Lutheran” means, “one who follows the tenets or teachings of Luther.”
- F. As we have previously learned, the name “Fundamentalist” and the name “Baptist” each define attributes and features of those who carry that name.
- G. So, the name “Baptist” means something (many things) and defines those who carry that name.
- H. Someone who rejects any name (i.e. does not want to be called a Baptist) is either uninformed or is unhappy with some portion of the meaning of that name.
- I. The question for the day is, “is the identity of being ‘Baptist’ important?” Is it worth standing for and defending?

II. WHAT MATTERS AND WHAT DOES NOT?

- A. Perhaps it would be best, some may say, to dispense with most doctrine in order to make our church or message more appealing to more people.
 - 1. Paul said, “1Cor 9:22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.”
 - 2. But, Paul did not become a drunk to win drunkards, or a false teacher.
 - 3. Some things are not negotiable, but which ones?
- B. Does identifying with error, or tolerating false doctrine matter?
 - 1. Eph 5:11 And **have no fellowship** with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.
 - 2. Listen to what Paul said to Timothy and Titus in the Bible:
 - a. 1Tim 1:3 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest **charge some that they teach no other doctrine**,
 - b. 1Tim 4:16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.
 - c. I Tim 6:3 If **any man teach otherwise**, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to

- godliness . . . 5 **from such withdraw thyself.**
- d. Titus 2:7 In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: **in doctrine shewing uncorruptness**, gravity, sincerity,
 - e. Clearly we are prohibited from identifying with or tolerating false doctrine.
- C. Does being unclear on salvation matter or contributing resources to the propagation of a false gospel matter?
- 1. Gal 1:8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach **any other gospel** unto you than that which we have preached unto you, **let him be accursed.**
 - 2. Gal 1:9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.
 - 3. Php 1:17 But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel.
- D. Does identifying with the truth matter?
- 1. 2 Cor 13:8 For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.
 - 2. 1 Tim 3:15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.
- E. What matters is what God says, and everything that God says matters. All of the teaching in the Bible is important because God said it. We do not have a right to pick and choose.
- F. It is not that we are opposed to named groups or unnamed groups, but we do oppose false doctrine, compromise over doctrine, disregarding doctrine, sin, godless living, empty worship, and that which God opposes.

III. WHAT IS A RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION, AND WHAT DO THEY BELIEVE?

- A. A denomination, using the dictionary definition, is a named religious group
- 1. We typically do not think of Baptists as a denomination, but everyone else tends to.
 - 2. The fact is that we are proud to be a named group, but we also know that our name identifies us with Bible truth.
- B. For purposes of this study, we will loosely categorize denominations as follows:
- 1. The non-Christians (i.e. Buddhism, Islam, etc.) and New age (Eastern religions, etc.)
 - 2. Judaism
 - 3. The pseudo-Christian cults - Mormons, JW's, SDA, Christian Scientists, etc.
 - 4. The Catholics (both), Church of England, Anglicans, etc - Groups directly connected to Papal Rome
 - 5. The Protestants and Reformation groups (i.e. Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist, etc.) - Groups started as a direct result of the reformation
 - 6. The non-charismatic, somewhat cultish groups from the 1800's like the Church of Christ, Campbellites, etc.
 - 7. The Charismatics - Pentecostals, AOG, Four Square, etc.
 - 8. The non-Baptist gospel somewhat teaching groups (be careful) like the Bible churches, EV Free church, Calvary Chapel, Community Churches, Brethren, etc. (some of these came from the Charismatics - i.e. Calvary Chapel).
 - 9. The Baptists of all types - even the liberal ones (i.e. SBC, ABC, etc.)
 - 10. Independent Historic Biblical Baptists
- C. The closer you get to the end of the above list, the closer you get to the truth.
- D. A few simple tests of a "religious group" (named or otherwise)
- 1. Do they believe in one Creator God? (Mal 2:10)
 - 2. Do they believe in the Christ of the Bible? (II John 1:9)
 - 3. Do they hold to the Bible as the exclusive source of authority for faith & practice? (Mark 7:13)
 - 4. Do they adhere to and propagate the pure gospel? (Gal 1:8-9)
 - 5. Do they have a proper doctrine regarding baptism?

6. Do they have proper doctrine regarding the Holy Spirit?
 7. Do they have a proper understanding of prophecy and Israel?
 8. Do they have a proper doctrine of the church?
 9. Do they have the anchor (scriptural and spiritual) necessary to keep them from drifting into apostasy, liberalism, modernism, worldly worship, the emerging church movement, etc.? (II Tim 1:14)
 10. Do they comply with a Biblical exercise of the Great Commission?
- E. It is a fact that nine of the ten categories of denomination which are named above will fail one or more of the above ten tests – usually many, if not all of them.
- F. Almost every named group has a distinct doctrinal error which makes participation or cooperation with that group objectionable.
1. The non-Christians, Judaism, and cults have either no Jesus or the wrong Jesus.
 2. The Catholics and their offspring have a works based false gospel.
 3. The Protestants and reformers seldom have the gospel, do not understand the prophetic portions of the Bible because they do not understand the identity of Israel, and have false doctrine regarding salvation, Calvinism, eternal security, and the church.
 4. The Capmbelites, Church of Christ, and their offspring have a false gospel which depends on baptism.
 5. The charismatic groups have a false (very false) doctrine of the Holy Spirit
 6. The non-Baptist groups have a number of problems
 - a. Their foundation is a rejection of what someone else believed.
 - b. They often have a founder who claims modern day revelation (i.e. Calvary Chapel).
 - c. They typically use any bible, any music, any standard of dress, any stand on baptism, and stand for only parts of the word of God.
 7. Sadly, many Baptist groups no longer stand for what Baptists historically stood for.
- G. Almost every named group has a founder who is a man who they follow as though he is infallible.
- H. Almost every named group was founded in protest or objection to another named group.
- I. If you are looking for a church with a true gospel, a pure stand on Bible doctrines (like baptism, the Holy Spirit, the local church, holiness, etc.), an understanding of prophecy and Israel, a burden for lost souls, worship that does not draw from worldly music and entertainment, and a history which connects with the church that Jesus promised hell would not prevail against (i.e. the church that Jesus built), you are looking for an Independent Baptist Church.
- J. Independent Baptists (in most cases) are unique in the following ways:
1. They reject modern versions of the Bible
 2. They have no founder other than Christ - no Luther, Wesley, or Calvin.
 3. They reject the so-called charismatic gifts
 4. They did not start in the past few decades or in the past couple of centuries
 5. They were no started in protest of another group
 6. They were not ever associated with the wicked apostasy of the Catholic church
 7. They have an authoritative connection with the churches of the First Century
 8. They are absolutely independent from any movement, convention, or hierarchy
 9. They have a scriptural position on doctrines like baptism, things to come - prophecy, the church, salvation, scriptural authority, etc.
 10. They have a legitimate claim to Matthew 16:18 - the church that the gates of hell did not prevail against.

I. REVIEW OF PAST LESSONS

- A. Thus far, we have discussed the following subjects
1. *What is a Fundamentalist?* Answer: A Fundamentalist (i.e. in Baptist churches) is someone who stands for a select group of important doctrines that were named in the late 1800's and early 1900's as an answer to theological liberalism which was overtaking various denominations. Fundamentalists stand for the truth and separate from error.
 2. *What is a Baptist?* Answer: A Baptist stands for distinct doctrines that have been identified by our opponents and persecutors (i.e. the Catholic church) such as "Believer's Baptism", "Local church autonomy", and "rejection of priests in churches." Baptists are who they are because of what they believe, not because of where they came from.
 3. *Where did Baptists come from; what is their history?* Answer: Baptists have been extant since the Lord Jesus Christ built His church. There is a history of Baptists as old as the history of the churches.
 4. *How important is it to be a Baptist?* Answer: It is as important to be a Baptist as it is to defend the truth, understand the Bible, practice the Bible, and fulfill the Great Commission. Rejection of being Baptist, or using the name "Baptist" is a compromise at least, and apostasy at worst.
 5. *What is a denomination and are Baptists a denomination?* Answer: While this is an argument in semantics (word meanings), the truth is that Baptists are a named group, but unlike any other denomination (or "non-denomination"), Baptists were not started subsequent to the ministry of Christ. Catholics, Protestants, Charismatics, and Cults all have a human founder or founders who began their movements after the ministry of Christ, Paul, and the early churches.
- B. Knowing who we are, and where we started, there are some questions and issues that we yet need to address, and they pertain mostly to authority and practice.

1. How does a Baptist church get started?
2. Where does a Baptist church get its authority?
3. What authority does a Baptist church have?
4. What about "apostolic succession?"
5. Is church genealogy important?
6. What is the meaning of the term "Baptist Bride" and are we part of such a thing?
7. What is Landmarkism and how does it pertain to us?



II. CHURCH PERPETUITY

- A. First, understand that "church" is not a word that means "everybody who is saved." "Church" means, a local visible called out assembly of baptized born again believers.
- B. So, when we say "church perpetuity" what we are talking about is the fact that, "as long as there have been churches, and ever since Jesus built His church, there has been an unbroken period of time wherein there existed legitimate (scriptural) churches."
1. Mt 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.
- C. We know of a number of churches in the Bible. For example, we know of the seven churches named in Revelation chapters 2 and 3. These existed before the end of the First Century but are gone today.
- D. Those seven churches are all gone today, but other churches exist. How did the churches (scriptural) that exist today get started, and what is their connection with the churches of the First Century?

III. THE BIRTH OF A CHURCH IN THE BIBLE

- A. In Acts 11:19, the persecution of the church in Jerusalem caused them to scatter to other nations, "preaching the Lord Jesus" (20).
- B. The Lord was with them, and many were saved (believed and turned) as a result. (21)
- C. The church in Jerusalem sent Barnabus to Antioch (22). The Bible says he "exhorted them" and then departed (25) to seek Saul.

- D. Next, in verse 26, the Bible says that there was a church in Antioch.
- E. Baptism adds someone to a church
 - 1. Acts 2:41 says that men who were “baptized” were “added” to the church.
 - 2. I Cor 12:13 says that we are “baptized into one body” (body = church).
- F. The existence of an assembly (church) in Antioch, which is called a church, surely indicates that these people were baptized, presumably by Barnabus.
- G. The conclusion is that the church in Jerusalem started the church in Antioch, and baptized the believers there (whether it was Barnabus or someone else).
- H. So we know that churches start churches. It was that way in Acts and is that way today.
- I. Churches have authority to baptize, which comes from heaven (Matt 28:19, Mt 21:25).

IV. WHAT GIVES A CHURCH AUTHORITY, AND WHAT AUTHORITY DOES IT HAVE?

- A. In Acts 13, the church at Antioch sent out missionaries who started other churches. What gives Antioch the right (authority) to do this?
- B. A local church has authority to do a number of things:
 - 1. Evangelize and Baptize
 - 2. Send out and support missionaries - start other churches
 - 3. Discipline its members
 - 4. Conduct the Lord’s supper
 - 5. Vote on church matters
 - 6. Select a pastor or pastors
 - 7. Collect and disburse tithes and offerings
- C. What gives a church authority to evangelize, baptize, send missionaries, collect offerings, start other churches, etc.?
 - 1. We have only the authority that Jesus gives us.
 - a. Mt 16:19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.
 - b. Matt 18:17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. 18 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.
 - 2. We have that authority in written form in the Bible. If the Bible does not allow it, then we do not have authority to do it. If the Bible commands it, then we can do it.
- D. The fact that a church is a legitimate (scriptural) church means that it has all the authority that a scriptural church is given by the Lord in the Bible.
 - 1. The question really should be, what gives a church authority to exist, because once it exists it has scriptural authority to do what a church is called to do.
- E. A church’s authority to exist comes from God. Churches start churches. When a church preaches the gospel, when sinners are saved and Baptized, and when they are assembled visibly as an autonomous body, they have the right to function scripturally.

Acts 11:19 Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.

21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

22 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

23 Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:

26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

I. APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION AND CHURCH GENEALOGY

- A. Apostolic succession is a Catholic (Roman and Orthodox) heresy which claims that the authority of the apostles was handed down to subsequent generations so that apostolic authority still exists today. The Catholic church needs this in order to try to prove that Peter (an apostle) gave authority to subsequent popes (how ludicrous).
1. If Peter was the so-called "pope", and if he passed that along, why did John write the seven churches of the Revelation directly, instead of having the "pope" instruct them?
- B. In the first place, the Apostles had no special authority as men which needs to be passed on. Their authority did not extend over that of the churches and pastors.
1. John was an apostle, but he gives no personal instructions to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 - the Lord was the one who spoke to those churches.
 2. Paul was an Apostle but he was sent out by the church at Antioch in Acts 13, under that church's authority.
- C. Second, our authority rests in the Bible, not in the handoff of authority from man to man. There is no place in the Bible that says that somebody should do something because an Apostle gave authority to another man.
- D. The Bible never teaches or suggests any "apostolic succession."
- E. There are those who claim that a church must trace its genealogy in order to verify its authority.
1. First, this is never stated in the Bible.
 2. Second, it is impossible to trace your lineage back to Jesus in a church to church succession.
 3. Third, our authority comes from the Bible, not from our connections with other men.
 4. We realize that churches start churches, but we do not depend on a genealogical document in order to verify that we have authority to baptize, evangelize, or operate.
- F. What if?
1. Some ask if a collection of people got together, heard the gospel (perhaps they read the Bible), got saved, and then wanted to be a church? Do they have the authority to do so?
 2. These people would have a problem. The Bible does not teach self-baptism. Baptism takes two people, and one of them must already have been baptized (with the exception of John, whose Baptism was "from heaven." – Matt 21:25).
 - a. Even Jesus submitted to Baptism by another – John.
 3. If Baptism is the mode of admission to a church, and if nobody is available to Baptize, then there is no way to establish church membership.
 4. These people have another problem. They have nobody to teach them. This may be the biggest problem of all. In Acts 11, the Bible does not emphasize the baptism of Barnabas in Antioch, but rather his teaching.
 - a. 2 Ti 2:2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

Eph 5:21 ¶ Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the saviour of the body.

24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

5. Ultimately, the question is not practical. We can count on one hand the number of people we know who have been saved only by reading the Bible, if there were any at all. It is by the "foolishness of preaching" that God chose to save some. (I Cor 1:21). It is preaching by men that lead folks to Christ, and those same men can teach and baptize.
6. Just to be clear, I do not believe that churches just spontaneously pop up from nothing: **churches start churches** (Acts 11).

II. WHAT ABOUT THE BAPTIST BRIDE?

- A. The Bible uses the illustration of a bride in several places, but the times when the Bible mentions both a bride and the assembly of the saints at the same time are very limited.
 1. For example, Ephesians 5:32 says that the husband and wife portray Christ and His church.
 2. Another reference is Revelation 19:7
 3. In Rev 22:17, the bride says, "Come."
 4. There are a few others
- B. Some facts that we believe to be Bible truth:
 1. You do not have to be Baptist to be saved, and you do not have to be saved in a Baptist church.
 2. You can be saved and not be part (member) of any church.
 3. Just because you are a church member does not prove that you are saved. There are people who are members of churches who are lost, wicked, carnal, etc.
 4. If you are not a member of a church, you are being disobedient to God. In fact, if you refuse to be baptized (i.e. to become a member of a church thru baptism) then you have refused and disobeyed the first step of obedience for a believer.
 5. You do not have to be doctrinally pure to be a scriptural church.
 - a. Corinth was a church, and they were charismatic and carnal.
 - b. Galatia had a church which taught a false gospel.
 - c. Laodicea was a church and it was lukewarm
 6. You cannot deny that the church is the bride (Eph 5:32).
 7. The fact that a church carries the name "Baptist" is no proof that it is a scriptural church, or even knows the gospel. In fact, most Baptist churches today are very unscriptural.
 8. God is the one who has the authority to validate or reject a church, not man.
- C. The "Baptist Bride" position is misrepresented by many, but in general it is the belief that only those who are Baptists are part of the Bride (the church), and only those who are part of the Bride (members of a Baptist church) will be given the special status of living in the New Jerusalem in eternity.
 1. i.e. If a church is not Baptist it is not a church.
 2. And, if a person is not a member of a Baptist church he is not part of the bride.
 3. And, if he is not part of the Bride, he is a second class citizen in heaven.
- D. My position on this matter (of the Baptist Bride):
 1. I am sure that the bride is the church (the local assembly) – Eph 5:32
 2. I am sure it is God's will for everyone to be baptized, and therefore for everyone to be a member under the authority of a local church. – Acts 2:38. A person who refuses to be a church member is disobedient to God, and there will be eternal consequences.
 3. I am sure that many who are saved are not Baptists and many (perhaps most) who are Baptists by name are not saved.
 4. I am sure that it is an incredibly rare exception to find a church that is not Baptist, and yet which interprets, believes and teaches the pure word of God accurately. But, I am not ready to say that there are none out there.
 5. I believe that the definition of Baptists that we use is a man made definition choosing doctrinal distinctions that are primarily intended to differentiate us from the apostasy called Catholicism.

6. We would not consider some scriptural churches to be Baptist. For example, we do not consider the Galatians to be Baptists if they teach a false Gospel. Yet, God considers them a church.
7. I do not know all of the implications of being part of the Bride, and don't really have or take time to argue about them, other than for edification of those who need to know.
8. I do not believe that the word "Baptist" is magic, gains anyone entrance into heaven or into the new city, or is proof of ones orthodoxy.
9. Be saved, be scripturally baptized, be a faithful member of an Independent Baptist church (and not any other) and don't spend too much time praising yourself for doing so or telling everyone else what you get because you are obeying God. God will take care of it.

III. WHAT IS LANDMARKISM?

- A. Landmarkism is a movement with the following characteristics:
 1. It claims to trace its origins back to John the Baptist
 2. It teaches that a church must be a local visible body of believers
 3. It opposes baptism of those who are not believers (i.e. infants)
 4. It opposes alien immersion (Baptism conducted by any group other than a scriptural church - and one with proper doctrine).
- B. It denies some false doctrines such as:
 1. The teaching that there is a spiritual baptism which supercedes water baptism
 2. That the church began with "spirit baptism" on the day of Pentecost
 3. That the church is universal and consists of everyone who is saved.
- C. The term comes from Proverbs 22:28 - "Remove not the ancient landmark."
- D. It is said to have started in the mid 1800's, particularly addressing the question of who should be allowed to preach in a Baptist church.
 1. Some Baptist churches were allowing Presbyterians, Methodists, etc. to preach in their pulpits.
 2. Some Baptists (very few) were accepting baptism from unscriptural churches.
 3. It was formally started in 1854 by a man named J. M. Pendleton. He wrote an essay entitled, "Ought Baptists to Recognize Pedobaptist preachers as gospel ministers?"
- E. Landmarkism is alive and well today, and is characterized by practices such as closed communion, rejection of alien immersion, and theological separation from false doctrine.
- F. Landmarkism could be called "Baptist perpetuity" or "church perpetuity" but it can also be a movement that "majors on the minors" instead of staying focused on the Great Commission.
- G. Most Landmarkists would hold some form of a "Baptist Bride" position.
- H. The great majority of Landmarkism's identifying traits would be acceptable, if not even very important to us. But, we become anxious when a small group claims to have the truth to the exclusion of the rest of the world, and declares pride in that fact.