

Church History: Baptist Church

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I. Last issue we covered these points in Protestant history:

A. Ulrich Zwingli responsible for the origin of the Reformed Church. The Congregational Christian Church and the Evangelical and Reformed Church have merged to form the United Church of Christ.

B. Zwingli and Luther held opposing views regarding the authority of the Bible:

1. Luther - anything acceptable that is not specifically forbidden.

2. Zwingli - everything rejected that is not expressly enjoined.

C. John Calvin and his disciple, John Knox, responsible for the origin of the Presbyterian Church in Switzerland and Scotland.

II. Today we begin a study of the origin and doctrines of the larger religious bodies in this nation.

Discussion:

I. The Origin of the Baptist Church.

A. Baptist people are not agreed as to when the Baptist Church started.

1. Back about the beginning of the century, Baptists were generally agreed that the Baptist Church was started by John the Baptist in the wilderness of Judea. In 1902, a Baptist preacher by the name of J.N. Hall affirmed this position in a debate with A.G. Freed at Corinth, Mississippi.

2. Most are now saying that it began during Christ's personal ministry.

a. Hazel, KY, Baptist wrote recently saying that Mark 3:13-14 is the beginning.

b. H. Boyce Taylor, Sr., in *Why Be A Baptist* (p. 15), says: "John the Baptist prepared the material and the Lord organized the first Baptist Church during His personal ministry here upon earth."

c. On page 17, Mr. Taylor says: "In Luke 6:12-16, after an all night of prayer, Jesus called His disciples unto Him and chose 12, whom He named apostles. They were called out from others. That is what ekklesia means, 'the called out.' They were chosen to be with Him (Mk.

3:14)."

(1) Observe, however, that Mark 3:13-14 and Luke 6:12-16 are parallel passages to Matt. 10:1-15.

(2) Some time after this, Jesus said, "I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18). In Matt. 16, the church had not yet been built!

3. There are some Baptists who claim that there is an unbroken chain of Baptist Churches from the apostles till now (see *The Trail of Blood*, by J.M. Carroll).

B. Baptist scholars, however, readily admit that the Baptist Church cannot be traced back of the 17th century.

1. "The first regularly organized Baptist Church of which we possess any account is dated from 1607, and was formed in London by a Mr. Smyth, who had been a clergyman in the Church of England" (Benedict's *History of the Baptists*. p. 304).

2. "The word 'Baptists' as a descriptive name of a body of Christians, was first used in English literature, so far as is now known, in the year 1644. For the fact that the name Baptist comes into use at this time and in this way, but one satisfactory explanation has been proposed: it was at this time that English churches first held, practiced, and avowed those principles ever since associated with that name" (Vedder's *Short History of the Baptists*, p. 3).

3. "A history of Baptist Churches going further back than the early years of the 17th century would, therefore, in the present state of knowledge, be in the highest degree unscientific. The very attempt to write such a history new would be a confession of gross ignorance, either of the facts known, or of the methods of historical research and the principles of historical criticism, or both" (Ibid., p. 5).

C. John Smyth and Baptist beginnings.

1. Smyth was a member of, and a preacher in, the English Separatist movement.

2. Persecution drove many Separatists to Holland, including Smyth and Thomas Helwys (1606).

3. Among other things, Smyth believed in separation of church and state and he rejected infant baptism.

4. The Separatists had trouble and in 1608 Smyth, Helwys and about 36 others began a new group.

5. "A refugee congregation of English dissenters settled in Amsterdam about 1607 and soon came under the influence of the Mennonites. From them they learned the biblical doctrine of believer's baptism. As a result, a Baptist congregation was established under the leadership of John Smyth and Thomas Helwys about 1608" (From a Baptist tract, Who Are The Baptists?, by Robert Torbet).

6. In beginning this new group, Smyth "baptized" himself and the others by effusion (sprinkling).

7. In 1611, Helwys returned to England and organized the Ist Baptist Church on English soil (A General Baptist Church).

a. In 1633, the Particular Baptist (Calvinistic) Church was organized.

b. In 1640, this English Church split and adopted immersion "as the mode of baptism."

c. The name "Baptist" as a denominational title was first used in 1644 and was adopted then only by those who immersed.

D. The Baptist Church in America.

1. Roger Williams came to America in 1631 as a Separatist minister. He contended for the separation of church and state.

2. Persecution arose and he was banished from Massachusetts in 1636 and settled in Providence, R.I.

3. In 1639, a Particular Baptist Church was organized by Ezeiel Holiman, baptizing Williams and Williams baptizing Holliman and about a dozen others.

4. At first Williams affirmed that they were nearer the "apostolic norm" than others, but later he became doubtful, withdrew, and remained a "seeker" the rest of his life.

E. The Baptist Church has been beset by numerous divisions. There are perhaps as many as 20 different groups in America.

1. General, Particular, Christian Unity, Free Will, Primitive, Missionary.

2. Independent, Seventh Day, Two Seed in the Spirit, Northern, Southern, etc.

3. In view of the divisions among Baptists, all Baptists will not agree

on the doctrinal points listed below.

II. Baptist Doctrines.

A. Original Sin (infants are born depraved).

1. "We believe that by the fall of Adam, all of his posterity are conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity, so that every thought and every imagination of the heart is only evil continually" (Articles of Faith, #3, First Baptist Church, Murray, KY).
2. Certain bodily ills may be inherited but our souls are not affected by sin.
3. Our souls (spirits) are from God; not from our earthly parents (see Zech. 12:1; Eccl. 12:7; Heb. 12:9).
4. Man "inherits" the penalty for Adam's sin, not the guilt. All men die physically, must contend with weeds, and woman is subject to man and must bear children in sorrow (Gen. 3:16-19).

B. Baptism.

1. Baptism is not essential to salvation.

- a. "Baptism is not essential to salvation, for our churches utterly repudiate the dogma of 'baptismal regeneration'; but it is essential to obedience, since Christ has commanded it. It is also essential to a public confession of Christ before the world, and to membership in the church which is his body" (The Standard Manual For Baptist Churches, by Edward T. Hiscox, D.D., p. 20, Note 8).
- b. See Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 2:37-41; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:26-27; 1 Cor. 12:13; 1 Pet. 3:21.
- c. Note that baptism is essential to obedience but not essential to salvation. Therefore (by Baptist teaching) obedience is not essential to salvation (see Heb. 5:8-9; 1 Pet. 4:17; Matt. 7:21-27; 2 Thess. 1:7-9).

2. Baptism is essential to membership in the Baptist Church (see quote above).

- a. If baptism is essential to being in the Baptist Church but not essential to salvation, then being in the Baptist Church is not essential salvation!
- b. Being in the church the Lord built is essential. In fact, being in the church and being saved are one and the same (Acts 2:47; 5:14;

20:28; Eph. 5:22-27).

3. Baptism must be administered by a Baptist preacher.

a. "We believe that no person has a right to administer the ordinances (baptism and the Lord's Supper) but such as are regenerated, baptized, called of God to the work, and set apart by ordination, with the laying on of the hands of a presbytery" (Articles of Faith, #10, First Baptist Church, Murray, KY).

b. Where does the New Testament give qualifications for the one doing the baptizing?

c. Were Ananias (Acts 9:10-18), Philip (Acts 8:26-39), etc., Baptist preachers or gospel preachers?

4. Congregational approval by voting on all candidates for baptism.

a. "It is most likely that in the Apostolic age when there was but 'one Lord, one faith, and one baptism,' and no differing denominations existed, the baptism of a convert by that very act constituted him a member of the church, and at once endowed him with all rights and privileges of full membership. In that sense, 'baptism was the door into the church.' Now it is different; and while the churches are desirous of receiving members, they are wary and cautious that they do not receive unworthy persons. The churches therefore have candidates come before them, make their statement, give their 'experience' and then their reception is decided by a vote of the members. And while they cannot become members without baptism, yet it is the vote of the body which admits them to its fellowship on receiving baptism" (Standard Manual For Baptist Churches, by Edward T. Hiscox, D.D., p. 22).

b. There is no command, necessary inference, or apostolic example for such a practice.

c. See Acts 8:26-39. When the Eunuch asked to be baptized did Philip say that such would have to wait until he could be voted on?

C. Impossibility of Apostasy.

1. "We believe that the saints shall persevere in grace, and never fall finally away" (Article of Faith, #6, First Baptist Church, Murray, KY).

2. "Baptists believe that if a man is once saved, he is always saved"

(Why Be A Baptist?, by H. Boyce Taylor, Sr., p. 13).

a. This is another of Calvin's teachings. This doctrine came out of the Reformation and not the Bible.

b. Read Heb. 3:12,19; 6:4-6; 10:26-31; Gal. 5:1-4; 1 Cor. 9:26-27; 10:12; 1 Tim. 1:18-20; 2 Tim. 2:17-18; 2 Pet. 2:1-3,20-22; Gal. 5:19-21.

D. Congregational Government of a Pastor and Deacons.

1. "Baptists assert that the officers of a church are two, - and of right, can be no more, - pastor and deacons" (Standard Manual for Baptist Churches, by Edward T. Hiscox, D.D., p. 146).

2. In the church described in the New Testament, each local congregation had a plurality of elders and deacons (see Acts 14:23; 20:17; Tit. 1:5; Phil. 1:1).

3. The Greek word for "pastor" in the New Testament is poimen and is translated "pastor" and "shepherd" (see Eph. 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:2).

E. Conventions and Associations, Intercongregational and Intracongregational organizations, church colleges and Hospitals, Missionary and Benevolent Societies.

1. The New Testament knows nothing of anything smaller than, larger than, or other than the local congregation so far as a functioning unit is concerned.

2. Can you imagine Noah tying a half-dozen small boats on behind the ark - thus demonstrating his lack of confidence in the all-sufficiency of the ark God designed?

3. Read Acts 14:23; 1 Pet. 5:1-3; Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:12; 3:21; 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Thess. 1:8; 2 Cor. 11:7-9; Phil. 1:5; 4:15-16; 1 Tim. 5:16; Acts 6:1-6; 11:17-30.

F. Church Sponsored Recreation, Entertainment, Meals, Church owned and operated Youth Camps (see 1 Cor. 11:20-22,33-34; Eph. 4:12; 1 Pet. 2:5).

G. Youth churches, Choirs to sing to the congregation, Instrumental Music in Worship (see Acts 2:37-47; 5:14; Phil. 1:1; Heb. 2:12; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

H. Lord's Supper.

1. Closed Communion.

a. 'Baptists believe in closed communion. Jesus Himself was a close communionist. He did not invite His mother, or the man in whose house He instituted the Lord's Supper to be present at that supper. How could you have closer communion than that?" (Why Be A Baptist, by H. Boyce Taylor, Sr., p. 13).

b. Read 1 Cor. 11:20-30. "Let a man examine himself."

2. Frequency and time of observance.

a. "As to the time, place, and frequency of the ordinances, no Scriptural directions are given. These are left optional with the churches. They are usually observed on Sundays, but not necessarily. As to the supper our churches have very generally come to observe it on the first Sunday of each month" (The Standard Manual For Baptist Churches, by Edward T. Hiscox, D.D., p. 20, note 5).

b. Acts 20:7.

c. This passage answers both questions:

(1) When? "On the first day of the week."

(2) How often? "On the first day of the week."

(3) Each week has only one first day, but each week has one.

Conclusion:

1. In the days of the apostles, people were taught the gospel without addition or subtraction. When they obeyed it from the heart they became free from sin and were added to the church by the Lord (Rom. 6:17-18; Acts 22:16; 2:47; 18:8).

2. As obedient believers they were simply called Christians (Acts 11:26; 2:47; 18:8).

3. They were never voted on; never joined any denomination.

4. They were just members of the family of God, which is the church (1 Tim. 3:15).

5. Our plea is that you come to Jesus in the same humble, obedient way today.

