

Baptist Distinctives

INTRODUCTION:

"Baptist distinctives are fast becoming a lost commodity even among Baptist churches and mission boards. Of course, everyone is 'baptistic,' but few are Baptist. Even if something carries the name Baptist, no one knows what Baptist distinctives are. 'The truth is important,' some say, 'but not the label.' Well, it may be old fashioned, but a proper label on the content of a bottle is still quite useful. If Baptist churches are truly Baptist churches, they would certainly cherish the label and the distinctives that the label proclaims.

Baptists have a heritage that has cost them much. This heritage should not be held lightly. Church planting is the concern of missions. Do American (or any) churches treasure Baptist distinctives, and are they planting Baptist churches through their mission programs?

The objective of this article is not to state anything new, nor is it intended to be an exhaustive explanation of each distinctive. It is simply to review the distinctive with its significance for emphasis. No one questions the fact that other groups have and hold to some of these distinctives, but only Baptists have historically maintained all of them. May God grant that they will continue to do so."

(Dr. Les Fraiser, Far Eastern Director, B.I.M.I.; BAPTIST DISTINCTIVES - A Must in the Continuity of Missions)

"TWO CLASSES OF DOCTRINE - Baptist doctrine might be divided into two classes for the sake of convenience. The doctrines that we hold in common with most of the other major denominations such as the doctrines of God, Christ, Sin, etc. would be in one class. The other class would be the doctrines that we hold as our distinctives." (A Brief History of the Baptists; Edward H. Overbey; pg. 10)

Definition from Webster's Dictionary

Distinctive - "marking or indicating distinction or difference" Baptist distinctives are the fundamental beliefs (or "marks") that separate fundamental baptists from other religious groups. Baptist distinctives are the distinguishing marks of real New Testament churches that are scriptural and historic in doctrine and practice.

There are eight distinctives:

1. **THE BIBLE, OUR ONLY SOURCE FOR FAITH AND PRACTICE.**
2. **A REGENERATED CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.**
3. **BELIEVER'S BAPTISM BY IMMERSION.**
4. **A SEPARATED CHURCH.**
5. **THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE BELIEVER.**
6. **THE AUTONOMY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH.**
7. **THE CHURCH HAS ONLY TWO ORDINANCES.**
8. **THE EQUALITY OF MINISTERS.**

"BAPTIST DISTINCTIVES - Some of these Baptist distinctives are held by other denominations but only Baptists hold them all in the way we interpret them. Our distinctives might be stated briefly as follows:

1. The Bible is the final authority for faith and practice.
2. Salvation is by grace through faith in Christ alone.
3. Baptism is the voluntary immersion of a believer in water to symbolically show what Christ has done for him.
4. The Lord's Supper is symbolic only.
5. A church should be composed of only professed believers who have been Scripturally baptised.
6. Each church is self-governing and democratic under the command of its Head, Jesus Christ.

IMPLIED DOCTRINES - These distinctives have been stated differently by Baptists from time to time but the basic ideas remain the same. The difference is only in statement. For example, **RELIGIOUS FREEDOM** is a belief of the Baptists but we have not stated it separately since it is involved in the distinctives stated. If a church governs itself and a person must make the decision to profess his faith in Christ and ask for baptism, then religious freedom is automatically involved. The **SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE** is also involved.

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Under these distinctives there can be no church officer that can govern several self-governing churches. This is an impossibility. This rules out such unscriptural offices as Pope and Archbishop and helps to define the true meaning of Bishop, Elder, and Deacon as used in the N.T. Neither can there be an officer that can interfere with the responsibility of each member in a democratic church. It is also implied that a church is a local, visible body and that there may Scripturally be many churches around the world as long as they are the same kind in belief and practice." (ibid., pg. 10, 11)

Dr. J. M. Carroll in his "The Trail of Blood" ... states the distinctives on page 4 as follows:

"MARKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

1. Its Head and Founder - CHRIST. He is the law-giver, the Church is only the executive (Matt. 16:18; Col. 1:18)
2. Its only rule of faith and practice - THE BIBLE (2 Tim. 3:15-17).
3. Its name - 'CHURCH,' 'CHURCHES.' (Matt. 16:18; Rev. 22:16)
4. Its policy - CONGREGATIONAL - all members equal. (Matt. 20:24-28; 23:5-12)
5. Its members - only saved people (Eph. 2:21; 1 Pet. 2:5).
6. Its ordinances - BELIEVER'S BAPTISM , FOLLOWED BY THE LORD'S SUPPER. (Matt. 28:19,20)
7. Its officers - PASTORS AND DEACONS. (1 Tim. 3:1-16).
8. Its work - getting folks saved, baptising them (with a baptism that meets all the requirements of God's Word), teaching them ('to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you'). (Matt. 28:16-20)
9. Its financial plan - 'Even so (TITHES AND OFFERINGS) hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.' (1 Cor. 9:14)
10. Its weapons of warfare - spiritual, not carnal. (2 Cor. 10:4; Eph. 6:10-20.)
11. Its independence - separation of Church and state. (Matt. 22:21)"

Dr. Carroll further states them at the end of this same book on pg. 51, 52 as follows:

"FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINES -

1. A spiritual Church, Christ its founder, its only head and law giver.
2. Its ordinances, only two, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. They are typical and memorial, not saving.
3. Its officers, only two, bishops or pastors and deacons; they are servants of the church.
4. Its Government, a pure Democracy, and that executive only, never legislative.
5. Its laws and doctrines: The New Testament and that only.
6. Its members. Believers only, and saved by grace, not works, through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit.
7. Its requirements. Believers on entering the church to be baptised, that by immersion, then obedience and loyalty to all N. T. laws.
8. The various churches - separate and independent in their execution of laws and discipline and in their responsibilities to God - but co-operative in work.
9. Complete separation of Church and State.
10. Absolute Religious Liberty for all."

I also call your attention to the cover page of this document. There you will find another list of Baptist distinctives. There are many ways to state them, but within each list you will find basically the same beliefs.

Fundamental Baptists claim distinctive marks which every New Testament church should hold to and stand upon. To move away these marks means to move away the "landmarks"

Proverbs 22:28 Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.

Proverbs 23:10 Remove not the old landmark; and enter not into the fields of the fatherless:

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NUMBER ONE - THE BIBLE, IS OUR ONLY SOURCE FOR FAITH AND PRACTICE.

"For Baptists, the Scriptures are the supreme authority in both faith and practice. The faith of Baptists claims its origin in Christ and the Apostles, which was put into its objective form by verbal, plenary inspiration in the Scriptures. This claim differs from other churches and denominations. Lutherans followed Luther as their founder. Their clergy, at ordination, must sign the 'Augsburg Confession' as an endorsement of their faith. Methodists look to Wesley for their beginning. They agree with the 'Methodist Discipline' to enunciate their distinctive belief. Presbyterians hail Calvin as their forerunner. They subscribe to the 'Westminster Confession' as the objective expression of their faith. The Reformed Church acknowledges Zwingli. The Episcopal Church or Church of England finds its expression in the 'Thirty Nine Articles,' but Baptists look to the Bible as their sole source of authority for faith and life. It is the Bible upon which a person is examined for ordination. Lutherans and RCs accept tradition as a source of authority. Although tradition is based on the teaching and decisions of men, it is accepted as equivalent to Scripture in some cases. Liberalism complains that Scripture is insufficient. So, it accepts reason and experience as sources of authority. However, Baptists accept the testimony of Scripture when it claims both verbal inspiration and authority (2 Tim. 3:16,17; 2 Pet. 1:20, 21). Inspiration must include the concept of inerrancy in its original languages. The Scriptures are able to lead one to salvation in Christ, and they are the only standard of conduct. Baptists have historically held this." (Dr. Les Fraiser)

The Bible sets forth principles and conditions under which a New Testament church ought to operate.

Baptists in their historic background do not derive (get) their beliefs from the decisions of councils or ecclesiastical bodies of any order or name. Long before religious hierarchies came into being, Bible-believing "Baptists" held to New Testament beliefs of faith and practice.

The Bible is the Basis of our Existence.

It is a fact that no one can point with any reputable proof to a human founder, nor to any beginning date for Baptist churches since after the days recorded in the New Testament. We do not claim that the name "Baptist" was used in those early days, but it is evident that the beliefs and principles held by us as "Bible-believing baptists" have been followed (yea, even died for) by some believers since the days of Christ and the apostles. The four gospels and the book of Acts give us Christianity wholly without state churches, any Catholic church, infant baptism or pouring and sprinkling masquerading as baptism. Neither can the whole anti-biblical system of "Church Courts", any dominating ministry, nearly the whole ritual, organization, and forms both of Romanism and Protestantism, and all the doctrines invented by ecumenical creeds be found within its pages.

If the New Testament alone were believed and obeyed, it would rid the world of all Romanism and much that is a hangover of Romanism in Protestantism.

Believers were not called Christians until Antioch.

Acts 11:26 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.

The unbelievers called the disciples "Christians". They were not called Baptists, as far as we know, for many years. All during the Apostolic and Post-Apostolic days there were groups of believers who took their names from geographical locations (church of Ephesus, etc., Rev. chapters 2,3). Later some of them were called by the name of a prominent leader of that day, (Paulicians, Waldenses, etc.) All through the ages there were groups who held closely to the scriptures and who were never at any time a part of the Roman system which was joined to the state by Constantine in A. D. 325 (see Church History notes) The very name "Baptist" was given as a label of contempt by those who tried to destroy them, hunting them down like wild beasts. They were imprisoned, tortured, and murdered for their persistent keeping to

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the Scriptures, the very Word of God. Today there are millions called Baptists, all of whom decided for themselves, and personally received Christ as Saviour, and were baptized upon personal profession of faith and accepted into church membership upon individual, voluntary application.

Baptist owe their existence to no other source than the Bible, the inspired Word of God. Imperfect as they are, failing God often, holding back the Word of God when it ought to be sent to the uttermost parts, yet their roots can be found pushing back through twenty centuries into the fertile soil of biblical truth.

Most churches, cults, and "isms" rest their rule for faith and practice upon one of the following:

1. A book written by man, either used to take the place of the Bible or used to explain it, or as an addition to it.
2. Their founder, to whom they look back for every decision and rule.
3. Popes, cardinals, and councils.
4. Reason, science, and convenience.
5. Emotional thrills and esthetic appeal or personal experience.

I. THE NEW TESTAMENT WAS WRITTEN FOR THE CHURCHES

A. The founding of the local church.

Matt. 16:18 - Ekklesia (ek "out of" kaleo "to call")

Matthew 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.

B. The discipline in the local church.

Matthew 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.

C. The pattern for the establishing of local churches.

1. Gentiles believed the gospel.

Acts 13:48-49 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. 49 And the word of

the Lord was published throughout all the region.

2. *Autonomous (self-governing) churches.*

Acts 14:23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

3. *Missions, a local church ministry.*

Acts 13:2-4 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. 3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. 4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

4. *Missionaries responsible to local church.*

Acts 14:27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

D. All the books in the New Testament were written within the framework of the local church except James, 2 Peter, 2 John and Jude.

1. *The church in the house of Priscilla and Aquila.*

Romans 16:3-5 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: 4 Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. 5 Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.

2. *The churches of Christ,*

Romans 16:16 Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

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3. *The church of God at Corinth,*

1 Corinthians 1:2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

2 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia:

4. *The churches of Galatia,*

Galatians 1:2 And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:

5. *In the church by Christ Jesus,*

Eph. 3:21, Phil. 1:1, Col. 4:16, 1 Thess. 1:1, 2 Thess. 1:1, 1 Tim. 3:15, 2 Tim. (Timothy was a pastor), Titus 1:5-7, Phil. 2, Heb. 13:7, 17, 24, 1 Pet. 5:13, 1 John 2:19, 2 John 6, 9, Rev. 1:4

II. THE BIBLE IS THE FINAL AUTHORITY FOR THE CHURCH

A. The authority for salvation and Christian living.

2 Timothy 3:15-17 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

B. The authority for our conduct in the house of God.

1 Timothy 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.

C. The only authority for our doctrine.

Acts 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

D. The only authority in prophecy.

2 Peter 3:1-2 This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: 2 That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:

III. THE BIBLE IS THE FINAL WORD FOR THE CHURCH

Revelation 22:18-19 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

Not only are these the last verses of the Revelation, but the last in the entire Book, (the Bible) composed of 66 books, inspired by God, and placed in their order under the direction of the Holy Spirit. (Imagine for a moment that Revelation were not the last book in the Bible, and see what confusion it would throw into the Scripture pattern.)

- **WE ACCEPT NO BOOK BEYOND THE BIBLE.**
- **WE HAVE NO FOUNDER BUT CHRIST.**
- **WE HAVE NO LORD BUT CHRIST, AND NO COMMANDS FROM HIM BUT THROUGH THE BIBLE.**

(No personal revelations, dreams, visions, hallucinations.)

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NUMBER TWO - A REGENERATED (born-again) CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.

Most churches receive individuals into membership on one of the following:

1. A mental assent to a God or a Supreme Being.
2. Attendance of an instruction class.
3. A request to join (regardless of morals, habits, etc.)
4. Baptism and confirmation.
5. A request to join honored after salvation is preached.

"Only those who publicly confess Christ, who demonstrate a willingness to obey Christ in baptism, and who endorse the doctrines of the church should be accepted into a local Baptist church. This was clearly the case of the church at Jerusalem (Acts 2:41, 42, 47). While the word ('church') does have a broad nuance (shade of meaning or suggested meaning) of the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22, 23), this nuance is consummative (encompasses all) in nature. More than ninety times in the New Testament the word is used clearly for a local church. Local church means an organized church. Church membership in local, organized churches is taught in the New Testament.

When saved church membership is emphasized, the purity of the church is the issue. The purity of a local Baptist church can be lost by shallow evangelism, acceptance of sprinkling instead of baptism, and the acceptance of church letters from non-baptist churches with different doctrines and concepts of baptism. Baptist churches have historically strived for purity, and they must continue to do so." (Dr. Les Fraiser)

Now let's turn to the Bible and read why we practice regenerated church membership.

I. THE WORD OF CHRIST DECLARES IT.

Matthew 16:16-18 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. 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.

Christ plainly declared that His church is to be built upon the faith that Christ is the Son of God.

This is not merely mental assent (head faith) but a working of the Holy Spirit and a revelation received from God.

II. THE EARLY CHURCH PRACTICED IT.

Acts 2:41-42 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. 42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Notice the order: "received His word - baptized - added unto them." The Scripture order: salvation - baptism - church membership.

Acts 2:47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. (A literal translation: "the Lord added to the church daily such as were being saved.") As they were saved, they united with the church, but not before.

Acts 5:13-14 And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. 14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.

Acts 6:7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

1 Corinthians 1:2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

Notice, the church at Corinth was a group of sanctified people, not a mixed multitude, but a fellowship of saints.

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III. THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH NECESSITATES IT.

Matthew 28:19-20 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

This is Christ's commission to the church. How can unsaved people do this work? We cannot sell that which we do not have. To effectively carry out this command a church must be a company of saved people.

IV. THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE CHURCH DEMANDS IT.

2 Corinthians 6:14-16 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16 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.

The church is to reach the lost, but it is not to be unequally yoked with the lost, in marriage, business or private closed clubs, like the Masons. Unsaved folk in a church never attract any other unsaved to come and hear the Gospel. Rather the church is a fellowship of spirit-filled Christians, which is the attraction.

V. FOR THE SAKE OF THE LOST, WE PRACTICE IT.

Revelation 3:1 ...that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

This may be said of everyone who has been *permitted* to unite with a church before being born again. In calling and witnessing, quite often some well-meaning soul will say, "I'm a member of _____ church; isn't that sufficient?" Merely being a member of a church is not enough.

Recently an 80 year man was baptized. He had been a good man morally. He had believed the Bible and its main beliefs of faith, but without receiving Christ personally. Lest we give a false assurance, only those who can give a clear statement of living faith in Christ are eligible for church membership.

NUMBER THREE - BELIEVER'S BAPTISM BY IMMERSION

This distinctive actually involves four characteristics which make Baptists different from other churches concerning baptism:

1. Only believers are to be baptized, which excludes not only unbelievers who are adult, but infants who neither believe nor disbelieve.
2. Baptism is to be by immersion rather than by sprinkling or pouring.
3. Baptism is not a step in receiving Christ, but a testimony that one already has.
4. Believer's baptism by immersion is necessary for church membership.

The purpose of this paper is to SHOW from God's Word that this is that which the Bible teaches.

"MEANING OF BAPTISM - Among scholars there seems to be an almost unanimous opinion that the word baptize and kindred words in the N. T. mean immerse or dip. The word baptize is a transliteration of the Greek word *baptizo*. King James of England in giving instructions to the translators of our King James Bible specifically stated that the word was not to be translated and this has been followed ever since. Although people may use the word today to mean sprinkle, pour, etc. this will not change what it meant when the N. T. was written and that is what we are interested in. Our meaning should be what we find in the N. T. days.

In Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, fifth edition, put out by the G. and C. Merriam Co. of Springfield, Massachusetts, states that the word baptize comes from a Greek word meaning 'to dip in water.' All the standard Greek lexicons, such as Liddell and Scott's Lexicon and Thayer's Lexicon, state that the word in the N. T. means to dip or immerse. Scholars of other denominations than Baptist admit this is the N. T. meaning." (Overbey, pp. 16)

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I. THE WORD OF CHRIST DECLARES THAT ONLY BELIEVERS ARE TO BE BAPTIZED.

Matthew 28:19-20 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Note that before baptism there is to be teaching. The word "teach" here literally means "make disciples"; make disciples and then baptize them.

Mark 16:14-16 Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. 15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Notice that in v. 16, "believeth" comes first, then "baptized". Notice further, you can omit baptism and be saved, but if you omit belief, you shall be damned (condemned).

II. THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST PATTERNS IMMERSION

Matthew 3:14-15 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? 15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

Baptism is a step in obedience - "fulfill all righteousness" Verse 16, Christ was immersed - "went up . . . out of the water" Our Lord's baptism was a picture of the cross, the tomb, and the resurrection. Christ did not need to be saved. He was Emmanuel or "God with us". Christ was baptized at the beginning of His public ministry to picture His life's work, namely, His death, burial and resurrection.

III. THE PRACTICE OF JOHN ESTABLISHED BELIEVER'S IMMERSION (John the Baptist)

Matthew 3:7-8 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.

John refused to baptize those whose lives did not show forth a change of heart.

John 3:23 And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.

One could sprinkle a thousand people from a bucket of water, but John had to find a spot in the river Jordan that was deep because he was immersing.

IV. THE EARLY CHURCH PRACTICED:

1. belief
2. baptism
3. church membership; in that order.

Acts 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

Acts 8:37-38 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. 38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

V. ITS SYMBOLIC MEANING NECESSITATES BELIEVER'S BAPTISM BY IMMERSION

"Baptism is a picture of what Christ did for us. He died, was buried, and rose again. Since He was our substitute this was our death, burial, and resurrection. In baptism we give a picture of how we were saved. The Bible gives examples of individuals that were saved but not baptized, showing that baptism is not necessary to salvation but is only symbolic.

Luke 23:39-43 tells of the salvation of the thief on the cross without baptism. Abraham is represented in Luke 16 as in Heaven and he was never baptized.

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Acts 16:30, 31 answers the question how to be saved by saying, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.' Baptism is not mentioned in answering this question." (Overbey, pp. 17)

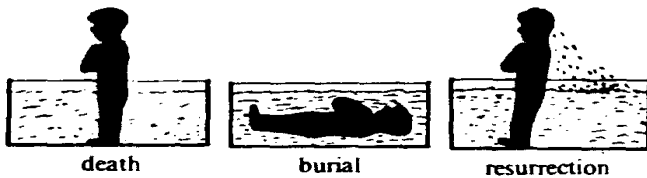
Baptism is a step in obedience according to **Matthew 3:15** And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

It is not just an empty step, but is filled with meaning as revealed in

Romans 6:4-5 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

Notice **v. 5** " . . . planted together in the likeness of His death . . . " Neither sprinkling nor pouring can symbolize the burial and resurrection of Christ.

THE METHOD OF BAPTISM



Colossians 2:12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

Every believer who has been baptized the Bible way has pictured to the world the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

1 Peter 3:21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

This is an important verse on the subject of baptism, but it could be confusing when first read. Note the parentheses, then read the verse without the words contained within them. Here is a literal free translation: "We are saved by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, of which baptism is the figure, which figure

does not put away the filth of the flesh, but is the answer of a good conscience toward God."

Norman Wells in his "Fifty Lessons on the Church" gives:

"THE FOUR REQUIREMENTS OF SCRIPTURAL BAPTISM

1. The proper candidate - a believer (Acts 2:41; 8:13; 8:37)
2. The proper mode - immersion. (Matt. 3:16; Mk. 1:9-10; Jn. 3:23; Acts 8:38, 39; Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12)
3. The proper motive - obedience. (Mt. 28:19).
4. The proper administrator - the church (Mt. 28:19)."

A Christian may follow one of three courses in relation to baptism:

1. Follow the Roman Catholics in changing baptism to the sprinkling of infants.
2. Follow the modernist and just forget about it, o
3. Follow the Bible and be immersed as a believer.

Additional notes on baptism

1. The word "baptize" is not an English word, but a Greek word which was lifted out of the Greek text without translation. "The word means immersion. It was first used by Grecian warriors who dipped their arrow heads in poison. It continues with this meaning through the New Testament era." (Dr. Les Frasier)
2. Anyone who can read German, Swedish, Dutch or Norwegian will want to read the verses referred to in this outline in those languages to see for himself that in those languages the word was translated; for instance, John the Baptist is referred to as "John the Dipper".

3. Testimonies from recognized Bible scholars:

John Calvin - "The very word baptize means to immerse." It is certain that immersion was the practice of the early church." (Note: the oldest Catholic churches contain baptistries. Why? They used to baptize by immersion.)

Martin Luther - "Baptism is a Greek word and may be translated as immersion. I would have those who are baptized to be altogether dipped in water."

John Wesley - "Buried with Him by baptism is alluding to the ancient method of immersion."

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE ON BELIEVER'S BAPTISM

Acts 2: 38,41	Acts 16:14, 15, 31-34
Acts 8:12,13	Acts 19:4, 5
Acts 10:47	Acts 22:16

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NUMBER FOUR - A SEPARATED CHURCH

Not only should the members of a local New Testament Church be a saved people, but they should also be a separated people.

1 Peter 2:9-10 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: 10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16 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.

17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

Many churches neither teach separation nor make any attempt at screening people when they come to unite with the church. There are churches that seem to practice "Continuing in sin that grace may abound:

Romans 6:1-2 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

The BIBLE teaches:

I. WE ARE TO BE SEPARATED FROM FALSE DOCTRINE

1 Timothy 6:3-4 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; 4 He is proud, knowing

nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

A. "Woe unto them that call evil good."

Isaiah 5:20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

B. "Division among the people because of Him" (Christ).

John 7:43 So there was a division among the people because of him.

C. There are those who cause division by denying Bible doctrine.

Romans 16:17-18 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. 18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

D. Avoid foolish questions: Where did Cain get his wife? If God is a God of love why would He send anyone to hell?

Titus 3:8-11 This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men. 9 But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. 10 A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; 11 Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

E. There is only ONE gospel.

Galatians 1:7-8 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 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.

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II. WE ARE TO BE SEPARATED FROM THE WORLD AND ITS STANDARDS

- A. "Blessed is the man that walketh standeth . . . and sitteth NOT . . ."** Psalm 1
- B. God's house to be a house of prayer, not merchandise.**
John 2:13-17 And the Jews' Passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, 14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: 15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; 16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. 17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.
Luke 19:45-46 And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; 46 Saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves.
- C. Avoid immorality.**
1 Corinthians chapter 5. Please read.
- D. Sin is to be reprimanded, without respect of persons.**
1 Timothy 5:20 Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.
- E. Our bodies are to be living sacrifices.**
Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.
- F. We are to glory only in Christ and His finished work.**
Galatians 6:14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus

Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

- G. Our lives to be sober (serious) and righteous.**
Titus 2:11-13 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

III. WE ARE TO BE SEPARATED UNTO CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH

- A. Do all things to the glory of God.**
1 Corinthians 10:31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.
- B. We are to be steadfast.**
1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.
- C. The life lived for Christ in not wasted; it is the only life that really counts.**
Philippians 3:7-14 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: 10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. 12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 13 Brethren, I

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count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

D. Sin need not dominate our lives.

Romans 6:11-13 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. 12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. 13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

E. We are to be identified with Christ.

Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

F. We are to be dedicated to our task.

Hebrews 12:1-2 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

A NOTE OF WARNING

There are certain dangers concerning separation that should be avoided.

1. Pride of separation is pride; pride is sin.

Proverbs 16:18-19 Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. 19 Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.

2. Lack of love or concern for those who disagree with us. Only love wins.

1 Corinthians 13:1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

1 Corinthians 13:13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

3. Separation from the world and unto God is not the end, but only a means to an end -- that our lives might witness for Him.

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

4. Separation except for real devotion to Christ is hypocrisy.

NUMBER FIVE - THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE BELIEVER

"This great distinctive, simply stated, is that every born again believer may pray directly to God, without a human intercessor, through Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:5-6). Direct access to God has been secured by the finished work of Jesus Christ (Heb. 10:19, 20). Although this privilege was not permitted in the O. T., every N. T. believer may enter into the Holy of Holies (1 Pet. 2:1-10). The privilege of prayer and responsibility of the confession of sin is a direct matter with God. It is never done to a human priest or intercessor as representative of God. Of course, there can be hindrances to prayer such as sin, doubt, family problems, bad attitude, etc. However, the believer has both the privilege and responsibility to pray and intercede for others and to involve himself on behalf of a lost world." (Dr. Les Frasier)

Let us first consider what the Bible has to say about a priest.

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The distinction of a priest:

1. He is a man.
2. He is called of God.
3. He wears the garb of his office.
4. He has a sacrifice.
5. He has an altar
6. He has a temple.
7. His work is to intercede (of which incense was a symbol).

I. CHRIST IS OUR HIGH PRIEST

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

A. He was a man.

John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

B. He was called by God to be a priest.

Hebrews 7:17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

C. The garb of His office is His righteousness.

Mark 9:3 And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.

D. He sacrificed Himself.

Hebrews 9:28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

E. His altar was the Cross.

Hebrews 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

F. He has a temple in which to work.

Revelation 11:19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

Hebrews 9:24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the

figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

1 Corinthians 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

G. His work is to intercede in behalf of the saints.

Hebrews 7:25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Read also **John 17** please.

II. ALL BELIEVERS ARE PRIESTS

1 Peter 2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Revelation 1:6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Revelation 5:10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. (All priests are not saints, but all saints are priests.)

A. We are men (mankind).

B. We are called of God.

John 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

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C. We have priestly robes.

(Christ's righteousness)

Philippians 3:9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

D. We have a sacrifice (our bodies).

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

1 Peter 2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

WE ARE TO OFFER UP 5 SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES:

1) **Praise**

Hebrews 13:15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

2) **Gifts**

Hebrews 13:16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

3) **Faith**

Philippians 2:17 Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.

4) **Substance**

Philippians 4:18 But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.

5) **Ourselves**

Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

E. We have an altar where self must die.

Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

F. We have a temple in which the Holy Spirit dwells.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

G. We have the responsibility of prayer.

1 Timothy 2:1-4 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

1 Timothy 2:8 I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

Luke 18:1 And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;

III. THE PRIVILEGES OF THE CHRISTIAN PRIESTHOOD

A. No need to go to sacred persons for Bible interpretation.

Acts 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

John 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

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B. No need to go to sacred places for prayer.

Acts 7:48-49 Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, 49 Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest?

Matthew 6:6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

C. No need to go to sacred people for confession.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

D. There are no sacred positions for the Lord's Table.

The Lord's Table is on the same level as the people. The pastor and deacons serve only as servants, not as priests, for all the saints gathered to partake are priests.

IV. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHRISTIAN PRIESTHOOD

A. To keep our temples clean.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

1 Corinthians 6:14-18 And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power. 15 Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.

16 What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. 17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. 18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he

that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16 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. 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

B. To keep our altar a reality.

Luke 9:23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

Romans 6:11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C. To keep our censor burning, which is prayer.

Revelation 8:3-4 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

Baptist Distinctives

NUMBER SIX -- THE AUTONOMY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

INTRODUCTION: By this we mean that the local church is a self-governing body and cannot be part of another body. Local Baptist churches fellowship together to accomplish missionary work which they could not accomplish alone, but while so doing each remains an entity in itself. What they do together may place a moral obligation on each church, but neither legal nor organizational obligation can be incurred on the local church.

"The cornerstone of Baptist polity (organization) is individual responsibility before God. Responsibility to obey Scripture rests in the body as a whole. Accountability must be given not only to God but to the congregation. This is called the congregational type of polity. In contrast to the congregational type of polity, there is the Papal system of Roman Catholicism, which places the authority in one man. The Episcopalian system, or rule of the bishops, is that system which is endorsed by both Methodists and the Episcopal church. The Presbyterian system is the rule of elders or a representative type of government. Bible churches also use the elder rule system.

The congregational or Baptist type of polity allows no denominational or outside control of a local church. The local church elects its own officers (Acts 6:1-7; 14:23), sends out missionaries (Acts 13:1-4), disciplines its own members (1 Cor. 5:1-5), and serves as the final authority in solving all disputes on the basis of Scripture (Acts 15). Such autonomy does not fall prey to denominational liberalism quickly; however, it depends on a constant education of its membership in the Scriptures and individual responsibility of obedience." (Dr. Les Frasier)

THE AUTONOMY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH IS BASED ON TWO NEW TESTAMENT PRINCIPLES:

I. THE ABILITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN TO KNOW GOD'S WILL

With this comes the idea of Individual Freedom (Responsibility). Dr. Frasier says that "Some have referred to this as soul liberty. However it is expressed, it never carries the idea of self-will or lawlessness. It expresses that individual freedom portrayed in passages like 1 Jn. 2:27 and Rom. 14:5. When the word freedom is used, the attendant responsibility is equally acknowledged. For certainly, there is no such thing as freedom without responsibility. The implementation of this distinctive is seen in Acts 5:29, "We ought to obey God rather than men." While that freedom is acknowledged, the responsibility and accountability, as an individual, is also present.

Man was created as an individual. There are not two people physically, exactly alike. Grace is individually imparted (Eph. 4:7). Spiritual gifts are individually given (1 Cor. 12:7,11,27). The potential of service is individual first of all (Rom. 12:1,2). He is taught and treated as an individual (Jn. 16:12,13). Man is condemned as an individual (Rev. 20:11-15). Baptists refuse forms of worship or obedience enforced upon them from without, yet they quickly acknowledge that they are free and responsible to be obedient to God as individuals and collectively as a church."

A. The Word is the authority for each individual.

2 Timothy 3:15-17 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

B. A responsibility to obey implies a knowledge of His will.

Acts 4:19-20 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. 20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

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Acts 5:29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

C. The consecrated Christian will know His will.

Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

D. The Holy Spirit is the teacher of each.

John 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

E. All believers are equal before God.

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

II. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH TO CARRY OUT GOD'S

WILL. (ON THE BASIS THAT ITS MEMBERS ARE ABLE TO KNOW GOD'S WILL)

A. Christ instructs the church to act.

We take care of our own problems within the body, without any outside interference.

Matthew 18:15-17 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. 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.

B. The early church acted as a body.

Acts 13:1-3 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. 3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

Acts 15:23-28 And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: 24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment: 25 It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, 26 Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. 28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;

C. The responsibilities of the church and state are separate.

Matthew 22:17-21 Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? 18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? 19 Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. 20 And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? 21 They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

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THE AUTONOMY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH OPERATES IN THREE SPHERES:

I. THE LOCAL CHURCH IS NOT SUBJECT TO, NOR PART OF ANY OTHER ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN ITSELF

The local church is composed of individual members not organizations. Thus the couple's club, Harvesters, or choir have no voice in the business of the church. These organizations exist for fellowship within their own group. Any time such organizations begin to influence the direction of a church, such a church has ceased to be autonomous.

Acts 2:41-42 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. 42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

II. THE LOCAL CHURCH IS NOT SUBJECT TO ANY ECCLESIASTICAL POWERS FROM WITHOUT ITSELF.

This means that the local church has neither denominations nor conventions nor any form of an hierarchy over it.

III. THE LOCAL CHURCH IS NOT SUBJECT TO THE STATE NOR THE STATE TO THE CHURCH.

Matthew 22:17-21 Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? 18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? 19 Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. 20 And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? 21 They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

"Baptists do not understand the church and state to have synonymous roles of responsibility from God. The classic passage on this subject is (stated above) Matt. 22:17-22. Christ differentiates responsibility to Caesar and to God. The State protects the church, and believers obey government, but there is not organic union. God established three institutions with different roles. God established the home (Gen. 2:20-25), government (Gen. 9:5,6), and the church (Matt. 16:18). Responsibility toward these three do not conflict. A Christian is to support his government (Rom. 13:1-7), submit to it (Titus 3:1), honor it (1 Pet. 2:13-17), and pray for it (1 Tim. 2:1-6).

Government's responsibility to the church is only illustrated in the United States of America. Separation of church and state (Autonomy) implies that the state guarantees religious freedom for all and any group. Religious groups are neither to be favored nor restricted, except in the endangering of morality and private property. Baptists clearly influenced George Washington and others in adopting this freedom. Baptists acknowledge both church and state to be divine institutions to fulfill God's will in their respective areas.

State churches in Europe or a Shinto state supporting Shinto shrines with state money are clear rejections of the separation of church and state." (Dr. Les Frasier)

Baptist Distinctives

NUMBER SEVEN

THE CHURCH HAS ONLY TWO ORDINANCES

"Baptists have historically held that faith must precede baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:41-42). Baptism for a believer involves both identification and obedience. It is willful identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. These factors involve a belief in the substitutionary Gospel truths of salvation. This involves personal faith before baptism (Acts 8:12, 35-39). At the same time it is in direct obedience to Jesus Christ. Baptism is never a reward but an act of obedience. Because of both identification and obedience, it is impossible to baptize infants." (Frasier)

I. THE BELIEVER'S BAPTISM

The Great Commission:

Matthew 28:19-20 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

With this, the authority to baptize was given to the church by Christ. It is a marching order to be carried into all the world. It is a continuing ordinance for His continuing churches.

II. THE LORD'S SUPPER

Its history grows out of the Jewish observance of the Passover. When the children of Israel were to be brought out of the land of Egypt the Lord commanded them to prepare for this departure by a solemn religious ordinance - the Passover. In its observance we can see many pictures or types of Christ's death so many years later.

1. Each family was to have a lamb without blemish.
2. When killed, the blood was to be placed over the top and on both sides of the door.
3. The lamb was roasted whole - not a bone broken.

4. It was eaten with unleaven bread and bitter herbs. Nothing was to be left - the remains were burned.
5. Judgment fell on all families where the blood had not been applied.
6. The Jews were to observe the Passover once a year in memorial of their deliverance from bondage.

Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper at the time of the Passover, thus turning the shadow of the O. T. into the substance of the N. T.

Jesus, by first eating the Passover according to the law, and then instituting the Lord's Supper, was teaching that one was to take the place of the other - the Lord's Supper, was the fulfillment of the symbols of the Passover.

THE PURPOSE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

A. In the symbols of the Lord's Supper the bread represents the broken body of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. When the believer raises the bread to his lips he is to remember the broken body of Christ.

- a. Jesus was God tabernacled (clothed) in the flesh.
- b. In His body Jesus suffered and was tempted in all manners.

2. One day we shall be like Him.

B. When the believer raises the cup to his lips to partake of the fruit of the vine, he is to remember the shed blood of Christ. There are four reasons why the blood of Christ had to be shed.

1. "All have sinned" and the very fact of sin is a reason why His blood was shed.

2. God punishes sin and this necessitated the shedding of His blood.

3. God's law is unchangeable. Justice had to be satisfied and so the blood of Christ was shed.

Baptist Distinctives

4. No atonement is possible by a violator of the law - it demanded a perfect substitute, Christ.

- C. The believer is to partake of the Lord's Supper in remembrance of Christ.** He is to remember Christ as his Savior, his friend, his prayer-hearing, prayer-answering God.
- D. Participation at the Lord's Supper should be a time of thanksgiving -** "He took the cup and gave thanks." The believer at the Lord's Supper should give thanks for salvation, for his church, for answered prayer, for loved ones, etc.
- E. Observance of the Lord's Supper is to be a time of self-examination.**
- 1. "Let a man examine himself."*
 - 2. The believer is to examine himself as a Christian, as a church member and in his relationship to others.*
 - 3. It is a time of confessing our sins unto God.*
- F. The believer is to remember when he partakes of the Lord's Supper that Jesus is coming again (1 Cor. 11:26).** The Christ who gave His body and blood is coming again and all are to live in anticipation of this "blessed hope."
- G. The disciples "went out" after the Lord's Supper to give their lives in service to Christ.** Every believer should leave the table with the same desire.
- H. Christ gave the command that all believers were to partake of the Lord's Supper.** When the believer comes to the table he does so in obedience to Christ. (Norman Wells; "Fifty Lessons On The Church"; pp. 27-30)

"The Lord's Supper is a memorial and nothing more (Luke 22:19, 1 Cor. 11:25,26, Matt. 26:26-30). Baptists have refused the RC's teaching of transubstantiation (the elements literally becoming the body and blood of Christ), the Lutheran teaching of consubstantiation (that Christ is in, with and under the

elements), or what some Presbyterians have called the spiritual presence of Christ in the elements.

The Lord's Supper is understood to be worship (1 Cor. 11:23-27), fellowship (1 Cor. 10:16,17, 11:33, 34), separation (1 Cor. 10:16-21), and examination (1 Cor. 11:28-32). Because of these concepts, the local church is the sole administrator of the Lord's Supper as well as baptism. Roman Catholics claim seven sacraments or means of grace. Others have included footwashing, etc. However, Baptists recognize only two ordinances." (Frasier)

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: 24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

The church only has the authority and capacity to observe the Lord's Supper. It is only to be observed by the local church. If the church is not in unity in spirit, it is not to be observed.

1 Corinthians 11:18-20 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. 19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. 20 When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.

It should be done in harmony. " ... one faith, one Lord, one baptism."

Ephesians 4:3-5 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism

It is a local church ordinance. The symbol of communion with Christ in faith that He offered His body to die on the cross and shed His blood for our salvation by his grace through faith alone.

Baptist Distinctives

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

It is also a living remembrance of His death until he comes again.

1 Corinthians 11:26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

THE MEANING OF THE TWO ORDINANCES

Baptists as a church have the scriptural understanding and teaching of the meaning of these two ordinances. Generally, non-Baptist churches believe that baptism has saving merit for the sinners towards salvation. They say that baptism is necessary to be born again, to receive forgiveness of sin, to wash away sin, to become a Christian etc. But Baptists scripturally believe that baptism has no saving merit. It is a prerequisite and guard for church membership.

Likewise, the Lord's Supper has no saving merit nor any magical power but is an ordinance to be kept and observed by the local church in remembrance of the death of Christ until He comes again. The local church, by the leading of its pastor, shall have to set a time to observe the Lord's Supper.

NUMBER EIGHT - THE EQUALITY OF MINISTERS

The Baptist belief of the equality of its Pastors or God-called Ministers is a distinct belief. Non-Baptists believe and practice that there are higher positions in the church of God. Many have an idea of a centralized church government with one "Mother" church and many branch churches, like a business firm with a General Manager with many sub-offices. This idea is common in the Catholic and Protestant churches and other modern sects. But the Baptists believe in equality of their Pastors. The Lord instructed His first ministers that there should be no exercise of lordship among them as the Gentiles do.

Mark 10:42-43 But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. 43 But so shall it not be

among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:

The Pastor is the overseer of one local church and has no authority over any other church or churches; as a husband rules only over his house and has no authority to rule another's house or home.

1 Timothy 3:4-5 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

Many groups have the idea that Peter and Paul exercised lordship over many churches. But in the light of the Scriptures we see they were acting as apostles, through whom God was giving orders and instructions to the Pastors and churches. Peter recognized that he was equal among and one with the Pastors or elders. He did not claim that he was the highest, as the Catholic popes claim.

1 Peter 5:1-3 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

Paul was also used of God to write epistles to the Pastors and churches, giving the laws of Christ that were to be obeyed.

The apostles' office ended when the apostles died. There are no apostles now. The New Testament was completed before the apostles' office ended. And Baptist Pastors and churches should only be loyal to Christ. Christ is the head of the church and our Chief Shepherd.

Now let us consider the organization within each church.

Baptist Distinctives

I. Jesus Christ is the Head of each church. Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23.

- A. He alone is our advocate with God. 1 Jn. 2:1
- B. He alone is our mediator. 1 Tim. 2:5
- C. He alone is our High Priest - intercessor. Heb. 7:25
- D. He alone is our only church-foundation. 1 Cor. 3:11

II. The Holy Spirit is the Administrator or Manager of each church.

- A. Each church settles all matters under the direction of the Holy Spirit without interference from other churches.
- B. The N. T. plainly teaches the work of the Holy Spirit.
 - 1. He directs. Rom 8:14
 - 2. He calls to special service. Act. 13:2-4
 - 3. He guides in service. Acts 8:27-29
 - 4. He equips for service.
 - a. He illuminates. 1 Cor. 2:12-13
 - b. He instructs. Jn. 16:13-14
 - c. He impowers. 1 Thess. 1:5

III. The Pastor

- A. In the N. T. the office of pastor was described by five words each signifying a peculiar aspect of the office and a particular duty of the pastor.

- 1. *Elder. This title refers to the position of the pastor as leader in the aspect of conducting business. 1 Tim. 5:17; Acts 11:30. The pastor was not to be a novice.*
- 2. *Bishop. This title is used 5 times in the N. T.*
 - a. It describes a superintendent or an overseer of a working force. Tit. 1:7; 1 Pet. 2:25; Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:2.

- b. By comparing references it is obvious that both Elder and Bishop designated the same office. 1 Tim.. 3:1,2; Tit. 1:5-7; Acts 20:17, 28-30; Phil 1:1

3. *Shepherd of a flock. This title implies that the pastor is to have the same relationship to his congregation as the shepherd does to the flock. 1 Pet. 5:2-4*

4. *Preacher. The pastor is to proclaim God's Word through preaching. 1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11; 2 Pet. 2:5.*

5. *Teacher. The pastor is to teach the whole counsel of God. Rom. 2:20; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11*

B. The personal qualifications of a pastor.

The 24 personal qualifications of a pastor are listed in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-8.

C. The duties of the pastor. They are numerous.

1 Pet. 5:2,3; Tit. 1:9; Acts 20:19; 6:4; 2 Tim. 4:2, 5; Jas. 5:14.

- 1. *He is to preach the gospel.*
- 2. *He is to win the lost.*
- 3. *He is to teach Christians.*
- 4. *He is to visit in homes and pray with the people.*
- 5. *He is to baptise and administer the Lord's Supper.*
- 6. *He to officiate at weddings and funerals.*
- 7. *He is to be a student.*
- 8. *He is to have oversight of all matters of interest to the church.*

D. Our duty toward the pastor.

- 1. *We should love and pray for him.*
- 2. *We should support him. 1 Cor. 9:7-14; 1 Tim. 5:18*
- 3. *We should respect him. 1 Tim. 5:19*

Baptist Distinctives

IV. Deacons

A. The origin of the deacon. Acts 6:1-7.

Deacon means servant.

B. The ordination of the deacons. Acts 6:6,7.

To ordain means to set aside publicly, under the leadership of God by the laying on of hands.

C. The qualifications of a deacon.

They are not much different from those of the pastor. 1 Tim. 3:8-13

D. The duties of the deacon. Acts 6:2,3

1. *They were to administer relief.*
2. *They were to relieve the pastor, to be a pastor-helper.*
3. *Sometimes, nowadays, they handle matters of discipline, serve the Lord's Supper, receive the Lord's offering, etc. They should serve in the capacity that the church directs. Above this they have no authority.*
4. *All N. T. deacons were soul-winners and great men of God.*

E. Our duty towards the deacons. We should

honor the deacons, loving and praying for them, and co-operating with them in the service of the Master."

(Norman Wells; "Fifty Lessons On The Church"; pp. 15-20)

CONCLUSION:

These then, are the marks or distinctives that are to be found in every fundamental Baptist church.

1. THE BIBLE, OUR ONLY SOURCE FOR FAITH AND PRACTICE.
2. A REGENERATED CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.
3. BELIEVER'S BAPTISM BY IMMERSION.
4. A SEPARATED CHURCH.
5. THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE BELIEVER.
6. THE AUTONOMY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH.
7. THE CHURCH HAS ONLY TWO ORDINANCES.
8. THE EQUALITY OF MINISTERS.

Look in the New Testament at the early church and you will find these same distinctives there also. Our goal as Baptist Christians is to be sure that our local church remains as true to the pattern that Christ left for us as it can be, with the help of God.

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR BAPTIST DISTINCTIVES

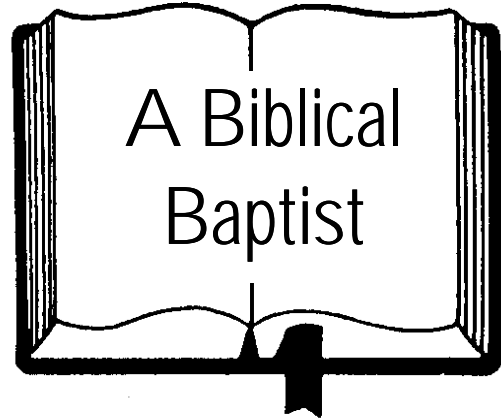
1. I have read all the printed material.
YES ___ NO ___
2. I have looked up _____% of the Scripture references.
3. Write a paragraph on each of the eight Baptist Distinctives and include at least one Bible verse with each distinctive.

Exam for Baptist Distinctives

Student's Name: _____ **Teacher's Name:** _____ **Date:** / /

1. I have read all the printed material. YES ___ NO ___
2. I have looked up _____% of the Scripture references.
3. I have looked up _____% of the Scripture references.
4. Write a paragraph on each of the eight Baptist Distinctives and include at least one Bible verse with each distinctive.

Baptist Distinctives



- S**eparation of Church and State (Matthew 22:21)
—Deacon (1 Timothy 3:13)
- T**wo Offices—Pastor (Acts 20:28)
- S**aved, Baptized Church Membership (Acts 2:47)
- I**ndividual Soul Liberty (Romans 14:5, 12)
—Communion (1 Corinthians 11:23-25)
- T**wo Ordinances—Baptism (Acts 2:41)
- P**riesthood of All Believers (1 Peter 2:9)
- A**utonomy of the Local Church (Matthew 18:17)
- B**iblical Authority (2 Peter 1:21)

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