

## **Baptist Baptism**



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## **Introduction from Pastor Les Potter**

It is extremely important that the subject of Scriptural baptism be addressed and clarified in our time. This little booklet cannot possibly do complete justice to the subject itself. It will scratch the surface, however, of that which has been clouded and myopically redefined by the Protestant influence upon Baptists.

In generations not too distant, the striding gains of apostasy and modernism caused a backlash of reaction among conservative Protestants. A fledgling movement drew a minority within various denominations who banded together under the flag of Fundamentalism. Their tune of militancy for the faith was welcome among those who had seen the decline of its fervency in America. It rang loudly in the Baptist camp also; resting from centuries of persecution by Catholicism and its Protestant reformers alike.

The cadence of fundamentalism boasted a united militancy for basic key truths. Baptists began to swell its ranks. They filled its schools, learned its doctrine, shared its pulpits and funded its cause. Fundamental Baptist schools were founded and staffed by these that now boasted Baptist polity with Protestant ecclesiology. Meanwhile, their prime distinction became diminished and redefined beneath a larger flag.

Nevertheless, many clung to the optimistic thought that the *true root* of fundamentalism was fidelity to every word of the King James Bible. They thought this root would ultimately prevail to the purifying of their mingled movement. While “fundamental Baptists” declared fidelity to Baptist



identity, the fruit of their spiritual fornication produced a generation that spake with a Baptist tongue and a Protestant dictionary. Thus, the lessons of Scripture and history are repeatedly demonstrated. Fundamentalism did not produce Baptists from Protestants. It produced Protestants with a Baptist name.

What centuries of persecution could not do, the Trojan horse of fundamentalism did magnificently. We now find ourselves once again defending the same Biblical truths for which Baptist martyrs suffered. Today, however, it is with brethren that identify with our name and heritage who despise the Bible doctrine that distinguished both. We trust, therefore, that this booklet will help edify those standing for truth and help educate those seeking it.

It is, therefore, an honor for me to co-author this booklet with Pastor Mac Woody, who writes the second half of it. Pastor Woody's section deals with the authority and ordination of baptism. It is, in fact, the capstone of this book. Scriptural ordination in the matter of baptism is a subject that many will simultaneously agree and overlook. It is a fact of human nature that men can live under the shadow of a great truth without grasping it. The ramifications involved in this truth cannot be underestimated. Pastor Woody does an expert job of unfolding this matter from the Scripture. He does it in a manner that is interesting and easily absorbed.

I first met Pastor Woody in 1986. He was an Evangelist at that time, traveling with his tent, preaching in rural parts of the country. He was a man of much zeal and Biblical knowledge that

made an unforgettable impact on me. Many years later, I saw a flier about a Baptist heritage camp meeting. It was hosted by Shiloh Baptist church in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. I was elated when I noticed brother Mac Woody was their pastor. I later received a call from Pastor Woody, who contacted me about a publication I had written. We soon became friends, sharing a kindred spirit and passion for the Lord's doctrine. He eventually became my pastor, from whom I have learned very much. I now pastor a church in Wyoming, being ordained and sent from Shiloh Baptist church. My friendship with and appreciation for Pastor Woody continually deepens through our fellowship and our co-effort in this writing.

Pastor Les Potter PhD.



# Biblical Baptism

**Pastor Les Potter, Glenrock, WY**

## **I. Are New Testament churches required to accept all immersions as their own?**

Scriptural baptism is understood to be a one-time event recognized by God and man. Like many other Biblical truths, however, our proneness to error complicates its simplicity. As early as the first century, the apostle Paul questioned the baptism of a group of disciples who claimed the legitimate baptism of John. Paul found their baptism did not stand up to its name and subsequently “re-baptized” them in Acts 19. The reason this was necessary will be dealt with further on. The point of interest here, however, is that corruption entered the issue of baptism early on. Paul was careful to reset the Scriptural principle. He did this, not by convincing them of doctrinal truth alone. It was followed through by Scriptural immersion. This presents us with a Scriptural precedent for re-baptism when the origin of former baptism is in question. This was, perhaps, a prelude to what would come as corruption and departure from the apostle’s doctrine became prevalent. Throughout the history of Christendom, this precedent has been used, tested, scrutinized, challenged or championed by Christian sects, cults and denominations - as well as New Testament churches.

*The Lord's church*

Our focus of this writing is the Biblical doctrine and practice of baptism among true New Testament churches. The baptism and re-baptism practices among Catholicism, Protestantism and the cults will only be mentioned in reference. The New Testament church itself was founded by Christ in His earthly ministry. He commissioned it to propagate itself and New Testament churches have continued ever since as promised. In this writing, these will otherwise be referred to as historic Baptist churches. It is known they were called by other names throughout history, according to their time and location. Their identification with the Lord's church and its promise of perpetuity is clear, however. We can know them by their faithfulness to the Lord's doctrine as carried by His apostles. There are many in the family of God that, although saved by grace through the blood of Christ, do not identify with the New Testament church. As contrary to ecumenical, Protestant doctrine this is, there is no denying that popular Christianity has little in common with the church that Christ founded.

The realm of God's salvation is as the field which the Lord bought for the treasure hid within it. That treasure is His church.<sup>1</sup> Those that dwell in the field are bought by the blood of Christ, and are part of the family of God. Some among this family are more obedient to Christ than others. All will stand to be judged and rewarded according to faithfulness to Him.<sup>2</sup> The field,

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<sup>1</sup> An illustration of Matthew 13:44

<sup>2</sup> MT 16:27; 1Cor. 3:8&14; Col 3:24; Heb. 2:2; 2JN 1:18; Rev. 11:8; Rev 22:2

however, was bought for its treasure, for which the Lord gave everything to purchase. <sup>3</sup> While the field now resembles the world around it in growing proportions, the Lord's true church will not lose its identity. The Lord promised the gates of hell would not prevail against His church.

### *The Lord's heritage*

The Lord always gives a visible means of distinguishing that which He has promised to perpetuate. The priesthood of Aaron's generations, for example, was continued by a special anointing. <sup>4</sup> Likewise the ordination of ministry is verified by the laying on of hands. As we will see in this study, the Lord Himself established an ordinance that verifies our connection to the heritage of His church. <sup>5</sup> That heritage cannot be presumed upon by religion. Nor is it owned by hollow claims of doctrinal orthodoxy without literal authority.

John Bunyan described the two ordinances as two chained lions guarding the gate of the palace beautiful. <sup>6</sup> As such, they prevent all but those who come through the narrow way between. Men may allow that which copies, corrupts or weakens the ordinance, but this only ensures a disconnection from that which the Lord promised

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<sup>3</sup> Eph. 5:25 and chapter.

<sup>4</sup> Exodus 40:15

<sup>5</sup> This is NOT speaking of salvation, but of the institution He called His "church."

<sup>6</sup> From John Bunyan's *Pilgrims Progress*. The reference to the palace beautiful is not heaven, but the New Testament church. The two lions are the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper to try the faith of some. They illustrate that which protects the purity of the church, not salvation.

would continue. As such, the Lord's truth and baptism continue without regard to the claims, presumptions and standards of men.

*The Lord's Headship of each NT church.*

The ordinances the Lord gave His church are understood only within the realm He gave them to be practiced. To conceptualize them outside the New Testament church will only serve to redefine them. This New Testament church is a completely autonomous organism, answering directly to the Lord. Each is independent from all but heaven itself. As such, each church has authority to recognize other New Testament churches as an equally autonomous authority. It may join in supporting their missionaries, for example. It may also accept the baptism of other New Testament churches through transfer of new members. By the same token, a church also has the autonomous authority to *not* join in the support of other church's missionaries and to *not* automatically accept the baptism of other churches.

Today, it is most common among churches of all backgrounds to accept members of nearly any immersion. Many among the fundamental Baptist ranks will accept some Protestant immersions while not accepting others. But overall, the general acceptance of most immersions has become so common; it is almost *thought* to be a mandate. People who float from church to church may expect each church to rubber stamp their baptism. But there is no Scriptural mandate that a church *must* accept ANY baptism outside its own doors. The better part of history, in fact, bears out a different tradition than today. Many New Testament churches; and even some Protestant

sects; were very careful with the baptisms they received; even to the point of exclusivity to each congregation. For example: there were those of the Waldensians, Donatists and Anabaptists (who are of the lineage of historic Baptists) who were known to receive members only through baptism. This was regardless of prior baptism even among their own. <sup>7&8</sup> The Novatians (an early separatist

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<sup>7</sup> For an example: Baptist historian John T. Christian, cites the research of Professor J. L. Reynolds, D. D., Professor in Columbia College, South Carolina, on the subject of alien immersion and rebaptism. Dr. Reynolds refers to the Protestant sect of Mennonites which had brief company with Anabaptists (though having a distinct origin and baptism) states: [Page 438] *The Mennonites (so called from Menno, who died 1571) rebaptized all who were admitted into their communion. This is the statement of Neudecker, Lebrd. Dogmende, 621. Once more: The vast body of the Mennonites adhered to the ancient practice **which they had received from the earlier Anabaptists** (The Christian Index, May 26 and June 16, 1843). - John T. Christian, A History of the Baptists, (Texarkana, TX, Bogard Press 1926; rpt. 1997), pp. 437-441.*

<sup>8</sup> Below is article 13 of a confession of faith in 1611 written by Thomas Helwys (considered a “Baptist Arminian”). His affiliation appears to be that of independent, Puritan-separatist origin, though the core of his theology and ecclesiology were clearly Baptist. These churches received members only by baptism, citing its practice to be of **primitive origin**:

*“13. That every Church is to receive in all their members by baptism, upon the confession of their faith and sins wrought by the preaching of the Gospel, according to the primitive institution and practice. And, therefore, Churches constituted after any other manner, or of any persons, are not according to Christ’s testament” (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:41).*

<http://www.reformedreader.org/history/cramp/s06ch03.htm> Cited 28Dec2011



Protestant sect) did likewise in their quest to distance themselves from Rome. <sup>9</sup>

*The Lord's ordinances and our faithfulness  
to keep them.*

Baptists today are largely unfamiliar with this practice although the conditions prompting it in our history are just as ripe in our present times. The natural conclusion of brethren today (as probably in history also) is that exclusivity of baptism (or “re-baptism”) is simply a contempt for all baptisms outside their own. This is a simplistic and natural assumption. The complete truth, however, goes much deeper. As we consider this matter, we gain a fuller understanding that cannot accurately abide with this indictment as stated. To properly understand it, we must consider the paradigm in which this ordinance was set. Scriptural baptism is reckoned only within the sphere of the individual New Testament church body. While that church will recognize the authenticity and autonomy of other true New Testament churches, each is a world in itself over which Christ is the Head. In that regard, the Lord may lead a church to employ an expedient that is proactive to their time and

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<sup>9</sup> Also cited by John T. Christian: *The Novatians, dissatisfied with the lax discipline of the Church of Rome, seceded from it, A. D. 251, and organized themselves on the most rigid principles. Claiming to be the true church they baptized, without distinction, all who were admitted to their communion. Applicants from other churches, were of course, rebaptized. They were the first Puritans — Cathari — and there is little doubt that they were opposed to infant baptism . . . The ground assumed by those separatists, as well as those who succeeded them, was that the Catholic Church (so-called) was become corrupt and anti-christian.* Ibid. John T. Christian, page 438

spiritual surroundings. He might not lead another church in another place to do the same. In either case, to its own master it standeth or falleth. As an executive body, a church has no authority to legislate any doctrine or tradition apart from Scripture. It is given all authority, however, to implement the means of carrying out its mission in all purity, by the will of its Head. <sup>10</sup>

## **II. What is baptism?**

Evangelicals and Baptist Protestants will typically answer that baptism is a Christian's first step of obedience and nothing more. In their efforts to clarify against the heresy of baptismal salvation, Evangelicals and Fundamentalists frame a portion of what Scripture teaches about baptism. They then canonize this myopic definition as the doctrinal standard on which they base their practice.

The weightier aspects of Biblical baptism that remain outside that frame are spiritualized, following the order of classic Protestantism. That is, they are mysticized to coincide with the *salvation experience*. This is, in fact, one of the first doctrinal differences between historic Baptists and Protestants (regardless of whether or not they identify as "Baptists").

Protestantism integrates salvation with a mystical "*baptism*" and mystical "*church*." This is what they call the "*true church*" which is

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<sup>10</sup> **Matthew 18:18** Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

synonymous with salvation.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, salvation is consummated by means of a mystical, spiritual “*baptism*” into a mystical, invisible “*church*.” This “*church*” to them is the realm of Christendom comprised of all believers. Literal water baptism, therefore, becomes only a picture of *another* baptism which they consider to be the “*true baptism*.” That is, of a spiritual “*baptism of salvation*” into an invisible, mystical body. By understanding this doctrinal mindset, we understand the rationale of Evangelical-Protestant baptism.

The water baptism of Protestant Evangelicalism or Protestant Fundamentalism is ultimately, therefore, tied to salvation as an illustration of their mystical-invisible “*true*” baptism (while they adamantly claim their water baptism has nothing to do with salvation). In contrast, the Scriptural baptism of the New Testament church remains clearly distinct. It is **not** an inferior proxy baptism of a mystical, “*true*” baptism. It does **not** illustrate an invisible baptism of salvation. It is the believer’s literal,

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<sup>11</sup> Let the reader be mindful that Protestantism is reformed Catholicism (which means “universal”). Baptismal salvation was one of the earliest cultic heresies incorporated within the body of catholic doctrine. This is essentially retained today in the common form of *spirit baptism*. Thus, regardless of individual salvation or affiliation, Protestants are identified as such by their common doctrine. There are saved brethren today that proudly identify as Baptist, but whose essential doctrine is Protestant. Many are even hostile to the Biblical doctrine that historically distinguished Baptists from Protestants. If our doctrine is not what defines us, however, then what does? Therefore, regardless of name, those that embrace Protestant doctrine cannot fairly be considered Baptist in the true historic sense of the word.

visible means of identifying with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ and our addition to His visible body on earth, the New Testament church. Water baptism is an ordinance that Jesus Christ set in His church. Therefore, the New Testament church esteems its baptism far greater than the Evangelical Protestants do theirs. This should seem a paradox considering that ***Biblical baptism*** has **no part in salvation**. Biblical doctrines, however, are always stronger in their pure form. They are weakest when “improved” upon by men.

Let the reader note that mystical imitations counterfeit ordinances did not begin with Rome. The Bible and history record there are fraudulent replications to nearly every truth from the beginning of time. From outward appearances, they are often indistinguishable in practice. When heathen idolaters sacrificed to false gods, they did so with devotion and in the same manner as those who sacrificed to the God of heaven. From the viewpoint of heaven, however, the differences were stark. Those differences are ultimately rooted in doctrine and authority. Likewise, the chaste bride of Christ and the whore of Babylon may share some similarities to the eyes of the flesh. When we view them Biblically, however, they starkly differ by their root of doctrine and authority.

Satan does not create; he counterfeits. Therefore, anything of any importance is going to have a similar version that effectively changes the intent and purposes that God created for it. None of us should be so naïve as to not suspect water baptism has a counterpart. Furthermore, it is certain that in any such case, it will appear

identical to the eyes of the flesh. We should not be ignorant of such mysteries, however because our discernment is not to be based on the flesh. The Kingdom of God is equipped with the tools and the power to try the spirits of truth and error. As we challenge every premise and build our understanding from Scripture, we glimpse the viewpoint of heaven. Only then can the mysteries of Babylon begin to lose their cloak.

*Biblical baptism pertains to death, not life.*

Aside from contradicting what the Bible teaches of baptism, the notion of a Spirit baptism of salvation contradicts what the Bible teaches about the Holy Spirit. The work of the Holy Spirit in the believer pertains to **life, not death**. But Biblical baptism pertains to **death, not life**.

RM 6:3-4 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were **baptized into his death**?<sup>4</sup> 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.

1Co 15:29 Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then **baptized for the dead**?

Associating the Holy Spirit with that which pertains to death in the believer is no minor corruption. While the neo-baptists might argue that their spirit baptism and water baptism are “*two different baptisms*,” they will also say that water baptism is a *picture* of the “*one true*” spirit

baptism. Therefore, their water baptism and their mystical baptism are interdependent and mutually defining. It is clear they are also mutually contradictory. Thus, their mystical, sacerdotal baptism, which they presume to be life is acted out by that which Scripture portrays as death. Scriptural baptism buries those who are already dead and crucified to the world. Their resurrection from the water is a testimony of newness of life.

It is important to note here that the Bible does not always use baptism to mean water baptism. The literal term simply means an overwhelming or immersion. Whenever the term “baptism” is applied to something other than water baptism, the words and context of Scripture are clear and specific. Thus, the baptism of suffering which the Lord endured (Matthew 20:22) was not speaking of the ordinance of water baptism. Nor was the baptism with the Holy Ghost, as prophesied by John the Baptist and promised of the Lord. This “baptism with the Holy Ghost” at Pentecost was an **empowerment** of the church, exactly as the Lord defined it in Acts 1:8. It was to happen in the four places the Lord said, and so it did. This baptism with the Holy Ghost was not the salvation of those whose names were already written in the book of life (Luke 10:20), who had been baptizing converts (John 4:1-2) and had the Lord’s Table (Matthew 26:26-28); who had the keys to the kingdom (Matthew 16:19) and who were commissioned with the gospel (Matthew 28:18-20). The point is, there is never a baptism in Scripture (literal, mystical or otherwise) that gives anyone life. We will deal with this matter of the

baptism with the Holy Ghost in more depth toward the end of the first half of this writing.<sup>12</sup>

*The doctrinal distinction*

Historic Baptists maintain that salvation is by the grace of God, which is a separate matter from baptism and church; both of which are literal and visible. As we have previously noted, Evangelical-Protestants, independent Fundamental-Protestants and neo-Baptist Protestants maintain the trace doctrine of **baptismal salvation** in a **spiritual form**. Most, however, will rightfully reject baptismal salvation in the literal form as salvation by works. The “*one true*” baptism they claim is a baptism of salvation performed *mystically* by the Spirit. Therefore, seeing it is not of their works and does not contradict grace, this baptism of salvation is codified in the foundation of their system of doctrine. Most importantly, it coincides with the intrinsic concept on which the Protestant perception of “church” is based.

Anyone professing Biblical purity should recognize that when dogma lacks Biblical root, it has a pedigree from another source. Indeed, the ecclesiology of Protestantism is ultimately reformed Catholicism. Their profession of *sola scriptura* (Scripture alone) cannot apply to the ecclesiology of reformed Catholicism. To do so would ultimately contradict their-own authority outside the New Testament church. Their foundational premise that salvation is synonymous with “church,” and that this “church” is a mystical, invisible entity, is clearly not derived of Scripture. Furthermore, the idea that we enter

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<sup>12</sup> Page 49

this salvation/church by mystical, invisible baptism is clearly a platonic corruption of what Scripture teaches on baptism.

Doctrinal Protestants wearing the “Baptist” moniker today will be particularly loath to own their self-opposition in this matter. It cannot be denied, however, that any Baptist church organized under this Protestant doctrine is *Protestant* – regardless of name. It is likewise inarguable that a church that is founded as a New Testament church, but which later incorporates Protestant doctrine, is now also Protestant. The baptism they give is, therefore, now of a different authority and doctrine. Obviously, the true definition of the names and adjectives we use to identify ourselves are given to change and corruption. Our doctrine is the only means by which we can truly be identified.

We establish, therefore, that any doctrine that does not spring from Scripture is alien to it, regardless of the name and claims of those who teach it. Since baptism itself is a doctrine (Heb. 6:2), any immersion performed as a picture of a corrupt doctrine is corrupt. It is of alien authority. This is regardless of proper mode or true sincerity of the participants. The water baptism of Evangelicals and neo-Baptistic churches, though it is very special and rightfully meaningful to them, is not the same water baptism of the New Testament church. This fact has been a well-established and deeply held conviction in the history of the New Testament church from its founding. This was no minor conviction for those who became known generally as “re-baptizers” (Anabaptists). They paid a great price in blood, persecution and the perpetual derision of



brethren for not accepting Christian immersion outside the New Testament church. They understood a definite difference between the two. Although the *mode*<sup>13</sup> may have been *exactly* the same, the difference in Scriptural authority was clarified in Scriptural doctrine. The love of Christ constrains us, therefore, to mark the Scriptural difference still today.

In a nutshell, when churches function under the doctrine that salvation entails a sacerdotal, mystical baptism into an invisible body, it changes the nature of the physical, water baptism they give. In every case, the water baptism they give will be a *ritual picture* of that doctrine. It is now, therefore, **not** the *ordinance* that Christ commissioned to His church (though they may call it an ordinance). Instead, it is ultimately a picture of a religious sacrament, which has no premise in Scripture. For simple proof to substantiate this, we only need to go to Eph. 4:5 “One Lord, one faith, one baptism.” They will interpret the “one baptism” in that passage to be

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<sup>13</sup> Immersion in the Trinitarian formula was the standard mode of baptism in Roman Catholicism until the Council of Ravenna, in AD 1311. There are sects of Eastern Orthodox that still immerse today, as well as many Protestant sects. Many independent, non-denominational/inter-denominational Protestant churches immerse in the exact same form the Bible prescribes, though under different doctrine and authority. Many of these will not accept the immersion of the cults, who immerse the exact same way they do. Their reason? It is an immersion performed under a doctrine that is alien to theirs. The cults, likewise, do the same. It should, therefore, be of no great offense if a NT church does not recognize Protestant or neo-Baptist immersion into their membership.

their “spiritual baptism” and not the water baptism our Lord gave us.<sup>14</sup>

This may seem a difficult truth for some. The prime argument opposing it is that their immersion was meaningful and Scriptural as a first act of obedience. However, if this argument is sufficient to validate a baptism, then we must also accept all forms of immersion, no matter the administrator. (In so doing, we also elevate individuals as the legislator and judge instead of Christ). In the opinion of this author, it is important that we should ***never*** disparage the *righteousness* of those who followed the light they had in any kind of previous baptism. Had they not followed what they knew *then*, they would not likely be a candidate for Scriptural baptism *now*. Any disciple that is pressing toward the mark will testify that we progress according to *obedience* to the light we are given. If we continue following Him, however, we are transformed to the renewing of our minds as we progress toward his likeness. If, according to the light we had, a

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<sup>14</sup> Neo-Baptists of Protestant doctrine will argue that the “one baptism” of Eph. 4:5 is a mystical spirit baptism. That premise contradicts their-own adherence to Baptist polity. If the “one baptism” is indeed mystical and spiritual, they should admit either that they have two baptisms or that their water baptism is an untrue baptism. We know, of course, there are many faiths and many lords in this world. Ephesians 4:4-5 is clear there is only one *true* Lord, only one *true* faith and one *true* baptism. While many practiced immersion in Judaism, John’s baptism was the “one baptism” authorized of God. That “one baptism” continues today (by Christ’s commission) though many in Christendom may practice their own immersion.

See also regarding the plurality of “baptisms” in Hebrews 6:2 on pages 41&42

previous baptism was meaningful, though now doubtful in authority, it should be *more* meaningful to follow the light we *now* have. It is of this author's opinion that this should be our approach if counseling baptism to new members. Their former "baptism" had its place in the building blocks of their spiritual growth. It is now part of what brought them to the water's edge of Scriptural baptism.

Today as throughout history, there are those who follow in Scriptural baptism who were previously baptized. They may do so for a number of reasons. Some may want to remove doubts of an unscriptural baptism. Some may do so to join a church that requires it of all new members. In any case, it has nothing to do with their salvation. It is a matter of good conscience toward God and faithful testimony before men. Therefore, pastors that will validate Protestant baptism, (even from "Baptist" churches) do a great disservice to their people and their Lord. As a faithful under-shepherd, our integrity in this matter is rooted in our love and honor for each.

### *The historic root of distinction*

The baptism that Christ gave His New Testament church has been jealously held since its reception. As self-ordained religious groups began performing immersion in Christ's name, the distinction of the Lord's true baptism was brought the forefront. Whenever counterfeit bills are circulated into an economy, the marks of the *true bill* are carefully sought and studied. In Christendom, the religious counterfeits assume authority to administer the Lord's ordinances based solely on their profession of Christianity.

This is without regard to the distinction between the Lord's New Testament church and the realm of salvation. Thus, we note again, their understanding of "church" is synonymous with "salvation" in its universality of the saints. This error rivaled New Testament church doctrine and its baptism soon after the apostolic age. It is the foundation of the body of Catholic doctrine as well as Protestantism. This doctrine is ultimately the square root of difference between the Lord's New Testament church and the realm of Christendom.

*Test your own criteria*

Baptism is therefore the mark of one's doctrinal root and heritage. Protestant Evangelical baptism may be identical in mode to New Testament church baptism, just as it is among some Catholic sects and cults. Such immersions, however, have never been recognized among New Testament churches. It is important that we understand that the Lord never refers to the realm of salvation to be synonymous with His church.<sup>15</sup> If the ordinance of baptism were commissioned to the family of God as a whole, with none in particular commanded to perform it, then baptism would necessarily be tied to salvation. Furthermore, anybody and everybody could legitimately baptize on their own authority, which must then be universally accepted.

If, however, the Lord commissioned the ordinances specifically to His New Testament church, then we have a completely different

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<sup>15</sup> Those who use the term "church" synonymously with the realm of salvation have no Biblical foundation to support this presumption. They do, however, have a religious premise which is ultimately based on Catholic/Protestant ecclesiology.

outlook of baptism. The Lord appointed His church as the executive of His kingdom in Luke 22:28-30. The kingdom over which the church is appointed is the kingdom of God on earth. The church is His seat of authority in this realm. We are seated there according to His will to exercise the gifts necessary to accommodate that body.<sup>16</sup> It is much like an ambassadorship that is appointed and staffed by its home government. There may be many of its citizens dwelling in that land who also identify with its flag. They are not the embassy, however. These expatriate citizens may even do good things of their own accord to promote the image of their home-land. The home government, nevertheless, conducts business through its appointed executive, its embassy.

The Lord likewise directs his work in the kingdom of God through His church. The Lord appointed no other executive to carry out His will. We would, therefore, disregard the Headship of Christ to recognize the immersion of any other agent presuming to baptize. In so doing, we would also be overstepping our assigned realm as executive and presume ourselves in the legislative realm belonging to God. A casual familiarity with Baptist history will bear witness that this important doctrinal concept has been brought to the forefront and reset time and again since the apostolic century.

*Since baptism was given to the Lord's church . . .*

The Lord's church not only received His ordinances, but also received His promise of perpetuity (MT 16:18; Mt 28:20). This presents us

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<sup>16</sup> 1Co 12:18 (and chapter) with Eph. 2:6

with some simple facts to consider: 1) Salvation is by the grace of God through the blood of Jesus Christ. Salvation itself is not found through church membership, baptism or any work of man. 2) During the Lord's earthly ministry, He founded His church. 3) The Lord gave this church its ordinances and a promise that it would continue to the end of the world. 4) There are many denominations and inter-denominational assemblies within Christendom today that are not that which He founded and appointed. These vary in all doctrines but one: *that salvation is synonymous with a mystical "church" by way of a mystical baptism.* 6) This root doctrine essentially identifies between the Lord's church and those founded independently by men. 7) Yet the Lord promised that the church *He* founded would continue.

This is why New Testament churches are founded under the ordaining authority of New Testament churches. When individuals start a church and baptize without that authority, they are operating by means of one of the earliest doctrinal diversions in Christendom. Their doctrine will ultimately reveal an invisible, universal church synonymous with salvation.<sup>17</sup> They will likewise believe in a spiritualized

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<sup>17</sup> It is very typical among neo-Baptists to disdain the terminology while embracing the exact doctrine of the term. Most neo-Baptists who believe in an invisible, mystical body of Christ that is comprised universally of all saved; and who believe "the true church" is the realm of salvation, may still be instinctively adamant that they do not believe in a "universal church." Thus, their Baptist sentiment clashes with their true indoctrination. This further illustrates why it is our doctrine that defines us, not our terminology.

baptism of salvation into this invisible “church.” Thus, their water baptism depicts their doctrinal root and is tied to it. Their affiliation name and polity are completely irrelevant at this point.<sup>18</sup> When “Independent, Fundamental, Baptists” operate under this premise, they share a doctrinal root with the great whore and her daughters – though they may simultaneously hate her. When other “Independent Fundamental Baptist churches” accept that baptism, they violate the purity and legitimacy of their own baptism before the Lord and among New Testament churches.

*The historic expedient to preserve purity*

It is for this reason in various periods of history, there were New Testament churches that were known to baptize all comers, regardless of prior immersion.<sup>19</sup> & <sup>20</sup> The importance of the Lord’s ordinance dictates a charge of faithfulness, consistency and purity. The preponderance of error, the subjective use of terms and the difficulty in verifying them were prevalent issues in history as today. The policy of baptizing all saved comers regardless of prior immersion was an ancient expedient employed to preserve the purity of the Biblical ordinance. In our own day,

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<sup>18</sup> The first doctrinally diverse Christians to presume unauthorized baptism likewise identified themselves by the same name as the Lord’s disciples.

<sup>19</sup> This is where the term “Anabaptists” (re-baptizers) came from.

<sup>20</sup> For an example: D. B. Ray quotes in historical research *“The fact that the Waldenses baptized all whom they received into fellowship, even when they had been previously immersed by others, is positive proof that the Waldenses practiced immersion or burial in baptism”*. D B Ray, Baptist Succession, (Parsons, KS: Foley Railway Printing Co.,1912), Page 412

even with information at our fingertips, it can be an uncomfortably subjective and sensitive matter to determine the background of a baptism. There are many churches that present a perfect doctrinal statement whose founding and actual practice are a complete departure from Scripture. Some churches may exist as a disgruntled, unrepentant faction of a church split. Their statement of faith, however, will not reveal this. Furthermore, there are pastors that have baptized many who later became convinced of a Biblical position, but who stopped short of being Scripturally baptized or Scripturally ordained. This is a common situation in our time in which their public statement identifying themselves as an “historic Baptist” is more of an ideal than substance.<sup>21</sup> To investigate and determine these things is extremely cumbersome and awkward if not impossible to ascertain. But to disregard our responsibility in maintaining the purity of baptism is unbiblical, unfaithful and one for which we will stand in judgment.

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<sup>21</sup> Baptist historian John T. Christian quotes a case from 1791 where a Baptist pastor came to Virginia whose preaching was effectual to the conversion and baptism of many. It became known, however, that his own immersion was Protestant. The churches in that region “*determined not to receive him or those baptized by him, unless they should submit to be rebaptized*” which they eventually did. - John T. Christian, *A History of the Baptists*, (Texarkana, TX: Bogard Press, 1926), pp. 439. The complication in this matter is many times greater in our time due to the lack of faithfulness. Many Baptists have traded the apostolic faith for the deluding influence of ecumenical, Protestant fundamentalism. Since baptism is not a “fundamental of the faith” it is effectively marginalized – and therefore Protestantized.



### III. **The principle of expedient: An expedient built upon principle.**

All churches, organizations and individuals have a right to set policies in order to maintain consistency in any given situation. The use of policy is generally an *expedient for the purpose of carrying out or preserving an underlying principle*. For example: some churches pass an offering plate and some have a drop box at the back of the auditorium. Either method is an extra-Biblical expedient to the Biblical principle of supporting the church. Determining the soundness of an expedient lies in whether it violates or validates Biblical doctrine in some other way. If it protects or furthers a Biblical doctrine while interfering with no other, the expedient may be considered sound (depending, perhaps, on other relevant factors including motive).

Biblically sound or not, every church, denomination or religious congregation has a policy regarding baptism. Some will accept baptism from only certain denominations. Some do not recognize immersion from any but themselves. This is their policy, which is an expedient *to carry out or preserve their underlying principle*. There are many churches today of Baptist polity and name that will accept some Protestant immersion. Some will even stipulate that the only requirement of valid immersion is the Trinitarian formula. Here again, this is their policy *which is born of their doctrinal root*. If their underlying doctrine is indeed Biblically correct, then their expedient to that doctrine is also. Ultimately, their expedient policy reveals their *true* doctrine. When a Baptist church

accepts doctrinally Protestant immersion to its membership (even if given by a church of Baptist name), the baptism that church gives must then be considered Protestant. In other words, the baptism they accept is the baptism they give.

A New Testament church, under the headship of Christ, may also exercise whatever expedient necessary to protect the purity of the Lord's ordinance. Such an expedient would be particularly necessary in an apostate environment. This authority was given to the church in Matthew 18:18. It is not a legislative authority, but an authority of operation within its executive responsibility. An example of comparison would be a city police department. It is commissioned to carry out laws set by the city. As such, it is not legislative, but executive. It must, however, set policies that are expedient to carrying out its charge in the best way possible. Likewise, New Testament churches have historically adapted policies to carry out their commission. These befit their time, place and environment according to the Lord's leading.

### *The Lord's baptism from John*

God ordained John the Baptist to baptize and prepare the way of the Lord. The place where John was baptizing was Bethabara near Jericho <sup>22</sup> (John 1:28). Mark 1:9 tells us **“And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.”** The distance is approximately 75 miles, which is a 3 or 4 day journey by foot

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<sup>22</sup> This is likely the place, or near the place, where Joshua and the children of Israel crossed into the Promised Land.

through rough country. It is important to note there were others among the Jews at that time performing a ritual of immersion of their own. Our Lord could have easily sought immersion by any of these much closer to home. The fact that He didn't is an indictment on those who will legitimize all immersion as baptism. We see from Christ's example that baptism is not simply a matter of immersion. It is a matter of God-ordained authority.

Jesus Christ identified with John in receiving his God-ordained baptism. It was that same baptism that He gave to His disciples who baptized under His authority (John 4:1-2). We see by this how the Lord's New Testament church practiced this ordinance from the early part of His earthly ministry. The Lord also commissioned them to continue this ordinance before He ascended to heaven. That commission came with a promise of an empowerment (Acts 1:8) which came on the day of Pentecost. The preaching of the word on that day resulted in 3,000 souls being saved and then "*added unto*" the Lord's church by means of baptism.

If we will consider carefully this matter of the 3,000 who were added upon baptism, we may see how it further disproves a major plank in the Catholic, Protestant and neo-baptist belief system. That is, the notion that "*church*" is synonymous with "*salvation.*" If "*the church*" is a universal entity comprised of all who are saved; and if these 3,000 were added unto this church by baptism; then salvation is obtained through the work of baptism. While our neo-baptist friends rightfully and heartily reject the heresy of salvation by baptism, their Protestant system of doctrine bears

record of self-contradiction. Here are some reasons to consider why:

The errant doctrine of baptismal salvation was indeed one of the first to enter into Christendom. It was later incorporated into the platform of Catholicism. The Protestant reformers of the Catholic system carried on this belief in the form of a “*spiritual sacrament*.” This is altogether different from the sealing of the Holy Spirit, which we receive at salvation (Eph. 1:13; 4:30). It is a mystical progression from one unbiblical notion (baptism as a means of grace) to another. If salvation now involves a mystical, invisible baptism into a mystical, invisible “church” then you have the same spirit of error. You also retain the basic premise that “*salvation*” is synonymous with a “*church*” and therefore mutually interdependent.

Biblical baptism, however, is a completely different matter. It is performed as an ordinance of the Lord’s New Testament church upon those who have demonstrated the fruits of repentance and profession of faith. The Lord’s water baptism is not a picture of another (so-called) “*true baptism*.” That is, it does not represent anything related to the heretical doctrine of baptismal salvation. Therefore, the water baptism of those who baptize under that doctrine is another baptism altogether.

### *One baptism*<sup>23</sup>

Nobody would question that this baptism was the one, true authorized baptism of Christ. Yes,

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<sup>23</sup> See also pages 41 & 42 regarding the plural form of baptisms in Hebrews 6:2

there were others practicing their own immersions at this time, but they were obviously not the “*one baptism*” (Eph. 4:5) the Lord gave His church.<sup>24</sup> We read much later in Acts 19:1-5 how Paul met disciples baptized unto what they claimed to be “John’s baptism.” They were obviously not baptized by John himself. John mentioned the Holy Spirit at his baptism, which these knew nothing about. He also pointed to the Lamb of God, who continued with his baptism while John decreased (JN. 3:30). Bear in mind that in the preceding chapter, we see that Apollos had John’s baptism and was not rebaptized. It is likely that these disciples in Acts 19 were of a sect claiming to continue John’s baptism, which had become a version of their own. Nobody was given authority to John’s baptism but John himself. John gave this baptism to Jesus Christ, who commissioned it to His church. Anyone else offering immersion, whether in the name of John or Jesus, did so spuriously of their own authority. Paul recognized this immersion was not legitimate and gave them the “*one baptism*” Christ authorized through His NT church. Paul was, then, a true “Anabaptist” (rebaptizer) from which we get our name. Protestant, fundamental Baptists today would have declared that immersion valid and brought them into the membership of *their* church.

### *One distinction*

History tells us that in the face of apostasy and persecution, New Testament churches were careful in the immersion they accepted. On the day of Pentecost, there was no other doctrine and

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<sup>24</sup> See footnote 13

no other baptism claiming association with the Lord's church. It didn't take long for this to change, however. Churches that would accept alien immersion eventually became amalgamated into universal Catholicism. Churches that were protective of their baptism became more exclusive by necessity. If all churches were Scriptural, this would not be necessary. Naturally, of course, their carefulness did not make them popular. Their pure baptism became their distinction. It also made them a prime target for the most horrible persecution. This was not a persecution of the world, but by religion that claimed to be Christian.

Imagine the wonderment of the Apostle John when recording Revelation 17. John knew how the world persecuted Christians in his day. He himself had been boiled in oil and left on the island of Patmos for his testimony of Christ. But the murder and persecution from something identified as "Christian" should have seemed unthinkable at that time. God revealed to him a whore that sat upon a beast. The details of the chapter make it apparent that the beast is a system of doctrine and the whore is the "great city" (which appears obviously to be Rome – verses 9 & 18). This great whore was called "**The mother of harlots.**" John saw her "**drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.**" To be a "*mother of harlots,*" one must have *daughters* that are also *harlots*. Let the reader consider who they might be and what thing they share in common that would identify them.

*One doctrine*

History proves that these daughters were equally as bloody as their mother. Their bloodline is a doctrinal one. They share no relation to the New Testament church. They may claim a mystical lineage to her name, however, as any harlot would. Nevertheless the doctrinal litmus test will reveal an incompatibility that exposes all such claims. The same doctrine of the Lord that endears us is repulsive to them. In this we see Hebrews 4:12 in action. The word of God is a sharp, two-edged sword that divides and separates at this point. Their hostility toward the Lord's doctrine instantly reveals the side of the blade on which they fall. None have a greater distaste for true Christianity than those that call themselves "Christian." Likewise, none have greater distaste for the distinction of the Lord's church than "Baptists" of Protestant doctrine.

There are those that glory in attaching themselves to Baptist history - but are repulsed at the Biblical doctrine that distinguished historic Baptists from other Christians. Thus, it is convenient and safe for them to build and garnish the sepulchers of those they would despise in life. There are self-proclaimed "Bible believers" today, who base their ecclesiology on a Protestant, systematic template, rather than the words of God.<sup>25</sup> These that interpret Scripture by a system instead of grammar operate on a completely

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<sup>25</sup> The shortcoming of man's theological systems, (however logical) is that they are contingent upon an extra-Biblical premise. If we truly believe every word of God (KJB) as our sole authority, we may be faced with truth that contradicts our theology. This is extremely difficult for those who have much invested in their intricate system. Nevertheless, their reaction at that point, illuminates the true heart of a man that otherwise professes a love for the Lord and fidelity to His word.

different paradigm than Biblical Baptists. When the inspired text is self-interpreted by its own words or expositied by its grammatical context, we find the mind of God in Scripture. But when the outcome contradicts the systematic conclusions of these self-proclaimed “Bible believers,” they will expose themselves. Their profession as “Bible believers” becomes their own undoing. This is because they oppose themselves in the very thing they emphasize to be their distinction. When their assertion of fidelity to Scripture is contradicted by Scripture itself, they become offended. At that point, they are intensely uncomfortable in their own self-opposition. Without Scriptural answer, they will even resort to slander or accusations of “heresy.” This is exactly as the forbears of their doctrinal line have always done. (There is, indeed, a spirit connected to doctrinal error).<sup>26</sup> Contrariwise, those whose

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<sup>26</sup> A good example of this is found in a booklet by (Ruckmanite) Evangelist Ken McDonald “Here Comes the Bride – a critique of Baptist Bride heresy.” In it, the author lashes out at pastors that hold to selected Biblical doctrines of historic Baptists. This, he calls “Brider heresy.” He bases his polemic on their incompatibility with his Protestant premise of an invisible, universal, mystical church and mystical baptism. He also repudiates the doctrine that church planters and missionaries must be sent under the authority of a New Testament church. Brethren of this doctrine believe that “knowing the Bible” means knowing their hyper-dispensational template of doctrine. It is as if they lay a systematic template of interpretation upon its pages. Those that don’t know this system are “untrained” or do not know the Book. Those that reject it, “do not believe the Book.” Historic Baptist doctrine, on the other hand, is built upon context and grammar of God’s words, not a Protestant system. When the two doctrines meet, the spirit of error is chafed and aggravated by the spirit of Biblical truth. Lacking Biblical answer, they will oppose themselves in frustration. In contrast, the spirit of truth responds differently. Historic Baptists typically do not demonstrate the same hatred, and blind self-contradiction toward Protestants. If such neo-Baptists would call themselves according to their true doctrine, they would have no reason to be frustrated or contentious with those that maintain historic, Biblical convictions.



heart is prepared to embrace the Lord's words on this will do exactly as true, historic Baptists have done for 2,000 years. They will identify with the Lord's "one baptism" regardless of prior immersion by any other.

## VI. Baptism in Scriptural example

*It was ordained of heaven*

John 1:6-7 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

John 1:33-34 And I knew him not: **but he that sent me to baptize with water**, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.<sup>34</sup> And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

*It is an act of righteousness*

Mt 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.

*Jesus referred to the origin of John's baptism to reveal the hypocrisy of religious Jews*

Matthew 21:25 The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?

*It is part of the great commission*

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Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

*It is expected that a saved person  
will follow in baptism*

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

Note that condemnation is by *unbelief*. Salvation is by grace through faith (belief). Baptism consequently follows saving faith, but it does not save.

*Our baptism is a doctrine*

Heb 6:2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

There are those who point to the plural of “baptism” in this verse to defend *their* contradiction with Eph. 4:5 with *their* two baptisms. The plural form of baptisms here, however, cannot justify the addition of a mystical baptism that is nowhere taught in Scripture. The important truth they miss in defending this aberrant teaching is a lesson in itself. Let the reader observe:

The New Testament does indeed link two Old Testament occurrences to baptism. These baptisms both illustrate and point unmistakably to the one baptism of the New Testament church.

First, there was the baptism of Noah (1Peter 3:20-21) which is a *like figure* of the one baptism of the New Testament church. Noah first found grace in the eyes of the Lord. This figure of

baptism translated Noah from the old world to the new and placed him under a new covenant (Gen. 9:1-7). This figure of baptism happened **After** he found grace. It was, by no means, a mystical, invisible sacrament of salvation.

There was also the baptism of Moses, (1Cor 10:1-2). This is also a perfect picture of the **one baptism** of Christ. God's people were saved by the blood, brought out of Egypt and brought through the Red Sea where they were covered by a cloud in complete immersion. That baptism identified them with Moses as the ordained authority of God. Likewise, when we are baptized into a New Testament church, we identify with the Lord Jesus Christ who is the Head of that church. In so doing, we identify with the testimony and fellowship of that assembly which is in accord with its Head.

Thus, the *doctrine of baptisms* in Heb. 6:2 is the grammatically correct way to illustrate for us how these Old Testament types point to the *one baptism* of the New Testament church. If, on the other hand, we are determined to follow the invisible baptism of mystery Babylon, we are unable to receive these things.

*Baptism follows salvation*

Acts 10:47 **Can any man forbid water**, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48 And he **commanded them to be baptized** in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Acts 16:15 And **when she was baptized**, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have

judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

Acts 16:33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; **and was baptized**, he and all his, straightway.

Acts 18:8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians **hearing believed, and were baptized**.

Acts 8:36-38 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? <sup>37</sup> 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. <sup>38</sup> 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.

Verse 37 is the key verse in this passage, which is the clearest verse in the Bible showing that baptism is only for the believer. It is also, therefore, a clear answer against the heretical teaching of “baptismal salvation.” This false teaching was held by the Docetist cult in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and continues in Catholicism and many cults today. It is one of the earliest corruptions to enter Christendom. This verse (among many others) was removed in the corrupt manuscripts underlying the modern Bible versions by Alexandrian Docetists. Many new versions today simply skip the numbers from 36 to 38. Others will flag the verse as being “*not found in the oldest and best MSS.*” Satan has always opposed the pure words of God and the doctrine of baptism.

*It is a picture of death to this life*

Romans 6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

1Corinthians 15:29 Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?

*It is a testimony of a new life resurrected in a new walk*

Romans 6:4 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.

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.

1Peter 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:

*It is identification*

Galatians 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

1Corinthians 10:2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

In this verse, Paul refers to the exodus of Israel from Egypt how they were covered by a cloud while crossing the Red Sea on dry land. This illustrates a submersion of death. Their crossing

pictured a resurrection of new life. They were identified with Moses through this baptism.

*The Lord's New Testament baptism is unique to  
all other immersions*

Ephesians 4:4-6 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**, 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

*We are added to the NT church body by baptism*

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.

1Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Note that Protestantism utilizes this verse in their system of spiritual baptismal salvation. Most of us were brought up with this interpretation and it would seem absurd that it could mean anything else. As a stand-alone verse, it would certainly seem to fit the preconception. However, if we seek only the word of God itself for its interpretation, we are going to find it clashes with man's religious system. If we will set aside all premises and observe words, grammar and context, they will reveal God's interpretation instead of that of man. Let's look at the actual words in this verse. The following is excerpted from the author's book

entitled *“The Mystical, Invisible, Universal ‘Church’ examined in Scripture.”*<sup>27</sup>

This verse is often used to teach that the Holy Spirit “baptizes” you into an invisible, mystical “body” at the point of salvation. Outside of its context this verse is a strong argument for a universal church, (even though “baptism” is never used to mean “salvation” anywhere in Scripture). The error in this is undergirded by a disregard for Biblical terms and a common understanding that **we are indeed “sealed”** by the Holy Spirit upon salvation (1Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30; 2 Tim 2:19). Mixing the concept of “*sealing*” with “*baptism*” however, is more than just a semantical indiscretion. It is doctrinally pivotal, which further illustrates the importance of observing God’s words.

If we are going to consider 1 Corinthians 12:13 honestly, without any religious preconception, we must examine every word in the context that God gave it.

**”FOR”** This word links the verse to its context in the same way a “therefore” does. So whatever the interpretation, it must be in continuity with its context. We ask the reader to read the twelfth chapter of 1Corinthians as we compare the words of verse 13 with the preceding verses.

**“BY”** This little preposition is used repeatedly in the verses prior to this, showing us how it is to be

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<sup>27</sup> Les Potter Ph.D. The Mystical, Invisible, Universal “church” examined in Scripture - fourth edition. (Calvary Baptist Publishing, Lansing, MI), pgs 38-47.

understood. Verse 3 says, “**...no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.**” Notice here that it is NOT the Holy Spirit doing the speaking, but a man, who does it BY the Spirit. Verse 8 “**For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;**” Verse 9 “**To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;**” In all seven instances in this passage, the Spirit is not the doer, but *the enabler*. It is “BY” (*by way of*) the Spirit that a member speaks the word of wisdom, a word of knowledge, has faith, does healing, etc. This instrumental sense is common throughout Scripture. In Luke 2:27, Simeon came “**BY** the Spirit into the temple.” Who came? The Holy Spirit didn’t come. Simeon came - **BY** the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 1:24 says “**...for by faith ye stand.**” Who stands? Your faith doesn’t stand. Ye do – by means of your faith. Ephesians 2:18, “**For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.**” Who has access unto the Father? **We** do – BY ONE SPIRIT.

When this word “by” is used in an instrumental sense, its object does not *do* the action. It *influences or enables* the action. It is used in this way most often throughout all Scripture. Furthermore, the Lord demonstrates how He means it here by using it **seven times** in this chapter in this instrumental (*by means of*) sense. Not in the active voice which would be required if the Holy Spirit is actually baptizing.

English is an **analytic** language, which



relies on word order and prepositions to convey a noun's case. This is a strong point of our language that allows for nuances of expression to be built by context. Most world languages (including Greek and Hebrew) are ***synthetic***. Synthetic languages integrate forms and endings into root words to convey their case, gender, action, etc. The placement of this little preposition "by" can be enormously important in an English sentence. In this case, its position makes all the difference as to whether the Spirit is acting or influencing the action.

Many people move the words around in their mind according to religious presumption to say: "*we are all baptized by one Spirit.*" This could indeed indicate the Spirit is doing the baptizing. It is not written that way at all, however. It is written: "***by one Spirit are we all baptized***" which indicates He is the instrumental influence or cause.

If we profess to believe the King James Bible to be God's gift to the English speaking people, and if we *profess* that we believe every word of it, we are bound by that profession to frame our doctrine according to its words. To do otherwise is to admit condemnation upon ourselves for hypocrisy. Those who do not make such a profession for our English King James Bible, however, are just as culpable. They cannot run to the Greek (of the Received Text) to support their religious premise without dishonesty. This is because the Greek bears it out clearly that the Spirit is passive voice, and not active.

The Greek preposition of "by" in 1Cor.12:13 is ἐν (en). Whenever you see the preposition ἐν,

its object (or objects) will always be in the *dative* case. The *dative* case indicates its object (Spirit) to be the source of influence or means by which something is done (in this case, baptism). This is as opposed to the *accusative* case, in which a preposition such as εἰς, or some usages of διὰ, would be required to denote the Spirit actively performs the action.

All of this is clear enough to the English reader who is blessed to have a King James Bible. We need only to observe the syntax of the sentence. We should also be confidently armed against the dishonest religionist who may seek to feign an elite refuge in the Greek text. In any way it is sliced, the role of the Holy Spirit in 1Cor. 12:13 is clearly not *doing* the baptizing. His role is the *influence* upon us to be baptized into that church body. This is exactly the same way (as demonstrated in context) that He influences us in the operation of our gifts within the church.

Nevertheless, if religious presumption prevails in the reader's heart over the English words; and if the Greek expels all hope of obscurity; there is yet one more refuge for the religionist. The modern-day versions are more than happy to oblige religious sentiment. The NIV, for example, has no scruples regarding the words of God. If you want a mystical baptism of salvation, you can find it there. But you will not find it anywhere in the King James Bible, nor its underlying text. Let God be true and every man a liar.

**“ONE SPIRIT”** This “one Spirit” is an exclusive oneness. It denotes a oneness of genuine, unique type - the Holy Spirit. We know, of course,

there are many spirits, many bodies, many lords, many faiths and many immersions that are called baptisms. But for us, it is clear that there is **“...one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism,”** (Eph. 4:4-5). The “one” in 1Cor. 12:13 stresses the theme of unity in contrast to schism in the body (vs. 25).

**“ARE”** This is not a past-perfect *“were”* which *could* express an action performed and completed by the Spirit Himself. This “are” is *present tense* showing a continuing state of influence.

**“WE ALL”** If we presume that the “the body” in this text is a universal, mystical entity, we will naturally conclude that this “we all” refers to all of us who had a mystical baptism of salvation into its universal membership. But laying all presumption aside, let us allow the text to interpret itself. The “*all*” in this “*we all*” is in reference the four categories of people listed – Jews, Gentiles, bond or free. (Read the verse). Regardless of race or social standing, “*We all*” operate as members of our New Testament church the same way members of a physical body operate together (hence the metaphor). To fully comprehend the message in this, we must be mindful of the social climate of the time. Every person living in Corinth was either a Jew, a Gentile or a slave. Each segment of that society was varied from the other. Yet it was by one Spirit that affected each upon salvation to identify with Christ by baptism into that church body. Paul is teaching them here that they are to function together as one body. It was not to be “We Jews and you Gentiles” or “You slaves and we free men” but “*We all.*”

Bear in mind also that in metaphorical language, the use of “we” is totally appropriate even if it does not include the narrator. The context of this “*we all*” (Jews, Gentiles, bond or free) is tied to “*whether we be*”.<sup>28</sup> These are all likened to members of a “body” which is a metaphor for the New Testament church. Paul referred to another metaphor the same way just two chapters prior to this. The context there deals with the elements of the Lord’s Supper which are metaphors for the blood and body of Christ. 1Cor. 10:16 “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” Paul refers to the partaking of this local church ordinance in the first-person, plural (we) though he was not with them, nor was he a member of that church. We naturally understand this example of “we” does not necessarily include the narrator. It is simply something that “*we all*” practice within each New Testament church body. So it is in the case of our text in 1 Cor. 12:13. Nobody reading this at the time it was penned would have taken it any differently (especially since the universal, invisible “body” doctrine had not yet been invented). This can be easily substantiated because if the “*we all*” must be taken in a universal sense, then there is a grammatical conflict in just a few verses further where Paul

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<sup>28</sup> That “*whether*” is a figurative option. It is used again in verse 26 “**And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.**”

said of this church “Now **ye** are the body of Christ, and members in particular”.

For added examples, notice how Paul uses himself hypothetically also in chapter 13:1-3 with an "I." Notice how he uses "we" and "ye" interchangeably also in 1 Thes. 5:5. He also uses "we" for "I" in 1Thes. 3:1. You will need to look these verses up to get the sense of what “we” are saying here.

**”BAPTIZED”** As mentioned earlier, historic Baptists are the only people who do not make “church” and “salvation” synonymous. Likewise, we are the only people who do not make **baptism** and **salvation** synonymous. The heresy of baptismal salvation was one of the first to enter Christendom. It is encapsulated in both Catholicism and Protestantism in one form or another. The Protestant concept of a mystical, invisible baptism at the point of salvation is an unquestionable point of orthodoxy among pseudo-Baptists who proudly brandish the Baptist name, but who are Protestant by doctrine.

Let’s face it. The only reason baptism is made to be salvation here is because it fits the premise of a universal-invisible “church.” This interpretation is not arrived at Biblically. It is a product of the “premise-to-proof-text” approach. Unfortunately, most of us were brought up on this interpretation and never thought to question it. Considering the huge impact such an interpretation makes, the only safe approach is to restrict the interpretation to the words, grammar and comparative usage. Anything else is a pretext. The Catholic/Protestant pretext of salvation by baptism has no Scriptural foundation. This

baptism is NOT salvation. It is water baptism just as in 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.”** It is “BY” the one Spirit, we follow Christ in baptism in the same way that “BY” one spirit we say Jesus is the Lord and “BY” that spirit are spiritual gifts exercised.

The term “baptism” signifies an overwhelming or immersion. Those who make this a “Spirit baptism” liken it to the terminology of the “baptism with the Holy Ghost” as first prophesied by John the Baptist. Jesus Christ confirmed this prophecy, saying it would occur in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8). This prophecy was fulfilled - in exactly all four places we are told it would. It happened in Jerusalem (Acts 2:1-4). It happened in Samaria (Acts 8:17). It happened in Judea (Acts 10:46). It happened in the uttermost part (Acts 19:6). At no time was this “*baptism with the Holy Ghost*” salvation.<sup>29</sup> It was an empowerment signifying the Lord’s authority on His New Testament church. However, if there are those who want to believe that their *salvation* was a “*baptism with the Holy Ghost*”, then it is only reasonable to expect the same manifestations

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<sup>29</sup> The terms “Holy Ghost” and “Holy Spirit” do signify the same person of the Trinity. The difference in terms, however, is for a reason. The word “ghost” is the essence of a person. (“*Ghost*” shares the same root as “*geist*” in German). The term “*Spirit*” signifies the work and influence of the Holy Ghost. This is why, for example, the Lord did not give up the spirit on the cross. He gave up the ghost. (Mark 15:37; Luke 23:46; John 19:30).

accompanying it. Although there have been feeble attempts at mimicking this, it has yet to be seen.

**“ONE BODY”** Again, this is obviously a numeric **unity** in connection with the “one Spirit” that works in diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. This *“one body”* is used the same way in Eph. 4:4-5. It is “one” in type and in unity. This “one body” is directly defined in vs. 27 **“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”** (Keep in mind that Paul wrote this church epistle to a literal, local, New Testament church.)

### *Schism in the Invisible Body?*

Furthermore, if the “body of Christ” is an invisible, universal composite of Christians, there are some serious schisms in it. Fundamentalists who disdain ecumenism while embracing this “universal church” concept have a real complication here. There is to be no schism (separation) in the body of Christ, (1 Cor. 12:25 **“That there should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another.”** If the *“body of Christ”* is composed of all Christianity, then the ecumenists, neo-evangelicals, and the entire contemporary Christian culture are correct. (Their platform is in fact, based on, and is consistent with this very premise.) But allowing the Bible to define *“body of Christ”* makes the issue of “ecclesiastical separation” amazingly simple and complete. It also lifts the veil to a tremendously rich concept of your relationship with your church. Isn’t that how the Lord works? The complicated inventions of man cannot approach the profound simplicity of Christ.

The examination of these Biblical words must certainly frustrate the neo-Baptist fundamentalist. His statement of faith is tied to his belief in the Bible and his claim to heritage is attached to his Baptist name. Yet his ecclesiology is born of the Protestant system he was taught. In his desire for purity, he boasts of separation from (selected) error. Yet, according to his doctrinal premise of a mystically inclusive body of Christ, his schism is in direct disobedience to 1Cor.12:25!

On the other hand, admitting that “the body of Christ” is the literal, visible, New Testament church would unfold negatively upon himself. It would be an indictment on his ecclesiology, his corrupt baptism and years of teaching and performing the same! This is very difficult for men that have sacrificially dedicated their lives to the ministry. Nevertheless, if we regard ourselves to be in the race while we have breath, we can cast it aside and continue to press for the mark. Many, however, count themselves to have apprehended. In their pride, they would rather cling to error than finish the race.

As this portion of the booklet closes, Pastor Woody will now present some specific aspects and timely issues regarding Biblical baptism.





### Introduction from Pastor Mac Woody

It may be a question to some as to why one would study the history of the Baptist. It is prudent for one to examine the faith which he may profess. With this profession, there needs to be a confirmation that it is indeed Biblical. However, this cannot be accomplished unless there is a historical and a Biblical examination. I have found in my personal life that the more I look into the doctrinal background that constituted the church that Jesus established during his earthly ministry, the more I am convinced that this doctrine is the same doctrine of the historical Baptist. Because of the promise that the Lord gave in regard to His church, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, we have assurance that it will endure through all ages.

In Ephesians 3:24-25 the scriptures states that God is to get glory by Jesus Christ through the church throughout all ages. It is not reasonable that the process by which God is to get glory would be cut off from the earth and then reappear as part of the Protestant reformation. Because of the promise of a continual existence of the church which we call the perpetuity, we must assume then that the doctrine that enables a church to be a church will be continually anchored in truth and handed down. Not only is there perpetuity of the church, there must also be succession of the church and its doctrine. The very thing that allows a church to remain a church is contained in obedience to the doctrine that is laid down by Christ and His apostles. If a church does not

continue in these doctrines, it will become “apostate,” departing from the doctrine of the apostles. This brings us to the subject at hand, which is baptism.

Baptism is an ordinance of the church. It is an ordinance by which one joins a Baptist church. Baptism is also a doctrinal issue. A New Testament (Baptist) church cannot accept baptism from a Protestant denomination. This is on the basis of its lack of authority and alien doctrine attendant to that baptism. For this same reason, it also cannot receive baptism from Baptist churches that are doctrinally Protestant, or from an unauthorized administrator. When Protestant baptism is received, it is the acceptance and in-grafting of that doctrine. Baptism is more than just a mode or an act. Biblical doctrine is shrouded within baptism itself. It therefore must also have proper authority in its administration. It is for this reason that this book is written. If there is no proper authority and or proper administrator of baptism, it is no baptism at all. Yet, this type of baptism has been welcomed in Baptist churches in recent times.

History will demonstrate our doctrinal facts by the martyrdom of the ancient Baptists. Protestant and Catholic institutions alike persecuted the Baptists unto death because of the stand they took for their scriptural baptism. The ancient Baptists rejected baptism that lacked proper authority. They also believed the authorized administrator of this ordinance must be duly ordained. I trust that while you read this small book, you will consider the scriptural facts at hand in regard to the authorized administrator of baptism. Many baptisms today are performed in Baptist churches

by administrators whose ordination is not through a Scriptural NT church. By general acceptance, these churches are then permeated with the doctrines attendant with those baptisms. It is for this reason that we must understand the importance of ordination.

Pastor Mac G Woody

# Who is authorized to administer the ordinance of baptism?

**Pastor Mac G. Woody, Shiloh Baptist Church, Gwinn, MI**

## **I. Using legal doctrine as an illustration.**

**Fruit of the poisonous tree** is a legal metaphor in the United States<sup>30</sup> used to describe evidence that is obtained illegally. The logic of the terminology is that if the source of the evidence (the “tree”) is tainted, then anything gained from

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<sup>30</sup> The fruit of the poisonous tree doctrine stems from the 1920 case of *Silverthorne Lumber Co. v. United States*.

it (the “fruit”) is as well. <sup>31</sup> Such evidence is not generally admissible in court.

In this study, we will use this legal doctrine as a parallel illustration. We will consider baptism and the authority of the administrator of baptism whether he is properly authorized to perform this ordinance. If the conclusion is that he is not authorized to baptize, then the legal doctrine of the “fruit of the poisonous tree” will illustrate our Biblical principle. If the authority is not there, all thereafter must be rejected as unlawfully administered. In a court trial, no matter how good that case is defended, or how much other evidence is considered, if the evidence is obtained unlawfully, all is to be thrown out. Likewise, regardless of good intentions and adherence to statements of orthodoxy, immersion without Scriptural authority cannot be considered Scriptural Baptism. Subsequent baptisms performed by its recipients are evermore of the same tree.

When we consider the subject of water baptism by an administrator, if he is not authorized lawfully, all baptisms must be rejected. The importance of law enforcement officials obtaining evidence lawfully is equally similar to

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<sup>31</sup> The doctrine is an extension of the exclusionary rule, which, subject to some exceptions, prevents evidence obtained in violation of the Fourth Amendment from being admitted in a criminal trial. Like the exclusionary rule, the fruit of the poisonous tree doctrine is intended to deter police from using illegal means to obtain evidence.

the lawful baptism of an administrator; its entire case will rest upon lawful authority.

*Presbyterians examined this same principle*

In 1854, the Presbyterian General Assembly met in Buffalo, NY and this question was presented to them for their decision: *Are the Romish baptisms and ordinations valid?*

There was a heated discussion over this question. The majority report of the committee was that all ordinations at the hands of Romish priest were invalid, because the Roman Catholic Church is no church of Christ, but anti-Christ, and therefore the baptisms and ordinations of such an apostate body are null and void.

The minority report, on the other hand, contended that if they denied the Church of Rome to be a true church of Christ, they unchurched themselves, since they came out of Rome, and received their baptism and ordinations therefrom. Finding they could not extricate themselves from the dilemma, they moved an indefinite postponement of the question. <sup>32</sup>

When one examines baptism in light of scriptural authority, one will come to the conclusion that a scriptural administrator invested with authority from a scriptural church is necessary.

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<sup>32</sup> William Manliuns Nevens, Alien Baptism and the Baptist, (Emmaus, PA:Challenge Press,1977), forward page

If the Presbyterians can see that the baptism of the Catholic institution is apostate, should we not be able to see the same from either the Catholic or Protestant institutions? However, when the Presbyterians refused to continue with consistency they stopped and tabled the issue. The logical progression of their inquiry is undeniable that their organization shares the same authority as their mother. That issue was therefore left in the realm of permanent denial. The ramification of that denial defaults to an endorsement of the root from which they sprang (though they may be loath to accept it). It is difficult to imagine, but others that carry the Baptist banner are guilty of this same denial. When one identifies themselves as a Baptist while knowing their baptism is corrupt, they are tabling the baptism issue as the Presbyterian General Assembly. Nothing can spiritually prosper under such a conscience that is being seared or subdued.

Scripture demonstrates that an authorized administrator of baptism is to be done by a “duly ordained minister” of the gospel. Our Baptist forebears had Biblical precedent for their practice of recognizing only baptisms performed by those duly ordained by a New Testament church. We will connect ordination and the laying of hands later for clarification. However, I would like to bring to your attention of a well-known preacher that Baptists admire and to whom we all owe much. This man is Elder John Leland.

Elder John Leland dealt with this issue of ordination without and with hands. In 1776, John Leland joined the Mount Poney church in

Culpepper VA. During this time he preached on Sundays. I quote below in his-own words the events that followed.

“At Mount Poney, in Culpepper, I joined the church, and undertook to preach among them half the Sundays. In August, I was ordained by the choice of the church, without the imposition of the hands of a Presbytery. As this was a departure from the usage of the church in Virginia, I was not generally fellowshipped by them. I spent all my time travelling and preaching, and had large congregations. The first person that I baptized was Betsey Tillery.”<sup>33</sup>

Nearly 11 years after John Leland was ordained without the laying on of hands he came to a point in his life when this issue had to be dealt with. Later in Leland’s writings, on page 26, he states the following:

“In June, 1787, I was ordained by laying of hands. The ministers that officiated were Nathaniel Saunders, John Waller and John Price. By this, not only a union took place between myself and others, but it was a small link in the chain of events, which produced a union among all the

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<sup>33</sup> LF Greene, The writings of John Leland (Arno Press & New York Times 1969. Reprinted by Local Church Bible Publishers 2010), page 19



Baptist in Virginia, not so long afterwards.”<sup>34</sup>

“The last Sunday in October I began to baptize those that were brought out, and the work prevailed greatly. The tract of land which I occupied in this revival was more than twenty miles square, including the corners of Orange, Culpepper, Spottsylvania and Louisa. When the work seemed to languish in one neighborhood, it would break out in another, and consequently, there was a continual fall of heavenly rain from October, 1787, until March, 1789, during which time I baptized about 400. Precisely 300 of them were baptized in 1788 – more than I have ever baptized in any other year”<sup>35</sup>

During the 11 years from Mount Poney Church until he was ordained by the laying on of hands Leland baptized about 140 persons. After he was properly ordained, God moved in his life in a powerful way. The Blessings of God were now upon Elder John Leland. There are primarily two ways in which his influence is still felt today.

First of all, his spiritual influence impacted us in the political realm. We owe the ratification of the U. S. Constitution to Leland and Madison. Leland was able to convince the large Baptist

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid pg 26

<sup>35</sup> Ibid pg 27

population to vote for ratification and at the same time was promised by Madison in return that there would be a bill of right. Without this vote, the constitution would not have been ratified. The Bill of Rights is a product of Leland and Madison. Leland's spiritual influence began when he was properly ordained with the laying on of hands. Leland was now accepted among the Baptist churches in Virginia because of proper ordination with the laying on of hands, which gave him credibility and authority. Where would we be today if Leland would not have humbled himself, admitted his error? The religious liberty we now enjoy was undeniably brought forth of that fruit. Not only do we have a constitution that guarantees us liberty, but many were indeed added correctly (Scripturally) to many Baptist churches and the kingdom of God expanded at a fast pace.

## **II. Historical examples - scriptural baptisms**

D. B. Ray states,

Here we have the undisputed historic fact, that the Baptists of London were so careful to obtain valid baptism that they delegated Richard Blunt, formerly a Pedobaptist minister, to visit a regular Baptist church at Amsterdam, in Holland, which belonged to the old Waldensian succession. And after the baptism of Richard Blunt by John Batte, by the authority of said church, he returned to London and baptized Samuel Blacklock, and they baptized the rest of the company, to the number

of fifty-three members; and thus was formed a Baptist church, which was afterward recognized as a Particular Baptist church. And from this influential church has flown the stream of succession down to the present time. <sup>36</sup>

Thomas Crosby, speaking of the Baptists in London, in 1645, says, "They rejected the baptism of infants as being a practice which had no foundation in Scripture; and all baptisms received either in the Church of Rome or England, they looked upon to be invalid, because received in a false church, and from anti-christian ministers" <sup>37</sup>

The Philadelphia Association, the oldest among the Baptists of America, in the year 1788, decided against the validity of baptism administered by persons who had not been **lawfully baptized and ordained**. They assigned four reasons for the decision.

The fourth is as follows: "Because such an administrator has no commission to baptize, for the words of the commission were addressed to the apostles and their successors in the ministry, to the end of the world, and these are such whom the church of Christ appoint for the whole work of the ministry." Reference may also be made to similar decisions of this Association in 1729, 1732, 1744, 1749, and 1758.

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<sup>36</sup> D B Ray, Baptist Succession (Parsons, KS: Foley Railway Printing Co.,1912), Pg. 189

<sup>37</sup> Thomas Crosby, The History of the English Baptists, Vol. I (London: 1738), Pg. 273. As quoted by J T Christian "A history of the Baptist vol 2 (Texarkana, TX: Bogard Press 1926),Pg 438.

The Richmond Association, in 1809, decided:  
 “Three things are required to make gospel  
 baptism, viz.: a gospel mode, a gospel subject and  
 administrator.” <sup>38</sup>

The Christian Review, Boston, 1846, in a long  
 article on Rebaptism, says:

We next consider the case of those who, though adults, baptized in the proper mode and form, yet at that time held grossly heretical doctrines; of adherence to which their baptism was a profession to the world: such as Unitarians, who deny the faith of the trinity; Universalist, who deny all future punishment; Campbellites, whose acknowledgment that Jesus is the Son of God implies neither a belief in the divinity nor vicarious sufferings of Christ, nor a profession of a change of heart. Even the Mormons, it is said baptize in the name of Jesus. When persons who may have been baptized in a profession in any of these forms of error, and afterwards brought to the truth as it is in Jesus, is it their duty to be re-baptized? In such cases the first baptism, is surely to be regarded rather as a profession of disbelief, than of belief in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. It should therefore be esteemed quite invalid, and be repeated by those who embrace orthodox doctrines. Nor can their subsequent faith make good their former baptism. <sup>39</sup>

J.T. Christian cites David Benedict saying:

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<sup>38</sup> Benedict, A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America, Vol. II. (Boston, 1813), Pg. 492

<sup>39</sup> The Christian Review, July, 1846. XI. 198, 199

David Benedict, the historian, probably held a more extensive correspondence with the Baptists of America in his day than any other man. He was doubtless correct when he summed up the situation as follows: "I have ascertained by my extensive correspondence, that by far the greatest part of our denomination both re-baptized and re-ordain all who join them, from whatever churches they come" (Benedict).<sup>40</sup>

We do not recognize unbaptized and unordained men, who are Baptist in sentiment, as scriptural ministers and qualified to administer church ordinances; and why should we be expected to recognize those we regard as disqualified, and who violently oppose our faith and practice?

It is troubling when Baptists have to defend themselves against the attacks of their own brethren, for consistently maintaining the time honored principles of historic Baptists. When professed Baptists make friends with the common enemy, they even show a fiercer and bitter persecuting spirit than those who once put our fathers to death for holding the self-same sentiments that landmark Baptists hold today.

J. R. Graves states, "Sir Isaac Newton, the great astronomer, but still greater student of the Scriptures and ecclesiastical history, declared to the Whiston; *"The modern Baptists formerly*

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<sup>40</sup> J T Christian *A history of the Baptist* volume 2 (Texarkana, TX: Bogard Press, 1926), Pg. 452

*called Anabaptist are the only people that never symbolized with the papacy.”*<sup>41</sup>

Henry Bullinger the successor of Calvin, who wrote in the sixteenth century, says: “The Anabaptist think themselves to be the only true church of Christ and acceptable to God; and teach that they, who by baptism are received into their church ought not to have communion (fellowship) with (those called) evangelical or any other whatsoever; for that our church are not true churches any more than the church of the Papists.”<sup>42</sup>

We must remember that compromise is the conclusion of differences between two or more parties by mutual concessions. Any time there is a compromise between truth and error, truth will always suffer because error has nothing to surrender. I apply this thought to the succession of scriptural practice of baptism. Anytime an unauthorized baptism is accepted, the doctrinal error associated with it will always be looking for an opportunity to diminish the power of truth.

### *Counterfeits and counter-doctrines*

If we receive, pass or encourage others to receive and pass counterfeit money, we make ourselves equally guilty with those who counterfeit it. This would be considered being an accessory of unlawful practice. Unscriptural societies of religion and churches are counterfeits

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<sup>41</sup> J R Graves Old Landmarkism what is it? (Texarkana, TX: Bogard Press, 1880), Pg. 114

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. p. 115

of Christianity and counterfeit churches. If we were to associate and participate with the teachers of these systems in order to maintain fellowship with them and their followers, we recognize them as the authorized ministers of God's truth and the ordinances of the church. In reality, we encourage them in their work and thus "bid them God speed" and make ourselves accessories to the fruit of the poisonous tree.

J R Graves stated that, "Human societies are but the expression of human opinion; only human authority is embodied in their laws and regulations. To observe and obey them is only obeying the men who established them." <sup>43</sup>

Thus it is with the church. It is entrusted with the business of maintaining the truth and keeping the ordinances as they were delivered; defending it from the assaults of error, and or transmitting it to future times. The truth is in fact upheld in the world by the church. The people of the world feel no interest in defending it. It is the local, visible, and scriptural church of Christ that has preserved and transmitted the truth and the ordinances from age to age. The stability of truth on earth is dependent on the church. Other systems of religion are swept away; other forms of doctrine vanish; but the knowledge of the great system of redemption is preserved on earth unshaken, because the church is preserved and its foundations cannot be moved. As certainly as the church continues to live, so certain will it be that the truth of God will be perpetuated in the world.

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid. Pg 27

*The Lord gave the command to go*

Mat 28:18-20 KJV And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. (19) 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.

At the conclusion of the Lord's ministry here on earth, He gave the command to go forth to preach, teach and baptize. The question remains then, who has the authority to baptize? As we look in the scriptures, we will see a clear answer. It is therefore necessary to examine the doctrines surrounding this issue.

*This means one of three options*

First, let's consider when the Lord gave this commission: we need to ask ourselves "To whom did He give it?" Here are our options. Option one: He gave the command to the Apostles. If this is the case, then the commission is over because they are dead and gone and the great commission is not for today. The second option is that He gave this commission to all individual believers to preach, teach, and to baptize. If this is so, it matters not if they are male or female, child or an adult. If we accept the second option, there will obviously be fatal flaws in our doctrinal teachings as well as unauthorized baptisms.



*Unity in truth*

Here is another potential problem with the second option: Baptism represents the doctrine that is associated with it. You can have Catholic baptism, Mormon baptism, Jehovah Witness baptism, and the list goes on. The reader will quickly see that doctrine is always associated with the baptism itself. Catholics would not accept the baptism of a Mormon; neither would a Mormon accept the baptism of a Jehovah Witness. How is it then, that we as Baptists who profess that we have the truth, are weaker than cults on the authority of baptism? It must be understood, that baptism is a doctrinal issue. If the second option is believed and allowed, we will find doctrine at the heart of the matter. If individuals are allowed to baptize at their own discretion, what should we do with a baptism performed by a person who is of an Assembly of God or a Pentecostal denomination? Are we required to accept these baptisms? Would this not violate the scriptures in creating a schism within the local church body?

1Co 12:25 KJV **That there should be no schism in the body**; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another.

Remember that the scriptures teach that they had **all things in common** and continued in fellowship and doctrine. It is obvious, that they had common doctrine and they continued in that doctrine. Paul also declares to the church at Corinth that they are to speak the same thing, meaning the same doctrine so there would be no divisions among them as a church body.

Act 2:40-44 KJV And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. (41) **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. (43) And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. (44) And all that believed were together, and **had all things common;**

1Co 1:10 KJV Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all **speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you;** but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

### *The third option*

The third option is that the Lord gave this commission to His local, scriptural visible church that they might preach and baptize. The church is the institution that He established here on earth and is the same institution that He gave this authority to. If this authority was given to the church, then the scriptures will give detailed qualifications as to who within the church can administer the ordinance of baptism. This person is to be the duly ordained minister. As we continue this study, we will see what is invested in a duly ordained minister.

### III. Ordination of Elders

The authority of baptism is vested within the New Testament church itself, which is why it is a *church* ordinance. Therefore, the church ordains men to carry out the ordinances entrusted to it. After all, can a church baptize an individual without appointing a man to do it? Does the entire church congregation get into the baptistery and baptize the new candidate? When a church starts a church, can they do so without sending out a man? Must the entire congregation go to that area miles away to carry this out?

The church has the authority to start another church and has the authority to baptize, but it is done by way of proper protocol and procedure. The church is never legislative only executive. The church cannot make up arbitrary laws as it moves along. Even though the church has all authority, this authority is governed by the laws of Christ. These laws are found in the writings in the New Testament. One example of these laws is who is approved to be an ordained elder and how he is approved.

For illustration, we know that an individual citizen cannot arrest people, read them their rights and take them to jail. This authority is delegated to an individual called the sheriff. The sheriff's authority, however, rests in the people and is conferred to him by way of an election. Although the sheriff has authority, he also is governed by the law of the constitution. The people also have the authority to recall one that is elected. Ordination is similar. The authority of the

church is conferred to a man who meets the requirements as found in the scriptures. This man represents the church body as the sheriff represents the citizens of the county. The duly ordained man never has authority that exceeds the authority of the church. Nor does the church have the authority to exceed the authority of Scripture. If the Scriptures prescribe a process of delegation of authority, does the church have the authority to depart from this process? Does the church have the arbitrary right to select anyone to baptize by a mere vote? Or is there a time of approval? Is there a desire for the office of a bishop? Is the laying on of hands required? Yes to all three. However, church authority is required to ordination to be completed.

Act 15:22 Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; *namely*, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:

The process of conferring this authority is accomplished not by way of an election, but by way of ordination (laying on of hands). If a duly ordained man violates his office by way of moral, doctrinal or ethical violations, the church has the right and the authority to re-call his ordination which gave him authority to administer the ordinances.

Ordained ministers are required, for Christ gave them as a gift to the church. We know that the church has authority over the ordained minister, but it is by the minister that the church

is gathered into one body by water baptism which can only be done by an ordained minister.

In first Corinthians chapter 11, the Apostle Paul deals with the relationship of the husband and wife. He makes the following statement:

1Co 11:12 For as the woman *is* of the man, even so *is* the man also by the woman; but all things of God.

If the reader will allow, I will use the above verse to show an example. As the woman came from the man, the man also came by the woman. Likewise, if a newly formed church (baptized converts) was established by an ordained minister, we must remember that the minister comes to us by way of the local church. Even though ordained ministers are sent from scriptural churches, a church cannot exist unless it has proper baptism and that by the hands of a duly ordained minister.

Let's look at starting a church in the proper sense with it being comprised with only newly saved and baptized individuals. It stands only to reason that if a church is to start a church they must send someone who is duly ordained. If there is no duly ordained minister, the questions remains, how can a church start a church?

There needs to be a duly ordained minister in every church. These ministers are gifts to the church of whom without we cannot be made perfect, or made ready for the work of the ministry, or be edified as we should.

*In every city*

Tit 1:5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

*in every church*

Act 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.

*It is a gift*

Eph 4:8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

Eph 4:11-16 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; (12) For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: (13) Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: (14) That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; (15) But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ: (16) From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh

increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

There are those today that will state with incredulity that Scripture does not require ordination to perform baptism. It is for this line of thinking that this portion of the book is written. It is clearly written that elders were to be ordained in every church in every city. That ordination was for a purpose as is evident. Let's begin with an example of principle:

Heb 5:1-4 For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: (2) Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. (3) And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. (4) And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.

It is clearly understood that the subject above is in regard to Christ being ordained to His priestly office. However, there is a principle in the concept of ordination that applies here. When a man of God is ordained in things pertaining to God, it is an honor that he cannot take unto himself. There is an attendant witness that substantiates it. He cannot presume that his profession alone validates his call without the witness of those before whom he has proved himself. If his call is true, it will be evidenced by the witness of the church body he has served. To disregard this witness is self-presumption and an

indication of lacking true qualification. We are not speaking of giving the gospel here, which we all are to do. Ordination is for the purpose and authorization to perform the ordinances.

*Apostles, prophets, evangelist and pastors  
are given as gifts to the local church  
body- Eph. 4:11-16*

There is a gift that is given to pastors and evangelists by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery (elders). He then, is given as a gift to the church. If Titus was commanded to ordain elders in every city; and if elders were ordained in every city by the hands of the apostles, it stands to reason that ordination is a biblical requirement. The word “elder” can be understood in different ways. It can refer to an older man or woman with experience or age. In regard to an elder in the context of this discussion, it is one that has been approved by the church and the Lord Jesus Christ. We also understand accordingly that a novice is not to even to be considered for the position of pastor. Ordination is the process by which the authority to administer the ordinances is conveyed by the laying on of the elders.



#### **IV. Common objections**

*If the disciples baptized in John 4:1-2 before they were ordained, then ordination must not be necessary to baptize.*

When the disciples were baptizing under the Lord's oversight, He had not yet appointed the kingdom to His church. This happened in Luke 22:29, after He had given them the cup of His testament in verse 20. From that point hence, the church was appointed to be the executor of His testament to carry out His will. Therefore, the responsibility of the church, as His executor, is to keep the ordinances as delivered. By this we understand the purpose of ordination. It is to ensure due process and order that the ordinances are kept as pure as they were given.

When the Lord ordained the twelve (Mark 3:14), He was setting up the kingdom on earth to carry on in His physical absence. He said in 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: . ." With the charge of executorship and the great commission, these apostles made disciples and ordained elders to carry this out. It is the Lord Himself that placed this order in His church. Those who claim their personal call allows them to disregard the Lord's appointed executorship simply place themselves outside of it. Furthermore, the idea that a college or religious organization would take this upon themselves is completely spurious, to say the least.

If there were anything we could add to further this point, it would be that he who builds a house has more honour than the house.

Heb 3:3-6 For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. (4) For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. (5) And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; (6) But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

The builder of this house is the owner. The work involved in building a house is different than that required to maintain it. The owner of the house has the right to leave instructions on how to do so. To assume that Christ must build according to the laws and governments He laid down to maintain His church is dishonoring to His authority and deity. Furthermore, it is we that are subject to error, not Him. If any church will remain as the pillar and ground of truth, it cannot side-step its charge of keeping the laws and ordinances as delivered. Therefore, when a man is called of God to Biblical office, his qualifications, spirit and fruit will bear witness. The ordination by those men whom the Lord has appointed bears a second witness. Thus the matter is established

in the sight of God and men. Ordination is, therefore, part of the process in setting things in order.

Tit 1:5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

*What about Phillip?*

God gave to the church the gifts. This includes evangelists and pastors who are teachers. They are to be thoroughly furnished unto good works. This would include the work of the ministry of every detail. I have often been asked the question in regard to deacons: are they allowed to baptize? Let me state by the authority of the scriptures that the answer is no. Deacons were never given to the church for the perfecting of the body. God never gave deacons to the church as a gift, they were chosen of the people for the basic needs of the widows. Man will say that Philip was numbered among the seven deacons and baptized the Ethiopian eunuch.

From what we ascertain later from Acts 21:8, the church must have recognized God's higher calling on him and sent him out. The apostles never questioned his baptizing the Samaritans. Furthermore, he baptized the Ethiopian eunuch at large. If any church member can go out and do this on their own (deacon or otherwise) then baptism is not a church ordinance. Evangelists, however, are specifically ordained by the church to do that very thing. These factors provide strong, Biblically consistent evidence his title of

evangelist in Acts 21 was ordained upon him before chapter 8.

Is this view a Baptist view only? To answer this question, I quote from the commentary a well-known Presbyterian minister, Matthew Henry:

*“Phillip is put next, because he, having used this office of a deacon well, thereby obtained a good degree, and was afterwards ordained to the office of an evangelist, a companion and assistant to the apostles, for so he is expressly called, Ac 21:8. Compare Eph 4:11. And his preaching and baptizing (which we read of Ac 8:12) were certainly not as a deacon (for it is plain that that office was serving tables, in opposition to the ministry of the word), but as an evangelist; and, when he was preferred to that office, we have reason to think he quitted this office, as incompatible with that.”*<sup>44</sup>

*A faithful deacon*

Let us consider a few facts that are often overlooked. The first thing to consider is that the qualifications of being a deacon are listed in the same section of scripture as the qualifications of the pastors. It is not my purpose to equal these two offices, but bring the reader to the awareness of a statement that is made in these qualifications for deacons.

1Ti 3:13 KJV For they that have used the office of a deacon well **purchase to themselves a good**

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<sup>44</sup> Matthew Henry commentary on Acts 6. Online Bible edition 4.12

**degree**, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

The deacon that is faithful will purchase to himself a good degree. The purchasing is to acquire the honor within the church body; this purchase is not of money, but is based upon his faithfulness as being an honorable deacon and has served faithfully. In the event that a deacon such as this would pursue the ministry as an ordained minister, he has already been proven and demonstrated faithfulness. It is evident this is how Philip became an evangelist.

Act 21:8 KJV And the next *day* we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of **Philip the evangelist**, which was *one* of the seven; and abode with him.

## V. **Biblical authorization**

### *Was Philip authorized?*

We have seen in the scriptures that deacons are chosen of the people based on the needs of widows and Apostles, prophets, evangelist, pastors and teachers are given as gifts to the church. We see that Philip was a deacon, but when did he become an evangelist? It is unclear as to when, but the fact is obvious Philip was an evangelist as one that was given to and recognized by the church as such. Another fact to consider is the time line. From Acts chapter 6 to chapter 8 nearly 2 years have passed. A lot could have happened in that time in regard to Philip

becoming a deacon and then an evangelist. After the disciples were baptized, the apostles which were at Jerusalem came down and confirmed these baptisms with the laying on of their hands and this is when these disciples received the Holy Ghost. Our purpose here is to establish reasoning in regard to who can baptize. We do know that Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch. Now the questions remain, was he authorized to do so? Well it is obvious, the answer is yes, but by what authority? Was Phillip authorized to baptize because he was ordained to do so, or was there a different set of circumstances? Furthermore, there is also a similarity in regard to the baptism of the Apostle Paul by the hands of Ananias and the Ethiopian eunuch by the hands of Philip. These two men received direct commands from God by way of an angel to administer the ordinance of baptism. In regard to Philip, after the baptism, he was caught away by the Spirit. Thus, the Lord confirming his approval and his direct command.

Act 8:29 KJV Then the **Spirit said unto Philip**, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

Act 8:39 KJV And when they were come up out of the water, the **Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip**, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

*What about Ananias baptizing Saul (Paul)?*

Act 9:10-18 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, **named Ananias**; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I

*am here*, Lord. (11) **And the Lord said unto him**, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for *one* called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, (12) And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting *his* hand on him, that he might receive his sight. (13) Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: (14) And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. (15) But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: (16) For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. (17) **And Ananias went his way**, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, *even* Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. (18) And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, **and was baptized**.

It is evident that the direct command of the Lord to these two men demonstrates their authority to baptize. There is nothing said specifically heretofore of who Ananias is, or whether or not the church had previously sent him out by direction of the Holy Spirit. There might be some that would assume he was not by the absence of its mention. They might use this, therefore, to suppose that anyone can baptize. (It should be noted here that the Scripture does not

say who actually baptized Paul). Nevertheless, let us assume it so, considering all facts concerned and work toward a logical conclusion.

*I am called of God, and I don't  
need man's approval*

It has been said by some, "God told me" to do this or that. Some would say "God called me into the ministry to preach and baptize, just as he told Ananias to baptize Paul." For those who have this mind set, we must conclude then that there are two different modes of confirmation in regards to being called of the Lord in to the ministry and being authorized to baptize.

The first mode is according to scripture. We have already seen the approval process, the recognition of God's call and the conveying of authority of the church by way of the laying on of the hands of the elders.

The second method is arbitration. Arbitration is a decision that is based upon opinion, thought, or idea. This method of decision will allow an individual to sidestep the legislative process as laid down in the scriptures by the Apostles and the Lord himself. Should I trust the safe keeping of the ordinances of the church to an individual on the basis of his claim that "the Lord told me so"?

It would do us well to take a closer look at the situation involving Ananias in regard to the vision he had and the baptizing of the apostle Paul.



*Established and confirmed by a witness*

We know that according to the scriptures, every word is established by two or three witnesses. Even when the Lord appeared at the river Jordan, there was a witness for the purpose of confirmation. We have the witness of John, we have the witness of the dove, and we have the witness of God Himself when He spoke and said "This is my son".

1Jn 5:5-9 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? (6) This is he that came by water and blood, *even* Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. (7) For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. (8) And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. (9) If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.

Joh 5:31-32 If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. (32) There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.

Joh 5:36-37 But I have greater witness than *that* of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. (37) And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath

borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.

Joh 8:17-18 It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. (18) I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.

If God thought that the witness of confirmation was needed for His son, then it is obvious that the witness would be needed for the confirmation of the minister who desires to administer the ordinance of baptism.

If anyone would desire to use Ananias as an example of their authority let's consider the following: When the Lord spake to Ananias in a vision, we then must conclude that your calling would be according to a vision of seeing and speaking directly to the Lord. The second thing to consider would be the witness of the vision. The scripture also states that while Paul was praying, he also had the same vision of the same man called Ananias coming in unto him. This vision had the witness of two men as well as an angel of the Lord giving direction in regard to the vision. Therefore, if anyone would dare desire to use the example of Ananias to confirm their calling by way of a vision, then every individual that he would baptize must in turn have the same vision as a witness to confirm the vision is actually of the Lord. I hardly think so!

*Did the scattered disciples baptize the  
converts at Antioch?*

Act 11:19-26 Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. (20) And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. (21) And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. (22) Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. (23) Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. (24) For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. (25) Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: (26) And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

As an objection to the authority of the administrator of the ordinance of baptism being “only” an ordained minister of the gospel, this passage is often referred to support the argument that anyone can baptize converts. As we study the book of Acts, we remember that Peter was sent for and went unto Cornelius and heard the word of the gospel, he believed and was baptized. In Chapter eleven, Peter rehearses the matter and returns to the home church and reports to the

other elders and Apostles. Peter's presence is a confirmation of the authenticity of this event in regard to the Gentiles receiving the Holy Ghost just as the Jews did at Pentecost several years before. After these events, the scripture records how the disciples were scattered abroad because of the persecution that arose about Stephen. These disciples traveled as far as Antioch. Here it is recorded that these disciples preached the Lord Jesus. A great number believed and turned to the Lord (verse 21). These new believers were not baptized at this point. The word that many believed and turned to the Lord makes its way back to the church at Jerusalem. With this knowledge, they (the church) sent Barnabas as far as Antioch. Barnabas was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost. Verse 23 is clear that he bore witness that the grace of God (salvation) was upon them. He exhorted them that with purpose of heart, they would cleave unto the Lord. His teaching was effectual in that we see in verse 24 ". . . and much people was added unto the Lord." How is it that repentant people who had turned to the Lord and who had the grace of God were not yet "added" unto the Lord? Obviously, this "adding" is not speaking of salvation. The Scripture is clear they were already saved. By comparing Scripture with Scripture, we find the reasoning in the early part of the book of Acts.

Act 2:40-41 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. (41) Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

This “adding unto the Lord” in chapter 11 is therefore, referring to water baptism by the hands of Barnabas, the authorized administrator of this ordinance. They were added upon baptism and a New Testament church was established. Barnabas now seeks out the Apostle Paul known at that time as Saul. Both returned, and assembled with the church at Antioch and taught much people. This is where they were first called Christians.

*Another objection that is often quoted*

1Co 1:10-18 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. (11) For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. (12) Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. (13) Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? (14) I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; (15) Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. (16) And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. (17) For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. (18) For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

The above passage of scripture is often quoted with a diminishing effect on the importance of baptism, let alone the importance of the administrator of baptism. What is often quoted is the statement that, "Christ sent me not to baptize". The Apostle Paul is writing and instructing the church that is at Corinth because of the divisions that are within the church body. Some were saying that I am of Paul, some said I am of Apollos or of Cephas or Christ. Because of this attitude that prevailed with the church of Corinth, Paul says that he is glad that he did not baptize any of them lest any would say that he baptized in his own name. When Paul made the statement, "Christ sent me not to baptize", Paul was referring to baptizing in his own name. It would fly in the face of the great commission to say that Christ sent me not to baptize when Jesus gave a direct command to do so.

Mat 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.

Joh 20:21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

Paul said that Christ sent him to preach the gospel. Preaching the gospel is not concluded with just telling how Jesus died and rose again from the grave. Teaching and preaching the gospel is to

instruct in the obedience of repentance and baptism.

Mark 1:1-5 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; (2) As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. (3) The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. (4) John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. (5) And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

Water baptism is part of the gospel message. When John preached the baptism of repentance, he was preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. This message included water baptism. Let our understanding be very clear in this. However, when Paul said Christ sent him not to baptize, he was not referring to the commission of Christ, but he was referring to baptizing in his own name lest there would be more division within the Corinthian church. When Paul said Christ sent me not to baptize but preach the gospel, the gospel that Paul was referring to was the same gospel that John preached in the beginning. This gospel message included scriptural water baptism.

## **VI. Gifts given to the church**

*Called of the Holy Ghost, sent through the church  
at Jerusalem*

The church is not a legislative body but an executive body. The church is not to make laws but it is to act upon the law of Christ that were already given by the Lord himself or his apostles. It is only executorial in regard to the laws and ordinances of Christ. With this in mind, let's use simple deduction in considering the progressive process of one who has chosen the office of a bishop. When one expressed his desire to be a minister of the gospel, he must first be proved. I have heard many men who were pastors were made such by self-appointment to this office. I have often heard them say, "I do not need man's ordination, I am ordained of God." This sounds spiritual, but is totally unbiblical. If a man desires this office, let him first be proved. Proved? Proved to whom? It is obvious, the church. It will be the church that will confer this authority by way of the laying of hands of the Presbytery.

As the church was assembled at Antioch, there were elders present. It was by way of the Holy Ghost that said "*Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.*" There was prayer and fasting and then the laying on of the hands of the elders and they were sent away. We will also find that the ordaining process requires the church vote. Some may ask, for what reason does the church vote? Remember, the church is not legislative but executive. The church is not here to make laws but to guard and act upon the laws that Christ has already laid down through his word. The church vote is basically the confirmation of the will of God. This is known through the prayer and fasting before ordination takes place. The church vote does not make the



will of God, but rather confirms the will of God. As an example in a true biblical sense, no pastor is to become a pastor of a congregation by way of a vote. Paul said to the elders of the church of Ephesus that they were made overseers by way of the Holy Ghost. What is the purpose of the church voting? To confirm the will of God in this matter not to create the will of God.

Act 13:1-4 KJV 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.** (4) **So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.**

Act 14:22-23 KJV **Confirming the souls of the disciples,** and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. (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.

*Pleased the apostles, elders and the whole church*

The man that is to be made an authorized administer of the ordinances must be approved by

the elders as well as the church body. Paul told Timothy not to lay hands on suddenly or on a novice. The elder must be selective with this responsibility. The elder (pastor) is one who will establish people in the faith. Without a pastor, the church cannot be established or made perfect.

Act 15:22 KJV Then **pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church**, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; *namely*, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:

Act 15:40-41 KJV And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. (41) And he went through Syria and Cilicia, **confirming the churches**.

Act 16:4-5 KJV And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. (5) **And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily**.

*Paul Calls for the elders of the church of Ephesus*

Act 20:17 KJV And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the **elders of the church**.

Act 20:28 KJV Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath **made you overseers**, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Elders are the overseers of the church. If overseers are feeders of the flock, then it should stand to reason, they are to watch for false doctrine and prevent it from entering the church body. Knowing then that people enter the flock through the door of baptism, does it not also stand to reason that the pastor should be the one to administer baptism?

1Pe 5:1-4 KJV **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. (4) And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

The elders are pastors ordained to feed the flock of God, meaning the church. What are they to feed them? Doctrine!

*The gifts He gave the church before  
He empowered it*

Paul made mention of gifts to the church in 1 Corinthians chapter 12 as well as Romans chapter 12. We know that there were apostles before the Pentecost event as found in Acts chapter 2. For this reason we can logically discern that the church was in existence prior to this event. We

know that Peter stood up and explained to the church the fall of Judas and the need for the selection of another apostle. They as a church body had already been in prayer for what was about to happen. A replacement apostle was to be appointed and Matthias was chosen by the casting of lots meaning a church vote. This vote confirmed the will of God. Some will say that this was not God's will and this was a mistake. It was not mistake. Matthias was numbered with the twelve and mentioned as such for he was numbered with the other eleven. Act 6:2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples *unto them*, and said, "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables."

*It was the **twelve** that called the church together concerning the office of deacons.*

Act 1:23-26 And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. (24) And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all *men*, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, (25) **That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship**, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. (26) And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and **he was numbered with the eleven apostles**.

*The first gifts set in the church were apostles,  
prophets and teachers (pastors)*

God set in the church, first Apostles, secondly prophets (walking oracles of God), and thirdly,

teachers (pastors who must be able to teach). Again I make reference that there were apostles before Acts chapter 2. For they were the first gift that was given to the church. Jesus gave and appointed such in this order.

1Co 12:27-28 KJV Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. (28) And **God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers**, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Now that God has set some in the church, the first thing that was given to the church was structure meaning the offices and officers. Administration will always precede operation. There must be administrators before there can be operation. For this reason the office of apostle, prophet and pastor were established before operational gifts.

1Co 12:4-7 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. (5) And there are **differences of administrations**, but the same Lord. (6) And there are **diversities of operations**, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. (7) But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

1. **He gave first apostles.**
2. **Secondarily, He gave prophets which are the walking oracles of God.**
3. **Thirdly, He gave teachers.**

After these were given to the church, then the ministrations were given: miracles, gifts of healings, helps, governments, and tongues.

To summarize, the apostles, prophets and teachers (pastors) constitute the ministers of the church. These ministers would possess authority to administer the ordinances of the church, which are baptism and the Lords Supper. This authority is transferred through the hands of other elders based upon the approval of the church body. Before this approval can be given, the person being ordained must prove himself by way of the requirements as found in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus chapter 1.

*This office and authority is considered a gift.*

The book of Ephesians is a book of church doctrine in total. Paul deals with ethnic diversity: how Jew and Gentile are both made one within the church body by the one baptism that has the one authority administered by a proper administrator. According to Ephesians, chapter 4, and Acts chapter 2, Christ ascended to heaven and sat on the right hand of God and gave gifts unto men. We see the continual gifts that are given to the church as gifts of administration and operation.

Act 2:33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath **shed forth this**, which ye now see and hear.

Eph 4:8-13 KJV Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and **gave gifts unto men.** (9) (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? (10) He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) (11) And he gave some, **apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;** (12) For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: (13) Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

We see Christ gave gifts unto men. These gifts are apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastor-teachers. These gifts are given to the church. The deacon is not mentioned as a gift. If a deacon can baptize, then so can the janitor. If baptism is a doctrinal issue, it is to be protected by the approved and called administrator.

*Thoroughly furnished but not  
necessarily authorized*

The apostle Paul made reference of the office of the pastor or man of God and the subject of doctrine. Paul charges the man of God or pastor to be sound in doctrine and to teach sound doctrine. If a pastor is absent in the church body and the church is receiving people into her membership by way of accepting previous baptisms from other church bodies, then we are

violating the scriptures and have become legislative and not executive. The deacon is not given for the perfecting of the church. The deacon cannot perfect the body or edify it properly or prepare it for the work of the ministry. The gift of the administrator is enabled by gift of operation. Paul gave explicit instructions to Timothy not to neglect the gift that was in him and given to him by way of the hands of other ordained men.

2Ti 3:16-17 KJV 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, **thoroughly furnished unto all good works**.

1Ti 4:14-16 KJV Neglect not the **gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery**. (15) Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. (16) **Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine**; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

1Ti 2:7 KJV Whereunto **I am ordained a preacher**, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, *and lie not*;) **a teacher** of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

2Ti 1:11 KJV Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and **a teacher of the Gentiles**.



## VII. Ordination

*This gift is recognized through the hands of other ordained pastors.*

I believe that ordination is one of the most misunderstood subjects today. Although the church has been given authority to bind and loose, the church is subject to the scriptures. The authority given to the church can never exceed that which is written. The man who says that he is called of God must be proved to the church, that he may be approved by God and the church. Once the approval is witnessed, the laying of hands can be administered. The church or the ordained minister has no right or authority to approve someone who has not proven themselves according to the scriptural mandate. If a church has no right to exceed the scripture, much less would an individual who administers the ordinance of baptism without the ordination. One who is ordained according to the scriptural mandate is considered duly ordained. Here is an example of how the approving process works: If the church desires that a man be ordained, but does not meet the marriage qualification and the Presbytery (ordained ministers) see this fault and explains it to the church but the church with this knowledge still desires ordination be extended, what would happen? The church cannot compel an ordained minister to ordain someone who is not qualified. There would be no ordination. If the reverse were to be applied - the minister desires to ordain someone who is not qualified and the church does not approve - there would also be no ordination.

I have seen different ordination services. I have witnessed graduations at colleges. At the conclusion of some graduations services, the men called to the ministry are asked to come forward and kneel down in front of the school body. A call is issued to all ministers in the congregation to come forward and lay hands on the kneeling subjects and by this they are now ordained. My question is, "By what authority?" Were these men proved? Have hands been laid upon a recipient of ordination that is not personally known to the administrator of that ordination? Are the doctrinal beliefs the same? We have seen that a man must be doctrinally correct, he must be proved and accountable to the local church that gave approval. It is obvious that the laws of Christ are brushed aside through ignorance and a non-authorized body has become legislative concerning the things of Christ.

Elder, pastor and bishop are the same office and the same administrator. The elder rules, the pastor teaches, and the bishop protects the flock. This office is a gift given by Christ to the church. Paul reminded Timothy not to neglect the gift which was given by the laying on of hands. You cannot be a self-appointed pastor and administer the ordinances. You must be proved and approved and have the laying on of hand to confer this authority.

1Ti 4:13-16 KJV Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. (14) **Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the**

**hands of the presbytery.** (15) Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. (16) Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

2Ti 1:6 KJV Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou **stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.**

Act 13:2-3 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.**

Act 15:22 Then **pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men** of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; *namely*, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:

2Ti 2:15 Study to shew thyself **approved** unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

*This gift given with much consideration*

1Ti 5:22 KJV **Lay hands suddenly on no man,** neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.

### **VIII. Laboring in doctrine ( a command for the man of God)**

*Elders labor in doctrine. Baptism is part of that doctrine*

The word, “doctrine” is found in 44 verses in the New Testament. The majority of these verses deal with instructions to the man of God and the teaching of sound doctrine. If we believe that baptism is the door by which one enters into the membership of a church, it is logical to assume that the belief system of the one being baptized will also enter into the body. Paul warned of doctrinal divisions within the body. One thing that will divide a body more than anything else is doctrinal issues. Unity of the Spirit can only be achieved when there is unity in doctrine. There is one Lord, one faith and one baptism. What is meant by one baptism? The one baptism is that which is by one authority -the church - and is to be administered by proper protocol of its administration.

We must remember that the body cannot perfect itself. This is why the gifts of the pastor and evangelist (church planter) were given to the church. It is the pastor that is to be skilled in doctrine. The pastor is to learn, think, speak and preach doctrine. He is to be built up in doctrine. He is to hold on to sound doctrine. The church is a doctrinal institution and it is necessary that the pastor knows doctrine. These commands regarding doctrine are given specifically to ordained men of God who are pastors. Through the knowledge of doctrine, the pastor can perfect

the church body. He can edify as well as prepare the body for the work of the ministry.

Can a church extend the ordinance of baptism to a person when there is no ordained minister present? The answer is no. Although the church has the power to bind and loose, she does not have the power to legislate. If she does not have a duly ordained minister, she must seek one. For this reason a church cannot add to her membership unless there is an ordained pastor present who is authorized to do so.

According to Baptist historian, D.B. Ray, “Dr. John Clarke received his baptism in Elder Stillwell’s church, in London, and that church received hers from the Dutch Baptists of Holland—sending over a minister to be baptized by them. These Baptists descended from the Waldenses, whose historical line reaches far back, and connects with the Donatists, and theirs, to the apostolic churches.”<sup>45</sup>

J. A. Shackelford writes, “A.D. 1663. It sometimes happened that the severity of the persecutions were such that no minister was left to a minister the ordnances. During the year 1663, owing to the extreme measures which Elizabeth used against dissenters, some English Baptist thought it necessary to send to Holland for a regular administrator of believer’s baptism.”<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> D B Ray, Baptist Succession (Parsons, KS: Foley Railway Printing Co.,1912), Page 163

<sup>46</sup> J. A. Shackelford, Compendium of Baptist History (Louisville, KY: Press Baptist Book Concern, 1892), Page 204

From the above quotes, we can see that baptism was very important to the ancient Baptist Churches! They believed in the doctrine of baptism so much that they died to keep this ordinance pure and the church free from the corrupt doctrine that could creep in if they were not diligent about the safe guards of baptism.

If in 1663, there was no minister to administer the ordinances, why then did they send to Holland for a regular administrator of believer's baptism? Could they not have done as so many do today? Simply choose and pick. Choose a deacon and have the deacon baptize. I think that these believers had an understanding of the ordinance of baptism that most do not possess today. We would do well to follow the steps of our martyred Baptist fathers. It stands to reason, if we today were in the situation that our Baptist fathers were in 1663, the purity of the church and the authority of baptism would have been lost many years ago. Thank God for men who considered the admonition of the apostle Paul when he said to keep the ordinances as they were delivered! For those who would even dare to contend with this teaching, I have one response. Tell your disagreement to the martyred saints of 1663.

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

Paul told Timothy to abide at Ephesus and charge some that they teach no other doctrine.

It is obvious that what doctrine is and is not allowed was by the decision of the pastor.

*Paul told Timothy that good ministers are nourished in doctrine*

1Ti 4:6 KJV If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a **good minister** of Jesus Christ, **nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine**, whereunto thou hast attained.

*Paul told Timothy to continue in doctrine*

1Ti 4:13-16 KJV Till I come, give attendance to reading, **to exhortation, to doctrine**. Neglect not the **gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy**, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. (15) Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. (16) Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

This is also a doctrine of Christ as found in Hebrews 6:1-2. It is called the laying on of hands.

The scriptures are profitable for doctrine that the “man of God” may be perfect and thoroughly furnished unto all good works. For the minister was given as a gift unto the church for the work of the ministry. Baptism is a work of the ministry.

2Ti 3:16-17 KJV 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.

*The day will come when sound doctrine will not be endured which includes baptism*

2Ti 4:2-5 KJV Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. (3) For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they **heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears**; (4) And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. (5) But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

*Remember that baptism is a doctrine according to Hebrews 6:1-2.*

Heb 6:1-2 KJV Therefore leaving the principles of the **doctrine of Christ**, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, (2) Of the **doctrine of baptisms**, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

The day will come when men within the church will heap to themselves teachers having itching ears and shall be turned away from the truth. How can this happen? If baptism is corrupt, so will doctrine be corrupt. If anyone within the church can baptize, where in the scriptures is it



found for them to be on guard and be nourished up in the doctrine of Christ?

*The administrator must be nourished  
up in doctrine*

Baptism reflects the doctrinal belief of the administrator. What assurance do we have if anyone can baptize? What assurance do we have that they are sound in faith and doctrine? As seen in Hebrews chapter 6 anyone who does not abide in the doctrine of Christ hath not God. It is an obvious conclusion, that scriptural baptism and the laying on of hands is a doctrine of Christ.

*The man of God must be nourished  
up in good doctrine.*

1Ti 4:6 KJV If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a **good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine**, whereunto thou hast attained.

As the train of thought continues, if they have not the doctrine of Christ i.e. scriptural baptism, we are not to receive them into the house of God nor bid them God speed.

2Jn 1:10-11 KJV If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, **receive him not into your house**, neither bid him God speed: (11) For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

1Ti 3:15 KJV 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.

To sum it up, because baptism is a doctrinal issue it is therefore an ordination issue. The ordained man of God would be a porter who would watch over the flock and commanded by Paul.

1Ti 5:17 KJV Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially **they who labour in the word and doctrine**. (including the doctrine of baptism)

*Doctrine is not just in letters of teaching but principles of actions.*

**Doctrine G1319** *did-as-kal-ee'-ah* From G1320; instruction (**the function** or the information): - doctrine, learning, teaching.

Heb 6:2 KJV Of the **doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands**, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

If other men within church body besides ministers can baptize and administer the ordinances, then why have ordained ministers at all? What purpose do they fulfill?

Tit 1:5 KJV For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and **ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:**

Things are wanting, (without order, lacking or destitute) in the churches in the Isle of Crete because there are no ordained ministers.

**Wanting G300** A primary verb; to *leave*, that is, (intransitive or passive) to *fail* or *be absent*: - be destitute (wanting), lack.

Christ gave to the church first apostles, prophets, evangelist and pastors for the perfecting of the saints, edifying of the body and the work of the ministry. Do we need pastors and evangelists who receive this gift by way of ordination? Yes we do. Without them, we cannot be made perfect (complete) we would not be equipped for the work of the ministry. Would you not agree that the perfecting of the saints would include proper baptism? Is this then not a doctrine of Christ?

## Conclusion

The issue of baptism is an issue that has caused division, banishment, and even the death of millions of Baptist martyrs down through the centuries. The division over the issue of baptism is the same today as it was then. What is the issue? *Scriptural authority!* Does the authority to baptize rest in the Catholic institution? Does the scriptural authority to baptize rest in the Protestant churches that came out of Rome? Does the authority of scriptural baptism rest in those churches that came out of the Protestant movement? Does the authority to baptize rest in a man who simply says that he is called of God? The answer is no. No doubt, there will be some who read this book who are recipients of unscriptural baptism. I know this is a difficult subject. The first of many reactions is to think that this can't be so. If unauthorized baptism is to be considered no baptism at all, then logic will conclude that there are many pastors who themselves have not a scriptural baptism are administering this ordinance of baptism. At this particular time, the question is not the mode but authority. There are many denominations that baptize in deep water. The Methodist and Nazarene, for example, baptize in deep water. The mode is not the issue at this point in time, but authority. Where and when did these denomination assemblies get the authority to baptize, when they are the daughters of the Church of Rome? If we are to accept baptism from these denominations, the question remains: "Why did the ancient Baptist not accept the baptism of the Church of Rome while they still performed this rite by immersion?"

Again, the answer is authority. What shall we do? Be obedient to the command of our Lord, and be baptized by an authorized administrator in a scriptural church body. Many will assume that we are trying to “prove” the authenticity of scriptural baptism back to Christ and the apostles by individual succession of baptism. It is not necessary to prove the historical and visible continuity of baptism of the churches all the way back to Christ. My faith does not rest upon proof. My faith rests upon a promise. It is a promise is that the Lord made when He said that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church. We hold that any church that bears the genuine apostolic stamp, if constituted only yesterday by a duly authorized administrator of the ordinance of baptism, is in direct historical descent from the primitive church, founded by Christ with His apostles. The question is not whether we can prove or trace our baptismal roots back to the apostles (although much evidence exists). The question is, has Christ kept His promise?

What causes the waters of true doctrinal understanding in regard to baptism to be blurred? The answer is false doctrine. For this reason, we are to mark anyone who causes division and offences contrary to the doctrine that we have learned. It stands to reason that if the man of God is to labor in word and doctrine, then that man of God should be the one to baptize. He is authorized by the church, because he has been given by God to the church. He has proven himself to the church. He has been authorized by the church through ordination. He is the overseer of the

flock. He is to teach the flock and to protect the flock. **For this reason, the pastor is the greatest insurance of protection against false doctrine from entering the church.**

Rom 16:17-18 KJV 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.

