

# WHY BAPTISTS ARE NOT PROTESTANTS

**A sermon preached by Pastor Herb Hatfield on Nov.1, 2009 at the Aberdeen Primitive Baptist Church, Aberdeen MS**

W

hat was yesterday? Most of you would answer "Halloween" or maybe just Saturday. But the day also has another name among Protestant churches, it was "Reformation Day." Almost all Baptists paid little or no attention to the fact that yesterday was "Reformation Day." Some may ask, "what is Reformation Day?"

Well, according to history, "Reformation Day" is the day when on October 31, 1517, Martin Luther, a Roman Catholic priest, nailed his *95 Thesis* against the sale of indulgences by the Catholic Church to the door of the All Saints Church in Wittenberg, Germany. The Sunday before October 31 is celebrated in many Protestant churches as Reformation Sunday and in some countries in Europe, it is a National holiday.

According to some history scholars, Luther did not mean to be confrontational against the Catholic Church, but wanted to make more of a scholarly challenge to what he perceived was an erroneous practice of the church. Nevertheless, there is an undercurrent of challenge in several of the theses, particularly in Thesis 86, which asks: "Why does the pope, whose wealth today is greater than the wealth of the richest Crassus, build the basilica of St. Peter with the money of poor believers rather than with his own money?"

"Luther objected to a saying attributed to Johann Tetzel that "As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs." He insisted that, since forgiveness was God's alone to grant, those who claimed that indulgences absolved buyers from all punishments and granted them

salvation, were in error. Christians, he said, must not slacken in following Christ on account of such false assurances. The *95 Theses* were quickly translated from Latin into German, printed, and widely copied, making the controversy one of the first in history to be aided by the printing press. Within two weeks, copies of the theses had spread throughout Germany; within two months throughout Europe.” From **The Wikipedia**, the free encyclopedia Most certainly, we Baptists would agree with Martin Luther on his objection to indulgences as well as several other doctrinal issues he had with the Catholic Church. Then why do Baptists not celebrate Reformation Sunday? The answer may be surprising to some, but it is because Baptists are not Protestants. The next question might well be, why not? So, the subject I want to consider with you today is:

## **Why Baptists are not Protestants?**

**First**, I want to make it very clear that I do NOT believe one must be a Baptist in order to be a child of God and go to Heaven. I believe and hope that there are some of God’s elect among all denominations, however, I do pray the Lord will be pleased to lead every one of them to become Baptists. So you will understand that I am not speaking as a bigoted, narrow minded preacher, I want to give you some of the resources for much of the material I will use. One source is a book written by a Baptist, Dr. Kenneth Good, entitled, ***ARE BAPTISTS REFORMED?*** printed by the Regular Baptist Heritage Fellowship. Another source of material that I will rely on will be a book written by Dr. Fred Malone, entitled, ***THE BAPTISM OF DISCIPLES ALONE***, published by Founders Press.

Dr. Malone is a Baptist pastor who was at one time the pastor of a Presbyterian church after his graduation from Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, MS. As a Presbyterian he sprinkled two of his own

infants. However, as he studied more the New Testament on the subject of baptism, he became a Baptist minister and pastor.

Some other sources for my material are: ***INTRODUCING COVENANT THEOLOGY***, written by Dr. Michael Horton, a Presbyterian professor of Systematic Theology at Westminster Seminary in California, published by Baker Press, and ***INFANT BAPTISM & THE COVENANT OF GRACE***, written by Dr. Paul K. Jewett, who is professor of Systematic Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary, also in California and published by Eerdmans Publishing Company. I have also used some material from the book, ***BELIEVERS BAPTISM***, edited by Dr. Thomas R. Schreiner and Dr. Shawn D. Wright. Dr. Schreiner is professor of theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. Dr. Wright is professor of church history at the same seminary and both are co-pastors of Clifton Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky. Their book is published by B & H Publishing Group, Nashville, Tenn.

Another resource and a book that I would recommend everyone to read is ***LECTURES ON BAPTISM***, by William Shirreff. This book was first published in 1878 in London, England. It has a preface written by Charles Spurgeon. William Shirreff was a graduate of Edinburg University and was an excellent scholar of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. At the age of twenty-six, he became the pastor of a very large congregation in the Church of Scotland which he served for thirty-five years. During the course of his studies, he became convinced of the Baptist's teaching on baptism so he resigned his church and became a Baptist pastor after his immersion.

I also want to acknowledge the valuable material and help I have received from a book written by Dr. W.R. Downing, entitled ***THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH***, published by PIRS Publications.

Now back to the question, "Why Baptist are not Protestants?" I will consider it under three headings:

**1. Because of what we believe about the Bible**

**2. Because of what we believe about the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.**

**3. Because of what we believe about the Lord's church**

**I. BECAUSE OF WHAT BAPTISTS BELIEVE ABOUT THE BIBLE**

When Peter and John had been charged by the High Priest and the Jewish council not to preach any more about Jesus, they answered them, "*We ought to obey God rather than men.*" (Acts 5:29) This is the compass that has guided the saints of God in all ages in their faith and in all their practices.

Later, the Apostle Paul wrote, "*Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ*" (1 Cor.11:1). To Timothy, the young pastor in training, he would write, "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.*" (2 Tim. 3:16-17) Kenneth Good, in his book says, "This passage speaks of the sufficiency of the Scriptures in an unmistakable manner. If a proper mastery of the written Word of God be the only intellectual and academic requirement imposed upon the 'the man of God' as absolutely essential to his ministry, then it ill-befits ecclesiastical authorities to impose others." (p.103) The Bible is the inerrant, infallible and eternal Word of God given to us by Divine inspiration. Baptists are people of the Bible. We believe the Bible is to be our only rule of faith and practice. We are governed by what is

referred to as the "Regulatory Principle" in doctrine and practice. If it is in the New Testament, we believe it and do it, if it is not, we don't. We differ strongly with the Roman Catholic Church who hold that the decrees and traditions of the Church are of equal authority as the Scriptures.

The Protestant Reformers, in their initial break from Rome began well. They make a great deal of the phrase "*Sola Scriptura*" which, if followed, would have led them back to the New Testament and to complete agreement with the Anabaptists. For a while they did and there was some agreement and fellowship between them and the Anabaptists. Zwingli, the companion of Calvin, at first accepted the teaching of the sole authority of the Scriptures in all matters of faith and had good fellowship with the Anabaptists. However, when the issue of the separation between Church and State arose, he turned against the Anabaptists and accepted the tradition and doctrine of the Catholics.

In debates between the Reformers and the Anabaptists over various doctrinal issues, the Anabaptists demanded a "chapter and verse" but the Reformers would only quote Church traditions and creeds as their defense. Kenneth Good, says, "Even the Reformers themselves admitted that the Anabaptists were primarily Biblicists." (p.107) Thus the authority of the Bible has been the great theological divide between the Baptists and the Protestants, a gulf that cannot be bridged.

"It was Balthasar Hubmaier, that stalwart Anabaptist, who dared to challenge Zwingli on this very point. He insisted, in a conference with the Swiss reformer, that 'in all disputes concerning faith and religion, the Scriptures alone, proceeding from the mouth of God, ought to be our level and rule.' Baptists have maintained this consistent stand through all the centuries that have followed Hubmaier's day, even at the expense of their personal safety." Robert Torbet, *History of the Baptist*, p.483 quoted from

the introduction of *Baptists and the Bible*, p. 15, by L. Russ Bush and Tom J. Nettles, published by Moody Press. Zwingli became one of the worst enemies and persecutors of the Anabaptists during the Reformation era. It was at his instigation, that the Council of St. Gaul passed an edict which read in part:

“In order that the dangerous, wicked, turbulent and seditious sect of the Baptists may be eradicated, we have thus decreed: If anyone is suspected of rebaptism, he is to be warned by the magistracy to leave the territory under penalty of the designated punishment...Teachers of rebaptism, baptizing preachers and leaders of hedge meetings are to be drowned...Foreign Baptists are to be driven out: if they return they shall be drowned...No one is allowed to secede from the (Zwinglian) Church.” See John T. Christian, *History of the Baptists*, I p.121; also see J. M. Cramp, *History of the Baptists*, pp.178-179; also Thomas Armitage, *The History of the Baptists*, p. 330

Unfortunate, many Reformers followed the pattern of Zwingli. Anabaptists' blood has been shed since the first century because they tenaciously held the teachings of Christ and the Apostles to be more sacred than life itself. This difference and distinction between the Baptist's view of the Bible and the Protestants', can be seen in the difference between their confessions of faith. The Westminster Confession of Faith of 1647 is a culmination and perfection of the "Reformed Faith" and as such is a most important confession of faith to the Reformers because it is the development of over a century of Protestant doctrinal refinement.

The first chapter deals with the doctrine of the Bible. Baptists do not differ from the Protestants in their view of inspiration and the authority of the Scriptures and are in complete agreement with the first five sections of that

Confession, however, it is with Section VI that we have much disagreement and take exception. It says:

“The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man’s salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequences deduced from Scripture:” (underlined for emphasis)

Here the proverbial fly is introduced to the ointment of Biblical theology. Here Baptists say is a departure from “Sola Scriptura”. Indeed the Reformers speak of “the all sufficiency of the Scriptures”, but they add the theory of “necessary consequences”.

B. B. Warfield, a well-known Presbyterian theologian writes: “Men are required to believe and to obey not only what is ‘expressly set down in Scripture’, but also what ‘by good and necessary consequence deduced from Scripture.’” (**Westminster Assembly and Its Work**, pp. 226,227)

It is this very idea that causes Baptists to draw back from fellowship with the Reformers and their descendants. Baptists believe that the clear statements of the Scriptures are to be used as a means to understand what may be obscure and that they must both be in agreement. **The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1646** and the **Second Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689** are very clear on what Baptists believed about the Bible. The Baptist Confession of 1646 says in Article VIII:

“The rule of this knowledge, faith, and obedience, concerning the worship of God, in which is contained the whole duty of man, is (not men’s laws, or unwritten traditions, but) only the Word of God contained in the Holy Scriptures; in which is plainly recorded whatsoever is needful for us to know, believe, and practice: which are

the only rule of holiness and obedience for all saints, at all times, in all places to be observed.”

When the Baptists of England drafted their Second Confession of Faith in 1689, they tried to follow the wording of the Westminster Confession as closely as possible to show that they were not a heretical group as was claimed by their enemies. However, in the very first chapter of their Confession of Faith, true to their independent spirit and convictions they departed from the language of the Westminster. The Baptists began Chapter One by adding a sentence not contained in the Westminster Confession. They wrote:

“The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving Knowledge, Faith, and Obedience;”

In Part Nine they wrote:

“The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself; and therefore when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched by other places that speak more clearly.”

In Part Ten they said:

“The supreme judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Scripture delivered by the Spirit, into which Scripture so delivered, our faith is finally resolved.”

Here is true "SOLA SCRIPTURA"!!!! There is no place for "good and necessary consequence deduced from Scripture." It is this very critical issue that separates Baptists from all other denominations, we will accept nothing, but "*thus saith the Word of the Lord.*" This is the foundation alone for all our doctrines and practices. We believe in the verbal plenary inspiration of the original manuscripts and as such they are the very words of God to us. If we depart from this, we cease to be a people of the Bible and we cease to be Baptists.

## **II. BECAUSE OF WHAT BAPTISTS BELIEVE ABOUT THE ORDINANCES OF BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER**

Baptists believe a New Testament church has only two ordinances: baptism by complete immersion in water following a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour, and the memorial observance of the Lord's Supper.

Just before He ascended back to Heaven, Jesus Christ gave what is called "The Great Commission." It is recorded in Matthew 28:19-20. Christ said: "*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 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.*"

Here is the Divinely given charter for all Christians who desire to do the work of Jesus Christ in any age. He said, "*Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*" In this commission, Christ gave clear instructions concerning the ministry of New Testament churches. They are to be evangelizing, baptizing and disciplining believers. The Lord said, "*teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*" Christ had taught baptism by practice and in precept. He was immersed by

John in Jordan River. Christ said, *"Immersing them (believers) in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."*

Many Greek language and history scholars from various denominations could be quoted here to prove that baptism was by immersion. Baptists call this the ordinance of baptism, because it is what Christ, the Head of His church, has commanded. It is an ordinance. We perform baptism the very same way that Christ was baptized and the very same way the apostles baptized, by immersion. We dare not change anything about baptism because it would involve the changing of the commandment of Jesus Christ. No mortal being has the authority to do that!

In John 3:22-23, we read: *"After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized."* John Calvin said in his commentary on these verses:

*"From these words, we may infer that John and Christ administered baptism by plunging the whole body beneath the water; though we ought not to give ourselves any great uneasiness about the outward rite,"*

I wonder what Calvin or any other sprinkler would say if we changed the baptismal formula to say, "In the name of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob?" Because Baptists are Biblicists, we dare not change anything that Christ has commanded. We hold that the ordinances as they were instituted by Jesus Christ and His apostles are to be administered and practiced as they instituted them. Paul wrote: *"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother*

*that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.”*  
(2 Thess.3:6)

Baptists do not call Baptism or the Lord’s Supper a “sacrament” as do the Catholics and Protestants, because a sacrament is to them a “means of conveying sanctifying grace.” Dr. Charles Hodge, a Presbyterian, says in his *SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY*, Vol. III, page 500: “The sacraments are declared to be means of grace.” As support, he quotes the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*:

“A sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ; wherein, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the New Covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.”

Baptists believe that Salvation is all by the sovereign grace of God through Jesus Christ which is freely bestowed on God’s elect apart from any works they perform, it is free, it is by grace alone. Paul said in Romans 11:6 *“If by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.”* Grace and works cannot be joined together.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:2 *Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.* When Baptists ask the Paedobaptists for a scripture to support their practice of sprinkling infants, they must resort to their doctrine of “necessary consequences” and their creeds. Baptists, on the other hand, support their doctrine of believer’s baptism by many New Testament scriptures with support from language and history scholars.

Because of the high esteem Baptists hold for the teachings of Jesus Christ and His apostles, we believe we are bound by their teachings in our

observances of the ordinances. We dare not alter or change them in any manner or form if we are to be true followers of Jesus Christ and teaching others to observe those things which He has commanded. It is only as we do this that we can lay hold of Christ's promise in that commission, "*Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of ages.*"

Baptists believe that the mark of a true church is one that teaches and practices the ordinances taught by Christ and His apostles as set forth in the New Testament. Only such churches can today be called true New Testament churches. Such churches have been preserved and perpetuated since the days of Christ, pure from the false doctrines and practices of the apostate Roman Catholic Church and all her daughters that are in the world today. This then brings us to the third point:

### **III. Baptists are not Protestants because of what we believe about the Lord's church.**

Because Baptists are strict Biblicists, we differ with all other denominations on what we believe about the church of Jesus Christ. Baptists are not Protestants because we were never part of the Roman Catholic Church. Therefore Baptists were never part of any protest movement against the Catholic Church. True Baptists believe that Jesus Christ established the first New Testament church and that it has been in existence ever since. Therefore we do not believe that the churches of Jesus Christ have ever needed to be reformed.

W. C. King, editor of the historical work entitled *Crossing the Centuries* (with associate editors from Harvard and Yale, including President Wilson) wrote:

“Of the Baptists it may be said that they are not Reformers. These people, comprising bodies of Christian believers known under various names in different countries are entirely distinct and independent of the Roman and Greek Churches, and have an unbroken continuity of existence from the Apostolic days down through the centuries. Throughout this long period, they were bitterly persecuted for heresy, driven from country to country, disenfranchised, deprived of their property, imprisoned, tortured, and slain by the thousands, yet they swerved not from their New Testament faith, doctrine and adherence.”  
(quoted by Dr. Roy Mason, *The Church that Jesus Built*, p.108)

While there are many more empirical historical authorities that could be quoted as proof of the preservation and perpetuity of the Baptists since the days of Christ, the main authority are the words of Jesus Christ Himself. We have such a promise given by Christ to His apostles and recorded in John 15:16. Christ said: “*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:* Those Apostles, who were sovereignly chosen by Christ to be witnesses of His life, beginning with His baptism, His teachings, His death and resurrection and finally of His ascension, where told they were ordained (put in place), to go forth and bring forth fruit (disciples). He promised them that their fruit would remain. This promise of Christ is that the work of the apostles, as set forth in the Great Commission, which they were engaged in and would suffer and die for, would be a fruitful work and would remain until the end of time. The original churches established by the apostles are no longer in existence today, but their labors have remained to the present time. Since the days of those churches, there have been New Testament churches like them, following in the apostles doctrine and practices (1Thess.2:14) and separate from the false apostate Christian churches.

Charles Spurgeon, the renowned Baptist preacher of London in days past and great church historian said:

"We believe that the Baptists are the original Christians. We did not commence our existence at the Reformation, we were reformers before Luther or Calvin were born; we never came from the Church of Rome, for we were never in it, but we have an unbroken line up to the Apostles themselves. We have always existed from the very days of Christ...It would not be impossible to show that the first Christians who dwelt in the land were of the same faith and order as the churches now called Baptists." (*Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, 1861, p.225)

In Matthew 16:18, Jesus Christ made a promise to the apostles concerning His church. He said, "*I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*" The Holy Spirit would first have us take note of the person speaking: "*I say unto thee.*" It is Christ, who is the Creator of the universe, who "*is before all things, and by Him all things consist*" (Col.1:17). He says, "*I will build my church.*"

Christ is the builder and it is His church. This promise to build His church was not made to Peter but to all His apostles and to all His saints. Peter is not the rock the church is built on, but it is Christ, the sure foundation. (I Cor.3:11) Lightfoot says: "... The words concerning the *rock* upon which the church was to be built are evidently taken out of Isaiah, chapter 28:16; which, the New Testament being interpreter, in very many places do most plainly speak of Christ. When therefore Peter, the first of all the disciples (from the very first beginning of the preaching of the gospel), had pronounced most clearly of the person of Christ, and had declared the mystery of the incarnation, and confessed the deity of Christ, the minds of the disciples are, with good reason, called back to those words of Isaiah, that they might learn to acknowledge who that *stone* was that was set in Sion for a foundation never to be shaken, and whence it came to pass that that foundation remained so unshaken; namely, thence, that he was not a creature, but God himself, the Son of God."

We need also to properly understand the Greek word "ekklesia", which is translated into English as "church." Many Greek scholars can be quoted to show that the word translated "church" is the Greek word "ekklesia", which means a called out assembly meeting for the purpose of conducting business. The definition of the word "church" has been corrupted through the centuries until today it has many different meanings. Some use it incorrectly in reference to a building, others to a particular denomination such as The Methodist Church and then others to all believers as a universal, invisible church. All such usages are wrong and have caused much confusion among Christians and the world in general. It is never correct, according to the proper definition of the word "ekklesia" as established by language scholars, to use the word except when referring to a local assembly. When more than one church is referred to in the New Testament, the plural Greek word is used and is translated "churches".

It is acknowledged that the word is sometimes used in the New Testament in what is referred to as the Generic form. So when Paul speaks of the church in Ephesians five, he is referring to all churches by a Generic usage of the word. Such is true today in our English language. We speak of "the car" or "the radio" having made a great impact on our society. We do not mean by that a big universal car or radio, but all cars and all radios. We speak of the home in the same way. We read in Genesis 1:28 *"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth,"* Every Bible believer understands that God established the home (a real visible entity) and He established it between one man and one woman as the foundation of our social order. We say God established the home when He ordained marriage.

We do not mean something universal and invisible when we use the word "home" in such manner, but rather all homes. Likewise, when Jesus Christ said in Matt.16:18, *"upon this rock I will build my church,"* He was not referring to something that was universal and invisible, but rather a local

called out assembly of saints, called together by Him and given authority to administer the affairs of the kingdom of God. Such assembly is a real visible entity and is the center of New Testament Christian order. When one reads the New Testament, there is no problem with understanding this, except when one's mind has been programmed by false teachings concerning the church of Jesus Christ.

I want to give a quotation from A. W. Pink on this verse:

"What kind of a '*church*' was the Saviour here referring to? The vast majority of Christians have understood it as the great invisible, mystical, and universal Church which comprises all His redeemed. But they are certainly wrong. Had this been His meaning He had necessarily said, '*Upon the Rock I am building My church.*' Instead, He used the future tense, '*I will build,*' which shows clearly His church had no existence, save in the purpose of God. The '*church*' to which Christ referred in Matthew 16:18 could not be a universal one, that is a church which included all the saints of God, for the tense of the verb used by Him on this occasion manifestly excluded the O. T. saints! Thus, the first time the word '*church*' occurs in the N. T. it has no reference to a general or universal one. Further, our Lord could not be referring to the Church in glory, for it will be in no danger of '*the gates of hell!*' His declaration that '*the gates of hell shall not prevail against it,*' makes it clear beyond all doubt that Christ was referring to His church upon earth, and thus, to a visible and local church." (*Studies in Scriptures*, Dec. 1927, p.277)

The Roman Catholics believe in a universal (catholic), visible church and the Protestants hold to a universal, invisible church. Both of these are Biblically wrong and violate the definition of the Greek word "*ekklesia*" and the New Testament teachings concerning what a true church is. So, one may ask,

“What constitutes a true New Testament church?” A New Testament church holds to the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Apostles as found in the New Testament. Baptists understand the marks of a true New Testament church to be:

1. The Sole Authority of the Bible, particularly the New Testament as the sole authority for faith and practice. We believe all the Bible is the Word of God. However the New Testament is the last and final revelation of God’s Will for His saints. We are to look at the Old Testament through the eyes of the New Testament and not the opposite. Jesus Christ is the final and complete revelation of God to us. If we follow His teachings we will live by all the Bible.

2. A Regenerated Church Membership. Baptists understand the New Testament to teach that church membership is restricted to regenerated people. It has been one of our cardinal distinctives. Here we differ with most Protestants and all the Reformers. Thus traditional Protestantism does not see the necessity of a regenerated church membership according to the New Testament because they hold to a dualistic concept of the church which is both visible and invisible. Children are accepted as church members merely because of a family relationship. The basis for this is their misconception of the New Testament church of Jesus Christ as a continuation of the Old Testament church. Because of their understanding of “Covenant Theology”, they hold to a church membership family based teaching that baptism (sprinkling) replaces circumcision. They also hold to a form of church government based on the Jewish pattern of ruling elders rather than the New Testament form of congregational rule.

3. Because of what we believe about church membership, Baptists have historically believed that the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper were only for regenerated church members. The Protestants have historically

held to the sprinkling of infants and open communion. They say participation in these ordinances or sacraments (as they call them) is left to the individual to decide. Baptists say, "The standards are set by Jesus Christ in the New Testament and the church is the one to make the final decision in these matters." Paul said: *"But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat."* (1 Cor.5:11)

4. Soul liberty. *Romans 14:5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.*" Again, because of what we believe about the Bible and Regeneration, Baptists have been strong defenders of what is called "Soul Liberty". We believe that it is the responsibility and right of every individual to practice or not to practice the religion of their own persuasion. Each individual is accountable to God, his Creator, to believe what they understand is true and to be free to live according to those convictions. Baptists have never been religious persecutors, but have often times been the objects of such persecution so they have historically been strong defenders of Religious Liberty. They have also strongly held to the separation of Church and State and no other denomination has so vigorously defended Religious Liberty as Baptists.

5. Baptists have championed the doctrine of Salvation by Grace apart from works. The doctrines of God's free and sovereign grace are not Reform doctrines, they are Bible doctrines and therefore Baptist doctrines, because we believe the Bible. Baptists believed the doctrines of free and sovereign grace before Martin Luther or John Calvin. We do not look to any man or any doctrinal creed as our authority for believing these doctrines, but only to the Word of God.

Charles Spurgeon said, "We (Baptists) have an unbroken line up to the apostles themselves. We have always existed from the days of Christ, and our principles, sometimes veiled and forgotten, like a river which travels underground for a season, have always had honest and holy adherents."  
*New Park Street Pulpit*, Vol. VII, p.225

Again, I want to make it very clear that I do NOT believe that one must be a Baptist in order to be a child of God and go to Heaven. I believe and hope that there are some of God's elect among all denominations, however, I hope the Lord will be pleased to lead every one of His elect to become Baptists. The doors of a Baptist church are not the doors to Heaven, Jesus Christ and him alone is that Door. Apart from Him, regardless to what religious order or church one may follow, Hell is their eternal destiny. Christ said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (John 14:6)* It is my prayer that God will be pleased to regenerate, by His Holy Spirit, everyone that hears or reads this sermon and lead them to profess Christ as Saviour and follow Him in Biblical baptism and church membership.

"Next to being saved, the writer (A. W. Pink) deems it his greatest privilege of all to belong to one of His 'churches,'" (*Studies in the Scriptures*, Dec.1927, p.281)