

# The Baptist Examiner

A nation-wide, independent paper, standing foursquare for the distinguishing doctrines of Baptists, and shunning not to declare all the counsel of God.

"To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20).

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## Were New Testament Churches Baptist Churches?

Sermon Preached by Pastor Carroll Hubbard, of Salem, Ky., Before Old Bethel Association of Missionary Baptist Churches, October 1st, 1930

Scripture Reading: Matt. 16:13-20, 28:18-20.

Text: Matt. 16:18—"And I say 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."

It seems from this text that the Lord Jesus, while on earth, built a church and to this institution promised perpetuity. The gates of hell were not to be successful in their opposition to this church. Whatever else "the gates of hades" mean, this does say that the churches of the Lord Jesus would encounter opposition, but that they would never be destroyed. Since Jesus established His church and promised it to perpetuity and continuity, then it is on this earth today or the Son of God stands convicted of an egregious error. To this same church Christ promised, "And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age"—Matt 28:20. If Jesus' words are truth then he has on this earth a church (we here use the word church in its generic sense) as the "pillar and ground of the truth," and it is ours to identify this church. **Were New Testament churches Baptist Churches? We wax bold in saying that they were and that from the days of the personal ministry of the Lord Jesus until now there have been Baptist churches on earth.**

Baptist churches are not nearest to New Testament churches, nor are they close to New Testament churches, but they ARE New Testament churches. To be a New Testament church a church must have certain resemblances to the churches talked about in the New Testament. Baptist churches have all these requirements, as we shall see, and are, therefore, the churches talked about in the New Testament. We mention five of these requirements:

### I. As To Origin.

To be a New Testament church, a church must have been instituted at the right time, at the right place and by the right founder. At all of these points, etc., Baptists can comply with the requirements while all others are "weighed and found wanting."

1. **As to Time.** New Testament churches were begun during the personal ministry of Christ. They were already in existence before the Lord went away. He even sang songs in the church before His ascension. Heb. 2:12—"Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church I will sing praise unto thee." To this church, Christ gave clear and definite instructions as to discipline. Matt. 18:16. Also He gave them the Great Commission and that before His death. Matt. 28:18-20. Then it is seen to be the height of folly to say that the Church that Jesus built did not begin during His ministry but on Pentecost. Thus before any people can claim to be New Testament churches they must find their beginning in the lifetime of the Lord Jesus. Who can do it? The following dates show that all other denominations fail to meet this requisite for a New Testament church:

Catholics, A. D. 590-604; Lutherans, 1520; Episcopalians, 1534; Presbyterians, 1536; Congregationalists, 1580; Methodists, 1730; Campbellites, 1827. It is significant that the Campbellites have only recently celebrated their one hundredth anniversary.

What about the Baptists? Their date of origin cannot be successfully and consistently placed this side of the life of Christ. Men well acquainted with history, who were not Baptists testify to this fact.

Alex Campbell—"The church at Jerusalem was a Baptist church; the churches of Samaria were Baptist churches."

John Clark Ridpath—"In the year 100 all Christians were Baptists."

Isaac Newton—"The Baptists are the only body of Christians that have never symbolized with the church at Rome."

2. **As to Place.** The church that Jesus built was instituted in the small confines of Palestine. All other denominations have had their beginning either in Europe or America.

3. **As to Founder.** The founder of New Testament churches was Christ Himself. It was prophesied that He would build the temple of the Lord and the scripture cannot be broken. Zech 6:12, 13—".....Behold the man whose name is The Branch; and he shall grow up out of this place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord." It is evident from 1 Cor. 3:16-17 and Eph. 2:22 that the temple here talked about in this prophecy refers to a New Testament church. Jesus did build His own church according to the New Testament. Matt 16:18—".....I will build my church," cf. Mk. 3:13-14. What institution on this earth today can claim the Lord of Glory as their founder and head save Baptist churches? All others are "synagogues of Satan" and were begun by sinful and depraved men.

Catholics, Pope Gregory; Lutherans, Martin Luther; Episcopalians, Henry VIII; Presbyterians, John Calvin; Congregationalists, Robert Brown; Methodists, John and Charles Wesley; Campbellites, Alex. Campbell.

### II. As to Constituency—Membership.

New Testament churches had a regenerated membership. Disciples were first made and then baptized. John 4:1. None were baptized into these churches but those who were already saved. Acts 2:47—"And the Lord added daily to the church such as were being saved." John the Baptist came to make ready a people for the Lord, and then this prepared people were organized into the First Baptist church. Who today can meet this requirement for a New Testament church?

T. T. Martin has well said, "Baptist churches are the only churches on earth that require a person to profess to be saved before the person unites with the church or is baptized."

Baptists have always advocated "blood before water, Christ before the church and salvation before church membership." This is the New Testament way and the Baptist way—therefore Baptist churches are New Testament churches.