

What is meant by the name ----

Old Line Primitive Baptist

by Bob Allgood

Among Old Line Primitive Baptists there is no name like the name of Jesus, for there is none other name given under heaven among men, whereby we must be saved. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow ----" (Phil. 2:9-11). Therefore, we do not exalt the name Primitive Baptist above that of Jesus Christ. However, it should be noted that Jesus himself said, "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he". The word least (mikros) can mean smaller in stature or younger in age. Jesus was six months younger than John the Baptist. There is none greater than John the Baptist, except for Jesus Christ who is the greatest of all.

Understanding our terms: Right or wrong, wars have been fought over words ! Contracts have been broken, families divided and churches split over the misuse or misunderstanding of words. Jesus told his disciples to "Take heed what ye hear" (Mark 4:24) and to "Take heed how ye hear" (Luke 8:18). Jesus often used the expression "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear". The Apostle Paul based an entire body of truth on one single letter - the letter "S" - see Galatians 3:6-18.

Perhaps the best way to begin this explanation or definition of the term "Old Line Primitive Baptist" is to look to Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch as recorded in Acts 8:26-40 (KJV). The apostle Philip was one of the twelve apostles of the FIRST (or Primitive) church in Jerusalem (Matt. 10:2-3). The deacon

Philip was also a member of the FIRST (or Primitive) church in Jerusalem (Acts 6:5). The Philip of our text - be he either the Apostle or the Deacon, [who had been ordained an Elder and now qualified to "baptize"] was a member of the FIRST (or Primitive) church.

Philip was directed by the Lord to go into the desert of Gaza (v. 26) where he found the eunuch, who was reading from Isaiah 53 (v.27-28, 32-33). Philip was directed by the Spirit of God to ask the eunuch "Understandest thou what thou redest" ?. The eunuch, desiring to know the truth, said, "How can I, except some man should guide me" (v. 30-31). The eunuch asked a spiritual question: "I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this ? of himself, or of some other man"? This question indicates that he had been given spiritual discernment (I Cor. 2:14). Philip then began at the same Scripture and preached unto him Jesus. Isaiah 53 does not mention anything about "water baptism" - but Isaiah 53 does teach the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (800 years before the birth of Christ). While there, you should also read Isaiah 7:13-14 and 9:6-7 with Matthew 1:18-25 and Acts 2:29-36. When preaching Jesus, Philip must have preached him as "The Christ, the Son of the living God" and as "the Messiah which was to come" according to Scripture.

As Philip and the eunuch went on their way, they came unto a certain water. Note, the eunuch, not Philip, said "See, here is water; what doth hinder (or prevent) me to be BAPTIZED". Philip did not demand the eunuch to be baptized, but rather he put a requirement or prerequisite to his baptism. "If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest" (v. 36-37). Water Baptism is not a requirement in order to gain eternal life. The eunuch answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God". Upon this confession of faith, Philip and the eunuch, "went down both into the water", (notice how Scripture repeats itself) "both Philip and the eunuch"; and he (Philip) BAPTIZED him (the eunuch). And when they were "come up out of the water" -- the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, -- and the eunuch "went on his way rejoicing".

In order to communicate one with another, it is very important that we have a mutual understanding of the meaning of the terms we use. The following terms and definitions are given for

this purpose.

PRIMITIVE is an adjective which means: "Pertaining to the origin; First or Original. That which existed first or was first-formed and has not changed much by evolution [growing and developing] in time". Primitive as used with "Old Line Baptist" refers back to the ORIGINAL New Testament Baptist Churches, not back to an imaginary "cave man".

BAPTIST is more than a name for identification. It describes the scriptural activity of the church or individual , namely "one who baptizes" [by immersion]. There is no other Scriptural mode for water baptism that can be accepted as pleasing to the Lord than "going down into the water" and being immersed. This only can picture the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is the way our Lord himself was Baptized by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:13-17). This is the way over 3,000 souls were Baptized into the Church on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41).

The word Church comes from the Greek word "Ekklesia" which means "A Called Out Assembly" of people. In the case of the "Town Council" (Acts 19:39) citizenship was required. "Ekklesia" is translated church 115 times in the KJV; 36 times as church and 79 times as churches. Using a contextual method of interpretation, the primary application is always to the local, visible church or churches. In the case of "The Church", membership is made up of people who are Born Again, Believers and then Baptized (and it must be in that order).

There is no such thing as a "denomination" known as The Primitive Baptist Church. This term is often used in the generic to speak of all "Primitive Baptist Churches" -- just as the term "The American Housewife" is used to speak of all "wives". Primitive Baptists have no headquarters, and their only Head is Jesus Christ who reigns in his kingdom on his throne of Glory. Primitive Baptists have always existed on the face of this earth, under one name or another, since Jesus Christ called out the first BAPTIST church on the banks of the river Jordan. For he said, "Upon this rock (i.e. Himself) I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"

The term "Old Line" is synonymous with many other names such as "Old School", "Old Path" or "Hard Shell", which were adopted by Primitive Baptists when they separated themselves from those who departed from the Faith in 1832 and followed after the man-made innovations of Andrew Fuller and William Carey. Those who departed became known as the "New School" or Missionary Baptists. I spent 15 years as a Missionary Baptist minister before being converted to the true doctrine of Grace and becoming an Old Line Baptist in 1976. Sadly some "Old School or Primitive Baptists" have become isolationist and some have even become fatalist. But the true Old School or Primitive Baptists do believe in Biblical Evangelism.

Jeremiah wrote to backsliding Israel "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein" (Jeremiah 6:16-19). God established the pattern for the New Testament Church, and as he told Amos, he laid a plum line (a sure method of measurement) in the midst of his people (Amos 7:7-9).

The true Old Line or Old School Primitive Baptists endeavor to follow the New Testament pattern for worship and practice. Our services consist of singing, praying and preaching of God's word in an effort to worship God in Spirit and in Truth (John 4:23-24. We do not engage in or follow after the modern religious inventions of man, nor do we teach for doctrine the commandments of men, in an effort to keep our worship from being in vain (Matt. 15:1-9).

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