

Introduction to a New Testament Church

Primitive in nature by design, Baptist in practice by commandment

by Bob Allgood

When you first visit a New Testament Church, which must be primitive in nature by design; Baptist in practice by commandment; and sound in doctrine by her teachings, you will notice a simple form of worship, consisting of hymns, prayer and preaching, as close to the pattern established 2000 years ago as possible. The absence of musical instruments, choirs, Sunday schools and other man-made inventions is in keeping with the teachings of the New Testament. The Lord's Church is under the authority of her husband and head, Jesus Christ and should be submissive to Him in all things (Eph. 5:23-25). Therefore, the church should not reflect the world, but rather be a city set upon a hill (Matthew 5:14).

The Words "Primitive and Baptist" are adjectives describing the origin and practice of the New Testament Church. The word PRIMITIVE means "First or Original; and pertaining to origin, has not changed much in time." Historians use this term to describe the first Churches of the New Testament era. The term Primitive Baptist has been traced back to 63 AD and a church found in Olchon, Wales. Another name given to the Primitive Churches in the 4th Century was "Ana-Baptist." Ana-Baptists were known throughout the dark ages by many names, such as Donatists, Paulicans, Waldenses and Lollards. After the Protestant Reformation, the term Ana was dropped and the name Baptist was retained. Baptist means "one who baptizes by immersion." In the United States all Baptists were pretty much of the same beliefs until about 1800 when a major division began to take place in the Baptist family. Those who believed in a "General Atonement" and that human efforts are necessary for the "dead" sinner to obtain eternal life, departed from the Primitive Faith. After 1832 the Baptist Churches which held true to the doctrine of Grace were called Old School, Old Line or Primitive Baptists, names which denote their desire to preserve the identity of the true New Testament Church.

The following is an introduction to the New Testament beliefs concerning the doctrine of Grace and Church practice followed by most Primitive Baptists.

The Church was established by Christ to be a home (on earth) away from home (heaven) for God's children. It is a refuge or sanctuary where one may receive spiritual comfort, rest, peace and instruction in righteousness.

The Scriptures are the inspired, infallible words of God, without error and contradiction, preserved by God, and are profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in

righteousness. The purpose of the Scriptures is to make God's children wise unto salvation by informing and educating them about eternal life through the finished work of Jesus Christ. We prefer the Authorized King James translation to any other English version. (I Cor. 15:1-4; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

The Purpose of the Gospel was never to bring eternal life to anyone. It means nothing to the dead sinner, but is good news and glad tidings to the born again child of God. Therefore, it is preached to feed the souls of His children; to comfort, edify and instruct them. There is no greater message to a child of God that feels to be poor and needy and unworthy of God's mercy and grace, than to hear that Jesus paid the sin debt, saved him from his sins and that he is kept by the power of God (Isaiah 40:1, 9; 52:7; John 5:39; I Cor. 2:9-14; Eph. 2:1-9; 2 Tim. 1:7-11; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 1:2-5; 5:1-3) .

The Key Difference New Testament Doctrine and Other Religions may be understood best by looking at the subject of cause and effect. What others say is the cause of salvation, such as belief, faith, repentance, baptism or other acts by an individual, the New Testament teaches are the effects (evidence) of spiritual life and can only be performed sincerely by those already possessing eternal life. In other words, salvation is totally by

The Sovereign Grace of God - which is explained briefly as follows:

1. The Fall of Man Resulting in Depravity.

When Adam transgressed God's commandment, he and the human race (Adam's posterity) fell under the law of sin and death. Adam's transgression brought sin and death to all mankind. No one is able to recover himself from this fallen condition by his own will or ability. All men are sinners by nature and WITHOUT GODS GRACE and MERCY will remain under the penalty and condemnation of sin (Genesis 2:17; Romans 3:10-23; 5:12; Psalms 14:1-3; 51:5; 58:3) .

2. Unconditional Election & Predestination.

God, according to His own purpose and will, chose an innumerable people in Christ, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation, before the world began and predestinated them unto the adoption of children to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ and to obtain an eternal inheritance in heaven (John 17:1-3; Eph. 1:4-11; 1 Peter 1:1-5; Rom. 8:29-30; Rev. 5:9-10).

3. Redemption: The Work of Christ for the Elect.

The word **redeem** declares a price to be paid and prior ownership of that which is to be redeemed. The price of eternal redemption (Hebrews 9:12) is the blood of Christ. Christ died for all that the Father chose in Him before the world began; ALL that the Father has given to Him; and NOT for ALL MANKIND in general. All that Christ died for SHALL live in heaven and immortal glory, for God has reconciled them unto Himself in Christ (John 6:37-39; 8:42-47; 17:9; Rom. 5:8-19; 1 Cor. 1:26-21; II Cor. 5:17-21; Heb. 9:24-26; 1 Peter 1:2-5 with 18-21).

4. Regeneration, New Birth, Born Again.

These various terms define what happens when God quickens His children into eternal life. This is done by the life-giving voice of Christ and is always effectual and irresistible on the part of the individual. It is accomplished separate and apart from the preaching of the gospel and without the help of man (John 3:6-8; 5:25; 6:37; Rom. 8:30; Eph. 2:1; 2 Tim. 1:9).

5. Preservation or Eternal Security.

The comforting aspect of the doctrine of salvation by grace is that ALL whom Christ died for shall be eternally saved without the loss of one. They shall never perish, and can never be separated from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. They are preserved by His blood and kept by His power (John 6:37-39; 10:27-30; Rom. 8:28-39; 1 Peter 1:1-5; Heb. 10:14).

Brief Comments About our Church Practices

1. Musical Instruments.

Our worship service is patterned after the New Testament example and authority and consists of congregational singing, prayer and preaching. Musical instruments are not used in our worship services as there is no New Testament command or example for them. We believe in singing and making melody in our heart to the Lord (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).

2. Sunday School - Teaching.

We have no Sunday Schools for lack of New Testament authority. They are a recent invention begun in the 18th century in England, and then only to teach reading, writing and arithmetic to under-privileged children. This does not mean New Testament Church do not believe in teaching children. The Bible instructs Parents to teach their children at home, and the Minister to teach them in the church assembly (Eph. 6:4; 2 Tim 2:1-2).

3. Tithing or Financial Support.

The New Testament Church does not believe in tithing, as this was an Old Testament law fulfilled in Christ. We do believe in giving by laying aside upon the first day of the week as God has prospered, and as one purposes in his heart, cheerfully supporting the ministry of the church (1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:7; Acts 20:35).

4. Rejecting Sin - Living Godly Lives.

The New Testament Church teaches God's children should deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. We should live unto Him died for us and called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (Titus 2:12; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; 1 Peter 2:9; Rom. 6:1-2).

In Conclusion we believe the New Testament Church, which must be primitive in design by nature, Baptist in practice by commandment, and sound in doctrine by her teachings, has an identity found in the New Testament and that God's children should worship Him in spirit and in truth, believing and observing the doctrine and commandments of Jesus Christ. This will bring a peace above all understanding, joy unspeakable and full of glory, to the child of God who walks in His ways, and glory and honor unto God by His Son Jesus Christ in the Church throughout all ages (John 4:23; Matt. 15:7-9; John 14:15-18; Philipians 4:7; 1 Peter 1:8; Eph. 3:21).

Truth will withstand the most intense scrutiny and examination. When separated from the traditions and ego-driven doctrines of men, the true Gospel of Christ shines clear. We encourage you to "search the scriptures," to see whether these things be so. Should you desire to serve the true and living God, please visit with the nearest Old Line Primitive Baptist Church in your area. (Acts 17:11)