

Seek Ye First...

"...the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

A Quarterly Journal of Biblical Studies

Fall 2001

THE BAPTIST CHURCH

Michael Light

The largest Protestant denomination in the United States is the Baptist Church. This religious body has some 30 million members composing some 100,000 congregations. There is no doubt that much temporal good has been done by this group. But Jesus taught us clearly that it takes more than doing earthly good to be saved. Notice Matthew 7:21-23, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Again, Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

This issue of *Seek Ye First...* is the third in a series dealing with various religious organizations in light of biblical teaching. We earnestly call upon all of our readers to examine the material presented herein with Bible in hand. Even though it is not popular to ask people to question their beliefs, the Holy Spirit calls upon us all to do just that. Read 1 John 4:1, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." This passage teaches us the need to be vigilant in the examination of both doctrines and teachers. We need to realize the seriousness of making sure what we believe in the area of religion is the truth because Jesus taught in a parable, "Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?" (Luke 6:39). Unfortunately many have closed their eyes and ears when it comes to their religious convictions. We must be honest enough to examine what we believe in light of the scriptures.

Notice what the record states in John 8:31-32, "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." It is our hope that our Baptist friends will read the following articles with these verses in mind. Only a knowledge of and obedience to the truth can make us right with God. We must continue in the truth to be right with God. John 12:48

adds, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."

As mentioned earlier the Baptist church is the largest Protestant denomination in the world. But being a majority doesn't make one right. The Bible is full of examples of the majority being wrong and a minority right in the area of faithfulness to God. Think of the story of Noah and the ark (Genesis 6:1ff). Was the majority right in that day? Certainly not. Was the majority right in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18 and 19, cf. 2 Peter 2:6ff)? Again the answer is, "No." In fact Jesus spoke specifically of the destiny of the majority. Read Matthew 7:13-14, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Let's be willing to stand with God and His word even if we must stand alone.

The following articles will examine some practices and doctrines of the Baptist church that are at odds with the scriptures. We call upon all our readers to search the scriptures for God's saving message (Acts 17:11). The Spirit through the Apostle Paul taught us to, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." While we realize that much of what will follow might offend some of our Baptist friends, our love for their souls moves us to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth on the subjects under investigation. We certainly hope that we do not find ourselves in the same position as Paul when he wrote the Galatians saying, "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" (Galatians 4:16). But if such does turn out to be the case, so be it. We seek to please God rather than men (Acts 5:29). Please read the following material carefully with Bible in hand. And feel free to contact us if you have any questions about the material that is covered.

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Seek Ye First...

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Our Purpose

The editors of *Seek Ye First* produce this biblical journal to provide scriptural material dealing with the issues that are currently affecting our families, our nation and the world. Our intent is to challenge souls to return to the "old paths" (Jeremiah 6:16) for their sole source of authority in religious matters. Our policy is to speak as the oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11), encouraging people to study to show themselves approved unto God, enabling them to rightly divide the word (2 Timothy 2:15). We make every effort to deal boldly with the issues that confront Christianity, with no apology, and strive to do so "speaking the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15).

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH

Tom Moore

It is sad when mankind strays so far away from the principles of New Testament Christianity. But, this should not surprise us, for Paul spoke of this when he said, "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; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Timothy 4:1-4). Jesus said He would build one church (Matthew 16:18) but today we see hundreds of different religious groups, teaching contradictory doctrines, using names foreign to the Bible, and applauding this denominational thinking. To show you just how far many have strayed from true New Testament Christianity, let me give you some of the history of the Baptist Church.

The Baptist religion is among the largest of the denominations. It has been reported there at least twenty-seven different Baptist groups - having a membership over 27,500,000. The Baptists claim they have no founder but Christ, and that Baptists have been in existence since John the Baptist. But history does not agree with their assertions. The Baptist denomination began in Holland in 1609. This is well over a thousand years after the church of our Lord was established on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ. Actually, the Baptist movement began even earlier with the Anabaptist.

The Anabaptist movement began around 1525 from the desire to return solely to the Scriptures in matters of faith. They saw that the death of Christ truly inaugurated a new covenant, and therefore the old law was not to be followed or used for doctrinal purposes, but some in Protestantism held that many of the laws under the old covenant were still valid. It was for this reason that they denied the need for infant baptism, and stressed the need for what is known as "believer's baptism," that the individual is only baptized after believing in Christ himself. They were thus given the name "anabaptist." As a result of persecution they spread all over Europe.

The Anabaptist movement began with three groups, the largest of which was named "Mennonite" after one of its most influential leaders, Menno Simons, around the year 1536. Near the end of the seventeenth century, division occurred within one of the groups when Jacob Amman left the church because of perceived laxity concerning the "ban" on excommunicated members. The group that followed him was known as the Amish, and these two groups (Mennonites and Amish) represent the greatest portion of the Anabaptist movement today. Anabaptists were prominent in Europe during the 16th century, forming part of the Reformation. They were harshly condemned and persecuted by Protestants and Catholics alike. Their principal centers were in Germany, Switzerland, Moravia, and the Netherlands. The Swiss Brethren, as they were called, separated themselves from the control of the state church established by Ulrich Zwingli in Zürich (and developed in other centers of the Reformation). Thus they became the first to practice the complete separation of church and state.

In Holland a group of English separatist, led by John Smyth, came under

Mennonite influence and formed the first English Baptist congregation in 1609. Smyth baptized first himself, then the rest of his followers. In 1611 certain members of this group returned to London and established a church there. This was the first of the denominations known as "General Baptists," since they held the belief that the atonement of Christ is not limited to the elect only but is general. In 1633 the "Particular Baptists" were founded. They were a group whose Calvinistic doctrine taught that atonement is particular or individual. Immersion was not yet insisted upon in these churches, but in 1644 seven Particular Baptist denominations issued a confession of faith requiring that form of baptism, and "Baptist" was thenceforth the name given to those who practiced it. In 1891, General and Particular Baptists united into a single body called the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland.

In America it was the Particular Baptist that first gained influence among the Puritans and Calvinists, when Roger Williams and his companions in Rhode Island rejected infant baptism and established a denomination in 1639 based on the individual profession of faith. Baptists were later persecuted in New England for opposing infant baptism, and one group emigrated from Maine to Charleston, South Carolina in 1684. A group of Separate Congregationalists in 1755 from New England under Shubael Stearns and Daniel Marshall established the Separate Baptists (Free-Will Baptist) in Sandy Creek, North Carolina. In the Southeast the General Baptist views found acceptance, but the stricter Calvinistic ideas suited the pioneers who settled the southern mountains after the Revolution. Their opposition to mission work gave them the name Anti-Mission. They were also called "Hard Shell" or Primitive Baptists. Early missionary activity extended the Baptist movement to the Continent and elsewhere. In the United States the American Baptist Missionary Union was formed in 1814 to support workers in foreign lands. In 1832 the American Baptist Home Mission Society was organized.

In the 19th century the Baptists, like most other Protestant denominations, split over the issue of slavery. This led to the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845. In 1907 the northern Baptists drew together their various educational and missionary societies to form the Northern Baptist Convention (now the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.).

The four largest Baptist denominations in the United States (according to their membership in 1999) were the Southern Baptist Convention (15.9 million); the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. (1.5 million); the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. Inc. (8.5 million); and the National Baptist Convention of America (3.1 million). The latter two are black Baptist groups. Other Baptist organizations include: Baptist Bible Fellowship, Baptist International Missions, Baptist World Alliance, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, National Association of Free Will Baptists, World Baptist Fellowship, and many others. Do any of these names resemble any biblical names in the Bible? No! Is there any authority for such organizations? No!

It is easy to see that the Baptist Church does not have its beginnings in the Bible, but is purely the work of man. Remember the words of Jesus, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matthew 15:13).

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Theme This Issue:

"The Baptist Church"

Table Of Contents

THE BAPTIST CHURCH Michael Light	1
THE BEGINNINGS OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH Tom Moore	2
SALVATION IN THE BAPTIST CHURCH? J. D. Sweeten	4
<i>Guest Article...</i> SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHURCH ORGANIZATION Joel Harris	5
WORSHIP IN THE BAPTIST CHURCH J. D. Sweeten	6
WHY DON'T ALL BAPTIST CHURCHES AGREE? Michael Light	7
FRIENDS OF SYF	8

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Volume 5

Number 4

This work is published quarterly in a joint effort among the editors and those which generously help to support it financially.

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All donations towards this work are greatly appreciated. Please note that every contribution, great or small, is beneficial to the paper.

SALVATION IN THE BAPTIST CHURCH?

J. D. Sweeten

“Salvation is the state of being saved,” says Wallace in his book *What Baptists Believe*. A Baptist will readily concede that humanity is sinful, that a person cannot save himself, and that Jesus Christ is the source of salvation. However, if a Baptist had been present on Pentecost, the answer to the question “What must I do to be saved” (Acts 16:30-33; cf. Acts 2:37) would have been radically different from what New Testament writers recorded.

Baptists concede without argument that faith is essential to salvation. In agreement with the Hebrew writer, they believe that “without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6). However, in rejecting salvation by meritorious works (which we should since the Bible does not teach this doctrine), Baptists hold that salvation is “solely through faith” (Pendleton, *Church Manual for Baptist Churches*, p. 48). Since justification is by faith (Romans 3:28), it follows that the Baptist believes that one is justified “solely through faith” or by “faith only.” The Bible, however, contradicts Baptist doctrine. “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (James 2:24). In the very same publication, Pendleton states, “no impenitent sinner can constitutionally enter into the kingdom” (p. 9). Obviously, a person cannot come to God justified, purified, and saved if that person is not willing to forsake sin, so, is repentance required (Luke 13:3, 5)? Further, he states, “We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace” (p. 47). If it is “wholly” of grace, how can it be “solely” through faith? If both are required, they cannot consistently believe it is “only” either of these. A sincere seeker of God will not redefine terms to fit a predetermined prejudice. The Bible teaches that we are saved by the grace of God (Ephesians 2:5), through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8), if we respond in obedience (Romans 1:5); there is no “only” anywhere in the salvation taught in the scriptures.

A more volatile doctrinal disagreement between Baptists and the Bible concerns baptism. On Pentecost, Peter said, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). In Acts 16, Paul and Silas said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway” (Acts 16:30-33). Paul, recounting his conversion, did not credit the experience on the road to Damascus to his salvation, but

assigned his forgiveness to his response to Ananias, who cried, “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). Over and over, Acts records conversion components which began with hearing the word of faith and were completed in baptism. It was always after this penitent obedience to the faith (Romans 6:17ff) that respondents “went on (their) way rejoicing” (Acts 8:39) to live “faithful unto death” (Revelation 2:10). The Baptist’s salvation is something different. In fact, Note 8 in the Hiscox *Standard Manual for Baptist Churches* states, “Baptism is not essential to salvation.” This stand puts the Baptist in a difficult situation. The Bible teaches, “baptism doth also now save us” (1 Peter 3:21). While there is no merit attached to obedience (Luke 17:10), baptism “does now” or “does not” save. There is no middle ground.

Church membership in the Baptist church differs with the Bible pattern, also. Baptists are timid in condemning their fellow denominations, so church membership must be optional. If that is the case, why even bother to become a member of the Baptist church? It is odd, too, that when Hiscox discusses the New Testament church, he admits that “the baptism of a convert by that very act constituted him a member of the church, and at once endowed him with all the rights and privileges of full membership... Now it is different...” (p. 22). So, the Baptist must garner a “unanimous or nearly unanimous vote” to acquire membership (*Standard Manual*, p. 24, Note 4). Why is it different *now*? Where is man’s authority to vote on the rights of the saved, including membership? If someone was saved in the New Testament, they became a member of the church that Christ built (Matthew 16:18) because “the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47); men did not decide. If a person is saved, God adds that soul to His Son’s church, Baptist doctrine notwithstanding.

When human beings assume the authority of the Divine, the doctrine is damned. Such is the case with the doctrine of salvation in the Baptist Church. It is unfortunate that morally good people in the Baptist Church will stand before the Judgment, and hear Jesus say, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21). The challenge before the Baptist is to submit to the Savior by forsaking doctrines that contradict the Bible and embrace the truth.

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Guest Article...

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHURCH ORGANIZATION

Joel Harris

The Southern Baptist Convention had its beginning in May of 1845, in Augusta, Georgia. The first meeting was to discuss relevant issues facing the Baptist churches. Since that time the tradition has continued. The Southern Baptist denomination has a membership of 15.8 million who practice their error in over 40,000 of their churches. In these meetings they will discuss various problems facing their denomination and seek to find answers through their president and his committee.

As you read through the pages of the New Testament, you cannot find an organization such as the one just described. The Southern Baptist denomination claims to be autonomous in each local congregation, however, they continue to travel to these meetings year after year to find out how they are supposed to be autonomous.

The leadership of the New Testament church is through its elders. The elders of a local congregation are the ones through whom God chose to expedite His commands. The elders have the responsibility to "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; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:2-3). Also, Acts 20:28 states, "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 spiritual leaders of the church of Christ, not an annual convention.

Southern Baptists recognize that the church is designed to have two Biblical offices that are to be held by eligible men—elders and deacons. Although they recognize this fact, they have a misunderstanding of the first office, that of an elder. According to them the office of an elder is to be held by one man, whom they call the "pastor". The pastor, to them, is described as God's special representative or leader in the local church.

Southern Baptists set their "pastor" on a different level than everyone else in their denomination. It is their sincere belief that the "pastor" is God's called man to serve as the earthly leader in the church. Since God has called these men to their office, no one has the right to be a "watch dog" over the pastor. Therefore, when a man is set into the office of "pastor" in a Southern Baptist church they believe it was God who called him to the work. Consequently, it is only God who can remove a person from such a position. Yet, when a pastor is not acting in a manner in which God

called a man to act, the local church has the right to remove him from this work. Sounds like someone is being a watch dog to me.

In the selection of a "pastor" in a local congregation, they usually begin with a "Pastor Search Committee". During this time they will decide on just the right kind of man for their church. After the committee receives many names of prospective pastors they will begin to start the selection process. When the interview is complete if the church "feels" the need to call him to "pastor" them, and if he "feels" called by God to "pastor" them, the process is complete. If everyone's "feelings" are not in certain alignment, then it all must begin again.

The term "pastor," as used in the New Testament, is used to denote the same office as elder or bishop. These are the men who watch over God's flock, not a single pastor, but a plurality of pastors. In the New Testament pastors are always spoken of in the plural, not in the singular (cf. Philippians 1:1). They are to rule the local church, since Hebrews 13:17 tells Christians, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." It is through the teachings of the New Testament that elders expedite and carry out the commands set forth by God, "holding fast the faithful word" (Titus 1:9).

It is the conviction of Southern Baptists that a man who serves as a deacon is "called" just as the pastor is "called." They believe the qualities set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 are the ones by which one must go today. However, they aver, since no one is perfect, one cannot expect to meet these standards fully, so these standards are simply "goals" one should try to achieve.

The qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 are the ones a man must meet in order to become a deacon. They are not simply a "goal" by which a local church must decide, but God given commands to follow—completely.

The organization of the Southern Baptist church is completely unscriptural. This organization has openly admitted to being started by men, and is proud of it. It should be the prayer of every child of God to serve our Master according to His ways, and not after the ways of men.

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WORSHIP IN THE BAPTIST CHURCH

J. D. Sweeten

Baptists worship and to impugn their sincerity is unjust. Therefore the purpose of this article is not to question the sincerity of the Baptists. Many religionists worship God in the greatest sincerity. However, the critical question is: does God accept it (Matthew 7:21-23)?

This question should be asked in view of examples in the Old Testament (Romans 15:4). If how we worship God does not matter, why did God reject Cain's sacrifice (Genesis 4:4-5)? Nadab and Abihu certainly learned the hard way that when God specifies what He will accept, His rejection can be rather heated (Leviticus 10:1-2). In fact, Jeroboam was just another word for apostasy in the Old Testament, and all because he was trying to make worship convenient (1 Kings 12:28-30). Even with a change in the Law, God didn't change his attitude toward worship (cf. Amos 6:5). So, when the sacrifices and Ten Commandments were nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:14) and replaced with love for God and neighbor (Matthew 22:37-40) and Jesus words (John 12:47-48), worship remained a conditional activity (John 4:23-24). These examples verify the fact that how we worship God matters.

For various reasons, Baptists have changed the New Testament pattern of worship. In the New Testament, "upon the first day of the week, ... the disciples came together to break bread" (i.e., participate in the Lord's Supper, cf. Acts 20:7). Now, if one wished to be a member of the church that Jesus built (Matthew 16:18), one could identify it by, among other things, the frequency with which the congregation partook of the Lord's Supper. Some perverted the purpose of the Lord's Supper and God rejected those involved (1 Corinthians 11:20ff). *The Baptist Faith and Message* states, "Jesus did not say when or how often believers should observe the Lord's Supper" (p. 90). The Bible does not record Jesus addressing frequency other than to say "this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me" (1 Corinthians 11:25). How "oft" would that be? If God teaches how "oft" elsewhere and specifies when it was to be taken in an approved example, how can this be less binding than Jesus' words? To partake of the Lord's Supper with any frequency other than that of the inspired example of the New Testament church is an adjustment to the pattern. Baptists understand and admit the connection of the Jewish Passover's role in ushering in the Jewish covenant, and rightly connect the Lord's Supper with a covenant change (*Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, Vol. II, p. 793*). It is therefore surprising to read the Baptists' position on the frequency with which it should be offered. "Custom and tradition determine its frequency; in some localities it

is observed monthly; in many states quarterly, in some rural areas, annually or semiannually" (Ibid., p. 793). If it is the case that the New Testament church that Jesus built came together every first day of the week, and upon that day partook of the Lord's Supper, it can be easily reasoned that a religious group that does not follow this pattern is not the church that Jesus built, and must have origins other than Christ.

Baptist changes to New Testament worship do not end here, unfortunately. One of the greatest departures the Baptists make from godly worship involves church music. Noah, a great example of obedience, exemplifies the kind of obedience God requires. Noah's general command was to build an ark. The specific command was wood, and more specifically, gopher wood (Genesis 6:14). Had Noah experimented with the Divine ingredients, Genesis would read differently today. We are told "... Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him" (Genesis 7:6). God desires music in worship. "The history of Baptist music begins with the practices and writings of John Smyth" (*Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, Vol. II, p. 932*). The irony of this admission is that John Smyth objected to instrumental music and for early Baptist churches, "Worship by machinery,' that is, by the use of instruments, was always disdained" (Ibid). Nevertheless, if a religious body falls back to the traditions of men for authority in their worship practices, almost anything is possible. The Bible states, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:19). You will notice that the general sanction for music exists, but that God specified the type of music that He would accept. Singing (as opposed to playing, whistling, yodeling, ad naseum) is what God commands and accepts. To add to, take away, or change this directive is to shipwreck the faith of the Bible (1 Timothy 1:19).

Jesus desired that we worship in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:19-21). The church that Jesus built will worship as the New Testament church worshipped.

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WHY DON'T ALL BAPTIST CHURCHES AGREE?

Michael Light

It may come as a surprise to some, but there are no less than 25 distinct Baptist denominations. These do not believe the same doctrines nor practice the same in areas of religion and daily living. *The Handbook of Denominations in the United States* lists twenty-five different Baptist churches. The list includes: American Baptist Association, American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., Baptist Bible Fellowship International, Baptist General Conference, Bethel Ministerial Association, Black Baptist, Central Baptist Association, Conservative Baptist Association of America, Duck River (and Kindred) Associations of Baptists (Baptist Church of Christ), Free Will Baptist, General Baptist, Landmark Baptist, National Primitive Baptist Convention of the U.S.A., Primitive Baptist, Reformed Baptist, Separate Baptists in Christ (General Association of Separate Baptists), Seventh Day Baptist General Conference, Southern Baptist Convention, Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Predestinarian Baptist, United Baptist, United Free Will Baptist Church, and others.

This massive division among Baptist Churches is the direct result of ignoring what the Bible says about the true nature of the church that Christ built. A friend of mine asked me just a few weeks ago if I had ever heard of the Fourth Baptist Church; I had not. But I had heard of the First, Second and Third Baptist Churches. Friends, such names are almost humorous as men attempt to separate themselves and yet stay joined all at the same time. The Lord never established one Baptist Church let alone the dozens we see in the world today. The fundamental reason for the division in the Baptist Church is the same as that for the denominational world in general. Denominational churches fail to recognize and submit to the biblical pattern of the church as God designed it.

There are literally dozens of contradictory doctrines held by the fragmented Baptist members. Notice briefly some of these areas. Many belong to area, regional, state, and national conventions and associations while others strongly condemn such as man-made innovations, which God regards as sinful. Some founded and support missionary societies, which again are vehemently condemned by other Baptist sects. A few practice "closed communion" and others do not. Some are staunch Calvinist, believing in total depravity and a need for God to "call" the "elect" to salvation. Others consider this position heretical and teach that Christ died for all men and therefore salvation is available to all. Some lean toward Pentecostalism, others teach that miracles ceased in the first century. Some practice foot washing as an act of worship, most do not. Some are highly premillennial, other not so much so. Some only recognize baptisms admin-

istered by Baptist preachers or members. Some uphold and defend creeds and confessions of faith while others denounce such as heresy. There are even some who believe that we are to worship on the Sabbath (Saturday) rather than Sunday, most denounce this notion.

Paul addressed this attitude in Romans 10:1-3, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." The mistake is trying to be **religious but lacking knowledge of God's word. I know this** will offend some yet it is the truth. Those in the Baptist denomination are either ignorant of what the Bible teaches about the nature of the church or else they know what the **Bible teaches and openly rebel against God's will.**

The church of the Bible has Christ as its head. It has a scriptural name (one found in the Bible [the name "Baptist Church" is not]). The church of the New Testament teaches **the Bible's plan of salvation. The Bible teaches that if one is to be saved, he or she must: hear the word of God (Romans 10:17), believe in Christ (John 3:16), repent of one's past sins (Luke 13:3), confess the name of Christ (Romans 10:10) be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16), and be faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10).** The church of the Bible also worships God according to His **instructions. This worship includes: partaking of the Lord's Supper (Communion) every first day of the week (Acts 20:27; 1 Corinthians 10,11), Singing - no instrumental accompaniment is authorized (Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16) prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17), teaching (2 Timothy 4:1-4) and giving (1 Corinthians 16:1,2).** The church of the New Testament was organized with elders (Acts 14:23; 1 Timothy 3:1-7) and deacons (1 Timothy 3:8-13).

While it is true the Baptist Church does comply with some of the above divinely given materials. They fall woefully short in many of the same areas. Other articles in this issue deal with those shortcomings. The differences among Baptist churches should not surprise us; they are the result of **ignoring God's divine will for our lives. It doesn't matter** which Baptist denomination one belongs to salvation cannot be found in any. We plead with our Baptist friends to "Consider you ways" (Haggai 1:7). Turn from this denominational death trap to the truth that will make you free (John 8:32).

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Bangs, TX
- Bethel Church of Christ
Springhill, LA
- Cold Springs Church of Christ
Lancaster, TX
- Eisenhower Church of Christ
Odessa, TX
- Elliott St. Church of Christ
Breckenridge, TX
- Hillcrest Church of Christ
Stephenville, TX
- Marlin Church of Christ
Marlin, TX
- McCloud Church of Christ
McCloud, OK
- Port Lavaca Church of Christ
Port Lavaca, TX
- Rising Star Church of Christ
Rising Star, TX
- Zephyr Church of Christ
Zephyr, TX

Individual Contributions

- Mr./Mrs. Ronald Allen—Lake City, FL
- Charlotte Banks—Eagle Pass, TX
- Norman & Loma Barnes—McCloud, OK
- James & Jean Berry—Montgomery, AL
- Jessie and Mayne Crow—Burnet, TX
- Manuel/Chelo Guajardo—New Braunfels, TX
- Lloyd/Elsie Haggerty—New Braunfels, TX
- Pauline Hopkins—Bangs, TX
- Michael & Carrie Light—Bangs, TX
- Ruth Locke—Austin, TX
- Morey & Judy Mast—Waxahachie, TX
- Cynthia McIntyre—Magnolia, AR
- Mr./Mrs. Clarence Moates—Slaton, TX
- Tom & Carole Moore—Malvern, AR
- Eddie & Oleta Pafford—Bangs, TX
- Ruth Price—Temple, TX
- Kenneth & Anna Reed—Bangs, TX
- Jeff & Kelly Sweeten—Comanche, TX

In Memory Of

- Gerald Walker—Bangs TX

Memorials Given By:

- Bangs Church of Christ
- Michael & Carrie Light—Bangs, TX
- Tom & Carole Moore—Malvern, AR

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The editors appreciate the support and encouraging words that so many of our readers have offered. We continue to strive to present Gospel truths in love, while holding fast to the old paths.

We especially appreciate those churches and individuals who have chosen to support *Seek Ye First* on a regular basis. If you have not considered doing so, we humbly request that you give it some thought. A small monthly amount goes a long way in covering costs.

We covet your prayers for the work we are doing, and pray that God will give you a long life in His service.

Thank you.

The Editors

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