

## **Historic Beliefs of the Baptists**

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Jude 3  
*It is needful that I exhort you to earnestly  
contend for the faith . . .*

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## **Introduction:**

### **A. My Purpose:.**

There are thousands of congregations that call themselves Baptists. Each one considers itself one of the Lord's churches, though many of them have very few beliefs of the apostolic churches. They are all independent of one another, which is a Baptist trait, but their doctrines differ widely.

It is not my purpose here to discuss the differences between the various sects of Baptists. My purpose is to discuss a few cardinal beliefs of the apostolic churches that have been preserved in the beliefs and practices of those churches that rightfully belong to Jesus since the time of the apostles. We believe there are Baptist churches now that teach and practice the same truths Christ and His apostles taught and were given to His church/churches to be preserved and taught until He returns to gather His saints unto Himself.

It is not my purpose to trace Baptists and their beliefs back to the time of Christ, though we have plenty of historical evidence (mostly from our enemies) that there is a chain of churches back to the time of Christ and His apostles that believed and practiced the same things. It is sufficient for us to note that Christ gave a promise to His first church, in its infancy, that they, as an institution, would continue to exist throughout this dispensation.

Since there were some people and churches departing from the faith delivered to the saints even during apostolic times, it should not be strange that those apostate churches have multiplied in the 1900 + years since Christ established His church.

We believe that the church Jesus built and those that practice the same things that the church stood for are essentially different from all other so-called Christian churches.

**B. The world has a right to ask, "By what authority do you array yourselves against all Christendom in maintaining your doctrines?"**

We do not maintain them because of sectarian bigotry of which we are often accused. To be sure, the spirit of sectarianism is among us as it is among all others who stand for anything. Even those who stand for nothing are sectarian, or they would not accuse us of being sectarian. A certain amount of sectarianism is not to be condemned except where it is carried to excess. Then, it is hurtful to Christian conduct. True New Testament churches are under a greater temptation to sectarianism than other Christians. We stand alone in maintaining Biblical principles. This, in itself, necessarily antagonizes all other sects that differ with us. William Tyndale would not have brought upon himself the ire of the Church of England when translating the Bible into the English language had he not insisted it was to be followed rather than the apostate churches' traditions.

I believe I speak the mind of my Baptist brethren when I say, "We cherish as kindly and with as much a Christian spirit toward other denominations as they do toward us and toward each other. We wish them more good than they do us." It is not lack of Christian love that makes us differ. Evidence of this is the fact that Baptists have never persecuted other denominations, while, at the same time, we have suffered untold miseries because of our beliefs. When Baptists petitioned for religious freedom, they did it for all people, not just for themselves. They would not settle for tolerance for themselves or for others.

**C. Dr. J. L. M. Curry said:**

"No religious denomination has a moral right to a separate existence unless it differs essentially from others. Ecclesiastical differences ought always to spring from profound doctrinal differences. To divide Christians, except for reasons of great import, is criminal schism. Sects are justifiable only for the matter of conscience, growing out of clear Scriptural precepts or inevitable logical inference. Human speculation, tradition, authority of pope, council, synod, conference, or legislature is no proper basis for an organization of Christians. Nothing short of the truth of revelation, the authoritative force of God's Word, rising above mere prejudice, or passion, or caprice, can justify a distinct church organization."

## **D. Some distinctive doctrines of Baptists through the centuries:**

Some principles of the Novatians in Europe - 4th Century:

1. Strict church discipline.
2. Only God can forgive sins.
3. Independence of each congregation.
4. Rebaptism when not from a Scriptural church.

Principles of the Donatists in Northern Africa - 4th Century:

1. Regenerated church membership.
2. Purity of discipline.
3. Independence of each congregation.
4. Rebaptism when the first was doubtful.
5. No infant baptism.

The Waldenses who were numbered by the thousands in North Italy, Austria, Hungary, Poland, Bohemia, Saxony, Germany, Netherlands, and all over Europe believed:

1. They rejected papal authority.
- 2 They had only two New Testament ordinances: baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- 3 They rejected infant baptism
- 4 Rejected the union of church and state
5. Rejected purgatory and the prayers for the dead.
6. Rejected burial in consecrated burial grounds.
- 7 Demanded the saints know all the New Testament
- 8 Taught justification by faith
- 9 Emphasized foreign missions

Peter Allix (1641-1717) said in "Ancient Churches of Piedmont," pages a2,iv,14: "The conduct of the churches of the valleys of Piedmont have served as a model to our Reformation and has justified their understanding, seeing they have always preserved amongst them the sacred truths of the Christian religion committed to them, as they had received them from the disciples of the apostles, and rejected the

corruptions thereof according as by degrees they broke faith with the west. This hath been the only thing that hath made them the object of the hatred of the Church of Rome and hath drawn upon them, for so many ages, such prodigious persecutions of the king. They were the remains of those so pure and so ancient churches. I undertake ... to set down the true antiquity of both of these churches who were so famous in the 13th century because of the opposition to the corruptions of the Roman Church ... from the time of the apostles to the 13th century."

Erasmus, a Roman Catholic and the compiler of the "Textus Receptus" (Some call it the "majority text"), wrote in 1529 AD: "The true anabaptists were simple, honest, and peaceable; they are to be commended above all others for the innocence of their lives. They preached repentance; they summoned men to the amendment of life; they followed the examples of the apostles."

Wycliffe taught: "The Scriptures are the sole rule of doctrine. What is not found in them is not binding upon any man's conscience." He repudiated the pope's claim and sovereignty. He taught the priesthood of believers. He taught that the Lord instituted only two ordinances. He denied baptismal regeneration and infant baptism. The Lollards were Baptists. He was one of them. They repudiated transubstantiation. They believed religion was inward and not outward exercise only. One of Wycliffe's students, Jerome Prague, took his teaching to Bohemia. John Huss was there and received Wycliffe's teaching. He was burned at the stake for his teaching and refusal to abandon them. When at first Wycliffe and his preachers ("Poor priests" they were called) were not persecuted for their preaching, it was because England was not under the pope's control and England's trouble was with him. But when John consented to pay tribute to the pope, trouble began for Wycliffe and his preachers. Henry walked barefooted through the streets of Canterbury and was publicly flogged as "atonement for killing Thomas "Beckett." The price was the death of the Lollards - 1401. This lasted until Henry VIII.

In England there was a people known as the "Cathari." They believed in the true church and personal holiness and rejected infant baptism. They were stripped, flogged, and branded as heretics. This was in and around Oxford before Wycliffe. Their teaching lingered and influenced people in and around Oxford, and even Wycliffe himself.

Newgate Street Baptist Church, London, England, published in 1611 (Taken from Encyclopedia Britanica, vol.3, page 87):

“That every, church is to receive all their members upon the confession of their faith and sins, wrought by the preaching of the Gospel according to the primitive institution and practice. And therefore churches constituted after any other manner, or of any other persons, are not according to Christ's testament. That baptism or washing with water is the outward manifestation of dying unto sin and walking in newness of life; and therefore in no wise appertaineth to infants. They held that no church ought to challenge any prerogative over any other. That the magistrate is not to meddle with religion, or matters of conscience nor compel men to this or that form of religion. Concerning baptism there were three lines of dispute: (1) who is the proper administrator? (2) who are the proper subjects? (3) what is the proper mode? The article of the Particular Baptists was in their confession of faith; that baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament given by Christ to be dispensed only upon profession of faith or that are disciples, who upon confession of faith ought to be baptized. The way and manner of dispensing this ordinance of Scriptures hold out to be dipping or plunging the whole body under water. They said, we hope that God will incline the magistrates' hearts so we might be protected by them from wrong, injury, oppression and molestation. But if God withhold the magistrates' allowance and furtherance therein, yet we must, notwithstanding, proceed together in Christian communion, not daring to give place to suspend our practice, but walk in obedience to Christ in profession and holding forth this faith before mentioned, even in the midst of all trials and affliction”.

A quote from Hiscox Baptist Directory", page 118:

1. Baptism is by immersion.
2. Subject for baptism: those who have experienced saving faith in Christ.
3. Subject for church membership: the truly, regenerated and scripturally baptized.
4. Subject for communion: by members of the church alone.
5. Church government: each church entirely independent of all other churches.
6. Officers: only two – pastor, called bishop/elder, and deacons.

### **E. Baptists have had and still have their differences.**

Some of our differences have been temperamental, others have been fundamental. These differences often bring unpleasanties; sometimes estrangements. Some of these differences have been a real threat to “the faith that was once delivered to the saints.” But the majority of Baptist differences have been temperamental. But during my lifetime there have been some differences that were very fundamental.

Have these differences been worth dividing Baptists into different factions? When they have been temperamental, the answer is, "NO!". When they have been fundamental, the answer is "YES!". For my part, I will be free. But I want the same for my brother; I want him to be free also. Our ties must be mutual and not some forced relationship. I will not force my beliefs upon my brother, and I will not let him force his upon me. Woe to those who continually contend with their brothers.

### **F. Baptists have had some fundamental as well as temperamental beliefs through the centuries.**

It is a must for us to stay with “the old paths” (the Word of God) concerning the fundamentals. When we do not stick to them, we are unfaithful to God, ourselves, and our fellow man. I am too old to break away from some of the temperamentals; I have held them too long for a change, but I will not let those temperamentals I prefer divide me from my brothers in Christ who still hold to the fundamentals.

Saved sinners are still human, and it is human to want something new, something appealing, something exciting, and something in keeping with the spirit of the age (style). I believe in progress, and there are some changes that must be made for progress, but I believe it must be done in the God-appointed and God-honoring way; to be done in decency and in order. The more of the flesh we get into our style (methods and temperamentals), the more dishonoring we will be to God. That is sin too!

### **G. My purpose is to call your attention to three distinctive Baptist fundamentals:**

#### **1. Baptists hold many doctrines in common with other denominations/sects.**

We are glad that others believe in the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures; that they

are the infallible Word of God. The doctrine of the Trinity is held by many that are not Baptist. We worship One God, who is manifested to us in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We do not quite understand it, but we believe such to be the teaching of the Bible.

Many, other than Baptists, believe that man was ruined by sin to such an extent he is totally depraved, and because of this the work of salvation must be wholly of God's grace. We believe, with others not Baptists, that God saves us by grace through faith in the sacrificial, substitutional, and redemptive work of Christ Jesus, the virgin-born Son of God, who is God, Himself. Others believe in the future rewards for the righteous, and future punishment for the wicked as do Baptists. There are many other truths other denominations teach and practice that are believed and practiced by Baptists.

Our separate existence is explained and justified by our beliefs in certain fundamental doctrines which are held to, or not held to so tenaciously and consistently by others. Many churches and sects of Christianity exist without those fundamental distinctions. An example that to some extent is praise worthy, and at the same time has no Biblical basis: About forty-five years ago Southern Baptists set on a plan to have a Baptist church in every county- seat-town in the South. In order to follow this plan some churches were moved from their good location into the county-seat-town without any other reason than Southern Baptists had such a plan. Many were moved at great expense and were of less use and in a more unfavorable place than they were before.

## **2. Baptists disclaim three doctrines as our distinctives that other denominations consider as our distinctives.**

Two of these doctrines (immersion and closed communion) are held by Baptists. But Baptists are not the only people that immerse believers, nor observe closed communion. Every denomination that baptizes or has some kind of church organization has some kind of restricted communion.

The other distinctive (Baptism is necessary to salvation) that many accuse Baptists hold is not one of our doctrines. Baptists believe the very opposite. We believe sinners are saved by grace through faith plus nothing, less nothing. We do believe that every saved person should be scripturally baptized. Baptists have suffered more

for denying “baptismal regeneration” than for any other doctrine. During the Middle Ages Baptists were killed by the millions by the Roman Catholic Church for not submitting to Roman baptism and because they rebaptized believers who had previously been baptized by an apostate church. Baptists fared no better under the Reformers: Calvin, Luther, and the kings/queens of England had Baptists martyred because of immersing only believers and rebaptizing those who came from their churches.

It is evident that the anabaptists were in great numbers before the Reformation, or the Roman Church would not have persecuted and killed as many as they did. It is estimated that millions were martyred during the “Middle Ages” by the Roman Church. If there had not been great numbers of them the inquisitions would not have been organized so precisely, and used so proficiently to eradicate them. (Encyclopedia Britannica).

Cardinal Hosius said in the 16th century: “Were it not that the anabaptists have been grievously tormented and cut off with the knife during the past twelve hundred years, they would swarm in greater numbers than the Reformers.”

In regard to these persecutions and murders: do not blame the men so much as the system under which they worked. The existence of an establishment is a temptation to those within and an menace to those without unless it is controlled by God. It attracts to itself people who are proud and intolerant.

The most severe trials to which the Voudois of Piedmont were subjected because of this doctrine occurred in 1655. An army of French troops and Irish soldiers spread destruction on every side. This aroused the conscience of the people of Europe. Large sums of money were contributed in England for the suffering Vaudois. (Encyclopedia Britannica).

### **3. Baptists do have three-distinctive doctrines.**

- a. The New Testament is the sole and sufficient rule of faith and practice.
- b. Individual responsibility to God for the performance of duty.
- c. The church is a visible body of scripturally baptized believers, equal in rank and privileges, administering its own affairs under the leadership of God.

Do you think I have omitted something? Wait until I have developed each distinctive. Are you from another denomination and you think I have stated something you believe? Wait until I have developed each point; then, if you hold to what I explain and you are not a member of a Baptist church, you should be, because if you believe these three distinctives, your belief is Baptist.

I. The New Testament Is The Sole And Sufficient Rule Of Faith And Practice.

A. All Scriptures are inspired; therefore, the Old Testament is equally the Word of God. The Old Testament is typical and preparatory to the New Testament doctrines. It was the schoolmaster that got God's people to Christ and the New Testament teaching. We do not go to the Old Testament to find laws for the church or for individuals in this age. Christ and the New Testament are our Lawgivers. Our economy is "under grace;" the Old Testament saints' economy was "under law."

B. The New Testament makes the above plain:

1. Romans 6:14 says, "... ye are not under law, but under grace".
2. John 1:17 declares: "The law was given by Moses, but grace. and truth came by Jesus Christ."
3. Luke 16:16 says,. "The law and the prophets were until John (the Baptist); since that time the kingdom is preached . . . ."

C. The Old Testament teaches the same kind of salvation that is taught in the New Testament by grace through faith.

The Old Testament saints were saved by grace through faith by looking forward to the appointed Savior, Jesus Christ; whereas, today, we look back to what Jesus Christ, our Savior, has already done in our behalf. Their view, looking forward, may not have been as clear as our view of what Christ has already done. Their view was a darker glass than ours. They believed God's promises (His Word) and were regenerated by the Holy Spirit as we are today.

D. All the New Testament is the law of Christianity; the New Testament is all the law of Christianity.

Creeds and decrees that come from men are not binding on God's people. Believers/saints have as their absolute guide the New Testament illuminated by the Holy Spirit. No one person, nor any group of persons, has a right to undo what Christ has commanded in the New Testament. Absolute obedience to God as outlined in the

New Testament is the supreme necessity of the Lord's churches and His people. When churches cease to obey the New Testament laws, they cease to be His house (Hebrews 3:6 - "... whose house we are, if we hold fast ... "). It is not strange that there has been found in past history, and is still found, churches composed of people who are willing to do God's will and suffer persecution and death rather than depart from this law, because this was Christ's promise to His church. Knowing the consequences for disobedience to God as recorded in the Bible, we do not see how we can act otherwise, or, even desire to act otherwise. Some Christian churches (?) with water sprinkle or pour on infants and call it baptism. Where do they get the authority to change either the mode or the candidate of baptism? They, most certainly, do not get it from God; therefore, it must have come from men, or lower. Some churches baptize repentant ones in order to save them. They call it "obeying the gospel." Where do they get such teaching? It is not in the Bible; therefore, they must have gotten it from another source, or twisted the scriptures to their own damnation. Some churches have more than two ordinances (baptism and the Lord's Supper). Where do they get their authority to change what God has commanded? I could go on and on concerning many other doctrines and practices that some churches do that they have no New Testament scriptures to validate.

When the New Testament is disregarded, there is no end to what men will do or not do. When this is done they either add to or take away from the scriptures. This is plainly forbidden in Revelation 22:18, 19: "... if add, God will add the plagues written in this book... if take away, God shall take away his part out of the book of life...."

An example: Circumcision was commanded and practiced during the Old Testament age, but there is no substitute for it in the New Testament. Many denominations say that baptism took the place of circumcision. The New Testament does not say this, and baptism did not take the place of circumcision for several reasons. If baptism had taken the place of circumcision Paul could have settled the controversy between the Jews and the Gentiles recorded in Acts 15 by simply saying, "Baptism has taken the place of circumcision," but he did not say it had, because it had not. Circumcision is too broad for baptism, because it included servants and infants; baptism is for those who have a personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Circumcision is too narrow for baptism in that it excludes females; baptism includes regenerated females as its candidates. It is evident that baptism does not take the place of circumcision.

Baptists fear the expansive power of error that one falls into when the New Testament is disregarded. There are no nonessentials in the divine commands. To take a position that there are some things in the New Testament that may be disregarded is dangerous to men and an insult to Christ. This is one of the reasons there are so many different Christian denominations as well as many so-called Baptist churches.

God had remarkably preserved His churches - those which have had the grace to obey Him and “contend for the faith that was once delivered to the saints.” They have not lacked enemies - both within and without. Error began early and is recorded in the New Testament. Some substituted traditions that were not of God's making. Then there were slight errors which increased to grosser errors, and then came bold subversion of the truth—all started by forsaking the New Testament as the law of Christianity. When the apostate churches gained sufficient power, they persecuted the true churches which they despised.

E. A brief look at how we have the Bible in the English language:

France, Spain, Italy, Bohemia, and Holland possessed the Bible in their vernacular before the accession of Henry VIII to the throne in England. In Germany the Scriptures were printed in 1466 and printed seventeen times before Luther began his work.

No English printer attempted to put any part of the familiar English Bible into print before 1525; no complete one until 1535, and none done in England before 1538. Versions were renderings of the Vulgate version; therefore, they were translations of a translation.

Wycliffe translated the Bible into the English language as early as 1382, but it was not strictly from the original Hebrew and Greek. Nicholas of Hereford was connected with this version and no doubt many other excellent men were in the circle of translators. During the early preaching of Wycliffe and his preachers, they had some degree of freedom.

From William Jones' *The History of the Christian Church*, vol 2, pages 182, 183: He is writing about Wycliffe, his “poor priests,” and the Lollards. They traveled up and down the country on foot in very plain dress, declaiming with great vehemence against the corruption of the church, and the vices of the clergy. The preachers were

not only admired and followed by the common people but were protected by several persons of high rank: Duke of Lancaster, Lords Percy, Latimer, Clifford, Hilton, and others. By zeal, activity, and eloquence of the preachers, under the protection of these great men, “more than one half of the people of England in a few years, became Lollards” (This quote by Jones was a quote from a historian, an enemy of the Lollards). The clergy, alarmed and enraged by this rapid progress of the new opinions, attempted to stop it by violence and persecution. They procured a statute empowering and commanding all sheriffs to seize and imprison all preachers of heresy.

William Tyndale was the first to resolve to translate the New Testament from the Greek into the English language. He had powerful resistance, so powerful, he could not do it in England. In 1524 he tried first to do it in Hamburg, then in Wittenburg. In 1525 he was in Cologne engaged in printing when he was stopped at the 10th sheet by Johann Cocklaeus, an enemy of the Reformation. Cocklaeus communicated with Henry VIII, and Wolsey warned of “this pernicious merchandise.” At Cologne it was done on the press of Peter Quentel, a quarto edition. Tyndale escaped to Worms and the press of Peter Schoeffer, an octavo edition. Both editions reached England in the summer of 1526. Strong measures were used to suppress them. Only a single fragment of the quarto edition remains (Matthew 1:1-22:12). Of the Octavo edition only one perfect copy (title page missing) remains; it is in the Baptist College at Bristol, and one imperfect copy in the library of St. Paul's Cathedral.

By 1530 all of the Pentateuch (Old Testament) was printed (This a translation from the Hebrew language into English.) by Hans Luft at Markburg. One perfect copy of this is in the Grenville Library of the British Museum. In 1531 the book of Jonah was printed. In 1534 at least three surreptitious reprints of the New Testament at Worms. In 1534 a revision of the New Testament was printed at Antwerp by Martin Emperor. In 1535 another revision was printed at Antwerp by Godfried Van der Haghen. October 6, 1536 William Tyndale was burned at the stake. As he died he cried, “God open the king's eyes!” William Tyndale was a Baptist.

Coverdale had worked with Tyndale, but his was a translation of a translation. His was the first Bible to leave out the non-canonical books of the Old Testament. His Bible had the blessing of the king, and was printed in 1535.

The translator of the Matthew's Bible probably was John Rogers. He was a friend and fellow worker with William Tyndale. His Bible was a compilation of Tyndale's and Coverdale's work. He, too, had the blessing of the king. This printed in 1537.

The Great Bible was printed in 1539. It was a “duly authorized Bible.” Archbishop Cranmer assigned Coverdale to supervise its printing. It was a new revision based upon Matthew's Bible. It was a large Bible, too big for the English presses; therefore, it was done in Paris but finally finished in London. It was meant to be used in the church.

The next English Bible to be printed was the Geneva Bible in 1560. It got its name from the fact that several men fled to Geneva during the reign of “Bloody Mary.” This was after Cranmer and Rogers had suffered martyrdom at her hands. Coverdale, William Whittingham, Anthony Gilby, and Thomas Sampson were the chief editors of this Bible. Its size and marginal notes made it a popular Bible.

The Bishop's Bible was printed in 1568. This was a revision of the Great Bible under the supervision of the Bishop of Canterbury during the reign of Elizabeth.

The Authorized Version, better known as the King James Version (KJV) is a revision of the Bishop's Bible (Rule #1 from King James: “The ordinary Bible read in the church, commonly called the Bishop's Bible, to be followed and as little altered as the truth of the original will permit”). It was begun in 1604 and finished in 1611.

Queen Elizabeth was succeeded by the first Stuart, James I of England, who had been James VII of Scotland. The English crown, until James, had been unfriendly to all non-Episcopalians. James was a Presbyterian, who were foes of Episcopacy. He promised full toleration to English nonconformists (non—Episcopalians) if they would support his claim to the English throne. It was not known until Elizabeth's death who she wanted as her successor. She made it known as she died that it was her cousin, James, that should succeed her.

About King James I of England, same as King James VII of Scotland (1566-1625): He was about one (1) year old when his mother, Mary, Queen of Scotland, had to abdicate the throne in 1567; he really began to reign in Scotland in 1583. His tutors were George Buchanan and Peter Young. He was immersed as an infant by the Presbyterians of Scotland. Many churches in England immersed until 1600.

While king of Scotland he kept the Protestants (Presbyterians) from dominating Scotland. He made the State superior to the Church.

His methods were questionable. He boasted of his “king-craft” – the playing of one of his enemies against the other by trickery to achieve his ends. His early life may have caused him to prefer "guile" to truth. He made promises to everybody and did not keep them. He promised the pope in 1584 he would be a “good Catholic” if he would help him. His behavior was not upright in the execution of his mother in 1587. He promised the Puritans to be on their side if they would help him get the crown of England; but, after he was made king, he became the head of the Church of England (Anglican) and made it difficult for the Puritans, though he had been a Presbyterian. It was his crafty methods that prepared the way for civil war in England later. He deserted many of his Presbyterian views in favor of the established “Church of England.” Sprinkling in England came through the established Church of England, which was sometimes Protestant (Anglican) and sometimes Catholic. Really, the only difference was: they recognize the pope or they did not recognize him. He never really won respect of his English subjects. His favor for Scotland hurt his position with England. He insisted for the divine rights of kings. He married his daughter to a leader of the German Protestants and tried to marry his son to an infant in Spain.

James was received joyously by all nonconformists. Even the Baptists at Longworth rebuilt their meeting house in 1604. Baptists could not afford beautiful church buildings; neither did they approve of them.

Once James was on the throne, he demanded all to conform. The Conventicles petitioned for his promised tolerance. His reply: They agree as well with the monarchy as God with the devil! There, Tom, Dick, Jack, and Will shall meet together, and censure me, and my council. Stay, I pray you, for seven years before you demand, and if you find me fat and pursie, I may hearken unto you.

They were fined every Lord's Day they did not attend the king's church (He was the head of the Church of England) without cause, and being a dissenter was not sufficient cause. The fine was 12 bushels of coal or 12 gallons of ale. In spite of this, they grew and met together. Their typical meeting was from 7 or 8 in the morning until noon every Lord's Day; then from 1 to 6 in the afternoon.

The prisons were full of Conventicles, put there by the king and the archbishop. Andrew Leighton who was in prison was interceded for by someone. The king's reply: "If he does not know how to obey, I do not know how to forgive." At that time he had been in prison for 9 years for preaching.

King James died in 1625. He exhorted Charles, his successor, to "protect the Church of England." After Charles came Civil War, and the anabaptists had some sort of rest during that time.

### **Some Facts About The Translation And Printing Of The KJV:**

In 1604, soon after James became king of England, he called a meeting of the High and Low Church parties at Hampton Court Place, "for the hearing, and the determining, things pretended to be amiss in the church." King James, now the head of the Church of England, met with John Whitgift, the aging Archbishop of Canterbury, eight Bishops of the Church, eight deacons of the Church's principal, cathedrals, and two Doctors of Divinity. James and his advisors had invited only four Puritans to this meeting: John Rainolds, president of Corpus Cristi College at Oxford, Laurence Chaderton of Oxford, John Knewstubs, and Thomas Sparke. They were excluded from the first day's meeting.

Dr. Rainolds was the speaker for the Puritans, and he spoke of the Puritans' concerns and questioned some of the proceedings of the Church. At one point King James said to Dr. Rainolds, "If these are the greatest matters you are grieved with, I need not have been troubled with such importunities and complaints ... some other more private. course might have been taken for your satisfaction." Finally, Dr. Rainolds "moved his Majestie, that there might be a translation of the Bible, because those which were allowed in the raignes of Henrie the eighth, and Edward the sixth, were corrupt and are not answerable to the truth of the Original." King James was impressed and added, "I wish some special pains were taken for a uniform translation, which should be done by the most learned men in both universities, then reviewed by the Bishops, presented to the Privy Council, lastly reviewed by Royal authority, to be read in the whole Church, and none other."

## **Some Rules Laid Down By King James For The Translators:**

In producing the King James Version of the Bible, one (1) year and nine (9) months were used, and the following 15 rules were adhered to as closely as possible by the translators. These rules were furnished to the translators by King James when those individuals were given the task of making the translation.

1. The ordinary Bible read in the Church, commonly called the Bishop's Bible, to be followed and as little altered as the truth of the original permit.
2. The names of the prophets and the holy writers with the other names of the text be retained as nigh as may be accordingly as they were commonly used.
3. The old ecclesiastical words to be kept., viz., the word church not to be translated congregations, etc.
4. When a word hath divers significations, that to be kept which hath been most commonly used by the most ancient fathers, being agreeable to the propriety of the place and analogy of the truth.
5. The division of the chapters to be altered either not at all or as little as may be, if necessity so require.
6. No marginal notes at all to be affixed, but only for the explanation of the Hebrew or Greek words which without some circumlocution, so briefly and fitly be expressed in the text.
7. Such quotations of places to be marginally set down as shall serve for the fit reference of one Scripture to another.
8. Every particular man of each company to take the same chapter or chapters, and having translated or amended them severally by himself where he thinketh good, all to meet together, confer, what they have done, and agree for their parts what shall stand.
9. As any one company hath dispatched any one book in this manner, they shall send it to the rest to be considered seriously, for his majesty is very careful in this point.
10. If any company, upon the review of the book so sent, doubt or differ upon any place, so send them word thereof, note the place, and withal send the reasons; to which if they consent not, differences to be compounded at the general meeting, which is to be of the chief persons of each company at the end of the work.
11. When any place of special obscurity is doubted of, letters to be directed

by authority to send to any learned man in the land for his judgment of such a place.

12. Letters to be sent from every bishop to the rest of the clergy, admonishing them of this translation in hand, and to move and to charge as many as being skilled in the tongues and having taken pains in that kind, to send his particular observations to the company either at Westminster, Cambridge, or Oxford.
13. The directors in each company to be the Deans of Westminster and Chester for that place and the king's professors in the Hebrew and Greek in either university.
14. These translations to be used when they agree better with the text than the Bishop's Bible viz - Tyndale's, Matthew's, Coverdale's, Whitechurch's, Geneva.
15. Beside the said directors before mentioned; three or four of the most ancient and grave divines in either of the universities, not employed in translations, to be assigned by the Vice Chancellor upon conference with the rest of the Heads to be overseers of the translations, as well as Hebrew and Greek, for the better observation of the fourth rule above specified.

With the king's blessing, Bishop Bancroft along with the Dean of Westminster and the king's professors of Hebrew at Oxford and Cambridge selected the men who would do the translating. Forty-seven men were selected. They were all gifted and learned men, and the work they did was the result of much painstaking labor. By the grace of God, their skills were blended into a masterpiece. It is more than an ordinary book. They gave England then, and the rest of the English speaking world, a work that would leave an indelible mark on the rest of human history.

The scholars were divided into six companies: at Westminster in London, Cambridge and Oxford Universities. None of the translators were paid for their work. They were provided residence and fixed assets, but that was perhaps less than (to them 10 pounds) a year For three years each man worked privately on his assignment guided by the fifteen specific rules given then by King James. The same portion of Scriptures was translated by each of the men of that company who carefully compared their translation with each other.

The translators had a rich array of other translations and texts to assist them in their work. William Tyndale's translations influenced this work perhaps more than any other. It is estimated that eighty percent of his language was used, yet, nowhere in the work is he given any credit except for rule number fourteen.

For the Hebrew text of the Old Testament they used the four Hebrew Bibles then available. For the New Testament Greek text, they used the work of Beza, the associate of John Calvin, who had revised the Greek of Erasmus and Stephanus.

The purpose of the translation had been “to deliver God's Book unto God's people in a tongue which they could understand.” “For over three centuries the Authorized, or King James Version, has been the Bible of the English-speaking world. Its simple, majestic Anglo-Saxon tongue, its clear, sparkling style, its directness and force of utterance have made it the model in language, style and dignity of some of the choicest writers of the last two centuries. Its phrasing is woven into much of our noblest literature; and its style, which to an astonishing degree is merely the style of the original authors of the Bible, has exerted great influence in making that ideal of simplicity, directness and clarity which now dominates the writing of English. It has endeared itself to the hearts and lives of millions of Christians and has molded the characters of leaders in every walk of life.” From Maurice Price -“The Ancestry of Our English Bible.”

Between the years 1611 and 1616 words and phrases in the King James Bible were changed, and various printing errors were corrected. In 1629 the first edition of the Authorized Version, printed by the presses of Cambridge University, underwent a thorough and systematic revision of the text, the italics, and the marginal references. Dr. Samuel Ward and Dean Bois, two of the 1622 translators, participated in that revision. A still further revision, more thorough than the first, was carried out in the Cambridge edition of 1638. The first Bible to contain the dates of events was a three-volume edition of 1701. The dates were developed by Archbishop Ussher in 1650. In 1762 Dr. Thomas Paris, a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and seven years later an Oxford revision by Dr. Benjamin Blayney made a revision. These two editors have been called “the great modernizers” of the King James Version. The King James Bibles in circulation today are the 1611 version as revised chiefly by these two scholars.

## II. Individual Responsibility To God For The Performance Of Duty.

### A. Individual responsibility separates the individual from family, friends, and government.

It brings him face to face with God, his Maker/Creator. If there is anything clear in the Bible it is this: "I am responsible to God!" Paul (Romans 14:12) wrote under inspiration: "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Jesus clearly said (Matthew 12:36), "but I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."

The parents of the blind son whom Jesus healed (recorded in John 9:1-34) understood each person was responsible for themselves as they replied to the Pharisees concerning him (v. 21): "...he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself." Jesus also made this evident when He spoke of discipleship (Matthew 10:37): "... he that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." The same is true of John 1:12, 13 "As many as received him ..." which shows each person's new birth is a personal thing.

### B. This means: read the Bible for yourself; approach God yourself; serve God personally.

This is one of the reasons Baptists do not baptize infants; they cannot act for themselves, and we do not believe we can act for them in matters of the conscience. Baptists do not force their children to become members of their churches because of this great truth—soul liberty. Every member of a Baptist church is there by their own choice.

### C. This truth is the reason we believe in the separation of church and state.

One of the great evils of this dispensation has been the union of religion and government. No church is to be state controlled, sponsored or supported. Where such is done, it is displeasing to God. God's relationship with man demands that there be no controlling element between Him and the souls of men. Freedom is granted by God that all people can worship Him after the dictates of their own conscience. When Jesus said (Matthew 22:17-22), "... shew me the tribute money... whose image ... render unto Caesar ... and unto God ...," He was declaring the separation of church

and state.

By separation of state and church I do not mean that Christians have no responsibility to the country in which they live. The Bible is clear that individuals that live in a state/country/land are subject to the laws of that land. It also entreats us to be lights in the world and salt of the earth. Our influence is to be used to make the nation in which we live as godly as we can. We should, when we have opportunity, select leaders who are worshipers of the true and living God, born-again Christians. They in turn should not forget they are saints and act in such a fashion as to influence their constituents toward salvation in Christ Jesus. At the same time they should make no laws that will keep anyone from worshiping or not worshiping after the dictates of their own consciences, unless it interferes with the freedom of another persons conscience.

Baptist views concerning this “soul freedom” has been a great problem to others who want this freedom for themselves, but are not so much concerned about the freedom of others to worship as they please. Because this doctrine is distinctively Baptist doctrine others cannot comprehend it.

D. My! What horrors have been wrought by the disregard of this. great truth!

Calvin had Servetus burned, and Melancthon approved it. Calvin will have to face his Maker some day and give an account of the murders he committed in the name of Jesus. He wanted freedom from the pope so he could worship as he pleased, but he did not have grace enough to permit the anabaptists to worship as they were led of God to do.

Luther killed anabaptists in Germany, and the German princes approved. The Word of God is full of denunciations/judgments of persons like him. He, too, did it in the name of God. He was guilty of murder and also blaming it on God; thereby, vilifying Him.

The Anglican Church headed up by the king/queen and the archbishops killed thousands, the most notable ones were the Lollards (Baptists). Bloody Mary had all who would not submit to the pope killed that she could. Queen Elizabeth abolished the stake in England, but not martyrdom. The established church was afraid of “preachers.” Archbishop Grindal wrote Queen Elizabeth to allow some preaching and

leave the church matters to the bishops. As a result, he was imprisoned in his own castle until a year before he died.

American history records many shameful acts against those who worshiped contrary to the colony/state established church. Obadiah Homes was whipped and John Clarke (both Baptist preachers) for praying in the home of a sick woman in the colony of Massachusetts. Lewis Craig, William Webber, James Greenwood, John Shackelford, John Miller, and John Ireland were imprisoned in Virginia for preaching the gospel. Lands were sold that belonged Baptists and put in the coffers of the established churches.

Freedom to worship God after the individual conscience is a work accomplished by Baptists. They first did it in Rhode Island in 1663, and later they were the ones who fought to make it the 1st amendment to the constitution of the USA. Baptists have never persecuted others; the day they do, they cease to be Baptists.

There was a land where liberty could be established. It was a long, toilsome task, but it was done. Religious liberty came to the Rhode Island Colony in 1663. The real fight for religious liberty took place in Virginia. It was primarily the work of the Baptists who prevailed upon government to grant religious freedom. This did not happen until over 100 years after religious liberty in Rhode Island. The 1st amendment to the constitution in 1791 granted freedom to all religions.

Baptists have multiplied into millions in the U. S. since that time. They have spread the Word of God worldwide. We have had a wonderful history under religious liberty, though I expect that, when we have finished the course, when the victory has been won, and we stand with Christ and all of His redeemed, we will see the greater rewards going to those who had not freedom from men, but were free indeed in Christ; those who had no beautiful church buildings, but worshiped in caves, hid in the mountains, or quietly met in some saints' homes secretly and were considered the scum of the earth.

### III. The Lord's Kind Of Church Is A Body Of Scripturally Baptized Believers Equal In Rank And Privileges, Administering Christ's Affairs Under The Leadership Of The Holy Spirit.

A. Baptists are the only people who can honestly claim Christ's promise to perpetuate His Church.

The church/churches that Jesus claims as His own did not begin on the day of Pentecost as the majority of Christendom claims. His church was added to (Acts 2:41) on that day; therefore, They have already had a beginning—already in existence. His church was empowered by the Holy Spirit as Jesus had already promised it (Acts 1:8). It was on the Day of Pentecost Jesus baptized His church in the Holy Spirit as He had promised (Acts 1:5) and as John the Baptist had prophesied (Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33). Jesus did the baptizing, as the Scriptures say. The church was not baptized by the Holy Spirit as men say. It was that day the Holy Spirit took up His abode in the Lord's kind of church, and He dwells in all of His kind of the Lord coming upon the tabernacle in the wilderness and then continually dwelling between the cherubims on the mercy seat over the ark of the covenant was a type of the church of Jesus being baptized in the Holy Spirit and his indwelling of each one thereafter (Ephesians 3:19-22). Before the day of Pentecost this body of believers (120) met every requirement as Christ's church except that which He had promised would be fulfilled on that day—the baptism in and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus built His church during His lifetime on earth. He said (Matthew 16:18). "... upon this rock (massive boulder, foundation rock, Myself (Ephesians 2:2-20) I will build (I am building, as we will see later) my church (kind of assembly/congregation); and the gates of hell (or the jaws of death) will not prevail against (overcome) it. Christ began His church with the material prepared by John the Baptist (Acts 1:21, 22). He set them in the church first (I Corinthians 12:28). He did this during His earthly ministry (Luke 6:12-16; Mark 3:13-19) when from among His disciples He chose twelve of them to be His apostles. That is when He began to build His church as an institution, and he has continued to build it through the ages, and it is true thus far: "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it".

#### **Here Are Some Examples Of This:**

Claudia, the daughter of Carataus, the Welsh king, and her husband, Pudence,

belonged to Caesar's household. They were brought to the knowledge of the truth of Jesus Christ by Paul's preaching about the year 63. These two with other Welshmen, among the Roman soldiers, who had trusted that the Lord was gracious, took the Gospel to their countrymen in Wales.

The next news we have of the Welsh Baptists is in the year 180: when two ministers by the name of Fahanus and Damicanus, who were born in Wales, but were born again in Rome, were sent from Rome (This is before the Roman Church was born) to assist their brethren in Wales. In the same year, Lucius, the Welsh king, was baptized. The flame of revival reached many in Wales in the following centuries.

About the year 300, the Welsh Baptists suffered bloody persecution under the reign of Dioclesian, a Roman emperor. Many people, meeting houses, and books were burned at this time. But the blood of those martyrs became the seed of the church. There were many outstanding men among them at this time. Infant baptism was in vogue in many parts of the world, but not in Britain. The Welsh considered baptism by immersion only to those who had professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and this continued to a time after the year 600.

A dispute arose between them and Austin, who came from Rome with orders from Pope Gregory, the Great, to convert the Saxons from paganism to popery. Having succeeded in England, he tried to convert the Christians in Wales but was disappointed. They were not ignorant pagans as the Saxons. They were well informed Christians. They agreed to talk with Austin at Herefordshire. Austin proposed three things: first, infant baptism. They replied they would keep that ordinance as they had received it from the apostolic age. Austin was wroth and persuaded the Saxons to murder twelve hundred of the Welsh ministers present. Many more were afterward put to death. It is evident that the Baptists were thousands in number in Wales at that time.

However, it cannot be controverted that there were still many in Wales that did not deny the faith, and over 1000 years later, many, even whole churches, migrated to America. There is no wonder that Dr. Mosheim (Lutheran historian) said, "The sect called anabaptists is hid in the depths of antiquity." Bede said, "The supremacy of Rome was unknown to the ancient Irish."

We have the strongest reason to conclude that these islands enjoyed the blessings of a pure enlightened piety, such as the Savior taught, unembarrassed by any idle tenets of the Romish Church. When we cast our eyes on King Henry II advancing toward this devout nation, bearing the bloody sword of war in one hand, and the iniquitous bull of Pope Adrain in the other, we have one of the strongest arguments to prove that this was not originally an island of popish saints, and that the jurisdiction of Rome unquestionably was not established here.

As the Baptists of Piedmont were much disappointed with the reformation of Luther, so these on the mountain of Principality (Wales) were disappointed in the reformation in Wales. Those ministers who were put to death by the English, through Austin, were men of learning as well as piety, brought up in the college of Bangor in the North, or the college of Carleon in the South. The above was taken from J. Davis' "History of the Welsh Baptists."

B. Each local church, if it is His kind, is His body.

There is no such thing as a universal, visible body or a universal, invisible body that can be called a church (assembly! congregation). It is impossible for the church to be a local body and also a universal body. The Lord's church is His body (Colossians 1:18). Christ's kind of church/churches: they are local, visible assemblies patterned according to His Word and obeying His Word.

One of the great problems in Christianity is the lack of understanding of the nature and function of the New Testament churches. The majority of Christendom has confused the "churches of God" with the "kingdom of God" and the "family of God." Though all three are related to one another, they are distinct from one another. The "family of God" is composed of all the saved of all ages, those in heaven and those on earth, those already saved and those yet to be saved. It can be equated with "the elect", "the saints," "the children of God", etc. The "kingdom of God" is not so easily defined, because it has different phases. For example: Israel was God's kingdom We are in the "mystery" stage of the kingdom; the Millennial Kingdom will follow us; and then Christ will turn over that kingdom to the Father forever. The "church of God" is that visible body of Christ in which He dwells as the Head through the Holy Spirit, and doing His work under His direction. It is an earthly institution for this dispensation in which we are now living.

C. New Testament churches are independent of one another; therefore, self governing under the leadership of God.

The Bible shows no such kind of church as the Romish kind where one man is king and all churches and bishops are under his control. This is more like the “mustard tree” (Matthew 13:31, 32) than it is a church of the Lord's. Neither does the New Testament portray a church as being composed of all the invisible saints somehow made into an invisible body according to the Protestants, and some so-called Baptists, view. That is more like the parable in Mark 4:26-29 concerning seed that was sown by a man, and the seed grew and brought forth fruit while he slept. The only kind of church shown in the Bible is a local, visible one like the “church at Corinth” or the “churches of Galatia.”

The Lord's churches cooperate with each other in doing God's work, but each body, then, is subject to its Head, Jesus Christ. Each one has its own bishop or bishop/elder or elder/pastor, or pastors. These three words describe the same office and distinguish the different duties of the same office. There may be a plurality in this office as shown in Acts 14:23; 20:17, 28 Each church had its own deacons also.

The rule of the church belongs to the body as a whole, not one group or one person within, nor anyone outside the membership of that local body. Jesus established this principle when He said, “tell it the church ...” (Matthew 18:15-18). He showed His apostles how it was to work among them in Luke 22:25, 26 - “...the kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors, but ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.” Peter understood this principle and declared such when he wrote, “the elders ... neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock” (I Peter 5:1-3). The church recognized this principle and exercised it (Acts 15:22): “.. it pleased the whole church.”

D. There are three things the Lord commanded His church to do:

1. They are to MAKE disciples. By this is meant: “get folks saved.” This is done as Jesus commands by preaching the Gospel to every creature. The Gospel is the “good new” of Christ's redemptive work for sinners. Our message is to tell a lost and dying world that “Jesus came into the world to

save sinners,” and that all who repent of their sins and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ to save them from their sins would be saved. God does the saving. Salvation is something God does. He saves sinners by grace through faith in the merits of the substitutionary work of Christ at Calvary.

2. They are to MARK the saved disciples by scriptural baptism. Baptism is the immersion of a saved person in water by the authority of one of the Lord's churches. Baptism is not a Christian ordinance; it is a church ordinance. Baptism, because of its symbolic significance, demands a burial in water of one who has died to sin and self, showing in his coming out of the water being raised to walk in newness of life. It also pictures the Gospel, the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. The one baptized is also showing he professes what the baptizing church confesses. There is no New Testament evidence that baptism was ever administered to any one except upon their voluntary profession of faith in Christ.
3. They are to MATURE those baptized disciples. This is done by teaching them to observe (obey) all that Christ commands.

### **Conclusion**

Now, we see happening the things Christ and His apostles prophesied that would happen in the “last days”: a departure from the truth. During this age the leaven was put into the meal, and the field has been over sown with tares. We are now seeing the loaf leavened throughout, and we are not far from the time of the gathering of the tares into bundles to be burned. Yes, it is evident we are in the “last times.” The largest group of Baptists are fighting as to whether the Bible is inspired or not. Who would have “ever thunk it?” Many Baptists have disregarded the nature of the church, its ordinances, and its purity. No wonder Christ asked the question, “... when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?”

A man relates this story:

He was in a lighthouse and had this conversation with the lighthouse keeper: “Sir, suppose that this light should go out, what then?” The keeper: “Go out? Impossible Sir,? he said, pointing to the ocean, “Yonder, where nothing can be seen, there are ships going by to every part of the world. If tonight this light should go out, within

six months would come a letter, perhaps from India, any place in the world, saying, on such and such a night, at such and such an hour, the light in your lighthouse went out and our vessels were in danger. Sir, sometimes, in the dark nights, in stormy weather, I look out to sea, and feel as if the eyes of the whole world were looking at my light. Let them burn out? Let them burn dim? O, never, never, never!”

Remember, dear friends: We are the lights of the world; we are the salt of the earth. When our lights are hid under a bushel, they give no light; when our salt has lost its savor, it is good for nothing.

**T H E   E N D**