

## STUDY PAK 3

### WERE THE EARLY CHURCHES BAPTIST?

Charles Haddon Spurgeon on Baptist History:

“We believe that the Baptists are the original Christians. We did not commence our existence at the Reformation, we were reformers before Luther or Calvin were born; we never came from the Church of Rome, for we were never in it, but have an unbroken line up to the Apostles themselves. We have always existed from the very days of Christ, and our principles, sometime veiled and forgotten, like a river which may travel underground for a little season, have always had honestly and holy adherents. Persecuted alike by Romanists and Protestants of almost every sect ... “

“We are very little for the ‘historical church’ argument, but if there be anything in it at all, it ought not to be filched by the clients of Rome, but should be left to the community, which all along held by one Lord, one faith, and one baptism ... The afflicted Anabaptists, in their past history, have borne such pure testimony, both to truth and freedom, that they need in nothing be ashamed ... It would not be impossible to show that the first Christians who dwelt in the land were of the same faith and order as the churches now called Baptists.”

“ ... when any say to us, ‘You as a denomination, what great names can you mention? What fathers can you speak of?’ We can reply, ‘More than any other under heaven, for we are of the old apostolic church that hath never bowed to the yoke of princes yet; we, known among men, in all ages, by various names, such as Donatists, Novatians, Paulicians, Petrobrussians, Cathari, Arnoldists, Hussites, Waldenses, Lollards, and Anabaptists, have always contended for the purity of the Church, and her distinctness and separation from human government. Our fathers were men injured to hardships, and unused to ease. They present to us their children, an unbroken line which come legitimately from the apostles not through the filth of Rome, not by the manipulations of prelates, but by the Divine life, the Spirit’s anointing, the fellowship of the Son in suffering and the Father in truth.”

**I. WERE THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES BAPTIST?**

A. The New Testament churches recognized the Bible as the \_\_\_\_\_  
for \_\_\_\_\_.

1. Paul always appealed to the churches to be \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_. He never appealed to any other authority.
2. Paul was not following dominant human leadership—he rebuked Peter publicly when he was \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The council in Acts 15 appeals to the Scripture, not to \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Man \_\_\_\_\_ to Scripture; Scripture must not \_\_\_\_\_.

B. The New Testament churches were \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

1. Paul appealed to the Corinthian Church to \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Paul \_\_\_\_\_ for the church in Jerusalem. There was no one to assign offerings.
3. When the Galatian church drifted into heresy, Paul begged them to \_\_\_\_\_ . There was \_\_\_\_\_ that could order them to do right.

C. The New Testament churches were composed of \_\_\_\_\_.

1. Appeals to the church for obedience are always to \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Warnings are given about \_\_\_\_\_.

D. The New Testament church practiced \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

1. There are no examples of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, or \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are the \_\_\_\_\_ of ordinances in the New Testament.

E. The New Testament church practiced the \_\_\_\_\_ .  
II John, III John, Philemon, Titus, I—II Timothy were written to individuals concerning their \_\_\_\_\_. It is clear that there was \_\_\_\_\_ between them and the Lord.

F. The New Testament church practiced \_\_\_\_\_ .  
The \_\_\_\_\_ is a continual record of persecution of the churches by the state.

## II. WERE THE EARLY CHURCHES BAPTIST?

The answer is clearly yes and no. From the very beginning all of the \_\_\_\_\_ are clearly seen among the churches. But also from the time of the earliest churches, people were beginning to \_\_\_\_\_ for what the Bible taught.

A. The Apostolic Fathers.

1. The “apostolic fathers” refer to the first generation of preachers \_\_\_\_\_ (roughly 70 A.D. to 150 A.D.). These include Ignatius of Antioch, Clement of Rome, Barnabas, Hermas, and Polycarp. Polycarp had served under John the Apostle.
2. The early church was united around the fundamentals but within a generation things began to slip badly.
3. Several Baptist Distinctives were common to almost all of the early churches.
  - a. Churches were \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ .
  - b. Church membership was gained by \_\_\_\_\_ after a \_\_\_\_\_ .
  - c. Churches were \_\_\_\_\_ from the state and were often \_\_\_\_\_ by the state.
  - d. Individual Christians were regarded as New Testament \_\_\_\_\_

and prayed \_\_\_\_\_.

e. A bishop was the \_\_\_\_\_. The idea of one preacher ruling over several churches was not mentioned.

4. Controversy about salvation developed even in the early church.

a. Ignatius taught that baptism and the Lord's Supper were necessary for salvation.

b. Polycarp and Clement of Rome taught that baptism and the Lord's Supper were simply acts of obedience.

B. The Apologists.

1. The Apologists were men who wrote to \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ during the Second Century A.D., they addressed many letters and books to the Roman government and to the emperors. The most famous Apologists are Justin Martyr, Tatian, Athenagoras, and Theophilus of Antioch.

2. All of the early apologists \_\_\_\_\_ the doctrines of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

C. The Church Fathers.

1. The "church fathers" is a term that refers to \_\_\_\_\_ of the late Second and early Third Centuries. Some of them corrupted Christianity deeply by trying \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_. Some have suggested that they should have been called the "church babies."

2. Church fathers who tried to \_\_\_\_\_ include \_\_\_\_\_ (195-258 A.D.), \_\_\_\_\_ (185-254 A.D.) and \_\_\_\_\_ (160-? A.D.).

3. Church fathers who were \_\_\_\_\_ include \_\_\_\_\_ (130-202 A.D.) and \_\_\_\_\_ (160-220 A.D.).

4. Cyprian taught salvation by baptism. Clement and Origen influenced many churches through the school at Alexandria. They taught salvation by works, a mystical interpretation of the Scriptures and proposed an alternate

Greek text of the Scripture.

5. Irenaeus wrote against the heresies of the era and clearly taught the sole authority of Scripture. Tertullian was a clearly a man of Baptist doctrine and was called Tertullian the Baptist. A \_\_\_\_\_ at Antioch taught \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Bible and held to the \_\_\_\_\_ of the New Testament.

D. A History of the Doctrine of Baptism.

“Holy Scripture alone may be accepted as our guiding star in all matters of doctrine and life. It alone is able to lead us out of the chaos of opinions into God intended clearness.” ~ ~ Johannes Warmes, *Baptism*, p. 17 ~ ~

1. John the Baptist.
  - a. John preached baptism as a \_\_\_\_\_ and as \_\_\_\_\_ of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.
  - b. The mode was clearly \_\_\_\_\_, Mark 1:5; John 3:23.
  - c. This practice was so identified with John that it became part of his name—John the Baptist.
  
2. Baptism of Christ, Mark 1:9-11.

Christ had no need of baptism as a \_\_\_\_\_ but He participated in baptism \_\_\_\_\_ of His coming death, burial, and resurrection.
  
3. The Early Churches.
  - a. Baptism by immersion is the clear practice of most churches until the Sixteenth Century, (see *Why I Am a Baptist* by Clarence Larkin, pp. 2122).
  - b. Infant baptism is unknown until the late Second Century—see *Baptism* by Johannes Warmes, Chapter IV.
  - c. Heretical ideas about baptism entered through the concept of

\_\_\_\_\_ . This is the belief that those with \_\_\_\_\_ could \_\_\_\_\_ because of the \_\_\_\_\_ of baptism by \_\_\_\_\_. Soon the idea of \_\_\_\_\_ was defended upon the grounds of \_\_\_\_\_. Tertullian wrote at length against the idea of infant baptism.

4. As the \_\_\_\_\_ began to develop, the idea of \_\_\_\_\_ began to be increasingly prominent. Church leaders gained power as they taught that \_\_\_\_\_ over salvation. Political leaders treated baptism as a sign of homage to the state. Infant baptism and baptismal regeneration became the two pillars of the state church. Independent churches kept preaching the truth. They were often persecuted.
5. As the Roman Empire crumbled, \_\_\_\_\_ developed. In union with many political movements, it required \_\_\_\_\_ and taught \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. In 550 A.D., Justinian ordered all non-Christians under his control to be baptized.
  - b. In the 9<sup>th</sup> Century, Charlemagne ordered many Germanic tribes to be baptized and he sent his armies to enforce his orders.
  - c. Independent churches that preached the truth were routinely persecuted.

E. Four Main Teachings.

Over the centuries four main teachings would develop about baptism.

1. The Biblical (and Baptist) teaching of baptism by \_\_\_\_\_ .
2. The Roman Catholic teaching of \_\_\_\_\_ by sprinkling for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ .
3. The Protestant idea of \_\_\_\_\_ by sprinkling \_\_\_\_\_ .
4. The Campbellite (Church of Christ) idea of baptism by \_\_\_\_\_ .

\_\_\_\_\_.

- F. There have always been independent churches, which taught what the Bible says about baptism. They are called \_\_\_\_\_. Honest scholars would admit that the Baptist doctrine of Baptism has been taught \_\_\_\_\_.

John Clark Ridpath, author of that monumental work *Ridpath's History of the World*, in a letter to Dr. W.A. Jarrell (*Baptist Church Perpetuity*, p. 59), says:

“I should not readily admit that there were Baptist churches as far back as A.D. 100, although without doubt there were Baptists as all Christians were Baptists.”

Alexander Campbell, founder of the “Christian” church or “Church of Christ” says:

“I would engage to show that baptism as viewed and practiced by the Baptists, has its advocates in every century of the Christian era ... and independent of whose existence (the German Anabaptists), clouds of witnesses attest the fact, that before the Reformation from popery, and from the apostolic age, to the present time, the sentiments of Baptists, and the practice of baptism have had a continued chain of advocates, and public monuments of their existence in every century can be produced.”