

Morning Star Baptist Church
"I am a Baptist Because..."
An Insidious Apostasy
5/20/07

Introduction

Romans 16:17-18 (17) Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. (18) For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

We are living in a very dangerous time when Baptists do not appreciate their own heritage. Practical and devotional books sell while history and theology books do not. Does it matter that Baptists contend for their own distinctiveness? Where did Baptists come from?

The Testimony of Historians

Cardinal Hosius, President of the Council of Trent wrote: " Were it not for the fact that the Anabaptists have been grievously tormented and cut off with the knife during the past twelve hundred years, they would swarm in greater number than all the Reformers." (Hosius, Letters, Apud Opera, pp. 112, 113.)" Quoted in the "Trail of Blood" by J. Carroll. He also wrote, "The Anabaptists are a pernicious sect, of which the Waldensian brethren seem to have been. Nor is this heresy a modern thing, for it existed in the time of Austin."

Ulrich Zwingli, the Swiss Reformer, who himself had many Anabaptists drowned by Protestants at the beginning of the Reformation, wrote: " The institution of the Anabaptists is no novelty, but for 300 years has caused great disturbance in the Church, and has acquired such strength the attempt in this age to contend with it appears futile for a time."

Others like Reynerius, around 1400, Dr. J.J. Dermont, a chaplain in 1814 Holland, Dr. Williston Walker, late 1800's church historian and Harvard history professor, and John Lawrence von Mosheim, a 1700's Lutheran, all agree with Archbishop Sessellius who writes in his book against the Waldenses: " The Waldenses originate from a religious man named Leo, who lived during the time of the first Christian Emperor, Constantine the Great (313 A.D.)."

I. Splits and Rivals

A. The seeds of corruption were sown in the 1st century with the fight over grace vs. circumcision **Acts 15**. Then in **II John** we see John battling Gnosticism.

B. Heresy is defined as drawing away disciples. There is a need for splits and divisions, because those who are real are manifested. **I Corinthians 11:18-19 (18) For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.(19) For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.**

C. Around 240 A.D. the church at Rome split into two factions - the worldly, loose faction and the strict, separated group. Cornelius, the old pastor and a strict immersionist died, and the majority of the church chose Fabian to replace him. Novation left and took others underground with him due to issues with worldliness and church discipline.

D. So now there are two churches. But time was not kind to the worldly Roman church, so in 323 A.D., Constantine wedded the church to the state. This church had the sword with her crook. Then in the 9th century Rome and Greece split.

E. Then around 1500, convinced that the RCC was the true church, the Protestant Reformation brought three new religious groups on the scene that would later turn on the Anabaptists.

F. Anabaptists and later Baptists continued to contend for the faith.

II. Dilute and Compromise

A. As long as Baptists were persecuted or unpopular they prospered.

B. In Europe the Baptists were always required to pay tax dollars to state churches.

C. Not until 1787 did the Baptists have religious freedom in America.

D. Baptists led the way in World Missions in the 1800 and 1900's. But also in the 1900's, Arminianism paved the way for pragmatism. Baptists became very shallow **II Timothy 4:1-5.**

E. Most Baptists today do not know why they are Baptists. You have the SBC, ABC, GARB, ABA, BBF, WBF, CBC, and Primitive Baptists.

III. Falling and Failing

A. The Scriptures warn us of apostasy in the last days. Paul warned of the great apostasy **II Thessalonians 2:3** and **II Timothy 3:1-7.**

B. When Christ wrote to the seven churches He warned them of falling away **Revelation 2** and **3.**

- Ephesus / lost candlestick
- Pergamos / fought against with my sword
- Thyatira / cast her into tribulation

- Laodicea / will spue thee out of my mouth

C. The Charismatic and Seeker-Sensitive movements have helped create an unusual religious culture.

D. Baptists are dropping like flies. Jesus also warned of false preachers **Matthew 24:45-51**, light hearted preachers Jeremiah **23:32**, and low life preachers **I Kings 13:33-34** and **II Kings 17:32-34**.

E. This pragmatism, getting them no matter what we compromise, is destroying our churches. One preacher, William Hybels, out of Illinois, admitted in Time magazine, that he went to Las Vegas to learn from Wayne Newton how to run a professional show.

F. Baptists have adopted worldly music, worldly translations, and worldly dress, baptism, and entertainment. We have shortened sermons to a comedy monologue, dropped distinctive doctrine, dropped ecclesiastical separation, and (thank the Lord), dropped the Baptist name.

G. But there remain some Baptists who are not caving in. I believe they will grow and once again be a shining light, a city on a hill!

Conclusion

II Kings 13:11-32

The young prophet was obedient and would not compromise before King Jeroboam. But the old compromiser, the pragmatic prophet had no problem lying for a good cause. He was BIG enough to contradict the word of God and got the young prophet to yield. Then he rebuked him. And then he wept over his grave!

Baptist compromise is commonplace. "You can't change culture," said the old preacher. That is true, but we can keep culture from changing us or we will die. I have seen what has happened to the once strong Baptist churches. The Bible is true, and as for me, I'm going to stay with Bible-believing, out-of-step Baptists.