

## 1. A believer in Christ should join a Baptist church because Jesus built a Baptist church

God prepared a Baptist preacher, John the Baptist, to teach and baptize (immerse) believers. Jesus endorsed the message and baptism of this first Baptist.

*Matthew 3:1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, ... 13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him... 15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteous ness. Then he suffered him.*

Jesus established His first church during the days of His personal ministry. Jesus promised that His kind of baptizing church would continue throughout history. This teaching is referred to as *Baptist church perpetuity*. Jesus commissioned and authorized His type of church to teach and baptize in His power. Since founded by Jesus, the Lord's kind of Baptist churches have existed throughout all history. *Matthew 16:18 And I [Jesus] say also unto thee, That thou art Peter [petros, small rock], and upon this rock [petra, large rock] I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it... 28:16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them... 18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things what so ever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. Acts 16:5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and in creased in number daily.*

Jesus baptized the first church in the Holy Spirit and publically displayed His approval of church worship and service on the day of Pentecost. This baptism and accompanying miracles were repeated to authenticate missions to the Gentiles. *Acts 2:1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost... 11:15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. 16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.*

The Lord's first church was comprised of believers taught and baptized by John the Baptist, a preacher sent from God. These first church members were the Apostles who were Baptists in belief, practice, and baptism. Matthias, the replacement for Judas, was also Baptist. *1 Cor. 12:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles... Acts 1:22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection...*

*rection... 26 and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.*

Baptism (immersion) pictures the gospel of Christ, the death of the believer to sin, and new life in Christ.

*1 Corinthians 15:1 More over, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel... 3 how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures. Romans 6:4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life... 11 Like wise reckon ye also your selves to be dead in deed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

The name Baptist is found 15 times in the New Testament and baptized converts had Baptist beliefs and Baptist baptism. *Luke 7:28 For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist... Acts 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls... 47 And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*

In the New Testament, all churches were Baptist in teaching and baptism, and there was no need for denominational names. These churches were Baptist churches and were identified by the area in which the churches were located. Baptist teachings and Baptist baptism continued except for heresies spreading like weeds. For example, twelve men in Ephesus had false baptism but they claimed they had John's baptism.

However, they knew nothing of the Holy Spirit whom John preached. *Matthew 3:11 I [John] in deed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. Acts 19:1 ...Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, 2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. 3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. 4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*

Near the end of the first century, God used John the Apostle to describe the spiritual decline in five of seven Baptist churches in Asia Minor. Jesus warned the five errant churches that they would cease to be His churches if their errors were not corrected.

*Rev. 1:20 ...the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches... 2:5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent... 3:22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*

## 2. A believer in Christ should join a Baptist church because a Biblical church is a Baptist assembly

Biblical churches are local assemblies that are Baptist in teaching and baptism. Each Baptist church is commissioned by Jesus with a mission to evangelize and establish other Baptist churches of like order and faith.

*Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the utter most part of the earth.*

Each Baptist church is a complete autonomous, indigenous body of Christ with Jesus as her head.

*Ephesians 1:22 And hath put all things under his [Jesus'] feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. Colossians 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*

Each Baptist church is the house of God. A Baptist church is the pillar and ground for preservation of the Bible, God's Truth. *1 Tim. 3:15 ...that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to be have thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*

## 3. A believer in Christ should join a Baptist church because Jesus promised that Baptist churches would continue throughout history

Throughout history, Baptist churches have taught and baptized believers and organized them into new Baptist churches. In this process, Baptists distributed the Bible in copied and translated forms throughout the world. Baptists translated and spread the Bible to people in their own languages. *Matthew 16:18 ...I [Jesus] will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

The Bible has traveled through the centuries on the *Royal Highway of the Trail of Blood*, the history of Baptist churches, so called because over 50 million Baptists and dissenters were killed by Roman and Protestant Catholics. In spite of terrible persecutions, Baptist churches continued to send missionaries to spread the Word of God. *Acts 13:49 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.*

Since Jesus started His first church, Baptists (with various nicknames) have continued throughout the centuries, taking the Word of God wherever they went

and establishing churches in the faith. They were called heretics and Anabaptists (Greek, re-immersers) by Roman and Orthodox Catholics, Protestants, and other man-made churches because they refused to accept baptisms of these false churches. Anabaptist churches used the Bible as the standard for life and baptized all believers who had questionable baptisms.

*Acts 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. 16:5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and in creased in number daily.*

**Montanist** (meaning *mountain people*) **Baptists** of Phrygia (2nd century), led by Montanus and Tertullian, spread throughout Asia Minor.

**Novatian Baptists** (3rd century), named for their pastor, Novatian (Roman philosopher converted in 250 A.D.), spread throughout the Roman Empire from Armenia to Spain, and into the great cities of Constantinople, Alexandria, Carthage, and Rome. They were numerous in Phrygia where Montanists joined them.

**Donatist Baptists** of North Africa (4th-7th centuries), named for their pastor, Donatus, spread through out North Africa in an area 2000 miles long (Egypt to the Atlantic) by 300 miles wide (Mediterranean Sea to the desert).

**Paulician Baptists** of Armenia (7th-12th centuries) were known for their love of Paul's Epistles. Their pastor, Silvanus, called his followers Pauline congregations.

**Albigense Baptists** of Albi, France (11th-13th centuries), in the Pyrenees Mountains were evangelized by the Paulicians of Asia. They spread throughout France and Italy.

**Paterine Baptists**, also called *Cathari* (Latin, *catharoi* meaning *pure ones*), flourished in Italy, France and more especially in the South of France (11th-13th centuries). They were evangelized by the Paulicians of Asia. Paterine Baptists took in the daughters of indigent noblemen and educated them in the Scriptures.

**Petrobrussian Baptists** of Southern France (12th century) were named for their pastor, Peter de Bruys, who was succeeded by Henry of Lusanne, Italy, and eventually became known as Henricians. These Baptists spread to Switzerland with the Word of God.

**Arnoldist Baptists** of Italy (12th century) were named for their pastor, Arnold of Brescia, great teacher of soul-liberty who was martyred for the faith.

They evangelized Switzerland.

**Waldense** or **Vaudois** (varied spellings from the Latin *vallis* meaning  *dwellers in valleys*) **Baptists** of Switzerland and of the Alpine (Alps) of the Piedmont

region of Italy (12th-13th centuries) were led by Peter Waldo. Waldensian Baptists taught that the Holy Scriptures are the highest standard of judgment, the only authoritative rule of faith.

**Waldense Baptists** spread themselves and their teachings all over Europe and England in the 12th century A.D. Their spiritual descendants in the 14th century became teachers of Wickliffe and his followers. Over half the people of England who followed Wickliffe's teaching became Baptists.

**Anabaptists** of the Reformation Period in Europe and England (16th-17th centuries) taught that the Scriptures are the only authority in matters of faith and practice.

[Anabaptists] sent forth a multitude of missionaries so that Melancthos could say that they went where no evangelist, Lutheran and Zwinglian, had penetrated... For a hundred years Switzerland was drained of her sturdy sons, who in great numbers braved the loss of their goods and the long journey through hostile territory and the price set upon their heads by the Bavarian dukes in order to reach Moravia, where they might enjoy some little freedom to worship God. From Moravia, they sent out missions in scores to all parts of Germany, Tyrol and Switzerland, to Hungary, Silesia and Poland, who took their lives in their hands that they might preach the word of their Redeemer and raise up churches to his praise... [Anabaptists] were the most determined colporteurs and missionaries throughout Europe. The only reference I have found to any heathen land I have given in Armitage, where the persecuted flock think of settling in America among "the red Jews Columbus has just discovered." This was in 1524... (Jarrell's Baptist Church Perpetuity, p. 189-190).

**Welsh Baptists** of Wales claim continuous existence from apostolic times to the present.

They would have order and no confusion—the word of God their only rule.. The Olchon Baptists must have been a separate people, maintaining the order of the New Testament in every generation from the year 63 to the present time (Davis' History of Welsh Baptists, p. 19)

Baptists immigrated to America to spread the missionary Gospel of Christ, or organize new Baptist churches, and teach God's Word to the people. Baptist churches continue to send missionaries throughout the world giving the Bible to the people in their own languages.

#### 4. A believer in Christ should join a Baptist church because all other churches are man-made organizations and not true Biblical churches

Following the first century, some Baptist churches developed such grave errors that their candlestick was removed and they ceased to be the Lord's churches.

Rev. 2:5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen,

and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

These errant churches changed the mode of baptism from immersion to pouring and sprinkling, and replaced the gospel of grace with a gospel of works-salvation. In the fourth century, Roman Emperor Constantine united these errant churches with his pagan government and formed a universal (Latin, catholic) visible church which claimed to exclusively include all believers. Baptist churches were cruelly persecuted by the governmental catholic churches. As time passed, this errant catholic church divided into the state orthodox catholic churches including the Roman Catholics, Greek Orthodox Catholics, Russian Orthodox Catholics, Egyptian Coptic Catholics, etc. All of these man-made catholic churches commanded armies in crusades against Baptists.

Baptists continued to witness and some catholics began to study the Bible. Many catholics were converted and joined Baptist churches. Some Roman catholic leaders trusted in Christ but loved the power and wealth that governmental connections gave them. These leaders remained catholics but protested many of the abusive errors of catholicism. These protesters became known as the Protestants. They established man-made churches and retained much catholic error. The Protestants modified their definition of a church to include a catholic (universal) invisible body comprising all believers. Note that the Bible never identifies a church as catholic (universal).

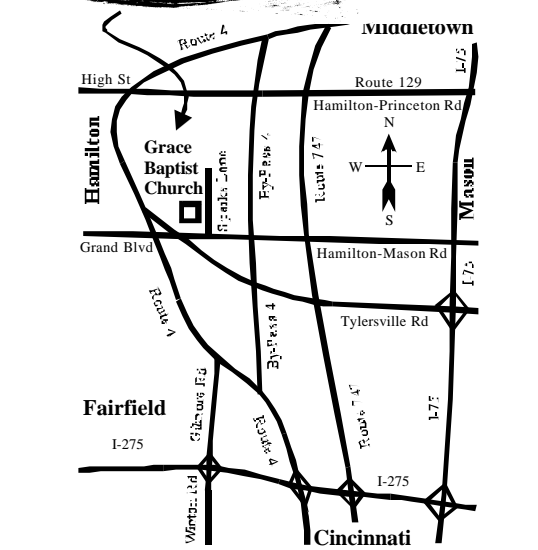
Man-made Protestant churches include the following: (1) Lutheran Church started in about 1520 by Martin Luther in Germany; (2) Church of England (Episcopal Church in America) started in about 1534 by King Henry VIII; (3) Presbyterian Church started in about 1536 by John Calvin; (4) Congregational Church started in about 1580 by John Brown; (5) Methodist Church started in about 1740 by John Wesley; (6) various charismatic churches (Pentecostalism, Assemblies of God, Churches of God, etc.) were founded by Protestant preachers in the confusion and despair following the U.S. Civil War and World War I in the late 1800's and early 1900's; (7) Campbellite churches (Church of Christ, Christian Church, Disciples of Christ) started in about 1827 by Alexander Campbell; and (8) many other Protestant churches.

The error of Protestant catholicism has resulted in so many man-made Protestant churches that they are too numerous to name. None of these man-made churches are Biblical churches. At best, they are social organizations which try to serve God in their own way with their own organizations and not according to Scriptural truth.

#### 5. A believer in Christ should join a Baptist church because Baptist churches help others learn all of God's truth

Jesus commissioned Baptist churches to teach and baptize believers: Matt. 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. Jude 1:3 ...ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

Baptists rejoice when ever Christ is preached by whatever sect or denomination. Baptists rejoice when any soul is saved. However, Baptists must not ecumenicalize or compromise with man-made churches. Compromise with error will not affect eternal salvation of your soul, but it will affect your reward from God. Matt. 5:19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but who so ever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 1 Cor. 3:13 Every man's work shall be made manifest... and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built there upon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.



# Five reasons why a believer in Christ should join a Baptist church

By Dr. Gail E. Terrell



### Opportunities For Worship

<b>SUNDAY</b>	
Sunday School	9:45 a.m.
Worship Service	10:45 a.m.
Evening Service	6:00 p.m.
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	
Midweek Service	7:00 p.m.

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