

# THE BAPTIST LANDMARK

“REMOVE NOT THE OLD LANDMARK, WHICH THY FATHERS HAVE SET.” PROVERBS 22:28

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## CHURCH SUCCESSION

by H. B. Little

The Church Succession view is the historical view of the Old-Time Baptists. As such, our fathers in the faith held the belief that churches of the Baptist faith have existed in regular succession from apostolic times. Old-Time Baptist pastors and historians taught the Church Succession view, as evidenced in their sermons and writings. As late as the turn of the twentieth century, the Baptists, by vast majority, considered any other view regarding our origins and baptism as controversial and unsound.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892) was one such Baptist. Bro. Spurgeon, dubbed the Prince of Preachers, was a pastor and author from London, England. His sermons and writings had great influence in Europe and in North America. His views on the origins of the Baptists are evidenced by a statement made in his address to the congregation at the ground breaking of the Metropolitan Tabernacle:

*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 we have an unbroken line up to the apostles themselves. We have always existed from the very days of Christ, and our principles, sometimes veiled and forgotten, like a river which may travel underground for a little season, have always had honest and holy adherents.* (Metropolitan Tabernacle 1861, 225)

Bro. Spurgeon was not the only English Baptist who held the Church Succession view. The distinguished historian Robert Robinson (1735-1790) held the Church Succession view. In his “Ecclesiastical Researches”, published after his death in 1792, he wrote about a particular division among the churches associated with the one at Rome. This division arose over lax discipline within the churches during the third century. Novatus, a church elder, called for the strict discipline churches to

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## WHICH BIBLE?

by M. A. Brawner

The study of the word of God is one of the most beneficial exercises in which any human being can engage. The value of studying the word of God is only exceeded by actually being born again and joining the Church the Lord established. The word of God is what He has had recorded, so we can understand that He created us and has an intentional purpose for us. It is important to clarify what we believe about His word because that belief directly reflects what we believe about God.

In the Bible we find it written, “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost”, 2 Pet 1:20-21. These verses share an explanation of what is called the “divine inspiration” of the word of God. They state that God directly gave His word to mankind using holy men. These men were moved by the Holy Ghost so that what they documented cannot be said to have come by the will of man. These men, being so moved, documented the will of God. For any to believe that God actually gave His word in this manner, they must also believe that God deals directly with mankind through the Holy Ghost. To deny the divine inspiration of the word of God is to also deny that God interacts directly with man.

The Bible also teaches, “The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, Thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever”, Psa 12:6-7. These verses share what is called the “divine preservation” of the word of God. They describe the purity of the words of the Lord by showing that His words are purer than the precious materials of the world. Verse seven tells us that the Lord will “preserve them from this generation for ever”. This statement teaches that God has given His word to mankind and He will preserve this word for every generation. These verses challenge whether or not we believe in the preserving

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## THE ORDINANCE OF BAPTISM

by B. W. Carver

Although baptism is not essential to the salvation of the soul, the scriptures place great importance on this ordinance in the work of the church. In fact, without baptism, the church could not continue to exist in the world.

After salvation, the first thing we are commanded to do is be baptized, as recorded in Acts 2:38. Water baptism places a saved person into the church. Ephesians 1:22-23 and Colossians 1:24 teach us that the church is the body of Christ. Galatians 3:27 and Romans 6:3 teach us that a saved person is “baptized into Christ”, that is baptized into His body. We notice, in I Corinthians 12:12-31, the apostle Paul comparing the church to the human body to show that we all have an important role to fill in the church. I Corinthians 12:13 states, “For by one Spirit are we baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” This is not teaching us that the baptism of the Holy Spirit places us into the body. The Holy Spirit came upon the church on the day of Pentecost. How could the baptism of the Holy Spirit have put those into the church when they (apostles) were already in the church? This verse is teaching that the Holy Spirit will lead a saved person to unite with the Lord’s church by water baptism. Water baptism is important; without it, a saved person cannot unite with the body of Christ. Without new members, the church would cease to exist.

We find another important reason for baptism recorded in Matthew 3:13-17. Here, we read about the baptism of Jesus Christ. The scriptures teach that He walked from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptized of him. Upon coming to him, John said to Jesus, “I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?” Jesus then answered, “Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.” Christ did not begin His ministry here upon the earth until after He was baptized (Matthew 4:17). He did not receive baptism to become righteous, as

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**ANNOUNCEMENTS  
THROUGH SEPT. 18, 2016**

Effort meeting will begin at Athens Missionary Baptist Church on Sunday, June 19. Services will be held nightly. Sunday night services will begin at 6:00PM. All other services will begin at 7:00PM. Eld. Kevin Harrison will be assisted by Eld. Brad Carver.

Effort meeting will begin at Oak Forest #2 Missionary Baptist Church on Sunday, June 19. Services will be held nightly at 7:00PM. Eld. Matt Brown will be assisted by Eld. Matt Apple.

Effort meeting will begin at Township Line Missionary Baptist Church, in Poplar Bluff, Missouri, on Sunday, June 19. Services will be held nightly at 7:00PM. Eld. Michael Brawner is scheduled to preach.

Effort meeting will begin at Drakes Creek Missionary Baptist Church on Sunday, June 26. Services will be held nightly at 7:00PM. Eld. Greg Dunham will be assisted by Eld. Kevin Harrison.

Effort meeting will begin at Red Hill Missionary Baptist Church on Sunday, June 26. Services will be held nightly at 7:30PM. Eld. Lonnie Meador will be assisted by Eld. Daniel Tinsley.

Effort meeting will begin at Siloam Missionary Baptist Church on Sunday, July 10. Services will be held daily at 11:00AM and 7:15PM. Eld. Jeff Blackwell will be assisted by Eld. Kevin Harrison.

Effort meeting will begin at Haysville Missionary Baptist Church on Sunday, July 17. Services will be held nightly at 7:30PM. Eld. Tony Allen will be assisted by Eld. Eddy Gregory.

Effort meeting will begin at Pleasant Hill Missionary Baptist Church on Sunday, July 17. Services will be held nightly at 7:00PM. Eld. Brad Carver will be assisted by Eld. Kevin Slayton.

Effort meeting will begin at Union Missionary Baptist Church on Sunday, July 17. Services will be held daily at 11:00AM and 7:00PM. Eld. Britt Little will be assisted by Eld. Kevin Harrison.

Effort meeting will begin at Long Fork Missionary Baptist Church on Sunday, July 24. Services will be held nightly at 7:00PM. Eld. Chris Griffith will be assisted by Bro. Jim Carter.

Effort meeting will begin at Old Rocky Hill

Missionary Baptist Church on Sunday, July 24. Services will be held nightly at 7:30PM. Eld. Kyle Gammons will be assisted by Bro. Derrick Dickens.

Effort meeting will begin at Churchville Missionary Baptist Church on Friday, August 26. Services will be held nightly at 7:30PM. Preaching by Bro. Jim Carter and a preacher to be determined.

Effort meeting will begin at Liberty Missionary Baptist Church on Sunday, September 11. Services will be held nightly at 7:00 PM. Eld. Chris Crowder will be assisted by Eld. Kevin Harrison.

**THE ORDINANCE OF BAPTISM**

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He is the only begotten son of God. He was baptized to "fulfill all righteousness." If Jesus had to submit to water baptism before He could fulfill all righteousness and begin His work, it stands to reason that any child of God must submit to the same. Glory is brought unto God in His church, and a saved person will never be able to serve God completely without yielding to this commandment of God.

In Romans 6, we find another important purpose of baptism. When saved people are baptized, they are putting to death the old man that they might be raised to walk in newness of life. When a person is saved, the inward man is cleansed. Baptism is a token that a saved person will strive to keep the outward man as clean as possible. In Acts 22, the apostle Paul is relating his testimony to the multitudes. He tells of his salvation on the road to Damascus and being led into Damascus to a man named Ananias. In verse 16, Paul was told to "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." We find the Greek meaning of "wash" to be to "separate and bathe the whole body." This washing had nothing to do with his inner man. His soul had already been born again. The command was to separate himself from the "old man" and be identified with the people of God. It was only after he had submitted himself to water baptism that he went and preached Christ (Acts 9:20).

We notice in Colossians 2:11-12 that the circumcision made without hands "puts off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." Baptism is the way by which we put off the body of the sins of the flesh. Under the old covenant circumcision was a sign or token of Israel. Baptism is the symbolic cutting off of the sinful flesh. It separates a saved person

unto God by uniting them to the body of Christ.

What is essential to scriptural baptism? Although it cannot be addressed fully in this capacity, it deserves some attention. We feel it is necessary to notice the following essentials:

1.) A scriptural candidate. We find evidence in Matthew 3:8 that John required "fruits meet for repentance" before he would baptize. In Acts 8:36-37, Philip required the same from the eunuch before administering water baptism.

2.) A proper authority. The first authority to baptize was given to John the Baptist. This authority was God given. He was sent to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. Christ took that material, ordained them, and gave them authority to baptize in His name (John 4:1-2). Before Christ ascended to the Father, He also commissioned the church to make disciples, baptize them, and teach them (Matthew 28:19-20).

3.) A proper administrator. The man administering baptism must be a saved person who has submitted himself to water baptism, has been called to preach, has been ordained by a sound church, and is continuing to walk in the faith. Many scriptures could be noted to glean these identifying factors. We find that as the apostles were seeking for one to take the place of Judas the requirement was "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." (Acts 1:22)

4.) Immersion in water. The scriptural candidate must be fully immersed in water. Romans 6:4 and Colossians 2:12 identify baptism as a burial. We also note in Matthew 3:16 that Jesus "...when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water..." John 3:23 states, "And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came and were baptized." There must be according to these scriptures, and others, enough water to bury the candidate in the watery grave.

So much more could be expounded upon as we consider the ordinance of baptism. I pray that we prayerfully consider the importance the scriptures place upon this commandment to those who have been saved. Our heart's desire is that first of all the lost will be saved. We must also be diligent in teaching the saved to submit to water baptism in uniting with the body of Christ.

**WHICH BIBLE?**

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power of God. The Bible teaches that God is preserving many things to include: this world unto the day of judgment; salvation ready to be revealed in the last time; and His own words through time and into eternity. It is simply impossible to believe God is able to preserve any of these things if there is an unwillingness to believe He is preserving them all.

God's word also records the following, "For ever, O LORD, Thy word is settled in heaven", Psa 119:89. Here it is apparent that the word of God is settled. Anything that is settled is unchanging. So then, the word of God has this very nature; it is unchanging. The words God had documented nearly 2000 years ago remain valid today. His word can never be updated because it is settled. God considered what would be happening in the world down through time and had His word written knowing it would apply throughout time. God has told us that He has this nature Himself. He has said, "For I am the Lord, I change not ...", Mal 3:6. No wonder His word is settled and will never change. To reject the settled, unchanging nature of the word of God is to reject this same nature as it pertains to God.

It is apparent that these comparisons could be extended. Perhaps what has been provided will help us consider the implications when we are offered a "New", "Updated" version of the Bible. We should realize that the belief we hold about the Bible reflects what we believe about God.

We first considered that God gave His word through His holy men. This should cause us to be serious about which words we decide to esteem as His words. If we would take two different versions of the Bible and compare their words, we would find differences. Not only do modern versions differ from the KJV but they also differ from each other. These differences do NOT simply amount to changing the word "Thou" from the KJV to the word "You" in the NIV. The differences amount to words and sentences with complete different meaning. So then, we must learn which version gives the correct translation of what God had documented. All cannot be correct. God has spoken, and only one contains what He has said.

We also found that God has preserved His word. If anyone suggests His words have

been lost at any period of time after being given, they are wrong. So then, we need to consider the history of what is being represented as the Bible. New materials blatantly challenge what God has said. God says that He has preserved His word down through time while new materials suggest otherwise. Men of philosophy suggest that God allowed the Bible to go out of existence for great periods of time. They say the same thing about His Church. However, God has told us He would preserve both His word and His Church so that the gates of hell would not prevail. The question is, whom do we believe?

Then we considered the very nature of the word of God and how that nature is the same as what God has told us about Himself. God has never and will never change. The same holds true for the words God has said. So then, why would any changes made to the Bible be acceptable? It is as easy to ask people to believe God has changed as to ask them to believe a Bible containing His words have changed. Even to suggest such things baffles the mind.

Much of what we are told about the modern versions of the Bible challenge these very beliefs. For example, it is sometimes said that the modern versions are the result of scientific research and discovery making them better than the KJV. However, **not** even one of these versions literally could have been produced earlier than the mid 1800s, because their source material had been fully rejected until then. Do we believe God had His word preserved or do we reject this? Likewise, was God interacting with man to verify His word was indeed in hand? If we do believe these doctrines, then anything that surfaced as late as the mid 1800s is unacceptable.

Additionally, and most importantly, the material used to produce modern versions of the Bible flat out disagree with the material from which the KJV is derived. More astonishingly, the materials from which modern versions are based fail to agree with themselves. Evidence shows the materials from which the modern versions are based were changed by someone along the way. When these changes were discovered, the materials were discarded. (Those who discarded those materials obviously believed the nature of God's word as explained at the beginning of this article.) These materials remained discarded until they were "discovered" in

the 1800s. With this in mind, should we receive as valid any version of the Bible based on such materials?

It honestly appears that the Bible has become nothing more than a money making venture for many businesses and companies. It is so sad to see that people are being led astray because they don't realize the implications.

**PUBLIC DISCUSSION ON BAPTISM**

by H. B. Little

On Friday night, May 27, at 6 o'clock, nearly six hundred people met at Macon County Junior High School, in Layette, Tennessee to consider the relation of baptism to salvation of the soul. Before a full house, Mr. Jack Honeycutt, Church of Christ, affirmed his proposition of baptism being essential to salvation, while Eld. Michael Brawner, Missionary Baptist, denied the proposition. On the following night, almost four hundred people came to hear Eld. Brawner affirm his proposition that belief from the heart is the final act essential to soul salvation, while Mr. Honeycutt denied.

The discussion was conducted in a mostly cordial manner, both among the participants and the crowd. Among the crowd were many young men and women. Many listened intently and took down several notes. Only eternity will reveal the fruits of the gospel seeds sown during the discussion. While some seed most likely found hardened ground, it seemed that some seed found honest, sincere ground. All who know the Lord and the power of prayer should pray to the Lord of the harvest that He would water the word with heaven sent conviction.

Eld. Brawner defended the biblical position the first night, denying the heresy of baptismal salvation by declaring it a work of men's hands. The second night, Eld. Brawner put before the crowd three types of faith found in the scriptures: historical, saving and living faith. He also set forth that saving faith comes from the heart and is independent of works. He further asserted that saving faith brings salvation, while baptism places one in the church. In the opinion of the author, the discussion revealed that the Baptist position regarding salvation is the biblical one.

Those desiring to listen to the discussion can find audio files for both nights online at [www.fishersofmenbaptistic.com](http://www.fishersofmenbaptistic.com).

**CHURCH SUCCESSION**

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separate themselves from the lax discipline churches. Dr. Robinson says concerning Novatus and those churches adhering to his principles:

*Great numbers followed his example, and all over the empire puritan churches were constituted, and flourished through the succeeding two hundred years. Afterward, when penal laws obliged them to lurk in corners, and worship God in private, they were distinguished by a variety of names, and a succession of them continued till the reformation. (Ecclesiastical Researches, 126-127)*

Both these English Baptists believed in a succession of pure churches from the Great Apostasy to the Protestant Reformation. They further believed that from this succession of churches came the Baptists. The Church Succession view was not peculiar to only the English Baptists. Many American Baptists historians have written in support of church succession. Dr. John T. Christian (1854-1925) was one such Baptist. He wrote much in the defense of our ancient origins and practices. Dr. Christian was a Baptist preacher and historian, who served as Professor of Christian History at The Baptist Bible Institute in New Orleans, Louisiana. In the preface of his "A History of The Baptists", he expresses that his historical research confirmed his belief of the Church Succession view:

*I am well aware of the imperfections of this book, but it presents much data never found in a Baptist history. I have throughout pursued the scientific method of investigation, and I have let the facts speak for themselves. I have no question in my own mind that there has been a historical succession of Baptists from the days of Christ to the present time. It must be remembered that the Baptists were found in almost every corner of Europe. When I found a connection between one body and another that fact is stated, but when no relationship was apparent I have not tried to manufacture one. Straight-forward honesty is the only course to pursue. Fortunately, however, every additional fact discovered only goes to make such connections probable in all instances. (A History of The Baptists, 5-6)*

The writings of these influential Baptists declare their adherence to the Church Succession view. The absence of contention surrounding their stated views

implies this belief was held by the majority of the Baptist churches with whom they were connected. However, a great dispute is found in Baptist history where a new philosophy regarding Baptist origins emerged. This noteworthy conflict is referred to as the Whitsitt Controversy.

The Whitsitt Controversy is named for Dr. William H. Whitsitt (1841-1911), former President and Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky. The controversy began in 1895 while Dr. Whitsitt was president of the seminary. In this year, Dr. Whitsitt wrote an article for Johnson's Cyclopaedia. In the article, he presented the notion that immersion was first introduced among the Baptists of England in 1641, thus denying the Church Succession View. Shortly after the publication of this article, Dr. John T. Christian discovered that Dr. Whitsitt had anonymously written a series of articles for the New York Independent, a Protestant journal, expressing the same views. The following year large numbers of Old-Time Baptists began to attack Dr. Whitsitt's previously stated views, and so began the Whitsitt Controversy.

Once the erroneous views of Dr. Whitsitt came to light, many of the Baptists began to question the ideology of the Louisville seminary, where he was then president. This is evident by the actions taken in the many of the Baptist associations. In the 1896 session of the Enon Association, a Middle Tennessee Baptist association, the following resolution was passed: "We denounce the course Dr. Wittsett [sic] has taken, and recommend our young brethren to keep out of the Theological Seminary at Louisville, Ky., till he is replaced with one who is sound in the faith." It is evident from this resolution that the Enon Association considered Dr. Whitsitt's views on the origins of the Baptists unsound. Further, it can be inferred that they recognized the danger in sending their young preachers to a seminary where such views were held or taught.

The Baptists of Middle Tennessee were not alone in their concerns over the views of Dr. Whitsitt and his position in the seminary. According to E. G. Hinson's Arkansas Baptist history, in the same year, the Arkansas State Convention "expressed outrage about Whitsitt's method and teaching and appealed to the Board of Trustees of Southern Seminary in Louisville to remove the existing difficulties or secure Dr. Whitsitt's resignation or removal." (A History of the Baptists in Arkansas, 146)

In 1897, the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky made resolution to "urge, insist upon and vote for the retirement of Doctor Whitsitt" by the trustees of the seminary. The reason for the resolution was that Dr. Whitsitt's views and teachings were "out of touch and harmony with the denomination." After the trustees decided to retain Dr. Whitsitt as president and professor of the seminary, the General Association in 1898 adopted the following resolution:

*Resolved, (1) That the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary shall not be allowed to make any report nor present any appeals of any sort whatever to this body so long as Doctor Whitsitt shall be in any manner connected with the institution. (2) That if Doctor Whitsitt's connection with the seminary has not ceased at the time of the next session of the Southern Baptist Convention, we urge that body to adopt, as the only means of preserving its unity, the resolutions proposed by Dr. B. H. Carroll, of Texas, whereby the convention shall dissolve the bond of connection between that body and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. (Kentucky Baptist History, 1770...1922, W. D. Nowlin, 152)*

While time would fail to share all the information available on this controversy, it is apparent from the limited information provided that great numbers of Baptists considered the Church Succession doctrine a fundamental one and considered Dr. Whitsitt's doctrine regarding our origins as unacceptable and worth of censure. They were only satisfied when the Board of Trustees of the Louisville seminary accepted his resignation. Upon this action, the controversy came to a close in the Spring of 1899.

The Church Succession view is among the landmarks of our Baptist heritage. Our fathers believed and taught that the Baptist churches originate from the days of Christ's personal ministry and not from the Protestant Reformation. As new views were introduced, the Old-Time Baptists vehemently opposed such views, considering them unsound and contrary to the scriptures. Let us mark well the boundaries of our Baptist heritage and remove not the old landmarks which our fathers have set.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Please address all communications by mail to:

The Baptist Landmark  
c/o Britt Little  
P. O. Box 392

Westmoreland, TN 37186

-OR-

By email to: hblittle21@gmail.com