

THE BAPTIST LANDMARK

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

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BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT

by H. B. Little

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a topic which is often misunderstood. It is commonly believed that baptism of the Holy Ghost is one of the blessings received upon obtaining salvation. In other words, many believe that a person is baptized with the Holy Ghost upon belief of the gospel. When one holds this view regarding the baptism of the Spirit, it can lead to a misunderstanding of several scriptures.

Let us consider 1 Corinthians, Chapter 12. In this chapter, Paul wrote to the church about being of one mind. Also, he taught that every member has a work to do within the church. Further, he taught that each person's specific work does not affect their status within the church. In other words, the church is made up of equal members. In expressing the reason for unity and equality, Paul writes, "For by one Spirit are we all 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." 1 Co 12:13

When one holds that baptism of the Spirit is bestowed in soul salvation, the obvious interpretation of "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" is that one enters the church, which is the body of Christ (Col. 1:24), upon belief. This implies then that there exists an invisible universal church made up of all believers. Conversely, if baptism of the Spirit is not obtained upon believing to the saving of the soul, 1 Co 12:13 does not imply that a person is saved into some universal church. Seeing that the nature of the New Testament Church and the means by which one enters this church depends on the scriptural teaching of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, let us consider "what saith the scripture" on the matter.

The first mention of the baptism of the Spirit can be found in the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew records the history of the forerunner of Christ, John the Baptist. This John was he of which Malachi foretold, "I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me..."

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THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

by M. A. Brawner

The doctrine of the Universal Invisible Church was made popular by Martin Luther (founder of the Lutheran denomination) during the early days of the Protestant Reformation. Other reformers also adopted it in order to combat the equally erroneous doctrine of the Universal VISIBLE Church held by the Catholics. When Catholicism implemented the office of pope as its head and became the state religion of the Roman Empire, the 1,260 years of the dark ages commenced. This union of church and state made it illegal to hold any doctrine or belief, whether religious or secular, contrary to those of the Catholic church. This made what a person believed religiously also a political matter. The doctrine of the Universal Invisible Church was part of the teachings used by the reformers during the last part of the dark ages to challenge and overcome the teachings of Catholicism in many countries. Historically speaking, this teaching was adopted not only for religious but also for political purposes.

Some may wonder why it is important to consider this teaching at all. It is important for many reasons. First and foremost, this doctrine is against the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ found in the Bible. So then, to teach this theory of the Church is to be at odds with the teachings of the Head of the true Church. In addition to this, it would be nearly, if not totally, impossible to find a Study Bible that fails to promote the Universal Invisible Church theory. This means that the Study Bibles sitting in many homes at this very moment contain this anti-scriptural teaching. A child who was honestly wanting to know what the Bible teaches about the Church that the Lord established could pick up one of these Study Bibles, read what it says about the Universal Invisible Church, and walk away believing a heresy. Though many prominent people have exalted this theory to a position of honor for serving what they view as an important purpose in combating Catholic teachings, the doctrine is contrary to the teachings of

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LIKE FAITH AND ORDER

by B. W. Carver

A phrase that is commonly heard among Missionary Baptist churches is "like faith and order." Among our churches when an opportunity for new members is given, the Pastor will elaborate on methods of receiving members. This includes experience and baptism, letter or credit of a letter, and restoration.

Let us examine these briefly. Experience and baptism is reserved for those born again who have never united with an old-fashioned Missionary Baptist Church. Upon giving their experience, being received, and baptized, this person becomes a member of the church to whom they have presented themselves.

Next, let us address restoration. From time to time, the need arises for a church to exclude a member from her membership. We will not address the various reasons for exclusion in this article, but only reference that if a member has been excluded from a church, he or she can present himself to that church to be restored to the full fellowship of the body.

When considering membership by letter or credit of a letter, we need to examine the phrase "like faith and order". This is sometimes referred to as "similar faith and order". It is a test applied to other churches to help determine their soundness and eligibility for fellowship. In this study, fellowship means granting and receiving letters, observance of church ordinances and pulpit affiliation. This phrase does not appear verbatim in the Bible, but its essence is there. Christ speaking in Matthew 7:15 said, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." We are warned to be cautious in our endorsements to preserve His doctrine.

The definition of *like* is "in the same manner." Like infers a comparison between two things – in this case, the faith and order of churches. Thus, the question should be raised: "Is the faith and order of the church in question the

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same or different from our own?" On the points of faith and order, the two should be the same.

Faith is "a system of doctrines or teachings believed or practiced." As this definition states faith is a system of doctrines, it is important to note this system is our fundamental doctrines. *Order* is "a regular government or discipline." Order is the mode or manner of practice.

In considering the meaning of like faith and order as pertaining to churches, it means that two or more churches teach, preach, and practice the same system of doctrine. Without there being like faith and order among churches, there can neither be harmony nor fellowship among churches. Amos 3:3, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Paul writing in I Corinthians 14:33 states, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." It is God's will that all churches preach, teach, and practice the very same doctrine. There has always been, and I presume always will be, disagreements among our brethren. One example is the millennial reign. In examining this subject matter, it is the fundamental doctrines that must be the same. I Corinthians 4:17, Paul writes, "For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church." In writing to the church in Philippians 3:16, he writes, "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." Without there being unity in doctrine, there will be confusion, strife, and heresy.

True churches are identified by preaching, teaching, and practicing the doctrines of the Holy Writ. According to Ephesians 4:5, there is "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism." Therefore, any organization operating outside this one faith is alien to the Lord and not recognized as a church of like faith and order to one of the Lord's true churches. The reason there are so many religious organizations and denominations in the world today is because man did not want to abide in the one faith given in the scriptures.

Fundamental doctrines have been referenced throughout, so let us examine

more closely "those things which are most surely believed among us."

Salvation is by grace thru repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ without any works. Paul writing in Ephesians 2:8-9 states, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper are the only two ordinances of the church, neither possessing any power to save the soul. Romans 6:3-4 states, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 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." In Galatians 3:26-27 Paul writes, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

Christ is the Head and only lawgiver of the church which He set up during His earthly ministry and purchased with His own blood. Ephesians 1:22-23, "And hath put all things under his feet, and give him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." The apostle Paul in Acts 20:28 to the elders at Ephesus spoke these words, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

Elders and deacons are the only ordained officers of the church, they are servants of the church and not rulers. I Timothy 3 provides the qualifications of a bishop and the qualifications of a deacon. Men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom were appointed in Acts 6 to serve tables, so the twelve should not leave the word of God.

The government of the church is a pure democracy that executes the laws given to the church in the Holy Scriptures and never legislates new laws. Paul writing in II Timothy 3:16 states that "All scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness..." Each church is an independent body of Christ and has no authority over any other church.

A church must be organized under the authority of an existing church, according to the New Testament. We read in Acts 13 & 14 where the Church labored with God by following the leadership of the Holy Spirit. First, the Lord led two members from the Church at Antioch to carry the gospel on the mission field. These brethren were ordained by the church at Antioch for this work. They went forth preaching the gospel in the regions where the Holy Spirit directed them. Many were born again and were baptized. Brethren were ordained in each of these young churches. Finally, these newly organized churches were commended to the Lord to continue the work as independent churches.

Although there are many other doctrines in the Bible that are needful for churches to abide by, a departure from any of these fundamental doctrines would be a serious departure from the faith and order given to the church by our Savior.

A QUESTION FROM THE PAST

by H. B. Little

In the last few years, I have taken a particular interest in the histories of early Baptist associations. It becomes apparent while reading associational minutes that the associations were often consulted when difficulties arose within a particular church or group of churches. In this way, the association often acted as an advisory council, much like the meeting of the Jerusalem Church and the messengers of the Antioch Church, as recorded by Luke in Acts Chapter 15.

From the questions asked during the associational meetings and the corresponding answers provided by the association, one can get a sense of the struggles within a church, or churches, and the doctrine and practice held by the same for a given period in history.

A question recorded in the minutes of an early Virginia Baptist association provides insight into early church fellowship. The question posed to the association, held in 1771, is recorded in "History of the Baptists in Virginia" by R. B. Semple.

A query from Amelia church, viz.: What are the terms of communion fixed in the Word of God? Answered. Fellowship in the same faith and order. (pg. 73)

From this, one can conclude that church fellowship based on similar doctrine and practice is an old-time Baptist distinctive.

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scripture, making it one of the most widely held heresies taught in the world today.

So what does this theory teach? The Universal Invisible Church theory suggests that there is NO distinction between the state of being born again and the state of being in the New Testament Church. It presents that the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing a person into the family of God is the same work of the Holy Spirit to bring a person into the Church. To get to this idea, some popular teachers suggest that the new birth is actually the baptism of the Spirit. In some way, these teachers have tied a doctrine depicting "life" - the new birth, to a doctrine depicting "death" - the burial in baptism. Regardless of how anyone gets to this point, what the Bible teaches regarding the distinction between being born again but outside the Church and being born again then joined to the Church will be addressed here.

Let's first present a basic belief established in the Bible. A basic belief taught in the Bible is that mankind has been born again by the same principle ever since there has been a lost man on the earth. This is to say, God has always forgiven sins by grace through faith and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God. Whether the Bible is teaching Abraham's reception of grace without works in Romans Chapter 4 or is reminding Church members in Ephesus how they were saved by grace without works in Ephesians Chapter 2, the Bible is documenting the same plan of soul salvation throughout the history of fallen man. Therefore, it is understood that people all down through time have and will be born again by the same principle: by grace through faith without any works on their part at all.

Biblical history reveals that Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden some 4,000 years before the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. This same history also helps us to understand that the New Testament Church was organized by the Lord around 30 years after His birth. This places around 4,030 years between the time when men started to be saved and the time there was a true Church that they could enter. This fact alone makes it apparent that soul salvation fails to place a person into the Church set up by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Someone might read through Acts Chapter 7 and find a reference to "the Church in the wilderness" in verse 38. There are those who look at that verse and conclude there was a Church, just like the Lord's Church today, in existence before the Lord entered the world through the virgin birth. They think that maybe people who were born again during those days were entering it. We need to take time to notice when this "Church in the wilderness" existed and what it actually was in order to clear up this confusion.

This verse in Acts is referring to the Old Testament congregation who God assembled under Moses as they departed from captivity in Egypt. This congregation was assembled around the year 1,490 before the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. These people were brought to Mount Sinai and entered into a covenant relationship with God. By doing so, they agreed to be His people and serve Him up to the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this way, this group of people who were in a covenant relationship with God were a type or foreshadow of the true Church the Lord would establish. As anyone knows, the shadow of anything cannot be the actual thing making the shadow. Also, notice that this organization came into existence in or around 1,490 B.C. while men were being saved since about 4,000 B.C. This places 2,500 years in between where people were being born again by grace through faith. It is simply beyond reason to conclude that somehow the "Church in the wilderness" discussed in Acts Chapter 7 justifies a belief that the new birth places a person in the either the foreshadow of the true Church setup by Moses or the Church the Lord established during His personal ministry.

We also see a distinction between being born again and entering the Lord's Church by noticing a distinction between the Lord entering a person and a person entering the Lord. For example, we notice a number of verses teaching that a child of God is someone who has the Lord in them. As a matter of fact, the scriptures point out that anyone who fails to have the Lord in them is none of His. Consider Gal 3:20; Gal 4:6; 1 John 3:24; and Rom 8:9 to verify this point. However, the Bible also teaches that a person who has already been born again enters the Lord's body, which is His Church, by baptism. This is to say that a born again person outside the Church is outside of Christ.

But, conversely, a born again person who has been scripturally baptized into the Church is considered in Christ. This is as simple as water. Anyone can tell the difference between water being inside of them and them being in water. Consider John 4:1 which shows people were already disciples before they were baptized; Rom 6:4 which shows people are with Christ as they are being baptized rather than being baptized to be with Him; and Gal 3:27 which follows verse 26 shows just exactly what John 4:1 teaches, i.e. a person is already a child of God before they put Christ on the outside by baptism and if Christ is on the outside, the person must be inside of Him.

May God help us to hold the truth regarding the nature of the Lord's true Church while revealing the many errors of the widely held Universal Invisible Church, so called.

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

This issue concludes the second volume of The Baptist Landmark. Our prayer to God is that this work has been a blessing to you our readers and has been beneficial to the cause of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

When the Lord placed this work upon our hearts, we did not fully realize the efforts that would be required in producing this paper. However, we have found the Lord again faithful to help us with that which He calls upon us to do. We are very much thankful for His divine aid.

This work is made possible by a continued supply of articles from a few brethren. I know they, and I, desire your prayers as we set before you future articles as God places them on our hearts. This work is also greatly aided by those who work behind the scenes in many different ways. The burden of this effort is further lightened by the prayers and financial support of many. We thank you all.

We have been pleasantly surprised with the reception of this work. The circulation of this paper has exceeded our expectations. This success is due, in part, to those who have requested copies and delivered them into new fields. We trust the Lord shall not forget your efforts and pray that He will bless you for them.

May God bless you all,

Bro. Britt Little

BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT

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Gabriel expounded upon this prophecy saying that John should “make ready a people prepared for the Lord”, Luke 1:17. Gabriel explained to Elizabeth, John’s mother, that John would prepare the way by making disciples ready to follow Christ at His first advent.

As John performed his work as harbinger, he preached in the wilderness. Matthew provides a sample of his preaching. In Mat. 3:1-2, he writes “In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Luke gives additional detail on the doctrine that John taught as he prepared a people for the Lord. In Acts 19:4, Luke writes, “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.”

From these two passages, it is apparent that John kept back nothing profitable to his countrymen but preached the same message that Paul preached to the Ephesians: “repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” Acts 20:21. In this way, John was preparing a people for the Lord. In addition to preaching the gospel, John baptized those who would “bring forth...fruits worthy of repentance”, Luke 3:8, and had not confidence in their own righteousness. In other words, John required all he baptized to supply evidence of a penitent faith, a saving faith. Considering John’s preaching and the strict prerequisite of his baptism, one can conclude that John would reasonably assume that those baptized by him were among the saved.

It is to this people, saved people, that John preached concerning the baptism of the Holy Ghost. In Mat 3:11, the apostle writes, “I indeed 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”. One should note the audience mentioned in the passage. John is evidently speaking to those whom he had baptized or would baptize. This could include none but those he supposed to be true believers. Yet, when he speaks of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, he says Christ “shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost”. In the simplest of language, he implies that the people

prepared by him for the Lord were saved but not yet baptized with the Spirit.

Upon examining John’s message in Matthew within the context of the rest of the Bible, one must conclude that all the saved are not baptized with the Holy Ghost or that John was mistaken about the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The later would be a foolish conclusion considering the praise heaped upon John by the Savior: “For John came unto you in the way of righteousness”, Mat. 21:32 and “Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist”, Mat. 11:11. John’s preaching on the matter was the truth. As such, a person is not baptized with the Spirit upon exercising a saving faith.

If a person is not baptized with the Holy Ghost upon believing, what should be understood about this baptism? Let us consider the words of our Savior on the matter. The Lord Jesus after His resurrection showed Himself alive and was with His disciples for forty days. Prior to His ascension, He promised the baptism of the Spirit to His holy apostles. One should note that these apostles were baptized by John; see Acts 1:22. Luke writes of Christ’s promise, “And, being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith He*, ye have heard of Me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.” Acts 1:4-5. Again, it is evident by “ye shall be baptized” that the apostles were, at that time, yet unbaptized by the Holy Ghost. These men had been ordained by the Lord. They preached the gospel of the kingdom, baptized by Christ’s authority, and performed many miraculous works during the Lord’s earthly ministry. These facts are further proof that the baptism of the Holy Ghost is not a blessing which accompanies salvation.

However, the Lord taught the apostles prior to His ascension that they would be baptized “not many days hence”, or in a few days. The Savior on the same occasion provided additional detail about this baptism of the Spirit. In Acts 1:8, He referred to it as “receiving power after the Holy Ghost is come upon you.” Luke alludes to this same occasion in his gospel. He records the words of the Lord, “And, behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of

Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.” Luke 24:49. From these scriptures one can ascertain both the time and place of the promised Holy Ghost baptism: in the days closely following Christ’s ascension and at Jerusalem.

The fulfilling of the promise is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. In Chapter 2, while the church waited at Jerusalem for the promise, Christ baptized them with the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. On the occasion, Peter remarked, “This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.” Acts 2:32-33. It was this church which received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and not any individual believer.

In conclusion, the baptism of the Holy Ghost is not a blessing received upon belief in the Lord. While all true believers obtain witness from the Spirit of sins forgiven, the baptism of the Spirit was an event in the history of the early church. The Church at Jerusalem received the promise of the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, on the day of Pentecost at Jerusalem. This was the promised baptism of the Spirit. This Spirit remains in the churches today. This is not the result of individual baptisms by the Holy Ghost, but by regular succession of visible churches from the one baptized at Jerusalem. As such, “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body” cannot teach the existence of a universal, invisible church consisting of all the saved. All who hold and teach this erroneous doctrine should seek another interpretation.

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