

THE BAPTIST LANDMARK

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

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SAVE OR SHOW?

by H. B. Little

Baptists understand that we are saved by a cordial, penitent faith in Christ. We are not saved by works of righteousness. We are not saved by our religion. We are not saved by religious rituals. Everyone does not have this same understanding. Everyone has not come to savingly trust in Jesus our Lord. Some teach and others are taught that salvation comes by religious rituals—what one might call ordinances. Paul referred to such people as *deceiving, and being deceived*. 2 Ti 3:13.

Let's consider a few examples from the Bible. If ordinances save, it will be evident in scripture. If they are symbols—if they show us some spiritual truth—that will be apparent also.

Let's consider circumcision. It was given to Abraham after God had called him from his homeland of Ur into the land of Canaan. God commanded Abraham, and every male among his people, to be circumcised. For what purpose was it given? Did it save? Or did it show? Paul answers this question. He says Abraham “received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised.” Rom 4:11. Was righteousness imparted to Abraham by circumcision? Was he made right with God by it? No. He was righteous when he received it. That righteousness was a *sign*. It was a *seal* of his righteousness. Circumcision showed his righteousness. It did not obtain it. His faith obtained it.

Let's consider the sin offerings of the Old Testament. The priests sacrificed the sin offerings *for atonement*. Exo 29:36. Atonement means to reconcile. Did Israel obtain the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation by these offerings? Did the blood of bulls and goats actually take away their sins? Paul answers this question. He says, “it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.” Heb 10:4. Why then did God command them to be offered? Paul answers this question too. He says the Holy Ghost was *signifying*—showing—the

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BAPTISTS AND PROTESTANTS

by M. A. Brawner

There was a period of time in United States history when the teachings of Protestantism attempted a total take over of true Baptist Churches. Many who wore the Baptist name left the ranks of the Lord's Churches to join in among Protestants. More Baptists adopted the teachings of Protestantism to the extent they became merely BINOs, “Baptist In Name Only.” In our day, the teachings of Protestantism are still on the march seeking true Baptist Churches to convert to their side or at least to weaken their doctrine to the point that the name on their signs mean nothing. Let's review a period of history where this trend was rampant and how Baptist Churches remained true to the Lord in this time of trial and temptation.

In 1788, the Constitution of the United States was ratified. The Constitution, in its original form, lacked the tenants which guaranteed citizens their basic rights. Accordingly, the Bill of Rights was proposed in 1789 and ratified in 1791. Of course, one of the key rights contained in this document is the Freedom of Religion. The First Amendment states that, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” This codified freedom provided something on a national level for the Lord's people they had never experienced. The Churches the Lord had established had followed Him for nearly 2,000 years through some of the most severe trials imposed on any people. These trials came mainly at the hands of pseudo churches joined in unholy union with State Government. However, in 1791, a new day had dawned for the Lord's people making up His Church. When the trials were lifted, how would they respond in an atmosphere of freedom?

Students of the Bible will recall how God warned the children of Israel about tolerating the false religions of the people who lived around them. They were even cautioned to avoid allowing their sons to marry their daughters and their daughters

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GHANA UPDATE

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I pray this letter finds you well and prospering in the Lord. I am writing to inform you about the mission work in Ghana, West Africa. By the Lord's mercy I have had the privilege to preach among the churches and missions in Ghana for the last two years. I would like to take a moment to give an overview of some of the work that's taking place there.

There are five Missionary Baptist churches in Ghana, with Mt. Zion being the oldest. Mt. Zion was organized in 1997 through the efforts of Bro. Paul Bryson. There have since been four other churches organized. They are New Covenant MBC, Ebenezer MBC, Trinity MBC, and Faith MBC. There are also eleven missions. The churches there are very mission minded. Travel is hard in Ghana due to road conditions and expense, so people can't travel to church as easy as we can here. The missions fill an important role in their communities by providing easier access to the Gospel.

In recent years, Mt. Zion MBC has hosted an annual Pastors and Deacons Conference as well as a Youth Conference. The Pastors and Deacons Conference gives an opportunity for preachers and deacons from various churches to come together for three days to study church doctrine. The Youth Conference consists of older teens and young adults. It gives an opportunity for the youth from various churches and missions to study and learn doctrine in a group setting. There is a mixture of saved and lost who attend the Youth Conference. It has been a blessing to teach and preach at both conferences for the last two years. I'm always impressed with the level of interest and depth of questions that get asked. They are surrounded by Pentecostals so a lot of the questions pertain to the gifts of the Spirit and church practices. We've also had the privilege to visit with and hold effort meetings at the various churches and missions. It isn't uncommon to have as many as 25 mourners around the

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SAVE OR SHOW?

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true way, which is Christ. Heb 9:8. He says it was a *figure*. Heb 9:9. The sin offering showed the way of atonement. It did not obtain atonement.

Let's consider the offerings for cleansing. The priests offered a sacrifice for a leper *in the day of his cleansing*. Lev 14:2. Did the leper obtain cleansing by the offering? Or was the offering to show his cleansing? The offering was made after he was cleansed. The Lord Jesus made this very clear when he cleansed a leper in Galilee. The man came to the Lord begging for cleansing from his illness. The Lord cleansed him, saying "be thou clean." Mat 8:3. *Immediately* he was cleansed. Mat 8:3. Then the Lord commanded that he go to the priest and offer *for* his cleansing as Moses commanded *for a testimony*. Mark 1:44. The offering showed the man was clean. It did not make him clean. His cleansing was by faith.

Let's consider the baptism of John. The Baptist himself tells us his mission, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance." Mat 3:11. The Greek word translated here as *unto* is often translated to *for*. So John baptized for repentance. Did he baptize to procure repentance through the ordinance? John baptized only those who presented evidence of repentance. He made this requirement clear when the self-righteous came to his baptism. He commanded them to *bring forth fruits [evidence] worthy of repentance*. Luke 3:8. John's baptism was for the penitent. His baptism showed their repentance. It did not make the baptized person a penitent.

Let's consider the Lord's Supper. It is an ordinance of the New Testament church. Is it a saving ordinance? Or does it show? Paul gives us the account of its institution. In 1 Co 11:23-26, he says:

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as

often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

The Lord said the bread was His body. He said the cup was His blood. When we eat and drink, are we actually consuming His body and blood? We know that we do not! The bread and the cup merely symbolize the Savior's body and blood. Does Paul say that we secure to ourselves the blessings provided by the Savior's death by eating and drinking? Absolutely not! He says our eating and drinking *shows* the Lord's death.

Let's consider Christian baptism. Do all the ordinances show except this one? Certainly not! Those who teach baptismal salvation hang a lot of their theology on *baptism...for the remission of sins*, Acts 2:38. Does this *for* mean *in order to obtain*? It no more means *in order to obtain* than it did for the leper who *offered for his cleansing*. He was clean, then he offered to show. Paul said we are *baptized for the dead*, 1 Co 15:29, as he taught on the resurrection. Are we baptized in order to obtain the dead? Such an interpretation is nonsense. We are baptized with reference to the dead. Baptism *shows* the death, burial, and resurrection of the Savior. It *shows* our death to sin and our being raised to walk in newness of life. Rom 6:4. We are dead to sin by faith, and buried in baptism to show that death.

The ordinances show. They do not save. They never have. They never will. The gospel message has been the same in every age. Peter tells us plainly, in Acts 10:43:

To [Jesus] give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.

The ordinances of the Old Testament pointed toward Him that would redeem them. The ordinances of the New Testament look back at Him who has redeemed us.

CORRESPONDENCE

Please address all correspondence to:

The Baptist Landmark
P. O. Box 392
Westmoreland, TN 37186

-OR-

hblittle@thebaptistlandmark.com**WHAT IS THE KINGDOM?**

by M. A. Brawner

History records that those who taught the world to believe that saved people enter the Church at the very moment they are born again have captured the attention of the masses. It is rare to find a religious writing, including Study Bibles, that teaches anything other than that soul salvation is the way a person enters the Church. This doctrine has caused many to assume that salvation must also put a person in the Lord's Kingdom when they are born again. Then, if a person so sins as to lose their inheritance in the Kingdom, they must also have lost their salvation. However, knowing that salvation is eternal, the sincere christian seeking the truth asks, "What is the Kingdom?" Let's consider the answer to this question.

Before getting to this answer, in light of what was addressed in the first paragraph, let's be clear on what the Word of God actually teaches. First, when a person is truly born again, they enter the Family of God. It is the inner man that is born of the Holy Spirit, sealed until the day of redemption, and kept by the power of God. The Word of God is clear that the born again part is unable to sin and; therefore, is beyond the state where it could be finally lost and go off into hell. The Church, on the other hand, was established by the Lord Jesus Christ during His personal ministry after over 4,000 years of human history had elapsed. Though the lost were able to enter the Family of God during that long period of time, they were unable to enter His Church simply because He had yet to establish it. Once He organized His Church, those who have truly been born again may enter it through the baptism which only it can administer. So then, salvation places a person into the Family of God but baptism places a child of God into the Church.

Sometimes, confusion arises when we read in some places of the "Kingdom of Heaven" but in other places of the "Kingdom of God." Rest assured that the vast majority of places in the New Testament where the "Kingdom" is taught, it referring to the same place. Yet to demonstrate how this applies to the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven, a few verses will be shared for comparison's sake.

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WHAT IS THE KINGDOM?

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First, notice what is documented about John the Baptist in the books of Matthew and Luke: "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." Mat 11:11. Notice that John, though a saved person who baptized the Lord, was outside the Kingdom of HEAVEN. "For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." Luke 7:28. Once again, John was a saved person but was outside the Kingdom of GOD. In this we learn that John prepared born again people whom the Lord would use to setup His Church. The Lord setup His Church rather than John. In both Matthew and Luke, the phrases "Kingdom of Heaven" and "Kingdom of God" are referring to the same place. Neither of these are where a person enters when they are born again, or John would have been part of them.

Let's consider another example. "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Mat 4:17. Notice that the Lord was preaching His own gospel. In this message He was declaring to people that the "Kingdom of Heaven" was at hand. This Kingdom that Daniel had spoken of (Dan 2:44) was close at hand. Now, let's see how this is documented in Mark. "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." Mark 1:14-15. In this place, we find the same message declared by the Lord as documented in Mark. Here, the same Kingdom is referred to as the "Kingdom of God." When you compare both of these declarations of the Lord, it is apparent He is referring to the same Kingdom. In Matthew, it is referred to as the Kingdom of Heaven while in Mark it is referred to as the Kingdom of God.

As we study our Bibles, it becomes apparent that we find the phrase Kingdom of Heaven used in the book of Matthew. Even though this might lead us to believe the Word of God is teaching us about two distinct places, considering the

comparisons above, we draw a much different conclusion. Without extensive explanation, consider a few more comparisons.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Mat 5:3. Compared to, "And He lifted up His eyes on His disciples, and said, blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God." Luke 6:20.

"He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." Mat 13:11. Compared to, "And He said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand." Luke 8:10.

"And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Mat 18:3-4. Compared to, "But when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased, and said unto them, suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." Mark 10:14-15. As a note, pay attention that in Matthew 18:3, the Lord said something had to happen BEFORE a person could enter the Kingdom. What did He say that was? See how He points out that a person must be converted FIRST, become as a little child, then they can enter the Kingdom? The fact is, many saved people reject joining the Lord's Church Kingdom through basic pride.

Let's end by being clear. When the Lord established His Church, He also setup the Kingdom spoken of by Daniel. The Lord gave the keys to the Kingdom to His Church. It is His Church whom He left with the authority to bind and loose into His Kingdom. This is not a matter of binding and loosing salvation. It is a matter of binding and loosing members in the Kingdom. As the United States has embassies all over the world authorized to do their business, the Lord has His Churches as embassies for His Kingdom here in the world authorized to conduct His work in His name until He returns.

RECORDINGS

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J. N. HALL ON A CONVERTED MEMBERSHIP

J. N. Hall (1849-1905) was a Baptist preacher who did much for our landmark churches. He was an avid debater and author. For a while, he was the editor of The Baptist Flag of St. Louis, Missouri. It was there that he wrote the following:

The doctrine of a converted church membership is the polar star of Baptist faith. On this pillar we can build the doctrine of the security of the believer, an experience of grace, a joyful religion, a symbolic baptism and supper, a congregational equality in church government, and all the characteristic doctrines of Baptist faith. A concerted church membership gives love to God, obedience to Christ, and a genuine fellowship of the brethren.

On this matter, Bro. Hall wrote wisely. I am reminded of Nicodemus who came to the Savior to inquire about the Kingdom of God. The man was a doctor of the law—a master in Israel. Yet for all his learning, he was unable to comprehend the basic tenets of the gospel. The Lord lovingly told the man, *you must be born again.* John 3:7. And again, *except a man be born again, he cannot see [perceive] the Kingdom of God.* John 3:3.

Principles do not change. As they were two millennia ago, and a century ago, so they are today. As true Baptist people, we *speak that we do know.* John 3:11. We have an experimental knowledge of the things of God. We have the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. We have these things because we have truly been converted. When we leave off the true conversion of sinners, *the polar star of Baptist faith*, we are destined to lose our way. —HBL

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to marry their sons. If such entanglements were allowed, it would result in the people of Israel adopting the false religions of these people. In the end, God would be required to raise His hand in judgment when they accepted religious practice that God had identified. Regrettably, the Baptists in the United States fared little better than the children of Israel.

In order to capture the history of what unfolded during the early years of the country in the life of Baptists, three men who wrote of this period will be referenced. The first is Jesse Mercer. He was born in 1769. His work was mainly in the state of Georgia. By all accounts, he was one of the leading Baptist pastors in Georgia during his lifetime. The second is J. R. Graves. He was born in 1820. Brother Graves worked mainly in the state of Tennessee. He was also a leader among Baptists and wrote many books such as the *Old Landmarkism*, *What Is It*, *The Seven Dispensations*, and *The First Baptist Church in America*. The third is D. B. Ray. He was born in 1830. He worked in Western Tennessee and Kentucky during his early ministry and in Missouri for the rest. He was likewise a leader publishing such works as the well known *Baptist Succession*. These were men who had their names recorded in history for battling the teachings of Protestantism, but let us never forget that the Lord had many faithful soldiers in this battle who history never acknowledged. We thank God for these unrecognized brethren knowing that such as these helped many of the true Baptist Churches so that we could be members of them in our day.

To see the impact that the teachings of Protestantism had on the Lord's people in the early days of their new found freedom, we will reference a report that J. R. Graves wrote. As editor of a popular weekly newspaper called *The Baptist*, he had access to an extensive amount of information related to the beliefs and practices of the Churches of that day. He pointed out how Protestantism had been allowed to invade the ranks of Baptists. He noted that trends among the Baptists started the first part of the nineteenth century, in 1800. To varying degrees, Baptists were sharing pulpits with Protestants, accepting their baptisms as scriptural, inviting them to the Lord's

table, and seating with them in ordinations (*Old Landmarkism*, reprinted by the Bogard Press, page 16). The practice was more common in Northern States than in the South, but the acceptance was widespread.

Brethren such as Mercer, Graves, and Ray worked tirelessly on behalf of the Lord's cause in His Churches to call attention to the errors of Protestantism and point out the right ways of God. An extensive catalog of the details of their teachings would make for a valuable study; however, only a brief overview is all that space allows here. Consider a few of the teachings these men held in common and taught to fend off the onslaught of error.

Concerning baptism, Jesse Mercer pointed out that, "Only the baptism administered by true Churches who descended through the ages of time and still maintain the gospel order is valid." Brother Graves stated, "Baptism was entrusted to the true Baptist Church as the method whereby born again people are brought into it." Brother Ray taught, "The right to administer baptism had been entrusted solely to the Church."

Of the ordained ministry, Graves taught, "The Church is to preserve the doctrine of a divinely called and scripturally qualified and ordained ministry to proclaim the gospel and administer the ordinances under the direction of the local Church." Brother Mercer stated, "Only ordinations performed by a true Church are valid while such as are performed by churches which are out of gospel order cannot be recognized as such."

Regarding the history of the Lord's Church, Brother Ray stated, "True Baptist Churches can be traced down through history by the beliefs and practices they held rather than by any particular name explaining the nature of the Baptist Succession." Graves pointed out, "The Church is to perpetuate the doctrine of the divine origin and sanctity of the churches of Christ, and unbroken continuity of Christ's Kingdom 'from the days of John the Baptist until now'." Mercer showed, "The Church will continue in an unbroken lineage down to the return of the Lord."

After thirty-four years of teaching such doctrines as these, the landscape of Baptist life had improved. In 1880, as editor of *The Baptist*, Brother Graves noted positive changes in the practice

among Baptists in the South and the North. He found only one of sixteen weekly newspapers in the South that would endorse either alien immersion or pulpit affiliation. More than that, he found no association in all of the South that would endorse alien immersion. The erroneous teachings of Protestantism had been fought off and true Churches persevered.

The Lord's Churches remain exposed to the teachings of Protestantism in this day. Through many avenues, this wolf in sheep's clothing offers a peaceful union to the Lord's Churches. It seeks to supplant such teachings as those presented here. Let the members of true Churches learn from the past and continue on in those things which we have received and been assured of, 2 Tim 3:14.

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altar floor. It's reminiscent of days gone by in our churches here in the U.S.

Concerning the economy in Ghana, it is ranked as a third world country. The average annual income in Ghana is only \$2,400. The majority of people live very modest lives. The churches and missions very much depend on financial help from the churches in the U.S. The support is used in large part for construction and maintenance of properties, travel expenses for preachers who preach at the missions, radio broadcasts, the annual conferences (for travel to the conference, mattress rental for those who stay on church grounds for the week, food enough for three meals per day per person, etc), and relief for the needy.

Union MBC, in Lafayette, Tennessee, has recently established a Ghana Mission Fund. The fund will be used to support the churches and missions in Ghana as well as travel expenses for preachers who travel to Ghana from the U.S. It's Union MBC's desire to see the churches in Ghana established in the faith of our forefathers and prospering in the work of our Lord and Savior. Donations can be sent to:

Union MBC
2179 Hwy 31E
Gallatin, TN 37066

Please continue to pray for the work in Ghana as well as all of the Lord's churches worldwide.

May God richly bless you all,

Bro. Kevin Slayton