

THE BAPTIST LANDMARK

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

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BAPTIST ORIGINS

by H. B. Little

The origin of the Baptists has been a topic on which much has been written. Many valuable histories have been written by learned and honest men. In their pages, the Baptists of today can read about the trials and triumphs of the Baptist people. This people, at times, were called different names by their enemies yet practiced as Baptists do today. While the author intends to focus on history written by fallible men, the surest witness of Baptist origins is found in the Holy Scriptures. The prophets, the Savior, and the apostles all foretold of the continuation of the church kingdom from its inception at Jerusalem to the end of the world. As the word of God is forever settled, so should our minds be settled on Baptist origins. In all ages, Baptist churches have been present, abstaining from heretical doctrines and practices, bringing glory to God.

The scriptures teach Baptist succession. As the scriptures “cannot be broken,” John 10:35, evidence of Baptist succession should be found among the honest annals of ecclesiastical history. Many Baptist historians have gleaned these histories and provided for subsequent generations much evidence supporting our ancient origins and succession back to the days of the apostles. Unfortunately, the world, acting under the influence of the deceiver, has attempted to discredit these Baptist historians, calling them ignorant, biased, or both. Thankfully, Baptist historians have been vindicated by the admissions of prominent, well-informed authors of other faiths. These men had no motive, other than a pursuit of truth, to speak of the ancient existence of the Baptists.

One such author was Stanislaus Hosius (1504-1579). Hosius, a Roman Catholic cardinal, was highly regarded among the Catholic faith, attaining the title of papal legate (personal representative of the pope) on three occasions. In his Latin work “A Most Excellent Treatise of the Beginning of Heresies in Our Time”, Hosius comments on the ancient origins

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WHICH BIBLE?-PART 3

by M. A. Brawner

Is there really anything that should cause concern when it comes down to which Bible we choose to use? Have we not all been told that translations other than the King James Version (KJV) are just about the same as the KJV? We are normally informed that the only real difference between the new versions and the KJV is that words like “Thee”, “Thou”, “Shew”, and “Shouldest” have been updated to match our current language. If that is really the case, why should anyone defend the use of the KJV as the Bible everyone should use who speaks English? On the other hand, what if other translations leave out words, phrases, and whole verses? If it could be demonstrated that the modern versions contain multitudes of differences, then the real concern regarding Bible versions would come to light.

The version of the Bible which has recently become popular is the English Standard Version, also called the ESV. When we go to a bookstore that sells Bibles, the ESV is “center stage”. Bookstore clerks present the ESV as the best version of the Word of God in the English language to date. We are told that it is the most current, accurate, and reliable version. It is suggested that the ESV simply makes the KJV an outdated relic of the past. Further, it is implied that anyone who continues to use the KJV is simply uninformed (or possibly ignorant). In light of the ESV, it is predicted by modern day “scholars” that the KJV will soon go out of existence. So, what is the actual history of the ESV and how does it compare to the KJV?

The ESV is the result of efforts which began in the early 1990s. A committee of “translators” came together using the Revised Standard Version (RSV) of the Bible published in 1971 to develop the ESV. The roots of the RSV and those of the Catholic religion are intimately interwoven. Astonishingly, only about 6 percent of the RSV was revised to produce the ESV making the ESV

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CHURCH GOVERNMENT

by B. W. Carver

At first glance, the topic of church government may not seem to be of great importance when compared to such doctrines as the plan of salvation and the proper observance of baptism and the Lord’s Supper. However, when one considers the errors made by some churches today, it becomes obvious that many of the errors, which cripple churches, are committed in business meetings.

Church government should be considered as a very important topic. Government according to Webster’s dictionary is defined as “the exercise of authority over a nation, state, group, etc. or the established system which exercises that authority.” When considering this definition in the application of church government, we would be considering how the church exercises its God given authority.

The church is the body of Christ, and Jesus Christ is the head (Ephesians 1:22-23 & Colossians 1:18). Therefore, Christ is our ruler, and we should follow His commandments and teach the same to those who are saved and then baptize into the church (Matthew 28:19-20).

We understand that we should follow the commandments of God in His word as we conduct our business. Paul wrote in I Corinthians 14:40, “Let all things be done decently and in order.” The context of this verse is in reference to our worship services. We must also consider I Corinthians 14:33 that God is not the author of confusion, but of peace. It stands to reason that we should conduct our business in the same decent and orderly fashion.

All governments have officers. According to the scriptures (I Timothy 3), the church has two offices: elders and deacons. We recognize elders as ordained preachers. In I Timothy 3 and Titus 1, we find out the qualifications of this office, which in Timothy was called a bishop, and in Titus was called an elder. Therefore, we

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ANNOUNCEMENTS THROUGH DEC. 17, 2016

A tent meeting will begin in Adona, Arkansas on Sunday, September 25. Services will be held nightly at 7:00 PM. Eld. Michael Brawner and Eld. Kevin Slayton are scheduled to preach.

Effort meeting will begin at Goodwill Missionary Baptist Church on Sunday, September 25. Services will be held nightly at 7:00PM. Eld. Chad Lambert will be assisted by Eld. Britt Little.

Effort meeting will begin at Spring Creek Missionary Baptist Church, on Sunday, October 2. Services will be held nightly at 7:15PM. Eld. Ricky Reeves will be assisted by Bro. Troy Swindle.

Effort meeting will begin at Dixon Creek Missionary Baptist Church on Sunday, October 16. Services will be held daily at 11:00AM and 7:30PM. Eld. Kevin Slayton will be assisted by Bro. Jim Carter.

Effort meeting will begin at Meadorville Missionary Baptist Church on Sunday, October 23. Services will be held nightly at 7:00PM. Eld. Mike Carver will be assisted by Bro. Tyler Eller.

Effort meeting will begin at Willard Missionary Baptist Church on Sunday, November 6. Services will be held nightly at 7:00PM. Eld. Chris Crowder will be assisted by a preacher to be determined.

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recognize that bishop and elder are the same office.

One difference we find in the qualifications for elders and the qualifications for deacons is the elder should be "apt to teach" (I Timothy 3:2 & Titus 1:9). The office of an elder existed first, as Peter who called himself an elder, was ordained by Christ and sent forth to preach (Mark 3:14-16).

The members of the church at Jerusalem sold their possessions and goods and divided them among themselves as any of them had need (Acts 2:44-45 & Acts 4:32-34). In Acts 6 we find evidence of the first deacons being ordained and charged with overseeing the business of distributing these goods. This office was established so that the apostles could focus their

attention on preaching without being hindered by the added burden of handling the church's physical possessions (Acts 6:3).

It would also seem wise that our church officers such as clerk, treasurer, and trustees should also be deacons. This might not be possible in a church with a small congregation, but it would seem wise to follow the example of the first church in that it wanted "men of honest report, and full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom" to oversee this business (Acts 6:3).

We must note that deacons are not to be rulers over the church. They are not to dictate to the church what it will do, but rather are to do what the church desires in carrying out their duties. In I Timothy 3:8, the word "deacon" is translated from the Greek word "diakonos", which literally means "those who serve". From this, we can clearly see that deacons are to be servants of the church, not masters over it.

Likewise, the elders are not to be masters, but rather servants. In I Peter 5:1-4, the apostle Peter admonishes elders to feed the flock of God willingly, not for filthy lucre and not to be lords over God's heritage. Elders are to be examples to the flock. We also find that in I Timothy 4:12, the apostle Paul admonishes the young preacher to "be thou an example of the believers..."

There is no establishment in the scriptures of a board, convention, association, or any other body that has authority to rule over a church. A presbytery is mentioned in I Timothy 4:14, but this is in reference to Timothy's ordination, namely the "laying on of hands of the presbytery." A presbytery cannot act without the church approving its formation. There is no evidence that the presbytery in Timothy's ordination had any other purpose, and it did not have a ruling authority over the church.

We also find no record in the scriptures of members of one church body being allowed to vote in the business of another church body. In Acts 15, Paul and Barnabas were chosen by the church at Antioch to meet with the church at Jerusalem concerning false teachings they had heard from "certain men which came down from Judea".

After the brethren at Jerusalem clarified the matter, they sent two of their own, Judas, surnamed Barsabas and Silas to go to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas to report on the advice of the church at Jerusalem. It is clear from these scriptures that the church at Jerusalem could not force the church at Antioch to do anything. They were only able to advise them. In Acts 15:31 we find the advice was well received, and when they had read the epistle, "they rejoiced for the consolation."

This brings up an important question. Given that elders and deacons, the only scriptural officers of the church, are to be servants rather than masters, who holds the authority to make the decisions of the church? We find in Acts 1 an account of a gathering of the first church at Jerusalem that will shed some light on this. In Acts 1:15, the number of disciples gathered there were 120. Peter spoke of the need to replace Judas Iscariot with another who could "take part of this ministry and apostleship." Two men were appointed and the disciples "gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven" (Acts 1:26). This was done after much prayer and asking for the Lord's guidance. The question was put before the church, and the church chose in accordance to the will of God.

We find in Matthew 18:15-20 where Jesus spoke concerning how to handle the matter of an offended brother. We also find in I Corinthians 5:4-5, Paul wrote concerning church discipline, that the church as a whole was to judge the matter and exclude from their membership the unrepentant, guilty church members who were in need of discipline. This decision was not left to the elders or deacons, but to the church when gathered together "with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 5:4).

Lastly, let's notice I Peter 5:5 and Ephesians 5:21. These verses instruct us as church members to submit ourselves to one another in the fear of God and to be clothed with humility. All members of the Lord's church are under the authority of that church. We as individuals are important in the sight of God, but no one person is above the church that Jesus established while here on earth.

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essentially the RSV all over again. The ESV was first released in 2001. Updates to the ESV occurred in 2007, 2011, and 2016. These updates incorporated just over 500 word changes inserting words that are gender neutral. Revisers also incorporated what they viewed as a more uniform grammar. The ESV is squarely grounded on the RSV and its source materials but polished with modern words and grammar.

Let's compare verses in the KJV and ESV. As this comparison is made, we will see if words such as "Thee", "Thou", "Shew", and "Shouldest" have simply been updated. If more than this has occurred, then we know that the ESV is a completely different book disguising itself as the Word of God.

First consider the ending verses which make up what is commonly called the Lord's prayer as contained in Matthew chapter 6.

CONTENTS OF THE KJV: [Mat 6:12-13 KJV] And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

CONTENTS OF THE ESV: [Mat 6:12-13 ESV] And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE KJV AND THE ESV: It is apparent that the words, "For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." have been removed from the ESV. It is deeply troubling to find that the honor and praise that is owed unto God the Father has been left out of any book claiming to be the Word of God.

Now consider verses that clearly express the trinity of the Godhead found in 1 John chapter 5.

CONTENTS OF THE KJV: [1Jo 5:6-8 KJV] 6 This is He that came by water and blood, [even] Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. 7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these Three are one. 8 And there are three that bear witness in

earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

CONTENTS OF THE ESV: [1Jo 5:6-8 ESV] 6 This is He who came by water and blood--Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. 7 For there are three that testify: 8 the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE KJV AND THE ESV: It is apparent that there is a major difference between the KJV and the ESV when reading these verses. The ESV removes the entire 7th verse as found in the KJV. This is the verse that states that there are three that bear record in heaven then gives exactly who those three are: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. We learn the doctrine of the trinity in the KJV when we find the last phrase in the 7th verse to read, "...and these Three are one". So then, the ESV not only changes the words and verses used in the Bible but it takes the additional step of changing core doctrines of the Word of God.

Lastly, consider scriptures relating to the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ in seeking to restore that which had been lost between God and mankind as found in Matthew chapter 18.

CONTENTS OF THE KJV: [Mat 18:10-12 KJV] 10 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven. 11 For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. 12 How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?

CONTENTS OF THE ESV: [Mat 18:10-12 ESV] 10 "See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven. 11 (see footnotes) 12 What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray?"

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE KJV AND THE ESV: Once again, it is apparent that the ESV has removed a precious verse

from the Word of God. This time, it is found that the ESV removes the reference to the Lord coming into the world to save that which was lost.

Any time someone comes up with a new version of the Bible, it is presented as the best, most accurate version of the Word of God. When the RSV first came out, it was advertised this way until it was discovered just how badly it misrepresented the Word of God. Philosophy and traditions of men were interwoven into the RSV resulting in a vast difference between it and what came down through history as the Received Text found in the KJV. This discovery led to a wide spread rejection of the RSV. As recent as 2016 the RSV has been placed back in front of the public wearing a new name: the ESV. Those who go to buy a Bible in a bookstore are told by sales clerks that the ESV is the most accurate, best representation of God's Word in the English language. The ESV is supposedly just the KJV with words like "Thee", "Thou", "Shew", and "Shouldest" updated. The above comparison shows this to NOT be the case. Let us be aware of these differences in versions of the Bibles and continue to hold to the KJV as the most accurate representation of the Word of God in the English language.

SEMPLÉ'S COMMENTARY ON EXCLUDED MINISTERS

by H. B. Little

In Robert Baylor Semple's "History of the Baptists In Virginia", a query of interest from the 1793 Roanoke Associate is recorded by the author. It is as follows, "Whether the excommunication of a minister does not make his credentials null and void?" The association answered in the affirmative. In other words, yes the excluded preacher's credentials become invalid upon exclusion.

Bro. Semple follows with his own commentary on the subject. "This is a subject of general interest. Many evils have been produced from excommunicated preachers availing themselves of their former credentials, yet it is difficult to find a remedy." (Page 308)

Two hundred years have passed since Bro. Semple wrote on this troublesome practice, yet the same thing may be said of it today. In the words of Winston Churchill, "Those that fail to learn from history, are doomed to repeat it."

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of the Baptists. Speaking of them, he writes, "Neither did this heresy begin yesterday, or the day before, for it reigned in saint Augustine's time." (The Hatchet of Heresies, R. Shacklock as cited in Hosius on the Anabaptists, S. duBarry, 2009)

In this passage, written in the early years of the Protestant Reformation, Hosius states that the Baptists and their doctrines are not of recent inception. The Protestant Reformation, which began in Europe in the early 1500s, was a movement of religious reform among the Catholic church. It began when Catholic clergyman attempted to reform their church from gross impiousness and heresies. When they realized this reform to be unattainable within their denomination, they separated themselves from it, forming their own denominations of Christianity. These new denominations are referred to as Protestant denominations. Most of the Christian denominations of today originate from this movement. Unfortunately, many claim that the Baptists also originate from this movement and should be considered Protestants. In recent years, many who call themselves Baptist historians have made this false claim.

Hosius, being an eyewitness of the Reformation, testifies to the contrary of this widely held belief. He states the Baptist faith did not "begin yesterday, or the day before." By this, he implies that Baptists are not a product of the Reformation. He goes further stating Baptist beliefs "reigned in saint Augustine's time." Here, he admits that the Baptists were not only present in Augustine's lifetime but were in a flourishing state. This is a strong testimony against the belief that the Baptists began during the Reformation, for Augustine died more than 1,000 years before it began.

Augustine (354-430) was a Catholic bishop in Northern Africa. In Augustine's lifetime, many churches had already separated themselves from the group of churches which would later become the Catholic church. One group of these churches, residing in Northern Africa, was known as the Donatists. Sharing the same location and holding a different system of doctrine, Augustine spent much effort disputing with this "reigning" group of ancient Baptists. As such, Augustine's writings contain much on the character, theology, and practice of the Donatists. Hosius, being familiar with these writings, alludes to the Donatists, stating

that they were of the same faith as the Baptists of the 1500s.

Another author and ecclesiastical historian, who spoke of the origins of the Baptists, was the German Lutheran, John Lawrence Mosheim (1693-1755). Dr. Mosheim was a well respected historian and is considered a revolutionary of church history. He was no particular friend of the Baptists. Yet in his history, "Institutes of Ecclesiastical History, Ancient and Modern", he makes the following remarks on the ancient origin and practice of the German Baptists, which he refers to as Anabaptists, Mennonists, and Mennonites.

The true origin of that sect which acquired the denomination of the Anabaptists, by their administering anew the rite of baptism to those who came over to their communion...is hid in the remote depths of antiquity, and is, of consequence, difficult to be ascertained...It may be observed that the Mennonites are not entirely mistaken, when they boast of their descent from the Waldenses, Petrobrussians and other ancient sects, who are usually considered as witnesses of the truth, in the times of universal darkness and superstition. Before the rise of Luther and Calvin, there lay concealed in almost all the countries of Europe, particularly in Bohemia, Moravia, Switzerland, and Germany, many persons, who adhered tenaciously to the following doctrine...That the kingdom of Christ or the visible church he had established upon earth, was an assembly of true and real saints, and ought therefore to be inaccessible to the wicked and unrighteous, and also exempt from all those institutions, which human prudence suggests, to oppose the progress of iniquity, or to correct and reform transgressors...and it is most certain that the greatest part of these peculiarities were approved of by many of those, who before the dawn of the reformation, entertained the notion already mentioned, relating to the visible church of Christ. (Vol. IV, Pg. 424-429 as cited in A General History of the Baptist Denomination, David Benedict, Vol I, Pg. 128-129)

In this passage, Dr. Mosheim describes of the origins of the Baptists, whom he refers to as Anabaptists. The Baptists in former times were often called Anabaptists, or re-baptizers. This name was given to them for their baptizing "anew" all who came to them from the Catholic and Protestant churches. The Anabaptists themselves

considered the name a misnomer, believing that this baptism was not re-baptism. They were persuaded that all who were not dipped by a proper administrator, following a profession of faith, were not baptized according to the scriptures and were in need of baptism. Old Time Baptists hold this same "old time" doctrine today.

Dr. Mosheim believed that the Baptists of his day were not of recent inception, neither were they produced by the Reformation. This is evident by his assertion that their doctrines predate Martin Luther and John Calvin. These two men were considered leaders of the Reformation. He further declares the true origin of the Baptists to be "hid in the remote depths of antiquity." Here the learned Mosheim admits that, even with the vastness of his studies, he was unable to make certain the origin of the Baptist faith, proclaiming it too ancient to determine. He also states that they "boast of their descent from...ancient sects...witnesses of the truth, in times of universal darkness" According to this statement, the German Baptists of the 1700s believed that they were an ancient people who persevered through the darkest ages of heresy and impiety holding a pure gospel. This claim is not produced of an arrogant spirit, as implied by Mosheim, but is produced from a love for the truth. Old Time Baptists make this same "old time" and truthful claim today.

The holy scriptures teach the tenets of the Baptist faith. The practice of the apostles was that of the Baptist faith. The scriptures foretell of the continuation of that pure faith by a pure church until the Lord's return. If no historical evidence should be available to confirm this continuation, every reader of the Bible should be convinced of its truth. Thankfully, within the annals of ecclesiastical history are found honest admissions of learned men, often of other beliefs, who concede that the Baptist faith is not of recent inception. Rather, the Baptist church has been a bearer of this faith, beginning in the days of Christ and persevering through the persecutions of the Dark Ages to this present time.

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