

Twelve Lessons

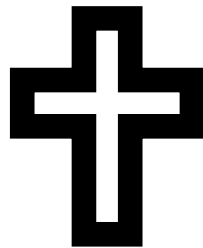
on

Baptist Distinctives

Compiled and Written

by

Ronnie Simpson, Ph.D., Th.D., LL.D., D.D.



Macedonia Baptist College

9722 Hwy 601

Midland, NC 28107

(704) 784-4200

\$6.00

CONTENTS

1. THE SUPREMACY OF THE SCRIPTURES5

2. BAPTIST ORIGINS9

3. REGENERATED CHURCH MEMBERSHIP12

4. BAPTISM BY IMMERSION15

5. THE LORD’S SUPPER: CLOSED COMMUNION18

6. TWO OFFICES: PASTOR & DEACON21

7. THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE BELIEVER28

8. THE GREAT COMMISSION IS THE WORK OF THE CHURCH31

9. TITHES AND OFFERINGS ARE THE FINANCES OF THE CHURCH35

10. SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE38

11. SPIRITUAL ARE THE WEAPONS OF THE CHURCH41

12. VISIBLE ASSEMBLY IS THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH44

**No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without
written permission from Macedonia Baptist College and Xaris, Inc.**



THE SUPREMACY OF THE SCRIPTURES – LESSON 1

1. Argument No. 1 – Many say that man is his own authority or the final authority is found in man’s inner reason or consciousness. This is secular humanism, which rejects that there are absolutes. Right and wrong depends on the circumstances.
2. Argument No. 2 – There are others who find the final authority in the Church. This is Roman Catholic doctrine. This heresy is seen by the decrees the Church and the Pope have made over the centuries in changing Bible Doctrines as, Baptism, Regeneration, Papal Infallibility, Immaculate Conception, the Communion, etc.
3. Argument No. 3 – The Authority of the Scriptures.

Lesson Goals:

1. To verify the importance of the Bible as our faith and practice.
2. To study the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Bible.
3. To vindicate the name “Baptist.”

Definitions of Important Terms and/or Phrases:

1. Scripture – The Old and New Testaments, which make up the Bible God's written word. God gave to the world His living Word, Jesus Christ, and His written Word, the Scriptures. Although the Bible was written by prophets and apostles, the Bible originated not with their wills, but with God's (2 Peter 1:20-21). "All Scripture," Paul wrote, "is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim 3:16). After Jesus, God's living Word, returned to heaven, the Bible, God's written Word, remained on earth as God's eternal guide for mankind. The written Word is durable and universally available and has remained essentially unchanged in its message since it was first inspired by God. Because the Bible is God's inspired Word, it is able to make us "wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim 3:15). The Scriptures testify of Christ (John 5:39) and are understood and received as He opens our understanding to the revealed will of His Father (Luke 24:27). Like the Berean Christians, we should search the Scriptures daily (Acts 17:11) to discover God's message for our lives. (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary).
2. Prophecy - Predictions about the future and the end-time; special messages from God, often uttered through human spokesmen, which indicate the divine will for mankind on earth and in heaven. The focus of all prophetic truth is Jesus Christ (Heb 1:2; Luke 24:25-27), who was destined to be the greatest prophet (Deut 18:15-18). He declared God's truth in this age (John 3:31-33) and the age to come (Isa 2:2-4). As the embodiment of truth (John 1:1), Christ fully radiated the brilliance of God which the earlier prophets reflected only partially. (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary).
3. Tradition - Customs and practices from the past which are passed on as accepted standards of behavior for the present. Jesus criticized the Pharisees for slavishly following their traditions and making them more authoritative than the Scripture (Matt 15:2; Mark 7:3). (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary).

I. THE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES

A. The Power of the first Church was given it by the Master in Matt. 18:16-18 – (Vs. 17) – *“And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.”*

1. His Word was His Command to the Church.
2. The Church has the New Testament as the law, which governs Baptist churches in all things.
3. In all matters of discipline and government the authority is in the church. Their action is final.
4. The government of a Baptist church is a pure democracy. It is a government of the people, by the people, and for the people under the headship of Christ, who is the head of each local church.

B. The Baptists regard the Bible as the sole authority for faith and practice. Loyalty to the Scripture is a distinctive feature of the Baptists. John 10:35 says, *“the Scripture cannot be broken.”* If the Scripture cannot be broken, it cannot be amended, reversed, or changed.

1. II Tim. 3:16-17 – *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God; and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”*
 - a. Eph. 4:4-6 – *“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”*
 - b. Rom. 4:3 – *“What saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.”*
 - c. Acts 17:11 – *“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with*

all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

- d. The New Hampshire Confession of Faith, 1852 – "We believe the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions should be tried."
 - e. II Pet. 1:19-21 – "*We have also a more sure word of prophecy...*" Peter said the Word of God is better than a "vision" or a "voice."
 - f. I Pet. 3:15 – "*But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.*"
 - g. W.C. Wilkinson in his book, "*The Baptist Principles*," says that this underlies all other Baptist principles. We base and build all other teachings and obligations on this fundamental and final principle, namely, that the Bible is the final authority on every question.
2. Baptists reject the doctrine that uninspired men have the right to make laws for the Church and consider such as rebellion against the Lord. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that the "traditions" of the Church and "doctrines" made by the Pope are infallible and this is a lie.
- a. Mark 7:9 – "*And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye make keep your own tradition.*"
 - b. As Luther put it at the Diet of Worms: "Unless I am convinced by the testimony of Scriptures or by an evident reason – *for I confide neither in the Pope nor a Council alone*; since it is certain that they have often erred and contradicted themselves – I am held fast by the Scriptures adduced by me and my conscience is taken captive by God's Word. I neither can nor will revoke anything seeing that it is not safe or right to act against my conscience. I can do no other. God help me. Amen." (Henry Cook: *What Baptists Stand For*, Page 22)
 - c. Matt. 15:7-9 – "*Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*"
 - (1) Your belief about the Word affects your Worship – Jesus said a man who says it doesn't make any difference what you believe is a hypocrite and his worship is vain.
 - (2) Your belief about the Word determines what Church you should attend. "Attend the church of your choice is a lie. Believing a lie is not the same as believing the truth. Rom . 3:4 – "*Let God be true and every man a liar.*"
 - (3) Your belief about the Word determines your Character. I Thess. 2:13 – "*For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh in you that believe.*"
 - d. The New Testament was written by Baptists, about Baptists, for Baptists to make Baptists.

C. Historic Baptists believe in the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Old and New Testaments.

1. "Verbal inspiration" means that the Holy Spirit so guided and controlled the authors of the books of the Bible that not only the ideas but the very words, came from God.
2. "Plenary inspiration" means the entire Bible is the Word of God.
3. "Infallible" means every instruction is true and proper and doesn't need correcting.
4. "Inerrancy" means God has kept the Scriptures from any error: theological, philosophical, moral, scientific, or historical.

D. Facts about the Bible of the Baptists

1. It was Written by Baptists. God chose 8 men to write the N.T.
 - a. Matthew, John, James, Peter, and Jude were baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River.
 - b. Mark, Luke, and Paul were baptized by others who got their baptism from John the Baptist.
2. It was Written about Baptists – Since Jesus was a Baptist and built a Baptist Church, the New Testament was written about Baptists.
3. It was Written for Baptists
 - a. Matt. 28:18-20 – Jesus promises that He would be with His churches unto the end of this age.
 - b. Eph. 3:20-21 – Jesus promised that God would be glorified in the church by Christ Jesus in every generation, world without end.
 - c. The Bible was written to encourage Baptist churches in times of backsliding or persecution, that there

would be Baptist churches in every generation until He comes again.

- d. Our enemies testify that our Lord has kept His promise and that Baptists can be traced through the centuries by a trail of blood. – Page 30-31 – Why be a Baptist?
 - (1) Joan Bocher, of Kent, Anne Askew, and hundreds of other Baptists were murdered for their principles in the sixteenth century before the Smyth affair. The following edict was put forth by the Council of St. Gall, March 26, 1530: “All who adhere to or favor the false sect of the Baptists, and who attend hedge meetings, shall suffer the most severe punishments. Baptist leaders, their followers and protectors, shall be drowned without mercy.” (Bullinger, Reformatiōns-geschichte, II., 287: “A History of the Baptists,” by J.T. Christian.)
 - (2) Dr. Ypeij, Professor of Theology in Gronigen University, and J. J. Dermont, his chaplain wrote: “We have now seen that the Baptists, who were formerly called ‘Anabaptists,’ and in later times Mennonites, were the original Waldenses, and who have long in the history of the church received the honor of that origin. On this account the Baptists may be considered as the only Christian community which has stood since the days of the apostles, and as a Christian society which has preserved pure the doctrines of the gospel through all ages.” Did these men tell the truth? They were not Baptists.
 - (3) Alexander Campbell, in 1851, when he had been an ordained minister for forty years, and fifteen years before his death, said: “There is nothing more congenial to civil liberty than to enjoy an unrestrained, unembargoed liberty of exercising the conscience freely upon all subjects respecting religion. Hence it is that the Baptist denomination, in all ages and in all countries, has been, as a body, the constant asserters of the rights of man and liberty of conscience. They have often been persecuted by Pedobaptists; but they never politically persecuted though they have had it in their power.” (“Christian Baptism,” page 409.)

4. It was Written to make Baptists – The Great Commission

E. The Baptists were not always called Baptists.

1. They were first called “Christians” at Antioch, Syria. Out of Antioch, Syria was the Greek Text preserved that was used by Erasmus to construct the Textus Receptus from which our KJV 1611 Bible was translated.
2. Having believed the Bible is the only Rule of Faith and Practice, the Baptists have died to preserve the True Text.
3. When Constantine had Eusebius to write a Bible for the Catholic Church, he chose the corrupted text of Origen out of Alexandria, Egypt. When Constantine commanded everyone to accept the text, the Baptists of that day, who were called Novatians and Donatists rejected it because Origen was a proponent of “*infant baptism*”. They hated this doctrine and they knew his “*Greek text*” was corrupted.
4. It would be as suitable for one to attempt to write a code of laws to govern the angels in Heaven as to make laws to govern the Church of Christ on earth. Popes and Priests have issued commandments about Mary, Purgatory, Mass, etc. that is contrary to the Bible. It is a sign of a Cult, to add or take away from the Scriptures.
5. Error exposed – Baptists have seen many errors come forth by taking a “text out of context” and therefore recognize that Bible Doctrine must follow the Laws of Hermeneutics and test the doctrine by a complete perspective of all the Bible teaches. A Doctor could not write a thesis on man with his body parts scattered all over an operating room. The best way would be to set before us a living man.
6. See Proofs of Inspiration – Page 34 – What We Believe – William Cooke Boone
 - a. Proof No. 1 – There is the testimony of the Bible to itself. It is said that in the Old Testament alone there are over 3800 places where we may find such expressions as “*the Lord spake,*” “*God said,*” “*The word of the Lord came,*” etc.
 - b. Proof No. 2 – The Character of the contents of the Bible. The Bible tells the truth about history, and the truth about its characters, however damaging to them that truth may be.
 - c. Proof No. 3 – The Bible is endorsed as the Word of God by Jesus Christ.
 - d. Proof No. 4 – The results of Christian Experience in the lives it changes and the way it speaks to the soul.
 - e. Proof No. 5 – The Bible relates His words, it tells of His works, it describes His suffering and death, it tells of His resurrection, it gives His commandments.

CONCLUSION – Many denominations “claim” that the Scriptures are their sole authority for their organization but when you ask them for their Scriptural authority for sprinkling and infant baptism, they have none. They have “added to” or “subtracted from” the Scriptures which is a dangerous matter. You dare not add to, by multiplying the rites or rituals.

You dare not subtract from, by changing the mode of baptism.

1. In *“Foundations in Faith”* by Jerry D. Locke, he quotes Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman’s suggestion of what we ought to do with the Bible”
 - a. Study it through
 - b. Pray it in
 - c. Put it down
 - d. Work it out
 - e. Pass it on
2. Dr. B. H. Carroll in his book, *“Baptists and their Doctrines”* said:
All the New Testament is the Law of Christianity.
The New Testament is all the Law of Christianity.
The New Testament will always be all the Law of Christianity.
3. By saying that we believe that the New Testament is the sole authority for faith and practice we do not deny the inspiration or profit of the Old Testament, nor that the New is a development of the Old. This principle teaches that the Church should not go to the Old Testament to find Christian law or Christian institutions. We do not find there the true idea of the Christian church, or its members, or its ordinances, or its government, or its officers, or its sacrifices, or its worship, or its mission, or its ritual, or its priesthood. Now, when we consider the fact that the overwhelming majority of Christendom today, whether Greek, Romanist or Protestant, borrow from the Old Testament much of their doctrine of the church, including its members, officers, ritual ordinances, government, liturgy and mission, we may well call this a distinctive Baptist Principle (*“Baptist and their Doctrine,”* Page 10.)