

The Gospel Herald

“As the truth is in Jesus” (Ephesians 4:21)

For The LORD’S PILGRIMS, STRANGERS & SOJOURNERS

by
Donald E. Martin, Sr.

What is a valid Baptism?

Let me ask you brethren that hold strongly to the Old Baptist “tradition” of requiring re-baptism as a means to become an “official” member in your assemblies a few questions.

First, I can hear the critics already belly-aching that there is not such thing as re-baptism. These brethren base their assumption on the fact that NO other baptism is a REAL and valid baptism if performed by a non-Primitive Baptist, therefore they have the mindset that the individual was never “officially” baptized.

The Old Baptist that currently hold to this position (on the most part) have no clue as to when and where this tradition started. They just DO IT because we always have, and we have been taught that this was in proper faith and order.

Would the reader agree with me that if a practice among the assemblies cannot be scripturally supported, we ought to question its validity? I have not met an Old Baptist who has confessed that they desire to practice a non-Biblical tradition or principle, have you?

Hypothetically, let me set before you things to consider. If on a given Sunday meeting, the Ethiopian Eunuch who was baptized by Phillip the evangelist, was to visit your meeting, would he be received? Would he be given liberty to speak in your stand? How about the apostle Paul of whom was baptized by Ananias, would he be received among you? And or given pulpit liberty?

Isn’t it interesting that the apostle Paul who was used of God to pen the epistles of the New Testament of which we call the INSPIRED Word of God, was chosen of God to preach the glorious gospel to the gentile world and yet expressed that he only baptized Crispus and Gaius, and the household of Stephanas, he said, “besides I know not whether I baptized any other” (I Corin.1:14-16).

Paul further stated, "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be of none effect" (I Corin.1:17).

What brother has been given the authority to question a believers' baptism that has followed their Lord into the waters of immersion identifying with the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ? And in good conscience has done so in Biblical obedience as instructed by our Lord.

I questioned a Primitive brother who is pastoring three churches regarding the issue. He confessed that his first baptism was accomplished in a Missionary Baptist Church at the time he felt that he was genuinely born again. I ask him if he felt that God was pleased with his Missionary baptism? He hesitated, and said, yes, although when I heard the message of grace and found a people who believed these revealed doctrines, he was willing to do whatever to join among them. He further stated that going into the water again did not change anything other than made him acceptable among the Primitive Baptist churches.

Now where in the world did this practice come from? It is NOT a Biblically supported practice? There is NO scriptural account of any believer being baptized more than once EXCEPT those that had been baptized by John the Baptist unto REPENTANCE, and when they were born of the Spirit and was a believer upon the Lord Jesus, they were baptized in Jesus' name.

As an interested Baptist Historian, you can trace these re-baptism roots back to about 1860 (20 years after the Black Rock Address) when Elder Gilbert Beebe was asked the question in the "Signs of the Times" periodical regarding "Missionary Baptism." Elder Beebe, replied by saying, "Any believer baptized by the Missionaries and who desire to come among the Old School Baptists, must be baptized by a Primitive Baptist Elder, which "we" accept as proper baptism. Missionary baptism is "ALIEN BAPTISM" and considered "PAGAN."

This is the FIRST time that the term "ALIEN BAPTISM" was ever used among the Old School Baptists. As often blessed as Elder Beebe was in his revelation of scriptural truth, this is one position that has poisoned the minds of the Old School Brethren even unto this day, and most don't even know the reason they follow the tradition. This Baptism tradition, requiring any that have been baptized by a Missionary preacher as a null and void baptism is not an issue any man can question if the believer followed Christ in their desire to identify with Christ death, burial and resurrection evidencing a good conscience toward God in obedience.

We are NOT being baptized into a denomination (as many have deemed), nor being baptized into a theological doctrinal position apart from believing upon the Lord Jesus Christ as one's ONLY means of salvation and hope of eternal life.

I was asked by a brother, well if you believe that, what about a Mormon or Jehovah's Witness baptism, (a Pharisaical question). My comment was, would you put a Missionary Baptist in the same category as those false doctrinal religions?

In conclusion:

This issue of baptism must be examined on an individual, stand alone, circumstance to those desiring to unite with the assemblies of the Old Baptist. What I mean by this, is that the candidate for Church affiliation as a believer, do they have a testimony of an experience of New Birth? If they were baptized in a non-Old Baptist assembly, did they do it in obedience to Christ command and to identify with Christ death, burial, and resurrection? And were they "satisfied" that their immersion experience was pleasing to God? If they are satisfied with their baptism experience, then I ask AGAIN, who are we to question what God has accepted?

Some of you may have read previous writings by this author on the subject with similar convictions, as I have wrestled with this matter for 25 years with NO scriptural proof that Old Baptist re-baptism is a Biblical practice, but a mere tradition started by MAN, and it was not Christ. I am an Old Baptist by conviction and historical doctrine and proclaim the "absolutes" of God's character without compromise and am not ashamed to be called an "Historical Predestinarian" of which I can defend with the Holy Writ.

*Humbly submitted for Zion's welfare,
December 6, 2005*