

The Gospel Herald

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

For The LORD’S PILGRIMS, STRANGERS & SOJOURNERS

by

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Scriptural Baptism

As examined by the Holy Scriptures in relation to the traditional practice among many.

With much confusion over the years regarding what constitutes a proper Biblical Baptism, we need to solely use the Word of God as our rule and guide to determine proper practice and order in the carrying forth of the baptism ordinance.

First: *Who are the Biblical candidates eligible to have baptism administered? The scriptures are very clear that the candidate for baptism must be a professing believer in the Lord Jesus Christ as the only saviour of sinners and have experienced a work of grace that causes one to have such hope. A testimony of such hope and the evidence of Godly sorrow that worketh repentance towards God for their sins shall be in their public profession of faith.*

Second: *Biblical baptism is not a door to the Church of Jesus Christ, for ONLY Christ is the Door, as He said, “I am the door, by me if any man enters in, he shall be saved” (John 10:9). Tradition among many has made baptism to simulate a door into the Church. This is totally erroneous and unscriptural.*

Third: *Biblical baptism is an ordinance that demonstrates by immersion, the believer’s identification experientially with their spiritual conversion, being symbolically buried to the old sinful dominating nature, and being raised from the baptismal waters as a symbol of being raised to the newness of life through the spiritual resurrecting work of God’s Spirit in the heart, mind and soul of the believer (Colo. 2:12).*

Fourth: *Who has been given the authority Biblically as those to whom the scriptures record as being the “baptizers?”*

John the Baptist was the first “baptizer” recorded, and his baptism was a baptism unto “repentance” as the forerunner of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus in his public ministry

commanded his disciples to go forth and teach the gospel and baptize those that believed. After Christ manifestation and revealed as the messiah, Christ by his death, burial and resurrection ushered in a baptism identifying with his sacrificial atonement on the cross that symbolizes the spiritual transformation of the born again believer.

The apostles and disciples were first sent to both teach and baptize, next the seven men chosen as servants to the Church which were ordained in Jerusalem were used to baptize as the Deacon Phillip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:38). Here is a perfect example of Biblical authority verses man's tradition. Why do some ONLY authorize the ordained elders to baptize? The deacons had this authority in the Acts of the apostles. Would it be wrong for a deacon to baptize a professing believer? I am persuaded that a "**Brother in good standing**" approved by the local Church, a "**deacon**" and or "**elder**" are those Biblically authorized to administer baptism.

Note: The author has no problem with a devote brother or deacon of the local assembly being authorized by the church as Philip the evangelist to baptize. Ananias was NOT identified as being anymore than a devote believer in Christ. Since Pentecost, you will NOT find where any believer was baptized in the Trinitarian names as commanded the disciples in the Gospels. Since the Holy Ghost baptism at Pentecost, ALL were baptized in THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST, as He was revealed as the fullness of the Godhead. Interesting.

Fifth: What constitutes a "**satisfactory**" baptism scripturally before God Almighty? The definition of a "**satisfied**" baptism, is a baptism that has been administered by a brother as authorized of a Christ centered Christian Church by the means of immersion to one that has professed an experiential believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as their saviour and has desired to follow our Lord's command in obedience, signifying a good conscience towards God
(I Peter 3:21).

Sixth: Baptism IS NOT an ordinance that associates the believer with anything other than their obedience to our Lord Jesus command, and to be identified with His death, burial and resurrection ONLY. It does NOT cause one to be associated with nor bound by any Church doctrine, faith and order.

This is exactly why a Missionary Baptist baptism by immersion, administered by another believing brother or duly authorized minister should be an acceptable baptism as long as the person being baptized professed a belief in Christ Jesus and went into those waters in obedience to Christ command.

To come into the revelation of the doctrines of God's sovereign grace in time, and one having a desire to identify with others of like doctrine SHOULD NOT NULLIFY their previous baptism.

As the revelation of "Sovereign Grace" doctrine does not govern Biblical baptism. The experience, profession and the obedience of the believer shall govern what designates a "**satisfied**" baptism. There is NO scriptural support that a believer had to

believe in “predestination” or the “sovereignty” of God to be a candidate for water baptism.

Baptism is a “believer’s” baptism. If one was not sure of their original baptism experience as being valid and genuine, then by all means shall the believer be baptized to satisfy their conscience before God. This would NOT be a “re-baptism”, as the first was null & void due to a questionable experience of the professing believer.

For there is but ONE baptism that shall be honored before God Almighty, the baptism of a born-again believer, blessed with the hope of eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ and following our Lord’s command entering into those waters identifying with HIM, in His death, burial and resurrection. This is a baptism God is pleased with, I challenge one to prove differently. For if God our eternal sovereign Father is **satisfied** and appeased, who is man to call it “invalid” or “alien” ? (as stated by the late Gilbert Beebe of whom I disagree with regarding his dogmatic stand against a Missionary performed Baptism).

In Conclusion: Regretfully, Gilbert Beebe, as gifted with divine understanding of Biblical issues of most in his era, and given the ability to put to pen his thoughts, in addressing the baptism” issue in the “Signs of the Times” 1840 publication in response to a inquiry about missionary baptism, he called missionary baptism an “**alien**” baptism and missionary Baptist “**Pagans!**” It is my opinion that these harsh and belligerent comments have NO scriptural foundation but are the mere “concept” of the matter conceived from the natural mind. I am hard pressed to believe that Bro. Beebe’s understanding and interpretation of the issue of water baptism was that which was not “taught of Christ”. His dogmatic position of re-baptism had made baptism an **initiation rite and tradition** in order to identify and become a member of the Old School Baptist local assembly. This **tradition** has additionally been carried to the extreme that those of various Old Baptist Associations have required those that desired fellowship which come from other Associations to be “re-baptized”. I have known one Old Baptist Elder which had been baptized four times to satisfy the demands of certain factions and Associations to be used to minister among them; in his final days, he told me in a stream of tears, “Bro. I am sad to have to report that I had followed “man’s tradition” to be acceptable among a people that I loved and had a strong desire to minister among.”

This was a sad commentary of how man’s sincere efforts to keep the Church purged from false doctrine and erroneous teachings had become a **tradition** of man’s invention.

“Sheep dipping” (re-baptism) has **never** changed a man’s heart and theology, Christ alone shall teach his people and ministers the TRUTH by the might of His Spirit and **cause** them to “feed his lamb’s and Sheep.” May the Lord our God give us discernment and wisdom in this often distorted ordinance given unto the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTE: Ironically, the Old School Primitive Baptists are not the ONLY Baptists who have adopted this “sheep-dipping” re-baptism as a membership ritual. Various Independent, Freewill, Old Regular and Landmark Baptists have practiced this re-baptism as if to adhere to some apostolic succession of the ministry, which is just as erroneous.

I have challenged ALL Old School, Old Line, Primitive Baptists for over twenty-five years to give me scriptural example and evidence of anyone being “re-baptized” to become a member of a local Old Baptist Church. NONE have been able to meet the challenge; most would argue that submission to “re-baptism” is DENOUNCING one’s previous alignment with Arminian missionaries. This totally a MANMADE RITUAL, Therefore, many have merely followed a TRADITION of man in lieu of seeking as to what is the individuals conviction as to a SATISFIED baptism by their experience of grace. Follow a man-made tradition as you will dear brethren, as for me, I shall seek to free the conscience of God’s heritage as God shall illuminate my understanding, not BIND them with confusion as to God’s work of grace. To Christ be the glory.

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