**Two Ordinances – Part Three**

**ALIEN BAPTISM**

**INTRODUCTION:**

Baptists hold to the scriptural view that there are two ordinances given to the church by Jesus Christ—baptism and the Lord’s Supper. There are four elements to a proper scriptural baptism: the subject, the method, the motive, and the authority. Last week we looked closely at the biblical basis for immersion and the issue of authority to baptize. This lesson considers more fully the issue of authority to baptize and why “alien baptism” is a threat to church purity.

1. **BAPTISM IS A CHURCH ORDINANCE** 
   1. **An ordinance is an authoritative command or decree.**
      1. An ordinance is a divinely instituted rite which conveys truth through its symbolism. Baptism as an ordinance was given to the church by Christ as a symbol of His death, burial, and resurrection for us. Thus, its symbolism requires a saved individual as the only proper candidate and immersion as the only proper method.
      2. When addressing the church at Corinth, Paul commanded them (the church) to “keep the ordinances” which he had “delivered” to them. *I Corinthians 1:2, 11:2*
   2. **Baptism is the “door” to church membership.** 
      1. The new birth is the door to the kingdom of God. *John 3:3*
      2. Baptism is the door to church membership. *Acts 2:41; I Corinthians 12:13*
   3. **Baptism is an identification.** 
      1. In baptism, we identify with three things:
         1. We identify with Jesus Christ. *Mark 1:10-11*
         2. We identify with the body of doctrine. *Matthew 3:13-15; Mark 1:4; John 1:15,27*
         3. We identify with a local church and that church’s doctrine. *Acts 2:41-42*
            1. If a person is saved and then baptized in a church that does not believe in the eternal security of the believer, that person has identified through their baptism with conditional salvation.
            2. If a person has been genuinely born-again and is then baptized in a church that teaches baptismal regeneration, that person has identified through their baptism with a false gospel.
            3. If a believer has been baptized in a non-denominational church that receives members who have not been scripturally baptized, that person has identified with unscriptural baptism.
      2. Baptism is like a uniform.
         1. If you work at McDonalds, you will have to wear a McDonalds’ uniform, not a Burger King uniform. The same is true with the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines—the uniform you wear identifies you as belonging to that person, team, company, branch of the military, etc.
         2. This is why it is important to properly carry out the ordinance of baptism given to us in the Scriptures.
   4. **A scriptural New Testament Baptist church cannot accept “alien baptism.”**
      1. Alien baptism refers to a baptism not meeting the requirements of the Word of God and is thus foreign to the Scriptures.
      2. By accepting those into church membership who have not been scripturally baptized, a Baptist church is not retaining its scriptural identity and purity.
2. **THE CONSEQUENCES OF ACCEPTING ALIEN BAPTISM** 
   1. **Alien baptism declares doctrinal agreement with non-Baptist churches.**
3. A Baptist church would not receive into membership someone coming from an infant-sprinkling denomination, because their “baptism” at the hands of such an organization declares baptismal regeneration (which is a false gospel).
4. Why, then, should a Baptist church accept someone into membership on the basis of their baptism in an immersionist denomination or “church” that also teaches baptismal regeneration, or that holds to Presbyterian beliefs, or believes in tongue-speaking, or rejects the office of pastor?
   1. **Alien baptism results in confusion and bitterness.**
5. Allowing some non-Baptists to join a Baptist church without baptizing them, while barring others, leads to inconsistent practice and places the church in the undesirable position of being a judge of men.
6. Many times, the statement is made, “They are Baptist in everything, except in name.” Well, just try to admit one of these, and then say “no!” to another. The result will be confusion.
   1. **Alien baptism leads to interdenominationalism.**
7. Interdenominationalsim means that an organization’s beliefs are such that they can find broad agreement in any number of distinct denominations.
8. It is true that most mainline denominations will have certain doctrines and beliefs in common, but one of the major reasons there are so many denominations in the first place is because they differ over certain major doctrines.
9. Therefore, interdenominatinoalism requires compromise—or at least the willingness to remain silent on matters of difference and controversy.
   1. **Alien baptism follows the ecumenical line. (ec·u·men·i·cal) means all churches or unity between all Christian groups**
10. The issue of baptism is a major stumbling block to the reunification of Catholics, Orthodox, and Protestants. Much ecumenical activity is centered on the sacraments and ordination, trying to reconcile all the differences with the aim of producing unity.
11. Scriptural baptism stands as an impassable barrier and an unbridgeable gap between sound Baptist churches and the ecumenical movement.
    1. **Alien baptism destroys the unity of the Spirit.**
12. The “unity chapter” (*Ephesians 4*) shows that God’s will for the Lord’s churches is to keep the “unity of the Spirit” (verse 3) and to come into the “unity of the faith” (verse 13).
13. Yet the passage speaks of one body (the New Testament Church) and one baptism (verses 4-5).
14. “One Lord” declares an agreement concerning authority; “one faith” declares an agreement on doctrine; and “one baptism” ties it all together.
15. **THE HISTORIC BAPTIST POSITION** 
    1. **Anabaptists**
       1. The name “Anabaptist” means “re-baptizer.” It was given as a nickname and a term of mockery or derison to our Baptist forefathers from the earliest days of Christian history.
       2. It is not a name Baptists would choose, because they never actually practice re-baptism. Unscriptural baptism is not a valid baptism—therefore those being “re-baptized” are in fact being baptized properly for the first time.
       3. In the middle of the third century A. D. (251 A.D.), the first major split within Christendom occurred. It is known as the Novation Schism. “The Novatians were the earliest Anabaptists; refusing to recognize as valid the ministry and sacraments of their opponents and, claiming to be the true church, they were logically compelled to re-baptize all who came to them from the Catholic Church.” – John Christian
       4. History attests that a strong stand for baptismal and church purity was taken by those who blazed the trail for 21st century Baptists.
    2. **The blessing of taking a closed baptism stand.** 
       1. The only way Bible-believing Baptist churches can maintain their purity of doctrine is to require Scriptural baptism. The place for a walled city to keep out its enemies is at the gate.
       2. The place for New Testament churches to stop any infiltration of unsound doctrine is before it ever gets in. To admit one person by any other way just one time is to pave the way of allowing many persons to come in many times, bringing their unbiblical teachings with them.
       3. This stand has never been a popular one, but those who stand unwavering for the one baptism will often be called narrow, bigoted, unloving, and unreasonable. But if it pleases the Lord; that’s what counts!

**CONCLUSION:**

These lessons have explained the importance of proper baptism in the church. Without proper observance of this ordinance, Baptist churches would begin to destroy themselves from the inside. We must take this ordinance seriously and take a stand against accepting any baptism that does not conform to Scripture.