

I - is for Immersion of the Believer in Baptism

The Definition of the Greek word (βαπτίζω) means to put under the water. It signifies the death of our old ways, going under the water, and rising up is symbolic of the resurrection, in newness of life. Sprinkling does not symbolize Christ's death or burial, nor does the water cleanse from sin. Only the blood of Jesus Christ washes away sin! Baptism is a symbol, not salvation.



The Importance of Baptism is recorded in all four Gospels, as Christ Himself walked 60 miles to be baptized. Believers are commanded to be baptized in Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:16.

The Qualifications for Baptism is found in Acts 8:37, «...If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest....». John the Baptist refused to baptize anyone who wasn't saved. For this reason infants are not eligible candidates for believers baptism. Babies are protected by God's grace until they are mentally mature enough to believe.

S - is for Security of the Believer

Eternal life is based on the promises of God. Eternal means forever, without interruption or end. «...whosoever

believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life» (John 3:16). Because Jesus Christ gave His life we are promised eternal security. No one can lose their salvation. «And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand» (John 10:28). However, believer's can lose the joy of their salvation from sin and broken fellowship with God. But Christ's blood was shed on the cross to cleanse us from all sin (1 John 1:9).



Our security is based upon the authority of God's Word. «...ye are sealed unto the day of redemption» (Eph. 1:14). We don't just think or hope we have eternal life. «These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; THAT YE MAY KNOW that ye have eternal life» (1 John 5:13).

T - is for Trinity: Three Persons, Yet One GOD

«Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD» (Deuteronomy 6:4). This Hebrew word "one" LORD is a compound unity. Just as, «Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be "one" flesh» (Genesis 2:24). Two people, but one unity. «For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ» (1 Corinthians 12:12). Our God is a Triune God. He is God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Not three Gods, but one God manifested in three persons.



The Trinity is found in the first book in the Bible. FATHER: "In the beginning God created..." HOLY SPIRIT: "And the Spirit of God moved upon..." SON: "And God said" «In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God» John 1:1.

The Triune Godhead is eternal deity. Not, first came God the Father; then Jesus Christ; then after Calvary's Cross, the Holy Spirit. Jesus is eternal. «I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last» (Revelation 22:13). The Father is eternal. «And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you» (Exodus 3:14). The Holy Spirit is eternal as seen in Creation.

Then too, the deity of the trinity is declared in the Great Commission. «Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost» (Matt. 28:19).

TJM

In memory of Annie M Gant

PUBLISHED BY "EVANGELIO-FOS" - P. O. Box 1089- WALKERTOWN, NC 27051
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The

BAPTIST faith



WHAT WE BELIEVE...

BAPTIST: *What we believe*

«And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch» (Acts 11:26). Regardless of the denomination, our preeminent label should be Christian, (Christ-like). We are Baptist's by conviction. Using the name BAPTIST as an acrostic, I want to briefly declare what we believe!

B - is for Bible.

The Bible is our Final Authority. We know the Bible is inspired by God Himself, as His Word proclaims: «All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness» (II Timothy 3:16). Because God makes no mistakes, His Holy Word is inerrant. The Holy Scripture has no contradictions in it! You and I may find some of the Bible difficult to understand, but our finite minds cannot comprehend the infinite ways of Almighty God. «O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out» (Romans 11:33).

A - is for *Autonomy of the Local Church*

The Autonomy of the local church is Scriptural. Every local church (Εκκλησία) is a called out assembly of believers. A group of baptized believers voluntarily bonded together with Scriptural officers, for regular scheduled meetings to teach the Word of God. Autonomous means, to be self-governed under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. The pastor is the under-shepherd of the fold. He is a God ordained keeper of the flock. The Lord Jesus is the head of the church, not some denominational headquarters. The pastor is not a dictator, but an example to be hon-



ored and respected for his ministry. «Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine» (I Tim. 5:17). Then too, depending on the size of the church body, there should be a number of deacons appointed, «Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business» (Acts 6:3).

P - is for *Priesthood of the Believer*

The Idea of a Priesthood. Beginning in the Old Testament sin had to be dealt with. Man could not access God directly and there needed to be a blood atonement. Usually the eldest man in the family was the designated priest. Job, «... Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all... Thus did Job continually» (Job 1-5) When God's people grew to be a nation (Israel), the Lord instituted the Levitical priesthood from the tribe of Levi. They built a tabernacle to God's instruction, and offered blood sacrifices for the sin of the people.

The Ideal Priesthood. Jesus Christ offered Himself, the perfect sacrifice to atone sin. The sin problem is settled forever! «Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us» (Hebrews 9:12).

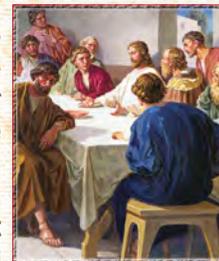
The Individual Priesthood. «Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need» (Hebrews 4:16). We can pray now directly to our heavenly Father. This great privilege brings enormous responsibility. **Believers are to study the Bible and seek a personal relationship with Christ, being directed by the Holy Spirit regarding doctrinal truths.** Pastors and teachers help guide us, but the priesthood of the believer places the ultimate accountability upon each of us.



T - is for *Two Ordinances: The Lord's Supper & Believer's Baptism*

Ordinances: Are a visible ceremony appointed by Christ's to be practiced in the church, for an outward sign. Both the Lord's supper and Baptism are a reminder of Christ's death for us to be observed until He returns. Note that there is NO supernatural grace coming from these ordinances!

The Origin of the Lord's Supper is found in the Jewish Passover. A memorial practiced for 1400 years, remembering the tragic night when the death angel passed over Egypt and took all of the firstborn, except those that had killed a spotless lamb, and had placed the sacrificial blood on their doorposts.



The Institution of the Lord's Supper is found as the Lord was eating the last true Passover meal with His disciples. «And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body» (Matthew 26:26). The very day that Jesus was sacrificed on Calvary's cross, the Jews were sacrificing lambs in the Temple. Christ is the Passover Lamb! «...John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world» (John 1:29).

The Two Elements of the Lord's Supper are Bread and Fruit of the Vine. The Bread represents Christ's body. It is to be unleavened bread, to symbolize Christ's purity. There is no set time frame demanded, but some systematic partaking is suggested. «For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come» (I Cor. 11:26).

The "Cup", as it is called refers to pure grape juice. Here again, as Christ shed His sinless blood, this memorial must be uncorrupted Fruit of the Vine to properly symbolize His blood. (Remember, wine goes through a corrupting process called fermentation.) All born again believers are to give thanks and examine themselves while considering the loving sacrifice of the blessed Savior!