

**Bible Baptist Theological Seminary's
Spring 2012 Lecture Series
April 19, 2012**

THE HISTORY OF ANCIENT BAPTISTS

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I. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF ANCIENT BAPTISTS

A. Unique Identification by God and Others	Mt.3:1, 11:11-13
B. Sole Authority of the Scripture	Mt.3:2, Lk.1:17
C. Christ-Centered Preaching	Mt.3:2,3
D. A Practice of Holy Living	Mt.3:4
E. Believers Baptism by Immersion	Mt.3:2,6
F. Changed Life as Fruits of Repentance	Mt.3:8
G. Soul Liberty to choose or reject Truth	Mt.3:8
H. Lord's Supper as a Memorial	Mt.26:26
I. Separation of Church and State	Mt.22:21
J. Emphasis on Local Church and Membership	Mt.16:18; Act.2:41,47

II. THE GROUPS OF ANCIENT BAPTISTS

A. Montanists:

1. Date: 2nd-8th century
2. Place: Phrygia in Asia Minor
3. People: Montanus - he opposed the church at Rome, its sacral society
Tertullian - he opposed the Gnostic movement
- he introduced the word "*trinity*"
- he strongly defended "believer's baptism" saying
Anyone who asked for himself
Anyone who truly believes
Anyone who comes by his own will
- he rebaptized the *lapsi*
4. Churches: Emphasis on "purity of church and baptism"

B. Novatians:

1. Date: 3rd-8th century
2. Place: Phrygia in Asia Minor
3. People: Novatian - he left the church at Rome, because of its laxity
- he led to the name *Cathari* meaning "*pure ones*"
- he strongly disagreed with Cyprian's teaching on baptism: that sins can be washed away in baptism
- he rebaptized the *lapsi*

4. Churches: Emphasis on “the purity of church membership”
Emphasis on church-planting

C. Donatists:

1. Date: 4th-7th century
2. Place: North Africa
3. People: Donatus Magnus - he separated from the church at Carthage
- he opposed the universal church of Rome
- he rejected the *lapsi*
4. Churches: Emphasis on purity of church membership
Profession of faith
Holiness
Baptism by immersion
Persecuted by Augustine

D. Paulicians:

1. Date: 7th-16th century
2. Place: Phrygia in Asia Minor
3. People: Constantine - martyred by stoning by one of his disciples
Simeon - took over after Constantine
4. Churches: Emphasis on the Truth of Scripture
Emphasis on holy living
Emphasis on evangelism
Emphasis on church planting
Severely persecuted

E. Bogomiles:

1. Date: 12th-15th century
2. Place: Bulgaria and Bosnia
3. People: Came out from Paulician persecution
4. Churches: Emphasis on holy living
Emphasis on evangelism - “*the wandering missionaries*”
Emphasis on church planting
Severely persecuted

F. Waldenses:

1. Date: 4th-16th century
2. Place: Valley Regions of Northern Italy
3. People: Claude of Turin (ca.825) wrote a commentary on Galatians
Peter Waldo (ca.1170) extraordinary preacher
Known as the *Picards* of France, Germany, Bohemia
Known as the *Lollards* of England

4. Churches: Emphasis on exactness of the Scripture
Emphasis on believer's baptism by immersion
Emphasis on evangelism and church planting
Emphasis on holy living
Began to be called Anabaptists

G. Albigenses:

1. Date: 10th-16th century
2. Place: Albige in Southern France, and parts of Northern Italy
3. People: Descendants of the Paulicians, known as *Cathari* "pure ones"
4. Churches: Held the Truth in unsophisticated simplicity
Held to the autonomy of local church government
Rejected the sacral society of the RCC
Persecuted greatly by Pope Innocent III - "kill all"

H. Anabaptists:

- 1, Date: 16th-17th century
2. Place: Europe
3. People: *Waldenses, Lollards, Picards, Albigenses*
4. Churches: Held to sole authority of the Scripture
Held to autonomy of the local church
Held to believer's baptism
Held to holy living
Held to separation of church and state
Held to the priesthood of the believer
Held to soul-liberty
Greatly persecuted

III. THE INDIVIDUALS OF ANCIENT BAPTISTS

A. Polycarp (A.D. 69 - 155):

1. He was pastor of the church at Smyrna.
2. He was trained by the Apostle John.
3. He was well documented in history.
4. He wrote a letter to the church of Philippi.
 - a. Encouraging them in faithfulness
 - b. Warning them to avoid materialism
 - c. Instructing them on ethics in church finances
5. He fought against Gnosticism.
6. He used both the Old and New Testament Scriptures.
7. He cited Psalm 4:5 and Ephesians 4:26.
8. He emphasized faith and taught the doctrine of the local church.
9. He was burned at the stake at age 86 for not burning incense to Caesar.

B. Romanus (ca. A.D. 304):

1. He was a deacon in the church at Caesarea.
2. He refused to worship idols in Antioch.
3. He was arrested and tortured by scourging, the rack, and tearing of flesh with hooks.
4. He thanked the Governor for the privilege to suffer for Christ.
5. He was strangled to death. -S.B. Shaw

C. Sergius (ca. A.D. 810):

1. He was led to Christ by a young Paulician woman.
2. He preached the Gospel in Western Asia for thirty-four years.
3. He was a zealous soul winner, winning multitudes to Christ.
4. He lived a holy life.
5. He was martyred for Christ. -L.L. Clover

D. Peter of Bruys [Bree'] (died ca. A.D. 1126):

1. He was leader of the *Petrobrusians*, having roots in the *Albigenses*.
2. He opposed the ecclesiasticism of the RCC.
3. He believed in the sole authority of the Scripture.
4. He regarded baptism for believing adults not for infants.
5. He rebaptized Catholics who converted to Christ.
6. He rejected the RCC's doctrine of transubstantiation.
7. He rejected chanting.
8. He rejected crucifix worship.
9. He labored 20 years throughout France.
10. He was captured by his Roman Catholic enemies.
11. He was burned at the stake in A.D. 1126. - L.L. Clover

E. Henry of Toulouse [Tuluz'] (died ca. A.D. 1147):

1. He was a disciple of Peter of Bruys.
2. He ministered throughout France.
3. He was leader of the *Henricians*, having roots in the *Albigenses*.
4. He faithfully followed in the shoes of Peter of Bruys
5. He was burned at the stake by the RCC in A.D.1147. - L.L. Clover

F. John Wycliffe (A.D. 1324-1384):

1. He was born near Richmond in Yorkshire, England.
2. He labored incessantly for reform.
3. He translated the whole Bible into the English language from Latin.
4. He wrote books That the RCC condemned.
5. He died and was buried in 1384.

6. He was held in such contempt by the RCC, they in turn ordered his bones dug up and burned in 1401, which was carried out in 1428.

-L.L. Clover

G. Conrad Grebel (ca. A.D. 1498-1526):

1. He was a former associate of Ulrich Zwingli.
2. He accepted Christ.
3. He separated from Zwingli opposing his positions
 - a. on infant baptism
 - b. on the sacral society
 - c. on images in the church
4. He believed that only by faith in the blood of Christ could the sins of men be washed away and not by the waters of baptism.
5. He believed in a local church of assembled baptized believers
6. He believed in the autonomy of the local church.
7. He rejected the *sacral society* view of the State-Church, which made all members of the State members of the Church by infant baptism.
8. He was persecuted by the Protestant Inquisition.
 - a. By Zwingli's consent
 - b. By robbing
 - c. By torturing
 - d. By confiscating of property,
 - e. By death for some.
9. He is known as founder of the *Swiss Brethren*.
10. He was also called "*the Father of Anabaptists*."
11. He held strong views on living in purity and obeying the Scripture.
12. He believed strongly in religious liberty.
13. He was a soul winner, along the coasts of Lake Zurich.
14. He believed in local church planting,
15. He established the Baptist Church at Hinwyl.
16. He traveled to Germany, sharing Christ with great success.
17. He was arrested and imprisoned.
18. He prepared and published a defense on baptism.
19. He escaped from prison, becoming a fugitive.
20. He died of the plague in 1526. - Thomas Armitage

H. Felix Manz (ca. A.D. 1498-1527):

1. He was a young Anabaptist.
2. He separated from Zwingli,
 - a. opposing Zwingli's position on church and state.
 - b. opposing Zwingli's position on infant baptism.
3. He started an Anabaptist church in his home.
4. He was imprisoned for expository preaching and rebaptism.
5. He was drowned in Lake Zurich in 1527. - Thomas Armitage

I. George Jacob Blaurock (ca. A.D. 1491-1529):

1. He was a former RCC priest.
2. He was saved and became an Anabaptist.
3. He joined Zwingli and then separated from him along with Felix Manz.
4. He was baptized by Conrad Gabel.
5. He opposed infant baptism, debating with Zwingli.
6. He was severely beaten; bloody he was dragged through Zurich.
7. He evangelized northern Switzerland with great success.
8. He preached in Austria, evangelizing and baptizing many.
9. He was pursued and caught and burned at the stake in 1529.

-Thomas Armitage

J. Balthassar Hubmaier (ca. A.D. 1480-1528):

1. He was an Anabaptist.
2. He published a tract at Shaffhausen, Switzerland on burning heretics.
3. He stated:

The burning of heretics cannot be justified by the Scripture. Christ Himself teaches that the tares should be allowed to grow with the wheat.... If they cannot be convinced by appeals to reason, or the Word of God, they should be left alone.... Indeed to every one it must be evident that the burning of heretics is a device of Satan. - John T. Christian

4. He was former a RCC priest.
5. He was saved in 1523.
6. He was an excellent Anabaptist preacher in his day.
7. He disputed with Zwingli over his Anabaptist views.
8. He was imprisoned, tortured on the rack
9. He recanted his recantations.
10. He was burned at the stake in 1528.
11. His wife was drowned 3 days after his death. - T.M. Strouse

K. Michael Sattler (ca. A.D. 1494-1527):

1. He was a former RCC priest.
2. He was saved and became an Anabaptist.
3. He became the pastor of the church at Horb, Germany.
4. He was extremely gracious, but very firm in his positions.
5. He wrote the *Schleitheim Confession*, which became foundational for many Anabaptist churches.
6. He was tried and burned at the stake.
7. He prearranged a sign with his follower that God's grace was sufficient for such a trial by fire.
8. His wife was drowned 8 days after her husband's death - T.M. Strouse

L. William Tyndale (AD. 1492-1536)

1. He was born in Gloucester, England.
2. He began his studies at Oxford in 1510, and later at studied at Cambridge.
3. He was converted to Christ while at Oxford.
4. He believed and defended baptism by immersion.
5. He was an Anabaptist: the member of a Baptist church holding Baptist views.
6. He could speak 7 languages, proficient in ancient Hebrew and Greek.
7. He was addicted to the study of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures.
8. He translated the 1st English Bible from Hebrew and Greek in 1520.
9. He became the object of RRC persecution following the illegal translation and printing of his English Bible.
10. He spent much of the last 15 years of his life in hiding.
11. He authored a number of other works while in hiding:
 - a. *"The Revelation of Antichrist,"*
 - b. *"The Supplication of Beggars,"*
 - c. *"The Parable of the Unrighteous Mammon,"*
 - d. *"The Obedience of a Christian Man,"*
 - e. *"How Christian Rulers Ought to Govern."*
 - f. *"The Practyse of Prelates"* AD. 1530
12. He was arrested in 1535.
13. He was tied to a stake, strangled to death and then burned in 1536.
14. He prayed that, *"the king's eyes would be opened."*
15. He changed the destiny of nations as a result of his Bible.

M. William Kiffin (A.D. 1616 – 1701):

1. He was an outstanding Baptist in his day.
2. He was saved under the preaching of John Goodwin in 1632.
3. He was a diligent student of the Scripture.
4. He joined a Particular Baptist Church, later separating from it over its indifference to infant baptism.
5. He was the pastor of the church at Devonshire Square (1643-1701) 58 yrs.
6. He was an honest and successful businessman who traded with Holland.
7. He acquired large property holdings during his lifetime.
8. He had a flawless character both in business and his spiritual life.
9. He was sought by many for his excellent counsel in both the mundane and spiritual areas of life.
10. He dealt wisely with King Charles II in money matters.
 - a. The king sought a loan of 40,000 pounds from Kiffin.
 - b. Kiffin counter offered with a gift of 10,000 pounds.
 - c. The King gratefully accepted the 10,000 pounds.
 - d. Kiffin pleased the King and saved 30,000 pounds.
11. He preached the Truth strongly and without apology.
12. He was persecuted for preaching against infant baptism.
13. He endured imprisonments several times, but was always cleared.
14. He was a contemporary of John Bunyan.
15. He opposed Bunyan's position that the unbaptized could take communion.
16. He stated very simply:
 - a. The New Testament is the sole guide to church order.
 - b. The New Testament pattern is faith, baptism, and then the Lord's Supper.
 - c. Therefore, an unbaptized person cannot come to the Lord's Supper while being consistent with the teachings of the New Testament.
17. He took comfort in the sovereign will of God upon the death of several of his children, believing their death was for God's purpose and to their advantage.
18. He, throughout his lifetime, sought liberty and welfare for the people of London.
19. He helped with the needs of many Baptist churches in England and America
20. He never retired, but continued to serve the Lord until his death.

APPENDIX 1

Quotes from William Tyndale:

Written by Tyndale to a friend while in hiding:

"The grace of our Saviour Jesus, his patience, meekness, humbleness, circumspection, and wisdom, be with your heart, amen! Dearly beloved brother, mine heart's desire in our Saviour Jesus is, that you arm yourself with patience, and be cool, sober, wise, and circumspect; and that you avoid high questions that pass the common capacity. But expound the law truly, and open the veil of Moses, to condemn all flesh, and prove all men sinners, and all deeds under the law, before mercy have taken away the condemnation thereof, to be sin and damnable. And then, as a faithful minister, set abroad the mercy of our Lord Jesus, and let the wounded consciences drink of the water of him. Then shall your preaching be with power, and not as the doctrine of the hypocrites, and the Spirit of God shall work with you, and all consciences shall bear record unto you, and feel that it is so. ... Finally, if there were in me any gift that could help at hand, and aid you, if need required, I promise you I would not be far off, and commit the end to God: my soul is not faint, though my body be weary. But God hath made me evil-favoured in this world, and without grace in the sight of men, speechless and rude, dull and slow-witted: your part shall be to supply that which lacketh in me—remembering, that as lowliness of heart shall make you high with God, even so meekness of words shall make you sink into the hearts of men. Nature giveth age authority, but meekness is the glory of youth, and giveth them honour. Abundance of love maketh me exceed in babbling" (Tyndale to John Fryth, reprinted in Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, pp. 347,348).

From *"The Practice of Prelates,"* published in 1530, in which he boldly described the pope as an ivy which climbs up a tree and gradually saps the strength of the tree and kills it. This shows Tyndale's excellent understanding of church history.

"Even so the Bishop of Rome, at the beginning, crepe along upon the earth, and every man trod upon him in this world. But as soon as there came a Christian Emperor, he joined himself unto his feet, and kissed them, and crepe up a little with begging,—now this privilege, now that,—now this city, now that ... St. Peter's patrimony,—St. Peter's rents,—St. Peter's lands,—St. Peter's right; to cast a vain fear and superstitiousness into the hearts of men ... And thus, with flattering and feigning, and vain superstition, under the name of St. Peter, he crept up and fastened his roots in the heart of the Emperor; and with his sword climbed up above all his fellows; and brought them under his feet. And as he subdued them with the Emperor's sword, even so, by subtility and help of them, after that they were sworn faithful, he climbed above the Emperor and subdued him also; so did his branches and his members, the bishops, play in every kingdom, dukedom, and lordship ... And thus,—the Ivy tree hath under his roots, throughout all christendom, in every village, holes for foxes, and nests for unclean birds, in all his branches,—and promiseth unto his disciples all the promotions of the world."

APPENDIX 2

Quotes from William Kiffin:

On the occasion of his wife's death in 1682, Kiffin said,

It pleased the Lord, to take to Himself my dear and faithful wife, with whom I had lived nearly forty-four years, whose tenderness to me and faithfulness to God were such as cannot, by me, be expressed, as she constantly sympathized with me in all my afflictions. I can truly say, I never heard her utter the least discontent under all the various providences that attended either me or her; she eyed the hand of God in all our sorrows, so as constantly to encourage me in the ways of God: her death was the greatest sorrow to me that ever I met with in the world. - J.M.Cramp

Kiffin, at age 77, wrote the following to his surviving family members:

I have tasted the goodness of God and His favor toward me from my youth, it being now sixty years since it pleased the Lord to give me a taste of His rich grace and mercy in Jesus Christ to my soul. Although my unprofitableness under these mercies and providences that have attended me hath been very great, they are not to be looked upon as products of chance, but as fruits of the care and goodness which God is pleased to show His poor people, while they are in this world; as there is no desire hatched against them for their ruin but they are rescued from them by special care and providence of God. And truly, I may say by experience, 'If the Lord had not been my help, they would have many times swallowed me up quickly.'

I leave these few instances of Divine care....To know God and Jesus Christ is eternal life. Endeavor to be diligent, to enquire after and to be established in the doctrines of the Gospel, which is of absolute necessity to salvation. I must every day expect to leave the world having lived in it much longer than I expected, yet I know not what my eyes may see before my change. The world is full of confusion. The last times are upon us. The signs are very visible. Iniquity abounds, and the love of many in religion waxes cold. God is by His providence shaking the earth under our feet. There is no sure foundation of rest and peace but only in Christ Jesus. To His grace I commend you. Amen.

Kiffin wrote his memoirs not for fame but for posterity, citing:

***"The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."* (Psalm 126:3).**

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