

BAPTISTS AND THE REFORMATION (1517-2017)

Eighth Annual BBTS Fall Lecture Series

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Five hundred years ago, Oct. 31, 1517, the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) monk Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five theses to the door of the Wittenberg Church in Saxony, addressing his list of refutations about the doctrines of indulgences, purgatory, and the authority of the pope to the Archbishop of Mainz. This occurred on the eve of All Saints' Day, All Hallows' Day,¹ or Halloween, November 1, 2017. The Reformation lasted until the Thirty Years' War with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648

B. The reformers were baptized members of the RCC who protested the Pope's encroachment on their respective territories. RCC Leaders in Germany backed Luther while the RCC member Henry the VIII rejected the papal influence in England. Luther was excommunicated out of the visible RCC in 1521 and began the Lutheran Church in 1530. The RCC member Huldrych Zwingli preached reform in 1525 in Zurich, Switzerland. By 1534 Henry VIII decreed the existence of the Church of England. Later RCC member John Calvin controlled Geneva Switzerland with his "reformed theology" (1541). The RCC reformers continued the RCC ecclesiology of the *sacral society* (= state religion), maintaining the mantra "whose territory his religion." They demanded by physical force the necessity of a national religious leader, religious sacraments which made one right with sacral society, and death to dissidents.

C. The Baptists, of course, rejected the *sacral society* and practiced believers' immersion into visible assemblies. Because Baptists differed with the RCC and with Protestants on the nature of the "*church*" (ἐκκλησία *ekklesia*) and therefore the mode and meaning of baptism, the former were severely persecuted during the Reformation era by both movements. The entrance into the visible assembly was through profession of faith and water immersion for the Baptists, whereas the RCC and Protestants taught that infants were regenerated in baptism and permitted membership into the state religion.

D. For instance, Luther defended the articles of the authoritative Lutheran Augsburg Confession (1530), including the following: "*Article IX: Of Baptism. 1) Of Baptism they [Lutheran churches] teach that it is necessary 2) to salvation, and that through Baptism*

¹The word "Halloween" is the contraction of "Hallows' Eve" or the evening before All Hallows' Day, the Roman Catholic Church/pagan holiday venerating the deceased. It is accompanied with occultic themes such as death, witchcraft, and the macabre, including ghosts, skeletons, goblins, etc. The interest in this form of Spiritism is demonic and certainly not Christian.

is offered the grace of God, and that children are to be baptized who, being offered to God through Baptism are received into God's grace. 3) They condemn the Anabaptists, who reject the baptism of children, and say that children are saved without Baptism." The initial Reformers (Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Henry VIII) were exactly that—as infant baptized Catholics they attempted to reform the RCC! There is no unambiguous evidence that they were born-again Christians, but to the contrary, their own statements revealed that they promoted baptismal regeneration. The Baptists of that era resisted this reformed RCC *sacral society* and quite often it cost these Biblicists dearly.

E. Today many Protestant and some Baptists celebrate the Reformation, especially this year 2017, five hundred years later, acknowledging the beginning of Protestantism and its rebuttal of the errors of the RCC. Some even celebrate “Reformation Sunday.”

F. However, the RCC is an apostate movement that was never biblical, and Baptists are not part of Romanism nor are they “Protestant.”² The effort to reform an apostate movement does not produce truth! Biblical Baptists are neither Reformers nor Protestants.

G. This Lecture Outline will delineate the history of the RCC, its “need” for Reform, the aftermath of the Reformation, and the biblical Baptist perspective on the five-hundred year old movement.

II. THE BEGINNING OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

A. Early Apostasy

1. Apostasy began early in Christianity with the teaching of “works salvation” perpetuated by the Jews towards Gentiles, saying, “*Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved*” (Acts 15:1).

2. Soteriological apostasy spread to the Galatian churches³ that the Apostle Paul planted on his first missionary journey (Gal. 1:2).

a. “*I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel. Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ*” (Gal. 1:6-7).

²The term “Protestant” originated with the Second Diet of Spiers (1529), as several Lutheran princes “*protested*” the encroachment of the RCC in Lutheran territories since Charles V wanted to rescind the First Diet of Spiers, which granted religious toleration to Lutherans.

³The Lord’s assemblies in the first century received warnings about theological heresy (Acts 20:29-30; Rev. 2-3), and consequently many rejected the warnings and became apostate “churches,” ultimately ushering in the Roman Catholic Church. Satan never started a church but he has deceived, debased, demoralized, decimated, and destroyed multitudes of New Testament assemblies.

b. “For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love” (Gal. 5:6), and “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature” (Gal. 6:15).

3. Apparently some churches succumbed to the soteriological heresy of “circumcision saves” or the error that salvation is in some ritual. After AD 70 and the fall of Jerusalem and of the Second Temple, Judaism declined (including the focus on circumcision [Acts 16:1-3, Gal. 2:3]), and Christianity became gentile rather than Judaistic. The works-salvation that appealed to Gentiles was not “circumcision” but “baptism.” This soteriological heresy prepared the foundation for baptismal regeneration and infant baptism.

4. Later, the movement of Diotrephes (leaders loving the pre-eminence) increased, and began to reject apostolic believers (III Jn. 1:9-11). This heresy anticipated the papal or popish mentality among the people.

5. Of course along the way, the Gnostic heresy that threatened the Colossian church (Col. 2:8-10) began to flourish among the Lord’s assemblies which ultimately lost their “*candlestick*” status (Rev. 1:20; 2:5).

a. Rejecting that the “*fulness*” (πλήρωμα) dwelt in Christ, the heretics taught that men were deities trapped in a bodies and needed to escape the flesh by ascending up the πλήρωμα to “godhood” in this life and the next. This prepared the way for the Doctrine of Purgatory.

b. Rather than recognizing that Christ was the head over all of the angelic creation, they looked to higher ascended masters (i.e., holy men, angels, etc.) for help. They taught that flesh was evil which heresy paved the way to celibacy and abstaining from flesh as in the practice of “Fish-Friday” (I Tim. 4:1-3).

c. Rather than realizing they were complete in Christ they sought completion in Stoicism or Epicureanism (cf. Acts 17:18).

d. Satan’s two lies of the Garden were the **deathlessness** and **deification** of man, which pantheistic lies are foundational to all false religions, cults, philosophies, sects, denominations, etc. Supposedly, the ineffable spirit, soul, mind, idea, “god” lost essence, which became embodied in flesh and has sought to escape incarnation. The way of escape back to “godhood” is through spiritual advancement up through the manifestation of the fulness of deity, or the πλήρωμα (*pleroma*), by good works with the help of ascended masters in the πλήρωμα. This Garden Gnostic Pantheism teaches 1) reincarnation (*contra* resurrection), 2) deification of man (*contra* sinfulness of man), and 3) abhorrence of the material creation or flesh (*contra* “*God was manifest in the flesh*” [I Tim. 3:16]).

B. The Church Fathers

1. In the Doctrine of Soteriology⁴

a. Many of the proto-RCC “church fathers” (patristics) taught that salvation was in baptism. For instance, **Ignatius** (35-107) stated, saying, “*For our God, Jesus Christ, was, according to the appointment of God, conceived in the womb by Mary, of the seed of David, but by the Holy Ghost. He was born and baptized, that by His passion He might purify the water*” (*The Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians*, 18).

b. The **Epistle of Barnabas** (100-131) stated, saying, “*Let us further inquire whether the Lord took any care to foreshadow the water [of baptism] and the cross. Concerning the water, indeed, it is written, in reference to the Israelites, that they should not receive that baptism which leads to the remission of sins, but should procure another for themselves.*” (*Epistle of Barnabas*, 11).

c. **Justin Martyr** (100-165) stated saying, “*Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For, in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water. For Christ also said, Unless you be born again, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven*” (*First Apology*, Chapter 61).

d. **Irenaeus** (120-200) stated, saying, “*‘And dipped himself,’ says [the Scripture], ‘seven times in Jordan.’ It was not for nothing that Naaman of old, when suffering from leprosy, was purified upon his being baptized, but it served as an indication to us. For as we are lepers in sin, we are made clean, by means of the sacred water and the invocation of the Lord, from our old transgressions; being spiritually regenerated as new-born babes, even as the Lord has declared: ‘Except a man be born again through water and the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.’*” (*Fragment*, 34).

e. **Tertullian** (155-220) stated, saying, “*When, however, the prescript is laid down that ‘without baptism, salvation is attainable by none’ (chiefly on the ground of that declaration of the Lord, who says, “Unless one be born of water, he hath not life”*)” (*On Baptism*, 12:1).

f. **Origen** (185-254) stated, saying, “*“The Church received from the Apostles the tradition of giving Baptism even to infants. For the Apostles, to whom were committed the secrets of divine mysteries, knew that there is*

⁴The quotes in this section come from A. Cleveland Coxe, ed. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vols. I-III (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1981), *loc cit*.

*in everyone the innate stains of sins, which **must be washed away through water and the Spirit**” (Commentary on Romans, 5:9).*

g. **Ambrose** (340-397) stated, saying, “*The Church was redeemed at the price of Christ's blood. Jew or Greek, it makes no difference; but if he has believed, he must circumcise himself from his sins [in baptism (Col. 2:11-12)] so that he can be saved . . . for no one ascends into the kingdom of heaven except through **the sacrament of baptism** . . . "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (On Abraham, 2:11:79-84).*

h. **Augustine** (354-430) stated, saying, “*By this grace baptized infants too are ingrafted into his [Christ's] body, infants who certainly are not yet able to imitate anyone. Christ, in whom all are made alive...give also the most hidden grace of his Spirit to believers, grace which he secretly infused even into infants...*” (Forgiveness and the Just Desserts of Sin, and the Baptism of Infants, 1:9:10; 1:24:34; 2:27:43).

2. In the Doctrine of Ecclesiology

a. The Influence of Plato

1) The “great” Greek philosophers influenced the Greco-Roman world into which Christianity came. Such men as Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, all Gnostics, contributed to the ancient world’s knowledge in math, ethics government, science, and religion. This latter category, religion, constituted the world view of the philosopher and was foundational to all other disciplines. All of these aforementioned philosophers embraced pantheism and its inherent Gnostic tenets.

2) **Plato** (429-347 BC) determined that reality was in the universal idea or “Over-soul,” and that it was imperfectly manifested in the physical world as shadows on a cave wall. In his thinking, each man had a “soul,” which was part of the universal Over-soul. The goal of life was to free the soul from the physical realm (“flesh is evil”) and to re-unite one’s soul with the Over-soul. His mind/body dualism and universal/particular contrasts had a major impact on his famous student Aristotle (384-322 BC), who opted for particularism. Plato’s emphasis on the universal, in contrast with the particular, led to universalism or “**catholicity.**” Permeating all of life, *catholicity* was the warp and woof of the Greco-Roman world. *Catholicity* corresponded to that which was absolute, ideal, perfect; it was the rational outworking of pantheism (all is God, God is all = universalism = *catholicity*).

b. The Patristics’ Platonic Ecclesiology

1) Whether wittingly or not, the patristics “platonized” Christian theology with the doctrine of *catholicity*. For example, **Ignatius** (30-107) stated, saying, “*Wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church*” (*Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*, 8).⁵

2) The writer of the **Didache** (c. 125) stated, saying, “*As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains and being gathered together became one, so may Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy kingdom...gather it together from the four winds—even the Church which has been sanctified.*”⁶

3) **Cyprian** (200-258) advanced *extra nulla salus ecclesiam* (“outside of the church there is no salvation”). He linked heretical soteriology (works salvation) with heretical ecclesiology (universal church). L. Berkhof said of Cyprian, “*Thus Cyprian was the first to bring out clearly and distinctly the idea of a catholic Church, comprehending all true branches of the Church of Christ, and bound together by a visible and external unity.*”⁷ By the end of the fourth century the concept of “*catholic church*” was firmly fixed in ecclesiastical writings and practice.

4) **Augustine** (354-430) was a neo-Platonist whose work “represents the climax of Platonic spirituality.”⁸ Augustine’s controversy with the Donatists (Baptists) helped shape catholic ecclesiology for centuries to come. The Donatists criticized the “visible church” of RCC because of its lack of a pure membership, asking if the church was actually split into two churches, the mixed church of the present and the pure church of the future. In seeing the Donatists’ legitimate criticism of the impure “visible church,” Augustine was forced to couple his concept of the predestination of the elect with his Cyprianic concept of the catholic Church. Berkhof summed up Augustine’s position by stating “the real unity of the saints and therefore of the church is an **invisible one**. At the same time it exists only within the Catholic Church, for it is there only that the Spirit works and that true love dwells.”⁹

⁵Coxe, *loc cit.*

⁶J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers* (Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1976 reprint), p. 126

⁷Louis Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975), p. 229.

⁸Edward G. Selwyn, ed., *A Short History of Christian Thought* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1949), p. 58.

⁹Berkhof, p. 229.

Augustine's theological ingenuity had a two-fold effect. It not only helped him to sidestep neatly the Donatists' objection, but it also was the source for later ecclesiological error. Although Augustine did not use the term "invisible" with "catholic Church," **he did originate the concept of "invisible, catholic church" out of theological necessity.** So by the 5th century there were at least two different concepts to "church." To the Augustinian catholic (Luther was an Augustinian monk), the true church was within the visible, catholic institution entered into by the sacrament of baptism and maintained by the sacraments. To the Donatist, the true church was the assembly of immersed believers in a particular local, maintained by biblical preaching and pertinent church discipline.¹⁰

C. The Roman Empire and the Catholic Church.

1. Pragmatic Reasons Leading to the Papacy.

a. The Supremacy of Bishops (*contra* III Jn. 1:9). Apostate churches began to insist that bishops were the *esse* (essence) rather than the *bene esse* (good of the essence) of the church. "*The church is in the bishop, and the bishop is in the church, and if anyone is not with the bishop he is not in the church*" (Cyprian).¹¹

b. The necessity of Apostolic Succession. **Irenaeus** posited the clear statement of Apostolic Succession, saying, "*But since it would be too long to enumerate in such a volume as this the successions of all the churches, we shall confound all those who, in whatever manner, whether through self-satisfaction or vainglory, or through blindness and wicked opinion, assemble other than where it is proper, by pointing out here the successions of the bishops of greatest and most ancient church known to all, founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul—that church which has the tradition and the faith with which comes down to us after having been announced to men by the apostles. For with this Church, because of its superior origin, all churches must agree, that is, all the faithful in the whole world. And it is*

¹⁰The Lutheran Reinhold Seeberg admitted the difficulty of having two different concepts of the nature of the church, stating, "From a critical point of view, the Donatist' objection is not without justification, for the church of the sacraments (*sic*) and the church of grace (*sic*) can only with the greatest difficulty be intellectually harmonized...We may, accordingly, speak of a two-fold, or even a three-fold, definition of the church in Augustine," Reinhold Seeberg, *Text-Book of the history of Doctrines*, transl. Charles E. Hay, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), I, 326.

¹¹Coxe, *loc cit.*

*in her that the faithful of the whole world. And it is in her that the faithful everywhere have maintained the apostolic tradition” (Against Heresies, 3:3:2).*¹²

c. The Development of Religious Hierarchism. **Ignatius** perpetuated notion of three church offices, saying, “*See that you all follow the **bishop**, even as Jesus Christ does the Father, and the **presbytery** as you would the apostles; and reverence the **deacons**, as being the institution of God. Let no man do anything connected with the Church without the bishop” (Epistle to the Smyrnaeans, 8).*¹³

1) Secondary bishops became assistants.

2) The Emperor (Augustus) became the *pontifex maximus* (“the great bridge builder”) uniting Roman man to Roman deities such as Mithras in the *pleroma*. Later the RCC employed this term for the bishop of Rome as “*the Pontiff who pontificated.*”

d. Territorial Subdivision

1) Corruption of the biblical text fostered the apostate churches to think in terms of territorial churches (The NIV reads “Then the **church** throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened” whereas the KJV reads “*Then had the **churches** rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria*” (Acts 9:31).

2) The concept and practice of *paroikia* (“parish”) developed.

3) Senior bishops, especially in larger churches, became authoritative over younger bishops.

4) By the 3rd century this diocesan system was “*quite fully established.*”¹⁴

e. Suitability of Church of Rome

1) Rome was capital of Roman Empire.

2) Rome was the chief city since “all roads lead to Rome.”

3) Rome had ideal geographical setting.

4) Rome had the prestige of receiving Paul’s most doctrinal letter.

5) Supposedly Linus was in apostolic succession after Peter in Rome (II Tim 4:21).

2. Religious Reasons Leading to the Roman Catholic Church

a. After Constantine became emperor in 306, he sought supernatural help against enemies for victories.

¹²Henry Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1957), pp. 95-97.

¹³Coxe, *loc cit.*

¹⁴Henry C. Vedder, *A Short History of the Baptists* (Valley Forge, PA: The Judson Press, 1969), p. 54.

- b. In 312 he prayed and received the vision of the cross in the heavens with the inscription *In hoc signo vinces* (“in this sign you will conquer”).
- c. He issued the Edict of Milan (313) which allowed for the toleration of Christianity. This was the practical beginning of the RCC.
 - 1) He began to have his children taught only by Christians.
 - 2) He allowed wills to benefit the churches.
 - 3) He began to spend money building church buildings.
- d. In 325, he called for about 300 bishops to settle the Arian heresy in the first ecumenical council at Nicea (Nicene Council).
- e. The Roman Empire, under the leadership of Constantine, merged with the apostate Catholic Churches for form the Holy Roman Catholic Church (RE + CC + RCC).
- f. In 380, the Edict of Thessalonica officially ordered all Roman Empire subjects to profess the faith of the bishops of Rome and of Alexandria making Nicene Christianity the state religion of the Roman Empire.

D. The Ecumenical Church Councils¹⁵

1. The Nicene Council (325)

a. The Political Setting

- 1) Constantine called the council to settle the Arian Controversy.
- 2) The council opened on May 20 and ended on July 25, 325.
- 3) State paid expenses for about 300 bishops and bishop Hosius of Cordova presided.

b. The Theological Setting

- 1) Origen held the Gnostic view that Jesus Christ was *theos deuterios*, the second god inferior to the Father.
- 2) Arius (256-336), presbyter of Alexandria, maintained that the Son of God was God’s greatest and highest creation based on Prov. 8:22 [LXX] and Jn. 14:28. This view denied distinction within the Godhead (Jn. 1:1) and contact of God with the world (I Tim. 3:16).
- 3) Athanasius (296-373), a deacon under Bishop Alexander at Alexandria espoused the biblical view of the Trinity and maintained that Christ the Son was eternal in order to provide eternal redemption.
- 4) The Arians held that Christ was created. Eusebius maintained that the Son was of similar substance (*homoiousios*) with the Father. Athanasius insisted that the Son was of the same substance

¹⁵Significantly, the RCC Council of Carthage in 397 finally concluded authoritatively that the 27 inspired NT books belonged in the NT Canon of Scripture.

(*homoousios*) with the Father. The *iota* in the heretical word *homoi-ousios* made all of the difference.

5) Although most of the bishops were initially Arians, Athanasius argued biblically and theologically convincingly, and ultimately the council rejected Arianism and proclaimed that the deity of Jesus Christ the Son is Nicene orthodoxy!

6) The RCC could finally unite around the doctrine of the deity of Christ (**Jesus of Nazareth is true God!**). The Nicene Council of 325 also established the calendar date of Easter, insuring that it would never fall on the Jewish Passover.

2. The Council of Constantinople (381)

- a. It confirmed the Nicene Council and the *homoousios* of the Holy Spirit.
- b. It dealt with the heresy of Apollinarius who denied the true humanity of Christ.
- c. The Council rejected the notion that the humanity of Jesus was absorbed into His divinity. **Jesus of Nazareth is true Man!**

3. The Council of Ephesus (431)

- a. Called by Theodosius II to settle the Nestorian heresy, it condemned the major proponent, Cyril of Alexandria.
- b. The Nestorian heresy maintained that Jesus Christ had two natures and was two persons. **Jesus Christ is One Person with Two Natures!**

4. The Council of Chalcedon (451)

- a. The Council rejected Eutyches's heresy that Christ was one person with one nature.
- b. Also known as Monophysitism, the movement was denounced by Bishop Leo and the Council. **Jesus Christ is One Person with Two Natures!**
- c. It took the RCC into the middle of the 5th century to comprehend and present the biblical and theological description of the Lord Jesus Christ!

III. THE EVILS OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

A. Heresies

1. Through the centuries the Roman Catholic Church collected an assortment of pagan concepts and heresies (some dates are approximate).

- a. Prayers for the dead (c. 310)
- b. Veneration of angels and dead saints (c. 375)

- c. The Mass (c. 394)
- d. Mariolatry and the use of *theotokos* “the Mother of God” (431)
- e. Purgatory first established by Gregory the Great (c. 593)
- f. the Latin language was required for prayer and worship (c. 600)
- g. Prayers were directed to Mary or dead saints (c. 600)
- h. The title Pope was first given to the bishop of Rome (610)
- i. Kissing the Pope’s feet (709)
- j. Worship of images (788)
- k. Holy Water blessed by priest (850)
- l. Veneration of St. Joseph (890)
- m. Canonization of dead saints (995)
- n. Fasting on Fridays and Lent (998)
- o. Celibacy of priesthood (1079)
- p. Practice of using Rosary (1090)
- q. The sale of Indulgences or purchasing forgiveness (1190)
- r. Transubstantiation (1215)
- s. Confession of sins to priest (1215)
- t. Adoration of wafer (1215)
- u. The Bible forbidden to common people (1229)
- v. The Scapular, a brown cloth with picture of Mary (1287)
- w. The cup forbidden to laity (1414)
- x. The Dogma of Seven Sacraments (1439)
- y. Tradition equal authority with Bible according to the Council of Trent (1545)
- z. Immaculate Conception of Mary (1854)
- aa. Papal Infallibility (1870)
- ab. The Assumption of Mary (1950)

2. These heresies were never rescinded even though they can be easily refuted by Scripture.

B. Monasticism

1. The Concept

- a. The word *monachos* means celibate.
- b. The desire to withdrawal or drop out of RCC society had its roots in “wilderness spirituality.”
- c. Little participation in RCC life brought dissatisfaction, along with the Gnostic tendency to avoid matter and flesh.
- d. The asceticism of celibacy and fasting fostered the “spirituality” of works salvation.

2. The Practice

a. **Origen** was a Gnostic infused with ascetic tendencies and perpetuated asceticism in Egypt. Egypt had the physical and religious climate ideal for the origin and spread of the theology of self-denial.

b. **Antony** (251-356) became the father of “anchoritic” (*anachorein*—to take to the bush) monasticism. Born in Egypt he sold all and lived outside of a village and off the land, rarely eating or sleeping. He devoted himself to fasting, asceticism, and prayers to rid himself of demons. Later he lived in an abandoned fort and gained a gathering like-minded ascetics who lived in cells in the ruins of the fort.

c. **Pachomius** (AD 287-346), as the father of “*cenobitic*” (close-fellowship with strict rules) monasticism, rejected the laxity of the RCC and established his ascetic *koinonia*. With a following of some 3000 devotees, he developed a list of strict rules, including garb, prayer, scripture reading, manual labor, fasting, and chastity. His sister **Mary** started a nunnery.

d. Extreme monasticism including movements wherein the “monks” ate grass, rejected sleep, and sat atop of stone pillars seeking solitude and separation from the world. **Simon the Stylite** (AD 390-459) lived atop a stone pillar some 60 feet high for the last 36 years of his life (it is recorded that he touched his forehead to his feet 1244 times in succession!).

e. **Basil the Great** (AD 329-379) left the RCC, became a monk, was called back to RCC and became the Bishop of Caesarea. Originally monasticism was a reaction to the “worldliness” of the RCC but later became a strong arm of the RCC.

f. Early monasticism led to movements of monastic orders such as the Franciscans, the Dominicans, the Friars, and ultimately the Jesuits. **Ignatius Loyola** (1491-1556) started the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) to resist the Protestant Reformation. **Francis Xavier** (1506-1552) was their greatest missionary. The SJ’s became the Pope’s apologists and initiated the Gregorian University in Rome. Numerous social and military monastic orders developed, such as the Carmelites, the Servants of Mary, the Knights of the Sword, the Templars, and the Hospitallers.

C. Crusades

1. The Motivation of the Crusades

a. Rome attempted to recapture the holy sites in the Promised Land from Islamic rule.

- b. This effort appealed to some with “wanderlust,” to some men of adventure, and to some convicted RCC members who wanted to the preserve the holy shrines.
- 2. The Madness of the Crusades (11-12 centuries)
 - a. In 1096 **Urban II** cried out *deus vult* (“God wills it”) and called the faithful RCC to travel to the Holy Land and deliver it from the infidel Muslims.
 - b. With the cross as their symbol, many armies of peasants proceeded with the promise for martyrs of plenary indulgence and eternal life (as were the Muslims promised their 72 virgins).
 - c. Many perished on the way or were slaughtered in battle, but Jerusalem was recaptured by the RCC.
 - d. The Second Crusade was launched by **Bernard of Clairvaux** (1147) to regain Jerusalem again, but ended in disaster.
 - e. Other crusades such as the Kings’ Crusade and later the Children’s Crusade were catastrophes as well.
 - f. The Seven Crusades and the many minor crusades established the “crusader spirit” to fight spiritual battles physically, barbarically killing enemies of “Christianity” in the name of God, and possibly gaining a martyr’s crown.
 - g. Some consequences of the RCC Crusades:
 - 1) Eastern and Western civilizations exchanged commerce, customs, and religious perspective.
 - 2) The west did not secure Holy places and became weak against the encroachment of Islam. Moslems developed an intense hatred for the west (as characterized by the “Christian” RCC).
 - 3) Western feudalism began to deteriorate, and Muslim words entered the Western vocabulary (e.g., alcohol, algebra, alkali, cotton, cipher, magazine, zenith, etc.).

D. Inquisitions

- 1. The Rationale of Inquisitions
 - a. Based on *extra nulla salus ecclesiam*, the citizenry needed to conform to RCC teaching and practice.
 - b. Kings, bishops, and priests must needs aggressively and forcibly exterminate all heresy, which they attempted to do.
 - c. Many who converted to “Ana-Baptist” (“re-baptizers”) teachings were persecuted.
- 2. The Development of Inquisitions

- a. Usually dated from the Council of Tours (1163), **Alexander III** urged secular princes to help RCC bishops to exterminate by imprisonment or death the teaching and practice of the Cathars (S. France) and Waldensians (N. Italy).
- b. The Cathars and Waldensians along with the Albigenses¹⁶ were early Baptists who rejected the papacy, the state religion, and entrance into the state religion by baptismal regeneration. They were considered apostate churches.
- c. The Councils of Montpelier (AD 1215) and of Narbonne (AD 1227) required RCC bishops and monks to participate actively.
- d. **Gregory IX** (AD 1231-1235) assigned formally the orders of the Dominicans and of the Franciscans with the task of Inquisitions under the authority of the pope.
- e. **Innocent IV** (AD 1252) instituted the Papal Bull *Ad Extirpanda* universally, and **Urban IV** (AD 1262) initiated the office of Inquisitor General (of the “Congregation of the Holy Office”).
- f. Supposedly, in 1834 the “Holy Office” ceased inquisitions, and now exists only to produce the “Index of Prohibited Books.”
- g. Obviously, the RCC could not obtain a pure *Corpus Christi*!

3. The Process of Inquisitions

- a. With vast records of the populace and of the most effective means of torture, the RCC processed enemies of the state religion with “*the accusation.*”
- b. Next came “*the denunciation.*”
- c. Then “*the examination.*”
- d. Then “*the torture,*” depending on what worked “best” on men, on women, and on children.
- e. “*The imprisonment*” followed, and in many cases then execution.
- f. Finally, “*the confiscation*” of all property of the accused and of their family, and ultimately “*the infamy*” leveled upon the family.

E. The Fallacy and Foibles of the Papacy

1. The issue of *Caesaropapism*, (“Caesar is pope”) or who will rule the RCC, Caesar or the Pope [?], weakened the papacy.

¹⁶Although many historians (RCC, Protestant, and some Protestant Baptists) will dismiss these movements as Gnostic and non-biblical, there is sufficient historical evidence that within these churches there were some true to NT tenets. After all, the Precious Saviour promised the perpetuity of His Baptist assemblies (Mt. 28:19-20; I Tim. 3:15).

2. The Byzantine Papacy (6th -8th centuries) conceded to the Emperor to rule the RCC, inaugurating *Caesaropapism*.
3. The Avignon Papacy (1309-1376) continued to weaken the papacy, as the Frenchman **Clement V** became pope and refused to move to Rome. For 67 years he ruled from Avignon (now in France) with six successive popes, their absence from Rome hailed as the “Babylonian Captivity of the Papacy.”
4. **Gregory XI** returned to Rome, but then **Urban VI** started up the Avignon movement again, causing each line of popes to denounce the other as anti-pope.
5. By this time (14th – 15th centuries), the papacy had been riddled with avarice [simony, theft, graft, bribery], immorality [sodomy, incest, rape, adultery, concubines] and witchcraft [sorcery] through popes such as **John XXIII, Pius II, Paul II, Sixtus IV, Innocent VIII, and Alexander VI**.

IV. THE EARLY EFFORTS OF REFORMATION

A. Prerequisites for the Reformation

1. The Need for a Weakened Papacy (the Avignon Papacy).
2. The Need for the Invention of Moveable Print (**J. Gutenberg**, c. 1440).¹⁷
3. The Need for Pre-Reformers (**Savonarola, Huss, Wycliffe**).
4. The Need for the Decline of Feudalism (Mercantile system developing along with the economic middle class).¹⁸
5. The Need for the Presentation of the True Gospel (Bible-believing Baptists).

B. The Pre-Reformers

1. **John Wycliffe** (1329-1384) was the English Pre-Reformer, called the “morning star of the Reformation,” who opposed the papacy and monasticism, sent out preachers (Lollards), and attempted to translate the *Vulgate* and produce the vernacular English Scriptures (AD 1382) into “the hands of every plow boy and milk maiden.” He died of a stroke and was condemned by the RCC as a heretic.
2. **John Huss** (1373-1415) was a Czech priest who opposed vocally the papacy and the doctrine of indulgences. He wrote against extremes in the RCC in his *De Ecclesia* and refused to recant of his denunciations. He was burnt at the stake as a heretic within the RCC.

¹⁷Johannes Gutenberg (c. AD 1400-1468), inventor of moveable type printing and the father of the Printing Revolution, printed the Gutenberg Bible in AD 1455.

¹⁸Medieval feudalism (AD 9th – 15th centuries) combined military and legal practices around large land owners who protected and provided for the populace in exchange for labor in the land. Mercantilism (14th – 15th centuries), including international trade and banking helped an economic middle class to emerge, give some financial freedom to the peasants of Europe.

3. **Girolamo Savonarola** (1452-1498) was a Dominican Friar (French for “brother”) in Italy who attempted to bring moral reformation in Florence by burning books and denouncing the papacy. He was ex-communicated, hanged, and burnt (this Friar became a “frier”).

V. THE REFORMATION

A. The Meaning of “Reformation”

1. **Joachim of Flora** (11th-12th centuries) employed the Latin *Vulgate reformatio* to designate the new era that was about to come upon the RCC.
2. Historians applied the term to Luther’s effort to rid the RCC of extreme errors and excesses such as the papacy and the doctrine of indulgences.

B. The Background of the Reformation

1. A Time of Revolution

- a. Economic Revolution—the rise of the mercantile system, banking, interest, manufacturing, foreign trade, etc., enhanced national economics with a growing middle class.
- b. Intellectual Revolution—simultaneous with the invention of the printing press was the rebirth of the Greek and Roman classics (humanities) and the rebirth of culture (Renaissance).
- c. Geographic Revolution—the discovery of America (1492), the world-wide voyage around the world by **Magellan** (1519), and **Copernicus’** heliocentric theory expanded knowledge about heaven and earth.
- d. Religious Revolution—the “Great Schism” (1378-1417) fostering three popes at once, the decadence of the papacy and priesthood, and the fact that the RCC had no answer for the Bubonic Plague (1347-1350) which killed about 1/3 of Europe, brought great despair in and distaste for the RCC.

2. A Time of Humanism

a. The Background of Humanism

- 1) Reacting to Scholasticism (the writings and philosophy of the RCC), the Humanist movement was an emphasis on man’s writings and philosophies.
- 2) In the RCC “universities” (which taught *catholicity* to men) the teaching of Scholasticism was replaced by the *studia humanitatis* or the study of the humanities including grammar, history, rhetoric, and the Greek classics and language (including the Greek New Testament).

b. The Phases of Humanism

- 1) 16th Century—return to human rather than RCC writings.
- 2) 17-19th Centuries—development of biblical criticism, skepticism and anti-supernaturalism.
- 2) 20th Century—atheistic humanism (Humanist Manifesto [1933]).

c. The Relationship between Humanism and Christianity

- 1) In western Europe the authority for life ceased being empty Scholasticism (e.g., “how many angels can stand on the head of a pin?” and “did Adam have a navel?”) and transferred to the writings of the ancients such as **Cicero’s** Latin and Paul’s Greek.
- 2) With the upsurge of interest in the Greek language, and many Greek manuscripts (MSS) of the NT flowing into Europe from Constantinople prior to its fall (AD 1453), churchmen began studying Greek MSS of the NT.
- 3) The “*humanist*” **Desiderius Erasmus** (1466-1536), a Dutch priest, became a world-renown Latin and Greek scholar. As he had access to both Latin and Greek MSS he became burdened to produce an edition of the Greek NT. He made his own Latin translation of the Greek NT in 1505-1506, and began to produce Greek editions of the NT starting in 1516. He edited about five Greek MSS and produced his first edition in 1516, which textual movement was later dubbed the *Textus Receptus* (Received Text). Historians have stated that he “laid the egg that Luther hatched.” Influenced by the Lord’s assemblies, Erasmus incorporated the *Johannine Comma* (I Jn. 5:7) in his third edition. His *Received Text* was the foundational text for the *Tyndale Bible*, the *Geneva Bible*, and the *King James Bible*.

VI. THE PROTESTANT REFORMERS

A. Martin Luther (1483-1546)¹⁹

1. His Early Years

- a. He was born into a RCC peasant family and baptized by immersion (RCC mode at that time) as an infant into the RCC.²⁰

¹⁹ For a thorough and informative examination of the private and public life of Luther, see E. G. Schwiebert, *Luther and His Times: The Reformation from a New Perspective*. (St. Louis: Concordia Publ. House, 1950), p. 1 ff.

b. He studied and received academic degrees from the RCC University of Erfurt (BA and MA) and ultimately his ThD from University of Wittenberg (1512).

c. While studying Romans for preparation (c. 1514-1517), he had his “tower experience” (*Turmerlebnis*).

d. He expressed his conversion thusly, *“I greatly longed to understand Paul’s Epistle to the Romans and nothing stood in the way but that one expression, “the justice of God,” because I took it to mean that justice whereby God is just and deals justly in punishing the unjust. . . . Night and day I pondered until I saw the connection between the justice of God and the statement that “the just shall live by his faith.” Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith. Thereupon I felt myself reborn and to have gone through the open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning, and whereas before the “justice of God” had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love. This passage of Paul became to me a gate to heaven.”*²¹

1) These are the words of one baptized into the RCC as an infant, embraced a theological system which perpetuated Mariolatry, and propagated baptismal regeneration. His faith was in justification produced by baptismal regeneration!

2) He co-authored the Augsburg Confession (1530) which states what Lutherans believe about baptism, saying, *“They teach that after the fall of Adam all men, born according to nature, are born with sin...bringing condemnation and also eternal death to those who are not reborn through baptism and the Holy Spirit.”*²²

3) Again the Augsburg Confession states under “Baptism IX” the following: *“Of Baptism they teach that it is necessary to salvation, and that through Baptism is offered the grace of God, and that children are to be baptized who, being offered to God through Baptism are received into God’s grace. They condemn the Anabaptists, who reject the baptism of children, and say that children are saved without Baptism.”*²³

²⁰It should be noted that all of the major Reformers died as baptized Roman Catholics. They considered themselves as reforming Catholics and never sought to change “church” affiliation through another baptism!

²¹Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1950, p. 60.

²²Bettenson, p. 297.

²³Bettenson, p. 298.

4) *The Large Catechism* by Martin Luther affirms this about infant baptism, stating, “*That **the Baptism of infants is pleasing to Christ** is sufficiently proved from His own work, namely, that God sanctifies many of them who have been thus baptized, and **has given them the Holy Ghost**; and that there are yet many even to-day in whom we perceive that they have the Holy Ghost both because of their doctrine and life; as it is also given to us by the grace of God that we can explain the Scriptures and come to the knowledge of Christ, which is impossible without the Holy Ghost.*”²⁴

5) The theological conclusion is that in c. 1514 he believed in justification by faith (through baptism) as all Catholics do, and he confirmed that same belief in 1530. There is no biblical, theological or practical evidence that he was born again by the Spirit, and the fruit of his religious heritage is German rationalism which fostered the Biblical Criticism movement (17th – 19th centuries).

2. His Reforming Years

a. On the eve of All Saints’ Day and the anniversary of the consecration of the church (October 31, 1517), Luther challenged Dominican friar and Grand Inquisitor **Johann Tetzel** (1465-1519) to a debate by nailing 95 theses to the door of the Wittenberg Church (common place for public notices).

b. Luther attacked Tetzel primarily for the doctrine of indulgences (selling coupons for the forgiveness of sins before they were committed to obtain money for the completion of St. Peter’s Church in Rome).²⁵

c. Luther’s propositions quickly spread throughout Germany with the aid of mass printing. One such proposition was the following: “*Those who assert that a soul straightway flies out (of purgatory) as a coin tinkles in the collection-box, are preaching an invention of man.*”²⁶

d. When the debate did not cease, **Pope Leo X** (AD 1475-1521) ordered Luther to Rome; however **Frederick the Elector** of Saxony intervened and had **Cardinal Cajetan** meet with him in Germany. When this meeting and the debate with **Johann Eck** failed to dissuade Luther from his criticism, Eck obtained a “bull of excommunication” from the Pope.

²⁴F. Bente and W. H. T. Dau, transl., “The Large Catechism,” *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical books of the Ev. Lutheran Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Publ. House, 1921), pp. 565 ff.

²⁵Even the following couplet was attributed to Tetzel: “*As soon as the gold in the casket rings, the rescued soul to heaven springs.*” Henry George Ganss, “Johann Tetzel.” *Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 14 (NY: Robert Appleton Company, 1912), pp. 539–541.

²⁶Bettenson, p. 265.

- e. In the mean time Luther wrote several treatises critical of the papacy and of some RCC doctrines. Upon receiving the “Bull” Luther burnt it.
- f. Finally, Emperor **Charles V** had to intervene and called the “Imperial Diet (= “special day”) of Worms (in Germany)” in 1521.
- g. The German reformer refused to recant of his criticisms and stated the famous declaration, “Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise.” He was subsequently ex-communicated from the visible RCC.²⁷
- h. While heading back to Saxony, Frederick “kidnapped” him and hid him in the Wartburg Castle for almost a year, during which time he wrote his commentaries and translated the Greek NT into the German language.
- i. By 1522 he headed up the Lutheran Reformation in Germany, married **Katherine von Bora** in 1525, turned the University of Wittenberg into a German training institute for German Lutheran pastors,²⁸ and promoted Lutheran doctrine throughout Germany via the Augsburg Confession (1530).
- j. Through his preaching, teaching, and many writings he impacted Germany and Western Europe with the reform of the RCC and the protestations of RCC geographical intrusions. Those that followed him were “**Reformers**” and “**Protestants**,” terms that relate to changing and challenging the RCC. He died of heart failure, trusting in the Lutheran doctrine which he taught (Feb. 18, 1546).

B. Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531)

1. He studied in the RCC University of Vienna and learned humanism through acquaintance with Erasmus.
2. He became priest at the Zurich Great Church, although forced to leave because of immorality.
3. By 1522 he attacked the RCC custom of fasting during Lent and promoted clerical marriages.
4. He also was responsible for the drowning of Anabaptist **Felix Manz** (1527) who rejected the practice of requiring all newborn infants in Zurich to be baptized.
5. Zwingli was killed in the Battle of Kappel.

²⁷Consequently, he claimed he was still a member of the “invisible” catholic or universal church.” He coined the term “*invisible universal church*.”

²⁸These young German men, baptized as babies, began to study Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek and to produce lexicons and theological works relating to the Bible as unregenerates, and consequently ushered in the anti-supernaturalism of Biblical Criticism movement.

C. John Calvin (1509-1564)

1. He studied theology and law at the University of Paris and was influenced by Erasmian humanism.
2. His only reference to salvation was a passing comment about a “sudden conversion.” Presumably at this time he sided with those calling for reform of the RCC and particularly of the RCC Mass.
3. In 1536 he wrote his basic reformed theology entitled *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. As a theological “Augustinian” he focused on predestination and the sovereignty of God.²⁹ He debated with Anabaptists about the meaning and mode of baptism. Ecclesiologically, Calvin advanced the Augustinian heresy that the elect constitute the invisible universal church.
4. By 1541 he came to Geneva and began to control the city, making it a “holy city” through rigid discipline and persecution. He was responsible for the deaths of at least 50 “heretics” including the burning of **Michael Servetus** (1553).
5. He controlled Geneva with a strong hand, making it his version of Reformed Catholicism, finally dying of natural causes in 1564.

D. Henry VIII (1491-1547)

1. As King of England, he resented the RCC intrusion into his six marriages as he attempted to have a son and keep the throne in the Tudor family.
2. By 1534 King Henry rejected papal intrusion and claimed to be the “Supreme Head of the Church of England.” He was subsequently excommunicated from the RCC by **Pope Paul III**.
3. Through the efforts of **Thomas Cromwell** (1485-1540) and others the King dissolved many monasteries, produced the anti-RCC *Ten Articles of Faith*, promoted the Great Bible, and forced the clergy to use the *Anglican Book of Common Prayer*.

E. Conclusion

1. All of these men and lesser known Reformers were born Roman Catholics and they died as Roman Catholics. To be sure, they resented the intrusion of the papacy and some of the extreme perversions of the RCC. They wanted to have the RCC “their way” in their geographical jurisdiction.
2. They all embraced the concept and practice of the state religion (“*sacral society*”), which maintained the tenets of **1) one national leader** (pope or king),

²⁹Later theologians, such as the Dutch scholar **Johannes Cocceius** (1603-1669) propagated Calvin’s sovereignty theology, organizing it around “*Covenant Theology*” (i.e., [1] The Covenant of Works, [2] The Covenant of Grace, and [3] The Covenant of Redemption) or “*Reformed Theology*.”

2) a specific geographical location (territorialism), 3) the rite of admission (infant baptism), 4) the standard form of worship (external), and 5) the attitude toward dissidents (persecution, torture, death).

VII. THE RESULTS OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

A. Denominations

1. The Various Branches of the RCC “denominated” themselves.
 - a. Lutheranism started in 1530 with Luther.
 - b. Anglicanism started in 1534 with Henry VIII.
 - c. Presbyterianism started in 1541 with Calvin.
 - d. Congregationalism started in 1581 out of Anglicanism.
 - e. Wesleyan Methodism started in 1791 with John Wesley.
2. The Denominations all had the common tenets of the “*sacral society*.”
 - a. One national leader: i.e., king or pope.
 - b. A specific geographical location: i.e., Germany, Geneva.
 - c. The rite of admission: i.e., infant baptism.
 - d. The standard form of worship: i.e., stained glass windows, pomp, etc.
 - e. The attitude toward dissidents: i.e., persecution, torture, death.

B. German Rationalism

1. The fruit of German Lutheranism and the pedobaptists theologians was unbelief concerning the Bible.
2. Through German Lutheran Theology the Biblical Criticism began, culminating in the late 19th century anti-supernatural, evolutionary-laced Higher Criticism, Lower Criticism, Form Criticism, Historical Criticism, Canonical Criticism, Source Criticism, etc.

C. Universal Church

1. Through the influence of the Gnostic Plato, the Patristics platonized ecclesiology as manifested with their Ignatian “catholic church” notion.
2. Cyprian declared *extra nulla salus ecclesiam*, and Constantine married the Roman Empire to the apostate catholic churches to produce the Roman Catholic Church, which was the **visible universal church**.
3. Augustine perpetuated the doctrine of the **visible universal church** hinting at the “invisible” elect within, as he dealt with early Baptists.

4. Upon being excommunicated from the **visible universal church** (RCC), Luther coined the term “**invisible**” and applied it to the **invisible universal church** to which he belonged.
5. Later, Calvin advanced the doctrine that the “elect” constitute the **invisible universal church**, equating soteriology with ecclesiology.
6. Protestant soteriology (Calvinism) and ecclesiology (invisible universal church) influenced Baptists like **John Gill** (1697-1771) to the extent that 21st century Baptists continue to propagate Calvinism (Reformed Baptists) and the invisible universal church (Mystical Body of Christ).³⁰

D. Fundamentalism

1. Fundamentalism had an American and Protestant foundation, starting among Protestant denominations in the 1920’s as Modernism (unbelieving liberalism) infiltrated Bible colleges, seminaries, and churches.
2. The theological conservative Protestants joined together to fight against Modernism as related to several fundamental Christian doctrines, such as the deity of Christ, the inspiration of Scripture, full atonement for sins in Christ’s death, bodily resurrection of Christ, and historical reality of the miracles of Jesus.
3. Fundamentalist schools began such as Bob Jones University, Wheaton College, and Shelton College, and the Scofield Reference Bible (AD 1909) became the Fundamentalists’ Bible of the 20th century.
4. Just as there were fundamental doctrines for debate, there were doctrines which were “non-essential” for debate, such as the mode and meaning of baptism and the nature of the church. Co-terminally, religious organizations started to help churches, promoting the “Para-church” movement in America.
5. As Baptists joined Fundamentalism (i.e., Fundamental Baptist Fellowship) they became more ecumenical within fundamental Protestant groups, embracing Protestant theological heresies such as Spirit Baptism into the Mystical Body of Christ, Calvinism, and the need for Textual Criticism (KJV > NASB > ESV), while diminishing of the importance of Baptist doctrine and the name “Baptist,”

³⁰In 1689 the Act of Toleration allowed Baptists to be tolerated in England. Along with this toleration from Protestants, Baptists tolerated the Protestants, especially the Reformed Calvinists. Particular Baptist Pastor John Gill was the first of many following that generation who embraced Reformed soteriology (dual predestination) and Reformed ecclesiology (universal invisible church = mystical Body of Christ). Much of early British and American theology was Reformed or Calvinistic. Later, **J. N. Darby** (1880-1882) reacted to the exaggerated hierarchy of the Anglican Church and identified with the Plymouth Brethren, demeaning the reality of the visible assembly and advancing the heresy of the invisible church (Mystical Body of Christ). Darby influenced **C. I. Scofield** (1843-1921) who incorporated the universal invisible church notion in his 1909 and 1917 Scofield Reference Bible editions, influencing multitudes of fundamentalists in the 20th century.

and readily accepting Para-church organizations (e.g., Bible colleges, radio stations, mission boards, Christian newspapers, etc.).

6. Whether they know it or not, many 21st century Independent Baptist churches have been “protestantized” (RCC > Protestants > Fundamentalism > Fundamental Baptists > Fundamental Independent Baptists).

VIII. THE BAPTISTS’ RESPONSE TO THE REFORMATION

A. The Beginning of Baptists

1. Just as the RCC had its roots in the AD 1st century, so did Baptist churches.
2. Christianity started off as a large Baptist movement, as John the Baptist baptized thousands with believer’s immersion in the Jordan River, identifying the recipients with Christ (Mt. 3:1-17).
3. The Lord Jesus Christ appointed twelve apostles as the first officers in His Baptist assembly (Mt. 10:1-4).
4. He edified (Mt. 16:18) His Baptist assembly with church discipline (Mt. 18:16-17), the Lord’s Supper (Mt. 26:28-30), and the Great Commission (Mt. 28:19-20).
5. The apostles and early disciples established churches in Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8). Paul started the Corinthian church by going to Corinth, discipling the Corinthians, baptizing, and then teaching them for 18 months (Acts 18:1-11).
6. Scripture predicted that the Messiah would sing in the midst of His congregation (Ps. 22:22) and Paul declared that the Lord Jesus Christ did sing in His “**church**,” saying, “*Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the **church** will I sing praise unto thee*” (Heb. 2:12; see Mt. 26:30).
7. The truth of the inspired account in Acts of the history of Baptist church planting of the first century can be assumed by faith and thrust forward in every succeeding century, as the Lord promised, saying, “*And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen*” (Mt. 28:20). Whether history corroborates Baptist churches in every generation or not, we believe that there have been independent Baptist assemblies since the 1st century. By the way, history does indeed corroborate this biblical truth!

B. The Continuity of Baptists

1. The Testimony of Historians for the Continuity of Baptists
 - a. Dutch reformed Ypeij and Dermout stated, “*We have now seen that the Baptists, who were formerly called Anabaptists...were the original Waldenses, and who have long in history received the honor of that origin. On this account the Baptists may be considered as the only Christian*

community which has stood since the days of the Apostles, and as a Christian society which has preserved pure doctrine of the gospel through all ages.”³¹

b. Church of Christ leader Alexander Campbell states: *“From the apostolic age to the present time, the sentiments of Baptist have had a continued chain of advocates, and public documents of their existence in every century can be produced.*”³²

c. Quaker historian Robert Barclay states: *“The rise of the Anabaptists took place prior to the Reformation of the Church of England, and there are also reasons for believing that on the Continent of Europe small hidden Christian societies, who have held many of the opinions of the Anabaptists have existed from the time of the Apostles.*”³³

d. The Methodist scholar, John Clark Redpath, wrote to W. A. Jarrell and confessed, *“I should not readily admit that there was a Baptist church as far back as 100AD, though without doubt there were Baptists then, as all Christians were then Baptists.*”³⁴

e. The Lutheran historian J. L. von Mosheim stated: *“The origin of the Anabaptists is lost in the remote depths of antiquity. Before the rise of Luther and Calvin, there lay concealed in almost all the countries of Europe, persons who adhered tenaciously to the principles of the modern Dutch Baptists.*”³⁵

f. The Catholic Cardinal Hosius stated: *“Were it not for the fact that the Anabaptists have been grievously tormented and cut off with the knife during the past 1200 years, they would swarm greater than all the Reformers.*”³⁶

g. The Reformed historian Leonard Verduin stated: *“The [Anabaptist] dissent against the medieval order was in 1517 already a millennium old and extremely widespread. Because it had been obliged to carry on undercover, so that conference between the dissidents was quite out of the question, it had gone in all directions...the Church called all its foes by one and the same name, ‘heretics,’ who ‘like the foxes of Samson, have diverse faces but are all tied together at the tail.’”*³⁷

³¹John T. Christian, *A History of the Baptists*, Vol. 1 (Texarkana: Baptist Sunday School Committee, 1922), p. 95-96.

³²Christian, p. 82.

³³Christian, p. 85.

³⁴W. A. Jarrell, *Baptist Church Perpetuity or Baptist History* (Dallas: W. A. Jarrell, 1894), p. 59.

³⁵Christian, p. 83.

³⁶Christian, pp. 85-86.

³⁷Leonard Verduin, *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1964), p. 15.

- h. The Baptist, **C. H. Spurgeon** (1834-1892) stated: “*We believe that the Baptists are the original Christians. We did not commence our existence at the Reformation, we were reformers before Luther or Calvin were born; we never came from the Church of Rome, for we were never in it, but we have an unbroken line up to the Apostles themselves.*”³⁸
2. The Testimony of History for the Continuity of Baptists³⁹
- Baptists of the 2nd and 3rd centuries: Montanists and Novatians.
 - Baptists of the 4th through 16th centuries: Donatists, Paulacians, Waldenses, Bogomili, Albigenses, and Anabaptists.
3. Baptists Were/Are Not Protestants
- The Protestant Reformation came out of the RCC with Luther, Calvin and others attempting to reform the RCC.
 - The Baptists were the original Christians of the 1st century who preceded the apostate RCC and were never part of the RCC to have a desire to reform the RCC!
 - Baptists “*protest*” being called Protestants.
4. Baptists and the Reformers
- Biblically and historically it is evident that Baptists were in existence when the Reformation began in 1517. The Baptists initially hoped that the Reformers would make a complete break with the RCC; they were disappointed.
 - “*There was a constant conflict between the Reformers and the Baptists on the proper subjects of baptism. At the first the Reformers were disposed to take the Baptist side of the controversy and to deny the necessity of infant baptism.*”⁴⁰
 - Obviously, the issue of infant baptism was the symptom of the problem; the Reformers problem was their heretical sacral society ecclesiology which maintained that all who were born in the state church territory must be baptized into that regional religion. The sacral society demanded the sacramental ritual of infant baptism.
 - The driving theological force of the RCC and now the Reformers was the heretical visible catholic church (state religion = sacral society). Even though Reformers could not defend infant baptism biblically because of

³⁸Charles H. Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publ., 1975 reprint), p. 225.

³⁹For great detail on the doctrine, practice, and history of these immersionist assemblies or Baptist churches, see J. T. Christian, *A History of The Baptists*; J. M. Cramp, *Baptist History* (Watertown, WI: Baptist Heritage Publ.), reprint of the 1871 edition, and Strouse, *I Will Build My Church: The Doctrine and History of Baptists*.

⁴⁰Christian, p. 105.

their dogma of the visible catholic church, they by “theological necessity” taught and practiced it.

1) The RCC scholar John Dollinger affirmed: “*There is no proof or hint in the NT that the apostles baptized infants or ordered them to be baptized.*”⁴¹

2) French theologian Edmund de Pressense acknowledged: “*No positive fact sanctioning the practice of infant baptism can be adduced from the NT; the historical proofs alleged are in no way conclusive.*”⁴²

3) Lutheran professor Johan Hofling recognized: “The sacred Scriptures furnish no historical proof that children were baptized by the apostles.”⁴³

4) The German encyclopedia *Real Encyklopadie fur Protestantische Theologie und Kirche* revealed: “*The practice of infant-baptism in the apostolic and post-apostolic age cannot be proved. We hear indeed frequently of the baptism of entire households, as in Acts 15:32 f; 18:8; I Cor. 1:16. But the last passage taken, I Cor. 7:14, is not favorable to the supposition that infant baptism was customary at the time. For then Paul could not have written ‘else were your children unclean.’*”⁴⁴

e. Baptists had maintained the local aspect of the assembly.⁴⁵

1) Baptists taught and practice the biblical concept of the visible assembly. In contrast to a state church ecclesiology, Baptists practice the NT teaching of the “gathered” church.

2) Since they rejected a *sacral society* theology they consistently practiced believer’s immersion, baptizing all converts even from the RCC or Protestant churches.

3) Consequently, they were derided by the RCC and Protestants as “Ana-Baptists” or re-baptizers (“ana” = “re”). They rejected this label since the RCC/Protestant infant baptism was not legitimate, and so they were not “re-baptizing” converts. In time, the term “**Ana-Baptists**” reduced to “**Baptists**” since the prefix “**Ana**” dropped off. Subsequently, they were then designated as **Baptists**, historically and biblically aligning with the message of John the

⁴¹Christian, p. 17.

⁴²Christian, p. 17.

⁴³Christian, p. 17.

⁴⁴Christian, p. 17.

⁴⁵The Greek word behind “church” is ἐκκλησία (*ekklesia*) meaning “assembly” (see Acts 19:32, 39, and 41). Obviously an ἐκκλησία is always visible and local as is the case in the NT for all 115x that ἐκκλησία appears in the Received Greek Text.

Baptist.⁴⁶ He was the forerunner of the Messiah, who baptized the Lord, His apostles and disciples, and laid the foundation for the church ordinance of baptism as found in the Great Commission.

IX. CONCLUSION

A. Contrary to a biblically illiterate society five hundred years later, the Protestant Reformation on Oct. 31, 1517 was not some glorious effort to restore biblical teaching and practice to “a good church gone bad.”

B. The RCC started off as a conglomeration of apostate Baptist churches, promoting the “Babylonianism” of the Roman Empire and perpetuating additional heresies through the centuries.

C. So bad were her many extreme teachings and heresies that even un-regenerate men bulked at the perpetuation of them and attempted to return the RCC back to “acceptable” heresies!

D. The Reformers were those men who wanted “to reform” the RCC, and to return her back to more humanly acceptable practices.

E. The major heresy of the RCC is “works salvation” through the seven sacraments including infant baptism. This heresy is necessitated by the heresy of the *sacral society* or the state religion of the visible catholic church, requiring all territorial inhabitants to be joined to her through the “regenerating” infant baptism.

G. Biblically, historically, and currently, Baptists have rejected works salvation, infant baptism, and the visible catholic church movement and the invisible catholic church ecclesiology.

H. The precious Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, brought forth the true “*reformation*” (Heb. 9:10), ending the *sacral society* of Judaism and requiring faith in His once-for-all sacrifice on the cross about which He stated, “*It is finished*” (Jn. 19:30).

⁴⁶The Lord Jesus Christ eulogized John as the greatest man other than Himself, saying, “*Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he*” (Mt. 11:11).

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