

2010

## Baptist Doctrine On Baptism

by Bill Lockwood

When men rely more on their own traditions than the Word of God, they always begin to cross not only the Bible, but also their own doctrine. Self-contradictions abound in the following statement taken from Edward Hiscox's *The Standard Manual for Baptist Churches*, (1931): p. 20-21. First, note the statement; then we will examine the main points.

“Baptism is not essential to salvation, for our churches utterly repudiate the dogma of ‘baptismal regeneration’; but it is essential to obedience, since Christ commanded it. It is also essential to a public confession of Christ before the world, and to membership in the church which is his body. “

1. Baptism “is not essential to salvation?” All one can know of baptism is in the Bible. Jesus taught “He that believes and his baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16) and Peter commanded baptism “for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). Peter later wrote “the like figure whereunto baptism does also now save us” (1 Peter 3:21). Baptist doctrine says “not essential.” The Bible teaches “baptism does also now save us.” It is simply a question of whom one believes.
2. “Baptismal regeneration?” Baptist doctrine confuses the essentiality of baptism with the dogma of “baptismal regeneration.” That doctrine—baptismal regeneration—is a Roman Catholic doctrine that teaches that water applied to a person, mostly babies, *apart from faith and repentance*, will save that person. The Bible teaches no such thing. Baptism apart from faith and repentance is not effectual. Faith and repentance are just as much requisite as is baptism.
3. “Baptism is essential to obedience” says Baptist Doctrine, but not for salvation? This is a strange statement. The only conclusion is that obedience is not essential to salvation. Yet, Hebrews 5:8-9 states, “*Though he were a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.*” Once again, it is only a question as to whom one will listen, the Bible—or Baptist doctrine.
4. “Christ commanded it.” Here it is admitted that Christ commanded baptism. According to Luke 7:29-30 those who accepted the baptism of John “justified God” and those who rejected it rejected the “counsel of God.” This was because it was from heaven. If one rejects baptism, as the Baptists say they do, they reject the commandment of God

against themselves—they reject the counsel of God.

5. Baptists write that “baptism is essential to a public confession of Christ before the world.” If that is true, and I have no doubt that it is, then it is essential to salvation on this ground alone. Why? Jesus said, *“Whosoever will confess me **before man**, him will I confess also before my Father in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven”* (Matthew 10:32-33). A public profession of Christ before men is essential. Baptism is part of that, according to the Hiscox Manual. Yet the Baptist Church denies its essentiality.
6. “Baptism is essential to membership in the church” but “not to salvation,” per the Baptist Church. If that is true, then salvation is obtained outside of church membership. Since the church of which they speak is the Baptist Church, the Baptist Church is not essential to salvation. They are thus admitting that they are allowing a non-essential institution to stand in the way of the unity of the New Testament. Not only so, the New Testament teaches that the Church is purchased with the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28); is His body (Ephesians 1:22, 23); and only those who are in Christ are in the body (Ephesians 5:23). It is only IN the Church that reconciliation to Christ is obtained (Ephesians 2:18); and the very same process that makes one a Christian (Acts 2:38) adds one to the Church of the New Testament (1 Corinthians 12:13).

It is amazing how far from the Word of God these doctrines of men wander. But a thorough study of God’s Word will keep us from the errors of the religious world.