

## **An Introduction to Our Church and the Beliefs and Practices of Primitive Baptists**

When a person first visits a Primitive Baptist Church, he will notice a simple worship service which consists of congregational singing, prayer and preaching. There will also be an absence of musical instruments, choirs, Sunday Schools and other auxiliary functions, which is in keeping with the pattern of New Testament worship.

The Lord's Church is under the authority of her husband and head, Jesus Christ, and should be submissive to him in all things (*Ephesians 5:23-25*). Therefore, the church should not desire to be like the world (*1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 8:19-20, Romans 12:2*) but rather be satisfied with the fatness of the Lord's house (*Psalms 36:8*).

The following is a brief description of what Primitive Baptists believe concerning the doctrine of the Bible which includes the fundamental principles of salvation by grace and the practice and order of the church.

### **The Name Primitive Baptist**

The word "Primitive" means original or first of the kind. It is one of many names the church has been called since it was established by Jesus during his earthly ministry (*Matthew 16:18*). Other names through history have been Christians (*Acts 11:26*), Donatists, Waldenses, Albigenses, Anabaptists, Novations, Lollards and Baptists.

The name "Primitive" was first used in the early 1830's when a major division came in the Baptist family. One group advocated a general atonement with salvation by the work of Christ, plus belief of the gospel by the sinner. They came to be known as "New School" or "Missionary Baptists". The other group continued holding steadfastly to the doctrine of "Particular Redemption" with salvation entirely by the grace of God through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. They came to be known as "Old School" or "Primitive Baptists". Therefore, the word "Primitive" denotes the desire to maintain the identity of the Lord's church as he established it and gave it to his disciples.

### **Purpose of the Church**

The Church was established by Christ (*Matthew 16:18*) to be a home (on earth) away from home (Heaven) for God's children. It is a refuge or sanctuary where one may receive spiritual comfort, rest and peace, and instruction in righteousness. The church was also established to give glory to God by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. (*Ephesians 3:21*)

### **The Scriptures**

We believe the scriptures are inspired by God (*2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3:16, 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1:20-21*), without error or contradiction and preserved (*Psalms 12:6-7, Proverbs 30:5-6*). We also believe the King James translation of the scriptures to be a work of God's Providence in preserving the scriptures for English speaking people. The purpose of the scriptures is to make *God's children wise unto salvation* by informing and educating them about their eternal salvation from sin by the finished work of Jesus Christ. The scriptures are also a thorough furnisher unto all good works. (*2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3:14-17*)

### **Purpose of the Gospel**

The gospel was never designed to bring eternal life to anyone. It means nothing to the dead sinner, but is good news and glad tidings to the born-again child of God who feels to be poor and needy and unworthy of God's mercy and grace, to hear that Jesus paid the sin debt, saved him from his sins and now he is preserved in Christ. (*Isaiah 40:1 & 9, Isaiah 52:7, Ephesians 4:11-12, 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 1:9-10, John 21:15-17, Acts 20:28, 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:1-3*)

### **Basic Difference Between Primitive Baptists**

## and Other Religious Groups

The main difference may be summarized by a look at the subject of cause and effect. What others say is the cause of salvation (such as belief, faith, repentance, baptism or other acts by an individual), Primitive Baptists believe these acts are the effects of, or evidence of, spiritual life and can only be performed sincerely by those already in possession of eternal life. In other words, salvation is totally by God's grace.

### DOCTRINE OF SALVATION BY GOD'S GRACE

#### 1. **The Fall of Man Resulting in Depravity**

When Adam transgressed God's law, he and all the human race died as they fell under the law of sin and death. This act did not result in sickness or injury but in death and separation from God. Therefore, he became incapable of recovering himself from this fallen condition by his own will or ability. (*Genesis 2:17, Romans 5:12, Romans 3:9-18, Psalms 14:1, Psalms 58:3-5*)

#### 2. **Unconditional Election and Predestination**

This wonderful doctrine teaches that God, according to his own purpose and will, chose an innumerable people in Christ out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation, before the world began, and predestinated them unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ and to obtain an eternal inheritance in heaven. (*Ephesians 1:4-11, 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:1-5, Romans 8:29-30, Revelation 5:9*)

#### 3. **Regeneration, New Birth, Being Born Again**

These different terms define what happens when God quickens one of his children into eternal life. We believe this is done by the life giving voice of Jesus Christ and is always effectual and irresistible on the part of the individual. This is done separate and apart from the preaching of the gospel and without any aid of man. (*John 3:6-8, John 5:25, John 6:37, Romans 8:30, Ephesians 2:1, 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 1:9*)

#### 4. **Work of Redemption**

The word "redeem" declares a price to be paid and prior ownership of that which is to be redeemed. The price of eternal redemption (*Hebrews 9:12*) was the blood of Christ and those he redeemed were his by covenant out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation (*Revelation 5:9*). All Christ died for will live in heaven because the debt of sin was paid and the righteousness of Christ was imputed unto his family. (*Hebrews 10:17-18, 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:21, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1:30, Ephesians 1:7*)

#### 5. **Preservation or Eternal Security**

This comforting aspect of salvation by grace teaches all that Jesus Christ died for will be eternally saved without the loss of one. They shall never perish, be cast out, separated from the love of Christ, nor plucked from the hand of God. They are preserved in the blood of Christ and kept by His power. (*John 6:37-39, John 10:27-30, Romans 8:28-39, 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:1-5, Hebrews 10:14, Jude 1*)

### Practice of the Church

The worship service is patterned after the New Testament example and authority which consists of congregational singing, prayer and preaching. Musical instruments are not used in the services because there is no New Testament command or example for them. Even though musical instruments were in existence during the time that Christ established his church, there is no record of their use in the worship services. We do believe in singing and making melody in the heart to the Lord. (*Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16*)

Also, there are no Sunday Schools for lack of New Testament authority. Their beginning was not until the 18<sup>th</sup> century in England, and then was only to teach reading, writing and arithmetic to underprivileged children. However, this does not mean in any way that Primitive Baptists do not believe in teaching children. The scriptures teach that parents are to teach their children at home privately (*Ephesians 6:4*), and then under the sound of a gospel minister in the public assembly.

Primitive Baptists do not believe in tithing as this was an Old Testament command. However, they do believe in giving, by laying aside upon the first day of the week as God has prospered and one purposes in his heart, cheerfully supporting the Church. (*1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 16:2, 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 9:7, Acts 20:35*)

Primitive Baptists believe that God's children should deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. They should live unto him that died for them and shew forth praises of him that called them out of darkness into his marvelous light. (*Titus 2:11-12, Romans 6:1-2, 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:14-15, 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:9*)

## **Church Covenant**

Forasmuch as Almighty God, by His grace, has been pleased to call us out of darkness into His marvelous light, and all of us have been regularly baptized upon a profession of our faith in Christ Jesus, and have given up ourselves to the Lord and to one another in a gospel church way, to be governed and guided by a proper discipline agreeable to the word of God: We do therefore in the name of our Lord Jesus, and by His power, covenant and agree to keep up the discipline of the church we are members of in the most brotherly affection towards each other while we endeavor particularly to observe the following principles.

In brotherly love, to pray for each other, to watch over one another, and, if need be, in the most tender and affectionate manner, to reprove one another. That is, if we discover anything amiss in a brother, to go and tell him his fault according to the direction given by our Lord in *Matthew 18:15-17* and *Galatians 6:1-2*, and not to be whispering and backbiting. We also agree, with God's grace, to pray in our families, attend our church meetings, observe the Lord's day and keep it holy, and not absent ourselves from the communion of the Lord's Supper without a lawful excuse; to be ready to communicate to the defraying of the church's expenses and for the support of the ministry; not irregularly depart from the fellowship of the church, nor to remove to distant churches without a regular dismissal.

These things we do covenant and agree, by the grace of God, to observe and keep sacred in the name of God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

## **In Conclusion**

We believe that the Church has an identity that can be found in the New Testament and that God's children should worship God in spirit and in truth (*John 4:23*), believing and observing the doctrine and commandments of Jesus Christ. This will bring a peace that passeth all understanding (*Philippians 4:7*) and joy unspeakable and full of glory (*1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:8*) to the child of God who walks in the ways of God.

We would encourage the reader of this pamphlet to search the scriptures as the Bereans (*Acts 17:11*) to see if these things are so.

## **Articles of Faith**

We believe in the being of a God, as almighty, eternal, unchangeable, of infinite wisdom, power, justice, holiness, goodness, mercy, and truth, and that this God has revealed Himself in His work, under the characters of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

*Psalms 91:1, Malachi 3:6, Matt. 6:13; 28:18, Deut. 4:27, Ps. 66:11, Gen. 17:1; 28:3; 35:11, Ex. 6:3; 15:18, Deut. 33:27, Ezek. 1:28, I Tim. 1:17, Matt. 28:18; 28:20.*

We believe that Almighty God has made known His mind and will to the children of men in His word: which work we believe to be of Divine authority, and contains all things necessary to be known for salvation of men and women. The same is comprehended or contained in the books of the Old and New Testament as are commonly received.

*II Tim. 3:16, John 5:39, II Pet. 1:21, Ps. 19:7, Rom. 1:2; 15:4; 16:26*

We believe that God, before the foundation of the world, for the purpose of His own glory, did elect a certain number of people to Eternal Life; and that this election is particular, eternal and unconditional on the part of the creature.

*Duet. 7:8, Rom. 8:33; 9:11; 9:12; 9:16, I Thes. 1:4, Rom. 11:5, I Pet. 1:2, Titus 1:1, Eph. 1:4, II Thes. 2:13, II Tim. 2:19, Matt. 20:23.*

We believe that it is utterly out of the power of men as fallen creatures, except they be drawn by the Holy Spirit, to keep the law of God, repent of their sins or believe in Christ.

*Ps. 10:4, John 5:40, John 6:44, John 6:37, Rom. 8:30.*

We believe that Adam fell from the state of moral uprightness and that he involved all of his natural offspring in a state of death and for that original transgression we were all guilty in the sight of a Holy God.

*Gen. 2:6; 2:17, Gen. 3:10; 3:12; 3:15; 3:16, Eph. 2:1, Rom. 5:12, Ps. 14:2, Rom. 3:23.*

We believe those that were elected by God were predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, Jesus Christ, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.

*Rom. 8:28; 8:29; 8:30*

We believe that in God's own appointed time and way (by means which He has ordained) the elect shall be called, justified, pardoned, and sanctified; and that it is impossible that they can utterly refuse the calling of Grace, but shall be made willing, by Divine Grace, to receive the offers of mercy.

*Jude 1:1, Acts 2:39, Rom. 8:30, Heb. 13:12, I Cor. 1:2, Heb. 10:10; 10:14, I Pet. 1:2, II Thes. 2:13, I Cor. 6:11, Rom. 3:24, Tit. 3:7, Rom. 5:9.*

We believe that eternal justification in the sight of God is only by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.

*Rom. 3:24, Rom. 5:9; 8:30, Tit. 3:7.*

We believe, in like manner, that God's elect shall be called and justified, born again, and changed by the effectual working of God's Holy Spirit.

*Jude 1:1 Acts 2:39, Rom. 8:30, Rom. 3:24, Titus 3:7, Rom. 5:9.* We believe that such as are called by His grace and justified shall finally persevere in Holiness, and never fall finally away.  
*John 10:29, Heb. 2:13, Isa. 49:16, Rom. 8:28-30, I Thes. 4:17.*

We believe it to be the duty incumbent on all of God's people to walk religiously in good works; not in the old Covenant way of seeking life and the favor of the Lord by it, but only as a duty from the principle of love.

*Ex. 5:13, Dan. 4:37, I Thes. 5:13, Heb. 9:14, James 2:14; 2:17-24, Rom. 6:4; 8:1, II Cor. 5:7, Eph. 2:10, Eph 4:1; 5:15.*

We believe that Baptism and the Lord's supper are gospel ordinances both belonging to the converted or true believer; and that persons who were sprinkled, or dipped while in unbelief were not regularly baptized according to God's word, and that such ought to be baptized after they are converted to the faith of Christ.

*Acts 2:27; 2:38, Acts 10:47; 10:48, Acts 22:16, Mark 16:16, Matt. 26:27-30, Mark 14:22-26. I Cor. 11:23-26.*

We believe in the resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust, and a general judgment.

*I Cor. 15, I Thes. 4:13, Phil. 3:20; 3:21, Acts 4:2, Psa. 49:14; 49:15, Rev. 20:12-15.*

We believe that the punishment of the wicked is everlasting and the joys of the righteous are eternal.

*I Cor. 15, I Thes. 14:13, Phil. 3:20; 3:21, Acts 4:2, Psa. 49:14; 49:16, Job 19:26, Rev. 20:12; 20:15.*

We believe that no minister has a right to the administration of the ordinances, only such as are regularly called to the work and come under the imposition of hands by the presbytery.

*Mat. 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-18, I Tim. 4:14, Heb 13:23.*

We believe that every Church is independent in matters of discipline and that Associations, Councils, and Conferences of several ministers or churches are not to impose on the churches the keeping, holding or maintaining of any principle or practice contrary to the church's judgment. This statement is based on the fact that the Church as such belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ and not to us as a people. All laws governing this same church are vividly set forth in the Holy Scriptures. We cannot add any man made rules neither can we detract from God's rules. Each Church is a sovereign body and will either prosper as she obeys the commandments of Christ or will be cursed for failing to abide in the truth. We are Christ's and will be judged by Him in all matters.

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