

31. WHAT AN INDEPENDENT BAPTIST CHURCH STANDS FOR

Bible Reading: Matthew 16:5-12

Aim: To make it clear as to what an Independent Baptist Church is and what it stands for, so that we can have strong convictions as to the truth of our position. To beware of the leaven of false doctrine.

Introduction

To many people an Independent Baptist church is something new. To those people in denominations, they find the concept of each church being independent and accountable only to God as difficult to understand. Yet this is precisely the New Testament pattern. Jesus, in Matthew 16:5-12, compares false doctrine to leaven (ie: yeast), something which permeates the whole batch. Jesus tells his disciples in v.6 to TAKE HEED and BEWARE of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Jesus explains this leaven in v.11,12 to be their false doctrine. Today, much false doctrine exists in Christendom, and we must be very careful to check every idea with the Bible. Independent churches that baptised believers by immersion were the norm up to 300 AD. They paralleled the Eastern Orthodox and Roman churches. They predated the Reformation. It is not new, nor novel. It lays claim to a long, and glorious heritage. It has been a persecuted church. Today there are millions of Independent Baptist churches all over the world in China, India, Africa, North and South America, Asia and Europe. They meet in buildings, houses, or in open air in poor countries.

What makes an Independent Baptist church so distinct?

An Independent Baptist church is a:

1. **SELF GOVERNING CHURCH** with no external hierarchy. All churches in the New Testament were independent, autonomous, self governing, responsible only to God, not to the commands of some man made hierarchy. The leading of the Lord is sought on all matters and this independence of a man-made hierarchy actually increases our dependence on the Lord. In Revelation 2,3 each church is accountable to Jesus Christ, not to an external, man-made hierarchy.
2. **BIBLE CENTRED CHURCH**
An Independent Baptist Church is a Bible believing, teaching and obeying church. The Bible is central in every service, because God "has magnified his Word above all his name." Psalm 138:2. The Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God, without error and is the standard by which all behaviour and beliefs are judged. 2 Timothy 3:16,17 and 2:15.
3. **KING JAMES VERSION** of the Bible is used, and not modern versions because of their many omissions and errors. This is because they were translated from mainly two corrupted manuscripts namely Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus. Omissions in modern versions include:
Matthew 17:21; 18:11 and 23:14
Mark 7:16; 9:44, 46; 11:26 and 15:28
Luke 17:36 and 23:17
John 5:4
Acts 8:37; 15:34; 24:7 and 28:29
Romans 16:24

Verses changed, left out partly, or cast doubt on are: Mark 16:9-20; 1 Timothy 3:16; 1 John 5:7,8 and John 3:13; 1 Corinthians 15:47.

We believe in 100% inspiration and preservation of the whole Bible to today as in the King James Version which is translated from the vast majority of NT manuscripts (Psalms 12:6,7).

4. ACCURATELY INTERPRETING THE BIBLE

The Bible has only one correct interpretation. This means it is not of any private interpretation (2 Peter 1:20). Rules for correct interpretation are applied such as grammar, context, history, cross-references, word meanings, and whether a passage is literal or figurative speech.

5. BELIEVERS BAPTISM BY IMMERSION, not infant sprinkling.

Baptism means to dip or immerse and pictures the Gospel of Christ's death, burial and resurrection. Baptism is for adult believers, not for infant unbelievers (Acts 8:37, Mark 1:9-11).

by: Immersion, not sprinkling (Matthew 28:19, 20).

to: Obey Christ, not to get saved.

by: a Bible-believing Church, not a false church.

"Sprinkling" in Greek is "rantizo"; Immersion is "baptizo". The early church immersed believers, but never sprinkled them. Sprinkling was a pagan practice introduced later. Baptism by immersion after salvation shows that a person wishes to obey God's Word rather than men.

6. SOUL WINNING and MISSIONARY MINDED

An Independent Baptist church takes the Great Commission seriously as we are accountable to Christ to be fishers of men (Matthew 4:19, Matthew 28:19,20). We do not just witness, but we seek to explain the Gospel clearly to lost people, challenging them to receive Jesus Christ as their Saviour from sin. We also see the need to preach the Gospel in regions beyond, and the starting of Independent Baptist churches all over the world.

We believe that men are eternally damned to hell without Christ as their Saviour, and it is our responsibility to spread the Gospel to all the world.

7. PREMILLENNIAL, LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF PROPHECY

An Independent Baptist Church looks for the blessed hope of believers being caught up to heaven at the return of Christ to the air (Titus 2:13 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17) and to the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ to rule on the earth for 1,000 years. Prophecy is to be taught and taken literally except where the passage uses figurative language. 1,000 years rule of Christ is literally 1,000 years. We look for the catching away of believers, seven year tribulation, glorious return of Christ to earth, 1,000 year rule of Christ, new heavens, new earth, and new Jerusalem. Since about 25% of the Bible is prophetic, we dare not ignore it.

8. CREATION BY GOD IN SIX LITERAL DAYS

An Independent Baptist Church believes that when God says He created the heaven and earth in six literal days, He means exactly what He says. (Exodus 20:11). God did not use the unscientific theory of evolution to create life. We resist the modernist trend to believe evolution. We choose to believe God as Creator rather than man's vain philosophy and deceit of evolution, which is woefully lacking real evidence.

- 9. PURITY OF LIFE. SEPARATION FROM WORLDLINESS AND SIN. A COMMITMENT TO HOLINESS, GOD AND TRUTH.**
 "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." 1 John 2:15,16.
 2 Corinthians 6:14 - 7:1 tells us to "come out from, be separate from, and touch not the unclean thing, and to perfect holiness in fear of God."
 Jesus warned His disciples (Matthew 7:15-23), as did Paul warn the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:28-30), against grievous wolves who would come in sheep's clothing. Jude 3,4 warned against those who would creep in unawares and for us to earnestly contend for the faith (doctrine). 2 Peter 2:1 warns against false teachers in the church. We are to "flee fornication" and all ungodliness. The Independent Baptist Church stands apart from apostasy (1 Timothy 4:1,2). We do not fellowship with churches which teach false doctrine (Hebrews 6:1,2) or tolerate unbelieving religious leaders (Romans 16:17,18).
- 10. NOT FIVE POINT CALVINIST (not TULIP doctrine)**
 We do not believe that God chooses one person to be saved before birth and another person to be damned. This is not the just God of the Bible. God makes salvation 100% available freely to all mankind, and God holds man 100% responsible to receive Christ as Saviour. Man is totally depraved, but can still call on Christ to save him. God chooses people not unconditionally, but on the condition of Christ's blood sacrifice being claimed for oneself. Salvation is not limited to those who would be saved, but Christ tasted death for every/all men (Hebrews 2:9).
 God's grace to be saved is not irresistible but resistible (Acts 7:51; 1 Peter 1:4,5). Saints do not persevere in salvation, but Christ keeps us saved forever.
- 11. REVEREND MELODIOUS WORSHIP, NOT ROCK MUSIC**
 "Rock music has always been the devil's music." D. Bowie.
 Ephesians 5:19 "Making melody ... to the Lord."
 It is wrong to bring rock music into the church.
 Don't use worldly music to worship God.
 Don't use worldly music to reach the world for Christ.
- 12. AVOID PAGAN PRACTICES** like infant baptism, black robes, rosary beads, statues, Mary worship, holy water, confession to priest, and confirmation.
- 13. NOT TONGUES SPEAKING, SLAYING IN SPIRIT, or NEW REVELATIONS**
 1 Corinthians 13:11 "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things."
 1 Corinthians 14:22 "Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not ..."
 1 Corinthians 14:15 " I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also..."
 The tongues gift was a temporary sign to warn unbelieving Jews to repent or God would judge them. They failed to repent, so God used Titus, the Roman General, to destroy Jerusalem in 70 AD. Hence, the tongues gift is no longer relevant after 70 AD. Praying in tongues is wrong because we must understand what we are praying for. (1 Corinthians 14:15).
 "Slaying in the Spirit" is not mentioned in the Bible. Therefore don't do it. New revelations from God are not necessary because the Bible is our only and complete revelation from God for this age. (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

- 14. HELL**
 An Independent Baptist Church teaches the reality of a literal burning hell of fire that Christ rejecters send themselves to after death. Jesus Christ warned people against going to hell many times, such as:
 "Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."
 "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."
 Matthew 25:41,46.
 "Into hell where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched." Mark 9:44,46.
 Some people may not like hearing about hell, but we must tell people all the relevant facts. Hell is relevant to unbelievers.

CONCLUSION

An Independent Baptist Church is more concerned about pleasing and obeying God, than about pleasing men. The Word of God will judge us at the last day (John 12:48). We won't have to give account of our lives to men, but to God (Romans 14:12). It is very important **WHAT** we believe.

Matthew 5:19 "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called THE LEAST in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall DO and TEACH them, the same shall be called GREAT in the kingdom of heaven."

Question: Do you want to be called "the least" or "great" in God's kingdom?

Therefore, get involved in doing God's work in an Independent Baptist Church. If you are in a church that does not hold to these important truths or holds false doctrines GET OUT OF IT NOW. You will never reform it by staying in it. God says: "What fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord." 2 Cor. 6:14,17; Rev. 18:4,5.

Question: Will you be like many chief rulers who believed on Christ, yet were afraid of being put out of the synagogue because "they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."? John 12:42,43.