

What Do Primitive Baptists Believe?

Written by Lasserre Bradley, Jr.

By Elder Lasserre Bradley, Jr.

1. What is the basic difference between Primitive Baptists and other religious societies?

Answer: The basic difference is that Primitive Baptists believe in salvation by grace. There are really only two positions that a person can occupy on this matter. One is that salvation is by grace, and the other is that salvation is by works. It cannot be a combination of the two. A person may say that he believes in salvation by grace, but if he sets forth any act of man's will, such as repentance, faith, baptism, or hearing the gospel, as a condition for obtaining it, then this position must be put on the works side. Primitive Baptists believe that salvation is of the Lord, that it is by His grace, and that nothing needs to be added to it.

2. What do Primitive Baptists believe about the fall of man?

Answer: That Adam willfully transgressed the law of God and therefore plunged himself and his posterity into a state of guilt and corruption (Rom. 5:12-19). That now man in his natural state is dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1) and is unable to recover himself by an act of his own "free-will" (John 1:13; John 6:44; Rom. 3:10-20; Rom. 9:16).

3. How do Primitive Baptists support their view of unconditional election?

Answer: They believe that Ephesians chapter one plainly teaches that before the foundation of the world, God, according to His own sovereign pleasure, elected a people to eternal salvation and made all of the arrangements necessary for them to live with Him in glory.

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4. What is their position on predestination?

Answer: They believe that God has predestinated a great number to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:28-30). While some object to this doctrine because they say it is unfair, Primitive Baptists rejoice in it, for they see that had it not been for predestination, the whole human family would have been lost forever. Predestination is not the thing that condemns a man, or puts him in a ruined condition, but the very thing that gets him out of such a state. Predestination concerns not "what" but "whom." It is the great purpose of God to lift a people up from sin and corruption and make them like Jesus Christ. That's glorious!

5. Did not Jesus die for the whole human race?

Answer: No, the Scriptures will not support that idea. Jesus said He came into the world to do the will of His Father, and that will was that He should save all who were given Him (the elect) even before the world began (John 6:37-39). Jesus came to save HIS PEOPLE from their sins, and He did it (Matt. 1:21; Rom. 8:33,34). He died for His sheep, not for goats (John 10:15). He died for sons, for the sanctified, for the brethren, for the church, and for the children (Heb. 2:9-15). He saw the travail of His soul and was satisfied (Isa. 53:10-12) .

6. Do Primitive Baptists deny that Christ died for the world?

Answer: No, they believe that the world for which He died was the world of His elect. The world of souls for which He died do not have their trespasses imputed to them and therefore cannot be condemned (II Cor. 5:18-19).

7. How do you know that all of the elect will respond to the call of the Spirit?

Answer: All of the called are justified, so all who were called were called effectually (Rom. 8:30). Jesus said all that the Father giveth me SHALL come (John 6:37).

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8. Do you not then teach that some might want salvation but could not have it because they are not one of the elect?

Answer: No, the man who wants salvation already HAS it. The man who hungers and thirsts (desires it) after righteousness is a blessed character (Matt. 5:2-6). The alien sinner doesn't want salvation, he doesn't fear God, and he doesn't love God; therefore we conclude that the man who wants salvation, fears God and loves God is a subject of grace (Rom. 3:11,18; I John 4:10).

9. Why then do you preach, if you are already sure that all of the elect are going to be saved in Heaven?

Answer: For the comfort and instruction of the Lord's people (Isa. 40:1-2,9; Eph. 4:11-16).

10. Don't you believe that the preaching of the gospel is God's ordained means of bringing eternal salvation to the sinner?

Answer: No, only by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit can eternal life be brought to the dead sinner (John 3:6-8). The gospel brings life and immortality to light but doesn't produce life (II Tim. 1:10).

11. How then do you explain I Corinthians 1:21 and passages like it?

Answer: The text says, "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Please notice, that the one saved by the gospel is a believer, one who believes in God, one who has already been

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born again; he is not an alien sinner.

12. Why is it that Primitive Baptists do not send out missionaries?

Answer: First, they believe that since preaching is not designed to make people ready for a home in Heaven, it is not necessary to send men across the seas in order to "save souls." The Lord put gifts in the church, and these are listed in Ephesians 4:11; there is no mention of a missionary. Furthermore, the gifts that the Lord did put in the church were not put there for the purpose of saving souls but "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12).

Secondly, they believe that gospel ministers should go where they are directed by the Spirit and not by a mission board (Acts 20:22-23). Primitive Baptists believe that if the Lord impresses one of His servants to go to a foreign land to preach the gospel, he ought to go at once and not wait for someone to pay his way.

13. Why is it that Primitive Baptists do not have Sunday Schools?

Answer: This ties in very closely with the previous question. The Lord put gifts in the church, and so the church has no more right to appoint someone to teach than they do to call a man to preach. We believe that "pastors and teachers" are one office. Children ought to be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6: 4), but this is the responsibility of the parents in the home. The church cannot possibly do for a child in one hour a week what his parents should have been doing all week long. The Sunday School is another of man's inventions which is generally used as a "soul-saving" agency But it must be emphasized that Jesus the Saviour is the only soul winner and that man never has been able to do that work (Heb. 8:11).

Furthermore, we are taught that women are to keep silence in the churches (1 Cor. 14: 34), and this is ignored in most Sunday Schools and Bible Schools. The church should be taught by the pastor, who is to be a God-called man and who must be apt to teach even before being recognized by the church as an elder (1 Tim. 3:2).

14. Why are your ministers called Elder?

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Answer: The term "Elder" is a scriptural one (1 Tim. 5:17), but the title "Reverend" used by many today is a name belonging only to God (Psa. 111:9).

15. Are Primitive Baptists Protestants?

Answer: No, the true church of Jesus Christ was established before the religious institutions of men bearing the name "Christian" came into being and has been somewhere in the world since that time. The true church was in existence long before the Protestant Reformation, so it cannot really be called a Protestant Church.

16. Why is it that Primitive Baptists do not build hospitals, orphanages, and other charitable institutions?

Answer: It is not that they are unconcerned about caring for those who have need, because they feel to have a duty in that regard. But the church is a spiritual body and not a charitable institution. The church is a home for God's people where the gospel of Christ is proclaimed, His ordinances are observed and discipline is maintained. It is the duty of every member of the church to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction (James 1:27), and prayer should be offered for the sick (James 5:14-16); but it is the chief aim of the church to render a spiritual service that is pleasing to God (John 4:24).

17. Do you believe in tithing?

Answer: No, this was a requirement put on the Israelites under the old law service but is not binding today. If we bring over part of the old Jewish service into the church, we might as well bring it all. God's people in this dispensation ought to give, but the principle set forth is that "God loveth a cheerful giver" (II Cor. 9:7).

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18. Do Primitive Baptist ministers receive a salary?

Answer: No, they devote their time and substance to the service of God out of love, and as the Lord blesses their labors among His people, those among whom the minister has labored contribute willingly to his needs (I Cor. 9:9-14).

19. Is it true that Primitive Baptists wash feet?

Answer: Yes, Jesus said we ought to wash each other's feet, and Primitive Baptists do so. "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well ; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet." (John 3:13-14).

20. Do Primitive Baptists actually believe they are the only ones going to Heaven?

Answer: Absolutely not; in fact they allow for a larger number being in Heaven than most religious societies. Ideas like this have been started by the enemies of the church and not by her friends. Jesus is the firstborn among MANY brethren. There will be a people in Heaven out of every nation on earth (Rev. 5:9-12). No one will be there because of what he believed, but many will be there in spite of it. One's doctrinal views or church affiliation has nothing to do with his destiny.

21. Can you know beyond a shadow of a doubt that you are saved?

Answer: In response to this question we would ask another; does any man have access to the Lamb's Book of Life? Of course there is but one answer. No man knows the names which are recorded there, so we must say with Paul, "In hope of eternal life" (Titus 1: 2). We are confident that the God Who cannot lie is going to save those He loved before the world began, and we have the sweet hope of being in the number. When Jesus said one of His disciples would deny Him and was a devil from the beginning, they all asked, "Lord, is it I?" We must acknowledge

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that if some can be deceived, thinking they are a child of God but are not, we could be in that number. A humble expression of hope in the mercy of God is far more befitting the little child of grace than a presumptuous boast that he knows he is secure.

22. Why do you not preach that God loves everybody?

Answer: Because the Scriptures do not teach it. God loves His people but does not love every man in Adam's family (Rom. 9:11-13).

23. Since you believe that your destiny is in the hands of God and that you can do nothing about it, does this not cause you a great deal of anxiety?

Answer: No, there is far greater peace and comfort in knowing that our case is in the Lord's hands than in thinking it is in our own (Titus 3:5-7).

24. For what purpose were the Scriptures written?

Answer: The Scriptures are written that the child of God "may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The Scriptures do not bring eternal salvation but are able to make us "wise unto it" (II Tim. 3:15-17).

25. Is not the word the means by which we are born again?

Answer: It is true that we are born again by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever, but that Word is not the written word, or the preached word, but the living Word-Christ (John 1:1,2,14; I Peter 1:23-25) ."And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." The

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Word and the gospel are two distinct things. Christ and the message of Christ are not synonymous. The gospel is the good news of what Christ has done for His people.

26. Do Primitive Baptists believe in preaching the gospel to sinners?

Answer: Yes, because the only people in the world interested in the gospel of grace are poor, needy sinners. A man must be made sensible of his sin by the Spirit, must be born again to receive the gospel message (Luke 5:31,32; I Cor. 2:14). The gospel is not addressed to the dead alien sinner but to the burdened sinner (Matt. 11:28-30).

27. Do you call upon men to repent and believe?

Answer: Yes, the burdened sinner ought to repent and believe the truth. The one who thus repents, believes, and is baptized is going to be saved from the distress he feels and from much error and confusion (Mark 16:16). The salvation involved here is not that which takes a man to Heaven, but that which saves his life here in the world (Acts 2:40).

28. What is meant by the expression, "the gospel or militant church"?

Answer: There are two phases of the church. The universal church or the church of the first born is made up of all the children of God. This is the church which Christ purchased and which He shall finally present without spot or wrinkle and therefore must involve more than one assembly or body of people (Eph. 5:25-27; Heb. 12:23). Then the visible, gospel or militant church was set up by Christ as a home for His people during the days of their pilgrimage. To enter the gospel church one must be taught by the gospel and follow the Lord in obedience through the waters of baptism. The gospel church is but a little flock in each place where it is found (Matt. 18:17; Luke 12:32; Rom. 16:16; II Cor. 1:1) but the church which shall be housed in heaven includes multitudes (Heb. 11:12,13; Rev. 5:9 and 7:9).

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29. Do Primitive Baptists preach infants in Hell?

Answer: No, the doctrine preached by Primitive Baptists is the only message which leaves any hope for infants, the feeble-minded, and the heathen, most religious groups preach that one must hear and understand the gospel, actively obey the gospel, and manifestly believe on Christ, in order to become a child of God. But the great message of grace which is so firmly believed and preached by Old Baptists, declares that one may be a recipient of the mercy of God without hearing the report of it through the gospel and even without fully understanding what has taken place in his heart. If infants, the feeble minded, and the heathen must hear the gospel preached by man and actively repent and believe the truth, then there is no hope for them. But since salvation is by the sovereign grace of God through the work of His Son, we know that He will save His own regardless of their circumstances in life (Rom. 8:34-39; Rom. 11:28; II Tim. 2:13,16-19).

30. Where did the Primitive Baptists get their name?

Answer: The true church has been known by several different names since Christ set it up during His earthly ministry. In centuries past those who made up the gospel church have been known as Christians, Donatists, Waldenses, Albigenses, Ana-Baptists, and others. Around the year 1832, there was a division in the Baptist family in this country. Those who insisted on establishing mission boards, Sunday Schools, and other unscriptural societies in the church became known as the New School or Missionary Baptists. Those who continued to walk in the old paths were known as Old School or Primitive Baptists. The word primitive simply means: "Of early times; of long ago; first of the kind; very simple; original." The Primitive Baptist Church is certainly of early times, from the time of Christ. It is the first of the kind, tracing its identity to the church which Christ established. It is very simple, adorned only with that beauty which Christ gave His church. It is original, the very church of Christ.