

Why I Left The Baptist Church

by Patrick T. Donahue

In general, Baptist people are not diligent and careful in their study of God's word, and this leads to many of their false teachings. Two of these false teachings were at the forefront in my decision to leave the Baptist church in November of 1981.

The Baptist church emphasizes that you must "accept Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour" to be saved. This is true enough if you understand that they mean by this phrase the same as what Phillip meant when he said in Acts 8:37 "If thou believest with all thine heart." The problem is that the Baptists say this is all you have to do, excluding the necessity of water baptism (to salvation) in their teaching. Many texts (for example, Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, 22:16, and I Peter 3:21) show clearly that a person does have to be baptized to be saved. My opinion is that many Baptists are too wedded to their system of "faith only" to accept the plain meaning of these passages. After diligently studying this issue for two or three years, I determined that I must change and follow what the scriptures actually say on the purpose of water baptism, instead of continuing to follow what I had always been taught on it.

The second major issue that I studied in-depth in the period leading up to my conversion was the "once saved always saved" question. Countless passages (for example, Galatians 5:2, 4; II Peter 2:20-22; and James 5:19-20) show that a Christian can "fall from grace." My opinion is that most Baptists continue to hold on to their false "once saved always saved" position because it makes them feel more comfortable. They don't want to ever have to worry about losing their salvation, no matter how they live. In actuality, the Baptist way is a de-emphasis upon obedience to God, whereas God's way most certainly requires our obedience (Matthew 7:21, Hebrews 5:9).

But as I said, these two issues are just a symptom of the problem. Members of churches of Christ struggle with different aspects of Biblical issues such as withdrawal (I Corinthians 5), the covering (I Corinthians 11), divorce and remarriage questions (Matthew 19:9), and etc.. Baptists simply ignore these teachings and therefore any difficulties in implementation are moot for them. This attitude is why I left the Baptist church. I am very thankful to the many who helped me see the error of my way during those years. Accommodatively speaking, I owe my soul to them.