

A SURVEY OF CHURCH HISTORY (2)

Introduction:

1. We have learned the key identifying marks of the Lord's church as given in the New Testament.
2. We have noted the warnings of Jesus and the apostles that false teachers would lead believers away from the truth.
3. We observed from history the first area of departure from the pattern was in the organization of the church.
4. We shall now look at further departures from the pattern in the area of salvation.

Discussion:

- I. THE DOCTRINE OF ORIGINAL SIN WAS FIRST TAUGHT IN THE SECOND CENTURY.
 - A. This is the view that babies are born sinners.
 1. When Adam sinned, the whole human race sinned.
 2. This view did not become widespread until the time of Augustine who popularized it.
 3. In the Protestant era, John Calvin included it as the first point of his system - "All are born hereditarily totally depraved and are helpless to do anything about it."
 - B. What does the Bible teach about sin?
 1. Sin is what one does or fails to do, not that which is inherited from another.

"Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4, NKJV).

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4, KJV).

"All unrighteousness is sin" (1 John 5:17).

"Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).
 2. Sin is not inherited from one's parents:

"The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself" (Ezekiel 18:20).

3. Some modern translations are slanted toward original sin (Consider the NIV in Psa. 51:5: “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me” and its use of “sinful nature” in Romans 8).
- C. The doctrine of infant baptism arose out of the doctrine of original sin.
1. If a baby is born a sinner, then he needs to be baptized for the remission of his sins.
 2. One false doctrine often leads to another.
- D. The Bible teaches one must be of an age of accountability.
1. Ninevah had “more than 120,000 persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left” (Jon. 4:11).
 2. Faith is essential to salvation (Heb. 11:6).
 3. Those who were baptized were old enough to have faith.

“But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized” (Acts 8:12).
 4. One must be old enough to hear, believe, repent, and confess Christ before he is subject to baptism.
 5. A baby does not need to be saved because he has never sinned; he is safe (Matt. 19:14).

II. SPRINKLING AND POURING IN PLACE OF BAPTISM CAME IN THE THIRD CENTURY.

- A. In 251, a sick man in Rome named Novatian wanted to be baptized.
1. He was considered too ill to leave his bed.
 2. Buckets of water were brought and poured over him.
 3. Later, when he was considered for a church office, some opposed him on the ground that he had not been correctly baptized.
 4. This began the practice of “clinical baptism” which was at first used only for the seriously ill.
 5. As the Gospel spread into cold climates, sprinkling and pouring were often substituted for immersion.
 6. Immersion remained the norm for nearly a thousand years.
 7. In 1311, the Church Council of Ravenna made sprinkling and pouring equally acceptable with immersion.
- B. What does the Bible teach about baptism?
1. The Greek word for baptism is defined as “plunging, washing, submersion, overwhelming, dipping, and immersion” by standard Greek authorities.

- a. Sprinkle and pour come from different Greek words which are never used to refer to baptism.
 - b. The Greek Orthodox Church has continued to practice immersion through the centuries.
2. Baptism requires much water; sprinkling does not.
- “Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there” (John 3:23).
3. Baptism requires going down into and coming up out of the water; sprinkling does not.
- “And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away...” (Acts 8:38,39).
4. Baptism is a likeness of the death, burial, and the resurrection of Christ.
- “Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4).

Conclusion:

1. Another common error which came in the third century was the belief that since baptism is for the remission of sins, if one sins following baptism, there is no more forgiveness.
 - a. Many delayed their baptism until shortly before death.
 - b. The Roman emperor, Constantine, was not baptized until the day before his death.
 - c. Christians have continuing access to the blood of Christ through repentance and prayer (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:7-2:2).
2. Only those who are of an age of accountability are sinners.
3. Sinners must obey the Gospel to be saved:
 - a. They must hear the Gospel (Rom. 10:17).
 - b. They believe the Gospel (Mark 16:15,16).
 - c. They must repent of their sins (Acts 2:38).
 - d. They must confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Rom. 10:10; Acts 8:37).
 - e. They must be baptized (immersed, buried) in water for the remission of their sins (Gal. 3:26,27).
4. Become a Christian the New Testament way while there is time and opportunity!