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The Church, Its Dignity and Identity

Chapter 5 – 30 Minutes

I. The Dignity of the Church
Dignity-The high-ranking position of honor which is given to the Church
1. Purchase of Christ's blood, Acts 20:28. If Christ thought enough of it to purchase it this way, we ought to think enough of it to join and support it.
2. Light of the world, Matt 5:14. The Lord stated He is the light of the world. The Church became a reflector of that light until He returns.
3. Salt of the earth, Matt 5:13. By means of its witnessing power, it seasons the earth making it a fit place to dwell until the return of the Lord.
4. Body of Christ, Eph 1:23. The existence of the body is dependent on the existence of the head of the body. Here we note that the Lord is the head.
5. Dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, 1 Cor 3:16/2 Cor 6:16. The Holy Spirit dwells in all believers as individuals but in the Church as an institution.
6. House of God, 1 Tim 3:15. The Church is the dwelling place of God and His people here on the earth. It is where He desires to dwell with them.
7. School for Religious Instruction, Matt 28:20. The Church is to teach the doctrines of the Lord found in Bible to its membership.
8. Field for Service, 1 Cor. 3:9. There is a place in the field of the Lord for every man and a man for every place. The Lord will lead us to that place.
9. Custodian of the Lord's Faith-System, Jude 3/Eph 4:5. The Lord committed the Word of God and the keeping of His ordinances to Church.
10. Witness on the Earth, John 15:27. Though others testify, the Lord commissioned His Church to bear special witness, Luke 24:48/Acts 1:8.
11. Word of Reconciliation, 2 Cor 5:19. Great responsibility.
12. Pillar and Ground of Truth, 1 Tim 3:15. The responsibility to house and present the truth to the world rests squarely on the Church and No other.
13. Make Disciples of all Nations, Matt 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47.
14. Bride of Christ, John 3:29 and 2 Cor 11:1-2. The wife of Adam was taken from his wounded side. The Lord will also have a wife from His.
II. Church Identity
There are certain characteristic features held by Baptists which are held by no other religious group. Eight identifying marks are listed here.
1. The Bible is the All-Sufficient rule of faith and practice.
2. The true Church was instituted by the Lord during His personal ministry.
3. New Testament Order: Repentance, Faith, Baptism, Lord's Supper.
4. Regenerated Church membership.
5. Absolute equality of membership.
6. Restricted Communion.
7. Church perpetuity: Persecuted often but never persecuting others.
8. Scriptural baptism began with John the Baptist and still links back to it.
DB Ray – Baptist Peculiarities – Lists Seven – Direct Overlap
1) As a Church or Kingdom: Jesus Christ is Founder and Head
2) Bible as Rule;
3) Order of Commandments;
4) Equal Rights;
5) Lord's Supper;
6) Persecuted;
7) Burial in Baptism for those already born again
III. Outline on Jesus Christ A Missionary Baptist
A) John: Missionary John 1:6; Baptist Matt 11:11; Preacher Matt 3:1B
B) Jesus: Missionary John 3:17; Baptist Mark 1:9; Preacher Matt 4:17C
C) Apostles: Missionary Matt 10:5; Baptist Acts 1:22; Preacher Matt 10:7D
Church: Missionary Matt 28:19; Baptist Matt 3:6; Church Matt 16:18E
D) God: Missionary Jhn 3:17; Bapt Jhn 1:6 (Sent the Baptist, Matt 11:11)
F) Holy Spirit: Missionary Jhn 14:26; Baptist Matt 3:16G
G) New Testament is a Missionary Baptist Book – Written by this people- Missionary Baptist have NOT always been called by this name.- Been called by various names through centuries-named by enemies- They have believed, taught, and practiced in the main what Missionary Baptists of today believe, teach, and practice.
Questions
1. What is meant by the dignity of the Church?
2. How did the Church become Christ's?
3. What price did the Lord pay for the Church?
4. How is the Church the light of the world?
5. How is the Church the salt of the earth?
6. How does God or Christ dwell in the Church now?
7. Who promised the Holy Spirit to the Church and when was this made?
8. What is the most highly honored place spoken of for the Church?
9. When will the Church become the wife of Christ?
10. Of what is the Church the custodian?
Optional written assignment
In three pages or less, explain the eight doctrines by which Baptist Churches may be identified providing scriptural support for each.
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