

Alien Baptism

Wayne Reynolds

II John 9-11

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. 10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: 11 For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

There are four requirements for scriptural baptism.

(1) Proper candidate - a believer in Christ. John the Baptist was sent from God to preach the true gospel and those that believed the message of God *"...were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins,"* Matt. 3:6. The Pharisees and Sadducees came to him to be baptized, but he said unto them, *"...O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:"* These passages make it very clear that baptism doesn't save. It reflects salvation. Paul even went so far as to say, *"...Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel..."* Therefore the proper candidate for baptism must be a person who already believes to the salvation of their souls. He has already been saved, redeemed, and forgiven. He is not being baptized to find forgiveness, or to do something to obtain the grace or forgiveness of God.

(2) Proper design - to show the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. When Christ came to John the Baptist to be baptized, John *"...forbad him, saying, I have need to be*

baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" Jesus' answer reveals He wasn't seeking righteousness, but to fulfill righteousness. "...Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Matt. 3:13-15. Baptism is a picture of the righteousness of God. When a saved sinner is baptized, he is showing that he now has the righteousness of God within him. Romans 6:2-4 declares, "...How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? 3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." These scriptures plainly state that when a sinner is saved, he is dead to sin, and baptism is a picture of his death to sin and newness of life. He was dead in sins, but now the very hand of God quickens him. He has been given the gift of eternal life. Baptism shows he is dead to his old way of life and has been spiritually resurrected to a new life in Jesus Christ through the power of God.

(3) Proper mode - a burial in water. Col. 2:12 says, "*Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.*" Baptism means a burial, not simply pouring or sprinkling water over a person. In Acts 8:38,39, both Philip and the Eunuch went down into the water, and both came up out of the water. This would have been unnecessary if Philip poured or sprinkled water over the Eunuch. John 3:23 declares that "...John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized."

(4) Proper administrator - A New Testament church. Matthew 28:18-20 emphatically shows that the great commission was given to the local church organized by Jesus Christ during His personal ministry. This is the only organization on the face of the earth that has the authority from God to baptize in His name (authority). There have been many different kinds of "churches" and other religious organizations started by men since Christ organized His kind of churches, but none of these have God given authority to preach the gospel or to baptize believers. Regardless of what many religious men say, the church is always a local body, never a universal visible, or universal invisible body. All the saved are not in the Lord's church, but all the saved will go to heaven and spend eternity with the Lord Jesus Christ and His bride.

Where Is That Scripture?

Some twenty years ago, I heard someone say, "When a church takes alien baptism, they cease to be a church." I accepted it right away because I understood the doctrine of the local church.

Soon after that first question was asked, I heard a second question, "How long does it take for a church to stop being a church when they accept alien baptism?" I heard two different opinions to this question. The first is that a church *immediately* ceases to be a church, and the second is that a church *gradually* ceases to become a church.

When I began searching for an answer to this question, I asked myself this question, "Where does the Bible say that a church ceases to be a church when they accept alien baptism? Where is the scripture that says a church *immediately* ceases to be a church, or where is the scripture that says a church *gradually* ceases to be a church?"

I've heard some preachers go back into the Old Testament when the Shekinah glory leaves Israel to show how the Lord gradually removes his candlestick. But that scripture is talking about Israel, not the church. The principle might be the same, but I thought there ought to be a scripture that says a church ceases to be a church when they accept alien baptism.

I became very concerned when, in my personal studies, I couldn't find a scripture that said that taking alien baptism causes a church not to be a church! I searched the scriptures, trying to find that magic passage, but couldn't find it. I read several books, hoping the author would give me the scripture, but I couldn't find it.

I do believe taking alien baptism causes a church not to be a church, but *why* do I believe it if there is no scripture that explicitly points that out?

When I couldn't find a scripture that said taking alien baptism caused a church to cease being a church, I began to study again what the church is, what the church expects, and what God expects from His church. But I couldn't find a scripture that plainly says that taking alien baptism is what caused a church to cease being a church.

My study led me into a renewed study about church fellowship and many peripheral issues that came up because of this issue of church fellowship.

II John 9-11

II John verse 9-11 is the passage that led me to see the real problem with alien baptism. This is where I really began to see what taking alien baptism is. I discovered that taking alien baptism is not the *disease*. It is the *symptom* of what is really going on. Taking alien baptism is like saying "My arm hurts, when I've really got a heart attack."

I John 1 declare, "*The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth;*"

I heard a preacher ask about this verse, "Who is the elect lady and her children?" He answered, "If you will understand that this elect lady is a local church, it will solve many problems for you. If you want to believe it is a real woman, that is perfectly fine with me, but if you understand that this elect lady is the church, and all her children are churches that came out of her, it will solve many difficulties."

I John 5-7 "*And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. 6 And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. 7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.*"

I John 5 reveal that it is a very great thing that children of God love one another. Is it true love when we love each other regardless of what we do? NO! Verse 6 declares that true love is when we walk *after his commandments*. That is real love - walking after the commandments of God.

I John 7 shows that there are many deceivers, that people who say they walk in love and do not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is a deceiver and antichrist. There

are people today who say we ought to forget about the commandments of God, lay down all doctrine, and get together in love. They are adherents of the Universal church theory and do not necessarily want conformity, they want uniformity.

Their ideas about religion might sound good to the uninformed, but they aren't scriptural. If a person tries to follow God in love, he is going to walk in *His* commandments, *and* he is going to make some people mad because they aren't going to walk in God's commandments. Many are "gathered together," but not in the true love of God because they aren't following His commandments. They follow their own commandments and desires, and call that the love of God, but they are in error. Their doctrine doesn't come from God's Word, but out of their own minds. This is the spirit of antichrist.

I John 8 declares, "*Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. 9 Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.*"

What is the doctrine of Christ? To put it very briefly, it is who Christ is, where He came from, and what He did while on this earth.

I John 10-11 states, "*If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: 11 For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.*"

These are the verses that first showed me the real problem of alien baptism. The *real* problem is that there are some who *profess* belief who *do not* have Christ, therefore they do not understand the doctrine of Christ. They don't really know who He is, where He came from, what He came down to the earth to do, whether He did it or not, or when He returned back to heaven. They don't really have any idea what Christ is all about.

This may be very different from what you have heard about alien baptism, but it is the way I have come to see what is wrong with alien baptism.

Remember, there are those that say they have Christ and say and understand the doctrine of Christ, who have built churches, but they really don't know who Jesus is. They are like the people Jesus spoke of in Mark 7:6,7, "*...This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. 7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*" They know in their minds, but they don't know in their hearts why Jesus came, what He did, or where He is.

Of all the churches in this whole wide world, how many believe that salvation is *only* of God and of His grace? How many pastors, churches and church members really believe in total depravity; that a sinner does not *want* to come to Christ and *will not* come? How many people really believe that nobody would be saved if it was left up to them? You think about it.

First, we are going to talk about other denominations, then we are going to talk about Baptists. First of all, there are many people in churches all over this land who are trying to work their way into heaven. They are doing everything they know to do to get to heaven.

They don't know the truth about total depravity, or the great free gift of forgiveness and salvation. Many lost people are getting involved in church ordinances trying to be saved. They do not know the doctrine of Christ, and Christ commands us to have nothing to do with them. I John 10 states, "*If any man come unto you and have not the doctrine of Christ, bid him not into your house, and do not wish him godspeed.*"

Think about this. Salvation is a gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast, Eph. 2:8,9. When the gospel is proclaimed, it will be presented in one of two ways. (1) Jesus saves completely, or (2) a person must do something to be saved. Every presentation of the gospel will fall into one category or the other.

Rom. 11:6 says "*And if by grace, then it is not more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.*" God speaks of the salvation of Israel as being completely by grace. Works has nothing at all to do with it Israel being saved. II Tim. 1:9 declares "*Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,*"

There are many different denominations in this world. Anything I say about a particular denomination will not fit all the churches of that denomination because there will be churches in that denomination that don't believe and practice what the majority of the denomination teaches. I know that generally speaking, the Church of Christ denomination believes that a person is saved when they are baptized. I talked with some Church of Christ people who told me there were five steps to being saved. I can never remember all their steps; God's way of salvation is so simple that when I compare God's way to their way, I get confused about their way. Their steps included believing and being baptized, along with some other things.

To be fair, a Church of Christ man, a leader in one of their local churches, told me, "I don't believe that stuff about working your way to heaven or being baptized to be saved. Salvation is by grace through faith, and if God doesn't save you, you aren't saved."

Some members of that same church told me, however, that the only way a person can be saved is to be under water. They told me a person couldn't be saved when they were breathing (unless they had gills). Their plan of salvation teaches that a person is lost when they get into the water, salvation comes when the person is underwater, and when they come up out of the water they are saved. That is what they told me they believe!

What does the Bible teach about salvation? Nothing like that at all. If our church accepts Church of Christ baptism, we are agreeing with them that the person is saved while being "baptized." They are unsaved if they are trusting baptism (or anything or anybody else) instead of Christ to save them. Therefore, we cannot take their baptism.

Another example: Catholics. The catechism of the Catholic Church states that a person is saved by grace. But what do they mean when they say grace? To them, grace is something you work for. You do things to receive the grace from God. This is nothing short of working for your salvation. A part of the Catholic doctrine of salvation is taking communion, being baptized, going to church, be confirmed, and a number of other things. All of these things, they say, are a part of their receiving salvation. The problem is that

they have no idea what Christ came for.

Listen, if I take Christ out of what I believe, what do I have left? Nothing.

If the Church of Christ denomination takes Christ out of the Church of Christ doctrine, what do they have left? Everything. They could go right on with their doctrine, because they aren't wholly depending on Christ anyway. They say they are trusting Christ, when in fact, they are putting more trust in what *they* are doing than in what Christ has done for them. They could continue in church services, and never know that God was gone.

The same thing is true with the Catholic denomination. They could take Christ, put Him in a closet, shut the door and lock it, and they would never know He was gone. So we can't take that kind of baptism.

In all these groups, there are some people who come to know some of the truth. I know a man who was saved in a Church of Christ church building, under a Church of Christ preacher, preaching Church of Christ doctrine. This man was saved in *spite* of their doctrine, and not *because* of their doctrine. They baptized this man. Why? Here was a fellow that was already saved, and they put him under the water. Why? According to their doctrine, he wasn't saved until he was under the water. The man was saved in a false church and we will accept that he is saved, but we will not accept that baptism because it is alien to the Bible. Why? Because they do not have the doctrine of Christ. They don't know what Christ came for. They have no earthly idea what Christ is all about. By the way, the man that was saved began to study about salvation and discovered the error of Church of Christ doctrine. He came to see the truth of scriptural baptism and the Lord's local church; joined a Baptist Church and was called of God to preach the true gospel. He was a successful pastor and is now retired from the ministry.

We believe, and the Bible teaches, that a person is saved by grace through faith. Where do you have to be to be saved? What location do you need to be? It really doesn't make any difference, does it? You can be at home, you can be at work, you can be in your car, you can be in bed, you can be standing up, you can be sitting down, you can be lying down, you can be standing on your head, you can be squatting, you can be in any position. It doesn't make any difference. You can be anywhere, in any position whatever, and the Lord save you.

What should a person do after they have been saved? They ought to be baptized. This gets down to the root of the matter. We aren't baptized *to be* saved, but to show to the world that we *are* saved. This is the scriptural reason for baptism. Baptism is a picture of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. It is a picture that we have died to sin, have been buried as far as the world is concerned, and are raised to newness of life. That is what baptism is all about. It is a picture. Baptism is not *to be* saved, but because we are *already* saved.

Churches that go away from the real meaning of salvation and baptism, what it is and what it does, we cannot accept their baptism because they don't have the doctrine of Christ. The problem is a heart problem. It is not something that just appears on the outside, it is what is happening on the inside.

If you could watch the baptismal services of a scriptural Baptist church and the

baptismal services of an unscriptural church, and if they were both immersions, you might not be able to tell much difference by looking at what they do. The problem is not the external parts of baptism, but the reasoning behind why a person is baptized.

Think also of this. People that believe in salvation other than completely through Christ, there will also be something else they will be wrong on. They are going to be wrong on what a church is. A church is not a visible universal organization, nor is it an invisible universal organization. A church is a local assembly of saved baptized believers who have covenanted together to serve God in a particular locality. A church is a group of people who take care of God's business the way God wants them to take care of it. False churches don't understand that local churches are the bride of Christ, nor do they understand the doctrine of Christ. They are off on many things. The more you look into what they believe, the more errors you will find in their beliefs. That is why we cannot accept their baptism. We don't want to be partakers of their sins.

Why do we preach the gospel we preach? Because we are following the Bible in declaring the same gospel it declares.

Why do we baptize the way we baptize? Because we are following the Bible in the way we baptize.

Why do we believe in the local church the way we believe it? Because the Bible says a church is local.

One error breeds another. When false churches say they believe in salvation through some sort of works, they are also going to be off on what baptism is all about. They are also going to be wrong on what the church is. Many people believe by getting into a "church", they are working their way into heaven. The church of the Lord Jesus Christ is not for people *trying* to get to heaven, it is for people who already saved by God's precious grace, and are *going* to heaven. Many people believe that when they are saved, they are in the "church": that great big, invisible or visible, mysterious monster that nobody knows where is. What terrible error creeps in because those people don't know the doctrine of Christ.

Rev. 2:1-7 - "Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; 2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: 3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. 4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. 6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. 7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

Rev. 2:4 states that the church at Ephesus had left their first love. What is the first love? The love of God and for God. In Matt. 22:35-40 the disciples ask, "*Master, which*

is the great commandment in the law? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Jesus said in Rev. 2:5 that He would come and take the candlestick out of his place except this church repent. Christ is telling the Ephesians that, although they have been faithful in many things, they have left the most important of all. They have left their love for God. What do you do when you love God? You follow **His** commandments. These two things go together like a horse and carriage. Obeying the commandments of God aren't grievous to you.

I John 5:1-3 declares, "*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.*"

A person who is truly saved will love God and they won't try to develop commandments that fit their lifestyle. They'll change their lifestyle to fit the commandments of God. They'll be willing to do what God wants them to do in His church, and they will love God, His children and His commandments. Acts 4:42 records that when the 3,000 were saved on the Day of Pentecost, they continued in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship. They did not try to establish their own righteousness, or try to get the apostles to agree with their "better ideas and methods of service." They loved God, His children and His church, and changed their lifestyle to fit the commandments of God. This is exactly what every child of God should do. Love God, love His children, love his church, and change his lifestyle to fit the commandments of God. Because God has put His love within us, we love Him, and ask Him, "What do you want us to do?" This is what Paul asked when he was on the road to Damascus and Christ saved him, "...Lord, what wilt thou have me to do..." Paul had no intention of doing his own will. He wanted to do the will of his Saviour and Lord.

We ought to do the first works. Rev. 2:5 says, "*Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.*" It seems to me that a church ceasing to be a church is a slow process as the church gradually leaves the place of loving God and putting Him first. There is a space for repentance, which is an indeterminate time that is at God's discretion.

Rev. 1:20 expresses the thought that having the candlestick is what makes a church a church. "*The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.*" If you don't have a candlestick, you don't have a church. It is gone, it is not there any more. What is the candlestick? It is a place where saved people put their light.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus stated, "*Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but*

to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. 14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matt. 5:13-16

When a church conducts herself in such a way that it is not a fit place for a saved person to put their light, they are in danger of losing their candlestick, and may have already lost it. Christ says He will remove the candlestick. Christ doesn't want a saved person thinking a false church is where they ought to go to public worship. Why does Christ think this way? It is because that church has stopped loving God and loving His commandments, and they have devised other plans to follow. Christ knows, and we ought to know, that every saved person needs to be in a fellowship of believers who love God and obey His commandments. If they aren't in a fellowship like that they will not be able to grow up into spiritual mature adults.

I have preached in my ministry that the most important thing in your life is loving God and obeying His commandments. Some people have listened to these messages and understood, but others haven't understood a thing I have said. What is wrong with putting God first in everything?

A church is a group of saved, baptized believers who have covenanted together to put God first, and to obey his commandments. When a church loses that, they have lost their purpose for existence. When a church accepts alien baptism, that is a clear sign they don't understand the doctrines of Christ, or the purpose of baptism. The reason they take alien baptism is because they don't understand. When they begin to baptize for another reason, other than to show the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, they have lost the purpose of baptism. Some people baptize babies. Why? So they will go to heaven? That is not in the Bible at all. They don't know what Christ came for. That is what we need to be looking at. The heart of the church is the doctrines of Christ, not just the external acts. The external acts are always a revealing part of what goes on in the heart of the church. How can I tell whether you love the Lord or not? By what you do in your bodies. How can I tell if a church loves the Lord? By what they do in their bodies. That is obeying the commandments of God, and His commandments are not grievous.

I hope this message means something to you. This is how I came to understand what alien baptism is. It may be a long way around to you, but it isn't to me. I wanted to understand *why* alien baptism is wrong. I needed more than just to parrot the phrase that alien baptism was wrong.

Another category of people

Some saved people are in churches that we might find difficult to receive letters from. A while back, some people joined our church from a nearby Southern Baptist Church. I called the pastor, and talked to him about the doctrines of Christ, and what they believed about salvation, baptism, and closed communion for the Lord's Supper. The longer we talked, the farther apart we became in our doctrines. Finally, it came down that we can't take the letter from that church. The pastor said the right words about salvation, but he said that as long as a person gave a good testimony about their salvation, and were

immersed, that was okay. There are many lost people that are able to give a good testimony, but we are looking for fruits, not just words. He asked me what we were going to do to receive these people into our church. I told him we would baptize them. He said, "I have never heard of that." This is a Southern Baptist pastor who does not understand what baptism is all about. I believe the people who joined our church are saved, but they didn't understand baptism. It seems to me that many people are very inconsistent as to following through with the doctrine of Christ to the doctrine of baptism.

Some other people joined our church on promise of letter from a Southern Baptist church. I called the pastor. He told me they wouldn't grant us a letter because we are an independent Baptist Church. They only granted and received letters from other Southern Baptist churches. I asked him why they did that. He said, "Well, I think it would be all right, but our policy is that we only receive members from and grant letters to Southern Baptist churches." I told him I knew some Southern Baptist Churches that accept alien baptism from denominations that believe in works for salvation. He told me he knew this was correct. Our church could not accept a letter from that church because they didn't know what kind of baptism they were getting from the Southern Baptist churches they accepted letters from. Therefore we baptized those believers into the fellowship of our church. That particular Southern Baptist Church eventually changed her policy, and now investigates each church because there are many Southern Baptist churches that receive alien baptism.

When someone joins our church on promise of letter, I always explain to them what we believe about the doctrine of Christ, and baptism. I then call the church they came from and explain to the pastor what we believe about the doctrine of Christ and baptism. When they begin to say, we believe that too, but we will take somebody that comes from another church that believes salvation comes through baptism. I am sorry, but we are unable to take their baptism. The Bible says we are not to take part with them in their error. II John 9-11.

This is my position on alien baptism. I have these scriptures for what I believe. I have looked for a passage that says that taking alien baptism causes us not to be a church, but I have not found it. If you know where it is, please show it to me. I want reasons for what I believe right out of the Bible, and I have them.

If churches don't know what the doctrines of Christ and baptism are and they don't want to learn, then God instructs me to leave them alone. We will obey the commandments of God. Alien baptism is wrong.

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