

## **Baptists and the Church of Christ**

The Churches of Christ were born out of the efforts of Alexander Campbell and a small group of men who sought to purify or “restore” churches in America to a “New Testament” pattern by eliminating all creeds and denominational organizations. Campbell came out of Scottish Presbyterianism into a Baptist Church and from that broke away to start a “Church of Christ.” Their distinctive plea for unity was to be achieved by **strict adherence** to a New Testament pattern of worship and church organization, and a refusal to join any inter-congregational organizations. **Thus they sought to achieve unity by uniformity.** When uniformity is necessary for unity there is a need to determine the “right” interpretation of scripture so as to strictly adhere to it. The desire to eliminate denominations created a denomination.

**The Scripture: Baptists and Churches of Christ agree that the scriptures are the final authority on all matters of faith, daily practice, and moral values.** However, Southern Baptists confess the content of their faith in a non-creedal statement called the Baptist Faith and Message, while the churches of Christ do not use such a statement. Baptists emphasize the doctrine of the Priesthood of the Believer teaching that each believer under the leadership of the Holy Spirit can come to a true understanding of scripture. The Churches of Christ instruct their members in prescribed interpretations of scripture that are to be followed.

**Jesus Christ: Baptists and Churches of Christ agree that Jesus is the second person of the godhead (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) and that He became a man, was born of a virgin, died for our sin and rose from the dead.**

**Salvation:** Baptists and Churches of Christ are distinctly different in their understanding of salvation. Churches of Christ teach that salvation is the result of (1) Faith in Jesus Christ as the only begotten Son of God, (2) Repentance, (3) Confession of Sin, (4) Baptism “in the name of Jesus” and “for the remission of sins” and (5) membership and attendance in the Church of Christ. Salvation can be received and lost thus requiring salvation again.

Baptists teach that salvation is entirely a result of grace that is received by faith in Christ. Baptists see repentance as the natural outcome of turning in faith to Christ and baptism as a simple symbol of that salvation experience. Baptists do not believe in

baptism “for” (**in order to obtain**) remission of sin, but rather that “for” means (**as a result of having received the remission of sins through faith in Christ**). See Acts 2:38.

**Unique Emphases:** Because of their understanding of scripture Churches of Christ observe the Lord’s Supper weekly, practice *a cappella* singing, baptize only in the name of Jesus, and do not organize in groups larger than the local church.

**Next Week: Baptists and The Episcopal Church**