

WHY BAPTIST?

The Significance Of Baptist Principles
In An Ecumenical Age

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INTRODUCTION

Why this book? True biblical doctrine is under attack. One type of assailant is the outright apostate who despises the authority of God’s Word and will do anything in his power to undermine it. This kind of frontal assault is actually good for us. It motivates us to study the Scriptures where we find powerful answers to the questions posed by the apostate. This kind of attack sharpens our ability to express the clear meaning of Scripture. It steels our resolve and strengthens our faith in the Word of God.

There is a second kind of attack that is much more dangerous. This attack is friendly and sly, winsome and quite effective. What, you ask, could be so powerful? “Ecumenism.”

Ecumenism, according to the Encarta Dictionary, is “a movement promoting unity between different Christian churches and groups.” This does not appear to be, too dangerous, does it? Jesus Christ prayed, “*...Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.*”¹ “*That they all may be one; as*

¹John 17:11b

thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.”²

If this was Christ’s prayer, and it was, should we not then strive for the oneness for which He prayed? The answer, of course, is an unqualified, yes! We should strive for the kind of oneness that is demonstrated in the Godhead. The oneness referred to by our Lord in John 17 is very specific; it is oneness anchored to truth. Jesus also prayed, “*Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*”³ The unity prayed for by Jesus Christ is a unity based upon, or modeled by, the unity that exists in the Godhead. It is not a fuzzy, feel good unity such as is being foisted upon us by the religious world today. It is unity based upon the immutable truths of God’s Word. For example, the Father

²John 17:21-23

³John 17:17

and the Son do not disagree about the virgin birth. They do not disagree about salvation by grace through faith alone. They do not disagree about the duration of the salvation which they secured for us. They do not disagree about the nature of the Church which the Father ordained and the Son established. They do not disagree about the priesthood of the believer. They do not disagree about believer's baptism.

A more complete definition of Ecumenism is, "a movement promoting unity between different Christian

Ecumenism is a movement promoting unity between different Christian churches and groups by diminishing, changing, or ignoring the very words of God.

churches and groups by *diminishing, changing, or ignoring the very words of God.*"

Why this book?

Ecumenism has gained a foothold in many of our churches today. When revealed for what it is, Ecumenism cannot stand. Bible-believing, Baptist people love God and His Word, they strive to be obedient to it and when taught what God says about

Ecumenism, they reject it with biblical conviction.

The authors believe that God has spoken in His Word, and it is the responsibility of believers to be obedient. We also believe there are consequences to despising or disregarding God's Word. Because of these beliefs this work is divided into two books. Book one, explains and defends the Baptist Distinctives. Book two, demonstrates how our doctrinal distinctives promote purity and provide mission for our churches. In *WHY BAPTIST?* we cite great Baptist leaders of the past believing they have much to teach us in our day, but our authority is not church leaders or confessions of faith. Our authority is the pure Word of God, the Bible. It is our prayer that this book will be a help to pastors and churches everywhere to the glory of God.