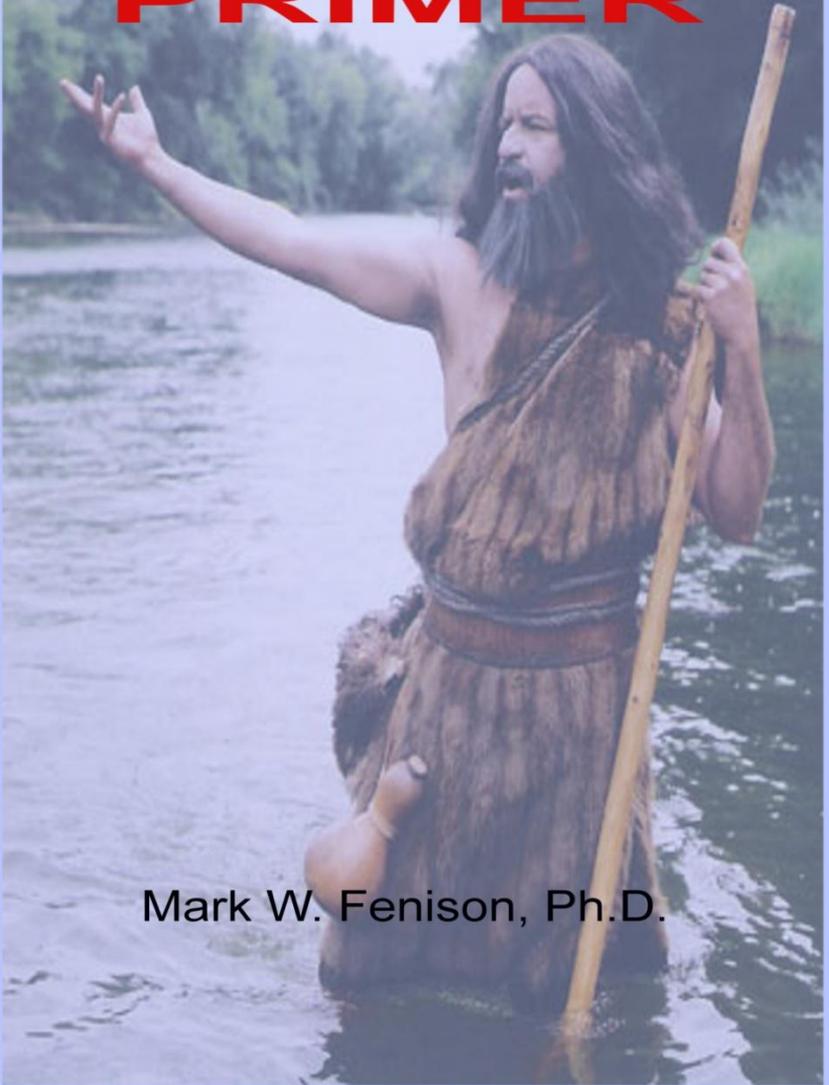


The Baptist Pattern **PRIMER**



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The Baptist Pattern

Primer

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The Baptist Pattern

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Introduction

This short booklet is intended to be used only as a primer to introduce people to the Baptist Pattern. It is something short and easy to read that can be used to start a conversation leading to a more thorough study.

Many people will not read long and complex studies. However, they are more willing to read a short presentation, as a snapshot view of our position.

It is suggested that you use this booklet exactly according to that purpose – a mere introduction – that is not designed to defend our position, but merely to clearly state it so they can at least grasp quickly where you are coming from and what you believe.

After they have read this primer, and show further interest, you can then direct them to more in depth studies to answer their questions or objections.

So if you are the one that has been given this little booklet, keep in mind that it was not designed to defend our position, but merely to present it in an easy, understandable way.

Mark W. Fenison
May 27, 2015

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“The Baptist” Name

*In those days came John **the Baptist**, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, - Mt. 3:1*

Why does Matthew call John “*the Baptist*”? It will be shown in this chapter that the Holy Spirit used the Greek definite noun transliterated¹ “*the Baptist*” to be a summary description of John’s prophetic mission, message and method. He did not choose a verb to describe an action, nor did he use an adjective to describe something about his person as “the baptizer.” Neither did he use a participle, or verbal adjective, as in “John the Baptizing one.” This descriptive noun provides the best summary description of his prophetic mission, message and method.

So, in Matthew 3:1 he is called “*The Baptist*” at the outset of his mission before he administered baptism to anyone. Moreover, the text says he initiated his mission by “*preaching*” rather than by baptizing anyone. So he is not called “*The Baptist*” in Matthew 3:1 for having baptized anyone.

Neither was he called “*the Baptist*” by his parents at birth (Lk. 1:13, 63) but just plain old “*John*.”

¹ The difference between a transliteration and a translation is that the latter provides an equivalent meaning from one language to another language, while the former gives the equivalent pronunciation from one language to another language. Most English translations do not translate the Greek baptizo but merely provide its pronunciation into English – “baptize...baptist”. If it was translated or given equivalent meaning from Greek to English it would be rendered “submerge, immerse, or dunked.”

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Some suggest that the Holy Spirit called him “*The Baptist*” in retrospect of what he had already done from the perspective of the New Testament writers.

However, the Biblical evidence suggests the very reverse. The Biblical evidence suggests that he was called “*The Baptist*” not in retrospect from the perspective of the Biblical writers after the fact, but due to the nature of his mission as described and predicted long before his ministry.

Both Isaiah and Malachi had predicted his ministry and described it in much broader terms than administering an external rite. Isaiah described his mission in the following figurative preparatory language:

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it. – Isa. 40:3-5

Mark claims this passage by Isaiah is to be applied to John the Baptist:

As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. – Mk. 1:2-3

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John the Baptist personally claimed this prophecy was fulfilled by his own ministry:

Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. – Jn. 1:22-23

So, the mission of John was to *prepare the way* for the coming of a person who is identified by Isaiah, and the gospel writers, as “*the Lord*.” The Hebrew term translated “*the Lord*” is Yahweh, or the personal name for the God of Israel.

However, it is Malachi that describes how John would prepare Israel to receive Christ, as the Lord.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.- Mal. 4:5-6

Before he was born, this very prediction by Malachi was specifically applied to John The Baptist by an angel unto his father Zacharias:

And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. – Lk. 1:17

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Therefore, John would prepare Israel for the Lord in the same “*spirit and power*” of Elijah. The effect of this empowered ministry would remove the generational gap, or enmity between the older and younger generations, and transform the “*disobedient*”, or law breakers “*to the wisdom of the just.*” Hence, his empowered ministry would be manifested in transformed lives.

This transformational ministry is not attributed to his baptism, but to his “*preaching*” that preceded his baptism (Mt. 3:1 – “*came preaching*”).

Indeed, Matthew says that John demanded “*fruits of repentance*”, or evidence of that transformed life prior to administering baptism to anyone:

*But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come. **Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:*** -

Mt. 3:7-8

Therefore, the phrase “*the baptism of repentance for remission of sins*” (Mk. 1:4) does not mean anyone was baptized **in order to** obtain remission of sins, but baptism was declarative that they had obtained remission of sins due to repentance in response to what he preached. In other words, the transforming power of his ministry was found in his preaching. **Baptism provided the public declaration that his transforming mission had been accomplished in those who submitted to baptism.** It was his preaching in the “*spirit and power*” of Elijah that obtained this transformation in those he baptized. So, then, what was this empowered transforming message he preached? It was the simple

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message of the gospel. He called upon his listeners to repent of their rebellion against the coming King, and believe in him for eternal life:

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. – Jn. 3:36

Therefore, his baptism was a personal declaration of a transformed life due to the power of the gospel. Peter identified the origin of the gospel preached by the church at Jerusalem with the ministry of John:

*That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after **the baptism which John preached**;* - Acts 10:37

The baptism of John could be “*preached*.” What did it preach? It publicly proclaimed that all who received baptism had brought forth “*fruits of repentance*” and thereby were “*a people made ready for the Lord*.” The descriptive noun “*The Baptist*” represented John’s prophetic mission, message and method “*to prepare a people made ready for the Lord*.” His *mission* was to prepare a people made ready for the Lord. His *message* was the simple gospel consisting of repentance and faith in the coming Christ. His *method* was to preach the gospel, administer baptism to repentant believers, and then disciple them. This was “*the Baptist*” pattern. Jesus followed this very pattern (Jn. 4:1-2) and commissioned this very pattern (Mt. 28:19-20).

Baptism visibly declared this mission had been successful with regard to the person being baptized. Those who submitted to his

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baptism were declaring public identification with his mission, message and method. That is precisely why in the Great Commission (Mt. 28:19-20) the only ones authorized to administer baptism are restricted to those who identify with the mission, message and methods of Jesus Christ.²

John's baptism visibly declared, or manifested Christ, and thus preached the very gospel of Christ in emblematic form:

And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.- Jn. 1:31

From this, we can see that God designed baptism to manifest Christ. God sent John to baptize in water because God had determined, according to His eternal counsel long before Isaiah and Malachi predicted and described his mission, that baptism would provide a public symbol of the very gospel of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Hence, to reject the baptism of John would be rejection of God's eternal council:

And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of

² The commission is given to "disciples" (Mt. 28:16) or those who have already been evangelized (Mk. 16:15), baptized and taught how to observe all things. A "disciple" is one who "follows after" Christ in these three designated areas (gospel, baptism, faith and practice). Baptism identifies a person with Christ's gospel, baptism and an observing teaching congregation of Christ's faith and order.

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***God** against themselves, being not baptized of him.* – Lk. 7:29-30

God’s counsel was not an afterthought, or something determined within time, but before the world began, as he works all things according to His counsel:

*....being predestinated according to the purpose of him who **worketh all things after the counsel of his own will**:*
- Eph. 1:11b

*Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, **My counsel** shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth **my counsel** from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; **I have purposed it, I will also do it.***
– Isa. 46:10-11

So he was not called “*The Baptist*” in retrospect from the perspective of the New Testament writers because of what he had already done, but he was called “*The Baptist*” in anticipation of what he would do according to prophesies that preceded his ministry.

The descriptive noun “*The Baptist*” represented his whole mission, message and methods – “*to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.*”

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The Pattern of “The Baptist” Ministry

And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. – Lk. 1:17

John followed a specific method to accomplish this mission. The descriptive noun “*The Baptist*” is the summary expression of his method, or the pattern to accomplish his mission. The Baptist pattern has three basic characteristics:

1. **The Preaching of the gospel** - He came calling on them to repent and believe the gospel:

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. – Jn. 3:36

And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel. – Mk. 1:15

2. **The Administration of baptism** - He administered baptism to only repentant believers:

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:
- Mt. 3:7-8

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Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. – Acts 19:4

3. **Assembling them around him in order to teach them how to observe God’s Word:** He taught them how to be obedient to God – he disciplined them in God’s Word.

And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.
– Lk. 11:1

Then there arose a question between some of John’s disciples and the Jews about purifying. – Jn. 3:25

It is by this threefold ministry pattern that John “*prepared a people made ready for the Lord*” to constitute the church at Jerusalem. The very Greek term translated “*prepared*” in Luke 1:17 is the common term used for the preparation of a bride (e.g. “*prepared as a bride*” – Rev. 21:2). John prepared those whom he disciplined by this threefold pattern to be presented unto Christ, as His metaphorical bride:

Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth

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greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. – Jn. 3:28-29

It is out of those that John prepared in this manner that Jesus took and formed the first church at Jerusalem (Jn. 1:35-50; Acts 1:4, 21-22; 2:1). The origin of the materials to form the church and its leadership are identified with the baptism of John:

Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us. Beginning from the baptism of John,³ unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. – Acts 1:21-22

In other words, John's Baptist ministry is an espousal ministry that prepared the proper materials for Christ to constitute a New Testament congregation.

However, this espousal pattern is the very same pattern used by apostles to form each New Testament church as a "*chaste virgin*" or metaphorical bride to be presented unto Christ:

For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. – 2 Cor. 11:2

³ Carefully examine the language used by Luke in this text. He is describing a travelling assembly that could be entered and exited ("*went in and out among us.*"). The fact that only those who had participated in this travelling assembly could be candidates to fill the apostolic office proves more than the twelve had been part of this assembly. The twelve were only the representative officers of this assembly (1 Cor. 12:28).

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He came to Corinth calling on men to repent and believe the gospel. He then baptized those who received that message and constituted them into the “*congregation which is at Corinth*.”⁴

In other words, Paul was claiming to perform the Baptist ministry by administering the very same Baptist method that defines “*The Baptist*” pattern:– (1) Preach the gospel; (2) baptize repentant believers in the gospel; (3) assemble them to teach them to be obedient to the Lord until He returns.

The metaphor of a “*bride*” or “*chaste virgin*” when applied to a congregation has to do with much more than mere salvation, as it includes baptism, and the intent to obey “*all things whatsoever*” Christ had commanded. These metaphors convey the idea of a congregation made up of Christians committed to remain faithful to Christ’s doctrine and practice until he comes again. It is more than just a gospel ministry, as the gospel has been preached since Genesis (Acts 10:43; Heb. 4:2; etc.). This ministry includes administering baptism and engaging in congregational gathering in order to be taught how to understand, observe and guard God’s word. Both John and Paul were bringing qualified materials (baptized repentant believers) into a teaching and observing relationship with Christ in anticipation of His coming. This metaphor has to do with doctrinal and practical public faithfulness to Christ (2 Cor. 11:3-4) as a congregational body of baptized believers.

⁴ God directly sent John to establish this pattern (Jn. 1:6, 33). However, now it is the New Testament church through which God sends out missionaries to perform this ministry (Acts 13; 1-4).

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Jesus followed the Baptist Pattern:

Jesus began his public ministry by public submission to The Baptist Ministry (Mt. 3:15-17). He then patterned his ministry after The Baptist Ministry (Jn. 4:1-2), as his ministry is also patterned after the very same three characteristics:

1. **The Preaching of the Gospel:** He came preaching the gospel, calling on them to repent and believe:

That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. – Jn. 3:15-16

2. **The Administration of John's Baptism:** He administered John's baptism to repentant believers of the gospel:

And all the people that heard him,[Christ] and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him. – Lk. 7:29-30

When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,(Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) – Jn. 4:1-2

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3. **Assembling them around him in order to Teach them to how to observe all things:** He taught them how to obey God’s Word – he disciplined them in God’s Word.

And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. – Lk 11:1

For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day. –Mk. 9:31

Jesus Commissioned the Baptist Pattern

Mark says the command to “*go*” refers to preaching the gospel:

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.: – Mk. 16:15

Hence, the Baptist Ministry Pattern is outlined in the Great Commission:

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1. The Preaching of the Gospel:

And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. – Lk. 24:47

2. Baptize the repentant believers:

...baptizing them... - Mt. 28:19

3. Assembled, in order to be taught how to observe all things:

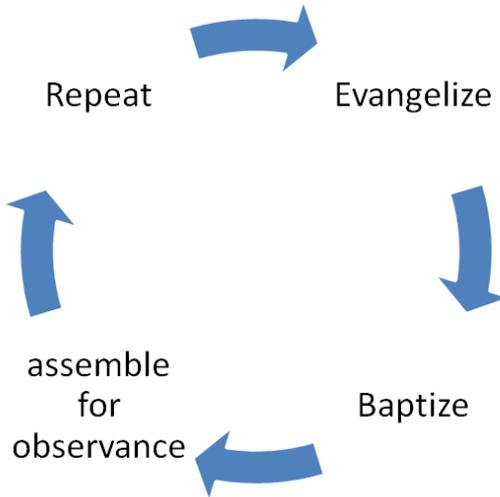
Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded... - Mt. 28:20

Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us. Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.
– Acts 1:21-22

The Baptist Ministry pattern was provided by John, submitted to, then copied and commissioned by Christ to the end of the world.

This Baptist pattern is put in the form of a graph on the next page:

The Great Commission Cycle - Mt. 28:19



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The Practice of “The Baptist” Ministry

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. – Acts 2:41-42

The Apostles doctrine is what Christ commanded and commissioned until the end of the age. So we have that pattern plainly spelled out and expanded in Acts 2:41-42.

1. The gospel was first preached calling them to repentance and faith – *as many as received the Word*
2. They baptized repentant believers – *were baptized*
3. They were added to a teaching assembly in order to observe the apostolic doctrine and practice – *added unto them...And continued stedfastly in the Apostles doctrine*

In fact, both the grammar and the words used in Acts 2:42 demonstrate that the congregation at Jerusalem embraced the Baptist Ministry as their pattern until the end of the book of Acts.

Luke writes the book of Acts after Paul had been under house arrest in Rome (Acts 28). He uses a grammatical structure in Acts 2:42 that tells his readers that what the congregation practiced in Acts 2:41-42 was not new, but had been the practice of this congregation prior to this point and continued to be its practice right up until the time he penned the book of Acts after Paul’s

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imprisonment in Rome. The beginning point of this practice is provided by Luke in Acts 1:21-22:

Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, - Acts 1:21-22

The congregation at Jerusalem began with the material John The Baptist prepared for Christ, of which, Christ took unto himself (Jn. 1:35-51) and formed a traveling congregation (“*companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us*”) which continued to administer the Baptist Pattern (preach the gospel, baptize the repentant believers and then teach them). This was the consistent pattern for the congregation at Jerusalem from its “*beginning*” point until Luke finished writing the book of Acts.

Indeed, instead of repeating this whole pattern every time a person was saved, baptized and added to their teaching assembly, Luke simply summarizes this pattern by using the word “*added*” in Acts 2:41 from this point forward (Acts 2:47, 5:14; 11:24). When the number of new members “*added*”, according to this Baptist Pattern were too many to be actually counted, he substituted the word “*multiplied*” (Acts 6:1, 7; 9:31; 12:24).

The apostolic doctrine (The Baptist Pattern) was the consistent blueprint behind the constitution of every single congregation found in the New Testament.

There were no denominations in the New Testament era because all the congregations were constituted and founded upon the very

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same apostolic doctrine.⁵ Indeed, most of the New Testament was written to provide a further defense of the apostolic doctrine (the Baptist Pattern) and/or to correct congregations who departed from the apostolic faith and practice. Most of the congregations formed in the book of Acts were formed by the Apostle Paul (Acts 13-28).

Therefore the “*we....us....you....ye*” found in the New Testament Scriptures do not represent Christians or congregations divided into different denominations with conflicting faiths and practices, but represent Christians and congregations united by the same faith and practice – the apostolic faith and practice or The Baptist Pattern.

Jesus did not commission anyone to go preach “*another gospel*” other than what He preached, because those who preach “*another gospel*” are accursed (Gal. 1:8-9). He did not commission anyone to baptize with another baptism than what he submitted to, and administered through his disciples to others, because only the baptism of John was according to the counsel of God (Lk. 7:29-30). He did not commission anyone to teach things he never commanded, as any faith and order that is not in keeping with “*whatsoever things I have commanded*” is regarded by the New Testament writers as apostasy from the faith (1 Tim. 4:1) and any “*brother*” that does so is to be placed under church discipline (2 Thes. 3:6; 1 Cor. 5:11-13). Instead, New Testament congregations were commanded to “*contend for the faith once delivered*” (Jd. 3).

⁵⁵ Therefore, “*The Baptist*” was not used as a denominational title to distinguish one denomination from another because there were no other denominations.

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The Protection of “The Baptist” Pattern

Christ and the apostles put into place certain safeguards to protect this Baptist Pattern, and to keep congregations from going astray, and thus prevent division into conflicting denominations. Congregations which followed these safeguards persevered in the faith once delivered, but congregations who did not were split and fractured, out of which ultimately came the first denominations (Acts 20:29-30).

These safeguards are as follows:

1. Final Authority - Inspired Scriptures
2. Church Discipline
3. Qualified Ministry and Membership
4. Limited Authority for constitution

A. Final Authority - Inspired Scriptures

New Testament scriptures were mostly written to New Testament congregations to correct and instruct them in the Baptist Pattern, or in the New Testament faith and practice. Scripture was to be the final authority for defining apostolic doctrine and practice, or the Great Commission pattern (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Isa. 8:20). This was the “*foundation*” provided by Christ through the apostles and prophets, and upon which the institutional church was founded (Eph. 2:20), which made it “*the pillar and ground of the truth*” (1 Tim. 3:15).

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The New Testament Scriptures were provided to keep them in the faith, so that they would not be “*tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine*” (Eph. 4:14).

All New Testament congregations that have been constituted according to the Baptist Pattern regard the scriptures as their final authority for faith and practice. That is a primary mark of a true church of Christ.

B. Church Discipline

Those Christians or congregations who openly violate the Scriptures or depart from essential truths of the Baptist Pattern (another gospel, another baptism, another faith and order – 1 Tim. 4:1) are rebuked, corrected and/or removed from the fellowship of New Testament congregations (Mt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Thes. 3:6-14; Rom. 16:17-18). Without church discipline “*a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump*” and apostasy from the faith is the result.

C. Qualified Ministry and Membership

The apostle Paul predicted that denominationalism would arise from two sources. It would arise from erring leaders within, or external false teachers that were allowed entrance into the congregation:

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For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. – Acts 20:29-30

In order to minimize this problem, the apostles provided specific qualifications in the selection of the ordained leadership (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Tit. 1:5-13). Any member desiring to fill these roles of leadership over the flock had to meet these qualifications. Such candidates could not be newly saved converts (1 Tim. 3:6), but must have been tested by time and experience in keeping with these qualifications. Paul warned not to lay hands suddenly upon any man desiring to be ordained for church leadership (1 Tim. 5:22). They must be “*sound in the faith*” and be spiritual mature (“*elders*”), as well as, morally upright. In other words, they must set forth the Christ like example as a pattern for others to follow.

Within the membership of the congregation all are equal in regard to their spiritual standing before God. However, not all are equal in regard to their position of service. The ordained are in the position of leadership. The scriptures forbid that women and children (Isa. 3:11; 1 Tim. 2:11-13; 1 Cor. 14:33-36) should be ordained to leadership or take any other roles of leadership over men in the congregation. This prohibition is not based upon culture but upon God’s design in creation (1 Cor. 11:5-6; 1 Tim. 2:12-13; Eph. 5:22-25; 30). Part of that design is the symbolism of Christ in the position of leadership over His bride (Eph. 5:23-25). The males in the congregation symbolize Christ in the position of leadership in the offices of prophet, priest and king, while the females symbolize

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His submissive and faithful bride. Therefore, the males assume the roles of prophet, and do the teaching and preaching (1 Tim. 2:11). They assume the role of priests in the public assembly and lead in prayer (1 Tim. 2:8). They assume the role of king and function in all the roles of leadership. So, then, the leadership role of the man in the home (Eph. 5:23-25) harmonizes with his role of leadership in the congregation.

D. Limited Authority for Constitution

Christ did not grant everyone the authority found in the Great Commission. For example, he did **not** authorize anyone to go preach “*another gospel*.” He did **not** authorize anyone to administer *another* baptism. He did **not** authorize anyone to teach *another* faith and order contrary to what he commanded.

He authorized only those who were like faith and order with him in the very things he commissioned. Most importantly, those commissioned were only those he had already taught how to observe these things (“*I have commanded you*”). They were already disciplined in this pattern.

The Great Commission was given to “*disciples*” (Mt. 28:16) who were already products of the Baptist Pattern. Indeed, the term “*teach*” in Matthew 28:19 is the translation of the Greek term *matheteusate* which literally means “make disciples.” A New Testament “*disciple*” is one that fits the characteristics of the Baptist Pattern as spelled out in the Great Commission. They have already been evangelized, they have already been baptized, and

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they have already been brought into a teaching observing congregation. He is addressing the very first ordained leaders of the congregation he founded in Jerusalem which had been habitually assembling together with him “*beginning from the baptism of John*” – Acts 1:21-22.

The congregation in Antioch was constituted by the preaching members of the congregation at Jerusalem (Acts 11:20-26). All the congregations listed in Acts 13-28 originated with the authorized preaching members of the congregation at Antioch (Acts 13:1-4). New Testament congregations do not self-originate, but are made or disciplined according to the Baptist Pattern by those who are already observing that pattern. All New Testament congregations originate from a previous New Testament congregation. The Great Commission is a *reproductive cycle* of like faith and order.

Christ never commissioned the lost, or the unbaptized or the untaught, but he commissioned plural “disciples” gathered into a congregational body, or those who were already in a disciplined state (saved, baptized and members of an observing congregational body of Christ). It is the congregational body of baptized believers which is authorized to reproduce after their own kind until He comes again. The reproduction of congregational bodies of baptized believers is precisely what is seen in the book of Acts and in the Pauline epistles.

There was no such thing as denominationalism in the New Testament era. In the New Testament era we find only congregations of like faith and order.

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It is these protective measures that maintain the New Testament congregation as metaphorical “*chaste virgin*” or “*bride*” so that it is not “*corrupted*” by false doctrine and practice (2 Cor. 11:2-4).

Today, congregations constituted according to the Baptist Pattern are easy to identify. The Scriptures are their final authority. They practice church discipline on open and public violators of the Scriptures. They qualify their leadership according to the Scriptural requirements. They preach the same gospel as Jesus did (Jn. 3:15-20). They administer the same baptism as Jesus did – the baptism of John, and claim it is the only baptism according to the counsel of God (Lk. 7:29-30). They teach the same faith and order found among the New Testament congregations.

Apostate congregations are just as easy to identify. They will always be identified by one or more of the following:

1. Deny either by doctrine or practice the scriptures as final authority.
2. Deny either by doctrine or practice church discipline
3. Ordain unqualified leadership
4. Preach another gospel
5. Deny either by doctrine or practice the baptism of John as Christian baptism.
6. Teach things fundamentally contrary to what Christ commanded.

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The Authorized Administrator of Baptism?

John's baptism was declarative of his public mission, message and method. Those who submitted to his baptism publicly declared they were a people made ready for the Lord. They identified with his gospel and doctrine or with The Baptist ministry pattern.

In the Great Commission, Christ has only authorized those who preach the same gospel, and teach the same faith and order to administer baptism. Why? Baptism is designed to publicly identify you with Christ, His gospel and his faith and practice, or pattern of ministry. He restricted baptism to administrators of like faith and order because he does not want true believers publicly identifying with any other faith and order.

Whatever administrator of baptism you submit unto, identifies you publicly with their doctrine and faith. For example, if you chose to submit to a Roman Catholic Priest for baptism, that would identify you as a Roman Catholic. If you chose to submit to a Methodist minister, that would identify you publicly with the Methodist church.

New Testament Baptist congregations refuse to accept baptism by other denominations because (1) their baptism publicly identifies with, and thus represents the faith and practice of that public ministry. (2) Christ restricted baptism to administrators that were like faith and order with him, or "*the Baptist*" ministry pattern.

Jesus walked over sixty miles to publicly identify with "*The Baptist*" ministry. He not only publicly submitted to "*The Baptist*"

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ministry pattern, but perpetuated it in the congregation that followed him around Judea (Acts 1:21-22; Lk. 7:29-30; Jn. 4:1-2). He then commissioned that congregation of like faith and order to reproduce after their own kind until the end of the world. No one has the right or authority to administer “Baptist” baptism, but those who also publicly identify with “*The Baptist*” mission, message and method or “*The Baptist*” pattern.

Finally, no one has the right to administer baptism contrary to “*The Baptist*” pattern of Christ’s baptism.

1. Neither John nor Jesus baptized infants
2. Both administered immersion only
3. Both baptized repentant believers only
4. Jesus did not submit to baptism for literal remission of sins.

John was sent directly by God to establish this pattern (Jn. 1:6, 33). Jesus authorized this pattern in the Great Commission “*until the end of the world*” (Mt. 28:19-20). It is through churches established by this pattern and operating according to this pattern that God now sends out men to administer this pattern (Acts 13:1-4).⁶

⁶ Every true believer is a steward of the gospel and is to be a witness of the gospel. However, the Great Commission involves more than a gospel witness. The whole family of God is to be witnesses of the gospel and can evangelize the lost. However, none but the institutional church of Christ can administer the Great Commission.

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The Theology of “The Baptist”

The Baptist Pattern has Baptist theological content. John The Baptist was a Trinitarian in his view of the Godhead. He believed in one true God manifested in three divine Personages – The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit: He makes a clear distinction in their Persons several times:

*And John bare record, saying, I saw **the Spirit** descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon **him**. And I knew **him** not: but **he that sent me** to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see **the Spirit** descending, and remaining on **him**, the same is he which baptizeth with **the Holy Ghost**. And I saw, and bare record that this is **the Son of God**. – Jn. 1:31-34*

***He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that **God is true**. For he whom **God hath sent** speaketh the words of God: for **God** giveth not **the Spirit** by measure unto **him**. **The Father** loveth **the Son**, and hath given all things into his hand.** – Jn. 3:32-35*

He not only distinguishes their persons, but identifies them as God. He recognized Jesus as Jehovah, or Yahweh (Jn. 3:32), but yet, as the Son of God, as he quoted and applied Isaiah 40:5 to Jesus Christ (Jn. 1:23). All Three Persons of the Godhead were manifested and recognized by John the Baptist at the baptism of Jesus (Mt. 3:15-17). He baptized in the name, or by the authority (Acts 4:7) of this one true God. Jesus said that his baptism was

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authorized from heaven (Mt. 21:25) and was the counsel of God (Lk. 7:30). John the Baptist said that he was “*sent*” (*apostalmenos* – sent by authority) by God (Jn. 1:6, 32) to baptize. This was the Triune God that sent him.

Furthermore, he did not administer sprinkling (Gr. *rantizo*) or pouring (Gr. *epicheo*) but immersed (Gr. *baptizo*) only repentant believers in Jesus. No infants were baptized by John, as he required “*fruits of repentance*” before baptism (Mt. 3:7). He was not a Pedobaptist (infant baptizer).

He believed in the sinfulness of mankind, as he required them to repent and believe in Christ and show forth the “*fruits of repentance*” prior to baptism:

Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. – Acts 19:4

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. – Jn. 3:36

Prior to the appearance of Christ unto John, John constantly told his audience that he had come to announce the arrival of Christ:

He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias....And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias,

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*neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but **there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.*** – Jn. 1:23,25-27

*Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that **I am sent before him.*** – Jn. 3:28

*And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, **the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.*** – Jn. 1:33

When he made his appearance, John told his audience who he was - “*the Lamb of God...The Son of God...who cometh from above... who is above all...*”.

He believed that Jesus Christ represented the sacrificial lamb offered up daily and on the Day of Atonement for sin (Jn. 1:29, 36).

He believed that the promised children of Abraham were by supernatural birth:

*And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that **God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.*** – Mt. 3:9

He believed in the total inability of fallen man and the complete sovereignty of God in salvation:

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John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. – Jn. 3:27

And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. – Jn. 3:34

He believed in heaven as the abode of God (Jn. 3:27) and in the wrath to come upon the lost (Mt. 3:6, 12; Jn. 3:36).

He believed that the Kingdom of God was manifested in the Person of Christ as the promised King (Mk. 1:1-2; Jn. 1:23) and thus preached the “*kingdom of God is at hand*” in the Person of the King.

He believed that the church was the bride of Christ and that the church was presently in the possession of Christ before Pentecost, and consisted of those whom he had made ready and prepared for the Lord.

He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. – Jn. 3:29

The apostles recognized that the church began to assemble with Christ beginning with the baptism of John in John 1:35:

Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. – Acts 1:21-22

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He believed that the baptism in the Spirit by Christ was yet future and was an immersion of a corporate body of only water baptized believers that he had made ready, prepared for the Lord:

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: - Mt. 3:11

Jesus affirmed that the baptism in the Spirit was to be administered on Pentecost to this same water baptized assembly of believers that Jesus had received from John and which had been habitually assembling with him as His church:

And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.... Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us.... And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. - Acts 1:4-5, 21-22; 2:1

So The Baptist embraced all the essentials of Baptist Theology in regard to God, salvation, the church, and eternal destinies.

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Is John's Baptism "Christian"

There are some who deny that the baptism of John was "Christian" baptism. They claim it is an Old Testament rite that was a transitional baptism. They assert that "Christian" baptism began on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:41. The only basis for this denial is their interpretation of the accounts of Apollos and the 12 disciples in Acts 18:24-19:6.

These accounts occur somewhere between 22-24 years after the death of John the Baptist. However, Apollos was not rebaptized, and it is quite apparent from their ignorance about the Holy Spirit that the 12 disciples in Acts 19 had never been baptized by John, but rather had been baptized by Apollos.

Apollos "*knew only the baptism of John*" which means he did not know that John's promise of the baptism in the Spirit had been accomplished on the day of Pentecost. That baptism was the public authentication of the new house of God, the church, as the only *authorized* administrator of baptism (Mt. 28:19-20). Apollos had no authority, no commission and no right to administer baptism to anyone, especially in the name of John, as John baptized in the name of Christ or in reference to Christ (Acts 19:4).

Moreover, the Biblical evidence demonstrates that the baptism of John was the only baptism in water authorized by heaven, received by Christ and the apostles, and included in the Great Commission.

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1. Did Christ have “Christ-ian” (Christ like) baptism?

Christ received the baptism of John (Mt. 3:15-17), and there is no record that Christ was ever rebaptized? How can we be called upon to follow Christ in baptism, if his baptism was un-Christ like?

Jesus not only submitted to the baptism of John, but administered it through his disciples (Jn. 4:1-2).

2. Should we “reject the counsel of God”?

And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him. - Lk. 7:29-30

Were the Pharisees and lawyers wiser than Christ and his followers in rejecting the baptism of John? If it was only a transition baptism that God himself would shortly reject by institution of another baptism in water on Pentecost, were they not wise in rejecting it also, since it would have to be repeated?

3. John’s baptism was the baptism in the Great Commission

When Jesus gave the final commission to his church in Matthew 28:19, the only possible baptism in existence was the baptism of John. This commission is based on what “*I have commanded*” and only the baptism of John had been commanded and administered

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by Christ previously through his congregation (Jn. 4:1-2; Lk. 7:29-30). Indeed, from the very point that Jesus first organized disciples of John around him as a traveling congregation (Acts 1:21-22; 10:37) the only baptism administered by them as a congregational body under his leadership was the baptism of John (Jn. 4:1-2). The baptism in the Great Commission is water baptism, because it is administered by men (“*ye*”) to other men (“*them*”). The commission authorizes the administration of John’s baptism unto the end of the age. It is the “*one baptism*” in Ephesians 4:6.

4. Why would the Church require John’s Baptism for Apostleship if it was to be rejected?

Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. – Acts 1:21-22

Here are the qualifications necessary to fill the office of Apostle. They had to have the baptism of John. There is no account of any apostle being rebaptized. Hence, if the highest office in the church required the baptism of John how could anything less be required of the common church member?

Moreover, after Pentecost, Peter identified the origin of the gospel ministry by the church to have occurred with the baptism of John (Acts 10:37).

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Indeed, the baptism of John is the only baptism authorized by God (Jn. 1:6, 31; Mt. 22:25), that justifies God (Lk. 7:29) and is the “*counsel of God*” (Lk. 7:30) that both the Spirit of God (Jn. 1:33) and the Son of God approved (Jn. 4:1-2) and commissioned unto the end of the age (Mt. 28:19-20).

5. Not administered in the name of the Trinity?

Some object that it is not “Christian” because it was not administered “in the name” of Jesus or the Trinity (Mt. 28:19).

However, in the book of Acts there is no instance or record of anyone using the words “*in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost*” as a verbal formula in administering baptism. In fact, the words “*in the name of*” are defined to mean “*by...authority*” (Acts 4:7).

John the Baptist believed in the Triune God. He recognized each divine Person, as God (as demonstrated in the previous chapter). His baptism was administered in reference to faith in Christ (Acts 19:4) and by the authority of the God that “*sent*” (*apestalmenos* – sent by authority) him. He baptized “*in the name of*” or by the authority of the Triune God that sent Him.

6. The Proper Interpretation of Acts 18:24-19:6

Apollos was never rebaptized, but merely instructed more perfectly in the way of the Lord. If the baptism of John had been

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transitional and invalidated by Pentecost, then he would have been rebaptized. However, the consequences of that instruction were that he ceased being a free lance ministry, and worked through the churches from that point forward, and preached that “Jesus” was the promised Christ of the Old Testament.

His ignorance was two-fold. First, he did not know that Jesus the son of Mary was the Christ that John the Baptist had foretold. He apparently was baptized by John prior to Jesus being baptized by John. Second, he did not know about the baptism in the Spirit on the day of Pentecost that authenticated the church institution as the authorized administrator of water baptism and successor to John's pattern of ministry. Hence, he was an unauthorized administrator (which accounts for the 12 disciples in chapter 19 who were also ignorant of the very two same issues). Apollos preached the same gospel that John did - the gospel that anticipated the coming of Christ as spelled out by Peter in Acts 10:43. When he was instructed that Jesus was the Christ, he then used his Old Testament knowledge to prove that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 18:28) **after** he first was received into church membership on the basis of John's baptism (Acts 18:27) without rebaptism.

In regard to the 12 disciples in Acts 19, notice that Apollos is transitioned right over into this context (Acts 19:1). Apollos is the administrator of their baptism, which he had no authority to administer.

I like what Dr. Lenski says of Paul's questions:

"Thus in the most natural way the question was asked, 'Did you receive the Holy Ghost on coming to faith?' The participle expresses action that is simultaneous with that of the main verb and is punctiliar to indicate the time when they first came to believe...Paul's question

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contained no reference to baptism....What Paul asked these men was whether any charismatic manifestations of the Holy Spirit occurred when they came to faith. In the case of Cornelius and those with him these manifestations came before they were baptized, they usually came afterward....As proof of this we may point to all the congregations founded by Paul." - Lenski, **The Book of Acts**

Only after Paul baptized them did they receive such charismatic manifestations (Acts 19:6).

They responded that they had not heard of the Holy Ghost. If John had baptized them they would have heard of the Holy Ghost (Mt. 3:11). However, they were ignorant of the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, just as Apollos had been ignorant about the baptism in the Spirit. Lenski then explains Paul's response:

"That is why Paul at once asks: 'In what, then were you baptized?' This is the static use of eis and is equal to en with the idea of sphere (R. 592) so that the sense is: "In connection with what were you baptized?" And 'what' (neuter) shows that Paul has in mind with what name?....It is quite possible that somebody had baptized them by using only more words: 'I baptize you with John's baptism'" (Lenski) or more likely "I baptize you in the name of John."

This immediately let Paul know, that unlike Apollos, they had not been baptized by John himself, because John did not baptize in his own name, but he baptized in the name of Christ or with regard to faith in Christ:

*"Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, **that they should***

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believe on him. which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.” - Acts 19:4

It is when they heard that the authentic administration of John's baptism was not in John's name, but in the name of Christ or with regard to Christ's name, that they were rebaptized by a church authorized and church authenticated administrator of baptism - Paul. The immediate effect was not salvation, but the temporary charismatic effects of the baptized church in the Spirit (Acts 19:6).

Jesus had said that John The Baptist was the greatest man born of women (with the exception of himself, who was “least” or lesser in age than John). Jesus had not submitted to an inferior baptism, but to the only baptism authorized from heaven and according to the “*counsel of God*” (Lk. 7:30).

John’s baptism was the only baptism Christ and the apostles and early church members at Jerusalem had submitted unto and administered (Jn. 4:1-2, Acts 1:21-22). John’s baptism was the only baptism authorized and commissioned by Christ (Mt. 28:19-20).

You have one of two possible options. You can stand with those who “*justify God*” by receiving the baptism of John, or you can side with those who reject the baptism of John and therefore “*reject the counsel of God.*”

And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him. – Lk. 7:29-30

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Only true New Testament churches identify with the baptism of John and with the pattern of ministry that the Bible calls “*the Baptist*” pattern. All others “*reject the counsel of God*” and thereby reject the very baptism of Christ as “Christ-ian” (Christ like) baptism.

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Conclusion

In examining the Biblical facts related to God's authorized way, we may conclude that, the Biblical descriptive noun "*The Baptist*" represents the ministry of reconciliation between men and God that prepares them for the coming of Christ. It prepared a people made ready for the Lord's first coming, and it is the pattern found in the Great Commission that prepares them for His Second Coming. It is the practice consistently found in the book of Acts to prepare a people made ready for the Lord's Second Coming.

This pattern of ministry is "*The Baptist*" ministry, and those who identify with the baptism of John "*justify God*" while those who reject the Baptist ministry "*reject the council of God.*" Where do you stand? Do you identify with "*The Baptist*" ministry or do you "*reject the counsel of God*"?

This short booklet has only been designed to be a primer for the Baptist Pattern. If you desire a more comprehensive study, then you can access on line, my book "*In Search of New Testament Churches*" absolutely free at:

http://victorybaptistchurch.webstarts.com/books_by_mark_fenison.html

Also, you can contact the person who provided you this material.