

"For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to battle?" 1 Corinthians 14:8

KJV

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THIS NEWSPAPER**

The Original BAPTIST OBSERVER



"Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls..." Jeremiah 6:16

Sounding Out The Faith

February 2024

Contending for the Faith - Its Costly Price Tag -

Let's begin with the highest price of all, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Although it was determined before anything was created, His price began to be paid when He left the portals of Heaven to come to earth to be born.

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." II Corinthians 8:9

Consider how beautiful, peaceful and lovely Heaven is and how that Jesus, as God, clothed Himself in the flesh of man and came to a sin cursed earth and people.

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." John 1:14

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:" Romans 8:3

This was only the beginning of His price. Yet, He came and continued throughout His life on earth to pay the full price for us to have the privilege of not only salvation, but to have a local, New Testament

church to worship and serve Him in.

"Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand." Isaiah 53:10

"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." Romans 5:9

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Acts 20:28

No price could ever compare to the ultimate price that Jesus Christ paid for contending for the faith. For truly, it was His doctrine for which the religious group of His day, His own "blood" family, that cried out for His death.

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not." John 1:11

"Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would. And they had then a notable prisoner,

called Barabbas. Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ? For he knew that for envy they had delivered him. When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified. When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children. Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified." Matthew 27:15-26

We could never compare any suffering that man could go through to that of the Lord's suffering. However, there have been those down through the ages that have been

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willing to stand and contend for the faith, even to the laying down of their lives. First of all let's consider Stephen, one of the first deacons chosen by the Jerusalem church.

"And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called *the synagogue* of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and *against* God. And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon *him*, and caught him, and brought *him* to the council, And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us. And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." Acts 6:8-15

Notice that Stephen was hated because of his doctrine that he preached. He was falsely accused so that they could see him punished and ultimately killed for contending for the faith.

"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept *it*. When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with *their* teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast *him* out of the city, and stoned *him*: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon *God*, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." Acts 7:51-60

Their anger was kindled toward Stephen because the truth of God's Word pierced through their "traditions" they had made into doctrines. Stephen's preaching of the truth exposed their false doctrine and they became so angry that they stoned him because of the truth he spoke.

Next, we see that James, the brother of John, was killed by the sword because of standing and contending for the faith. Then, Peter was put into prison at the same time because Herod saw that the religious Jews of the day were pleased by James' death. False religion has shown itself

to be very aggressive when it comes to anyone standing against their "doctrines" or "traditions". Down through the ages, when truth is preached, false religion has continually attacked and even killed those who dare to oppose them.

"Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth *his* hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) And when he had apprehended him, he put *him* in prison, and delivered *him* to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people. Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon *him*, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from *his* hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him. And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and *from* all the expectation of the people of the Jews." Acts 12:1-11

Of course, we see that God chose to deliver Peter on this occasion for the glory of His truth. However, at other times the Lord saw that the greater glory was for His saints to die. In every occasion, the Lord has been faithful to be with His children and to give grace and help in their time of need.

As we consider the great price that has been paid by the Lord, but also by our brethren down through the ages, we should understand the importance of standing and contending for the faith. Others have been willing to suffer great afflictions and even death for this faith once delivered to the saints. However, God's grace was always sufficient for any price that was required of those that would lean to that grace.

"And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all." Acts 4:33

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Philipians 4:19

"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." II Corinthians 12:9

Much of the Lord's New Testament churches' sufferings have been written down and preserved by the historical writings of those that opposed this faith once delivered to the saints. As we read these historical accounts, keep in mind that the enemies of the Lord's churches were trying to prove that the Lord's churches were going against what they called "truth" or "doctrine". However, in their "proving", they are showing forth the Lord's churches were contending for the faith once delivered to the saints. These enemies' writings have no agenda to show forth a bias toward truth for the Lord's churches so in that, we can truly see that our forefathers truly did stand and contend for truth.

The Apostles and other early members of the Lord's church at Jerusalem, as well as other early churches, suffered martyrdom for contending for the faith. Matthew was slain in Ethiopia, Mark was dragged through the streets until dead, Luke was hanged, Peter and Simeon were crucified, Andrew was tied to a cross, Philip was crucified and stoned, Bartholomew was flayed alive, Thomas was pierced with lances, James, the less, was thrown from the temple and beaten to death, Jude was shot to death with arrows, Matthias was stoned to death and Paul was beheaded. The Jewish religion and the Pagan religion were responsible for these deaths. Because these brethren were preaching the truth according to the Scriptures, the other religious sects decided that they would stop their message by killing the messengers. However, we know that the truth would not be stopped by stopping one messenger because of the promise of Jesus Christ in Matthew 16:18. We can see Biblically and historically that the Christian religion of truth spread throughout all the Roman Empire, Europe, Asia, Africa, England, Wales, and truly into "all the world". (*Trail of Blood*, First Period A.D. 30-500; *Fox's Book of Martyrs*, Chapter One)

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matthew 16:18

Different than our day and time, during this period of history you have only three categories of claimed "religion". You have the Jews, the Pagans, and then the Christians. Now, not all "Christians" were adhering to the true doctrines and teachings. Even at this time some were beginning to depart from the faith. Remember, Revelation chapters two and three show us that the Lord through the Apostle John admonished some churches to repent or they would lose their "candlestick", the Holy Spirit as Comforter and authority to the local church.

During this early period of time, Nero reigned in Rome from about 54-68 A.D. He was a sick, barbarous and cruel emperor. It is recorded that he ordered the city of Rome to be set on fire just for his own pleasure. After he found he was being blamed and hated by the people, he sought occasion to then try to blame the Christians. He derived horrible means of punishments for Christians as he could. He had many Christians sew up in skins of animals then chased by dogs until they died. Others he took and dressed them in shirts of wax, fixed to axletrees, and set on fire in his gardens to illuminate them. (*Fox's Book of Martyrs*, chapter Two) Historical documents show that it was during this time that Paul and Peter were both executed during this persecution that extended throughout the city of Rome. (*Faithful Baptist Witness*, pg. 50)

Marcus Aurelius, 161-180 A.D., decreed that anyone reporting and identifying Christians to the government would be given the property belonging to those Christians. Christians were reported to the authorities by their neighbors. Many were beheaded and others were thrown to wild animals to provide entertainment for spectators who came to the Roman amphitheaters. The Roman leaders tried to prevent the bodies of the Christians from being resurrected by burning their dead corpses and throwing the ashes into the wind or rivers. At this time, Rome was requiring all religions except the Romans government and Caesar as the final authority. Christians that were contending for the faith could not do this knowing that Jesus Christ was the Head of the local church and that the Scriptures were the sole authority for their rule of faith and practice. It was during this time that Polycarp was martyred. After being apprehended, he requested an hour for prayer before being killed. It is recorded that he prayed with such fervency, that the guards which apprehended him repented that they had taken him. He was then carried before the proconsul, condemned, and burnt in the market place. As the flames were encircling Polycarp he was praying and assuring the onlookers that he should stand immovable. The executioner then ordered him to be pierced through with a sword. The quantity of blood that came out was so great that the flames were extinguished. His Christian brethren requested to have his body to bury but were refused. They continued to burn his body and then the brethren took the bones and as much of his remains as possible to bury them. (*Fox's Book of Martyrs*, Chapter Two)

"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." Colossians 1:13-18

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Matthew 28:18-20

The *Trail of Blood* written by J. M. Carroll documents some other historical statements as follows:

Cardinal Hosius, President of the Council of Trent (Catholic, 1524) states: "Were it not that the Baptists have been grievously tormented and cut off with the knife during the past twelve hundred years, they would swarm in greater number than all the Reformers." (*Hosius, Letters, Apud Opera, pages 112, 113*)

These "twelve hundred years" previously referred

to were the years preceding the "Reformation" in which Rome persecuted our Baptist forefathers, (known by other names) with the most cruel persecution thinkable.

Sir Isaac Newton is quoted to have said, "The Baptists are the only body of known Christians that have never symbolized with Rome."

Mosheim, a Lutheran historian, is quoted as saying, "Before the rise of Luther and Calvin, there lay secreted in almost all the countries of Europe persons who adhered tenaciously to the principles of modern Dutch Baptists."

The Presbyterian Edinburg Cyclopaedia states, "It must have already occurred to our readers that the Baptists are the same sect of Christians that were formerly described as Ana-Baptists. Indeed this seems to have been their leading principle from the time of Tertullian to the present time."

Tertullian was born just fifty years after the death of the Apostle John. Tertullian wrote of Polycarp, who was a disciple of John the Apostle, who was a disciple of Jesus, Himself. To set a timeline, we have Jesus and His disciples, His church, in the first century. Then we have the Apostolic Fathers in the second century, of which Polycarp was one. Then we move to the third century and we have Irenaeus who was a disciple of Polycarp and also Tertullian who was a Montanist, just one of the names our Baptist forefathers were given.

Some of the early heresies that it cost our brethren their lives were some of the pastors of larger churches began to assume authority over other smaller churches.

"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." I Peter 5:3

Even our enemies can clearly see in history that some of our forefathers stayed true to the teachings of God's Word and did not compromise.

This is a quote from Mosheim's written history, a Lutheran church historian, 1693-1755. "But whoever supposes that the bishops of this golden age of the church correspond with the bishops of the following centuries must blend and confound characters that are very different, for in this century and the next, a bishop had charge of a single church which might ordinarily be contained in a private house; nor was he its Lord, but was in reality its minister or servant. All the churches in those primitive times were independent bodies, or none of them subject to the jurisdiction of any other. For though the churches which were founded by the Apostles themselves frequently had the honor shown them to be consulted in doubtful cases, yet they had no judicial authority,

no as the noonday that all Christian churches had equal rights, and were in all respects on a footing of equality." (*Mosheim*, Vol. 1, pgs. 71-72)

The doctrine of salvation was even being perverted before the second century. Baptism began to be taught that it was such a ceremonial work that it must be important enough that it had something to do with one's salvation. Thus, being called baptismal regeneration, which of course, is completely contrary to the Scriptures. (*Shackelford*, pg. 57, *Camp*, pg. 47, *Benedict*, pg. 286, *Mosheim*, Vol. 1, pg. 134, *Christian*, pg. 28)

"And if by grace, then is it no 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." Romans 11:6

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." Galatians 2:16

The next attack on truth seems to come later in the form of who was a proper candidate to be baptized. As the heresy of baptismal regeneration grew, so did the false urgency of how quickly one was to be baptized because it was a means for salvation, in their false doctrine. Infants began to be baptized by immersion for several centuries. Sprinkling and pouring for baptism was not introduced for a long time.

Robinson's Ecclesiastical Researches is quoted as saying: "During the first three centuries, congregations all over the East subsisted in separate independent bodies, unsupported by government and consequently without any secular power over one another. All this time they were baptized churches, and though all the fathers of the first four ages down to Jerome (A.D. 370), were of Greece, Syria, and Africa, and though they give great numbers of histories of the baptism of adults, yet there is not one of the baptism of a child till the year 370." (*Shackelford's Compendium of Baptist History*, pg. 43; *Vedder*, pg. 50; *Christian*, pg. 31; *Orchard*, pg. 50)

Notice what the Bible teaches and what our forefathers stood for concerning those that were baptized. They stood with the Bible doctrine that salvation, repentance, belief had to take place before one could be a Scriptural candidate for baptism. An infant is not capable of understanding their need for repentance and belief in Jesus for salvation. Therefore, they are not a proper candidate for baptism. Our forefathers were willing to stand and lose their lives for the doctrine of Scriptural baptism.

"Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. 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:" Matthew 3:5-8

"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. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the

Apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.' Acts 2:41-47

Understand that all this was happening before the Catholic church was even started. These heresies were creeping into Scriptural New Testament churches with a lineage back to the first church and the faith once delivered to the saints. However, as little compromises on truth began to creep in and were left unchecked, more and more heresies continued to prevail in some of these churches. In fact, it had become so evident that these churches were not going to repent and the heresies had continued to the point that the loyal churches to the doctrines of Christ withdrew fellowship from the compromising churches in 251 A.D. (*Trail of Blood*, First Period A.D. 30-500, point 7) In fact, these compromising churches are the heretics that were used to later form the Catholic church.

Diocletian reigned in Rome 284-305 A.D. This ruler was a Pagan and he hated the Christians. He wanted all Christians deemed as outlaws. His persecutions made no distinction for age or sex. Houses were set on fire and the families left to perish in the flames. Others had stones fastened about their necks, and being tied together were driven into the sea. Racks, scourges, swords, daggers, crosses, poison and famine were all tortures against the Christians. Some governors became tired of the executions so they stopped killing them but set out to render their lives miserable. Some of these were to cut off their ears, slit their noses, put out their right eyes, dislocations of limbs, and searing their flesh with red-hot irons. (*Fox's Book of Martyrs*, Chapter Two)

In 313 A.D. Constantine, a new emperor, saw a vision of a fiery red cross. On that cross were fiery letters saying, "By this thou shalt conquer." He interpreted this vision to mean he should become a Christian. He thought that by giving up Paganism and attaching the spiritual power of the Christian religion to the temporal power of the Roman Empire that the world could be easily conquered. Consequently, a council was called for all the Christians churches or their representatives to come together to form this union between the government and religion together. A hierarchy was formed and simultaneously dethroning Christ from those churches that once had lineage, doctrine, and practice. However, they had left off the first principles of the Word of God and this was the beginning of what is now known as the Catholic, or "universal" church. Many of the churches came together for this council, but there were many that did not. These churches wanted no marriage with the state, no centralized religious government, and no higher ecclesiastical government of any kind besides the local church. (*Trail of Blood*, First Period A.D. 30-500, point 14-18)

Those that accepted this now "established" church seemed to be free from persecution.

Those who stood for maintaining the purity of the Lord's New Testament churches still faced persecution. However, now that persecution wasn't just coming from Pagans, or the Jewish religion, but it was now coming to them in the "name of the Lord" in the form of this new established religion. Now the government was the authority to this "established" church and the Bible was no longer the sole authority. This opened the door for doctrinal changes that have continued even to the day we live in. (*Stringer*, Chapter 7, pg. 53)

In 381 A.D., the Council of Constantinople was called to settle a controversy over the Holy Spirit. Some taught that the Holy Spirit was an impersonal force, others said He was a special creation of God the Father, and others held to the Bible that the Holy Spirit is a part of the eternal Godhead of the Trinity. The council did come out with the correct decision that the Holy Spirit is a part of the Godhead, but true churches could not agree with the state having any part in declaring truth. The Lord's New Testament churches have always allowed the Scriptures to determine truth, not the government. To remain faithful and true to the Lord, we must accept that the Bible is the sole authority for the Lord's churches and we cannot allow the government or anyone else to determine what truth is. In this, it is important to note that even heretics may "sound good" in some of their doctrines. However, we must be prepared to ask questions and to make diligent inquiry in order to see if they are truly one of the Lord's churches. (*Stringer*, pg. 57-58)

The term "Christian" is now turning into a term more closely related to our time, therefore, being used to describe even the heretics of this time. Heretics being those that departed from the faith and became part of this "established" church. Those that would not join in with the state religionists became the enemy and were hunted and hounded because they stood up against the heresies. Our forefathers became known by other names such as Montanists, Tertullianists, Novationists, Paterines, some later being called Anabaptists. All of these names were given as "insults" because of their strong adherence to the doctrines of the Bible that conflicted with the doctrines of this universal religion. (*Trail of Blood*, First Period A.D. 30-500, point 23-27)

With this perversion, the concept of a bishop being the pastor of a local church was soon corrupted to be a leader ruling over several churches in one geographical area. This led to a form for uniting all churches in the "church-state" system into one universal, organized church. They quickly became dominant and the structure of the church system included all regions within the Roman Empire. The Emperor became the head of the church system, and since he had already been the head of a Pagan religion, the two roles became confused. Because of his relationship with the Roman Emperor, the bishop at Rome soon became the most important preacher in the empire. (*Stringer*, pg. 60)

Roman Emperors soon began to use the title, Pontifex Maximus. This was later shortened to Pontiff or Pope, meaning "holy father". When the Roman Empire crumbled, the bishops of Rome gradually

assumed the powers and role of the Pontiff. This created the modern day Roman Catholic religious system. Independent Baptist churches stood opposed to this entire process as contrary to the Scriptures that clearly teach separation of church and state. (*Stringer*, pg. 60-61)

We now enter the period known as the Dark Ages. It is during this time that many more of the Lord's people are martyred, tortured, and displaced for contending for the faith. The persecutions of the established Roman Catholic church are hard, cruel, and perpetual. God's people found it necessary to show themselves separate from those that were compromising the truths of God's Word. They did not shy away from controversy. In fact, they stood and contended even under the threat of death or torture. Our Baptist forefathers thought it necessary to speak up and out about the truths of God's Word. They were not ashamed to stand and contend for truth.

In this day and age we live in, we should easily be able to stand and contend for truth compared to the things our forefathers endured. They were not afraid to separate themselves from those that compromised. They were not afraid to stand and contend for truth with those that opposed them. They were not afraid to stand up to the government that wanted them to join in with their "established" church. So many times we are willing to compromise for the sake of family, friends, or loved ones. As you have seen, our forefathers stood for truth no matter the cost. They loved their families, but they loved God more.

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." Matthew 10:32-39

Many of our Baptist forefathers were called heretics, troublemakers, divisive, and even criminals because they would not conform to the worldly doctrines of religion. They suffered many cruelties and unjust punishments simply for standing for what the Bible taught. Many times they were even falsely accused of witchcraft just so that they would be executed. Although our forefathers were not always called Baptists, they can be recognized by the Baptist distinctives and doctrines they held to in the Scriptures. If you look throughout history, it is clear that there have always been the Lord's New Testament churches down through the ages that have contended for the doctrines that Jesus delivered to His first church. It was not enough for them to just believe the truth. They understood the Lord commanded us to stand and contend for the truth as well. They believed the truth so much they were willing to put their lives on the line for truth. The question is, are we willing to do the same? **"Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?" John 6:67**