

Difficult questions for the Universalist to answer in regards to the church and the baptism of John the Baptist

Listed below are some questions for (Baptist) Universalist who believe in the invisible church to answer. In my discussions with the Universalist I have been told the following: **A.** There is a church (local) and then there is the True church (invisible) consisting of all the saved. **B.** There is a Spirit Baptism that places us in to this invisible church which is the body of Christ and then there is water baptism that is a confession of an outward sign of an inward change and is a prerequisite to join the local church.

In the Universalist Baptist view of the paradox of spiritual and physical, i.e. the Church and the True Church, Spirit Baptism and Water Baptism, I have a question. What would be the Paradox for the Lords Supper? According to the Universalist Baptist view, I can see the Lords table being exercised in the local assembly but what would be the spiritual invisible counterpart? If the Universalist Baptists are not careful, they will be completely Protestant in their spiritual beliefs with a Baptist name. The Universal Baptists are already two thirds of the way there. If one would study Calvin, Luther and the Catholic views of the Lords supper, they would have examples of a spiritual counterpart to an invisible Lords supper.

Another thing for the Universalist Baptist to consider is this. There are two ordinances given to the church, Baptism and the Lords supper. Because of the belief of a "Spirit baptism" that places all into the body of Christ, then the Lords table as the second ordinance **must be open to all** the saved and Spiritually baptized regardless of denomination or church membership. If is not open to all, then please be consistent and tell me why based on the Universalist Baptist views. What right would the Universalist Baptist have to refuse any saved person from the Lords supper based upon their belief system? According to their understanding, are they not all Spiritually baptized into the body of Christ? You must, according to your logic sit down and partake with professed "saved" Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists, etc. for they are all Spirit baptized into the invisible body of Christ. If they have had Spirit baptism as the first ordinance, why can't they partake of the second ordinance being the Lords supper?

Protestantism has infiltrated our Baptist churches. These articles are only meant to be a help and to challenge the Universalist Baptist thinking to take a sobering look at their doctrinal views.

Consider these questions

1. A universal invisible church defies the Greek definition. By definition of the Greek word used, a church (ecclesia) must be an organized called out gathering (assembly) of persons with a common interest and common officers. This is the N.T. usage. There can be no such thing as an assembly that does not assemble.

2. The invisible church definition is based on unsound definition. To make up a second definition for the word church (or any other word) in order to fit preconceived doctrinal notions is not sound Bible teaching. Such a practice allows any doctrine to be taught simply by saying that a word means one thing in one place and quite another in a different place. If "ecclesia" means a gathered, organized assembly of persons called out from daily duties, to assume that Christ or Paul used it differently is unsafe, unless Christ or Paul explained such a different usage – which neither did. Personal bias is no justification for saying that there is a second definition for the word "ecclesia".

3. Pentecost nowhere stated or hinted to be the birth of any church. Universal church theorists often teach that the church was born on Pentecost. there is no Scriptural proof or even hint that any kind of church was on the first “Christian Pentecost,” a Jewish feast day.

4. The day of Pentecost was not the end of the law. The Old Testament did not end on Pentecost. While Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to all who believe, Jesus Himself said, “The law and the prophets were **until John**” (Luke 16:16). So then the law system ended years before “Pentecost.”

5. In regards to baptism, there must be the **administrator** of baptism, the **article**, i.e. water and the **candidate**. An invisible church requires more than one baptism. John prophesied that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Ghost. **Christ was to be the administrator**, the Holy Ghost is that with which one would be baptized (overwhelmed with power and influence). To try to manufacture a “baptism” by which the Holy Ghost baptizes one into the mystical body of Christ [?] would make the Holy Ghost the administrator and this “mystical body” the element into which the believer would be immersed – an altogether different thing. An invisible church requires an invisible “baptism.” The Bible teaches only ONE (kind) of baptism (Ephesians 4:5). Which will it be, real water baptism like the New Testament church or Protestantism’s spirit baptism? To believe that the Baptism with the Holy Ghost places us into an invisible church is **baptismal regeneration**.

6. The universal invisible church popularized by Martin Luther. The teaching of a “universal invisible church” was popularized by Martin Luther, some 1450 years after Christ. (He did so to counteract the “universal VISIBLE church” teaching of the Roman church from which he had just been excommunicated. Since he had been ejected from the “universal VISIBLE church” he had to come up with some kind of church of which he could be a member so that it would not appear that he was starting one of his own – which in fact he was.)

7. A church born on Pentecost would have a different founder. Jesus promised to “build” (literally “to build up or continue to build”) His assembly (church) as opposed to any other kind of gathering. He did not promise that the Holy Ghost would do it on Pentecost. He was no failure. If the church began on Pentecost, its founder would be the Holy Ghost and not Christ.

Eph 2:20-22 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, **Jesus Christ himself** being the chief corner *stone*; (21) In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: (22) In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Act 2:47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the **Lord added** to the church daily such as should be saved.

8. A church born on Pentecost must have “Old Testament baptism.” John instituted baptism. Jesus personally baptized no one (John 4:2). If the first church was born on Pentecost and necessarily with it the New Testament dispensation, it must reach back into the Old Testament era for baptism, for baptism was instituted prior to Pentecost and thus according to this theory, prior to the birth of the church.

9. A church born on Pentecost must have an “Old Testament supper.” If the first church was born on Pentecost and with it the New Dispensation, it has an Old Testament supper. For the Lord’s Supper is an Old Testament ordinance since it, like baptism, was instituted according to these theorists in the Old Dispensation – that is, prior to Pentecost.

10. A church born on Pentecost has no commission from Christ. If the church did not begin until

Pentecost then she has no commission, for the Lord Jesus gave the second and “Great Commission” PRIOR to Pentecost. It is unthinkable to have a New Testament church operating under an Old Testament commission! Who was the great commission given to? There are three options, 1. To the apostles. If this is the case, the great commission is over, for the apostles are dead and gone. 2. To everyone that is saved, men and women. If this is the case, we need to allow women to baptize converts for he said to go, teach, preach and baptize. 3. To the church. How can this be if the church started at Pentecost?

11. An invisible church must be a corrupt church. Christ’s church is pictured as His “bride.” Paul said of a “local” church (the only kind addressed in the New Testament), “...I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (II Cor. 11:2). Purity, loving service and fidelity are hallmarks of such a church. A universal church cannot be pure for all the redeemed are members of such a church, even one excluded from churches for idolatry, immorality, etc. How can a pure bride (church) be made up of excluded church members? The Romish church is pictured in Revelation 17 and 18 as a grossly immoral woman having daughters like unto herself. A universal invisible church must of necessity include in it persons who are part of the Harlot and/or her Harlot daughters. How can a pure bride be made up of an impure Harlot?

I believe that part of the confusion is because of the misunderstanding of the family of God and the body of Christ. All who put faith in Jesus Christ are born into the family of God (John 1:12) and those who are baptized (water) scripturally are made members of a local church body which is the body of Christ. Remember, we are born into His family, baptized into His body and translated into His Kingdom.

12. An invisible church can do nothing. Just what does an invisible church do? It cannot meet. It never gathers for fellowship or worship. It cannot send out a missionary. It cannot ordain a preacher. It cannot ordain a deacon. It cannot baptize converts. It cannot exclude a member or discipline its members in any manner. It cannot receive tithes and offerings. It cannot observe the Lord’s Supper. It cannot agree on doctrine, nor even support the most basic of Christian truths. It cannot do any of the things churches in the New Testament did. It can do nothing.

Surely every truly repentant believer in Christ is saved and safe. All the saved shall be someday with Him in Heaven. Salvation is not related to church membership. A church is a “body” constituted for service and is a “pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3: 15). Are you a member of one of Christ’s churches where you can serve Him in a way that is acceptable unto Him?

13. If John’s baptism is not for today, then why was it required for the naming of a new apostle? Act 1:20-23 For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take. (21) Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, (22) **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. (23) And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. Some may say that this apostolic appointment was not the will of God. They then must explain what is written: Act 6:2 Then the **twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them**, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

14. If John’s baptism is not for us today, then we then have 3 different baptisms to deal with. John’s baptism, the baptism of the disciples of the Lord and the baptism at Pentecost. Yet the scriptures state that there is one Lord one faith and one baptism.

15. Some may say that John was given to Israel and this is why his baptism is not for us today. If this were the case, then Jesus would not be for us either. Rom 15:8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a **minister of the circumcision** for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* unto the fathers:

The scriptures clearly state that Jesus was sent only to the Lost house of Israel. Mat 15:23-24 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. (24) But he answered and said, **I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.**

15. If John and Jesus were sent to Israel, we must remember that we are grafted into them (Jews) and not them into us. We must remember that we are partakers of **their spiritual things**. Rom 15:27 It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made **partakers of their spiritual things**, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things. This would also include the baptism of John.

16. If the baptism found in Romans chapter 6 is Spirit baptism, we would have to admit that death is associated with the Holy Ghost. Rom 6:3-4 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ **were baptized into his death?** (4) Therefore we are buried with him by **baptism into death**: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

The Spirit is life and never puts one into death. Rom 8:2 For the law of the **Spirit of life** in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Gal 6:8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap **life everlasting**.

The death in baptism as described in Romans 6 **is my death** by my choice. **I must be willing to die** to the old way of life and be **alive unto God**. Paul writing to the church in Rome as well as Ephesus speaks of awaking out of sleep (dead to the things of God) and being alive unto God. This is what water baptism in Romans 6 teaches and demonstrates. I die by choice. The Holy Spirit **does not** put me into death. This is foreign doctrine in regards to the Holy Ghost.

1Co 15:31 I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, **I die daily**.

Rom 6:11-12 Likewise **reckon ye also yourselves** to be **dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God** through Jesus Christ our Lord. (12) **Let not** sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

Rom 13:11-14 And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to **awake out of sleep**: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed. (12) The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. (13) Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. (14) **But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.**

Eph 5:14-16 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and **arise from the dead**, and Christ shall give thee light. (15) See then that ye **walk circumspectly**, not as fools, but as wise, (16) Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.