

Answer 3: 27 proofs of “The First Church”

3. They were baptized after conversion (Matt. 3:6; Acts 1:22).

The question I have here is one of timing. Is baptism a prerequisite to church membership, or a result of church membership? Across the board, fundamental Baptists hold, and rightly so that baptism is a prerequisite for church membership. However, one can be baptized and not immediately join a church. It is usually not customary for this to occur, but it can. It happened in the instance of Phillip and the Ethiopian eunuch. Nowhere in Scripture is it recorded that he attended any service at the church in Jerusalem, or any other church for that matter. What then do we make of it? Was his baptism invalid? Or, more likely the Lord had somewhere else for the eunuch to go and the Lord would make use of him there. After all, it was the Holy Ghost that directed Phillip to minister to the eunuch, knowing that the eunuch would be saved and baptized.

So then, Point 3 is not really proof either. At least it doesn't contradict what he is trying to prove.

However, this point would be valid if we look at it in light of building a church. When a missionary goes on the field, and in the process of his work individuals are saved, and subsequently baptized, does that make the mission a church? Is it proof that the mission is a church? I am certain that I would receive a universal “No” to the previous two questions. However, it is proof that a church is in the process of being built. Moreover, in time, as the Lord leads, the mission will grow and a church will be organized. Even so, it is in the case of believers being baptized prior to Christ's death on

the cross.