

I. Introduction.

- A. Before the time of Constantine and the forming of the hierarchy which developed into Roman Catholicism, there was not much need of churches carrying identifying names. In the main, all the churches were true New Testament churches.
- B. After the organization of the churches into a hierarchy and their acceptance as a "state religion," the true and loyal churches that rejected this error began being identified by various names. Our lesson today deals with some of these names and groups they identified.
- C. It is not to be understood that each of these groups were entirely free from error or entirely embraced of all truth. Through these groups can be traced the people now called baptists. In these groups were to be found the true New Testament churches – not in Roman Catholicism.


II. The Montanists, 156 A.D.

- A. The first protest in the way of separation from the growing corruption of the times was the movement of the Montanist churches.
- B. Their leader, Montanus, was a Phrygian [*An ancient Indo-European speaking people who lived in central-western Anatolia, which is now Turkey. They may have been descendants of the Thracians and were closely allied with the Trojans.*] He was brought up a heathen but later became a Christian.
- C. The most distinguished advocate of Montanism was Tertullian [*Tertullian was the first theologian to write in Latin, and so has been called "the father of Latin Christianity", as well as "the founder of Western theology".* **Died:** 240 AD (age 80 years)]




- D. These churches were simply calling Christians back to New Testament teachings such as:
1. A separate pure life.
 2. Stern discipline in the church.
 3. True “believers baptism.”
 4. A return to Bible teachings.
- E. They rejected any form of hierarchy.
- F. The Montanist name clung to some of the true loyal churches as late as 722 A.D. They finally became known by other names.

III. The Novatians, 250 A.D.

- A. In 250 A.D. a preacher Novatian began protesting the the lack of purity and separation in the churches. He particularly objected to the condition that existed in the church at Rome. [**Novatian** was a scholar, priest, and theologian. He is considered by the Catholic Church to have been an **anti-pope** between 251 and 258 A.D.]
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- B. Many churches backed Novatian in his protest and these churches became known as “Novatians.”
1. These churches flourished in many parts parts of the world for 600 years. Some have claimed the Novatian churches existed into the 16th century.
 2. The “Novatians” insisted upon true “believers baptism” and at times were known as “Anabaptists.”

IV. The Donatists, 311 A.D.

- A. Donatus was another pastor who protested the lack of discipline and the doctrinal errors in the churches. The teaching of Donatus spread all over Africa and attracted many followers. [**Donatus Magnus**, also known as *Donatus of Casae Nigrae*, was the leader of a schismatic Christian sect known as the Donatists in North Africa, Algeria. **Died in exile: 355 A.D., in Gaul.** The **Donatist** movement was a branch of Christianity in north Africa, eventually deemed heretical by Roman Catholicism, which began in the early fourth century C.E. and flourished for more than a century, surviving numerous **persecutions by the new Christian Roman Empire** until it finally disappeared in the wake of the Muslim conquest.]
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- B. Crespin, a French historian, said that the Donatists held the following views: “**First**, pray for the purity of the church members, by asserting that none ought to be admitted into the church, but such as are visibly true believers and true saints. **Secondly**, for purity of church discipline. **Thirdly**, for the independence of each church. **Fourthly**, they baptized again those whose first baptism they had reason to doubt. They were consequently termed re-baptizers and Anabaptists.”
1. It is not too difficult to identify the Donatists with today’s Baptists.
 2. The “Donatists” flourished under this name for several centuries.

V. The Paulicans, First Century.

- A. It is to be regretted that most of the information concerning these people comes from their enemies.
- B. Most of the correct information comes from Fred C. Conybeare who gave a great deal of time unearthing the truth concerning the Paulicans. From his writings, their history can be reconstructed:

1. The Paulican churches were of apostolic origin and were planted in Armenia in the first century. [*Republic of Armenia, is a landlocked country in the Armenian Highlands of West Asia, west of Azerbaijan between the Black and Caspian seas.*]
2. The Paulicans stood for the same truths as today's Baptists.
3. They can be traced through fifteen centuries.

VI. Anabaptists.

- A. From the time of the beginning of the error concerning baptism, those who insisted upon "believer's baptism" were called Anabaptists.
 1. The word Anabaptists means re-baptize.
 2. It arose from the practice of the true churches insisting upon true baptism, even of those who were baptised in other churches.
- B. The name Anabaptists identified the true churches right down to the Reformation in the 16th century.

VII. Many other names at times identified the true churches. These names were generally given to them by their enemies but were in honor.

- A. The names are given in this lesson to establish the fact that before Catholicism ever came into existencethose churches, now identified by the Baptists were flourishing throughout all Christianity.
- B. Baptists have existed from the New Testament times and are truly the church Jesus built.