

Why Baptist?

An Introduction

Matthew 16:16-18

Introduction:

Every religion claims to have the truth. But how can there be so much disagreement? How can we know which one is right? We have to start with the understanding that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. As Baptists, _____ is our sole authority for everything we believe and practice.

Goals for this study:

1. To understand the Biblical _____ that make Baptists distinct from other religious groups - the Baptist _____.
2. To discover the major _____ between Baptists and other religions.
3. To learn the rich _____ of Baptists throughout the last two thousand years.
4. To learn more about _____ we are, _____ we believe, and most importantly: _____.
5. To appreciate the importance of our beliefs, and the _____ made by our forefathers to deliver the faith to us today.

I. What's in a Name?

A. In the first few years after Christ died, you were either a Jew, a pagan, or a _____ of Christ (also called saints in the epistles).

B. When they started a church in those days, there was no need to name the church at all. It was simply "the church of" that area. (Rev. 2-3)

C. The first time the disciples of Christ were named, it was by their _____.

"Then departed Barnabus to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." Acts 11:25-26

D. In the beginning, all Christians basically believed the same thing. But by the time the New Testament was completed, there were doctrinal _____ creeping into some of the churches.

1. The formation of a denominational _____.
2. There were changes to the purpose of _____.
3. The error of baptizing _____, including infants.

E. A difference of doctrine led to a difference in _____. (Rev. 2:6, 15)

II. The First Separation

“In A.D. 251, the loyal churches declared non-fellowship for those churches which accepted and practiced these errors. And thus came about the first real official separation among the churches.” J.M. Carroll, *The Trail of Blood*, p. 14

“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.” Revelation 2:5 - This means that churches which depart from the truth forfeit their candlestick - their _____ to be a true church.

III. Church _____

A. Matthew 16:16-18 “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

B. Matthew 28:20 “And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

If Jesus promised that the gates of hell could not prevail against His church, and that He would always be with His churches to the end of the world, that means somewhere since that time there has always existed at least one true church somewhere on earth.

C. Sometimes they have gone by different names: Montanists, Novationists, Donatists, Paulicians, Albigenses, Waldenses, and Anabaptists.

IV. Baptist Distinctives

Historically, what makes churches "Baptist" is not their denomination, but their _____.

B _____ Authority

A Autonomy of the Local _____

P _____ of Every Believer

T Two _____: Baptism & the Lord's Supper

I Individual Soul _____

S Saved, Baptized Church _____

T Two Offices: _____ & _____

S Separation of _____ & _____

"Although it is understood that other Christians may agree with one or more of the distinctives we hold, Baptists believe all of them. Since these beliefs and practices make Baptists different from others, they are Baptist distinctives." (Mike Randall, *Our Baptist Distinctives*, p. 8.)

These beliefs are what tie us to a line of faithful churches that have existed since Christ founded His first church.

C.H. Spurgeon (*Baptist Pastor in London*):

"We believe that the Baptists are the original Christians. We did not commence our existence at the Reformation; we were Reformers before Luther or Calvin were born. We never came from the Church of Rome, for we were never in it, but we have an unbroken line up to the apostles themselves. We have always existed from the very days of Christ, and our principles, sometimes veiled and forgotten, like a river which may travel underground for a little season, have always had honest and holy adherents."

The following quotes are from *The Trail of Blood*, by J.M. Carroll, pp. 3-4.

Ypeig & Dermont (Reformed Church):

"[T]he Baptists may be considered as the only Christian community which has stood since the days of the Apostles; and as a Christian society which has preserved pure the doctrines of the Gospel through all ages."

Sir Isaac Newton:

"The Baptists are the only body of known Christians that have never symbolized with Rome."

Cardinal Hosius (Catholic, A.D. 1524), President of the Council of Trent:

"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."

Mosheim (Lutheran):

"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."

Edinburge Cyclopedia (Presbyterian):

"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."

Conclusion:

We have the promise from God's Word that true churches of Jesus Christ are in existence today. We will learn that the Baptists of today most closely represent the teachings of Scripture, and are linked to a line of faithful churches that have existed from the time of Christ until now.