

Why we are Baptist

Baptist Distinctives



March 27, 2022

The Baptist denomination officially began in 1609 in Amsterdam, Netherlands. Believers from early times were nicknamed **anabaptist** (*later just "Baptist"*) because of their distinct belief system they adhered to from the Bible. Interestingly, the acronym BAPTISTS easily displays the 8 distinctive beliefs of Baptists.

- B** – Bible is the Final Authority in All Matters
- A** – Autonomy (self-governing, local control) of Local Churches
- P** – Priesthood of Believers
- T** – Two Church Ordinances (observances)
- I** – Individual Soul Liberty
- S** – Security of a Believer's Salvation
- T** – Two Offices in the Church
- S** – Separation of Church and State

BIBLE is the Final Authority in All Matters

1. Biblical support for this distinct belief

- God _____ **His words** to be written down by men...and then to be received by all as **from God** – 2 Pet. 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Thess. 2:13.
- God's recorded words are called the **laws, testimonies, statutes, and commandments** that are meant to be good to us and guide us – Deut. 6:24; Ps. 19:7-8, 119:105; Pr. 6:23; John 17:17.
- God elevates His Bible to have prominence over _____ – Ps. 138:2; 2 Pet. 1:16-21; John 5:39.
- Consider that the devil's **first attack** was against the _____ of God's word and Jesus combated the **devil's attacks** with the authority of God's word – Gen. 3:1; Matt. 4:1-11; 2 Cor. 2:11.
- God has _____ to preserve **every word pure** until the end of time (*and forever*) – Ps. 12:6-7; Pr. 30:5; Ps. 119:89, 160; Matt. 5:18; Is. 40:8.

2. What other beliefs are out there?

- When the Roman Empire converted to Christianity (*becoming the RCC*), the distinct authority of the Bible alone shifted to the pope, church tradition, and the Bible all having _____ authority.
- The *Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints'* founder (*Joseph Smith*) stated that an angel named Moroni delivered golden plates to him on September 22, 1823 from which he translated the book of Mormon.
- Many churches and denominations subtly _____ the authority of the Bible and replace it with the whims of modern culture, popular belief, and false science – 2 Tim. 4:3-4; 1 Tim. 6:20.

3. What do I do with this distinct belief about the Bible?

- Read it, Believe it, Love it (*over everything/everyone else*)..._____ it guide your entire life – Deut. 8:3 (Matt. 4:4); Jer. 15:16; Ps. 119:97; Matt. 4:4; James 1:25.

AUTONOMY (self-governing) of Local Churches

1. A distinct belief about local control of a church

- *Autonomy* = The right or condition of self-government
- Baptist churches are known to be autonomous at the _____ **level** without outside control, influence, or interference in its local church matters from any national association, government, or organization – Matt. 18:17-18.
- Pastors (*also called bishops/elders*) and deacons are the ordained leadership structure of a local church with _____ Himself as the head – Eph. 1:22; Php. 1:1; Col. 1:18.
- Each local Baptist church selects/ordains its own leaders, structures its own meeting times/styles, decides on its own financial matters, enacts church discipline, etc. on its own without outside influence – Acts 17:10-11; 1 Cor. 11:3-16.
- Autonomous Baptist churches recognize family and government as ordained authority structures of God as well. Baptist churches respect those structures as long as they don't contradict the authority and autonomy given to the local church – Acts 4:19, 5:29; Dan. 3:16-18; 1 Tim. 3:15.

2. Biblical support for this distinct belief

- Three are over _____ independent local churches mentioned by name in the New Testament.
- The seven letters written to the seven churches in Rev. 2-3 demonstrate that each church was individually governed and there was no authority over each local church except Jesus Christ.
- Churches are always referred to in a self-governing way in the New Testament – 2 Cor. 8:1-5; Tit. 1:7; Rom. 16:3-4; 1 Cor. 16:19; Gal. 1:2.

3. What other beliefs are out there?

- The RCC was designed from its inception to be the _____ true church ("*catholic*" = *universal*).
- All Protestant churches are connected to each other in the same way that the Roman church models. The true authority lies at the top of the organization and not at the local level.
- Some Baptist churches will join conventions and allow those conventions of churches make the BIG decisions in regards to doctrine, behavior, etc.
- These associations become an authority above the local level, above the Bible, and many times above the _____. They decide (*by vote*) what is to be believed about controversial issues such as ordaining women, creation beliefs, spiritual gifts, contraception, divorce, homosexual/lesbian/transgender behavior, performing abnormal marriages, etc.

4. What do I do with this distinct belief about the Autonomy of the Local Church?

- _____ yourself to a biblical local church (*through membership and involvement*) and know that God will work through the **authority** and **autonomy** of your local church – Matt. 16:18; 1 Tim. 3:15.