

## **Monday Baptist Distinctives**

There are eight beliefs that distinguish Baptists from others. Each letter of the word “Baptists” will help us to remember what we as Baptists believe. Each belief has a Biblical basis. Today is B – Bible as the Sole Authority.

1. Read II Timothy 3:16-17 – How much Scripture was given by inspiration of God?
2. How much Scripture is profitable?
3. For what four things is all Scripture profitable?
4. According to verse 17, why was Scripture given?
5. Through Scripture we can be “thoroughly furnished” or completely equipped for everything you need in the Christian life. What does II Peter 1:3-4 say about that?
6. Read II Peter 1:20-21 – Did Scripture come by the will of men?
7. How did the holy men who recorded Scripture speak?
8. Scripture itself isn’t a product of human effort. It’s a work of Divine inspiration. Since that is true, what should be a church’s response to that fact?
9. What is the benefit of a church’s following Scripture as their only source of authority?

Some religions and denominations recognize traditions, councils, decrees, and many other sources as just as authoritative as the Bible. We view the Bible as our only source of authority. It does not matter what any many says. If God said it, it’s authoritative!

## **Tuesday Baptist Distinctives**

Yesterday we looked at B – Bible as the Sole Authority. Today is A – Autonomy of the Local Church. Autonomy means that every local church is self-governing and makes its own decisions.

1. Read Colossians 1:18 – Who is the Head of the Church?
2. Read Acts 13:1-3 – What church is mentioned in this passage?
3. Who were the prophets and teachers mentioned in these verses?
4. What were Barnabas and Saul doing before they were sent out by the Holy Spirit?
5. What did the church do before it sent those two men out?
6. Did they ask permission from any other church or organization before they did?
7. Read Matthew 18:15-17 – When a church dismisses a member for disciplinary purposes, whose permission do they need?
8. Paul wrote many of his letters to individual churches. You never see in Scripture where there is a system of hierarchy among the churches. Every church can and should govern itself. What is the benefit to us that no other church can tell us what to do?
9. Should we think that we can tell another church what to do?

Christ is the Head of the Church. Every local church ought to operate under its own authority. Every local church ought to make its own decisions. Every local church should be self-governing.

## Wednesday Baptist Distinctives

Another Baptist distinctive is P – Priesthood of the Believer. This means that every Believer has direct access to God. He does not need to go through any other person in order to talk to God.

1. The Old Testament priests were the only ones who could enter the holy place. Only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies once per year. That changed when Jesus died. Read Matthew 27:51 – What happened in this verse?
2. Why is this so important?
3. The tearing of the Temple veil signified that the barrier between God and man was now removed. Now anyone could come to God. Read I Timothy 2:5-6 – How many mediators are there between God and mankind?
4. Who is that one mediator?
5. Read Hebrews 10:19-22 – Who is the High Priest over the house of God?
6. Through what veil do we now enter the presence of God?
7. Read I Peter 2:9 – This verse teaches that every Christian is part of Christ's royal priesthood. Do you need anyone else in order to gain access to God?
8. Read Matthew 6:9-13 – To Whom did Jesus teach us to pray?
9. We pray directly to God the Father. We do not pray to Mary, a priest, or any other "saint." Why?

As Christians, we have direct access to God. We do not need to go through anyone else to talk to God. No one else is better than you. You are a royal priesthood. Enjoy your personal access to God.

## Thursday Baptist Distinctives

B – Bible as Sole Authority, A – Autonomy of the Local Church, P – Priesthood of the Believer, T – Two Ordinances – Baptism and Communion. Ordinances are not the same as sacraments. Sacraments are observed in order to gain salvation. Ordinances are memorials observed after salvation. We observe two ordinances, baptism and communion.

1. Read Matthew 28:19-20 – What was included in Christ's last command before He left?
2. Read Acts 2:41 – After what event in their personal lives were the people baptized?
3. How soon after salvation were the people baptized?
4. Read Colossians 2:12 – What does baptism picture?
5. Baptism is a public declaration that you are not ashamed to be associated with Christ or His church. Is it an important thing?
6. Read I Corinthians 11:23-30 – What are the two elements of the Lord's Supper?
7. Why do we observe the Lord's Supper?
8. According to verse 28, what should we do before we observe communion?
9. According to verse 29, why should we examine ourselves?
10. According to verse 30, what could happen if we take the Lord's Supper with sin in our lives?

Baptism and Communion or the Lord's Supper does nothing to save you. They are both acts of obedience and remembrance that are observed after salvation.

## Friday Baptist Distinctives

We have studied already four of the eight Baptist Distinctives, Biblical teachings that are traditionally held by conservative Baptist churches. Today is I – Individual Soul Liberty. We are free to make our own decisions, but we will answer to God for our decisions.

1. Read Romans 14:1-17 – This passage dealt specifically with issues that the church in Rome was facing. It is not the purpose of today's study to say what is ok and what is not, but we will study the teaching of individual soul liberty and how it affects you. According to verse 3, what should be our attitude towards people who have different opinions than we do?
2. Verse 4 talks about judging another man's servant. Paul said that a servant is to be judged by his own master. Who is our Master that will judge us?
3. As far as areas that are not clearly marked in Scripture, according to verse 5, what is every Believer's responsibility?
4. God allows us to make our own decisions, but that comes with a level of responsibility: we will answer for our decisions. According to verse 10-12, when and to Whom will we do that?
5. According to verse 13, judging one another is not our job. What is?
6. Verse 17 begins the conclusion of the discussion. Basically, the kingdom of God is not about issues. About what three things is the kingdom?

Individual soul liberty is not a free ticket to do anything. Whatever you choose, you will give an account of yourself to God. You will not be able to pass off your responsibilities to anyone else. No one else can give account for you. You are responsible!

## Saturday Baptist Distinctives

We will look at two letters today. One letter is S – Saved, Baptized Church Membership. The requirements for church membership are salvation and baptism by immersion. The other is T – Two Offices – Pastors and Deacons.

1. Read Acts 2:4 – When were the people baptized?
2. When were the people added to the church?
3. There is a process there. The people were baptized after they were saved, and they were added to the church after they were baptized. Why do you think that is?
4. The two offices of the church are pastor and deacon. Read I Timothy 3:1-7 – What are some of the qualifications for pastors?
5. Why do you think the standard is so high?
6. Read I Peter 5:1-3 – What are some of his jobs?
7. Read I Timothy 3:8-13 – What are some of the qualifications for deacons?
8. Verse 10 says that deacons should “use the office of a deacon.” It does not say that they hold the office. What should a deacon “use” his office to do?
9. According to verse 13, what is the reward for deacons who “use” their office well?

Baptism is a public declaration of faith in Jesus Christ and shows that you are not ashamed to be identified with Him and His people. It makes good sense, then, that members of the church be baptized!

## **Sunday Baptist Distinctives**

The last letter could stand for two things, depending on whom you ask. S – Security of the Believer or Separation of Church and State. Both have Biblical foundations. The security of the Believer means that you can never lose your salvation. Separations of Church and State means that the Church doesn't run the government, nor does the government run the Church.

1. Read John 10:27-30 – According to verse 28, what kind of life does Jesus give to His sheep?
2. Does eternal life ever end?
3. According to verses 28-29, what is no one able to do?
4. Verse 29 gives the reason. Our salvation is in God's hands, and He is greater than anyone. What kind of security does that give you?
5. Read Acts 4:13-20 – God used Peter and John to do a miracle in the temple. They healed a lame man in Jesus' name. The leaders met together. What did they command Peter and John in verse 18?
6. What was their response?
7. Later in Acts 5, they were preaching in the temple again after being in prison. They were confronted again by the leaders. How did they respond in Acts 5:29?
8. While the government can dictate building codes and seating capacities, can it tell the church what to say?

The security of the Believer is perhaps the greatest teaching of all the Bible. You can NEVER lose your salvation. Separation of Church and State does nothing to minimize either one, but keeps their roles and powers under check.