

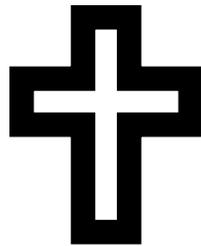
Twelve Lessons

on

Baptist History

by

Robert Wagner, Th.D.



Macedonia Baptist College

9722 Hwy 601

Midland, NC 28107

(704) 784-4200

\$6.00

Baptist History

Lesson 1

If you were to look throughout history for an unbroken chain of churches with a sign out front that says “Baptist,” you would be disappointed. If, however, you look throughout history for an unbroken chain of Baptist belief, your search will be pleasantly rewarded. Those men and churches holding proper Biblical belief have gone by a variety of names and appeared in a variety of places, but the common cord of belief has bound them and us together since the time that the church began. This will be a study of Baptist history from a biographical perspective, studying many of the men who have held Baptist beliefs and the men who have opposed them. In order for us to truly understand this history of belief, it is first necessary to understand the basics of what we believe...

I once met a man that told me that it didn’t matter what type of church he went to. He just picked out the one nearest to his house and went there. I wonder what would happen if he applied this logic to the rest of his life. To find a wife, just pick the nearest female to him, it doesn’t matter if she is cute, ugly, smart, stupid, tall, short, skinny or fat, just so that she is the nearest one to him.

To find a car, just pick out the one closest to him, price, color, and style shouldn’t matter. Clothes, same thing, just pick out the nearest ones in the closet, it doesn’t matter if they match or if they are ironed. This is not a good way to pick things out.

Why are we Independent Baptists? There are certain Biblical beliefs that Independent Baptists have traditionally held. They are often called the “Baptist Distinctives” . I will give them to you in an easy to use form, an acrostic of the word “Baptists.”

4. The Baptist Distinctives

These are the beliefs that godly men have held to since the church began, and will till Christ comes again. These are the beliefs for which choice servants of God have bled and died. These are the beliefs that make us Baptists.

B - Biblical Authority - II Tim. 3:16-17; Matthew 4:4; Psalm 119:9; I Tim. 3:14-15

When we use the term “Biblical authority” we mean that the Bible is our sole rule for faith, belief, and practice. This distinguishes us from every group that holds the church itself as having as much authority as Scripture, such as Catholicism, and also from every group that holds personal experience as having as much authority as the Scripture, such as many Pentecostals. Neither tradition, nor experience, nor a church, absolutely nothing is to be regarded as having as much authority as Scripture!

A - Autonomy (self rule) of the local church I Peter 5:1-2, Acts 20:17-28

Each local church is sovereign in itself and cannot be controlled by any board, hierarchal system or other church **I Timothy 3:15**

This is where we differ with most Southern, Northern, or American Baptists. We own our own land, call our own Pastors, choose our own missionaries, handle all of our own discipline, and know where every dime of our money goes.

P - Priesthood of every believer - Revelation 1:4-6, I Peter 2:5, I Peter 2:9

Every born again believer may pray without a human intercessor directly to God the High Priest and may offer sacrifices:

1. Our bodies **Romans 12:1**

2. Praise **Hebrews 13:15**
3. Good Deeds **Hebrews 13:16**

This is one of the many areas that make us different from Catholics.

T - Two church ordinances I Corinthians 11:1-2

(An ordinance is something that the local church as a body is supposed to do, a solemn ceremony to signify a spiritual truth.)

1. Baptism by Immersion (Dunking)

Matthew 28:19-20

Matthew 3:16

Mark 1:4-5

Acts 8:26-39

Colossians 3:12

2. The Lords Supper **I Corinthians 11:23-26**

Note we do not include foot washing as an ordinance of the local church. This is one way we differ from the denomination I grew up in, the “Freewill Baptists.” (We also differ with them in that they believe you can lose your salvation, we do not and will cover this later)

Look at **John 13:1-15**

First, lets look at the cultural aspect. People wore sandals then, and walked every where on dusty streets. There was a literal physical need for foot washing, and the lowest servant was the one to perform it. By all means, follow the example of service Christ set! Be a servant! But we don’t wear sandals and walk everywhere on dusty roads any more, there is no more literal need of it.

Second, notice that no instructions are given to the church any where in the Scripture as to how and when is to be done. The only other time it is even mentioned is in connection with the widows service in **I Timothy 5:10**. While Baptism & the Lord’s Supper are given detailed attention, foot washing is ignored. So while it is not a major issue, we do not believe that foot washing is an ordinance of the local church.

I - Individual soul liberty Romans 14:5-12

Every man has a right to interpret the Scriptures, to hold profess and worship as he believes the Bible teaches. These things are not to be forced upon any man, however, it is also recognized that all must give account to Jesus Christ who is Lord of the conscience and sovereign of the soul.

S - Separate duties for church and state Matthew 22:15-22

Many use the term “separation of church and state.” I do not say separation of church and state. It is neither in the Bible nor the constitution. It was once used properly, but now is being used to cause more ungodly havoc than anything imaginable. However, God, who invented both the government and the church, does clearly outline separate duties for each.

Note: **Matthew 22:15-22** This is also clearly a command to pay taxes!

- God’s law is always to have the priority over man’s law when there is a conflict. **Acts 5:12-29**
- But when man’s law is not at odds with God’s law, it is to be obeyed! **Romans 13:1-7**

5. The States Duties
 1. To punish evildoers **Romans 13:4**
 2. Capital punishment **Genesis 9:6, Numbers 35**
 3. Make war to ensure peace **Numbers 1:1-3**
6. The churches societal duties
 4. To have members serving in government **Proverbs 29:2**
This is both Biblical and Constitutional. While the church is not to run the government, and the government is not to run the church, Christians, church members, are to serve in government.
 5. To be a purifying influence in society. **Matthew 5:13-16**
 6. To be in charge of helping the needy. **Ephesians 4:28**
The government has taken over this duty from the church and naturally it has been a disaster. Please look at how God instructed the church to help the needy, and you will see how badly the government has blown it by trying to do the church's job.
Church: No work, no food! **II Thessalonians 3:10-11**
Govern: No work, no problem!
Church: Responsibility is placed on the man for providing for his family. **I Timothy 5:8**
Govern: No one is responsible for anything, we are all victims.
Church: Only real needs are to be met. This makes us check out every plea for some of God's money very carefully. **I Timothy 5:16**
Govern: Every "need" is a real need, unless it is the need of a white, conservative, fundamental, right-wing religious, fanatic.

T- Two Church officers, Pastor and Deacon

7. Deacon
 - A. They are servants **Acts 6:2**
 - B. They are Godly **Acts 6:3, I Timothy 3:8-10**
 - C. They are men **I Timothy 3:11-12**
8. Pastor **Ephesians 4:11-12**
 7. Apostles were those who has seen the risen Christ and been personally commissioned by Him. We do not have apostles today. **I Corinthians 13:8-10** shows that when the bible was completed, the gift of prophecy was done away with, so we do not have prophets today. We do have evangelists and pastor/teachers. Note: For three reasons we do not make evangelists church officers, even though they are Scriptural, and used mightily of God. First, they primarily travel around, and are not able to be heavily involved in one church. Second, there are no qualifications of office given in Scripture for them like there are for Pastors and

deacons. Third, the evangelist is never referred to as an officer of the church in Scripture.

Now some churches believe in Bishops, Elders, and Pastors. We believe that they are all the same person, the Pastor, and here is why:

In **Ephesians 4:11-12**, He mentions giving to the church the Pastor/teachers, but no mention of Elders or Bishops, because they are the same person.

In **Philippians 1:1**, Paul greets the Bishops and deacons of the church, but does not mention the Elders or the Pastor. If they are not the same person, Paul was very rude!

In **Acts 15:4-6, 22**, the Elders are in a position of authority, but the Bishops and Pastor are not mentioned, again because they are the same people.

In **Acts 20:17-28**, Paul is talking to one group of people, the “Elders” . In **verse 28**, he says that God has made them, the Elders, overseers. The English word overseer is the Greek word Episkopos. In **I Timothy 3:1-2, Titus 1:7, I Peter 2:25, Acts 1:20 and Philippians 1:1**, the word Episkopos is translated Bishop! Paul is literally saying “Elders, the Holy Ghost hath made you Bishops!”

He then tells why he has made the Elders Bishops, it is to feed the church of God. The English word feed is the Greek word Poimane, which in **Ephesians 4:12** is translated Pastor! So again, what he is literally saying is “Elders, the Holy Ghost hath made you Bishops, to Pastor the church of God!”

S Saved church membership Acts 2:40-41

A qualification we place on church membership by these verses is that you must have made a public profession on Jesus Christ. The church is not a glee club, it is a called out assembly. We expect church members to live holy lives, and that will not happen with lost members!