

What is a BAPTIST ??

(Let Us Spell It Out For You...)

B — BIBLICAL AUTHORITY

- 2 Timothy 3: 15-17

Baptists through the centuries have insisted that the Bible is the sole ultimate written authority for Christian faith and practice. The Bible is the foundation for Baptist doctrine and church governance.

A — AUTONOMY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

- 1 Cor. 5: 4,5; Rev. 2,3

The word "autonomous" comes from two Greek words that mean "self" and "law". Autonomous means self-governing or self-directing. The exception to complete autonomy is that Baptist churches recognize the control and authority of Jesus as Lord over the church and over life. (Baptists have traditionally joined with other Baptist Churches to form associations and fellowships. These associations are voluntary, recognizing that there is no denomination which tells the church how to conduct worship or business.)

P — PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

- 1 Peter 2: 5-9; Heb. 4: 14-16

Baptists insist that all who believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior are priests — believer priests. The concept of the priesthood of believers is basic for Baptists. Each believer has access to God's throne of grace through the Lord Jesus Christ.

T — TWO ORDINANCES - Believer's Baptism *and* The Lord's Table

- Acts 2: 40-42; 1 Cor. 11: 23-34

Baptists consistently declare that baptism and the Lord's Supper are symbols and are not necessary for salvation. They call them ordinances — not sacraments — for this reason. Baptists believe that those who have professed faith in Christ should be baptized by immersion. They also believe the Lord's Table should be partaken of — regularly — as a table of remembrance.

I — INDIVIDUAL SOUL LIBERTY

- Romans 14: 5-12

Baptists believe that each person shall stand before God and give an account of themselves. Each person is responsible for the decisions they make and whether or not they follow Christ. Baptists will try to influence people to receive Christ and follow Him, but they will not force or coerce anyone into this decision.

S — SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

- Matthew 22: 15-22

Baptists believe that the Church should not be in control of the state, telling people what to do and what to believe. They also believe that the state should not control the church. Historically, Baptists have been law-abiding citizens who do their part to try to make society better.

T — TWO OFFICES OF THE CHURCH - Pastor *and* Deacon

- 1 Timothy 3: 1-13

Baptists believe that the church has pastors (elders, overseers) and deacons as its two offices. These are the two offices mentioned in scripture, recognizing that the office of the overseer has multiple words (such as elder, bishop, overseer, and pastor) describing it.

S — SAVED CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

- Acts 2: 47

Baptists believe that everyone who is a member of the church should have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Although Baptists believe that church membership should include only those who are redeemed in Christ, they do encourage and welcome all persons to attend worship services and various activities of the church.

**From sermon notes by Pastor Jack DeVries
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