



Baptist Faith and Practice
Teaching Notes

Rev. David Chibanga
Lusaka

Lesson 1

Course Introduction

What really distinguishes Baptists from other denominations? How rich is its history? This first lesson will answer the two aforementioned questions. The lesson is further divided in three parts. The first part will provide a brief history of Baptists, answering the second question. While the second part answers the first question phrased differently: - what is meant by Baptist distinctives?, and finally concludes with the first of the eight distinctives; namely Biblical Authority. For easy retention the word 'Baptists' with its eight letters, each letter will aid in memorization of a Baptist distinctive.

Part 1 - A Brief History of Baptists.

Baptists can be historically categorized in two groups, the General Baptists, and the Regular Baptists or the Particular Baptists. Although the Particular Baptists were to represent the major continuing Baptist tradition, the General Baptists were first to appear. In 1608 religious persecution in England caused a group of Lincolnshire Separatists to seek asylum in Holland. One group settled in Amsterdam (Netherlands) with John Smyth (or Smith), a Cambridge graduate, as their minister; another group moved to Leiden (Netherlands) under the leadership of John Robinson. When the question of Baptism arose during a debate on the meaning of church membership, Smyth stated that, if the separatist contention that "churches of the apostolic constitution consisted of saints only" was correct, then baptism should be restricted to believers only. This, he contended, was the practice of the New Testament churches, for he could find no scriptural support for baptizing infants. Smyth published his views in *The Character of the Beast (1609)* and in the same year proceeded to baptize first himself and then 36 others, who joined him in forming a Baptist church. Shortly thereafter Smyth became aware of a Mennonite (Anabaptist) community in Amsterdam and began to question his act of baptizing himself. This could be justified, he concluded, only if there was no true church from which a valid baptism could be obtained. After some investigation Smyth recommended union with them. This was resisted by Thomas Helwys and other members of the group, who returned to England in 1611 or 1612 and established a Baptist church in London. The parent group in Amsterdam soon disappeared. The General Baptists held to the doctrine of a general atonement - that Christ died for all people and not only for an elect group. They represented a more moderate Calvinism of Jacob Arminius (a 17th century Dutch theologian), while the Particular Baptists adhered to the doctrine of a particular atonement - that Christ died only for an elect and were strongly Calvinist (following the Reformation teachings of John Calvin), an old theological debate of Arminianism and Calvinism.

This lesson, however, will explain the beliefs that are generally held by both these Baptist groups, as biblical and true, and what makes Baptists distinct. It will further expound on this spiritual truths that forms the ancient land marks and foundational beliefs that have defined Baptist over the centuries. It is significant to know them and identify with the kind of worship that has been held from inception.

Part 2 - What is meant by Baptist Distinctives?

Definition: Baptist distinctives are those set of beliefs and practices derived from the Holy Scriptures that are held by Baptists as the matters of faith and practice that identify their way of worship. Let us now look into these distinctives deeply:

- **Our name**

The name “Baptist” was not the name which we as Baptists chose for ourselves. It was rather the name given to us by our opponents to express that too great an emphasis was placed on believer’s baptism. Before the name Baptist was adopted, similar groups were called “Anabaptists” (which means re-baptizers) or “Credobaptists” (those who baptize only believers).

- **An Outline of Baptist Distinctives**

The most significant matters of faith and practice in Baptist churches can be summarized by following an eight-point outline using the word “Baptist” as a memory aid. Each letter introduces a unique feature of the Baptist faith. Let us look at these distinctives eight in all corresponding to the letters “Baptists”:

1. **Biblical Authority**.....our only authority for faith and practice
2. **Autonomy**..... of the local church
3. **Priesthood**..... of all believers
4. **Two Ordinances**.....1) baptism and 2) the Lord’s supper
5. **Individual** soul liberty
6. **Saved**.... and baptized church membership
7. **Two Offices**.....1) Pastor and 2) deacon
8. **Separation**1) church and state, and 2) believers and the carnal world.

The remaining sections of this course will look at each of these distinctives in more detail, exploring the clear biblical teachings which lead Baptist churches to hold these beliefs today.

Part 3 – “B” Biblical Authority

Although all the Biblical distinctives of Baptists are important, the **Authority of the Bible** is foundational to all that we cherish. Without it, the rest of the doctrines would not speak with authority. With the same voice, it is because we hold the Bible to be authoritative in our lives, and that we believe as we do.

True Christians hold firmly to belief in biblical authority because:

- **It is the inspired Word of God.**
 - As constituted by both the Old and New Testaments.
The sixty-six books are regarded as a unit which is God’s Word. Our confidence in these sixty-six books as God’s Word is based upon:
 - The Authority of Christ
 - Twenty-two times Christ referred to the Old Testament as ‘Scripture’ or, ‘It is written.’ He placed His stamp of approval on the miracles recorded therein(Luke 4:25-27; John 6:31,32). He confirmed the Mosaic account of creation (Matthew19:4). He referred to the historical characters as authentic (Luke 20:41-44; Matthew 5:29).
 - Our LORD also pre-authenticated the New Testament (John 16:12-15). His plan for believers included additional revelation which they were not ready to receive. This future ministry was reserved for the Holy Spirit.
 - The result would be a complete revelation i.e. ‘all truth’
 - The human channels were limited in time and number (John 17:8,18,20). N.B. The context here indicates that the apostles and their lifetime are directly in view. This would mean that the fulfilment of this promise did not extend beyond John’s death, thus marking the book of revelation as closing the canon
 - The Apostles’ Affirmation
 - These men knew that they were channels of revelation (1 Corinthians 2:13; 14:37; 2 Peter 1:21). They recognized each other as instruments for composing the canon of Scripture (2 Peter 3:2).
 - Only as far as the Original Manuscripts are concerned.
Important to remember is the fact that the Bible’s authority is guaranteed by its authenticity which, is inseparable from its inspiration. Therefore, we must understand two things:

- Inspiration
 - 2Timothy 3:16 says, 'all Scripture is inspired,' The word 'inspired' gives a wrong connotation in the English language. Instead of being 'breathed in' it actually means, 'that which is **out breathed**' thus we can see that the original Scriptures were '**out breathed by God**', both in their content and extent.
 - **Content:** this is often referred to as being **verbally inspired**. By this we believe that the Holy Spirit guided and controlled whom He chose to receive His revelation, that not only were the ideas but the very words that they wrote were 'out breathed by God.' While at the same time allowing for their individual style and vocabulary to be used. Though He directed the choice of the words that they were His words, the whole process was in such a way that it was not mechanical dictation (2 Peter 1:21) the Spirit's operation in His moving on human authors (2 Timothy 3:16) His inspiring the manuscripts were thus produced. Not the authors!
 - **Extent:** by this it is often referred to as being **plenary inspired**. Plenary meaning, 'full, complete', speaks of the entire Bible equally God's Word. Thus it is not that the Bible contains the Word of God, but that the Bible is the Word of God!!!
- Translations

Being that the above doctrine of inspiration applies only to the original documents, which we do not have, and that what we have today are translations and/or versions, is it possible for us to know with any reasonable degree of accuracy what those originals stated? Is our Bible today the Word of God? The answer is 'Yes'. Through the dependable skills of reverent translators who compare thousands of copies or portions found in different languages, covering a long period in history, a reliable text in both Hebrew (O.T.) and Greek (N.T.) has been produced (Matthew 5:18). From this text have come many translations - some excellent and accurate, others,

of lesser value. There are also a few rationalistic ones with doctrinal bias.

This position with regards to the Bible is why the Baptists are known as people of the book, and it is also a biblical distinctive of the Baptists.

- **It is the Inerrant Word of God.**

The truths learned from Scripture are absolute- without error. While man's comprehension of these revelations may contain imperfections, as this account for human differences in understanding, it does not suggest that the Word of God thus speaks instinctively or with ambiguity. The fault lies with man, not the Bible. The inerrancy of Scriptures extends to all areas of doctrine. As Baptists we believe that the Bible is our handbook for our new life in Christ and it is to be understood according to certain necessary principles:

- The word of God is to be interpreted literally.
 - That is, when it speaks of Christ's virgin birth and physical resurrection, these are to be understood as having occurred as stated. The same holds for the creation account as for Jonah and the great fish. These accounts as well as the entirety of God's Word are not to be allegorized or spiritualized but to be taken literally.
- The Word of God to be interpreted systematically
 - This is accomplished through careful study of the Scriptures taking the different teachings and arranging them into a system of truth by discovering:
 - All of what Scriptures teach on any given subject (synthesis-an overall method of study)
 - And exactly what the Scriptures teach in place (analysis – a detailed method of study)
- The Word of God is to be interpreted intrinsically.
 - The Bible speaks for itself. It has been said that, the Bible is its own best interpreter. 'When the Bible is studied consistently as a whole, light is cast upon difficult passages by other Scriptures which are more readily understood.
- The Word of God is to be understood spiritually.
 - 1 Corinthians 2:14 - Since the Bible is the product of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, its proper understanding can come only by the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

- **Questions to Discuss**

- What makes a book an authoritative book?
- What do we mean when we say that we believe in Biblical authority?
- What other churches today regard as their final authority?

- What do the Scriptures teach about the origin of the Bible?
Select a few of the following verses for students to read and discuss:
Jeremiah 1:1-4; 1 Corinthians 14:37; Galatians 1:11,12; 1
Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21
- If the Bible is from God, then it is our Authority.
- If the Bible is our authority, then we must Obey.
- What did Christ think about the authority of the Bible?

Lesson 2

Introduction

This second lesson will focus primarily on two letters “A” and “P”. A – stands for “Autonomy of the Local Church” and P- for “Priesthood of All Believers.” Why are these important to the Baptist distinctive? Are they supported by scripture? Biblical explanation will discard or authenticate these distinctive.

Part 2 – “A” Autonomy of the Local Church

Throughout its history the true church has had a struggle to maintain its autonomy and independence. Today many local churches are controlled in some way or another by an organisation or headquarters. Baptists believe this is not biblical. Thus, the autonomy of the local church has become another biblical Distinctive of the Baptists.

- **Christ as Both Lord of All and Head of the Church.**
 - The fact of Christ’s Lordship revealed:
 - Head of the Church:
 - Ephesians 4:15,16
“Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”
 - Ephesians 5:23
“For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.”
 - Colossians 1:18
“And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.”
 - Lord over all things:
 - Ephesians 1:20-23
“... that [God] worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things

to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.”

- Colossians 2:9-10

“For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.”

- Christ’s Lordship as demonstrated fact: Revelation 2:1-3:22.

- The Seven letters to the seven churches of Asia are Christ’s direct words to each body. Each assembly likewise are accountable to the Lord directly, not a Synod, a council, a Bishop or denominational board.
- The churches are commended or corrected by the Head (Jesus Christ) according to their individual needs. No church is made responsible for another, but each is an autonomous unit, dependent only upon Christ. Thus, the Lordship and Headship are seen to be the cause of their autonomy, and any departure from this simplicity in government militates against the adequacy of His person and position.

- **Local church autonomy was taught by Christ**

- The Levitical order was a system with moral and ceremonial laws, but the church is not a legislative body with responsibility to develop the law of the Kingdom! The rules of God’s house have already been transmitted to us, and we are responsible only to execute what the Lord has commanded.
- One of the most outstanding of these regulations constitutes a revelation of the divine plan on the local church autonomy (Matthew 18:15-18).
 - “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”
 - The steps in church discipline are highlighted here. First the offended brother must approach one who offends to show him/her the offence to repent and ask for forgiveness. The offended must also be willing to forgive. Both are responsible to see their duties are done properly the goal is reconciliation. One or two witnesses are called to hear both for accountability, and

finally the matter must be brought before the final appeal the church. A local assembly of believers must follow scripture in matters of correction and keeping the purity and good testimony of a local assembly (church). Corporate responsibility is here entrusted to the assembly as the final rule.

- The voice of the local assembly is final when acting within Divine authority. The church acts for the Lord (vs. 18). Thus, there obviously can be no other human court of appeal.

- **Local church autonomy is demonstrated in the book of Acts.**

Local church autonomy may be readily observed in the 'inspired' record of its early history.

- The Church Organized Itself: Acts 6:1-7.
- The Church Propagated Itself: Acts 13:1-4
- Christ commissioned the church to go and make disciples. Christ commanded them to 'go' with the gospel (Matthew 28:19). The capability of reproduction was given to them when they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). We see that the church at Jerusalem was scattered (Acts 8:1-4) and reproduced itself as the churches of Judea and Galilee (Acts 9:31; 1 Thessalonians 2:14).
- The church commissioned the first missionaries. A church was also started at Antioch (Acts 11:19-26) and from this local church we witness the initiation of the general plan of missions. No denominational headquarters enters the picture. The call and ordination of the missionaries are affected through a local autonomous church. The Spirit initiated and ratified this (Acts 13:4). The significant feature is that the church which sent them out reproduced itself on the mission field (Acts 14:23). It was to this church that these missionaries, sent out by it, reported to upon their return (Acts 14:17). Only an autonomous church can do this!
- The Church defended Itself: Acts 15:1-4. In defence of its message and ministry, the Antioch church did not appeal to some 'general conference' but rather sent messengers directly to Jerusalem where 'they were received of the church...'

- **Local church autonomy is further established in Paul's writings.**

- The Local Church is Responsible to Excommunicate (1 Corinthians 5:1-13).
 - The discipline is to be carried out by local church action (vs.4)
 - The discipline is to result in excommunication (vs. 7- 'Purge out,' vs. 11- 'not to keep company' ; vs. 13 – therefore put away from among yourselves.) (N.B equivalent to Christ's words 'let him be ... as an heathen... (Matthew 18:17).
 - The discipline bears Divine sanction (vs. 4).

- The Local Church is also responsible to restore the repenting sinner (2 Corinthians 2:6-10).
- **Questions to Discuss:**
 - We are free and independent churches. However, freedom brings responsibility. Are you carrying out your part as member of the 'body of Christ in being responsible Biblical Baptist?
 - What churches today are controlled, at least in part, by an organization, denomination, headquarters, or other such governing body?
 - What kinds of things in these churches are controlled by the organization or headquarters?
 - What do we mean when we say we believe in the autonomy of the local Church?
 - What can our local Church do because it is independent and autonomous?

Part 3 – “P” The Priesthood of All Believers

While many of the powerful religions of the world teach that man can only approach God through priests, Baptists are distinct in their biblical belief that all believers in Christ are themselves priests.

- **The Old Testament Priesthood has been fulfilled in Christ.**
 - The order of Melchizedek has been fulfilled (Genesis 14:17-24; Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 5:6, 10; 6:20 etc.).
This mysterious person comes suddenly upon the scene in the experiences of Abraham and departs just as suddenly, not to be seen again until his office is viewed as filled in Christ, whether by prophecy (Psalm 110) or by history (Hebrews) His ancient office pointed to the fulfilment in Christ as the ultimate King-Priest. All that Melchizedek was is now perfectly and universally fulfilled in the glorified Christ in Heaven.
 - The Order of Aaron has been fulfilled (Exodus 28: 1-3, 29,30; Leviticus 8:1-30; Hebrews 7:11-9:28)
The essential message is that the entirety of the O.T. Levitical system as centred in the ministry of the priest and as expressed through the multitude of sacrifices, has now been completely fulfilled and set aside (terminated) in Christ (Hebrews 10:1-12; 1 Timothy 2:5).
- **New Testament Priesthood has been Given to All Believers.**
 - Two important points to understand:
 - The new Covenant is a replacement for the old Covenant (Hebrews 8:13).

- Christ has not only fulfilled and terminated the O.T order, and all authority attaching to these prior administrations is now resident in Him exclusively.
 - This is true of all believers (1 Peter 2:5,9).
As the sons of Aaron were constituted priests in their birthright, so the children of God are universally made priests in a spiritual way. Every believer is equally a priest. No Christian may be a priest in the sense of authority or privilege over another.
 - It is by the grace of God (Revelation 1:6; 5:10; 20:16).
 - Not by any achievement on our part or an honor conferred by men.
 - It is based upon Christ's Mediatorial Work (Hebrews 10:19-22).
 - It involves a Priestly Ministry.
 - The sacrifice of praise (Hebrews 13:15). This will make the proper spiritual impressions upon the unsaved (Matthew 5:16).
 - The sacrifice of Substance (Hebrews 13:16; Romans 12:13; Galatians 6:6; Philippians 4:15-19)
 - The sacrifice of Self (Romans 12:1)
 - A non-conformity with respect to the world (1 John 2:15-17)
 - A transformation with respect to Christ (Colossians 3:1-3).
 - A demonstration with respect to the will of God (Romans 12:2-8)
- **Questions to Discuss**
 - One of the responsibilities of a priest is to pray. How well do you measure up in being a Biblical Baptist?
 - What is the function of a Priest?
 - What churches today have a special order of Priests?
 - What is denied people in churches that have Priesthood?
 - What do we mean when we say that we believe in the Priesthood of all believers?

Lesson 3

Introduction

Identification and freedom are two important and sort after values that man treasures. This lesson gives detailed explanation in these biblical truths that address these two aspects in the Christian faith. T is standing for Two Ordinances. What does that mean? And I for individual soul liberty. What is the freedom of a believer? These truths are revealed clearly in this lesson and they bring about the understanding of these two aspects.

Part 1 - "T" Two Ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Baptists observe these two rites and do not believe in them as or call them 'sacraments'. The word 'sacrament' describes an act which gains grace for the one performing it. Such a term and belief is contrary to Scripture as the church is not the 'instrumental source of salvation' nor are Baptism and the Lord's Supper 'God's appointed sacraments of salvation'. We as Baptists firmly believe that there is no merit gained by the observation of these rites, but that they are 'ordinances'. By this we mean that they are richly symbolic testimonies ordained by Christ the Head of the church, for memorial purposes, without any other merit in observing them than that of obedience.

Baptism.

As Baptists we insist on proper baptism - not because the ordinances have anything to do with our salvation - but because it is a divine command and bears a clearly defined relationship to salvation. It is not required to enter Heaven, but it is commanded for all believers to profess faith in the Lord before you go to Heaven.

- **The Command of Baptism: Christ has commanded that all believers (and only believers!) receive baptism.**
 - Matthew 28:18-20 (notice the order)
 - 'go and make disciples'
 - 'baptize them' (after made into disciples)
 - 'teaching them to observe all things' baptized believers in the truth about Christ so they will be able to live worthy lives for Christ!
 - Mark 16:14-16 (notice the order)
 - Faith – 'Whoever believes'- without faith baptism has no validity!
 - Baptism – 'and is baptised will be saved'- it is not teaching that baptism is essential for salvation. However, in referring to the entire text one can clearly see that the cause of ones damnation is the failure to believe, not a failure to be baptized. The N.T.

does not contemplate the possibility of an unbaptized believer. Thus the phrase 'and is baptised' places no additional condition on our salvation but is given as the evidence of it!

- Believers Baptism carried out in obedience by the early church:
 - At Pentecost (Acts 2:36-41)
 - To the Samaritans (8:5-13).
 - Interesting note – the phrase, 'both men and women,' is a serious blow to the practice of infant Baptism. Rather, we are told that those baptized were 'men and women'.
 - To the Gentiles:
 - An Ethiopian - African (Acts 8:26-40)
 - Cornelius (Acts 10:44-48)
 - Europe (Acts 16:14,15,30-34)
- **The Method of Baptism is Immersion.**
 - '*Baptizo*' – the Greek word for the English word 'immerse.'
 - However, instead of the translators translating 'Baptizo' as 'immerse' they Anglicized the word.
 - By saying, 'Baptize' they left their normal act of translating here by making up a word which was similar in sound in the English language.
 - The word 'Baptizo' means dip.....to immerse, submerge' (Thyer, Liddel & Stott).
- **The Symbolism of Baptism.**

Baptism as a symbol means the public proclamation of the inward change besides being a command from the Lord. When there is a clear testimony of salvation in the believer he/she must make a public announcement by getting baptized as above in fulfilment of the great commission of Mathew 28:19. As a symbol of not only becoming a member of a local congregation but carrying with it the responsibility of the duties expected of a believer in the body of Christ.

 - Though Romans 6:3,4; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Colossians 2:12,13 refer to Spirit Baptism upon regeneration they speak clearly of the symbolism that is pictured when one is baptized- death burial and resurrection.
- **Questions to Discuss:**
 - Baptism is voluntary, but it is not optional for the believer. The Scriptures instruct us as believers to be baptized (immersed).
 - How would you instruct people in the following situations?
 - One is saved and now wonders if baptism is really important and worth considering
 - Your friend has just had a new baby and has been urged by relatives to have the baby baptized.

- Your friend has been saved and wants to be baptized. However he wants to be baptized in his own church, which practices sprinkling.
- You are told by a friend that you need to be baptized to be saved.
- Your friend has just been saved he was baptized by immersion two years before when he first professed to be saved, and he thinks that baptism is sufficient.
- Your brother has been saved and desires to be baptized, but wants to wait two or three years.

The Lord's Supper

- **What it is not:**
 - *Transubstantiation.* This is the teaching by Roman Catholics that when the bread, or wafer, is blessed by the priest the elements become the actual body of Christ. Though they based it upon Christ's words, 'this is my body, which is broken for you' his disciples understood that He was using imagery or figure of speech. As He spoke these words and offered the bread to them, He stood in their presence not with flesh ripped off his bones but completely whole and intact. Having sent some of his disciples ahead of time to prepare for the supper that night-included in the procurement of the victuals, were the very elements the Lord was going to use, the bread and the wine. The greatest extent of this error lies in that each time mass is conducted Christ's body is broken over again, and it is taught that the 'mass' is a sacrifice for sins. Hebrews 10:12, 14- states clearly the heresy of this teaching.
 - *Consubstantiation.* Lutherans hold to a similar teaching in error by stating that 'both the literal bread and the literal body' exist together in the wafer that they serve.
 - Special sanctity and/or salvation, other churches teach that in the partaking of the elements 'they will produce a special blessing within them or even result in salvation'
- **What it is:**
 - 1 Corinthians 10:16 – states that it is 'communion' with:
 - Christ – the cup expresses the believers oneness with Christ (1 Corinthians 11:25; Hebrews 9:15ff)
 - His body the Church – the bread expresses the believers' oneness with another (1 Corinthians 12:12 - the body 'is one,' vs. 13 – formed by the Holy Spirit).
 - 1 Corinthians 11:24,25 – states in Jesus words spoken that night before His crucifixion that it is to be **in remembrance of**

me'. It is to be a **memorial** feast to 'show the Lord's death till He come.' Vs. 26.

- **Who is it for:**
 - Whereas baptism, the complete immersion of the believer in water (a time act), pictures the beginning of his new life in Christ by his identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection, the Lord's Supper thus pictures the continual 'communion' in his life with Christ. Thus it is quite clear that baptism being a prerequisite to ones partaking of the Lord's Supper; we can conclude that only those who are born again and baptized are to be the potential participants in this 'memorial feast'. We say potential because 1 Corinthians 11:28 states furthermore that there is then to be an 'examining' for unconfessed sin in our hearts. After all it is our 'remembering' that which accomplished the means to forgive us our sins and give us life eternal.
- **Question to Discuss:**
 - As a Biblical Christian what are some ways that you can employ to help yourself on a 'continual' basis focus attention on the 'body' and 'blood' of our Lord?

Part 2 – "I" Individual Soul Liberty

Based upon the Biblical doctrine of the priesthood of believers, Baptists insists on the liberty of soul and conscience.

- **Privileges of Believer-Priests**
 - All Believers may receive Illumination.
 - The Spirits illumination, enabling believers to understand God's will through the Scriptures, covers two areas:
 - In one's perception of truth (1 John 2:20, 27).
 - Any believer may understand the Bible as the Holy Spirit guides him.
 - In one's application of the truth (Romans 12:1,2; Philippians 2:13).
 - As Christians we have a different guidance than the O.T Saints. They, being Jews, 'required a sign' but we are to be directed through 'the renewing of our minds' in order that we may discover 'that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.'
 - All believers are Individually Responsible.
 - Between the O.T Aaronic priesthood and the N.T priesthood of all believers, we have a sharp contrast. Whereas in the former one man received illumination and guidance for the whole body, in the latter each believer receives illumination for himself and

becomes responsible to evaluate and act (Romans 14:4a, 12; 1 Corinthians 12:7,11).

- **The Responsibilities as Believer-Priests.**

All privileges involve responsibilities. As a believer-priest, these include:

- To conform to the standards of God's revealed Word (Isaiah 8:20; Revelation 22:18,19)
 - Take note that the biblical principle of soul liberty does not give license to transgress the plain revelation of God's word. Any departure is condemned and declared apostasy (Matthew 24:24; Mark 13:22; 2 Peter 2:1-3:7).
- To conform to the church (1 Corinthians 10:33).
 - Our lifestyle must not cause offense to the local church to which we belong.
- To take into consideration the weaker brother (1 Corinthians 8:7-13).
 - Our effect upon Unity within the entire Christian Community (1 Corinthians 10:23-33; Ephesians 4: 15, 16)

- **Questions to Discuss:**

- As seen in the Biblical Baptist Distinctive of Individual Soul Liberty, we cannot force a person to accept a certain belief. However, we still can be concerned about those, both believers and unbelievers, who believe incorrectly. What means, as believers, do we have which the Lord can use to change their minds?
- What is the biblical principle regarding individual soul liberty which is stated in Romans 14:5,12?

Lesson 4

Introduction

This lesson will address the issue of belonging and authority as two aspects in the letters “S” and “T”. What is required for one to become a member of a church? Is it required? Do we include in the church register people who are not saved why not? Who are the leaders of the church who appoints them? What are their qualifications? Where do they get the mandate and authority to exercise their guidance and leadership?

Part 1 – “S” Saved, Baptized Church Membership

Herein great care should be exercised, for the strength or weakness of a church is derived primarily from its membership. This is not so much dependent upon the quantity of members as it is upon the quality. That is their personal relationship to Christ – whether they are spiritually strong. Only such members make a spiritually strong church.

Thus, as Baptists we insist upon two requirements for church membership:

- **All church members must be truly saved.**
 - We believe that, inasmuch as the local church is a manifestation of the Church universal, triumphant and militant, thus anyone wanting to become a member must first meet the conditions of membership ‘into the Church universal’ John 3:3 – states it is clear that one is only eligible if he is ‘born –again’
- **All church members must be baptized by immersion.**
 - As a witness to one’s identity by faith with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. Just as the new birth is necessary or the ‘door’ for membership in the ‘Church universal’, so baptism which visibly pictures the gospel which produces the new birth is necessary or the ‘door’ for membership in the local church.
- **Questions to Discuss:**
 - As a member of a church, what are some things you should be doing to help your church?
 - Examine the following texts and write down what they say about the requirements for church membership and the importance of church membership:
 - Acts 2:41,47
 - 1 Corinthians 1:1-16
 - 1 Timothy 5:9

- Hebrews 10:25
- What do non-Baptist churches require for church membership?

Part 2 – “T” Two Offices: Pastor and Deacon

Pastor

The distinctive being considered here is not that Baptists have a pastor, for most churches have a pastor. The distinctive of Baptists is that we have only a pastor, while other churches add offices such as Bishop, elder, or “man of God- Prophet” in a hierarchy over churches. We believe that these other offices are not biblical but refer to the same office of pastor.

- Defining the Term “Pastor”:
A ‘shepherd’ thus defines his relationship to the local church or ‘flock’. As the flock’s shepherd he is responsible for their spiritual welfare their security and their feeding (Acts 20:17,28; 1 Peter 5:2)
- Defining the Term “Elder”:
(Greek – *presbuteros*) Presbyter. – speaks of a mature person spiritually, emotionally thus indicating the dignity of the office. In 1 Peter 5:1 the pastor (vs. 2), is called an elder. 1 Tim 3:6 sets as one of the qualifications for this office that the pastor is not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.
- Defining the Term “Bishop”:
Likewise, in 1 Peter 5:2, not only is the pastor called an elder but is charged with the ‘oversight’ which is from the greek word that is usually translated ‘bishop’ (*episcopos*) also Acts 20:17,28
 - Titus 1:5-7, Two terms are again applied to the same person, elders and bishops. As ‘elders’ indicates the dignity of the office and ‘pastor’ to his relationship to the flock, so is the term ‘bishop’ to his duties as overseer. All three terms referring to one office. Thus Scriptures teach not three different offices but to only one office
- His Qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-7)
- His respect (1 Timothy 5:17)

Deacons

- Defining the Term:
 - *Diakonos* – ‘servants’ those who serve others, signifying their proper attitude of humility.
- Their Duties:

- As indicated by the title, 'servants,' and by their relationship to the pastor as described in 1 Timothy 3 as the second officers or assistants to the pastor (see Acts 6:1-7)
- Their Qualifications (1 Timothy 3:8-13; Acts 6:1-7)
- Question for Discussion:
 - As Biblical Baptists we have learnt that the pastor is the only human leader for the church according to 1 Timothy 5:17. We are to honor the men called to this office who lead our churches. What are some ways that you can honor the leader whom God has given the church?
 - Can you think of any forms of honor or obedience for pastors that would not be appropriate?

Lesson 5

Introduction

There is a separation between human government and the church. This lesson highlights these differences although God ordains both of them they have boundaries that scripture gives. The church is in the world but not of the world. It is important to learn and notice these differences. How do Christians respond to human government? In this lesson the answers are given. And finally will give guidance and review for the final examinations for the whole course. -*Soli deo Gloria*. To God alone is the glory.

Part 1 – “S” Separation of Church and State & Separation from the Carnal World

- **The State or Human Government.**

Out of three institutions ordained by God - namely marriage, human government and the church -human government is the second and has a function peculiar to itself(Rom 13:1).

- Its birth (Genesis 8:20-9:19)
- Its responsibility (Romans 13:1-7)
- The maintenance of order vs. 3,4
- The punishment of offenders vs. 4
- The general welfare of society vs. 6,7
- Its Limitations.
 - As noted in the above passages, the State’s functions are limited to the temporal realm. Government must be restricted to the visible as opposed to the invisible, the temporal as opposed to the eternal. Christ’s statements in Matthew 22:21 placed a sharp distinction between government and the Church.

- **The Church.**

The last and by far the youngest of the three institutions set-up by God is the Church. As with human government, so God has designed the Church with a function peculiar to her own.

- Its birth
 - Baptists believe that the church’s historic beginning on earth must be sought in connection with Christ’s advent, and not before. Many believe that Pentecost marks its beginning, although some would position it slightly earlier or afterward. Either is a radical departure from the position that supposes the church to have begun with Abraham, known as Covenant Theology.

- The logical consequence of Covenant Theology is the union of Church and State to a greater or lesser degree. This has been demonstrated in the history of the Roman Catholic Church and the reformation churches.
 - Its Responsibilities
 - The propagation of the gospel (Matthew 28:19,20; Acts 1:8)
 - The observance of ordinances (Acts 2:41,42, 1 Corinthians, 11:2,23-29)
 - The care of its membership (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2)
 - Its limitations (Matthew 22:21)
 - The behaviour of the Apostles and the early church (Acts 5:29; 12: 1-5; 25:10,11) shows us that they made no intrusion on the State's prerogatives but were submissively obedient except where God's command was contradicted.
- **The Carnal.**
 - The believer is warned against intimate fellowship with the unsaved.
 - While fellowship (companionship-not befriending) is warned against, this does not mean isolation from them (1 Corinthians 5:9,10; 2 John 9-11; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18) for we are commanded to preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15).
 - The believer is warned against fellowship with the habitually sinning (or carnal) believer (1 Corinthians 5:11 13; 2 Corinthians 2:6-8; Titus 3:10; 2 Thessalonians 3:6,14,15).
- **Question to Discuss:**
 - ET Hiscox says "Baptists have a history of which they need not be ashamed –history of noble names and noble deeds, extending back through many ages A great army of these witnesses for the truth. And martyrs for its sake, has illumined and honoured."

Part 2 – Final Exam Review

Review questions Lesson 1

1. Baptists are categorized in two groups historically. What are they?
 - a. *General and Particular*
2. What doctrine of atonement did General Baptists hold?
 - a. *General atonement*
3. What doctrine of atonement did Particular Baptists hold?
 - a. *Particular atonement*
4. What is foundational for Baptists to all that we cherish?
 - a. *Biblical authority*
5. What do we mean by inspiration and inerrant of the word of God?
 - a. Inspiration means

- i. *The Bible was out-breathed by God*
- b. Inerrant means
 - i. *The truths learned from Scripture are absolute without error*

Lesson 2

1. What do we mean by autonomy of a local church?
 - a. *Independent from an organization or headquarters, but Christ as both Lord and head of the church*
2. How did Christ teach local church autonomy?
 - a. *By self-regulating in case of an erring brother as in Mathew 18:15-18.*
3. What is meant by Priesthood of ALL believers?
 - a. *Biblical belief that ALL believers in Christ are themselves Priests.*

Lesson 3

1. What do Baptists call the Christian rites of Baptism and Holy Communion?
 - a. *Ordinances*
2. What method of Baptism do Baptists exercise?
 - a. *Immersion*
3. What is Holy Communion in Baptist faith?
 - a. *A memorial feast and command*
4. What is meant by individual Soul Liberty?
 - a. *It is a teaching on the liberty of Soul and Conscience*

Lesson 4

1. What do Baptists insist their members to be?
 - a. *Saved and Baptized*
2. Examine the following texts and write down what they say about the requirements for church membership?
 - Acts 2:41,47
 - Heb 10:25
3. What two offices of a local church leadership do Baptists ascribe
 - a. *Pastor and Deacon*
4. Define Term "Pastor"
5. Define Term "Deacon"

Lesson 5

1. Name the three institutions ordained by God?
2. Write the acronym Baptists and name the distinctive represented by each letter?

Baptist Faith and Practice Final Exam

1. Baptists are categorized in two groups historically. What are they?
 - a. Central and Eastern
 - b. Western and Southern
 - c. Northern and Southern
 - d. General and Particular

2. What doctrine of atonement did General Baptists hold?
 - a. Static atonement
 - b. Moving atonement
 - c. Sensitive atonement
 - d. General atonement

3. What doctrine of atonement did Particular Baptists hold?
 - a. Sacrifice atonement
 - b. Burning atonement
 - c. Particular atonement
 - d. Same atonement

4. What is a foundational authority for Baptists that we cherish?
 - a. Gathering authority
 - b. Praying authority
 - c. Biblical authority
 - d. Worship authority

5. What do we mean by the inspiration and inerrant of the Word of God?
 - i. Inspiration means
 - a. The Bible was breathed out by God.
 - b. The Bible was inspired by man.
 - c. The Bible was translated into languages.
 - d. None of the above

 - ii. Inerrant means
 - a. The truths learned from Scripture contain errors.
 - b. The truths learned from Scripture are absolute without error.
 - c. The truths learned from Scripture are obsolete in this modern time.
 - d. None of the above

4. What do we mean by autonomy of a local church?
 - a. Independent from civil laws
 - b. Independent from spiritual laws
 - c. Independent from an organization or headquarters, but Christ as both Lord and head of the church
 - d. None of the above

5. What is meant by Priesthood of ALL believers?
 - a. Belief that priests are selected from among believers
 - b. Belief that no one is a priest or servant in the church
 - c. Biblical belief that ALL believers in Christ are themselves priests
 - d. None of the above

8. What do Baptists call the Christian rites of Baptism and Holy Communion?
 - a. Prayers
 - b. Commitments
 - c. Ordinances
 - d. Ornaments

9. What method of Baptism do Baptists exercise?
 - a. Pass under Flag
 - b. Sprinkle
 - c. Immersion
 - d. Salute

10. What is Holy Communion in Baptist faith?
 - a. One of merit for obtaining Salvation
 - b. One of the feasts prior to Salvation
 - c. A memorial feast and command
 - d. None of the above

11. What is meant by individual Soul Liberty?
 - a. It is a teaching on the civic liberties of an individual
 - b. It is a teaching on the liberty of Soul and Conscience
 - c. It is a teaching on the independence of thinking
 - d. None of the above.

12. What do Baptists insist their members to be?
 - a. Saved and Baptized
 - b. Ushers and deacons
 - c. Singers and worshipers
 - d. None of the above

13. What two offices of a local church leadership do Baptists ascribe

- a. Papa and Prophet
- b. Apostle and Pastor
- c. Overseer and elder
- d. Pastor and Deacon

14. Name the three institutions ordained by God?

-
-
-

15. Write the acronym Baptists and name the distinctive represented by each letter?

B -

A -

P -

T -

I -

S -

T -

S -

Baptist Faith and Practice

Final Exam – MASTER COPY

*All correct answer are in **bold**. Each question is worth 1 point unless marked differently. The exam is worth a total of 25 points. Each student must score 13 or more points to pass the course.*

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 - c. The Bible was translated into languages.
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- d. None of the above
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 - Ushers and deacons
 - Singers and worshipers

d. None of the above

15. What two offices of a local church leadership do Baptists ascribe

- a. Papa and Prophet
- b. Apostle and Pastor
- c. Overseer and elder
- d. Pastor and Deacon**

16. Name the three institutions ordained by God? (3 points)

- **Family**

- **Church**

- **Government**

17. Write the acronym Baptists and name the distinctive represented by each letter?
(7 points)

B – Biblical Authority

A – Autonomy of the Local Church

P – Priesthood of All Believers

T – Two Ordinances: Baptism & Lord's Supper

I – Individual Soul Liberty

S – Saved and Baptized Church Membership

T – Two Offices: Pastor (or Elder) & Deacon

S – Separation of Church and State