

**WHY ARE BAPTISTS BAPTISTS?
1 PETER 3:15 / FEB. 4, 2018 / AM**

I. FIRST, BAPTISTS ARE BAPTISTS BECAUSE OF OUR HISTORY.

- A. Every denomination or religious group wants to trace their genesis or beginning back to the New Testament—Matt. 16:18
- B. The best historical evidence says that Baptists came into existence in England in the early 17th century.
 - 1. This was when Christians emerged from the official Church of England and formed two splinter groups, the Puritans and the Separatists.
 - 2. Both groups accepted only believers into their membership and baptized only those who made professions of faith in Jesus. This became known as “believer’s baptism.”
- C. The early beginnings of both the Puritans and Separatists occurred in the 16th when people demanded that the Church of England reform.
 - 1. Since the Church of England refused to reform, a German by the name of Martin Luther posted what has been called “The 95 Thesis” on the door of the church in Wittenberg, Germany in 1517.
 - 2. His action spawned what is called “The Protestant Reformation.”
 - 3. Two kinds of Baptists grew out of this reformation.
 - a. The first group called themselves “General Baptists”. They emphasized that anyone expressing faith in Christ could be saved.
 - b. A second group of Baptists called themselves “The Particular Baptists”. Unlike, General Baptists, they believed that only those people called or predestined by God could be saved.

II. SECOND, BAPTISTS ARE BAPTISTS BECAUSE OF OUR HERITAGE.

- A. How did you become a Baptist?
- B. Where did Southern Baptists come from?
 - 1. Southern Baptists split with what would later become Northern Baptists in 1845 in August GA. over the issue of slavery. The specific question was over whether slave owners could become missionaries.
 - 2. In 1995 delegates to the SBC adopted a resolution renouncing our roots in slavery and also issued an apology for the same.

3. Today Southern Baptists are the largest religious denomination or group in the world with 16 million members in over 50,000 churches.
4. We support with our prayers and money....
 - a. 3,500 IMB missionaries.
 - b. 5,200 NAMB missionaries.
 - c. Six Seminaries with 21,000 students.
 - d. 42 State Conventions.
 - e. 1,100 local Associations
 - f. Disaster Relief efforts—110,000 volunteer days, 2 million meals served and 550 people saved.

C. What do Baptists believe?

1. An official statement of Baptist beliefs is found in a pamphlet called “The Baptist Faith and Message” first created and adopted in 1925 and revised several times after that.
2. Basic Baptist beliefs include....

The Lordship of Jesus Christ.

The use of the Inerrant Word of Bible as our sole authority for faith and practice.

Salvation by faith in Christ alone.

Believer’s Baptism.

Autonomy of the local church.

Volunteer cooperation for missions.

Separation of Church and State.

III. BAPTISTS ARE BAPTISTS BECAUSE OF OUR HEARTS.

- A. Baptists aren’t the only Christian denomination or religious group today.
- B. I’m a Baptist today, not only because of my history and heritage but also because of my heart.
 1. First, I’m a Christian by conviction because I believe in salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone.
 2. Second, I’m a Baptist by choice, not because it’s the only Christian denomination or religious group but because I believe its faith and practice is closer to the New Testament pattern than any other denomination.