

BIBLICAL AUTHORITY

(Part One – series on Baptist Distinctives)

TEXT: 2 Timothy 3:16 – 4:5

INTRODUCTION: Baptists come in a variety of “flavors,” but they have the same basic “ingredients.” The most important essential – and the one upon which all the others are predicated – is the belief that the Bible is the only authority for both faith and practice. Baptists do not appeal to the Bible AND church tradition, or the Bible AND reasoning, or the Bible AND rapturous experience. We look to the **Bible only**.

We are not the only ones who appeal to the Bible as our sole authority. But we can certainly argue that we do it more consistently and thoroughly than our non-Baptist brethren, many of whom are the heirs of a Protestant Reformation that did not completely ‘reform’!

OUTLINE: What are the implications of a professed adherence to ‘**biblical authority**’?

I. What an adherence to Biblical Authority INCLUDES

- A. Inerrant inspiration (2 Pet. 1:21)
- B. A closed canon (Prov. 30:6, Rev. 22:18)
- C. New Testament relevancy (Christ: “...but I say unto you”)

II. What an adherence to Biblical Authority EXCLUDES

- A. The decisions of councils, creeds, and confessions
- B. The decrees of ecclesiastical hierarchies
 - 1. The Catholic Church
 - 2. The Protestant Reformers
 - a. Infant baptism
 - b. Consubstantiation
 - c. Concept of a state church
- C. Tradition
- D. Human experience and reason (1 Cor. 1:21; 2 Cor. 10:5)

III. What an adherence to Biblical Authority CONCLUDES

- A. All aspects of church practice must be evaluated in the light of Scripture.
- B. Adherence to biblical authority must shape all other Baptist beliefs.

CONCLUSION: All of our Christian experience and practice must be judged by the Bible. It must be **the** source of all our theological formulations and declarations.

The failures and excesses of the Protestant Reformation should be a solemn warning to us that we must continue to be a people who appeal only to God's Word as our rule and sufficiency. If we would continue to "*do truth*," we must keep "*coming to the light*" (John 3:21).