

BAPTIST HISTORY
Lesson 1 - What is a Baptist?
Suggested Reading: None

I. Introduction

- A. Overview of Course
- B. Question: Where Do Baptists Come From?
 - 1. There are many kinds of Baptist's today
 - 2. No one was called a Baptist prior to the protestant reformation of the 16th century
 - a) The exception being John the Baptist, but obviously the term is being used differently when applied to him
 - 3. How, then, do we explain our existence?
 - a) This is not a problem unique to Baptists...

II. Three Prominent Views

A. The Succession View

- 1. Different forms of successionism
 - a) Apostolic (Roman Catholic, Anglicanism)
 - b) Baptismal succession
 - (1) Similar to apostolic succession but relies upon the credentials of the administrator. To validate your baptism you must demonstrate that the administrator was qualified.
 - (2) Must trace back to John the Baptist
 - c) Church succession
 - (1) "Churches come from churches like horses come from horses." (B.H. Carol)
 - (2) This view understands a true church to be a Baptist church.
 - (3) Must demonstrate a succession Baptist church by Baptist church back to the time of the apostles.
 - (4) Different theories
 - (a) Chain link succession (Best example of this theory: "The Welch Succession of Primitive Baptists")
 - (b) Kingship succession (The thought is that Christ has always had a true church in the world, and a true church must be a Baptist church)
 - i) See "The Trail of Blood" chart and book.
 - ii) Usually very opposed to the idea that Baptists came out of the Reformation. To them this would imply that Rome was a true church.
 - iii) See James McGoldrick's, "Baptist Successionism" for a response.

B. Anabaptist Spiritual Kinship

- 1. Not chainlink, but kinship
- 2. The modern western Baptist tradition traces itself back to the Anabaptists who arose after the Reformation.
 - a) Renihan will come to teach you about the Anabaptists in a couple of weeks.
- 3. I won't say much here. For now, notice what the introduction to the first London Baptist Confession says: "A confession of faith of seven congregations or churches of Christ in London, which are commonly, but unjustly called Anabaptists; published for the vindication of the truth and information of the ignorant; likewise for the taking off those aspersions which are frequently, both in pulpit and print, unjustly cast upon them. Printed at London, Anno 1646."

C. English Separatist Theory

- 1. Modern Baptist churches emerged in England in the first half of the 17th century out of English separatism.
 - a) General (atonement) Baptists
 - b) Particular (atonement) Baptists

III. What is a Baptist? (See James McGoldrick's, "Baptist Successionism" , pages 6-8)

- A. "Baptists have historically held to the following theological tenets:
 - 1. The supreme and final authority of the Holy Scriptures in all matters of doctrine and practice;

