

A History of the Baptists
Jeremiah 6:16

- I. Difficulties in tracing Baptist history
 - a. The events took place long ago
 - b. Most of the records are from their enemies and are biased.
 - c. Baptist literature was often burned
 - d. Baptists were far more interested in surviving than in writing
 - e. Baptists have been called by many different names

- II. Earmarks of Baptist churches
 - Biblical authority**
 - Autonomy of the local church**
 - Priesthood of the believers**
 - Two ordinances of the church**
 - Individual soul liberty**
 - Saved and baptized church membership**
 - Two offices in the church**
 - Separation of church and state**

- III. The New Testament Churches**
 - a. Began on the day of Pentecost c. AD 33
 - b. False teachers were already infiltrating the Church – Gal. 1:6-8; II Cor. 11:3-4
 - c. One recorded instance of a false teacher turning a church against the Apostles – III John 1:9-11
 - d. Only one of the seven leading churches in Asia did not have doctrinal errors in their theology – Rev. 1-3

- IV. The Ancient Churches**
 - a. Began with the death of John, the last of the Apostles, c. AD 100
 - b. Authors of this period are referred to as the Church Fathers.
 - c. Churches of this era began to display a tendency to lessen the demand for repentance and faith and emphasize external signs and symbols instead.
 - d. Four major areas of false doctrine arose at this time.

- V. Baptismal regeneration
 - a. Definition: The belief that salvation is obtained through baptism
 - b. Rejected by the first generation of church fathers
 - c. Began to be accepted by the second generation
 - d. First written record of this doctrine comes from Justin Martyr in AD 150
 - e. This doctrine soon led to the doctrine of infant baptism

- VI. Infant baptism
 - a. Definition: The practice of baptizing children as soon as they are born in order to obtain salvation for them
 - b. First written record comes from AD 185

- c. It was opposed by most churches
 - d. Became the official doctrine of the Catholic church in AD 416
- VII. The hierarchy of churches
- a. The pastors of the larger churches began to assume authority over the smaller churches
 - b. This created four major regions of churches
 - i. The churches of Africa were led by the bishop of Alexandria
 - ii. The churches of Europe were led by the bishop of Rome
 - iii. The churches of the Middle East were led by the bishop of Antioch
 - iv. The churches of Asia were led by the bishop of Ephesus
 - c. Eventually, the bishop of Rome was given authority over all four regions and became the Pope
 - d. This hierarchy eventually eradicated the doctrine of religious freedom
- VIII. The loss of the freedom of religion
- a. Prior to Christianity, Israel was the only nation in the world to offer true religious freedom
 - b. In Israel, strangers were allowed to participate in all areas of life except for entering the temple.
 - c. The early church followed this example and advocated religious freedom
 - d. Constantine established religious freedom throughout Rome in AD 313
 - e. Rescinded 70 years later by Theodosius in AD 385
 - f. Theodosius required all Romans to be Catholics