

OUR BELIEFS

LESSON 2

I. Our Baptist Distinctives

A. The Authority of the Bible

1. The Bible is God's revelation to man
 - a. God has revealed himself generally in nature. (Psalms 19:1-2; Romans 1:20).
 - b. God has revealed himself specifically in Scripture. (Luke 24:27; John 5:39; 20:30-31)
 - c. God inspired His Word. (II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:20-21)
2. The Bible is the source of our knowledge of God
I Corinthians 2:9-13; I Peter 1:23
 - a. God's revelation is the standard for churches today.
II Timothy 3:14-17; II Peter 3:2
 - b. The pattern of the early church was that doctrine guided fellowship. Acts 2:42-The *apostles' doctrine* was the eyewitness account from the apostles of Christ's life and teachings. This was the authority of the church until the NT was completed.
 - c. The Scripture was their guide concerning their faith (what they believed). See Romans 16:17-18; Jude 3
 - d. The Scripture was their guide concerning their practice (how they behaved).
See II Timothy 3:16-17; II Thessalonians 3:14
 - e. The Bible is our only authority for faith and practice.
It is not the final authority. That implies there are others and the Bible is the greatest. It is the only authority.

B. The Priesthood of the Believer

1. Jesus Christ became our High Priest
 - a. As our High Priest, He offered Himself for our sins.
Hebrews 2:17-18
 - b. As our High Priest, He opens the way to God.
Hebrews 10:19-20; Romans 5:1-2
2. Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man.
I Timothy 2:5-6; I John 2:1-2
 - a. This is why we have no altar in the church on which to make sacrifices. The sacrifice has already been made once for all in the eternal sacrifice of Christ.
 - b. This is why we have no confessional booths or a pastor who pronounces forgiveness (absolution) of sin.
 - c. The pastor is the leader and the shepherd, but only Jesus can forgive.
 - d. Every believer has open access to God. This is a great privilege and with it comes a great responsibility.

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C. The Autonomy of the Local Church

1. The local church is the only ecclesiastical institution in the New Testament.
 - a. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth.
I Timothy 3:1-15
 - b. The church answers only to Christ, it's head.
Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23
 - c. You should follow the leadership of your pastor.
Hebrews 13:7,17
 - d. Your Pastor should be your shepherd and not your "lord."
I Peter 5:1-3
2. The local church is responsible to handle its own affairs.
 - a. It is responsible to elect its own officers. Acts 6:1-7
 - b. It is responsible to maintain its doctrinal integrity.
Galatians 1:8-9
 - c. It is responsible to discipline its own members.
Matthew 18:15-17; I Corinthians 5:1-7