

BIBLICAL AUTHORITY

(Part Two – series on Baptist Distinctives)

TEXT: 2 Timothy 3:16 – 4:5

INTRODUCTION: The foundational distinctive belief of true Baptists is that the Bible is the “only authority for both faith and practice.” We appeal to the Bible only. Baptists come in a variety of “flavors,” but we have the same basic “ingredients.” Other denominations share certain of these beliefs with Baptists, but only Baptists hold to all these core beliefs. Many religious groups hold to this key tenet of biblical authority, but Baptists can argue that we do it more consistently and thoroughly than our non-Brethren brethren.

Baptists have suffered much for this historical stance – even at the hands of the Protestant reformers and their ecclesiastical heirs in both Europe and America. Our Baptist forefathers have always regarded themselves as the logical outcome to the famous watchword of the Protestant Reformation, “*sola scriptura*.”

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 spring from, and be judged by, the Bible. It must be **the** source of all our theological formulations and declarations. If we base our beliefs and practices on tradition or human reason, we *“reject the commandment of God”* (Mk. 7:9). The end of those who have done so is awful to contemplate.