

Baptist History and Their Distinctives

Lesson #5 – Who’s Who Amongst the Baptists?

We Baptists are not very good at remembering our history. As a result, we often don’t know and appreciate the legitimacy or the basis of our own heritage. In this lesson, I wanted to familiarize you with some of our Baptist heroes and what they accomplished for us.

It is important to understand that the nature of the contributions of these men are:

1. Developing our identity in doctrine and practice as to who we are.
2. Opposing false ideas regarding doctrine and practice. (Orthodoxy and Orthopraxy)
3. Preaching, teaching, publishing, organizing for the Kingdom of God.
4. Demonstrating leadership* in order to convince people regarding what we are and what we need to be.
* “Leadership” – the ability to sell a vision.

The Church is always under attack from Satan, his demons, and the culture at large. We must be ever vigilant regarding the truth.

- Sometimes the attack comes abruptly and powerfully in the form of overt persecution.
- Sometimes the attack comes subtly and slowly with flattery and deception that is barely detectable.

Both of these forms of attack can and do kill churches!

This is a partial list of important men as it would be much too time consuming to include all of these men and women who made us who we are today.

I. Historical Heroes – (1600 - 1900)

Obadiah Holmes – (1606 – 1682) A Rhode Island clergyman who was pivotal in the establishment of the Baptist Church in America. 2nd pastor of the First Baptist Church of Rhode Island. Underwent persecution by imprisonment and whipping for his faith in Massachusetts. It is said that he told the magistrate after the whipping that “You have struck me as with roses.”
Calvinist in Soteriology

Roger Williams – (1603 – 1683) An English Protestant (Puritan/Calvinist) theologian who was an early proponent of religious freedom and the separation of church and state. In 1636, he began the colony of Providence Plantation, which provided a refuge for religious minorities. Williams started the first Baptist church in America, the First Baptist Church of Providence. He was a student of Native American languages and an advocate for fair dealings with Native Americans and a active abolitionist.

John Bunyan (1628 – 1688) was an English Christian writer and preacher, famous for writing *The Pilgrim's Progress*. He was a “Particular” Baptist and was imprisoned twice for preaching without being licensed by the Church of England.

As John struggled with his new found Christian faith, he became increasingly despondent and fell into mental turmoil. During this time of conflict, Bunyan began a four year long discussion and spiritual journey with a few poor women of Bedford who belonged to a nonconformist sect that worshipped in St. John's Church. He also increasingly identified himself with St. Paul, who had characterised himself as "the chief of sinners", and believed he was one of the spiritual elite, chosen by God.

Although known principally for his famous Christian allegory *Pilgrim’s Progress* a partial list of his works is:

- *A Few Sighs from Hell, or the Groans of a Damned Soul*, 1658
- *A Discourse Upon the Pharisee and the Publican*, 1685
- *Christ a Complete Saviour (The Intercession of Christ And Who Are Privileged in It)*, 1692
- ***Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners***, 1666
- *Praying with the Spirit and with Understanding too*, 1663
- *Of Antichrist and His Ruin*, 1692

- *Reprobation Asserted*, 1674
 - *Saved by Grace*, 1675
 - *Some Gospel Truths Opened*, 1656
 - *The Acceptable Sacrifice*
 - *The Doctrine of the Law and Grace Unfolded*, 1659
 - *The Doom and Downfall of the Fruitless Professor (Or The Barren Fig Tree)*, 1682
 - *The End of the World, The Resurrection of the Dead and Eternal Judgment*, 1665
 - *The Fear of God – What it is, and what it is not*, 1679
 - *The Greatness of the Soul and Unspeakableness of its Loss Thereof*, 1683
 - *The Heavenly Footman*, 1698
 - *The Life and Death of Mr Badman*, 1680
 - ***The Pilgrim's Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come***, 1678
 - *The Strait Gate, Great Difficulty of Going to Heaven*, 1676
 - *The Saint's Knowledge of Christ's Love, or The Unsearchable Riches of Christ*, 1692
 - *The Water of Life or The Richness and Glory of the Gospel*, 1688
 - *The Work of Jesus Christ as an Advocate*, 1688
- Calvinist in Soteriology**

Benjamin Keach – (1640 – 1704) Originally from Buckinghamshire, Keach worked as a tailor during his early years. He was baptized at the age of 15 and began preaching at 18. He was the minister of the congregation at Winslow before moving in 1668 to the church at Horse-lie-down, Southwark where he remained for 36 years as pastor (1668-1704). This congregation later became the New Park Street Church and then moved to the Metropolitan Tabernacle under the pastorate of Charles Spurgeon. It was as representative of this church that Keach went to the 1689 General Assembly and subscribed the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith. Keach was one of the seven men who sent out the invitation to the 1689 General Assembly. The signing of the confession was no mute doctrinal assent on the part of the church, for in the same year they entered into a Solemn Covenant which reflected, at the practical and congregational level, some of the doctrines of the confession.

Calvinist in Soteriology

John Gill – (1697 – 1771) The first major writing Baptist theologian, his work retaining influence into the 21st century. An English Baptist pastor, biblical scholar, and theologian who held to a firm Calvinistic soteriology.

Calvinist in Soteriology

Andrew Fuller – (1754 – 1850) English Particular Baptist minister involved in the founding of the Baptist Missionary Society.

Calvinist in Soteriology

William Carey – (1761 – 1834) An English Baptist missionary and a Reformed Baptist minister, known as the "**father of modern missions**." Carey was one of the founders of the Baptist Missionary Society. As a missionary in the Danish colony, Serampore, India, he translated the Bible into Bengali, Sanskrit, and numerous other languages and dialects.

Calvinist in Soteriology

Adoniram Judson – (1788 – 1850) Baptist missionary; 1st protestant missionary to Burma where he spent almost 40 years and wrote a Burmese translation of the Bible.

Calvinist in Soteriology

James P. Boyce – (1827 – 1888) Served as a Southern Baptist pastor, theologian, author, and seminary professor. (1st president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) Boyce insisted that ministers ought to be taught in systematic theology.

Calvinist in Soteriology

Charles H. Spurgeon – (1834 – 1892) A British Particular Baptist preacher who remains highly influential among Christians of different denominations, among whom he is still known as the "Prince of Preachers". He was a strong figure in the Reformed Baptist tradition, defending the Church in agreement with the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith understanding, and opposing the liberal and pragmatic theological tendencies in the Church of his day.

In his lifetime, Spurgeon preached to around 10,000,000 people, often up to 10 times each week at different places. His sermons have been translated into many languages. Spurgeon was the pastor of the congregation of the New Park Street Chapel (later the Metropolitan Tabernacle) in London for 38 years.

He was part of several controversies with the Baptist Union of Great Britain and later had to leave the denomination. In 1857, he started a charity organization called Spurgeon's which now works globally. He also founded Spurgeon's College, which was named after him posthumously.

Spurgeon was a prolific author of many types of works including sermons, an autobiography, commentaries, books on prayer, devotionals, magazines, poetry, hymns and more. Many sermons were transcribed as he spoke and were translated into many languages during his lifetime. Spurgeon produced powerful sermons of penetrating thought and precise exposition. His oratory skills held throngs of listeners spellbound in the Metropolitan Tabernacle and many Christians have discovered Spurgeon's messages to be among the best in Christian literature.

Calvinist in Soteriology

John Broadus – (1827 – 1895) American Baptist pastor and professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, one of the most famous preachers of his day. Charles Spurgeon deemed Broadus as the “greatest of living preachers”. Church historian Albert Henry Newman said he was perhaps the greatest man the Baptists have ever produced.

Calvinist in Soteriology

II. Modern Heroes – (1900 – 2000)

Augustus H. Strong – (1836 – 1921) Baptist minister and theologian who wrote Systematic Theology. He was the first president of the Northern Baptist Theological Convention and also served in 1877 as the president of Rochester Theological Seminary. He was always orthodox, but was open to a number of liberal theological ideas including Theistic Evolution.

Arminian in Soteriology

A. W. Pink – (1886 – 1952) English Christian evangelist and Biblical scholar known for his staunchly Calvinist and Puritan-like teachings. Pink immigrated to the United States and studied at Moody Bible Institute and then started a pastorate in Silverton, Colorado. He served as pastor in other places such as California, back to Britain, then to Australia, back to Britain, then to Colorado, California, Kentucky, and South Carolina. He was a Christian author and had many books published (41 books). He is best known perhaps by his books: *The Attributes of God*; *The Holy Spirit*; *Practical Christianity*; *The Sovereignty of God*; and *The Total Depravity of Man*.

Calvinist in Soteriology

Carl F. H. Henry – (1913 – 2003) Theologian, first editor in chief of *Christianity Today* to challenge the liberal *Christian Century* magazine. He was known as one of the founders of the modern Evangelical movement, differentiating it from American Fundamentalism. In 1942 he participated in the launching of the National Association of Evangelicals and serving on their board for several years. Albert Mohler has said that he is “among the few individuals who can claim to have shaped a major theological movement.” Henry authored more than 40 books.

Arminian in Soteriology

W. A. Criswell – (1909 – 2002) Baptist minister, author, and two-term president of the SBC. Described by some as the 20th century's greatest expository preachers and the Patriarch of the SBC “Conservative Resurgence.” In 1944 he was called to First Baptist Church in Dallas to replace George W. Truett. The church membership grew from 7800 to 26,000 becoming the largest SBC church in the world.

Arminian in Soteriology

E. Y. Mullins – (1860 – 1928) Pastor and educator and 4th president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary from 1899 until his death. Mullins emphasized human soul competency and personal experience at the expense of God's sovereign action.

Arminian in Soteriology

Adrian Rogers – (1931 – 2005) Pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church taking it from 9,000 members to 29,000 members. Rogers was president of the SBC three times. Adrian Rogers was a key person in the SBC

Conservative Resurgence and a faithful believer in the essentials of the faith. He held fast throughout his ministry to the inerrancy of the Word of God.

Arminian in Soteriology

III. Today's Living Baptist Heroes

Albert Mohler – (1959 - -) Ninth President of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky (2003). Time magazine referred to Mohler as the leading intellectual of the Evangelical movement today. He travels and lectures. He has brought Southern Seminary back into the fold of conservative Christian theology.

Calvinist in Soteriology

Mark Dever – (1960 - -) Pastor of Capital Hill Baptist Church in Washington, D.C. since 1994 and president of **9Marks** ministry. The 9 marks are:

1. Expository preaching
2. Biblical theology
3. Biblical understanding of the gospel
4. Biblical understanding of conversion
5. Biblical understanding of evangelism
6. Biblical understanding of membership
7. Biblical church discipline
8. Promotion of Christian discipleship and growth
9. Biblical understanding of church leadership

Calvinist in Soteriology

Paige Patterson – (1942 - -) Current president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Key role in conservative resurgence of the SBC.

President of SBC in 1998 and 1999

Arminian in Soteriology

Alistair Begg – (1952 - -) Pastor of Cleveland's Parkside Church since 1983, teacher, author; broadcaster (**Truth for Life**). R. C. Sproul has said of Begg, "Alistair Begg incarnates this Neo-Puritan movement, a humble champion who has been galvanized by a magnificent obsession with the God-centered life. [...] Begg is an anachronism. He breaks the mold of contemporary evangelicalism, the mold that has been marred by narcissism and sullied by a preoccupation with a man-centered focus on method, technique, and a virulent form of self-esteem."

Calvinist in Soteriology

John Piper – (1946 - -) Pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church, author, teacher and the founder of **Desiring God Ministries**. Some of Piper's many books include:

- Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist
- The Pleasures of God
- Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood
- The Misery of Job and the Mercy of God
- Don't Waste Your Life
- Suffering and the Sovereignty of God

Calvinist in Soteriology

John MacArthur – (1939 - -) Evangelical minister, author (>150 books), broadcaster and college/seminary president (Master's College & Seminary). Christianity Today referred to him as one of the most influential preachers of today. Grace Community Church is officially, "Non-denominational", but in terms of beliefs and practices, John MacArthur is essentially a Particular Baptist. **Calvinist in Soteriology**

We as Baptists, believing in the Priesthood of the believer, have taken on a great responsibility to be discerning regarding the truth as taught in Scripture. We must stand firm against false teaching and worldly wisdom. We must keep Christ's church committed to the truth of His Word.