

PERPETUITY - “endless existence”

INTRODUCTION: We live in a day when there are many different kinds of churches. Where did all of these churches come from? We as Bible-believing Baptists need to know where we have come from:

Isaiah 51:1-2 - “ *Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged.*

2 Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him.”

It is good for us to take a look back to see from whence we have come. In the Old Testament, God set up many memorial feasts for the Jews so that they might be reminded of what He had done for them and from where they had come.

In every age since the time of Christ, there have been churches which agreed in doctrine and practice with the first church at Jerusalem which Jesus Christ, Himself, started.

I JESUS CHRIST STARTED HIS CHURCH HIMSELF

Matthew 16:18 - “. . .upon this rock I will build my church.”

- A. Jesus said the “*gates of hell*” would not prevail against his church
 - 1. this means that since the time of Christ and his disciples there has always been a true New Testament church somewhere in the world
 - 2. this means the church will last until Jesus comes again
 - 3. this means the devil cannot defeat Christ’s church

- B. Jesus’ church was not built upon Peter
 - There is a play on words in Matthew 16:18:
 - 1. PETER (Greek - “*Petros*”) - “*a stone*”
 - 2. ROCK (Greek - “*Petra*”) - “*a massive boulder; foundation stone*”

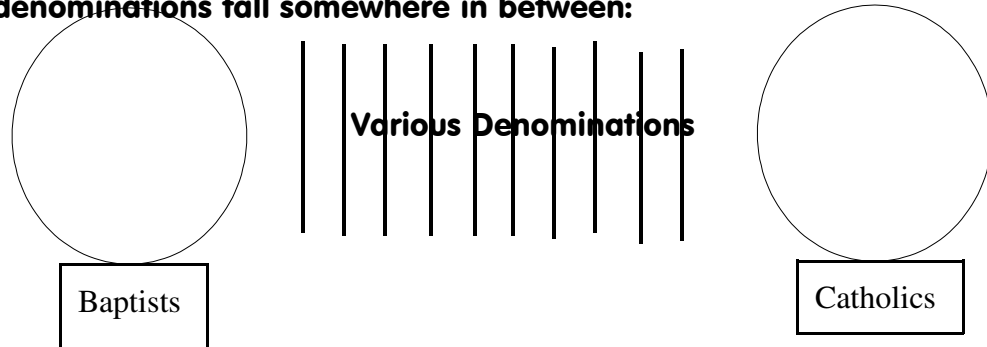
NOTE: Even Peter himself tells us that the church was not built upon him but upon Christ - I Peter 2:6-8 - “. . .*a chief corner stone. . .*”

II WHICH CHURCH IS THE CHURCH THAT JESUS STARTED?

There are only two denominations of churches that can even pretend to be existing since Christ and His disciples – 1) Baptists 2) Catholics

- A. If you take away all Catholic similarities from a church, you would have something very similar to what Baptists' believe.

Baptists are as far as you can go to the right way and Catholics are as far as you can go to the wrong way. All other various denominations fall somewhere in between:



NOTE: The Baptist faith is like an underground river all through history. It is seen for awhile and then it goes underground for awhile and later comes up again. There have always been New Testament churches somewhere since Christ doing the work of the Lord.

- B. No protestant can write the true history of the Christian church Every protestant church, if they were to write their history, sooner or later would have to write about the Catholic church. Baptists were never a part of the Catholic church and thus are not Protestants.

NOTE: Notice these quotes about the origin of Baptists:

1. Cardinal Hosius (Catholic 1524) - *"The Trail of Blood"* pg 3 - *"Were it not that the Baptists have been grievously tormented and cut off with the knife during the past twelve hundred years, they would swarm in greater number than all the Reformers."*
2. Sir Isaac Newton - *"The Trail of Blood"* pg 3 - *"The Baptists are the only body of known Christians that have never symbolized with Rome."*
3. Mosheim (Lutheran scholar) - *"The Trail of Blood"* - pg 3 - *"Before the rise of Luther and Calvin, there lay secreted in almost all the countries of Europe persons who adhered tenaciously to the principles of modern Dutch Baptists."*
4. Cardinal Hosius - pg XVII *"Concise History of Baptists"* - *"If the truth of religion were to be judged by the readiness and cheerfulness of which a man of any sect shows in suffering, then the opinion and persuasion of no sect can be truer and surer than that of Anabaptists (Baptists) since there have none for these twelve hundred years past, that have*

been more generally punished, or that have more cheerfully and steadfastly undergone and even offered themselves to the most cruel sorts of punishment than these people.” This carries our history back to the fourth century.

- C. In order to determine which is the church that Jesus started, it is necessary to follow that church from its beginning to its present state.
1. it was prepared by John the Baptist - Luke 3:2-4
 2. it was organized by Jesus Christ - Mark 3:13-19
 3. its first members were the disciples - Mark 3:13-19

NOTE: The church did not begin on the day of Pentecost. Reasons:

- 1) they baptized believers before Pentecost - John 4:1-2
- 2) they were assembled - Matthew 5:1; Mark 3:13
- 3) the apostles were ordained to preach - Mark 3:14
- 4) they were sent into the world - mark 3:14; John 17:18
- 5) they practiced church discipline - Matthew 18:15-19
- 6) they observed the Lord's Supper - Luke 22:19-20
- 7) they were given the Great Commission - Matthew 28:16-20
- 8) they held an official business meeting - Acts 1:15-26
- 9) the church had 120 members - Acts 1:15
- 10) they met as a church - Acts 2:1

Before Pentecost they were already doing everything that a New Testament church is supposed to do. At Pentecost, they were empowered by the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:8)

D. The growth of the first church

1. 120 members - Acts 1:15
2. 3,000 added at Pentecost - Acts 2:41
3. more added "*daily*" - Acts 2:47
4. 5,000 added on Solomon's porch - Acts 4:4
5. "*Multitudes*" added - Acts 5:14

There were probably somewhere around 100,000 members in this church at Jerusalem after one year! (After Pentecost)

E. The persecution of the first church

1. first persecution (against Peter and John) - Acts 4:18 - (warned)
2. second persecution (against the apostles) - Acts 5:17-42 (beaten)
3. third persecution (against deacon Stephen) - Acts 7 (stoned)
4. fourth persecution (against whole church) - Acts 8:1 (scattered)

As they scattered from the first church, new churches were started in the new areas where these early Christians settled.

John 15:20 - “. . . If they persecute me, they will also persecute. . .”
II Timothy 3:12 - “. . .all that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer. . .”

- F. Persecution continued and other Christians were martyred**
- 1. John the Baptist (first) - beheaded (Mark 6:14-29)**
 - 2. the Lord Jesus Christ - crucified (Luke 23:33)**
 - 3. Stephen - stoned (Acts 7)**
 - 4. James of Zebedee - slain with a sword (Acts 12:1-2)**
 - 5. Matthew - slain with a halberd (*ax; spear*)**
 - 6. Mark - dragged to pieces behind a horse in Alexandria, Egypt**
 - 7. Luke - hanged from an olive tree**
 - 8. Peter - crucified upside down**
 - 9. Simeon - crucified**
 - 10. Bartholomew - beaten and crucified in India**
 - 11. Thomas - thrust through with a spear**
 - 12. James the Less - thrown from the temple pentacle and beaten**
 - 13. Jude (Thaddaeus) - crucified and shot full of arrows**
 - 14. Matthias - stoned at Jerusalem, then beheaded**
 - 15. Paul - beheaded at Rome**
 - 16. James the brother of Jesus - beaten and stoned by Jews**
 - 17. Philip - scourged and beaten, put in prison then crucified in 54 A.D.**
 - 18. Andrew - crucified on transverse cross**
 - 19. Simon Zealotes - crucified in Persia where he went to preach**
 - 20. John the Beloved Disciple - boiled in oil but lived and finally died of natural causes (only apostle to escape a violent death)**
- For 1200 years there were over 60 million Christians martyred for their testimony for Christ. That is over 1 Christian for every 15 minutes for 1200 years! (see *Fox's Book of Martyrs*)**

- G. Apostasy was brought into the new churches by the false teachers**
The Word of God is full of warnings concerning false teachers.
(Mark 13:23; II Corinthians 11:13; II Peter 2:1-2) These false teachers started false churches that started other false churches until there are many false churches today.

- NOTE: Why were the early Christians drawn away by false teachers so easily?**
- 1) there were very few Bibles around to study**
 - 2) not many of the common people could read if they had a Bible**
 - 3) false teaching was easier many times to accept than the truth**

H. The origins of today's churches

- 1. Baptists - founded by Jesus Christ around A.D. 26 - Our calendar has been proven to be about 4 years off the real dates. So Jesus was born in about 4 B.C. and baptized in about 26 A.D.**
- 2. Catholics - founded by Emperor Constantine around A.D. 325 - Through the years, irregular churches (or churches with error) began to form because of a lack of Bibles to study. Constantine, the emperor of the Roman empire, had a dream in about 313 A.D. He saw in the skies a fiery red cross and on that cross written in fiery letters these words, "*By this thou shalt conquer.*" He interpreted it to mean that he should become a Christian, and that by attaching the spiritual power of Christianity to temporal power of the Roman Empire, the world would be easily conquered. Thus, the Christian religion would become a whole world religion, and the Roman Empire a whole world empire. ("*universal*" or "*Catholic*") Around 325 A.D., Constantine called together a meeting of pastors or bishops to a city in Italy called Nicea. Invitations were sent out to 1800 pastors. History records that only 318 (1/6) attended this council. These were only the pastors of the irregular churches. An alliance was formed of these churches which later became known as the Roman Catholic church with its first pope Leo II.**

NOTE: All other "*churches*" other than Baptist and Catholic have had their beginning since 1500 A.D. - they were founded by men and were started 1500 years too late to be the kind of church that Jesus Christ started.

- 3. Greek Orthodox Catholics - separated from the Roman Catholics in 869 A.D. - There had arisen in the Catholic church a Greek (Eastern) Branch and a Roman (Western) Branch. The two leaders, Pontius the Greek at Constantinople, and Nicolas the First at Rome. The controversy was so great that each leader excommunicated the other causing a split in the Catholic church and producing two popes.**
- 4. Lutherans - founded by Martin Luther in 1530 A.D. - Luther was a Catholic priest who got hold of a "*textus receptus*" and trusted Christ as Saviour. On October 31, 1517 in Whittenburg, Germany, he nailed his "*95*" thesis to the door of the Catholic church there. All 95 points of his thesis were against the Catholic church. He was excommunicated from the Catholic church at**

the “*Diet of Worms*” in April, 1521. In 1525, he married Katherine Van Bora and by her fathered six children. He translated the “*textus receptus*” into German for his people. This Bible became called “*Luther’s Bible*.” He called the pope “*most hellish father*.” He also wrote several songs including *A Mighty Fortress is Our God* and *Away in a Manger*.

NOTE: The Lutherans were the first to be called *Protestants*. At the *Diet of Spires* in 1529, the Catholics were in majority and ruled that Catholics could teach their religion in the northern German states that followed Luther, but the Lutherans could not teach their religion in the southern German states that followed Rome. The Lutherans of course *protested* this ruling and thus thereafter were known as *Protestants*.

5. Church of England (Episcopalians - bishops preside over districts) - founded by King Henry VIII in 1534 - King Henry the VIII was ruling over England and was married to Catherine of Aragon. Catherine was a Spanish princess who had been married to Henry’s older brother Arthur. Arthur died and Henry VII, Henry’s father arranged for her to be married to Henry VIII. Catherine could have no children and Henry VIII wanted a male heir to the throne. He fell in love with Ann Boleyn and asked the Pope to grant a divorce. When the Pope would not grant the divorce, Henry VIII split away from the Catholic church and started the Church of England.
6. Presbyterians - founded by John Calvin in 1541 - Calvin broke away from the Catholic church and taught a systematic approach to Theology. The doctrine he promoted still bears his name today and is denoted by five letters:
 - a. T - total depravity of man (nothing good in man)
 - b. U - unconditional election (God elects some to be saved and some to be lost)
 - c. L - limited atonement (Christ only died for the “*elect*”)
 - d. I - irresistible grace (The elect cannot resist being saved)
 - e. P - perseverance of the saints (all the saved will persevere to the end)Calvin had a system of church officers composed of teachers, elders, and deacons (a presbytery) which govern the church. Thus, they were called Presbyterians.
7. Congregationalists - (split from the Episcopalians) founded by Robert Brown in 1602 - These opposed all the “*rogues of popery*” still in the Episcopal church of England. They wanted

separation of church and state, believed the officers of the church were to be elected by the membership and that no congregation was to have authority over another. These were part of the pilgrims who later came to America.

8. **Quakers** - founded by George Fox in 1652 as a split from the Congregationalists - George Fox was challenged in 1643 to a drinking duel by two Puritans and the loser had to pay the bill. Fox, in disgust, left the church. Quakers do not believe in an organized church. They were first grouped together and called themselves "*friends*." They set aside the Bible as the sole authority in all matters of faith and practice but also believe in a '*mystical inner light*' which they believe is the Holy Spirit giving immediate and direct knowledge of God apart from the Bible. The Bible was only a secondary rule of faith, however they said, "*revelations to a Friend should not contradict the scriptures, or sight and sound reason.*" They did not engage in war and did not believe in slavery. They were said to *quake* when the Spirit came upon them, thus they were called Quakers.
9. **Free Will Baptists** - founded by Benjamin Randall in 1780 - This group split away from a Baptist church and adopted James Arminius' doctrine of works for salvation. They believe you must trust Christ as Saviour, but also work for the Lord or you may lose your salvation.
10. **Methodists** - founded by John Wesley in 1739 as a split from the Church of England - John Wesley and his brother, Charles, joined a club in Lincoln College called the "*Holy Club*." The students nicknamed them "*Methodists*" because of their methodical Bible study and prayer habits. Wesley preached salvation in Christ alone but still practiced infant baptism and sprinkling for baptism.
11. **Church of Christ (Christian Church)** - founded by Alexander Campbell in 1827 A.D. - Alexander Campbell joined his father Thomas Campbell in America in 1811. The Presbyterian church where his father was pastor refused to let him give communion to those outside his own group so they left the Presbyterians and were convinced that the Baptists were the kind of church that Jesus started. (see tract by Alexander Campbell) They were baptized at a Baptist church but soon began to teach that baptism was necessary for salvation. They broke away from the Baptists and formed a group called "*the Disciples of Christ*" or the "*Christian Church*" and later changed the name to The

Church of Christ.

12. **Mormons (Latter-Day Saints) - founded in 1830 by Joseph Smith - Joseph Smith claimed to have seen an angel named Moroni who told him about some golden plates on a hill near Palmyra, New York. Smith claimed to have dug up the plates and put on some magic glasses and translated the plates out of Egyptian hieroglyphics into English. This book became called the book of Mormon. Mormons teach salvation by baptism, baptism for the dead, and polygamy. Joseph Smith's son broke away from the Mormons because of the teaching of polygamy and formed the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.**
13. **Seventh-Day Adventists - founded in 1843 by William Miller - William Miller was a farmer who studied the Bible and became convinced that Christ would return to earth in 1843. When Christ did not make His return then, Miller said he was mistaken by one year and again predicted Christ's return in 1844. When Christ again did not appear, the group almost broke up until Ellen G. White stepped in and said that Miller was right about Christ's return but that Christ returned to His sanctuary in Heaven rather than to earth. They began worshipping on Saturday and taught soul sleep.**
14. **Christian Science - founded by Mary Baker Glover Patterson Eddy in 1866 - Mary Eddy, in 1862, met a man named P.P. Quimby who believed in healing by "*mental assent to truth.*" She soon set herself up as a practitioner of this "*new science.*" In 1875, she wrote her method of healing in a book called "*Science and Health*" which now is accepted by Christian Scientists as equal with the Bible. She called her organization "*The Church of Christ Scientists.*" They believe that matter is really just a "*delusion of the senses.*" In other words, '*If you do not think you are sick, you will not be sick.*'**
15. **Jehovah's Witnesses - founded by Charles Taze Russell in 1884 - As a youth, Russell had a terrible fear of hell and often went around writing on sidewalks to warn people about hell-fire. At 17 years of age Russell got into a long discussion with a man about hell and wound up convinced that there was no hell. Russell said, finally, that Christ would return in 1874 and later changed the date to 1914. He said Christ's return was a spiritual return rather than a physical return as the Bible teaches. (Revelation 1:7) Russell started teaching a class and published a paper called "*Zion's Watchtower and Herald of Christ's Presence.*" In 1881, he started an organization called "*Zion's***

Watchtower and Tracts Society” which was finally chartered in 1884. Jehovah’s Witnesses today do not believe in hell and believe they are the 144,000 witnesses (and Jonadabs) and teach soul sleep and deny that Jesus is God.

16. Church of the Nazarene - founded by S.F. Breeze in 1885 as a split off from the Methodists -Nazarenes believe in salvation by grace through faith in Christ BUT contend that sin can cause one to lose his salvation. They also teach a second act of grace which they call the “*second blessing*” which they believe happens when a Christian is truly filled with the Holy Spirit.
17. Pentecostal (Church of God; Apostolic) - founded in 1914- Pentecostals believe in what they call the “*Charismatic Renewal.*” (Charisma - “*gifts*”) They claim that in 1914, God poured out his spirit again on all men and thus fulfilled Joel 2:28-29 but this prophecy was already fulfilled at Pentecost. (Acts 2:14-21) These sign gifts have been done away with today. (I Corinthians 13:8-10)
18. World-wide Church of God - founded by Herbert W. Armstrong in 1934 as a split from Seventh Day Adventists - Armstrong launched out on his own ministry and started a radio program called “*Radio Church of God.*” He began printing a magazine entitled “*Plain Truth.*” They believe that the United States, Great Brittan and the nations of the English Commonwealth (Australia, Canada, etc) are actually the real nation of Israel. Local congregations meet at secret locations and its ministers are not identified to the general public. They believe that you cannot know for sure if you are saved until the resurrection.

III THE BAPTIST FAITH THROUGH THE CENTURIES

The early disciples did not name themselves “*Christians*” (Acts 11:26) but that name was given to them by those who opposed them in the world. In like manner, those Christians who have held true to the faith of the Bible did not name themselves. Those that opposed them called them by various names down through the centuries until one name stuck with them. That name was at first spelled “*Anabaptists*” (ana-“*re*”; baptist - “*baptizer*”) and was finally shortened to just Baptists.

Notice some of the names by which Christians who held to the beliefs of modern-day Baptists were called:

- A. Disciples (Matthew 5:1) - during Christ's public ministry (1st century)
- B. This Way (Acts 9:2) - during the early days of the church at Jerusalem after Christ's resurrection (1st century)
- C. Christians (Acts 11:26) - during the time when churches began to spread (1st century to present)
- D. Montenses (1st to 3rd centuries)
- E. Anabaptists (2nd to 4th centuries)
- F. Donatists (4th century) - named after a preacher named Donatus - These believed that only those who had made personal professions of faith in Christ first should be baptized.
- G. Novationists (4th century) - believed in the same as Donatists but were located in France
- H. Puritans (4th century) - stood for Bible Christianity without tradition of men
- I. Manicheans (4th century)
- J. Paulicians (3rd century) - in Bulgaria
- K. Cathari (3rd century)
- L. Montanists (3rd century)
- M. Paterins (4th century)
- N. Bogomilians (7th century) - in Bulgaria
- O. Arnoldists (12th century) - in Italy; named after Arnold of Brescia
- P. Albigenses (12th century) - in France; named after this city called Albi where many early Baptists lived
- Q. Petrobrussians (12th century) - in France; named after Peter of Bruys
- R. Waldenses (12th century) - in France and Germany; named after one of their preachers named Peter Waldo
- S. Lyonists (12th century) in France; named after one of their preachers named Peter of Lyons - these combined with the Waldenses
- T. Henricians (12th century) in France; named after Henry of Toulouse a disciple of Peter of Bruys

CONCLUSION: Since the time that Jesus Christ Himself organized the first church until the present age, there has always been a church of *'like precious faith'* doing the work of the Lord in this world. Though these churches at different times have been called by different names, they still would agree in basic doctrine and practice with the churches today called Baptists.