

FBC Durham BFL
How Did the Bible Come to Us?
Baptists and the Bible

The very first Baptists viewed the Scriptures as God's Word and as the highest authority in their lives.

Who were the first Baptists?

What makes a Baptist church today a Baptist church? What defines it?

1 Timothy 3: 14-17

¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed. You know those who taught you, ¹⁵ and you know that from childhood you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 2:15

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

Acts 1: 16, 20-22

¹⁶ "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled that the Holy Spirit through the mouth of David spoke in advance about Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus

²⁰ "For it is written in the Book of Psalms:

Let his dwelling become desolate;

let no one live in it; ²¹ and

Let someone else take his position

²¹ "Therefore, from among the men who have accompanied us during the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us— ²² beginning from the baptism of John until the day He was taken up from us— from among these, it is necessary that one become a witness with us of His resurrection."

2 Peter 1: 20-21

²⁰ First of all, you should know this: No prophecy of Scripture comes from one's own interpretation, ²¹ because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Acts 17:10-12

¹⁰ As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas off to Berea. On arrival, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. ¹¹ The people here were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, since they welcomed the message with eagerness and examined the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. ¹² Consequently, many of them believed, including a number of the prominent Greek women as well as men.

1 Thessalonians 2: 13-14

¹³ This is why we constantly thank God, because when you received the message about God that you heard from us, you welcomed it not as a human message, but as it truly is, the message of God, which also works effectively in you believers. ¹⁴ For you, brothers, became imitators of God's churches in Christ Jesus that are in Judea,...

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Acts 4: 24-26

²⁴ *When they heard this, they all raised their voices to God and said, "Master, You are the One who made the heaven, the earth, and the sea, and everything in them. ²⁵ You said through the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of our father David Your servant*
Why did the Gentiles rage
and the peoples plot futile things?
²⁶ *The kings of the earth took their stand*
and the rulers assembled together
against the Lord and against His Messiah.

Romans 4

¹⁴ *What should we say then? Is there injustice with God? Absolutely not! ¹⁵ For He tells Moses:*
I will show mercy
to whom I will show mercy,
and I will have compassion
on whom I will have compassion
¹⁶ *So then it does not depend on human will or effort but on God who shows mercy. ¹⁷ For the Scripture tells Pharaoh:*
I raised you up for this reason
so that I may display My power in you
and that My name may be proclaimed in all the earth
¹⁸ *So then, He shows mercy to those He wants to, and He hardens those He wants to harden.*

The First Baptist in Modern Times: John Smyth

Baptized himself and a few dozen followers in January 1609.

"Men are two sorts: Inspired or ordinary men. Men inspired by the Holy Ghost are the Holy Prophets & Apostles who wrote the Holy Scriptures by inspiration. 2 Peter 1:21, 2 Timothy 3:16, Romans 1:2. Namely the Hebrew of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament.... The Holy Scriptures viz. the Original Hebrew & Greek are given by Divine Inspiration & in their first donation were without error most perfect & therefore Canonical." ***The Works of John Smyth, Vol. I, p. 279***

"There is neither precept nor example in the New Testament of any infants that were baptized, by John or by Christ's disciples: Only they that confessed their sins, and confessed their faith, were baptized. ***The Works of John Smyth, Vol. II, p 574***

Thomas Helwys

A Declaration of Faith of English People Remaining at Amsterdam in Holland (1611)
27 articles, citing 102 Scripture verses.

Article 23

"That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are written for our instruction. 2 Tim. 3.16 & that we ought to search them for they testify of Christ. John 5:39. And therefore to be use with all reverence, as containing the Holy Word of God, which only is our direction in things whatsoever."

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John Murton

“True worship can only be defined by Scripture, ‘for the word of God is the only ground of faith’.” – **Bush and Nettles, *Baptists and the Bible*, 18, quoting Murton’s *Objections Answered* (1615)**

Murton begins Ch. 1 of *A Most Humble Supplication* by saying:

“The rule of faith is the doctrine of the Holy Ghost contained in the sacred scriptures, and not any church, council, prince, or potentate, nor any man whatsoever.” Murton, *A Most Humble Supplication*

And then dedicates the remainder of the chapter to explaining 12 evidences that the Bible is the Word of God.

Murton then concludes by saying:

“The truth of this is as plain as may be, that the Scriptures being the rule of faith, perfect and absolute, and that the plainness of them is such, as by the spirit of God they may be easily understood of those that fear and obey God.” **Murton, *A Most Humble Supplication***

General Baptists

The first major confession of faith written by and for General Baptists is *An Orthodox Creed* (1679).

The first part of the confession is dedicated to defending the doctrine of the Trinity and a biblical Christology. There are 111 Scripture citations in the first 8 articles alone.

An Orthodox Creed (1679)

XXXVII. Article. Of the Sacred Scripture. The Authority of the holy Scripture, dependeth not upon the Authority of any Man, but only upon the Authority of God, who hath delivered and revealed his mind therein unto us, and containeth all things necessary for Salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any Man, that it should be believed as an Article of the Christian Faith, or be thought requisite to Salvation. Neither ought we (since we have the Scriptures delivered to us now) to depend upon, hearken to, or regard the pretended immediate Inspirations, Dreams, or Prophetical Predictions, by or from any Person whatsoever, lest we be deluded by them. Nor yet do we believe that the Works of Creation, nor the Law written in the Heart, (viz.) Natural Religion (as some call it), or the Light within Man, as such, is sufficient to inform Man of Christ the Mediator, or of the way to Salvation, or Eternal Life by him; but the holy Scriptures are necessary to instruct all Men into the way of Salvation, and eternal Life. And we do believe, that all People ought to have them in their Mother Tongue, and diligently, and constantly to read them in their particular Places and Families, for their Edification, and Comfort. And endeavour to frame their Lives, according to the direction of God’s Word, both in Faith and Practice, the holy Scriptures being of no private Interpretation, but ought to be interpreted according to the Analogue of Faith, and is the best Interpreter of itself; and is sole Judge in Controversie. And no Decrees of Popes, or Councils, or Writings of any Person whatsoever, are of equal Authority with the sacred Scriptures. And by the holy Scriptures we understand, the Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, as they are now translated into our English Mother-Tongue, of which there hath never been any doubt of their Verity, and Authority, in the Protestant Churches of Christ to this Day. [A list of all the books of the Bible follows the article]

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Thomas Grantham (1634-1692)

Christianimus Primitivus (1678)

Dedicates the Introduction to, as he put it, “showing the truth and Divine Authority of the Scripture, as being the undoubted oracles of God.” *Christianimus Primitivus*, p.1

“We therefore conclude, that such hath been the Providence of God, that Men could not corrupt those Holy Writings which he had ordained for the Generations to come; neither can all of the Art of Evil Men ruse out, or foist into the Greek copies, so much as one Sentence, but either Friend or Foe would soon detect them.” *Christianimus Primitivus*, p. 3

“That amongst all such Parties of the Son and Men, the only Infallible and Authoritative Judge of their Controversies about Religions, is the Lord Himself, as he speaketh by his Spirit in the Holy Scriptures; together with right Reason Or thus, which all one, the Apostles and Prophets, as they speak in their Holy Writings, are the only Infallible Authoritative Judge in these Controversies.” *Christianimus Primitivus*, Vol. 4, p. 21.

“And there was one point in which they all agreed; they all esteemed the holy scripture as the rule of faith and practice; and manifested a sincere desire to bow with implicit submission to what they judged its dictates.” **Adam Taylor, *A History of the English General Baptists*** (1818), p. 358

Particular Baptists

1644 London Baptist Confession of Faith

VII. The rule of this knowledge, faith, and obedience, concerning the worship and service of God, and all other Christian duties, is not man’s inventions, opinions, devices, laws, constitutions, or traditions unwritten whatsoever, but only the word of God contained in the Canonical Scriptures (John 5:39; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Col. 2:18, 23; Mat. 15:9).

VIII. In this written Word God has plainly revealed whatsoever He has thought needful for us to know, believe, and acknowledge, touching the nature and office of Christ, in whom all the promises are Yea and Amen to the praise of God (Acts 3:22, 23; Heb. 1:1, 2; 2 Tim 3:15-17; 2 Cor. 1:20).

XXII. That faith is the (Eph. 2:8; John 6:29; 4:10; Phil. 1:29; Gal. 5:22) gift of God wrought in the hearts of the elect by the Spirit of God, whereby they come to see, know, and believe the truth of the (John 17:17; Heb. 4:11-12; John 6:63) Scriptures, and not only so, but the excellency of them above all other writing and things in the world, as they hold forth the glory of God in His attributes, the excellency of Christ in His nature and offices, and the power of the fullness of the Spirit in His workings and operations; and thereupon are enabled to cast the weight of their souls upon this truth thus believed.

The last article...

LIII. And thus we desire to give God that which is God’s, and unto Caesar that which is Caesar’s, and unto all men that which belongs unto them, endeavoring ourselves to have always a clear conscience void of offense towards God, and towards man. And if they take this that we have said, to be heresy,

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then do we with the Apostle freely confess, that after the way which they call heresy, worship we the God of our Fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets and Apostles, desiring from our souls to disclaim all heresies and opinions which are not after Christ, and to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, as knowing our labor shall not be in vain in the Lord (Mat. 22:21; Acts 24:14-16; John 5:28; 2 Cor. 4:17; 1 Tim. 6:3-5; 1 Cor. 15:58, 59).

IV. (Gen. 1; Col. 1:16; Heb. 11:3; Isa. 45:12) In the beginning God made all things very good, created man after His own (Gen. 1:26; 1 Cor. 15:45-46; Eccl. 7:31) image and likeness, filling him with all perfection of all natural excellency and uprightness, free from all sin (Psa. 49:20). But long he abode not in this honor, but by the (Gen. 3:1, 4, 5; 2 Cor. 11:3) subtlety of the Serpent, which Satan used as his instrument, himself with his angels having sinned before and not (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; John 8:44) kept their first estate, but left their own habitation; first (Gen. 3:1, 2, 6; 1 Tim. 2:14; Eccl. 7:31; Gal. 3:32) Eve, then Adam being seduced did wittingly and willingly fall into disobedience and transgression of the Commandment of their great Creator, for the which death came upon all, and reigned over all, so that all since the Fall are conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity, and so by nature children of wrath, and servants of sin, subjects of (Rom. 5:12, 18, 19; 6:23; Eph. 2:3) death, and all other calamities due to sin in this world and for ever, being considered in the state of nature, without relation to Christ.

The Second London Baptist Confession of Faith (1677)

Written in a period of persecution against non-Anglicans (monarchy restored in 1660 after English Civil War, which started in 1640, and resulted in Oliver Cromwell's Protectorate, 1652-1660)

The Westminster Confession (1646)

The Savoy Confession (1658)

The Introduction expresses the desire for the confession's teachings to be "in consent with the holy scriptures" and admonishes the reader to be like "the noble Bereans who searched the scriptures daily."

Article I - 1677 1. The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience, although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and his will which is necessary unto salvation. Therefore it pleased the Lord at sundry times and in divers manners to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his church; and afterward for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan, and of the world, to commit	Westminster: 1. Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation; therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his Church; and afterwards for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit
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the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the Holy Scriptures to be most necessary, those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased. (2 Tim. 3. 15,16,17. Isa. 8. 20. Luk. 16. 29, 31. Eph. 2. 20. 2 Rom. 1. 19, 20, 21. & ch 2. 14, 15. Psal. 19. 1, 2, 3. Heb. 1. 1. 4 Pro. 22. 19, 20, 21. Rom. 15. 2 Pet. 1. 19, 20.)	the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.
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2. Under the Name of Holy Scripture or the Word of God written; are now contained all the Books of the Old and New Testament which are these,
 Of the Old Testament.

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Songs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

Of the New Testament.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, The Acts of the Apostles, Paul's Epistle to the Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, to Titus, to Philemon, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of James, The first and second Epistles of Peter, The first, second and third Epistles of John, the Epistle of Jude, the Revelation. All which are given by the (e) inspiration of God, to be the rule of Faith and Life.

e 2 Tim. 3. 16.

3. The Books commonly called Apocrypha not being of (f) Divine inspiration, are no part of the Canon (or rule) of the Scripture, and therefore are of no authority to the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved or made use of, then other humane writings.

f Luk. 24. 27.44. Rom. 3. 2.

4. The Authority of the Holy Scripture for which it ought to be believed dependeth not upon the testimony of any man, or Church; but wholly upon (g) God (who is truth itself) the Author thereof; therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God.

g 2 Pet. 1. 19,20,21. 2 Tim. 3. 16. 2 Thes. 2. 13. 1 Joh. 5. 9.

5. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church of God, to an high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scriptures; and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the Doctrine, and the Majesty of the stile, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God) the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, and many other incomparable Excellencies, and entire perfections thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God; yet notwithstanding; our (h) full persuasion, and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our Hearts.

h Joh. 16. 13,14. 1 Cor. 2. 10,11,12. 1 John 2. 2.20.27.

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6. The whole Counsel of God concerning all things (*i*) necessary for his own Glory, Man's Salvation, Faith and Life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the *Holy Scripture*; unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new Revelation of the *Spirit*, or traditions of men.

Nevertheless we acknowledge the (*k*) inward illumination of the Spirit of God, to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word, and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the Church common to humane actions and societies; which are to be (*l*) ordered by the light of nature, and Christian prudence according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.

i 2 Tim. 3. 15,16,17. Gal. 1. 8,9.

k John 6. 45. 1 Cor. 2. 9,10,11,12.

l 1 Cor. 11, 13,14. & ch. 14. 26. & 40.

7. All things in Scripture are not alike (*m*) plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for Salvation, are so (*n*) clearly propounded, and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of ordinary means, may attain to a sufficient understanding of them.

m 2 Pet. 3. 16.

n Ps. 19. 7. and 119. 130.

8. The Old Testament in (*o*) *Hebrew*, (which was the Native language of the people of God of old) and the New Testament in *Greek* (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the Nations being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and Providence kept pure in all Ages, are therefore (*p*) authentic; so as in all controversies of Religion the Church is finally to appeal unto them (*q*) But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have a right unto, and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded in the fear of God to read (*r*) and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every Nation, unto which they (*s*) come, that the Word of God dwelling (*t*) plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have hope.

o Rom. 3. 2.

p Isa. 8. 20.

q Act. 15. 15.

r John 5. 39.

s 1 Cor. 14, 6.9.11,12.24.28.

t Col. 3. 16.

9. The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the (*u*) Scripture itself: And therefore when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold but one) it must be searched by other places that speak more clearly.

u 2 Pet. 1. 20,21. Act. 15. 15,16.

10. The supreme judge by which all controversies of Religion are to be determined, and all Decrees of Councils, opinions of antient Writers, Doctrines of men, and private Spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Scripture delivered by the Spirit, into which (*x*) Scripture so delivered, our faith is finally resolved.

x Mat. 22. 29.31. Eph. 2. 20 Acts 28. 23.

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The 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith

The Philadelphia Confession of Faith (1742)

The New Hampshire Confession of Faith (1833)

I. Of the Scriptures We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter, that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried. II Tim. 3:16-17; II Tim. 3:15; Proverbs 30:5-6; Romans 2:12; Phil. 3:16; I John 4:1

The **Free Will Baptists** (North) emerged in New Hampshire through the work of **Benjamin Randall** in the late 1700s.

The Free Will Baptists of the North adopted a **Treatise on the Faith of the Free Will Baptists** in 1834.

1. These are the Old and New Testaments; they were written by holy men, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and are God's revealed word to man. They are a sufficient and infallible rule and guide to Salvation and all Christian worship and service.

Landmark Baptists

Founded by **J.R. Graves** in the 1840s.

"To intimate that the least sentence or allusion of the Scriptures is inaccurate or false, is to make God a liar.... The original Scriptures are the words of the living God. " – **J.R. Graves, *The Work of Christ in the Covenant of Redemption Developed in Seven Dispensations*, p. 24**

Did not adopt a distinct statement of principles until 1905

The introduction of the statement of principles said:

"We, your committee on the statement of our doctrinal belief, would respectfully submit the following and recommend:

That this body reaffirm its acceptance of the New Hampshire confession of faith; so long held by our American Baptist people, and that it be printed in full in the minutes of this session.

And that we would further recommend that in explanation of said Articles of Faith and in view of the attacks being made by the advocates of modern science, falsely so-called, on certain fundamentals of the revealed truth, do most positively emphasize our adherence to the following:

1. We believe in the infallible verbal inspiration of the whole Bible. 2 Tim. 3:16"

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (SBTS) - 1859

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The Abstract of Principles (1858)

I. The Scriptures

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, and are the only sufficient, certain and authoritative rule of all saving knowledge, faith and obedience.

The Abandonment of the Infallible, Authoritative View of the Bible By Some Baptists

“The Baptists’ radical commitment to the New Testament held them together for a while. But soon some of their finest scholars were persuaded by the German higher criticism. Their basis of authority shifted to personal religious experience and away from the grammatical-historical interpretation of Scripture.” **Bush and Nettles, *Baptists and the Bible*, 178**

Southern Baptist and Crawford Toy

Toy a graduate of UVA in 1856 and one of the first students at SBTS. He graduated in one year (1861). In 1866 he went to Germany to study theology and languages. He returned in 1868 and was hired to teach at SBTS in 1869. He signed the Abstract of Principles.

It eventually became clear that he believed the Scriptures contained errors. After a prolonged investigation, he was forced to resign in 1879.

Downgrade in England

“a want of adequate faith in the divine inspiration of the sacred Scriptures” was leading to a Downgrade. The result of this want of faith is the formation of a “new religion” which is “no more Christianity than chalk is cheese.” – **Charles Spurgeon, *Sword and Trowel*, April 1887, p. 170 & August 1887, p. 397**

“We who believe the Holy Scripture to be the inspired truth of God cannot have fellowship with those who deny the authority from which we derive all our teaching.” ***Sword and Trowel*, November 1887, p. 559**

“We cannot, then, be surprised that, like our fellows and predecessors, we are still confronted by the ultimate problems of Christianity, and are trying to obtain and express a scientific conception of Christianity in the light of the new knowledge and of the new needs of our time.” – **John Clifford, *Ultimate Problems*, p. 7**

“He can find out for himself what Christianity is without testing this or that document, or determining whether Christ said or did not say this particular word, or do this special deed; he can know of the teaching whether it is true or not, by experience; and so he can secure the consent of himself to himself, which is the first condition and foundation of certitude.” – **Clifford, *Ultimate Problems*, 37**

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Northern Baptists in America

“We have always believed in the Word. This spiritual religion of ours is not unintelligent. It does not propagate itself by magic or mere enthusiasm. It depends on truth. Its method is preaching – the appeal of the reasonable spirit of man. The gospel, which is the very essence of the Holy Bible, is fundamental and the great principles of Scripture the authoritative court of appeal, which will save the church from vagaries and fanaticism.” – **Pastor Frederick Anderson**

“It is interesting to note where the Fundamentalists are driving in their stakes to mark out the deadline of doctrine around the church, across which no one is to pass except on terms of agreement. They insist that we must all believe in the historicity of certain special miracles, preeminently the virgin birth of our Lord; that we must believe in a special theory of inspiration—that the original documents of the Scripture, which of course we no longer possess, were inerrantly dictated to men a good deal as a man might dictate to a stenographer; that we must believe in a special theory of the Atonement—that the blood of our Lord, shed in a substitutionary death, placates an alienated Deity and makes possible welcome for the returning sinner; and that we must believe in the second coming of our Lord upon the clouds of heaven to set up a millennium here, as the only way in which God can bring history to a worthy denouement. Such are some of the stakes which are being driven to mark a deadline of doctrine around the church. If a man is a genuine liberal, his primary protest is not against holding these opinions, although he may well protest against their being considered the fundamentals of Christianity. This is a free country and anybody has a right to hold these opinions or any others if he is sincerely convinced of them. The question is—Has anybody a right to deny the Christian name to those who differ with him on such points and to shut against them the doors of the Christian fellowship? The Fundamentalists say that this must be done. In this country and on the foreign field they are trying to do it. They have actually endeavored to put on the statute books of a whole state binding laws against teaching modern biology. If they had their way, within the church, they would set up in Protestantism a doctrinal tribunal more rigid than the pope’s.” - **Harry Emerson Fosdick (1878-1969)** “Shall the Fundamentalists Win?” (1922)

At the 1922 convention, the **Fundamentalist Fellowship**, led by **William Bell Riley** (Pastor, FBC Minneapolis, MN) proposed that the NBC adopt the New Hampshire Confession of Faith of 1833

In response, a liberal pastor from NYC (Cornelius Woelfkin) offered as a substitute the statement “That the New Testament is the all-sufficient ground of our faith and practice, and we need no other statement.” His proposal beat Riley’s 1,264 to 637.

In response to the actions of the NBC, Riley and the Fundamentalist Fellowship left the NBC in 1923 and formed the **Baptist Bible Union** (now called **The General Association of Regular Baptist Churches**—name changed in 1932). They adopted the New Hampshire Confession of Faith.

Southern Baptists

J. Frank Norris, Pastor, FBC-Ft. Worth, TX

1925 meeting of the SBC adopted **The Baptist Faith and Message (1925)**

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We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and religious opinions should be tried.

Luke 16:29-31; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Eph. 2:20; Heb. 1:1; 2 Peter 1:19-21; John 16:13-15; Matt. 22:29-31; Psalm 19:7-10; Psalm 119:1-8.

The Elliott Controversy

Ralph H. Elliott was a professor of Old Testament of **Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary** in Kansas City, which was founded in 1958. In 1961 Professor Elliott published a book entitled *The Message of Genesis*. It was published by Broadman Press.

He asserted that Genesis had been written by multiple authors, that it contained numerous errors (and therefore was not divinely inspired in the traditional sense of the term) and that some of the events it recounts can be taken literally and must be seen as symbolic stories, particularly the story of Adam and Eve. Other parts of Genesis were taken from earlier myths and legends he said. He theorized that the flood was a local phenomenon, that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by some act of nature, and that Abraham did not literally hear the voice of God when he instructed to sacrifice Isaac.

"Broadman Press defended its publication of the book 'in light of the historic Baptist principle' that each individual has the freedom to hold any particular theory of the inspiration of the Bible 'which seems most reasonable to him'." – **Bush and Nettles, *Baptists and the Bible*, 2**

The Baptist Faith and Message (1963)

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON BAPTIST FAITH AND MESSAGE:

"Throughout its work your committee has been conscious of the contribution made by the statement of "The Baptist Faith And Message" adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1925. It quotes with approval its affirmation that "Christianity is supernatural in its origin and history. We repudiate every theory of religion which denies the supernatural elements in our faith."

Furthermore, it concurs in the introductory "statement of the historic Baptist conception of the nature and function of confessions of faith in our religious and denominational life." It is, therefore, quoted in full as part of this report to the Convention.

(1) That they constitute a consensus of opinion of some Baptist body, large or small, for the general instruction and guidance of our own people and others concerning those articles of the Christian faith which are most surely held among us. They are not intended to add anything to the simple conditions of salvation revealed in the New Testament, viz., repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

(2) That we do not regard them as complete statements of our faith, having any quality of finality or infallibility. As in the past so in the future Baptists should hold themselves free to revise their statements of faith as may seem to them wise and expedient at any time.

(3) That any group of Baptists, large or small have the inherent right to draw up for themselves

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and publish to the world a confession of their faith whenever they may think it advisable to do so.

(4) That the sole authority for faith and practice among Baptists is the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Confessions are only guides in interpretation, having no authority over the conscience.

(5) That they are statements of religious convictions, drawn from the Scriptures, and are not to be used to hamper freedom of thought or investigation in other realms of life."

Baptists are a people who profess a living faith. This faith is rooted and grounded in Jesus Christ who is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." Therefore, the sole authority for faith and practice among Baptists is Jesus Christ whose will is revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

A living faith must experience a growing understanding of truth and must be continually interpreted and related to the needs of each new generation. Throughout their history Baptist bodies, both large and small, have issued statements of faith which comprise a consensus of their beliefs. Such statements have never been regarded as complete, infallible statements of faith, nor as official creeds carrying mandatory authority. Thus this generation of Southern Baptists is in historic succession of intent and purpose as it endeavors to state for its time and theological climate those articles of the Christian faith which are most surely held among us.

Baptists emphasize the soul's competency before God, freedom in religion, and the priesthood of the believer. However, this emphasis should not be interpreted to mean that there is an absence of certain definite doctrines that Baptists believe, cherish, and with which they have been and are now closely identified."

Article 1 The Scriptures BF&M (1925)	Article 1 The Scriptures BF&M (1963)
We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and religious opinions should be tried. <u>Luke 16:29-31</u>; <u>2 Tim. 3:15-17</u>; <u>Eph. 2:20</u>; <u>Heb. 1:1</u>; <u>2 Peter 1:19-21</u>; <u>John 16:13-15</u>; <u>Matt. 22:29-31</u>; <u>Psalm 19:7-10</u>; <u>Psalm 119:1-8</u>.	The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is the record of God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. It reveals the principles by which God judges us; and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ. <i>Ex 24:4; De 4:1-2; 17:19; Jos 8:34 Psa 19:7-10; 119:11, 89, 105, 140 Isa 34:16; 40:8; Jer 15:16; 36:1-32 Mat 5:17-18; 22:29; Lu 21:33; 24:44-46 Joh 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Ac 2:16; 17:11 Rom 15:4; 16:25-26; 2Ti 3:15-17 Heb 1:1-2; 4:12; 1Pe 1:25; 2Pe 1:19-21</i>

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The Broadman Bible Commentary Controversy

G. Henton Davies of England. Davies, in interpreting Genesis 22, concluded that God did NOT instruct Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. He said, "Did God make, would God in fact have made, such a demand upon Abraham or anybody else except himself? Our answer...is no. Indeed, what Christian or humane conscience could regard such a command as coming from God."

John R. Claypool's *Is the Bible a Human Book?* (Broadman Press: 1970)

"it is heretical to speak of the Bible as the final authority in all matters religious"
The Bible is full of "mistakes and errors and conflicting opinions..."

E. Glenn Hinson

In 1977 E. Glenn Hinson, a professor of Church History at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, published a book entitled *Jesus Christ*.

Of the 4 gospels, he said "none of these is absolutely factual."

He also said, "A number of modern scholars have discounted the healing narratives and miracle stories ascribing them to primitive mythology and early Christian embellishment. Some embellishment undoubtedly occurred."

Lastly he claimed that "the risen Christ had not a physical but a spiritual body."

At a 1981 Christian Life Commission seminar, **Robert G. Bratcher** said "Only willful ignorance or intellectual dishonesty can account for the claim that the Bible is inerrant and infallible....To invest the Bible with the qualities of inerrancy and infallibility is to idolatize it, to transform it into a false god."

Bratcher the son of Baptist missionaries and a graduate of SBTS. He was primarily employed by the FMB and taught at seminaries overseas. In 1966 he published the Bible translation *Good News for Modern Man*. He also taught summer classes at Southeastern Seminary.

The Conservative Resurgence – The Battle for the Bible – 1979-2000

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Baptist Faith and Message (2000)

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Summary Statements

“Baptists, to a greater degree than any other group, have strengthened the protest of evangelical Protestantism against traditionalism. This they have done by their constant witness to the supremacy of the Scriptures as the all-sufficient and sole norm for faith and practice in the Christian life.” – **Robert G. Torbet, *History of the Baptists*, p.483**

“It may be said without hesitancy that Baptists generally have quite universally placed their uncompromising faith in the authenticity of the Sacred writings through divine inspiration of the writers by the Holy Spirit, and have stressed the necessity of Bible reading by every Christian for himself.” – **Robert G. Torbet, *History of the Baptists*, p.485**

“Historically, Baptists have built their theology from a solid foundation. Holy Scripture was taken to be God’s infallible revelation in words. What God said, Baptists believed. No creed held them together, though Baptists never hesitated to write and affirm their doctrinal confessions. No church covenant was mandatory for all Baptist churches; yet hardly a church has not adopted strongly worded covenants. Scripture has been the cornerstone, the common ground, the point of unity.” **Bush and Nettles, *Baptists and the Bible*, 4.**