

# The Baptist Church



**Origin & History:** The Baptist tradition is one of the largest of the Protestant Christian denominations. Most Baptist churches agree with the basic Protestant doctrines; however, they hold one very specific different belief that *only* true believers should be baptized (called "believer's baptism"). The church expanded as a result of evolving differences with the Church of England and the subsequent decision to form Christian communities with local autonomy, and an understanding of the church as primarily a community of believers.



**Who:** English separatists and pastor John Smyth who rejected infant baptisms and instituted baptisms by immersion only by believing Christian adults. Thomas Helwys was also instrumental in the growth of the Baptist tradition.

**When:** Most Baptists trace their heritage to early 17<sup>th</sup>-century C.E. The first known Baptist Congregation was formed by a number of these fleeing separatists in 1608.

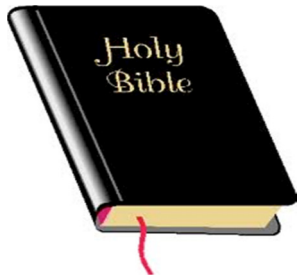
**Where:** Amsterdam, Holland

**Total Members/Followers:** Worldwide estimated at 100 Million

**Deity:** One creator, Lord of all existing eternally as the Triune (Trinity) of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (Holy Ghost)

**Jesus:** The eternal Son incarnate, fully God and fully human. Conceived and born of the Virgin Mary. Was crucified, died on the Cross for our sins and rose again, ascended into heaven and will come again as written in scripture.

**Sacred Text:** Scripture is the inspired word of God. The Holy Bible is the sole, final rule of faith. The standard protestant canon of 39 Old Testament books and 27 New Testament books)



**Core Beliefs:**

**Salvation:** Forgiveness of sin (by God) and personal salvation is entirely by *Grace* alone, as gracious free gift from God, through *Faith* alone (*sola fide*) in Jesus Christ who died for our sins. We can do nothing to earn or even prompt this gift. Good works are the result of true faith but do not obtain forgiveness or save us.

**Death and Eternal Life:** Baptists believe in the traditional idea of an immortal soul that spends eternity (life forever) either in a literal place of blessedness called heaven (with God) or a literal place of torment called hell (separated from God). Upon dying, the souls of believers go immediately to be with Christ in heaven. The souls of the unbelievers suffer eternally, separated from God in hell. However, not all believe in a hell.

**Baptism:** Baptism by immersion of believers only, as a symbol of their faith in Jesus Christ.