

## WHY BAPTISTS BELIEVE WHAT BAPTISTS BELIEVE, PART 2

### ***JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD***

*[Question 10]* The focal point in history is the **life, death** and **resurrection** of Jesus Christ. The years before Jesus's birth we call B.C. (before Christ). The years after His birth we call A.D. (Anno Domini, Latin for "in the year of our Lord," marking the beginning of the Christian era). So then, the whole way we tell time on our calendar is based on Jesus. He's central. He's the focus, even for unbelievers out there.

Jesus is really important to us Baptists! The Baptist Faith and Message covers a lot about Jesus. I'm going to put it into my own words basically what it says...

From the time of Adam and Eve's fall God's people have looked forward in faith to God's provision for their sin. It began with the promise of one who would be the "seed of the woman" (Genesis 3:15), defeat the serpent (Satan) and restore creation. Throughout the entire Old Testament, you have many prophecies about this anointed one, this Messiah, that God was going to send. This person would be the Redeemer who would save His people from their sins. When you go through the Old Testament prophecies and read the revelations about this promised Messiah, each of the prophets builds on the other one. You get a deeper and deeper picture of this fantastic person. Isaiah really builds Him up. As a result, an eager anticipation surrounds His coming. But after centuries of waiting, the Old Testament Israelite people are like, "When is the Messiah going to come? It's been hundreds of years!" Their thought process back in those days regarding the coming Messiah was a lot like ours today about the second coming of Jesus. "Hey, when is He coming?" You're just worn out by the time you get to Malachi wondering when the Messiah will come.

And then, He came!

The Gospel of Matthew, the Christmas story! Immanuel, God with us. The Messiah, the One promised by God turned out to be Jesus of Nazareth. He was fully human, born of a woman (Mary). But He was also fully God. He was God the Son, God Himself, God in the flesh conceived by the Holy Spirit! He was born, grew up, lived among us, taught us, did many signs and wonders. When He entered Jerusalem for the last time He was hailed by God's people as their Messiah King. The crowds were so excited! But then, less than a week later, Jesus was crucified. What? When you read this for the first time you're wondering, "What's going on here? How could they do that to their Messiah, the one they've been waiting for so long?"

Jesus's lifeless body was taken down from the cross and laid in a sealed tomb. Then... the Easter story! On the third day, Sunday morning, Jesus came back to life! He came out of the grave. Ever since the resurrection, Christians have looked back in faith to an empty cross and an empty tomb. Jesus isn't on the cross any more. You'll notice that we Baptists don't have Jesus on the cross and here's why - because He made the payment once for all, for all time, for our sins one time. It was done. Then He was taken off the cross and placed in a tomb. But then He came out of the tomb. He came back to life and He is alive today seated at the right hand of the Father making intercession for us. Oh, and one last thing... He said He was coming back again for us! By faith we believe that He will.

So, there you have a summary of what the Baptist Faith and Message has to say about Jesus in my own words. It's all there in the Gospels, Acts, and the New Testament Letters. You can read about it and study it for yourself.

We just read about creation in Genesis Chapter 1. So, Jesus was there from the beginning of the world. This what John

Chapter 1 says: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God [the Father]. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made... And the Word became flesh [human] and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:1-3, 14). We read this passage before. Here we see that the human Jesus that we could see with our physical eyes was also the Lord of all eternity.

*[Question 11]* So, when did Jesus come into being? Well, it was not at Bethlehem. Based on the teaching of John 1, Jesus **has always existed**. It says “He was in the beginning with God.” This is a fundamental doctrinal belief that we Baptists have about Jesus. It is what separates us from other so-called Christian groups who think that He was a created being. But He was not created. He is God and has always been God and always existed as God from eternity past.

Another important belief about Jesus that we Baptists hold to is that Jesus was both fully human and fully divine. He was both God and man. Here’s how the Baptist Faith and Message puts it under the heading “God the Son”: “Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature... and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin... He is the one Mediator, fully God, fully Man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man.” A mediator is a go-between. In this case Jesus, God the Son, goes between us and God the Father.

*[Question 12]* Jesus was certainly human. We know from reading the Gospels that He did a lot of the same things we do. For example, He slept, He ate, He wept, He walked, He talked, He thought, He drank, He bled, He died. Jesus was also divine, He was God – He forgave sin, He had authority over demons, He raised the dead, He was transfigured into a glorified body, He

stilled a raging storm, He made blind people see, etc. I'll let you come up with your own list. A side note here - while we may do a lot of things listed in the left-hand column but we're not going to do any of those things listed in the right-hand column because we're not God.

Let's talk now about the Bible prophecies concerning Jesus. We Baptists believe Jesus is the Messiah prophesied about in the Old Testament - the One who would deliver people from their sins.

*[Question 13]* Isaiah is one of the major prophets that talks about the Messiah a lot. Consider just a few of Isaiah's prophecies that Jesus fulfilled. These are just five examples of many which just happen to have been taken from Isaiah.

One of the resources I have in my library is a book by Herbert Lockyer entitled "All the Messianic Prophecies of the Bible." I have no idea how many prophecies that book contains but it is well over 400 pages long. I haven't taken the time to count them all. However, according to the website [newtestamentchristians.com](http://newtestamentchristians.com) Jesus fulfilled a total of 351 Messianic prophecies. I'm going to take their word for it. Given the length of Lockyer's book, that number sounds reasonable.

*[Question 14]* First Peter 2:24 is a good verse to memorize. It tells us that Jesus Christ "bore our **sins** in His **body** on the tree [on the cross], that we might **die** to **sin** and **live** to **righteousness**. By His **wounds** you have been healed." That last sentence is language is taken right from Isaiah's prophecy about the suffering Messiah that Jesus fulfilled on the cross. I always wondered about the Jews in the Old Testament who had this idea in their minds about the future Messiah and all those wonderful things He was going to do; how he was going to be the savior and defeat Israel's enemies and so forth. But then along comes Isaiah and he talks about the suffering servant, the Messiah being

beaten and killed. I wonder what they thought about that. It must have been shocking and somewhat confusing to them. But later we find out exactly what Isaiah was talking about.

*[Question 15]* Jesus is the Messiah spoken of in the Old Testament:

**The Deliverer - C** the One who will come and set up a new Kingdom. The disciples actually thought that this was what Jesus was going to do the first time He came, but Jesus had to set them straight.

**The Redeemer - A** the One who paid the price for our sins.

**The King - B** the Reigning Lord of the universe, the One who sits at the right hand of God the Father.

**The Returning Savior - D** the One who will come back as promised to rule at the end of time.

### ***GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT***

The Baptist Faith and Message under the heading “God the Holy Spirit” says this: “The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration.” They go on to explain what the Holy Spirit does in the church and individual believers. What I want you to see from what the Baptist Faith and Message’s description is that the Holy Spirit is a person

and is referred to with the pronoun “He” rather than as an “it.” He is a Person!

God the Holy Spirit was active in creation as we noted earlier. This same Spirit was active throughout the Old Testament empowering certain people for special tasks. Some examples of this are:

Bezalel in Exodus 31 was a craftsman for the tabernacle. The Holy Spirit came upon Bezalel and gave him the insight, creativity and the power to come up with the way the Tabernacle would be built and look. God actually empowered him to do that as a craftsman. The tabernacle was very ornate and done with such precision and excellence by this good craftsman who was empowered (inspired) by the Holy Spirit.

Then you have King Saul of all people. We all know King Saul as the one who was constantly chasing after David. He lost it there at the end but early on, when he was first anointed as Israel’s king, the Holy Spirit actually came upon him. That story is told in 1 Samuel 10. The Holy Spirit came upon King Saul and he began prophesying. God wanted to show the people that He was with this new king and empowering him. So, he began prophesying with the prophets. All the people were scratching their heads and asking, “Is this Saul prophesying?” It was evidence to the people of Israel that God was with Saul.

When you come to the New Testament, it speaks of the Holy Spirit as One who permanently indwells God’s children, those who believe in Jesus Christ. God is the One “Who has also put His seal on us and given us His Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee (2 Corinthians 1:22). When you heard the gospel and believed in Him, you “were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit” (Ephesians 1:13).

The Baptist Faith and Message says that the Holy Spirit “seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the

Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ.” This is the reason why we Baptists believe in the Doctrine of Eternal Security which we will discuss more later in this study. The Holy Spirit is our Guarantee.

The Holy Spirit is mentioned in 24 of the 27 New Testament books. Jesus promised His disciples that after He left, the Holy Spirit, the Helper would come. That occurred at Pentecost (Acts Chapter 2).

*[Question 16]* Consider the following activities of the Holy Spirit:

John 14:26 – He will **teach** us all things. He will bring to **remembrance** all that Jesus said. Can’t you just see Matthew and John and Mark and Luke giving their Gospel accounts from their own memories and from other people – trying to recall years later exactly what Jesus said? While their own memories might have been a bit foggy, the Holy Spirit is the One who brought the details to their remembrance so that they could write them down. That meant that we would have those same words centuries later. I don’t think they necessarily kept a journal. I believe it was the Holy Spirit who brought to their minds exactly what Jesus said.

John 16:8 – He will **convict** the world of sin, righteousness and judgment.

John 16:13 – He will **guide** us into all truth.

John 16:14 – He will **glorify** Jesus.

Acts 1:8 – He gives us **power** for witnessing.

Romans 5:5 – He pours out the **love** of God in our hearts.

Romans 15:13 – He gives us **joy** and **peace** and **hope**. We all want peace in these times of turmoil. And we can never get enough hope. This is what the Holy Spirit provides us with.

Finally, the Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit gives gifts to Christians. These are called “spiritual gifts.” Paul talks about them at length in First Corinthians Chapters 12 thru 14.

*[Question 17]* True or false? Spiritual gifts are given for the benefit of the entire church? It says, “for the common good” (1 Corinthians 12:7) so, that is **True**.

True or false? Spiritual gifts should bring unity to a church since we have the “same Spirit,” “same Lord,” and “same God” (1 Corinthians 12:4-6). That is also **True**.

True or false? The gifts are given as a spiritual status. No, spiritual gifts are not intended to be some kind of status symbol, but are given for the “common good” (1 Corinthians 12:7). So that one is **False**.

True or false? The gifts should be used to serve others. It says, “serve one another” (1 Peter 4:10) so, that one is **True**.

True or false? The gift of prophecy is more important than love. Any gift not exercised in love is useless, yes, even the gift of prophecy. “If I had the gift of prophecy... but didn’t love others, I would be nothing” (1 Corinthians 13:2 NLT). So that’s **False**.

Paul says this in Galatians Chapter 5: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law” (Galatians 5:22-23). The fruit of the Spirit (plural) are character traits of a person living the Spirit-filled Christian life. You can fill in *[Question 18]* on your own.