

The Baptist Church

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History:

- The book "Christianity through the Centuries" says that, "**Thomas Helwys, John Murton, and their followers returned to England about 1611 or 1612 and organized the first English Baptist church. This group thought that Christ died for all. They were known as General Baptists because they held to general rather than particular atonement.** Thus the first Baptist church emerged from the Separatist Congregationalist group.

The stronger group of Calvinistic or Particular Baptists originated in a schism from Henry Jacob's congregation in London in 1633 and 1638. They held to the baptism by immersion and a Calvinistic theology that emphasized a limited atonement. It was this congregation, first led by John Spilsbury, that in 1638 became the main influence in the English Baptist movement. The antecedents of the American Baptist movement are to be found in this group. Although Roger Williams was not a Baptist when he went to the America, he had imbibed Baptist principles and he used these as soon as opposition to his preaching developed among the Congregationalists" (Cairns, Earle E. "The Reformation and Puritanism in England." *Christianity through the Centuries*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996. P.331).

- "**Many Baptists hold to the belief that the Baptist Church has existed since the days of John the Baptist**" (Mead, Frank S and Hill, Samuel S. *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*. 11th ed. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001. P.44)
- **The Southern Baptist Convention was founded in 1845 and has populations of 15,851,756 in 41,099 churches in 1999.** The Handbook of Denominations also reports, "**The largest non-Catholic denomination in the United States is the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), whose membership, as its name suggests, is most numerous in the South.** In recent years, however, the SBC has been expanding in all regions of the country. The annual convention increasingly is being held in cities outside the southern homeland partly because so many members live in those areas and are entitled to have geographical access to national convention meetings. The name 'southern' has, therefore, become something of a misnomer.

The SBC came into being during the years leading up to the Civil War, and in many ways, the division of the Baptists North and South merely foreshadowed that American tragedy. Although there were significant disagreements between Baptists in the two regions over the question centralized organization (the South favored one organization to control the various cooperative ministries), it was the issue of slavery that led directly to the formation of a separate Southern Baptist Convention" (Mead, P.64).

- The Handbook of Denominations reports, "**Primitive Baptists have the reputation of being the strictest and most exclusive of all Baptist churches. Certainly they have held to the Baptist belief in local autonomy to an unusual degree. In fact, they have never been organized as a denomination and have no administrative body of any kind beyond the local church.** The movement originated in the nineteenth-century protest against money-based mission and benevolent societies introduced in the early nineteenth century. Of particular concern was the assessing of churches to support missions, missionaries, and Sunday schools. **The Primitive Baptists maintained that there was no missionary societies in the days of the apostles and none directed by the Scripture; therefore, there should be none now. [...]**

Calvinism runs strongly through the Primitive Baptist doctrine" (Mead, P.59).

God, Christ, and the Spirit:

- The Southern Baptists state, “There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. **The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being**” (“Baptist Belief & Message.” *Southern Baptist Convention*. 19 Apr 2012. <sb.net>).
 - The SBC states, “[Jesus] **ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man**” (“Baptist Belief & Message.” *Southern Baptist Convention*. 17 Apr 2012. <sb.net>).
 - Concerning **evolution**, the Southern Baptists state, “**WHEREAS, The theory of evolution has never been proven to be a scientific fact, and**
 WHEREAS, Public school students are now being indoctrinated in evolution-science, and
 WHEREAS, Creation-science can be presented solely in terms of scientific evidence without any religious doctrines or concepts, and
 WHEREAS, **Public school students should be taught all the scientific evidence on the subject of the origin of the world and life, and**
 WHEREAS, Academic freedom and free speech should be encouraged rather than inhibited.
 Therefore, be it RESOLVED, That the Southern Baptist Convention in session in New Orleans, Louisiana, June 1982, express our support for the teaching of Scientific Creationism in our public schools” (“Resolution of Scientific Creationism”, June 1982. *Southern Baptist Convention*. <sb.net>).
- Scriptures:** *God:* Gen. 1:1-2, Psa. 110:1, Isa. 9:6, 48:16, 61:1, Mic. 5:2, Matt. 12:46-47, 13:55-56. 28:19, Luke 3:22, John 1:1, 14, Acts 7:55, 10:38, Rom. 8:9, 9:5, 15:30, 2 Cor. 3:17, 13:14, Phil. 2:5-8, Col. 1:15-20, Heb. 9:14, 1 Pet. 1:2, 3:18, 1 John 4:2; *Creation:* Gen. 1:26-27, Exo. 20:11, Matt. 19:4-5, Mark 10:6-8, Luke 11:50-51, Rom. 1:20.

Christ’s Words and the Scriptures:

- The Southern Baptist Convention states, “**The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is 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.** Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. 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. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation” (“The Baptist Faith and Message.” *Southern Baptist Convention*. 17 Apr 2012. <sb.net>).
- The Handbook of Denominations notes, “**The Baptist churches of London wrote a Philadelphia Confession in the year 1689 that was enlarged by the Philadelphia Association in 1742.** The New Hampshire State Baptist Convention drew up another confession in 1832. The Philadelphia Confession is the strongly Calvinist, the New Hampshire Confession only moderately so” (Mead, P.43).
- The Philadelphia Confession says, “**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 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" ("The Philadelphia Confession of Faith", 1742. <spurgeon.org>).

- The Southern Baptist Convention has its own confession of "Baptist Faith and Message" (2000), which states, **"The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is 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. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy.** 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. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation" ("Baptist Faith and Message." *Southern Baptist Convention*. 18 Apr 2012. <sb.net>).

Scriptures: Luke 1:1-3, 1 Cor. 1:1-2, 10, 12:13, 2 Cor. 1:1, Eph. 2:20, 3:3-5, Col. 4:16, 2 Thess. 2:15, 2 Tim. 3:16-17 (cf. 1 Tim. 5:18), 2 Pet. 1:16-21, 3:15-16, 1 John 1:1-4.

Way of Salvation:

- The Handbook of Denominations states, **"The first churches were General Baptist churches, which means that they believed in a general atonement for all persons. In the course of time there arose a Particular Baptist Church, which held to the doctrine of predestination associated with the teachings of John Calvin (1509-64), The first British Particular Church dates back to 1638"** (Mead, P.43).
- Dr. Charles Stanley served as President of the Southern Baptist Convention (1984-1986) and states, **"Baptism is not equivalent to salvation. A. Baptism is included in the Great Commission: we are to 'make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit' (Matt. 28:19). B. However, the Word of God makes it clear that a person's sins are forgiven based on belief in Christ rather than through baptism. [...]**
Only those who have been saved by grace through faith in Jesus should be baptized" (Stanley, Charles. "Baptism: The Clear Teaching of Scripture." *InTouch Ministries*. 18 Apr 2012. <intouch.org>).
- The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) says, **"Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace.**
Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Saviour" ("Salvation." *Southern Baptist Convention*. 17 Apr 2012. <sb.net>).
- Concerning **falling from grace**, the SBC states, **"All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end.** Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; **yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation"** ("God's Purpose of Grace." *Southern Baptist Convention*. 17 Apr 2012. <sb.net>).
- The Southern Baptist Convention notes, "Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **It is an act of obedience symbolizing the**

believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. **Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper**" ("Baptism and the Lord's Supper." *Southern Baptist Convention*. 17 Apr 2012. <sbcc.net>).

- Some Baptist churches like the North Jacksonville Baptist Church state, **"The Bible is very clear that there are steps you need to take after your salvation experience. Step 1: Eternal Life is entirely in receiving Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior. (1 John 5:11-13) Step 2: Baptism follows salvation. Only God's children qualify for baptism. (Matthew 3:13-17) Step 3: Christians mature by feeding on God's Word, serving Him, and establishing Christian fellowships. (1 Peter 2:2)"** (Reavis, Herb. "Salvation Plain and Simple." *North Jacksonville Baptist Church*. 18 Apr 2012. <njbc.org>).
- About **baptism**, the famous Baptist preacher, Charles Spurgeon, said in his sermon about Mark 16:16 (Oct. 13, 1889), **"Please observe that I did not make the text. Perhaps, if I had made it, I should have left out that piece about baptism; but I have had no hand in making the Bible, I am obliged to take God's Word as I find it, and here I read these words of our Lord Jesus Christ, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.'** 'Do not dwell on the baptism,' says one; 'leave that out.' That is what you say, my dear Sir; I cannot see your face, but I do not believe that you are my master. My Master is the Lord who taught holy men to write this Book, and I can only go by the Book; the Book has the baptism in it, so I must stick to the truth as it is in the Book: 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved'. [...]

What do you mean by 'nonessential'? 'I mean that I can be saved without being baptized.' Will you dare to say that wicked sentence over again? 'I mean that I can be saved without being baptized.' You mean creature! So you will do nothing that Christ commands, if you can be saved without doing it? You are hardly worth saving at all! A man who always wants to be paid for what he does, whose one idea of religion is that he will do what is essential to his own salvation, only cares to save his own skin, and Christ may go where he likes. Clearly, you are no servant of his; you need to be saved from such a disreputable, miserable state of mind; and may the Lord save you! **Oftentimes, I do believe that this little matter of believers' baptism is the test of the sincerity of our profession of love to him**" ("Baptism – Essential to Obedience." *Spurgeon Ministries*. 18 Apr 2012. <spurgeonministries.com/sermons/baptism-obedience/>).

- Spurgeon preached a sermon titled "Baptism – A Burial" on October 30, 1881 stating, **"Baptism sets forth the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and our participation therein.** Its teaching is twofold. First, think of our representative union with Christ, so that when he died and was buried it was on our behalf, and we were thus buried with him. This will give you the teaching of baptism so far as it sets forth a creed. **We declare in baptism that we believe in the death of Jesus, and desire to partake in all the merit of it. But there is a second equally important matter and that is our realized union with Christ which is set forth in baptism, not so much as a doctrine of our creed as a matter of our experience. There is a manner of dying, of being buried, of rising, and of living in Christ which must be displayed in each one of us if we are indeed members of the body of Christ.**

"First, then, I want you to think of OUR REPRESENTATIVE UNION WITH CHRIST as it is set forth in baptism as a truth to be believed. Our Lord Jesus is the substitute for his people, and when he died it was on their behalf and in their stead. **The great doctrine of our justification lies in this,** that Christ took our sins, stood in our place, and as our surety suffered, and bled, and died, thus presenting on our behalf a sacrifice for sin. We are to regard him, not as a private person, but as our representative. **We are buried with him in baptism unto death to show that we accept him as being for us dead and buried.** [...]

His death is the hinge of our confidence: we are not baptized into his example, or his life, but into his death. We hereby confess that all our salvation lies in the death of Jesus, which death we accept as having been incurred on our account" ("Baptism – A Burial." The Spurgeon Archive. 18 Apr 2012. <spurgeon.org>).

Scriptures: Matt. 28:19-20, **Mark 16:16**, John 6:53-56, 16:7-13, **Acts 2:38**, 3:19, 8:38, 22:16, **Rom. 6:3-7**, **Gal. 5:4**, Col. 2:11-12, 1 Tim. 2:4, Heb. 6:4-6, 1 Pet. 3:21, 2 Pet. 1:10, 3:9, 1 John 1:5-2:6.

The Church & Church Government:

- The Handbook of Denominations reports about Baptist churches, **"Most state and regional conventions meet annually with delegates from all Baptist churches in a given area.** These conventions receive reports, make recommendations, and help to raise national mission budgets; but they have no authority to enforce their decisions. [...] Candidates for the ministry are licensed by local churches and are ordained upon recommendation of a group of sister churches" (Mead, P.42).
- The Southern Baptist Convention states, **"A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers,** associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. **Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes.** In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. **Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons.** While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, **the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture**" ("The Church." *Southern Baptist Convention*. 17 Apr 2012. <sbcc.net>).

- Concerning **women in ministry**, the SBC says, "Women participate equally with men in the priesthood of all believers. Their role is crucial, their wisdom, grace and commitment exemplary. **Women are an integral part of our Southern Baptist boards, faculties, mission teams, writer pools, and professional staffs. We affirm and celebrate their Great Commission impact.**

While Scripture teaches that a woman's role is not identical to that of men in every respect, and that pastoral leadership is assigned to men, it also teaches that women are equal in value to men" ("Women in Ministry." *Southern Baptist Convention*. 18 Apr 2012. <sbcc.net>).

- About **denominations**, the Southern Baptists report, **"Some people feel that denominations are constrictive, and that when you identify with other churches, you suffer compromise.**

Southern Baptists are sympathetic to these concerns and so firmly hold to the principle of church autonomy and self-rule. The Southern Baptist Convention does not ordain ministers, assign staff to churches, levy contributions to denominational causes, dictate literature and calendar, or assign persons to churches according to place of residence. These are local church matters.

Southern Baptists are wary of interdenominational councils. While Southern Baptists work with other churches on matters such as abortion and pornography, read and hear non-Southern Baptists, and join with other Baptists in the work of the Global Evangelical Relations, they do not enter into covenants with others who wish to speak for them.

The Convention is an alliance of churches working in friendly cooperation under the heading 'Southern Baptist.' **A Southern Baptist church is about as independent as you can get and still be counted as part of a denomination**" ("Why a Denomination?" *Southern Baptist Convention*. 17 Apr 2012. <sbcc.net>).

- The SBC says, **"Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most**

effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. **Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament** ("The Baptist Belief & Message." *Southern Baptist Convention*. 17 Apr 2012. <sb.net>).

- About **the convention**, the SBC says, "Technically, the Southern Baptist convention exists for only two days a year, at the annual gathering.

The rest of the year, denominational entities carry out the instructions of the messengers to the Convention. **The authority, then, resides with the messengers elected by churches** and participating in the two-day meeting. Still, those churches and individuals who identify with this enterprise typically call themselves Southern Baptist" ("Why a Convention?" *Southern Baptist Convention*. 17 Apr 2012. <sb.net>).

- **The Philadelphia Confession of Faith only makes mention of "churches of Christ" and states about church government, "A particular church, gathered and completely organized according to the mind of Christ, consists of officers and members; and the officers appointed by Christ to be chosen and set apart by the church (so called and gathered), for the peculiar administration of ordinances, and execution of power or duty, which he entrusts them with, or calls them to, to be continued to the end of the world, are bishops or elders, and deacons. [...]**

Although it be incumbent on the bishops or pastors of the churches, to be instant in preaching the word, by way of office, yet the work of preaching the word is not so peculiarly confined to them but that others also gifted and fitted by the Holy Spirit for it, and approved and called by the church, may and ought to perform it" ("The Philadelphia Confession of Faith." *The Spurgeon Archive*. 1742. <spurgeon.org/~phil/creeds/phila.htm>).

Scriptures: Acts 14:26, 20:28, Eph. 1:22, 4:11-12, **Phil. 1:1**, Col. 1:18, 2:19, **1 Tim. 3:1-7**, Titus 1:5-9, **1 Pet. 5:1-4**.

Worship and Assembly:

- About the Lord's Supper, the Baptist Faith and Message states, "**The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming**" ("Baptist Faith and Message." *Southern Baptist Convention*. 18 Apr 2012. <sb.net>).
- Dr. Bruce Gourley, who was the Executive Director the Baptist History and Heritage Society (2010) says, "As to Baptist observance of the Lord's Supper, it is probably true (I am not aware of any actual surveys) **that most Baptist congregations observe the Lord's Supper no more than every quarter (four times a year). I do know that some Baptist congregations observe it monthly, and I've heard (but not personally experienced it) that a few do so weekly.** So in general, you are correct: Baptist observance of the Lord's Supper is less frequent than that of some other Christian groups. Why? It is hard to pin down historically, but even well into the nineteenth century, many rural Baptist congregations only met once a month, so those congregations could observe the Lord's Supper no more than that. It is also true that for Baptists, broadly speaking, preaching is (and always has been) more central to worship than sacraments.

One other interesting note is that until the 20th century, many if not most Baptist congregations in America used real wine (often homemade) for communion. Only in modern times have Baptists in

America become anti-alcohol" ("Baptists: Frequency of the Lord's Supper", 12 Oct 2009. *AllExperts* 18 Apr 2012. <en.allexperts.com/q/Baptists-954/2009/10/Frequency-Lord-Supper.htm>).

- Regarding **the Lord's Day**, the Southern Baptist Convention notes, "**The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private.** Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ" ("The Baptist Belief & Message." *Southern Baptist Convention*. 17 Apr 2012. <sbcc.net>).
- Concerning **church music**, the Baptist historian, David Benedict stated, "In my earliest intercourse among this people, congregational singing generally prevailed among them. [...]
The Introduction Of The Organ Among The Baptist. This instrument, which from time immemorial has been associated with cathedral pomp and prelatical power, and has always been the peculiar favorite of great national churches, at length found its way into Baptist sanctuaries, and the first one ever employed by the denomination in this country, and probably in any other, might have been standing in the singing gallery of the Old Baptist meeting house in Pawtucket, about forty years ago, where I then officiated as pastor (1840). [...]
Staunch old Baptists in former times would as soon tolerated the Pope of Rome in their pulpits as an organ in their galleries, and yet the instrument has gradually found its way among them. [...]
How far this modern organ fever will extend among our people, and whether it will on the whole work a RE-formation or DE-formation in their singing service, time will more fully develop" (Benedict, David. "Fifty Years Among Baptist", 1860. Boston: Gould and Lincoln. P.204-207).
- About **church music**, the Baptist preacher, Charles Spurgeon said in his Commentary on Psalms 42:4, "David appears to have had a peculiarly tender remembrance of the singing of the pilgrims, and assuredly it is the most delightful part of worship and that which comes nearest to the adoration of heaven. **What a degradation to supplant the intelligent song of the whole congregation by the theatrical prettinesses of a quartette, the refined niceties of a choir, or the blowing off of wind from inanimate bellows and pipes! We might as well pray by machinery as praise by it**" ("Psalm 42." *The Treasury of David*, 1885. <spurgeon.org/treasury/treasury.htm>).
- Spurgeon also commented about Psalm 33:2, "'Praise the Lord with harp.' Men need all the help they can get to stir them up to praise. This is the lesson to be gathered from the use of musical instruments under the old dispensation. Israel was at school, and used childish things to help her to learn; but in these days, **when Jesus gives us spiritual manhood, we can make melody without strings and pipes.** We who do not believe these things to be expedient in worship, lest they should mar its simplicity, do not affirm them to be unlawful, and if any George Herbert or Martin Luther can worship God better by the aid of well-tuned instruments, who shall gainsay their right? **We do not need them, they would hinder than help our praise but if others are otherwise minded, are they not living in gospel liberty? 'Sing unto him.' This is the sweetest and best of music. No instrument like the human voice. As a help to singing the instrument is alone to be tolerated, for keys and strings do not praise the Lord**" ("Psalm 33." *The Treasury of David*, 1885. <spurgeon.org/treasury/treasury.htm>).
- Primitive Baptists are against the use of musical instruments to worship God (*The Primitive Baptist Web Station*. <pb.org>).

Scriptures: Matt. 6:1-18, 15:1-9, 23, John 4:21-24; Acts 20:7, **1 Cor.** 4:17, **11:2**, 17-34; 14, 16:1-3; **Eph.** 5:19; Col. 2:18-23, 3:16; **Heb.** 2:12, 10:24-25, **13:15-16.**

Morality:

- Concerning **sexual immorality**, the Southern Baptist Convention presents, “In the spirit of Christ, **Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography**” (“Baptist Faith and Message.” *Southern Baptist Convention*. 17 Apr 2012. <sbcc.net>).
- About **homosexuality**, the SBC states, “**We affirm God's plan for marriage and sexual intimacy – one man, and one woman, for life. Homosexuality is not a ‘valid alternative lifestyle.’ The Bible condemns it as sin. It is not, however, unforgivable sin. The same redemption available to all sinners is available to homosexuals. They, too, may become new creations in Christ**” (“Position Statement: Sexuality.” *Southern Baptist Convention*. 17 Apr 2012. <sbcc.net>).
- Regarding **abortion**, the Southern Baptist state, “**We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death.** Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth” (“Baptist Faith and Message.” *Southern Baptist Convention*. 17 Apr 2012. <sbcc.net>).
- “Procreation is a gift from God, a precious trust reserved for marriage. **At the moment of conception, a new being enters the universe, a human being, a being created in God's image. This human being deserves our protection, whatever the circumstances of conception**” (“Position Statement: Sanctity of Life.” *Southern Baptist Convention*. 17 Apr 2012. <sbcc.net>).
- Concerning **religious liberty**, the Southern Baptist Convention states, “**God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it.** Church and state should be separate. **The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others.** Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind” (“Baptist Belief & Message.” *Southern Baptist Convention*. 17 Apr 2012. <sbcc.net>).

Scriptures: Matt. 15:19, Mark 7:20-23, Rom. 1:24-32, 12:9-15:13, 1 Cor. 6:9-11, Gal. 5:16-6:10, Eph. 4:17-6:18, Col. 3-4:6.

Marriage and Divorce:

- The Southern Baptist Convention states, “**Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.**

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his

helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation” (“The Baptist Faith & Message.” *Southern Baptist Convention*. 17 Apr 2012. <sbcc.net>).

Scriptures: Matt. 5:31-32, **19:9**, Mark 10:5-12, Luke 16:18, 1 Cor. 6:16-18, 7:10-15, Heb. 13:4.

The End Times & Afterlife:

- About **the End Times**, the Southern Baptist Convention reports, “There is no official stance in the SBC beyond what you find in the Baptist Faith and Message. **The views among Southern Baptists regarding the end times are broad. If you surveyed Southern Baptists, you would likely find many who hold to the ‘Pre-Tribulational’ view of the rapture, others who hold to a ‘Mid-Trib’ view, some to a ‘Post-Trib’ rapture, some who hold to historical premillennialism, and perhaps even a few who don't agree with any of these views**” (“What is the SBC’s stance in the End Times?” *Southern Baptist Convention*. 17 Apr 2012. <sbcc.net>).
- Concerning **the afterlife**, “God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord” (“Baptist Faith and Message.” *Southern Baptist Convention*. 18 Apr 2012. <sbcc.net>).

Scriptures: Matt. 24:29-51, 25:31-46, Mark 9:1, 13:24-37, Luke 21:25-36, John 14:1-4, 18:36, Acts 1:9-11, 1 Cor. 15:23-28, 50-53, Col. 1:13, 1 Thess. 4:13-5:11, 2 Thess. 2:1-12, Heb. 12:28, 2 Pet. 3:1-13, Rev. 19-22:5.