**Exploring Christian Denominations**

*Class #3*

**Baptist Distinctives**

**4 Largest Baptist Denominations in the U.S.**

National Baptist Convention (African American), Southern Baptist (Evangelical), American Baptist (Mainline/liberal)

1. **Baptists believe in biblical authority.**

**2. Baptists practice believer's baptism.**

**3. Baptists believe in a believer's church (regenerated church membership).**

**4. Baptists believe in congregational governance.**

**5. Baptists believe in the priesthood of the believer.**

**6. Baptists believe in salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.**

**7. Baptists believe in the security of believers.**

**8. Baptists believe in religious freedom.**

*Why do you think Baptists care so much about religious freedom?*

**9. Baptists believe in cooperation.**

### **10. Baptists are passionate about evangelism & missions.**

Sources:

Sbc.net

<http://www.bpnews.net/48698/7-baptist-distinctives-amid-reformations-milieu>

**Presbyterian Distinctives**

## 1. Early Presbyterians founded congregations in America as early as the 1630s.

## There are several denominations of Presbyterianism.

## Presbyterianism refers to the system of church government of the church.

## 4. Presbyterians follow a “confessional tradition.”

* The [Westminster Confession of Faith and Larger and Shorter Catechisms](https://epcresources.org/collections/books-and-booklets/products/westminister-confession) are the singular confessional standard for most Presbyterians. They affirm that it contains the system of doctrine taught by the Bible.

## 5. Presbyterians believe strongly in the 5 Solas of the reformation.

## 6. They believe in two sacraments: baptism and communion.

## 7. Presbyterian vocational pastors are chosen by the church’s presbytery, not simply the local church.

**8. Presbyterians are Calvinists and believe in the doctrine of predestination.**

**A Closer Look at Calvinist vs. Arminian Views of Predestination**

**What is TULIP?** T-U-L-I-P. Someone came up with it around the beginning of the twentieth century as a way of remembering the five distinguishing marks or points of Calvinism. These five points arose because of a theological controversy in the early seventeenth century. Some were starting to follow the teachings of a Dutch theologian called Jacobus Arminius, and these Arminians set out five places in which they disagreed with Calvinist teaching. So, in an attempt to resolve the confusion, a meeting was convened in 1618 in the Dutch city of Dort—and they called it the Synod of Dort. The result was the so-called five points of Calvinism—an answer to five criticisms offered by the Arminian theologians.

**Every Christian Believes This Doctrine…but what do they believe about it?**

***What the Bible says:***

***Deuteronomy 7:6-8…6****“For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.* ***7****It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples,* ***8****but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.*

**Romans 8:28-30** ***28****And we know that for those who love God all things work together hfor good,8 for ithose who are called according to his purpose.* ***29****For those whom he jforeknew he also kpredestined lto be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be mthe firstborn among many brothers.*

***Jesus:***[***John 6:44***](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+6%3A44&version=ESV) ***-*** *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.*

[***John 10:27-29***](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+10%3A27-29&version=ESV) ***-*** *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.*

[***John 15:16***](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+15%3A16&version=ESV) ***-*** *You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.*

[***Acts 13:48***](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+13%3A48&version=ESV) ***-*** *And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.*

* How many? As many as were appointed.
* Luke is conscious of God’s sovereign work in election.

***Eph. 1:3-4 -*** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world*

* When? Before the foundation of the world.

**Tim Keller -** *“The doctrine of election (predestination) is this: it’s that all human beings (as a result of their sinful, depraved nature), given a hundred chances, a thousand chances, an infinite number of chances, will always – because their desires are such – will always choose to be their own lord and savior and they’ll never choose Jesus. And what God does, is in His love and grace, He opens the eyes of some so they’ll see the truth.”*

Salvation isn’t a 99% to 1% split between God’s participation and ours. It is entirely the work of the Lord and all the glory belongs to Him.

**5 Points of Calvinism**

1. **T\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ depravity**

Humans are not completely devoid of good impulses, but every human is engulfed in sin to such a degree that he or she can do nothing to earn merit before God.

1. **U\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ election**

God’s choice of certain persons to salvation does not depend on any foreseen virtue on their part but rather is based on His sovereignty.

1. **L\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ atonement**

Christ’s atoning death was only for the elect.

1. **I\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ grace**

Those whom God has chosen for eternal life will, as a result of God’s irresistible grace, come to faith and thus to salvation.

1. **P\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the saints**

Those who are genuine believers will endure in the faith to the end.

**5 Points of Arminianism**

1. **Election based on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

God elected those whom He foreknew would, of their own free wills, believe in Christ and persevere in the faith.

1. **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ atonement**

In His atonement, Christ provided redemption for all humankind, making all humans saveable. Christ’s atonement becomes effective only in those who believe.

1. **Natural \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Humans cannot save themselves; the Holy Spirit must effect the new birth.

1. **Prevenient \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Prevenient grace from the Holy Spirit enables a person to respond to the gospel and cooperate with God in salvation.

1. **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ perseverance**

Believers have been empowered to live victoriously, but they are capable of turning from grace and losing salvation.

Sources:

Pcanet.org

Opc.org

Epc.org

https://www.christianity.com/church/denominations/presbyterians-10-things-to-know-about-this-historic-denomination.html

Rhodes, Ron. The Complete Guide to Christian Denominations (pp. 40-42).