

Welcome To Grace Primitive Baptist Church

We are thankful for your interest in Grace Primitive Baptist Church and pray you will see fit to visit us or visit us again. The purpose of this introductory pamphlet is to better acquaint you with the beliefs of the church. Since we are a typical Primitive Baptist church, much of the pamphlet will discuss the beliefs of Primitive Baptists in general. Primitive Baptists are a small denomination having significant differences from most other churches. These are differences you will want to understand, and we hope you will also examine them under the light of scripture to confirm they are indeed Bible-based. Numerous scriptural references are given for the claims that are made

Primitive Baptists are an ancient body. The word “primitive” primarily means “original,” and this is the meaning in “Primitive Baptist.” We have beliefs and practices almost identical to that of Baptists in early America and England. Many Baptists in America derived from the “Regular Baptists.” The Primitive Baptists and old Regular Baptists are essentially the same.

One of the most distinguishing marks of Primitive Baptists is that we believe the Bible to be the *sole* rule of faith and practice. We not only believe the Bible to be *inerrant*, but also believe it to be *sufficient* for all spiritual needs and obligations of man (2Tim 3:16, 1Pet 4:11). As a consequence, we aim for a greater degree of Bible conformity than most modern churches. Since the Bible was written in the infinite wisdom of God, we believe it to be void of both error and oversight, and therefore believe any departure from its precepts or precedents will either be in error or else entail loss of effectiveness toward achieving objectives that are important to God. This view of the Bible will serve to explain the answers given in the following FAQ (“frequently asked questions”) about Primitive Baptists:

1) How large is the Primitive Baptist denomination?

Primitive Baptists are a small body in comparison to the largest types of Baptists. Their churches are fewer in number and tend to be smaller in size. While there is no official count, and no central organization to do the counting, there are roughly 80 Primitive Baptist churches in Mississippi. Primitive Baptists exist in most American states and in several countries.

2) Are all Primitive Baptist churches the same?

There are actually a handful of disconnected groups that go by the name “Primitive Baptist.” This fact must be considered when researching them on Internet and elsewhere. Differences between them can be significant, but the vast majority are essentially the same and will be in agreement with the things presented in this document.

3) Why is music in Primitive Baptist churches purely vocal?

This policy is a reflection of Primitive Baptist belief in the inerrancy and sufficiency of scripture. Since the Bible was inspired by God, and since it is a sufficient rule of service (2Tim 3:16), the

best way to worship God is the scriptural way. Since music in the New Testament church was altogether vocal, and since such was the case for all churches for many centuries after the ascension of Christ, we believe this to be the best way to worship God with music today. If instrumental music were superior for purposes of worship, then God would have given some instruction for it in His biblical specification of the church. He did not. The reason churches have musical instruments is because people enjoy listening to them. It is not because of any scriptural evidence that Christ or His Apostles wanted them in the church. We enjoy instruments also, but the purpose of worship is to please God, not ourselves.

It is also a near-universal principle that when men make their own additions to what God commanded, they will eventually exalt their additions to the exclusion of what God commanded. This can be seen in many modern churches where increasing amounts of time, effort and expense have been committed to musical productions having very little instructive content, and this has been done to the exclusion of scripture-based hymns and Bible teaching.

4) Why do Primitive Baptists not have Sunday schools?

The reasoning here is much the same as for vocal singing. While Bible study and teaching is very commendable, Primitive Baptists believe the best way to teach children in church is in a common assembly of both young and old under the instruction of a qualified elder. This is how things were done in the New Testament church (Jn 21:15-17, Acts 10:33, 10:23-24) and how Primitive Baptists have done them throughout their history. Many Christians in recent years have come to the conclusion that the Sunday school system has not proven sufficiently effective toward teaching youth. Because of this, some churches in other denominations have moved toward what they call “family-integrated” worship. We have believed all along that if Sunday schools were a superior way of teaching, then God would have surely thought of them and communicated this in the Bible. He did not.

5) What do Primitive Baptists believe about baptism and communion?

Primitive Baptists believe it is important to follow biblical example in these important rites. This means we baptize by immersion administered to professing believers (Mk 1:10, Jn 3:23, Acts 8:36, Rom 6:1-5, Mt 28:19). We commune with wine and unleavened bread because these were the actual substances used by the Lord. One must consider that these are the most sacred religious rites in history. If a person says it is unimportant to follow the Bible in these things, then how can he consistently argue that it is important to follow the Bible in anything?

Most Baptists are in agreement with Primitive Baptists on baptism and arrive at their conclusions from the same line of thinking. If you are a Baptist seeking to understand Primitive Baptists on other points of practice, then simply apply the reasoning you used on baptism to all other things.

6) Aren't Primitive Baptists just traditionalists?

Jesus Christ actually sharply condemned those who based their religion on human tradition (Mk 7:6-13). Therefore, the fact that other people, whether past or present, are doing or believing a particular thing does nothing to endorse it. Our service to God must be based in scripture.

7) Are Primitive Baptists "legalists?"

A legalist is someone who contrives rules for other people to obey and then judges them for falling short. This behavior was sharply rebuked by Jesus Christ (Lk 11:46). A man-made rule is no different than any other aspect of man-made religion. It is without divine authority, and must never be confused with what God has truly commanded or intrude upon freedoms that God has given (Mk 7:6-13). There is no better preventative to legalism than scriptural adherence.

8) Aren't these points of church practice (e.g. baptism, music, Sunday school, etc.) mere matters of personal preference?

If we accept the principle that the Bible is an infallible and thorough furnisher to God's people, then any form of worship differing from the Bible cannot be a superior way. To choose a potentially inferior way simply because we prefer it gives our own preference priority to that of the Lord. Also, the Bible actually commands us to adhere to the precedents of Christ and His Apostles. Verses to this effect include:

Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances (i.e. "traditions"), as I delivered them to you. – 1Cor 11:1-2

Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle. – 2Thess 2:15

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. – 2Thess 3:6

Some of the most commonly used words of Jesus Christ were "follow me" (Mt 4:19, 8:22, 9:9, 16:24, 19:21, Mk 2:14, 8:34, 10:21, Lk 5:27, 9:23, 9:59, 18:22, Jn 1:43, 10:27, 12:26, 13:36, 21:19). So it is not only important that we do what He commanded, but that we also follow the example He left. We should therefore be baptized as He was baptized; commune as He communed, etc.

9) Do Primitive Baptist churches have a headquarters or centralized authority?

Primitive Baptist churches are independent, self-governing bodies. The Bible gives neither commandment nor example for super-church institutions.

10) Do Primitive Baptists have women preachers?

Primitive Baptists do not have women preachers because the Bible expressly forbids them (1Tim 2:11-12, 1Cor 14:34-36, 1Tim 3:2, 1Pet 3:1-4). If these clear statements in the Bible cannot be taken for their simple, intuitive meaning, then how can we be sure that clear statements about resurrection, heaven, or anything else can be taken for such? We believe that men and women should serve in the important capacities the Bible has assigned to each.

11) Where do Primitive Baptists stand on social issues such as abortion, gay marriage, etc?

Primitive Baptists are unanimous on these issues. This agreement derives from their common commitment to the Bible. They do not support any of the modern efforts to redefine moral standards in ways that contradict the Bible. Christ forbids us to force our opinions upon those who disagree with us on these and like issues (Mt 10:14-15), but He also forbids us to capitulate to them in any way that would compromise the word of God (Mt 5:19).

12) Why do Primitive Baptists use the New Testament as the rule of service instead of the Old Testament?

The Old Testament scriptures are a powerful witness to Jesus Christ and this is their primary purpose in religion today (Gal 3:24-25). However, the Old Testament Law was a covenant that, according to its own promises, was replaced with the New Testament (Jer 31:31-34, Dt 18:15-19, Gal 2:19). It is not for us to pick from these two covenants the parts we want while leaving the rest. Both are comprehensive covenants that must be kept in whole (Gal 5:3, Js 2:10). The New Testament actually calls us to a higher standard than the Law. Indeed, it is a heavenly standard (Mt 5:48, Col 3:1), designed for a heaven-bound people, and when it is properly kept, it will more than meet the moral demands of the Law (Gal 5:14-23, Mt 5:17).

13) What do Primitive Baptists believe about those claiming to possess extraordinary spiritual gifts such as abilities to heal, speak in tongues, etc?

Such claims are dismissed as false unless there is clear proof to the contrary. While God is very capable of giving such gifts today, His tendency in the Bible was to give them to the Apostles and to those upon whom the Apostles laid their hands (Acts 5:12, 6:6-8, 8:18). We deny that Apostles exist today. We resolutely affirm the power of prayer toward physical and mental healing as well as all other human needs.

14) Is Primitive Baptist doctrine Arminian or Calvinistic?

Primitive Baptists affirm all five points of what is commonly (but errantly) called "Calvinism." These points are: a) That men are depraved by nature, meaning that they will not come to God or Christ when left to themselves. b) That those who will be saved were graciously elected to that end, being chosen from the fallen human race, while others were left to their own choices. c) That Christ died for the elect, and that His death either met the conditions for their salvation or

ensured that they would be met. d) That all for whom Christ died will be regenerated in time (i.e. “born again”) by the irresistible and immediate operation of the Holy Spirit, and that it is on account of this operation that they believe on Jesus Christ. e) That all who are saved in Christ are forever saved in Christ, being upheld by the power of God.

Most Baptists in early England and America affirmed these points, but then departed from them in varying degrees over the 20th century. Significant numbers of Baptists have been transitioning back to these doctrines in recent decades. Primitive Baptists are the oldest body of Calvinistic Baptists in America and never left these doctrines. However, as with nearly all Baptists, Primitive Baptists do not like the term “Calvinism” because both history and the Bible show that these doctrines did not originate with John Calvin. Most Baptists refer to these doctrines as the “Doctrines of Grace.”

These doctrines are abundantly taught throughout the Bible and it can require years to search out all proofs, but the following is a sample of scriptures to support them:

- a) Depravity: 1Cor 2:14, Rom 8:5-10, Jn 6:44-65, 8:43-47, 10:26, 1Cor 1:18
- b) Election: Mt 24:24, 24:31, Lk 18:7, Jn 6:37-40, 10:25-29, 17:1-3, Acts 18:10, Rom 8:33, 9:11, 11:7, Eph 1:4, Col 3:12, 1Thes 1:4, 2Thes 2:13, Tit 1:1, 1Pet 1:2, 2:9
- c) Effectual Atonement: Jn 6:37, 17:1-3, Rom 8:32, 5:10, 2Cor 5:14, 2Tim 2:11
- d) Irresistible Grace: Jn 1:11-13, 3:3-8, 5:21, Rom 9:11-16, Eph 2:1-6
- e) Preservation: Jn 5:24, 6:37-39, 6:54, 10:28, Rom 8:35-39, 1Pet 1:3-5, 1Jn 2:19

15) How does Primitive Baptist doctrine differ from typical forms of Calvinism?

The difference mostly centers on the word “means.” Many Calvinists (not all) believe that human instruction is a means unto the new birth and a means to being made righteous before God. Primitive Baptists believe these things are done by God alone and without human means. They claim men are born again by a direct work of the Holy Spirit upon their hearts, and this is manifested in obedience to the gospel. Primitive Baptists deny that men believe in order to be born again. Rather, they affirm that men are born again in order to believe (Jn 1:12-13, 3:3-8). Similarly, Primitive Baptists affirm that men are rendered righteous before God by the death of Christ alone (Rom 5:10, 2Cor 5:18-21, Col 2:13), and that their righteous state is declared and certified by their faith in Jesus Christ (Jn 5:24, Mt 12:33-35, Eph 1:13, Heb 11:4).

16) Aren't the Doctrines of Grace unfair to the non-elect?

The Doctrines of Grace say that the non-elect were left to their own choices, which is exactly what Arminianism says. If one is unfair, then so is the other. The difference is that Doctrines of Grace say that men will never choose the truth of God when left to themselves. They must be subdued by heart-changing grace for this to happen, otherwise they will be unbelievers and consider Christ and His word to be foolishness (Jn 8:43-47, 10:25-31, 1Cor 1:18, 2:14, Rom 8:5-

8). Also, anyone who would release condemned prisoners from a jail need not defend himself for those he left behind bars. Rather, he must defend himself for those he sets free. If there is any unfairness in the plan of God, it is on account of the ones He saves, not the ones He condemns. But God defends Himself for saving His people on the basis of His sovereignty (Rom 9:15, Isa 46:8-13), and on the basis that His Son has paid their debts (Rom 3:25-26).

17) Doesn't it honor God to say that He loves everyone?

Nothing is more common to modern religion than to say that God loves everyone. Regardless of how many times men have said it, it is simply wrong to say that God can love a man in life but hate him in death by sending him to hell (Rom 8:35-39). Christ loved His people and died for them when they were contemplated as sinners and enemies to God. His love is no less today because it can never change (Heb 13:8, Jer 31:3, Mal 3:6). This fact is the bedrock of our salvation, and without it we are all surely lost (2Tim 1:19, Rom 5:10, 8:32-33). While God's love can extend to the vilest sinner, the effect of His love will be to change and chastise that sinner to set him on a different path (1Jn 4:9, Ps 65:4, Jer 31:3). In absence of evidence to this effect, it is simply wrong to say that God feels the same about murderers of Christians as He does about the Christians they murder. Such claims are not biblical and do not honor God (Mt 6:15-23, 23:33, Lk 13:27, Jn 3:36, Rom 9:13). However, we can be sure that God loves all who turn to Christ and believe on Him, because these things are the effects of His love. Primitive Baptists have always affirmed these things, and so did many Baptists of the past.

18) Do the Doctrines of Grace say that how we live really doesn't matter if we are an elect?

The Doctrines of Grace do not disassociate good works from salvation; rather, they reverse the order of causality from what is taught in works-based religion. Men are not saved by their good works; rather, they are saved in order to do good works that give glory to God (Eph 1:3-12, 1Pet 2:9-11). There is no such thing as a true believer who is not an elect (1Thes 1:4-5), and there is no such thing as a born-again elect who rejects Christ and loves a life of rebellion against Him.

19) Does the doctrine of predestination say that men cannot help what they do?

The doctrine surely does not say this, but divine predestination is very necessary to our salvation. The natural laws of the Universe and of carnal human behavior have effectively predestined all things to a sure end of ruin and death. If God has not predestined us to something good, then nature has surely predestined us to something bad. The Bible definitely teaches that man has a will and that he is responsible for his actions, but the will of man does not have sufficient force to overcome the curse of nature. God's purpose in predestination is to overrule the curse of sin and nature where such is necessary to secure the salvation of His people. It is a bold and dubious claim that a loving God would leave such a crucial matter to chance. The Bible clearly says He has not (Rom 8:28-39, Eph 1:3-12).

20) Does the doctrine of election say that only a few people are saved?

Most Primitive Baptists believe the elect represent a vast body of people reaching to all nations of the world and in all eras of history (Rev 5:9). However, we are not to put our trust in probabilities but entirely in Jesus Christ. The Bible commands us to live in such a way as to make our calling and election sure to ourselves (1Pet 1:2-11).

21) Some Bible verses say we are saved by grace, but others say that salvation derives from our obedience. Isn't the truth a little of both?

It is a contradiction to say it is both and the Bible itself says as much (Rom 11:5-6). The key is to understand that when the Bible speaks of being "saved," it does not always mean "saved to heaven." The Bible will never make sense without recognition of this fact. We are saved to heaven by grace alone, but the knowledge, assurance and peace of this are significantly contingent upon our obedience. Disobedience will, in this life, be more consequential to God's children than to the wicked. The reason is that the changed nature of a child of God will ultimately find unhappiness in disobedience, and he must also endure the chastening and corrective hand of God. It is in this sense that he is "saved" by his obedience (e.g. 1Tim 4:16, Js 5:15, 1Pet 4:18).

22) Does doctrine really matter? Isn't God content if we know the basics?

The indifference commonly seen in modern Christianity toward doctrinal principle is unbiblical. The importance of accurate doctrine can be seen in the strength of God's objection to errant doctrine. While Jesus voiced great compassion toward sinners, His tone dramatically changed when speaking of corrupters of religion. He called such "ravening wolves" (Mt 7:15) and "vipers" that were surely damned to hell (Mt 23:33). Accordingly, the very same Bible that commands long forbearance for one another also demands that heretics be rejected after the first or second admonition (Tit 3:10). Further, Jesus warned that corrupters of doctrine can be like "whited sepulchres," (Mt 23:27), meaning that their teachings oftentimes have a very favorable outward appearance to men. These strong scriptural precautions are simply incompatible with idea that we can view doctrinal principle with indifference.

The Apostle Peter said the first thing a new convert should do is add to his faith virtue (i.e. clean up his life), and the second thing he should do is to add knowledge (2Pet 1:5). Peter's final words to us were, "*But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,*" (3:18). Paul admonished the Hebrews saying, "*For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God,*" (Heb 5:12), and he further exhorted, "*Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection,*" (Heb 6:1). This last scripture shows that the Lord expects us to strive for more than a mere knowledge of basic principles.

When a man is only interested in the final score of the Super Bowl, and has no interest in seeing the actual game, this is a good sign that he has no passion for either team on the field. If we truly love Jesus Christ, and are truly thankful for our salvation, then we will want to know as much about Him and His victory as we possibly can. Paul said, *“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,”* (Phil 3:8).

23) Do the differences between the Doctrines of Grace and Arminianism really matter?

If the Doctrines of Grace are true, then Arminianism falls far short of giving Christ proper credit for what He has actually done in our behalf. As praise of Christ should be the primary purpose of our lives, such an error must be judged as severe.

24) Do Primitive Baptists believe in mission work?

Primitive Baptists definitely believe in foreign evangelism (Mt 28:18-20). They also believe it should be directed and coordinated from local churches as opposed to humanly-contrived institutions (e.g. mission boards and societies). Because Primitive Baptists have not been supportive of such institutions, they have been misconstrued and misrepresented as opposing mission work itself. The Primitive Baptist position is simply that we need not form an institution to evangelize the world because Jesus Christ has already done it. It is His church.

25) Is Grace Primitive Baptist Church a “feel good” church?

It is better to feel good on seven days of the week than for a brief period on Sunday morning. The only way to do this is to learn God’s word and to live by it. The primary aim of church should be to teach or remind of what the Bible says. Anytime we substitute “feel good” preaching or entertainment for scriptural instruction, we are setting people up for failure and unhappiness. This is one reason why Christians today have many moral and spiritual problems. Any truly loving church will tell people what they *need* to hear, not what they *want* to hear.

26) What does Grace Primitive Baptist Church think about home-schooling?

While no system is perfect, homeschooling has an impressive and well-established record of success as measured by either spiritual or academic standards. We do therefore generally encourage it and support it, but recognize that it is not practical in all cases. However, all children should receive schooling in the Bible at home (2Tim 1:5, 3:14-17) as well as at church.

27) Where do Primitive Baptists stand on issues concerning prophecies of the last days?

Primitive Baptists allow considerable freedom of thought on this subject and are varied in their own opinions. When Jesus commanded us to watch for the last days and His coming, this likely implied that we should be careful about over-commitment to preconceived theories about it. We should therefore approach this subject with joyous anticipation and studious caution. All true

Primitive Baptists believe in the visible second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the body, the eternal bliss of the righteous and the eternal punishment of the wicked.

28) Why do Primitive Baptists still use the King James Version (KJV)?

Practically all English-speaking Primitive Baptists use the KJV. Few Primitive Baptists would object to the idea that a better version *could be* written, but they do not believe that a better version *has been* written. They believe the KJV with translator notes remains the best version for serious Bible students. The KJV is also easier to commit to memory – a thing Primitive Baptists tend to encourage more than most. However, the things asserted in this document will be corroborated by most reputable versions.

29) How can I confirm that Primitive Baptist doctrine is the historical doctrine of the Baptists?

Numerous sources could be consulted on this, but some of the most recognizable and readily available would be the 1689 London Confession of Faith or the 1742 Philadelphia Confession.

30) How can I learn more about Grace Primitive Baptist Church or other Primitive Baptists?

There is a considerable amount of literature at our church website: <http://www.pb.org>

There is also a large amount of misinformation about Primitive Baptists on Internet and elsewhere. Sources should be carefully checked. The best way to get accurate information is by visiting a Primitive Baptist church. You will find the pastor to be very willing to address your questions. We hope you will be led to come!