

Know What You Believe

A church's beliefs or doctrines reveal the direction in which individuals are taught and led. As we compare the doctrine of other Christian denominations and Baptist doctrine, we will only focus on key beliefs about (1) Scripture, (2) Christ, (3) Salvation, and other (4) Unique Emphases.

Baptists and Assemblies of God

The Assemblies of God began in Hot Springs, Arkansas in 1914 and today is one of the largest and fastest growing expressions of the Pentecostal, Charismatic, or Neo-Pentecostal movement. From these descriptive titles we see their unique emphasis on the events of the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2. This leads to an emphasis on speaking in tongues as the evidence of the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit."

The Scripture: Assemblies of God churches like Baptists believe that the Bible is the infallible Word of God. Assemblies of God emphasize preaching and teaching scripture and personal devotion and meditation in the Bible. Most AOG churches do not have as developed a structure for teaching the Bible in small groups for all ages (such as Sunday School) as do Baptists.

Jesus Christ: Like Baptists, Assemblies of God churches teach that Jesus is the second person of the Trinity. They believe that Jesus was fully God and fully human and as such made full atonement for our sin by His sinless life, substitutionary death on the cross, and bodily resurrection. AOG churches emphasize the Second Coming of Christ and His actual one thousand year reign upon the earth, as do many Baptists.

Salvation: While members of Assemblies of God believe in salvation by a personal faith commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ (like Baptists), they are Arminian in their understanding of salvation. This term refers to the founder of this theological precept Jacob Arminius (1560-1609). They conclude that salvation comes upon the free will choice of man

and can later be lost. **They do not believe in the doctrine of the security of the believer.**

Unique Emphases: The most recognized doctrinal distinction of the Assemblies of God is the urgent call for the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" evidenced by speaking in tongues (a language of unknown random syllables). This is believed to be a second and separate spiritual experience. **Baptists believe that a Christian is baptized in Holy Spirit at the point of salvation (Rom. 8:9).** We note that there is no command to be "baptized in the Holy Spirit" in scripture because this is the natural working of God in the life of a believer at the moment of salvation.

Baptists firmly teach that speaking in tongues is not the biblically ascribed evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit but rather simply a spiritual gift distributed by God according to His will and determination. Baptists do not emphasize one spiritual gift above another. If anything is to be identified as the evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit, it would more likely be the "Fruit of the Spirit" mentioned in Gal. 5:22-23.

Most Baptists would recognize a confessed follower of the Lord Jesus Christ who is a member of an Assembly of God Church as a brother or sister in Christ. We would, however, believe in a stronger emphasis in the security of the believer and have a different understanding of the ministry and work of the Holy Spirit.

Please keep these "Know What You Believe" articles as useful tools to assist you in relating to and ministering to others.

Next Week: Baptists and Methodists