

Quakers (Proper Name: The Society of Friends) date back to the influence of George Fox in England in 1650. They were first called “Quakers” as a term of derision when Judge Bennett sentenced Fox to six months in jail on charges of blasphemy. In so speaking Bennett referred to their habit of trembling and quaking with emotion in their meetings as they felt they experienced the presence of God. They referred to themselves as “Friends” taking the title from John 15:14 describing those who obey Jesus commands as “friends” of Jesus.

**The Scripture: Baptists believe the Bible to be the divinely inspired and infallible revelation of God.** While friends value the Bible, they do not hold that it is the objective and final authority of revelation of God. Their central and focal emphasis is on the subjective “Inner Light” (John 1:9) as the spiritual nerve center, which God has given to every man. Therefore they value what they would call the individual guidance of the Spirit of God more than any scriptural revelation. Simply put, Quaker doctrine sees the inner sense of God’s personal revelation as the standard by which the written revelation is to be measured. Baptists measure any personal revelation by the Bible.

**Jesus Christ: Quakers put a strong emphasis on a personal relationship with Christ.** However, this relationship is based on subjective personal experiences with rather than scriptural revelation. Fox challenged all people to “let Christ, be your prophet, priest, and king.” While Baptists would use many of the same terms to identify Christ and to define beliefs about Christ, the basis of that identification and those beliefs always begins with picture of Christ portrayed in scripture.

**Salvation: Fox was, and the Quakers are, very resistant to any explanation of man’s relationship with Christ based upon the formal organization, rituals, customs, or traditions of any church or denomination.** Because of their belief that this “Inner Light” is in all people, their approach to salvation does not hinge on a particular moment of faith in Christ or decision for Christ. Baptists see salvation as an actual point in time experience that is as tangible and real as physical birth.

Therefore Baptists have widely called all people to be “born again” in order to have a relationship with God through faith in and commitment to Christ.

**Unique Emphases:** Generally Quakers are **pacifists** seeing no proper place for war. They are also **simple in their lifestyles** and very **philanthropic** in helping others. They pursue a life seeking greater and great perfection in their lives as a part of their desire to experience God in a personal, subjective, and intimate sense. Most numeric growth, if any, occurs among the offspring of Quakers.

Next Week: Though it was our intention to write on Baptists and Adventists this week, this topic will be dealt with next week.