

## Favorite Bible Study Booklist (in priority order)

1. of course, *the Bible*\*
2. Strong's concordance\* (strictly, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*) is a concordance of the King James Bible (KJV) that was constructed under the direction of Dr. James Strong (1822–1894) and first published in 1890. Dr. Strong, an American Methodist, was professor of exegetical theology at Drew Theological Seminary at the time. It is an exhaustive cross-reference of every word in the KJV back to the word in the original text. You might need to find the equivalent concordance depending on which version of the Bible is your version of choice
3. *Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*\* (by R. A. Torrey (author of the Introduction ONLY), was originally compiled by Thomas Scott and published around 1836. Most of the references were taken from Scott's Commentary on the Bible, and were supplemented with others from the center column of the English Polyglot Bible. Where space permitted, comments were added from various sources. This reference work contains the most exhaustive listing of biblical cross references available anywhere. For over a century this unique volume has been an essential tool—for the beginner wishing to be more biblically literate and for the scholar seeking greater depth and breadth of understanding)
4. *Nave's Topical Bible*\* (Orville J. Nave – original copyright 1896) This reference tool for Bible students and teachers is arranged by topic and provides over 6,000 entries with more than 100,000 Scripture references. It lists Scripture verses that address a specific topic—even if only the concept occurs in the verse and not the particular word. This compact topical Bible also serves as a Bible dictionary, listing all proper names, places, objects, and events of the Bible along with their brief definition or description. The trick with Nave's is to figure out how he categorizes things. This comes with practice.
5. *The Reese Chronological Bible* (Edward Reese 1977) Dr. Reese has taken all the scriptures and tried to faithfully reproduce them in Chronological order. His approach is conservative, and due to the nature of Bible chronology, may not please everybody. I find it fascinating (e.g. Gen 1:1 is not the first verse in the Chronological Bible, John 1:1,2 is followed by Psalm 90:2) and helpful (putting kings and chronicles and the respective prophets in chronological order is great, as is Acts and the Pauline epistles)
6. *Bible Panorama* (Terry Hall Victor Books 1983) (now out of print and used books are outrageously priced) A very handy Bible overview/introduction at a popular, easy to understand level. Lots of helpful illustrative drawings and charts. "Bible at a glance"
7. *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*\* (4 volumes – the old, edited by James Orr – my favorite, or 4 volumes – the new, edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley [The ISBE contributors represent various evangelical positions. The set often includes articles that are barely evangelical, contributors frequently holding to inspiration but not inerrancy. Though I find myself more conservative than many of the contributors, I find the insights invaluable and the thinking scholarly. There's not a lot of the same old same old surface info, but depth and even some original thinking. Highly recommended for students of the Word, with a note of caution to those of us on the conservative end of evangelicalism.] Note: the old suffers from sometimes outdated material, the new suffers from more frequent usage of less conservative contributors.
8. *The Harper Collins Concise Atlas of the Bible* (James Pritchard -1997) puts all of biblical history in its geographical context: from the earliest evidence of humankind in Palestine to the rise of Christianity in the Byzantine empire. You will find this edition easy to use and invaluable, with a complete chronology of events and indexes of names, places, and biblical references. Richly illustrated with more than 250 maps, site reconstructions, and color photographs, this practical resource is engaging to the eye and to the intellect.

9. *Basic Bible Interpretation* (Roy B. Zuck – 1991) Isn't Bible interpretation just for the experts? No, says Dr. Zuck—it's essential for each Christian's understanding and application of Scripture. Discover the challenges, problems, key terms, and history of interpretation—all in practical, down-to-earth language.(as a Dallas Theological Seminary prof, he is dispensational in his theology, and thus his approach to interpretation reflects his theology)
10. *Exegetical Fallacies* (D. A. Carson 1996 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) I don't agree with everything in this book, but it does cover many errors that are made by well-meaning Christians, and helps us avoid repeating those exegetical errors.
11. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old & New Testament*, (2 Volumes – Edited By: John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck) features insightful exposition and commentary on the entire Bible from members of the distinguished Dallas Theological Seminary faculty. For commentary from the historical-grammatical and premillennial perspectives, its hard to beat this commentary, and the commitment to scriptural inerrancy is unmatched. Thoroughly conservative and Evangelical.
12. *Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Gleason L. Archer – Moody Publishers, 1964) He faces problems honestly and gives really helpful answers. He defends the inerrancy of the Bible, the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, the unity of Isaiah, and the early date for Daniel.
13. *Introduction to the New Testament* (Dr. Henry Clarence Thiessen – 1943) He defends the verbal inspiration of scripture, discusses the synoptic problem (The synoptic problem concerns the literary relationships between and among the first three canonical gospels (the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, and Luke), known as the Synoptic Gospels. Similarity in word choices and event placement shows an interrelationship. The synoptic problem concerns how this interrelation came to pass and what the nature of this interrelationship is. Any solution must account for the similarities and differences in content, order, and wording. Possible answers speculate either a direct relationship (one Evangelist possessed one of the gospels) or indirect (two Evangelists having access to a shared source). The sources may be written or oral; single or multiple.), and defends the traditional authorship and a conservative date for each NT book.

## **Baptist History Information**

The article below (“A Fairly Brief Introduction . . .”), represents a fairly even-handed look at the rather disjointed and sometimes confusing Baptist History. I would read this article first before exploring the websites below.

<http://www.bible-truth.org/fundbapt.htm> (Funnymentalists)

<http://www.baptistheritage.com/history/history.htm> (Baylor U)

<http://www.centerforbaptiststudies.org/conferences/humphreys2005/calvinism.htm>

## **A Very Brief Introduction to Baptist History, Then and Now<sup>1</sup>**

by Bruce Gourley, Baptist Historian

(Baptist Origins; The Reformed Debate; The Southern Baptist Controversy and Beyond)

Those who would research Baptist history via the Internet be warned: there is an abundance of information about Baptist history, but most of it comes from biased perspectives which are fed from personal agendas.

There is a long-held saying among Baptists: when you get two Baptists together, you get three difference opinions! This is most evident when one reads online Baptist history resources: many seem bent on proving that their particular view of Baptist history is the one and only true understanding of Baptist history.

History, in fact, is subject to various (and often contradictory) interpretations. Baptist history is not exempt from the interpretive confusion. Indeed, Baptists are even in disagreement over how they originated!

### Four Views of Baptist Origins

1. Outgrowth of English Separatism -- In this view, the Baptist faith originated from within the Separatist movement, a movement which arose in Europe with the goal of breaking away from the Church of England (which previously had broken away from the Catholic Church, yet retained many of the trappings; those within the Church of England who wished to remain a part of the Church and yet purify it became known as "Puritans;" they were, in a sense, cousins to Separatists). The influence of Anabaptists upon early Baptists is considered minimal, according to this viewpoint. The earliest Baptist church is traced back to 1609 in Amsterdam, with John Smyth as pastor. The group's embracing of "believer's baptism" became the defining moment which led to the establishment of this first Baptist church. Shortly thereafter, Smyth left the group, and Thomas Helwys took over the leadership, leading the church back to England in 1611. This view of Baptist origins has the most historical support and is the most widely accepted view of Baptist origins. Representative writers include William H. Whitsitt, Robert G. Torbet, Winthrop S. Hudson, William G. McLoughlin and Robert A. Baker.

2. Influence of Anabaptists -- This view holds that although Baptists originated from English Separatism, their emergence owes much to the earlier Anabaptists. According to this view, some early Baptists were influenced by some Anabaptists. The Dutch Mennonites (Anabaptists), for example, shared some similarities with General Baptists (believer's baptism, religious liberty, separation of church and state, and Arminian views of salvation, predestination and original sin). However, other than this, there were significant differences between Anabaptists and Baptists (Anabaptists tended towards extreme pacifism, communal sharing of earthly goods, and an unorthodox optimistic view of human nature). Therefore, few Baptists hold to this theory of Baptist origins. Representative writers include A.C. Underwood and

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.yellowstone.net/baptist/history.htm>

William R. Estep. Among some contemporary Baptist scholars who emphasize the faith of the community over soul liberty, the Anabaptist influence theory is making a comeback.

3. Continuation of Biblical Teachings -- Some Baptists "seek to go back beyond the Anabaptist movement to trace the continuity of Baptist forms of faith through the centuries" (Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, page 56). While advocates of this view do not claim a succession of organized Baptist churches (see below), they believe that Baptist faith and practice have existed since the time of Christ. This view has a goodly number of advocates, including a number of early Baptist historians, many of whom were concerned with presenting the validity of their faith (denomination) over and above that of other denominations. Some representative writers of an earlier era include Thomas Crosby (one of the earliest Baptist historians, he wrote in the early 1700s), A.H. Newman and David Benedict.

4. Succession of Baptist Churches -- This viewpoint goes beyond mere "continuation of biblical teachings" and declares that Baptist churches actually existed in an unbroken chain since the time of Christ and John the Baptist. Commonly referred to as "Landmarkism" or the "Trail of Blood" theory (J.M.Carroll wrote a book of supposed Baptist history by this name), this view declares that those churches which stood outside the influence of the Roman Catholic Church at various times in church history were, in actuality although not in name, Baptist churches. That which made them Baptists was their refusal to accept infant baptism, or, said another way, their refusal to accept the legitimacy of the Roman Catholic Church as a Christian entity. However, many of the historical churches which Landmarkists label as Baptist churches were actually heretical in regards to doctrine. Nonetheless, the "Landmarkist" view, which has little actual historical support, remains popular among certain Baptists. The reason for its moderate popularity (and, indeed, strong popularity among some rural Baptists in the southern and western United States) stems (to some degree) from a long-standing dislike (if not hate) of Catholics by many Baptists. Representative writers of this viewpoint include J.M Carroll, G.H. Orchard and J.M. Cramp. It should also be noted that, interestingly enough, much of the Baptist history material thus far posted on the Internet is Landmarkist in nature, indicating that Landmarkers are yet a very vocal lot.

## The Reformed Debate

In addition to the long-running debate over Baptist origins, a new debate is now prominent in Baptist life: the question over whether or not Baptists (and particularly Southern Baptists) are historically Calvinistic. *The Founders Journal* (see below), along with Dr. Albert Mohler, president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, is doing an admirable job in championing the belief that Southern Baptists have always been strict (5 point) Calvinists. Their efforts do fall short of the truth, however, for although Baptists (including Southern Baptists) have certainly been influenced by Calvinism, they have also been much influenced by Arminianism, which historically served to moderate Calvinism and produce a warmly evangelistic theology as mirrored in the Great Awakenings. Most Baptists today hold beliefs from both Calvinistic and Arminian schools of thought. The current Calvinistic debate about Baptist history has reached the point where it is now affecting many Baptist churches throughout America. The reader will note that a number of the online Baptist history resources listed below are from the Reformed (or Calvinist) perspective. The reader should also note that within the past few years, some Reformed (or Calvinist) Baptists have shifted to using the milder-sounding terminology of "doctrines of grace" rather than "Calvinism."

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### Successionist Theory

Baptists have been in existence ever since the first New Testament church was formed. They weren't always called Baptists, but the Baptist distinctives were present throughout history

### Spiritual kinship Theory

English Separatist descent Theory

Books I have on Baptist History:

*A History of the Baptists* – John T. Christian 1922

Spiritual Kinship History

*Baptist History* – J. M. Cramp 1871

Spiritual Kinship History

*A History of the Baptists* – Robert G. Torbet 1950 (1963)