

Why I Am
An
Independent
Baptist
By
Evangelist
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Some time ago, I received information that surprised me. People that I have known for years left the Independent Baptist church that they were members of and joined a Southern Baptist church. The families that I know were in the Greenville, SC area, but I also know of a family in Georgia that left their Independent Baptist church and joined a Southern Baptist church. Also, in recent years some Independent Baptist churches have joined or rejoined the Southern Baptist Convention. The question that must be asked is, "Why?" Why did Bible-believing preachers, churches, and people leave the Convention years ago, and why are some returning now? I pray that in the course of this article you will understand why you are an Independent Baptist, and why you should remain one.

The basic reason for being an Independent Baptist is obedience to God. The Bible commands and demands the separation of believers. Every New Testament epistle contains something on the subject of separation. Now separation is not a popular subject, but anything that is right never has been nor will it ever be popular. So, I am not concerned if the majority will agree with me. I expect that they will not. All I am concerned with is that I am right in the sight of God and obedient to His Word. I want to show you what the Bible has to

say about separation, and then apply that to our situation today.

In a sermon that I have prepared on separation, I have over 50 verses referenced that pertain to separation from every New Testament epistle. It is not a subject that is treated lightly, but it is important enough that the Holy Spirit inspired every writer of the New Testament to cover it. Also, we have scores of passages in the Old Testament that speak on the subject as well. In studying the passages, we can discern three categories of separation: 1. Separation from the World; 2. Separation from False Teachers; and 3. Separation from Disobedient Brethren. In treating the subject of being an Independent Baptist, we will focus mainly on the category of Separation from False Teachers.

I give two reasons for being an Independent Baptist: 1. Because of My Allegiance to the Word of God; and 2. Because of My Alliance with the Warriors of God. The first reason will take up the majority of this article.

I am an Independent Baptist because of **My Allegiance to the Word of God**. As I mentioned, the Bible commands believers to be separated, and one of the topics covered in those verses is separation from false teachers. What

is a false teacher? It is a preacher or teacher who preaches a false doctrine. They may be found in the pulpit or the classroom, but they are espousers of falsehood.

Notice some Characteristics of False Teachers. In II Corinthians 11:13-15, they are described as transforming themselves into “*ministers of righteousness*.” They say one thing but are really something else; they are hypocrites. Also Galatians 1:6-9 describes them as perverting the Gospel. In Philippians 3:17-19, they are called “*enemies of the cross*.” In II Peter 2:1, it is said that they deny the truth. In II Peter 2:12, they speak evil of the truth, and in Jude 4, they pervert the truth.

These are the people that infiltrated the mainline denominations in the late 1800's and early 1900's, and the Southern Baptist Convention in particular in the early 1900's. The seminaries and colleges of the Southern Baptists were full of teachers that denied the Bible and its teachings. For instance, many teachers denied the historical fact of the first 12 chapters of Genesis. They denied the deity of Christ, saying that He was only a man, and not God. They espoused many other heresies as well. I remember hearing Harold Sightler talk about when he was a student at Furman University in the early 1940's. He sat in

classes and heard teachers say why parts of the Bible were untrue and unreliable. Many other examples could be given, but the classrooms and pulpits of the Southern Baptist Convention were full of men that disputed, if not denied the Bible and its teachings. (For a detailed analysis of the liberalism and unbelief that invaded the Southern Baptist Convention, read *S. B. C. House on the Sand?*, by David O. Beale. It was published by Bob Jones University Press, Greenville, SC, in 1985.)

The Southern Baptists also were major promoters of the Revised Standard Version in the 1950's. It was the “official Bible” of the Convention as evidenced by its use in Sunday School quarterlies and other official publications. The RSV was a translation by liberals and perverted many Scriptures, a prime example being Isaiah 7:14 where they translated “virgin” as “young woman,” thus denying the miraculous and pure conception of Jesus Christ. The Southern Baptists also produced the *Broadman Bible Commentary*, the official commentary of the Convention. It is most famous for its denial of major Bible truths, such as writing that the first 12 chapters of Genesis were false. It is replete with other heresies.

Many other examples of false

teaching and heresy could be cited, but time and space will not permit in this article. However, the Convention was full of apostates and false teachers. Along with the false teaching, the churches were asked to give to the Cooperative Program. This combined offerings from the various churches and allowed the leaders of the Convention to disperse the money as they saw fit. Now the Bible-believing pastors and churches were contributing to the seminaries and colleges where the false teaching was being done, and a line had to be drawn.

Not only does the Bible give the characteristics of false teachers, it also gives Commands about False Teachers. If we can identify them (and our forefathers did and we can too), what are we to do? In Romans 16:17, it says to “*mark and avoid them*.” In I Timothy 6:20, it says to avoid them. In Hebrews 13:9, it says to “*be not carried*” away by them. In Jude 17-21, we are commanded to keep ourselves from them and in the love of God. And in II Corinthians 6:14-18, we are told, “*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers*,” and “*come out from among them, and be ye separate*.”

The Bible is very clear about the believer’s reaction to false teaching. It is not to be supported or tolerated! When confronted with condoning or rejecting,

staying or leaving, our forefathers chose the right way of rejecting the teaching and leaving the Convention. The preachers and churches did the right thing then, and today it is still right to be separated from the Southern Baptist Convention.

Some like to say that the Southern Baptist Convention has been taken over by the conservatives and now is all right. That is not true! The seminaries and colleges are still full of Bible deniers. A few years ago, I saw where the President of the Convention at the time appeared on a Charismatic TV network and had “fellowship” with them. Many higher echelon Southern Baptists use the NIV translation which is a terrible and false translation. Many other examples could be given that would prove that the Convention is following the same path that it has for years. (Shelton Smith of *The Sword of the Lord* has written a booklet, *SBC Conservative “Takeover” Not a Makeover*, that goes into more detail than I can go. Get it if you want more proof.) Giving to the Convention makes you a supporter of the false teachers (II John 9-11). If you want to obey the Bible, you cannot be a part in any way with a church that is part of the Convention.

Read through the verses that I have mentioned that describe the

Characteristics of False Teachers, and then the ones that give Commands about False Teachers. There is no way to be obedient to Scripture and give support to Bible deniers. That is why Bible believers separated from the Convention in the 1940's, 1950's, and so on. In obedience to Scripture, they could no longer be a part of, and support in any way, teachers and preachers that denied the Bible. Today, if we obey the Bible, we cannot support them either.

A second reason I give for being an Independent Baptist is **My Alliance with the Warriors of God**. Great men of the past such as J. Frank Norris, Harold Sightler, Oliver Greene, and many, many others left the Convention because they would not align themselves with the false teaching in it, neither would they support it in any way. The Convention has false teachers that still deny or corrupt Scripture today, and I will not support it or be a part of it in any way. I want to stand where great men stood years ago because they had conviction.

May God help us to obey Him and His Word and not be a part of that which denies Him and His Word. I hope that this has been some help. May we determine in our hearts to obey God's Word.

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