

What's the Difference ?

Comparing Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists

Reformed Theology (Presbyterian)

- Authority of scripture
 - > The Bible is God's Holy Word.
 - > The Bible is our rule of faith.
- Open Bible
 - > The Bible should be in the language of the people.
 - > People should be encouraged to read the Bible for themselves.
- Two sacraments
 - > Communion
 - > Baptism
- God is a living and sovereign God
- Celebration of God's glory revealed in the created order
 - > Creation was pronounced good by God.
 - > Misuse of creation is evil.
- Justification and Sanctification
 - > We are all sinners.
 - > We cannot save ourselves.
 - > Christ died an atoning death for us.
 - > We are saved and forgiven through faith in Christ.
 - > God strengthens the faithful so that we might bear fruit and to lead more Godly lives.



- John Wesley was influenced by the teachings of Jacobus Arminius, who was a Dutch theologian in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. Arminius proposed that the election of God was of believers, thereby making it conditional on faith.
- Historically, Methodists might ask Presbyterians:
 - > Are there those who have no opportunity to be saved?
 - > Does the response of the human heart have no bearing on salvation?
- Historically, Presbyterians might ask Methodists:
 - > Is God powerless to save a person without his or her permission? What about Paul?
 - > Does not faith become a “work” if it is a human precondition to salvation?

Baptists

- Baptism of (adult) believers only
- Freedom of speech and conscience
- Freedom from interference by any civil or ecclesiastical authority;
- Primacy of scripture in matters of faith, doctrine, and morals
- The authority of local congregations
- Avoidance of creeds
- Emphasis on "conversion experience."
- The primary difference between Baptists and Presbyterians centers on baptism.
 - > Baptists: Acts 2:38 “*Repent and be baptized...*” Baptists believe that repentance is a faith decision, and, therefore, faith precedes baptism.
 - > Presbyterians: Acts 16:33 “*Immediately he and all his household were baptized.*” Presbyterians follow the practice of the church in Acts, and the first century church which baptized children—as they were part of the household.
- Historically, Baptists might ask Presbyterians:
 - > How can the believer be subservient to the will of a church body in matters of faith?
 - > What's the point of baptizing children when they are too young to make a decision for Christ?
- Historically, Presbyterians might ask Baptists:
 - > If Paul and Peter participated in councils to decide church issues, why shouldn't we?
 - > If the early church celebrated baptism as a sacrament of belonging to Christ, why can't we?

Methodists (historically derived from the Church of England—also known as the Anglican or Episcopal Church)

- John Wesley’s three basic precepts that began the Methodist tradition consisted of:
 1. Shun evil and avoid partaking in wicked deeds at all costs,
 2. Perform kind acts as much as possible, and
 3. Abide by the edicts of God the Almighty Father.
- Methodists teach also that people must use logic and reason in all matters of faith.
- The historical differences between Presbyterians and Methodists center on election and the sovereignty of God.