

# WAS JESUS A REGULAR BAPTIST?



## What would Jesus think about labels?

### *The Promotion of Sound Doctrine is Good*

- Paul commanded Titus to hold fast to, teach, and persuade others of sound doctrine. (Titus 1:9; 2:1).
- Paul commands Timothy to hold fast to the sound doctrine he received from Paul (2 Tim. 1:13).
- Paul commands the Thessalonian church to hold the sound doctrine (“traditions”) he taught them (2 Thess. 2:15).

### *Noting and Withdrawing from False Doctrine is Good*

- Paul commands Timothy to withdraw from those who do not teach or consent to the words of Jesus Christ and the doctrine which accords with godliness (1 Tim. 6:3-5).
- Peter commands the believers to watch out for those who twist the Scriptures (2 Pet. 3:16-18).

### *Labels can Be Helpful in That Process*

- John commands believers to abide in the “doctrine of Christ” (2 John 7-11).
- Jesus commands the messenger of the church in Pergamos to repent from the doctrine of Balaam and also the doctrine of the Nicolaitans (Rev. 2:14-15).

## Are Labels Helpful Today?

- They weed out heresy.
- They help us find faithful churches.

## Can Labels do Harm?

- We must consider reputation.
- We must consider definition.

# What do these labels mean?

## *Regular Baptist*

- Baptist History (*Biblical Basis for Baptists*, Brown, p. 9-12).
  
- Baptist “Distinctives”
  - Christian Fundamentals include:
    - Inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures.
    - The deity and virgin birth of Christ.
    - The sufficiency of Christ’s substitutionary atonement.
    - The literal, bodily resurrection of Christ.
    - The literal, bodily second coming of Christ.
  - Baptist “Distinctives” (when taken together):
    - A foundational distinctive: Bible Interpretation
      - Historical-Grammatical Interpretation
      - The Bible is the sufficient authority for the believer (not creeds/confessions, or tradition)
      - The New Testament is the authority for the Local Church.
      - Scripture helps us understand Scripture.
    - **Biblical Authority**
    - **Autonomy** of the Local Church
    - Priesthood of the Believer
    - Two Ordinances
    - Individual Soul Liberty
    - **Saved Church Membership**
    - Two Officers
    - **Separation of Church and State**
  
- Definition: A Regular Baptist holds to orthodox Baptist doctrine and affirms the rule (*regula*) of Scripture as the ultimate authority for faith and practice.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/Regular-Baptist-Church.html>

## *Dispensationalist*

- Definition: “Dispensationalism is a system of theology primarily concerned with the doctrines of ecclesiology and eschatology that emphasizes applying historical-grammatical hermeneutics to all passages of Scripture (including the entire Old Testament). It affirms a distinction between Israel and the church, and a future salvation and restoration of the nation Israel in a future earthly kingdom under Jesus the Messiah....” (Vlach, *Dispensationalism*, p. 93).
- Three main points of dispensationalism (from *Why Dispensationalism Matters*.)
  1. A distinction between Israel and the Church.
  2. Consistently literal interpretation of the Bible (as opposed to “spiritual.”)
    - Normal interpretation (including figures of speech).
    - Single meaning/authorial intent.
    - Contextual Consistency.
  3. Recognition of God’s glory as His ultimate purpose (John 8:29; Ephesians 1:3-14).
- Michael Vlach has six points (from Vlach p. 31-50).
  1. The meaning of any Bible passage is found in that passage. The New Testament does not reinterpret or transcend Old Testament passages in a way that overrides or cancels the original authorial intent of the Old Testament writers. (p. 31).
  2. Types exist, but national Israel is not an inferior type that is superseded by the church. (p. 35).
  3. Israel and the church are distinct; thus, the church cannot be identified as the new and/or true Israel (p. 41).
  4. Spiritual unity in salvation between Jews and Gentiles is compatible with a future functional role for Israel as a nation (p. 43).

5. The nation Israel will be both saved and restored with a unique functional role in a future earthly millennial kingdom (p. 46).
  6. There are multiple senses of the “seed of Abraham,” thus the church’s identification as the “seed of Abraham” does not cancel God’s promises to the believing Jewish “seed of Abraham.”
- What it’s not
    1. A view of Bible Prophecy
    2. Dividing time into “Dispensations”.
    3. Multiple ways of salvation.

## Why consider these labels?

There’s one thread that ties the together: the way we interpret the Bible - Hermeneutics

- Historical-Grammatical Interpretation
  1. Also called “literal” or “normal” interpretation.
  2. Historical Context – Single Meaning/Authorial Intent
  3. Literary (Genre) Context – Teaching Passages vs. Historical passages. Deliberate vs. Incidental
  4. Grammatical Context –
- This leads to a number of conclusions:
  1. No “spiritual” or “typological” interpretation or added meaning.
  2. The Old Testament stands on its own and cannot be reinterpreted or changed by the New Testament.
  3. The New Testament is the authority for the faith and order of the church (Bauder, p. 13).
  4. Scripture will never contradict itself.

## Taking our Cues from Jesus

Premise 1: The doctrines of Dispensationalists and Regular Baptists are rooted in a specific way of interpreting the Bible.

Premise 2: Jesus interpreted the Bible that way and taught His followers to do the same.