

- I. **Introduction.** Next lesson we will begin our study of the History of Baptists in the United States. In order to do this, we must have a background of the religious conditions that existed in England. This is our lesson today.
- II. The first churches planted in England were Baptist churches and can be traced back to Apostolic times, it is difficult to ascertain who carried it there.
- III. Under Roman Emperor Diocletian, about the year 300 A.D. the Baptists of Britain suffered severe persecution. Their books and churches were burned, and many of them were put to death.
- IV. In year 597, Pope Gregory sent Austin to England to convert the Saxons to Roman Catholicism.

[**Augustine of Canterbury** (early 6th century – most likely 26 May 604) was a Christian monk who became the first archbishop of Canterbury in the year 597. He is considered the "Apostle to the English". Augustine was the prior of a monastery in Rome when Pope Gregory the Great chose him in 595 to lead a mission, usually known as the Gregorian mission, to Britain to Christianize King Æthelberht and his Kingdom of Kent from Anglo-Saxon paganism.]



Augustine of Canterbury

- A. Austin met with great success. The King and great numbers of people accepted Roman Catholicism.
- B. Austin next turned his attention to the native Christians and tried to bring them into subjection to Rome.
 - 1. This attempt met with no success and Austin began a severe persecution of the Baptists of England.
 - 2. In one instance, 1,200 Christians were assembled for prayer, were brutally slaughtered with only 50 escaping.
 - 3. The Catholic hierarchy forced their religion on England.
- V. After the year 1000, the Paulicans began to make their appearance in England despite terrible persecutions. During this time, a preacher named Walther Lollard, brought about a great revival and the number of true believers increased.

VI. The Reformation Period was of long duration in England lasting from Henry VIII (1509 to 1547) until Charles I (1625 until his execution in 1649).

- A. Henry VIII had married Catherine of Spain but subsequently fell in love with Ann Boleyn.
 - 1. Henry VIII desired a divorce and, in those days, only the Pope could grant one. His request for a divorce was denied by the Pope.
 - a. Henry VIII, angered by the Pope's decision to refuse his divorce, threw off the rule of the Pope and proclaimed himself the head of the Church of England.
 - b. Thus, the Church of England began in 1534.
- B. Henry VIII persecuted the Baptists to death and Edward VI who followed him continued the purge.

- C. Mary Tudor, known in history as "Bloody Mary," came to the English throne in July 6, 1553.
 - 1. Mary Tudor was an intense Roman Catholic and when she came to the throne, her first thought was to reestablish the Roman Catholic religion.
 - 2. Mary Tudor tried to exterminate all non-Catholics.



[**Mary I** (18 February 1516 – 17 November 1558), also known as **Mary Tudor**, and as "**Bloody Mary**" by her Protestant opponents, was Queen of England and Ireland from July 1553 and Queen of Spain as the wife of King Philip II from January 1556 until her death in 1558. She made vigorous attempts to reverse the English Reformation, which had begun during the reign of her father, King Henry VIII. Her attempt to restore to the Church the property confiscated in the previous two reigns was largely thwarted by Parliament, but during her five-year reign, **Mary had over 280 religious dissenters burned at the stake in the Marian persecutions.**

NOTE: Mary Tudor, also known as "Bloody Mary," was the Queen of England, while Mary Queen of Scots was the Queen of Scotland; both were related as cousins, with Mary Queen of Scots being a descendant of Henry VIII's sister, Margaret Tudor, making her a distant relative to the English throne.]

- D. During the reign of Elizabeth, the persecutions (of denominations other than the Church of England) continued.

VII. The origin of the “Independents” or “Congregationalists.”

- A. Robert Browne was the father of the “Independents” or “Congregationalists.” [Robert Browne (born c. 1550—died October 1633, Northampton, Northamptonshire, Eng.) was a Puritan Congregationalist church leader, one of the original proponents of the Separatist, or Free Church, movement among Nonconformists that demanded separation from the Church of England and freedom from state control. His Separatist followers became known as Brownists.]



1. In the year 1580 he went to Norwich(k) among the Baptists. Here Browne learned the way of the Baptists.
 2. In 1584, he organized the first independent church which eventually became the Congregationalists. [a group of early Protestant Christians, specifically a congregation of Separatists, who followed the principles of Congregationalism and were based in the English city of Norwich, with Robert Browne being a key figure in establishing this movement; essentially, it describes a group of people in Norwich who believed in the autonomy of their local church and self-governance within their congregation, distinct from the established Church of England.]
- B. The Congregationalists adopted many of the Baptist doctrine and practices. [The Congregationalist Churches are a continuity of the theological tradition upheld by the Puritans. Their genesis was through the work of Congregationalist divines Robert Browne, Henry Barrowe, and John Greenwood]

VIII. In 1611, the King James Version of the Bible was printed and given to the people. At this time, the stirring for “religious freedom” began.**IX. John Symth**, around 1609, became a Baptist. Mant have tried to establish today’s Baptists had their beginning with John Symth.

- A. It is easily established that English Baptists were thriving in great numbers and many churches before John Smyth’s time.
- B. Baptists have a noble history in England.



- X. At the beginning of the 17th century we find that turbulent conditions existed in the religious world of England.**
- A. The Baptists were persecuted yet loyally proclaimed God's gospel.
 - B. The Congregationalists were also persecuted and longing for freedom.
 - C. In 1564, a group who had rebelled against the pomp and doctrinal error of the Catholicism, expressed a desire to purify the church and thus became known as "Puritans."
 - 1. The Puritans broke with Rome but had no desire to be separated from the Church of England.
 - 2. There were those among the Puritans who desired to not only break with Rome but also to separate from the Church of England. These were called "Separatists."
 - D. The Church of England was established as the "State Religion" of England.
 - E. In England, Roman Catholicism remained strong but was declining.