



? What Do Baptists Believe?

Someone has said that if you ask the question, “What do Baptists believe?” of five Baptists you’ll get seven different answers. That’s not too far from the truth because Baptists are such a diverse people. But there are some identifiable basic Baptists principles. As Christians, the tie that binds us is our common faith in Jesus Christ. As Baptist Christians, we also share a commitment to those principles that have shaped our unique Baptist heritage and polity. These include:

- ◆ **Soul Freedom**—We believe in the priesthood of all believers. We affirm the freedom and responsibility of every person to relate directly to God without the imposition of creed or the control of clergy or government.
- ◆ **Believer’s Baptism**—Baptists are called such because we believe that baptism is an act of obedience to be practiced by those who have made a personal faith decision about Jesus Christ and his Church. Therefore, we do not baptize infants. While the form of baptism is secondary to the act, most Baptists practice baptism by immersion.
- ◆ **Bible Freedom**—We believe in the authority of Scripture. We believe the Bible, under the Lordship of Christ, is central to the life of the individual and the church. We affirm the freedom and right of every Christian to interpret and apply scripture under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. This is sometimes referred to as “soul competency.”
- ◆ **Church Freedom**—We believe in the autonomy of every local church. We believe Baptist churches are free, under the Lordship of Christ with the Guidance of the Holy Spirit, to determine their membership and leadership, to order their worship and work, to ordain whomever they perceive as gifted and called out for ministry, and to participate as they deem appropriate in the larger Body of Christ.
- ◆ **Religious Freedom**—We believe in freedom of religion, freedom for religion, and freedom from religion. We support the separation of church and state.