

### **Baptist Distinctives**

There are biblically based doctrines that make Baptists unique among professing Christians. Not all Baptists hold to all of these doctrines and practices. Since the beginning of Christendom there have been those who have not held to everything that is mentioned here. The failure to do so has often led to Baptists losing their unique identity as Baptists, though the name may remain on the church and on the sign. The totality of the doctrines believed is what makes Baptists unique. In addition to the fundamental doctrines of Christianity listed above, these are as follows:

1. Salvation by grace through faith, apart from any good works or religious deeds.
2. The eternal security of the believer in Christ. (John 10:27-30; Romans 8:28-39; Ephesians 1:12-14; 1 Peter 1:1-9).
3. The baptism of believers by complete immersion in water as an ordinance that is **requisite** to church membership. (Matthew 3:1-18; 28:18-20; Acts 2:38-47; Romans 6:1-4)
4. The beginning of the New Testament church during Christ's earthly ministry. John came immersing those who repented, and Jesus led His followers to do likewise. (See Matthew 3:1-18; John 4:1-3; Matthew 28:18-20)
5. The identity of this church as Baptist in doctrine and practice.
6. The independence and autonomy of the local church under the headship of Christ and the leadership of His Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 1:1-3; Galatians 1:1-5 Note that here the churches are recognized as local and distinct bodies with no connection to one another beyond that of Christian fellowship. None had authority over the other. See also Revelation chapters 2-3, 2 Corinthians 8:18-24 and Colossians 1:1-2; 4:15-18.)
7. The Lord's Supper, or Communion Service, as an **ordinance** in the church by which the members of the church remember the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, as well as the promise of His return. (Matthew 26:17-30; Luke 22:1-20; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34)
8. That Baptists have existed in all ages since Christ established His church and are not Protestant, having begun before the Roman Catholic Church.