

## Our Distinctive Beliefs as a Baptist Church – FBC Dublin, GA

*Baptists are much like other Christians. We, like them, affirm those doctrinal beliefs that followers of Jesus Christ have always held to be essential to the Christian faith. Chief among these would be the following beliefs Christians consider especially precious. Jesus died in our place. He did so to pay the penalty for the sin-guilt of all who place their faith in Him and His atoning work. Repentance from sin coupled with faith in Christ as Savior and Lord is the sole means by which sinful men enter into a personal and saving relationship with a holy God. Finally, salvation is all a work of the Father's saving grace.*

1. The Scriptures: The Bible is our sole authority for all faith and practice because it is the inerrant, fully sufficient, infallible/reliable, and fully authoritative Word of God to man. Human documents, though helpful, are not considered authoritative. They are instead considered faithful instructional guides. (e.g., the Ancient Creeds, The Baptist Faith and Message)
2. Church Membership: Only those who profess to be regenerate ("born again"/saved) Christ-followers who have been baptized by immersion should become church members.
3. The Ordinances: Baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper are symbolic acts for believers only.
4. Soul Competency: Christians are responsible for their own spiritual growth. They are therefore accountable to God, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, to read, interpret, and apply Scripture to their daily lives with the aid of the Holy Spirit and the godly counsel of others.
5. The Priesthood of All Believers: Each Christian enjoys direct access to God through Christ as his High Priest. As a result, each follower of Christ is a "priest" in that they represent Holy God to a lost world.
6. The Church: The Universal Church, which is the Body of Christ, is made up of all believers, at all times, and in all places. Each local church is a contextually appropriate and visible expression of the Church Universal. Each congregation is an autonomous body subject only to Christ as its Head.  
  
Congregational church government under biblical pastoral leadership best expresses the equality and responsibility of believers under the leadership of Jesus Christ as Lord of the Church. Churches voluntarily cooperate with each other for the purpose of evangelism and missions, as well as other endeavors such as Christian education. (e.g., GBMB, Southern Baptist Convention)
7. Religious Liberty: Baptists have historically supported the principle of the Separation of Church and State given that we have, even in America, experienced state persecution. That principle was created to separate (protect) the church from the state, not relegate religion to only private belief and practice. The secular state should never establish, endorse, or financially support a religion. Likewise, the principle of Religious Freedom means every faith, even those not Christian, should be free to participate in every area of the public square as their values and conscience dictates. Religious liberty enables the Gospel of Jesus Christ because Christianity flourishes in a "free market of ideas."