

# What is a Baptist

*Follow the acrostic below and you will have a glimpse of significant distinctions of most Baptists.*

**B** = The BIBLE is the sole authority for all we believe and do.

**A** = The local church is AUTONOMOUS (self-governing). The members of the local church own the church building and property and govern the church. The local association of Southern Baptist churches (Arundel Baptist Association), the state convention of churches (Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware), and the national convention of churches (Southern Baptist Convention) support the ministry of the local church, but have no authority over the local churches.

**P** = The PRIESTHOOD of every believer. We believe that each person is free to come to God in prayer to confess sin and self-commitment without the need of clergy or other religious professionals.

**T** = TRUSTING Baptism, also called Believer's Baptism. We believe that a person should first become a believer in Jesus as Savior and Lord, and then baptized to signify their commitment to Him. We do not baptize infants or small children since they are not mature enough to trust in Jesus for salvation from sin.

**I** = We believe in Baptism by IMMERSION. Immersion (complete submersion of a person in water) symbolizes that the believer has died to an old way of life and has been raised to a new way of life in Jesus Christ. We believe that all the baptisms in the Bible were by immersion. The word baptism literally means "to immerse, dip".

**S** = SECURITY of the believer. We believe that once a person trusts in Jesus for salvation, that he or she will not fall away from trusting in Jesus, nor lose his or her salvation.

**T** = Each Christian is to share his or her TESTIMONY. Each person's story of personal salvation is unique. Every follower of Jesus is to tell others what Jesus has done for him or her. This is how the good news of salvation is spread to all people.