

## **Immanuel Baptist Church Basics for Baptists**

This two day series is for visitors, new members, and anybody who wants a refresher on who we are as Christians and Baptists. The Bible tells us to be holy because He, God, is holy. To be holy means to be set apart, different, from people in the world around us who live without God. The purpose of these two class sessions is to clarify what sets us apart as Christian individuals, the Christian church, Baptists and members of a Baptist Church.

### **Considerations for our time together**

1. There is no such thing as a dumb question. Questions are good. If you have a question, it is quite likely that many others have the same question. Please write out your questions on the cards provided.
2. We are focusing on God's truth as recorded in scripture, not talking politics.
3. The theology of the topics we cover can be quite extensive, so in our short refresher time, we will focus, not so much on details in the statements of faith, but on two specific aspects of these topics
  - a. Our relationships with God, others, and creation
  - b. How we are different in the world.

### **The outline we will follow**

1. The Essential Beliefs of Christianity
2. Baptist History and Traditions
3. Expectations of a Christian and Baptist Church Members
4. Immanuel Baptist Church History and Leadership.

**Introductions:** To begin with let's do some short polling to understand who is here. If this were a smaller group we could take some time to hear a little more about each other's spiritual journey.

1. How long have you been a Christian?
2. How long have you been a Baptist?
3. What other Christian denominations have you been a part of?
4. How long have you been at IBC?

### **The Essentials Beliefs of Christianity**

Essentially every Christian organization posts a statement of faith or beliefs on their website, and almost all include these seven topics: The Bible or the Word of God, God, Man, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, Redemption and Salvation, and the Future. If you look for these on church and Christian organization websites, you will find remarkable consistency among evangelical Christian groups, and most will list scripture references used as the basis of each belief statement.

The Immanuel Baptist Church "God's Plan for You – What we believe" webpage, <http://www.immanuel-baptist.us/godsplan.html>, includes statements about these and references the "Baptist Faith and Message" (BF&M) adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000 as well which has 18 topics, <https://bfm.sbc.net/bfm2000/>

The "Baptist Faith and Message" (BF&M) document was developed primarily for leadership in Southern Baptist churches, seminaries, colleges, and other organizations to clarify Biblical doctrines and Baptists beliefs. The BF&M is a little too academic for a refresher or introductory

class like this. Lifeway, the research and publishing arm of the Southern Baptist Convention, also created another document called “The Gospel Project” much more user friendly for youth, new and old believers which summarizes “99 Essential Doctrines” of the Christian faith in the words anyone can understand: <https://gospelproject.lifeway.com/wp-content/uploads/tgp2018/2018/03/99-Essentials-Booklet.pdf>

If you are interested in a good quick summary of specific doctrines of the Christian and Baptist faith, I recommend you start by reading these.

Here are a couple of other statements of faith if you want to compare a few:

The Billy Graham Association: <https://billygraham.org/about/careers/statement-of-faith/>

Samaritan’s Purse: <https://www.samaritanspurse.org/our-ministry/statement-of-faith/>

To guide our discussion, will use the eighteen topical titles from the Baptist Faith & Message, but focus primarily on the relational aspects of the doctrines and how they are different from other beliefs in the world.

### **The Essential Beliefs of Christianity**

I. The Scriptures - the Bible - The Word of God

II. God- One God in Three Persons

God the Father

God the Son

God the Holy Spirit

III. Man

IV. Salvation

V. God’s Purpose of Grace

VI. The Church

### **I. The Scriptures - the Bible - The Word of God**

1. It is reliable and accurate
2. It is authored by God using human writers
3. It is complete and stands alone as God’s word to man.
4. From Genesis to Revelation it is about Jesus.

The Bible was written over a period of 1500 years by 40 or more people. Three tests are commonly used to evaluate ancient manuscripts and history for reliability and accuracy. The Bible stands out as hundreds, perhaps even 1,000 times, more accurate and reliable than comparable documents from other religions and ancient history.

### **First Test: Manuscript Trustworthiness - Bibliographic Test**

1. Plato’s “The Republic” written around 380 B.C., oldest manuscript about 900 A.D. Seven total copies.
2. Caesar’s “Gallic Wars” written around 100-44 B.C. earliest manuscripts date to about 900 A.D. Ten copies
3. New Testament written 50-100 A.D. 5,000+ Greek manuscript copies dating from within 50-225 years after they were written, one partial copy from the Gospel of John within 30-40 years after John. Including Latin and other languages 24,000+ from the same time period.

4. Old Testament- Dead Sea Scrolls from 200 B.C. to 68 A.D. 99.5+% identical to Masoretic scripts 895 A.D. and to today. NO doctrinal differences.

Second Test: The Internal Test- Do the texts internally agree, are they consistent across the authors and time span written?

Most are eye witness accounts, not secondary, and most quote other eyewitnesses. Eyewitnesses from different perspectives add to the accuracy, not take away. Most indicate that the words recorded were from God. There is a great deal of doctrinal and other types of consistency from cover to cover.

Third Test: The External Test- Is there evidence from outside the Bible to corroborate what the Bible says? There are thousands of archaeological findings confirming many facts, none refuting Biblical statements. There are many thousands of references to Biblical facts and teachings from unbelieving writers in secular works. Even most detailed Jewish writings don't deny Jesus' life, teaching, and miracles.

1. 2 Peter 1:20-21 "Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."
2. Hebrews 1:1-2a "Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son."
3. Luke 24:27 – "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he (Jesus) interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."
4. Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

## **II. God- One God in Three Persons**

God the Father

God the Son

God the Holy Spirit

### **God the Father**

1. He is one and there is no other- stated hundreds of times in the Old Testament  
Isaiah 45:5a "I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God."
2. His character is good- (the John 3:16 of the Old Testament)  
Exodus 34:5-7a "Then the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the Lord. And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished."
3. He is the perfect Father  
Matthew 6:6 "But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."  
Matthew 6:9 "This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name."

## **God the Son**

1. **He is fully human**: born of a woman, ate, drank, slept, tired, wept,... and was crucified because He, a man, said he was equal with God.
2. **He is the only pathway to heaven**  
John 14:6 “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”  
Acts 4:12 “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”  
1 Timothy 2:5 “For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”
3. **He is fully God and rules and mediates for us in Heaven**  
Matthew 28:18 “Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.  
John 1:1-4 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.”  
Colossians 1:15-20 “The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”
4. Hebrews 1:1-4 “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.”

## **God the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is equal in deity, sent by God the Father and the Son, convicts of sin, reveals God’s will and truth, protects, empowers, guides, and indwells all believers.

John 14:26 “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”

John 16:13 “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.”

1 Corinthians 3:16 “Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?”

1 Corinthians 6:19 “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own.”

Romans 8:9 “You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.”

Romans 8:26 “Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.”

John 14:15-17 “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.”

### **III. Man**

All people are born with a sin nature and powerless to become sinless

Genesis 6:12 “God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways.”

Genesis 8:21 “God speaking to Noah after the flood ““Never again will I curse the ground because of humans, even though every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done.”

Ecclesiastes 7:20 “Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins.”

Psalms 14:3, Romans 3:10 “They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one.”

Romans 3:23 “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

### **IV. Salvation**

From before the beginning of the world, God had a plan to redeem man from sin.

1 Peter 1:18-20 “For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.”

Mark 16:16 “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”

Acts 2:38 “And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

Romans 10:9 “Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

Romans 10:13 “For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.””

### **V. God’s Purpose of Grace**

Grace is God’s love reaching out to save us while we were yet sinners and sustaining and sanctifying us while we are yet still sinners.

Romans 3:24 “...are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”

Ephesians 2:8-9 “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

## **VI. The Church**

The Church is the body of Christ in the world today made up of all believers unified in love and under the directing of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 16:18 “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

Colossians 1:18 “And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.”

Acts 20:28 “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.”

Ephesians 1:22 “And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church,”

## **Next Week**

Much briefer discussion of the remaining topics in the “Baptist Faith and Message”

1. VII. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper; VIII. The Lord’s Day; IX. The Kingdom; X. Last Things; XI. Evangelism and Missions; XII. Education; XIII. Stewardship; XIV. Cooperation; XV. The Christian and the Social Order; XVI. Peace and War; XVII. Religious Liberty; XVIII. The Family
2. Baptist History and Traditions
3. Expectations of a Christian and Baptist Church Members
4. Immanuel Baptist Church History and Leadership.