

## The Ten Greatest Theological Facts



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### ★ 1/ Scripture interprets Scripture (Isaiah 28:13).

*But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.*

This simple rule means that Scripture always resolves itself. Where ever there is ambiguity, especially in the area salvation doctrine, it will provide its own clarity by thorough comparison with related Scriptures. A good example is Matthew 28:19. It qualifies as an obscure Scripture since it has more than one possible interpretation. But, when it is compared with other Scriptures related to Christian baptism, its meaning is clear. Jesus was calling for His Own name to be used in the baptismal formula. He made this fact evident in His later commission recorded in Luke 24:45-47. And all Christian baptisms were administered in the name of Jesus (Acts 2,8,10,19).

◆ Proper study will reveal truth (2Timothy 2:15).

Everyone can come to the knowledge of the truth (John 7:17; 1Timothy 2:4).

◆ There is no support of false doctrine in the Bible (Proverbs 21:30; 8:6-10).

### ★ 2/ Each Scripture only has one meaning.

Scriptures may have many applications but every Scripture only has one meaning. Each Scripture only means what it means to God Who gave it. Our role is to discover Scripture's correct meaning through study. Misinterpreting Scripture is equivalent to changing the meaning of Scripture. No one likes being misinterpreted or taken out of context.

An accurate translation of the Bible is important. Often today, emphasis is merely on ease of reading.

◆ Context is important to a Scripture's meaning.

There are no less than 12 possible contexts which can bear on the meaning of Scripture.

A few of them are:

- Local context
- Chapter or division of the book context
- Covenantal context

- Topical context
- Literary genre context
- Authorship context

### ★ 3/ Sequence of revelation must be observed to obtain correct interpretation of Scripture.

If understanding of the Bible's message is to be obtained, the Bible cannot be approached as a smorgasbord. That will leave a person all mixed up. Biblical revelation flowed in a particular sequence out of necessity. That sequence must be recognized in order to understand the Bible's message. This fact is particularly true about salvation doctrine. Proper interpretive methodology is to follow the sequence of revelation. For example, many people err in forming salvation doctrine by skipping over the book of Acts. They find appealing verses in the Gospels or in the Epistles and settle on them as the plan of salvation. That's probably the biggest mistake a person can make. Christian salvation is displayed in Acts. Nowhere does the Bible offer a greater effulgence of revelation on the subject. By discounting the content of Acts, people get confused about the message of the Gospels and Epistles.

The remedy to that error is this: If a person would receive the Bible's message (or come to recognize it) in its revealed order, he would never be confused about salvation. The Gospels teach us about Christ and His efficacious death on the cross. Receive that before proceeding forward. The book of Acts showcases Christian salvation. Receive that exactly as it was received from the beginning. You will rightly be able to claim salvation and it will prevent you from being confused when you get to the Epistles, which, by the way, were written to saved persons. The Epistles largely expand on God's tremendous grace in offering salvation through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:24). That redemption that is in Christ Jesus is what we see in Acts. No one who has received the salvation experience of Acts will confuse the message of Romans, Galatians, or any other Epistle. That's because he has received the salvation message exactly as it unfolded and was received in the biblical era.

◆ Former revelation sheds light on newer revelation. New revelation cannot contradict what previous revelation established.

### ☆ Regarding Christianity:

### ★ 4/ The Great Commission governs Christian preaching.

Christ alone is the Author of salvation and determines its tenets (Hebrews 5:9). Christ revealed the tenets of salvation in His Great Commission and charged His Apostles to witness those things (Luke 24:48). The Great Commission was initially fulfilled on the

Day of Pentecost. No one is authorized to preach anything differently from what was revealed in the Great Commission and fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost.

**★ 5/ The Gospel is the specific Word of Christ to save a lost world in His absence (2Corinthians 5:18-20).**

*18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;*

*19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*

*20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*

When Jesus was on earth, He saved people by the power of His spoken Word\*. His time on earth would be short, so He called Apostles and commissioned them to preach the Good News which included the specific terms that would bring salvation to those who believe. The Gospel literally saves in the place of the physical Person of Christ. That's because Christ has authorized us as His ambassadors to speak His particular saving Word in His stead (Luke 10:16).

\*Jesus saved people with His Word as He walked in this world.

Mark 2 The palsied man

Mark 16:9 Mary Magdalene

John 8:11 The woman caught in adultery

Luke 7:36-50 The woman with the alabaster box at Simon's house

Luke 23 The thief on the cross

◆ The saving benefits of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection come to us through the tenets of the Gospel.

The tenets of the Gospel are made available and efficacious to us through Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Calvary underwrites the gracious remission of sins we receive through baptism in Jesus' name (Matthew 26:28), which qualifies us for the precious gift of the Holy Ghost (John 16:7).

The fact that salvation only occurs through the terms of the Gospel is evident in Paul's conversion. On the Damascus Road, Christ spoke directly and audibly to Paul (Saul) but, rather than pronouncing him saved as He did others while on earth, He directed Paul to someone else who would tell him what to do (Acts 9). Three days later, a Christian minister, named Ananias, came and led him to be baptized and receive the Holy Ghost.

Another example of this regards our role as God's ministers to effect remission of sins (John 20:23). How can we possibly remit the sins of someone coming to Christ? Only God can forgive/remit sins (Mark 2:7). Yet, Jesus said we would. His reference in John 20:23 was to baptism in Jesus' name, which came to be fulfilled on the Day of

Pentecost (Acts 2:38). The only way we can remit sins is through this wonderful tenet involving the saving name of Jesus (Acts 4:12). Thanks be to God for it.

## ★ 6/ The Day of Pentecost is the inauguration of Christianity.

The Christian era literally began on the Day of Pentecost. It is the first day of the New Covenant, which had just been effected by the death of Jesus (Hebrews 9:16-17). This makes the Day of Pentecost a dynamic context. It is dynamic because it is literally when Christian evangelism and salvation were inaugurated. It is the birthday of the Church. It is the consequence of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus (John 16:7; Acts 2:33). It is the fulfillment of the Great Commission. It is the one-time, historic event that determines the course of Christian history, much like Mt. Sinai did for the Jewish Law dispensation. That's why the plan of salvation was revealed on this day for the entire Church age (Acts 2:38-39). In fact, there is no other place in the New Testament where the plan of salvation was announced. Peter supported it by the prophecy of Joel and it became binding for the duration of the Christian era (Matthew 16:19). It was immediately received by thousands on that day and was accepted by the Apostles universally (Acts 2:41-42). Christianity was thus established on the Day of Pentecost.

### ◆ The Day of Pentecost determines salvation doctrine.

Because the Day of Pentecost is the inauguration of Christianity and for the reasons stated above that describe the Day of Pentecost as a dynamic context, that day necessarily determines the plan of salvation. It had to be apparent on that day and it was. When inquiry into salvation took place, the answer was immediately provided and thousands were saved (Acts 2:37-41). That marked a watershed in redemptive history. Christianity proceeded from that dramatic point without contention or reservation about the tenets of Acts 2:38. Salvation revealed became salvation accepted. The plan of salvation was never edited. It came to be experienced throughout the world, as recorded in Acts (2,8,9,10,19). The means by which the first Christians were saved became determinative for all persons to be saved. In fact, that's exactly how Peter expressed it on day one (Acts 2:38-39).

### ◆ The Day of Pentecost proves the plan of salvation.

Since the Day of Pentecost is the initial point of Christianity, it proves by precedent what the plan of salvation is. Peter himself later used the reference point of the Day of Pentecost as the standard for accepting the Gentiles into the faith (Acts 11:15). Uniquely, the Day of Pentecost profoundly and fairly judges all claims of salvation doctrine. Anyone who states a means for someone to be saved must be able to identify it as the plan of salvation on the Day of Pentecost. In other words, it must appear after the question in Acts 2:37.

◆ No other proof of salvation doctrine is needed, though the Bible provides many. There are many biblical proofs of Christian salvation doctrine. But the Day of Pentecost is unique in that, as a dynamic context, it singularly proves the plan of salvation. No other proof from the examples of conversion in Acts, which followed accordingly, are necessary to support Acts 2:38, though they are, of course, corroborative. They exist because of the standard set in Acts 2:38. Nothing in the Epistles is needed to prove Acts 2:38 is the plan of salvation, though there is much corroborative evidence there as well. For example, Galatians 1:8-9, Ephesians 4:5, and Jude 3 all confirm Acts 2:38 as the plan of salvation. Nothing else has existed from the beginning, leaving angels and men powerless to change. Every Christian salvation reference in the Epistles or anywhere in the New Testament is about Acts 2:38.

◆ Nothing can oppose Acts 2:38 as the plan of salvation in the Christian era. The Day of Pentecost proves the salvation tenets of Acts 2:38 by declaration and demonstration. And they were stated to endure throughout the Church age (Acts 2:39). Christianity advanced from that initial point in Jerusalem into all the world, as Jesus charged His Apostles (Luke 24:47). No other claim of salvation doctrine can be made in the Christian era. It would be an attempt to subvert what was established on the Day of Pentecost. It would make the Word of God on the inaugural day of Christianity of none effect, even nonsensical. It would, literally, replace biblical Christianity.

◆ What about expressions in the Epistles, such as Romans 10:9-10 and Ephesians 2:8-9?

None of the Epistles make a presentation of the Gospels or state the plan of salvation. All of them, when expressing salvation theology, summarily depict the Acts 2:38 salvation experience. They describe the theological essence of salvation consisting of grace and faith, of which the practical essence is the tenets of Acts 2:38, involving the gracious remission of sins and infilling of God's Spirit.

Nothing in any of the Epistles introduces anything different about salvation than what was presented and experienced on the Day of Pentecost. The practical essence of every theological description of Christian salvation is Acts 2:38. It is the grace of God which is appropriated by faith. However a verse or passage of Scripture describes Christian salvation, it describes Acts 2:38. It is the benchmark of every verse of Scripture about Christian salvation in the entire Bible.

◆ The Christian era is the dispensation of grace, which comes through faith in Jesus Christ. Logically, then, the Bible must illustrate that grace and faith on the Day of Pentecost since that is when it was initiated.

Speaking of grace, Acts 2:38 is the most gracious verse of Scripture in the Bible. It is the very height of the grace of God to those who believe. Its simple, but profound, theological essence is grace through faith in Jesus Christ. It is the very biblical process of justification by faith, which, as a theological concept, was initiated on the Day of Pentecost. Let me illustrate.

In Acts 2, the former crucifiers of Christ (v.23) were convicted by Peter's words and, accordingly, asked what to do (Acts 2:37). Their very question was a demonstration of newly placed faith in Christ. Peter answered with the simple tenets of salvation with which Jesus commissioned His Apostles and by which personal justification could be obtained (Acts 2:38). Justification primarily involves remission of sins, which was offered to them through baptism in Jesus' name. The gift of the Holy Ghost was promised upon that cleansing. That is justification (1Corinthians 6:9-11).

There were no personal works involved in order to procure salvation beyond the imperatives of faith. And all those who obeyed them were added to the Church. What they experienced that day was profoundly the grace of God brought about through faith in Jesus Christ upon hearing Peter's preaching (Romans 10:17). They received the theological, justification by faith in Christ, that comes through the tenets of salvation offered in Acts 2:38. The New Testament does not offer a greater presentation of the Gospel nor a more perfect example of justification by faith than what is evidenced on the Day of Pentecost.

### ★ 7/ The fourfold credal declaration of Ephesians 4:4-6.

*4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;*

*5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,*

*6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

◆ There is one God.

The one God of the Old Testament manifested Himself in flesh to redeem the human race.

Acts 24:14

Colossians 1:15; 2:9-10

1Timothy 3:16; 6:14-16

2Corinthians 5:19

Romans 9:5

Titus 2:10

◆ There is one faith (Christianity).

The Bible does not acknowledge any other faith than Christianity as legitimate (Matthew 15:13-14; John 14:6).

◆ There is one baptism (i.e., means of being in Christ). There is only one plan of salvation.

There is one universal means to be a Christian, which Paul styled here as being baptized into Christ since being saved involves water and Spirit baptism. The plan of salvation was revealed on the Day of Pentecost and is showcased elsewhere in the book of Acts in numerous instances, involving thousands of people over a period of time equivalent to a generation. The two baptisms— water baptism in Jesus' name for the remission of sins and Spirit baptism— comprise Christianity. There is no salvation apart from remission of sins (implied in Hebrews 9:22; Matthew 26:28) and receiving the Holy Ghost (John 3:5; Romans 8:9; 1Corinthians 12:13; 1John 4:13).

Acts 2:38 is the plan of salvation for the Christian era. This is according to:

- The Day of Pentecost— the first incidence of Christian salvation
- Old Testament Prophecy (Peter based what he preached on Joel's prophecy of the Spirit and salvation involving the name of the Lord.)
- The Great Commission

- Peter— the chosen vessel to reveal salvation doctrine

There has only ever been a single means of salvation (being in right standing with God) since the beginning of human history (Genesis 2:17). That means that, in any given dispensation, salvation for one is salvation for all.

◆ There is one hope.

We are all in the same race— called to the same great salvation (2Timothy 4:6-8).

We're all hoping for the Rapture and eternal life in the Holy City. We are all members of the one family of God (1Corinthians 12:12-13).

## ★ 8/ The blood of Jesus is applied through baptism in Jesus' name.

Christ's blood was shed for the remission of sins (Matthew 26:28). Remission takes place at baptism (Acts 2:38; 22:16). Paul provides a good example of this when he came to believe in Christ on the Damascus Road. He talked with Christ there one on one and submitted to Christ but his sins were not remitted until he was baptized (Acts 9; 22:16).

Revelation 1:5 says Christ washed us from our sins in His Own blood. This statement will only jibe with previous revelation if Christ's blood is applied at baptism. And Paul explains how it does. Baptism is a mystical burial with Christ into His death (Romans 6:3-5). That is when we come into contact with His blood.

## ★ 9/ The Holy Ghost baptism is evidenced by speaking in tongues.

The Christian era is the dispensation of the Spirit (2Corinthians 3:8; Romans 8:9). The ministry of Christ is as Spirit Baptizer (Matthew 3:11; e.g., John 3,4,7,14,20). A person without the Spirit is not a Christian in the strict biblical sense (Romans 8:9). He may be a God-fearer and have a vibrant relationship with God (e.g., Cornelius, Acts 10). But, on that level, he is not considered saved (Acts 11:15). His relationship is non-covenantal. To be a Christian, the terms of the Covenant are unavoidable (John 3:5; Acts 2:38-39).

Persons who wish to biblically prove speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of receiving the Holy Ghost have many evidences at their disposal, both hard and circumstantial. But, the fundamental interpretation surrounding receiving the Holy Ghost and speaking in tongues was done two thousand years ago under divine inspiration. Peter was divinely led to understand Joel and give an answer on the Day of Pentecost that applies to everyone. That is when the issue was first addressed (Acts 2:12). Peter declared that speaking in tongues is the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy regarding God's promise to pour out His Spirit on all flesh (Acts 2:17-18, 41). And those in Peter's audience received it. Therefore, people today must do the same. The prophecy indisputably guarantees every person the same gift, to be received in the very same way (Acts 2:38-39).

What Peter presented on the Day of Pentecost was never challenged in Scripture. Speaking in tongues was understood to be the universal evidence of the infilling of the Spirit (Acts 10:46; 11:15). Nothing more was ever added to Peter's explanation of speaking in tongues as the evidence of Spirit baptism. The early Church proceeded on Peter's preaching and proliferated (Acts 2:41-47). And, today, nothing else is needed. Acts 2 is the biblical precedent and is the sufficient answer for the Church age. It was based upon the enlightenment Christ gave His Apostles concerning Old Testament prophecies relating to salvation (Luke 24:47). Therefore, Peter's explanation of speaking in tongues as the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy about the universal outpouring of the Holy Ghost is all the proof that is needed for anyone to conclude that Holy Spirit baptism is accompanied by speaking in tongues. As it was accepted then, it should be accepted now. People often freely accept false doctrine and move forward from that point, never to reconsider. If only they could do the same with true interpretation of Scripture.

◆ The difficulty for moderns is two-fold.

1/ Often, they don't know how to read the simple message of Scripture.

2/ Some people don't want to receive the simple message of Scripture. Therefore, they have trouble accepting biblical revelation.

◆ From the fact that Holy Ghost baptism is evidenced by speaking in tongues, it is clear that the Holy Ghost baptism is a separate experience from coming to believe in Christ and from water baptism.

## ★ 10/ Holiness of life is the theological consequence of salvation.

Salvation is the theological basis for holiness. That is because salvation is the remedy to the Fall. It, therefore, lifts us out of sin, resulting in holiness (Matthew 1:21). Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14; 2Thessalonians 2:13; Matthew 5:8).

◆ The theology of Jesus (John 3:5)

Salvation is regeneration, which results in a new person (Ephesians 4:22-24; 2Corinthians 5:17). That's why being born again is a requirement. It is the only way to overcome the sinful nature. New birth means new life. The person is being remade.

◆ Paul's theology (Romans 6:3-5):

Paul used remission of sins is a theological argument for holiness of living (Romans 6:3-5, 11-23). If Christ remitted our sins, He never wants to see them again. It implies that we will not sin after conversion— like the Prodigal abiding at his father's house rather than returning to the far country. But each of us must walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16).

The salvation brought to the world by Jesus is so complete that, when a person turns to Christ (repentance) to be saved, he turns from being a sinner to become a saint. Salvation does not occur without expected consequences in lifestyle (Hebrews 6:9).

◆ Peter's Theology (1Peter 1:22-33): Being born again of incorruptible seed will result in incorruption just as birth by corruptible seed produced corruption. Being born again, we are partakers of the divine nature (2Peter 1:4).

◆ John's theology (1John 2:1): The person is so radically changed by Christ that, even though he still retains his corrupt nature until the completion of redemption at the Rapture, his sinning is placed in the category of if, not when. The sinful nature is still present until the Rapture. A person, thus, can still sin. But sin does not dominate his life as it did before receiving his new nature.

◆ The evidence of personal experience: Anyone who has experienced regeneration in Christ can testify of the chains of sin having been broken in his life. Salvation by new birth renders him a new creature (2Corinthians 5:17).