

Discipleship: An Introduction to Systematic Theology and Apologetics

The Doctrines of Redemption: Key Protestant
Reformation Doctrines

The Heights Church May 20, 2018

Major Jewish Holidays (Shavuot/Feast of Weeks/Pentecost: Sivin 6-7; (May 19-21, 2018)

- **Season:** Late Spring: seven weeks after Passover and ingathering of the first (barley) harvest Leviticus 23:15-16.
- **Jewish Calendar date(s):** Sivin 6-7
- **Temporal significance for Israel under the Law:**
 - (1) Thanksgiving for the wheat harvest
 - (2) According to the oral tradition the giving of the Law at Sinai (Genesis 24:7)
- **Future significance for all God's people under grace:**
 - (1) God's harvest of those redeemed in Christ (Jews and Gentiles)
 - (2) God's Law written on the hearts of the redeemed
- **NT event:**
 - (1) Coming of the Holy Spirit
 - (2) Birth of the Church

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- **Scripture reference:**

(1) When the day of Pentecost* arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:1-4)

So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (Acts 2:41)

(2) “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,” (Hebrews 10:16)

* Pentecost is the Greek word for the Hebrew word *Shavuot* and derived from the Greek word meaning 50.

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- Pentecost was an important Jewish Holiday. Because agriculture was the basis of the economy.
- God promised that agricultural results would differ from that of all other nations. Deuteronomy 7:12-13
- The first fruits of the wheat harvest were brought in the form of two cakes of leavened bread. Leviticus 23:17
- Pentecost was a major holiday up to the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D.
- Today Pentecost is the neglected stepchild” of the Jewish holidays.

The Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics (November 10-13, 1982)

- **Biblical hermeneutics** is the study of the principles of interpretation concerning the books of the Bible.
- Until the Enlightenment, Biblical hermeneutics was usually seen as a form of special hermeneutics (like legal hermeneutics); the status of scripture was thought to necessitate a particular form of understanding and interpretation.
- In the nineteenth century it became increasingly common to read Scripture just like any other writing, although the different interpretations were often disputed. Friedrich Schleiermacher argued against a distinction between "general" and "special" hermeneutics, and for a general theory of hermeneutics applicable to all texts, including the Bible. Various methods of higher criticism sought to understand the Bible purely as a human, historical document.
- The concept of hermeneutics has acquired at least two different but related meanings which are in use today. First, in the older sense, Biblical hermeneutics may be understood as the theological principles of exegesis (**critical explanation or interpretation of a text, especially of scripture**) which is often virtually synonymous with 'principles of biblical interpretation' or methodology of Biblical exegesis.

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- Secondly, the more recent development is to understand the term 'Biblical hermeneutics' as the broader philosophy and linguistic underpinnings of interpretation. The question is posed: "How is understanding possible?" The rationale of this approach is that, while Scripture is "more than just an ordinary text," it is certainly "no less than an ordinary text."
- Liberal theologians in the 19th and 20th centuries applied the work of secular philosophers to their understanding of hermeneutics.
- Note: BLUE text in this and the previous slide is not part of **The Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics**

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1. **We affirm** that the normative authority of Holy Scripture is the authority of God Himself, and is attested by Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church. **We deny** the legitimacy of separating the authority of Christ from the authority of Scripture, or of opposing the one to the other.
2. **We affirm** that as Christ is God and man in one person, so Scripture is, indivisibly, God's Word in human language. **We deny** that the humble, human form of Scripture entails errancy any more than the humanity of Christ, even in His humiliation, entails sin.
3. **We affirm** that the person and work of Jesus Christ are the central focus of the entire Bible. **We deny** that any method of interpretation which rejects or obscures the Christ-centeredness of Scripture is correct.
4. **We affirm** that the Holy Spirit who inspired Scripture acts through it today to work faith in its message. **We deny** that the Holy Spirit ever teaches to anyone anything which is contrary to the teaching of Scripture.

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- 5. We affirm** that the Holy Spirit enables believers to appropriate and apply Scripture to their lives. **We deny** that the natural man is able to discern spiritually the Biblical message apart from the Holy Spirit.
- 6. We affirm** that the Bible expresses God's truth in propositional statements, and we declare that Biblical truth is both objective and absolute. **We further affirm** that a statement is true if it represents matters as they actually are, but is an error if it misrepresents the facts. **We deny that**, while Scripture is able to make us wise unto salvation, Biblical truth should be defined in terms of this function. **We further deny** that error should be defined as that which willfully deceives.
- 7. We affirm** that the meaning expressed in each Biblical text is single, definite and fixed. **We deny** that the recognition of this single meaning eliminates the variety of its application.

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8. **We affirm** that the Bible contains teachings and mandates which apply to all cultural and situational contexts and other mandates which the Bible itself shows apply only to particular situations. **We deny** that the distinction between the universal and particular mandates of Scripture can be determined by cultural and situational factors. **We further deny** that universal mandates may ever be treated as culturally or situationally relative.
9. **We affirm** that the term hermeneutics, which historically signified the rules of exegesis, may properly be extended to cover all that is involved in the process of perceiving what the Biblical revelation means and how it bears on our lives. **We deny** that the message of Scripture derives from, or is dictated by, the interpreter's understanding. Thus we deny that the "horizons" of the Biblical writer and the interpreter may rightly "fuse" in such a way that what the text communicates to the interpreter is not ultimately controlled by the expressed meaning of the Scripture.
10. **We affirm** that Scripture communicates God's truth to us verbally through a wide variety of literary forms. **We deny** that any of the limits of human language render Scripture inadequate to convey God's message.

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- 11. We affirm** that translations of the text of Scripture can communicate knowledge of God across all temporal and cultural boundaries. **We deny** that the meaning of Biblical texts is so tied to the culture out of which they came that understanding of the same meaning in other cultures is impossible.
- 12. We affirm** that in the task of translating the Bible and teaching it in the context of each culture, only those functional equivalents, which are faithful to the content of Biblical teaching, should be employed. **We deny** the legitimacy of methods which either are insensitive to the demands of cross-cultural communication or distort Biblical meaning in the process.
- 13. We affirm** that awareness of the literary categories, formal and stylistic, of the various parts of Scripture is essential for proper exegesis, and hence we value genre criticism as one of the many disciplines of Biblical study. **We deny** that generic categories which negate historicity may rightly be imposed on Biblical narratives which present themselves as factual.

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- 14. We affirm** that the Biblical record of events, discourses and sayings, though presented in a variety of appropriate literary forms, corresponds to historical fact. **We deny** that any event, discourse or saying reported in Scripture was invented by the Biblical writers or by the traditions they incorporated.
- 15. We affirm** the necessity of interpreting the Bible according to its literal, or normal, sense. The literal sense is the grammatical-historical sense, that is, the meaning which the writer expressed. Interpretation according to the literal sense will take account of all figures of speech and literary forms found in the text. **We deny** the legitimacy of any approach to Scripture that attributes to it meaning which the literal sense does not support.
- 16. We affirm** that legitimate critical techniques should be used in determining the canonical text and its meaning. **We deny** the legitimacy of allowing any method of Biblical criticism to question the truth or integrity of the writer's expressed meaning, or of any other scriptural teaching.

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- 17. We affirm** the unity, harmony and consistency of Scripture and declare that it is its own best interpreter. **We deny** that Scripture may be interpreted in such a way as to suggest that one passage corrects or militates against another. We deny that later writers of Scripture misinterpreted earlier passages of Scripture when quoting from or referring to them.
- 18. We affirm** that the Bible's own interpretation of itself is always correct, never deviating from, but rather elucidating, the single meaning of the inspired text. The single meaning of a prophet's words includes, but is not restricted to, the understanding of those words by the prophet and necessarily involves the intention of God evidenced in the fulfillment of those words. **We deny** that the writers of Scripture always understood the full implications of their own words.
- 19. We affirm** that any preunderstandings which the interpreter brings to Scripture should be in harmony with scriptural teaching and subject to correction by it. **We deny** that Scripture should be required to fit alien preunderstandings, inconsistent with itself, such as naturalism, evolutionism, scientism, secular humanism, and relativism.

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- 20. We affirm** that since God is the author of all truth, all truths, Biblical and extrabiblical, are consistent and cohere, and that the Bible speaks truth when it touches on matters pertaining to nature, history or anything else. **We further affirm** that in some cases extrabiblical data have value for clarifying what Scripture teaches, and for prompting correction of faulty interpretations. **We deny** that extrabiblical views ever disprove the teaching of Scripture or hold priority over it.
- 21. We affirm** the harmony of special with general revelation and therefore of Biblical teaching with the facts of nature. **We deny** that any genuine scientific facts are inconsistent with the true meaning of any passage of Scripture.
- 22. We affirm** that Genesis 1 – 11 is factual, as is the rest of the book. **We deny** that the teachings of Genesis 1 – 11 are mythical and that scientific hypotheses about earth history or the origin of humanity may be invoked to overthrow what Scripture teaches about creation.

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- 23. We affirm** the clarity of Scripture and specifically of its message about salvation from sin. **We deny** that all passages of Scripture are equally clear or have equal bearing on the message of redemption.
- 24. We affirm** that a person is not dependent for understanding of Scripture on the expertise of Biblical scholars. **We deny** that a person should ignore the fruits of the technical study of Scripture by Biblical scholars.
- 25. We affirm** that the only type of preaching which sufficiently conveys the divine revelation and its proper application to life is that which faithfully expounds the text of Scripture as the Word of God. **We deny** that the preacher has any message from God apart from the text of Scripture.