

Getting Scripture Right

Pt 4c: Let's use Hermeneutics to solve some Scriptural dilemmas



“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.’ **Acts 2:38**”

Based on other Scriptures, “for” should be interpreted “because of.”

We are baptized because our sins have been forgiven – **not** to have them forgiven



“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,” Phil 2:12

This passage teaches we must allow God, the Spirit, to “work out” our salvation by sanctification.

It does not mean we can “invent” our own version of salvation or “work” for our salvation.



What did Jesus mean when He said, “Unless you do not ‘hate’ your family, you cannot be My disciple”?

“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.” Lk 14:26



We must first establish what we do know and
then work from there



1. What He could not have meant:

- That we should not love our family members
- We are commanded by God to love one another – especially our family members



“And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” **Mt 22:39**

“By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” **Jn 13:35**

“Honor your father and your mother” **Ex 20:12**

“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” **Eph 5:25-33**

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² ‘Honor your father and mother’” **Eph 6:1-2**



2. So, what did He mean?

“Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.” Mt 10:37



- When Jesus said “hate family” it appears He was using an Aramaic idiom meaning to “not prefer” or to put second in importance
- He was saying our love for God must take priority over everything/everyone



Did Jesus say He came to cause division and conflict instead of peace?

“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. ³⁶ And a person’s enemies will be those of his own household.” **Mt 10:34-36**



1. **What He could not have meant:**
That He is all about division and conflict



“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, **Prince of Peace.**” **Is 9:6**

“And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, ⁴² saying, ‘Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that **make for peace!** But now they are hidden from your eyes.’” **Lk 19:41-42**

“So then let us **pursue what makes for peace** & for mutual upbuilding.” **Rom 14:19**

“endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit **in the bond of peace.**” **Eph 4:3**



2. So, what did He mean?

“If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” **Jn 15:18-19**



“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. ³⁶ And a person's enemies will be those of his own household.” **Mt 10:34-36**

“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³ And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.” **Heb 4:12-13**



- Jesus' message causes inevitable division and conflict, rather than immediate earthly peace
- It signifies that following him requires ultimate allegiance, which can disrupt personal relationships, family ties, and social order
- The “sword” represents a separating force, not literal violence



Are women saved by bearing children?

“I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve; ¹⁴ and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. ¹⁵ Yet she will be saved through childbearing – if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.” **1 Tim 2:13-15**



1. What Paul could not have meant

- Salvation is based upon works/performance



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

“not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit”
Titus 3:5



- That women must be married to be saved

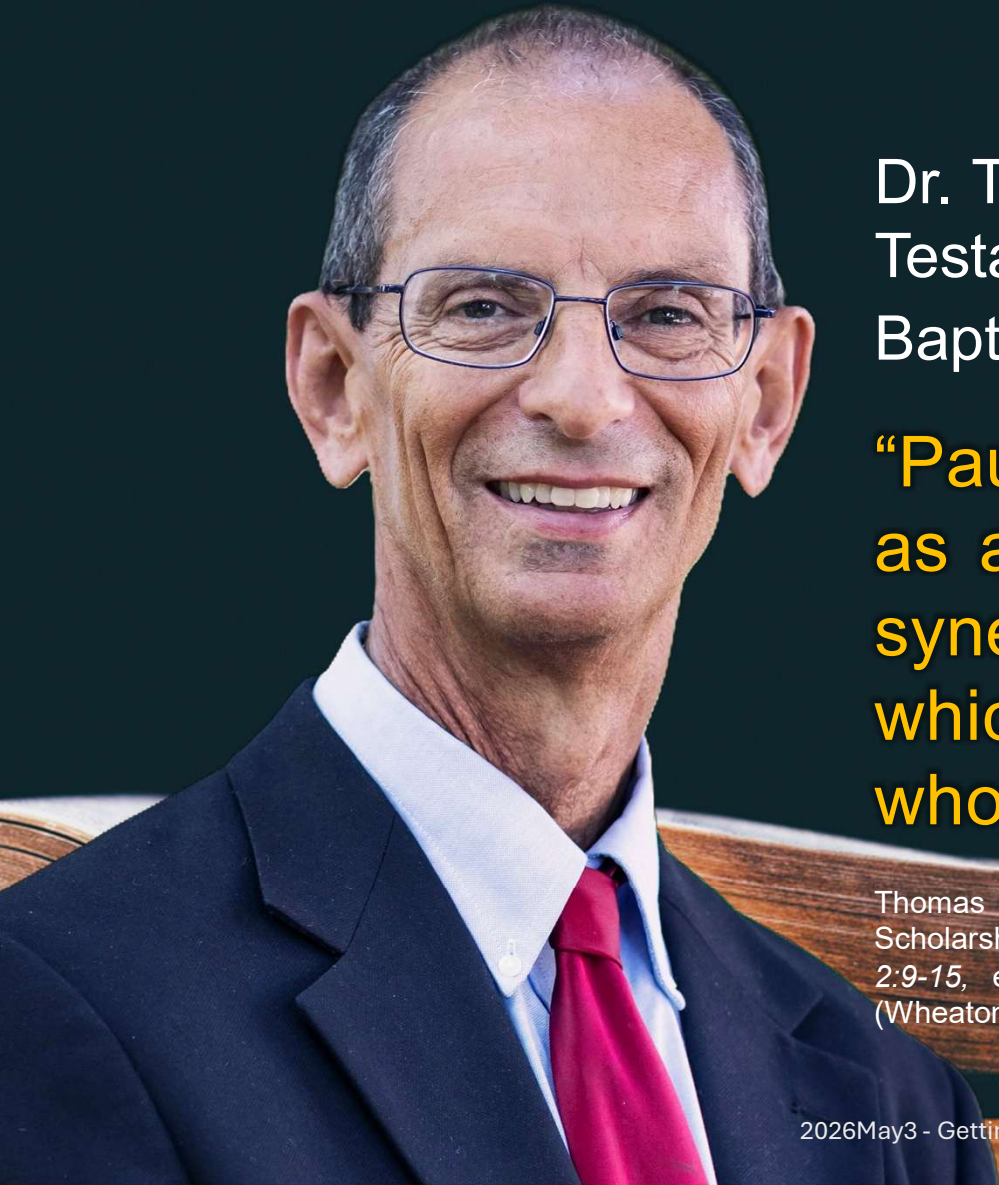
“I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another. ⁸To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single, as I am.” **1 Cor 7:7-8**

2. What Paul likely meant

- Childbearing is only part of a woman's wider, special role to care for the home – a major part of which is to care for and help raise the children.

“and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, ⁵ to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.” **Titus 2:4-5**





Dr. Thomas Schreiner, Professor of New Testament Interpretation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary:

“Paul is likely using ‘childbearing’ as a figure of speech known as a synecdoche which is a figure in which the part stands for the whole.”

Thomas R. Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Tim 2:9-15: A Dialogue with Scholarship,” in *Women in the Church: An Interpretation and Application of 1 Tim 2:9-15*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger and Thomas R. Schreiner, 3rd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 222.

- A wife who fulfills this role is giving evidence of her true faith
- “Saved” in this verse is in the future tense: “She will be saved”
- Paul is not talking of entry into salvation, but of the future consummation of salvation through sanctification



- Women who embrace their God-ordained role of bearing and raising children, while they continue in “faith and love and holiness, with self-control” will be greatly rewarded (saved) when they stand before the Lord

“if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.” 1 Tim 2:15



Is it biblical to be baptized for someone who is dead?

“Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?” **1 Cor 15:29**



Cerinthus

1st cent Christian heretic



Marcion

2nd cent Christian heretic





Mormons call the practice vicarious or proxy baptism



- Joseph Smith instituted the practice in 1840 in response to concern among his followers for forebears who died unbaptized.
- These baptisms are performed as an act of love for people who are selected from genealogical records in Mormon archives.
- “Worthy” Mormons with special temple privileges serve as proxies by undergoing baptism in a basin, patterned after the bronze sea of Solomon’s temple.



- According to Mormons, the practice affords the dead the opportunity to pursue salvation through a system of works righteousness.
- Mormons teach salvation by works. Baptism for the dead is part of that system.
- This disregards the context of Scripture and it undermines the biblical gospel.

1. What Paul could not have meant

- Salvation is based on works/baptism
- Believers can be “saved” for others by being baptized in their place



2. What Paul likely meant

- The context of 1 Cor 15 is the defense of the resurrection (a critical doctrine some in Corinth were rejecting) – not salvation

“Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?” 1 Cor 15:12

- Baptism is sometimes used synonymously with salvation in the N.T.



Possible interpretations consistent with Scripture:



- Some Christians at Corinth, still influenced by their pagan background, were practicing a pagan ritual that Paul simply used to emphasize the validity of the resurrection
- Some Christians at Corinth were being baptized for deceased believers who had died before they could be baptized
- Paul could have been asking, “If Jesus was not resurrected and believers will not be resurrected, why be baptized for a dead Savior?”



- The Corinthians were being baptized “because of the dead” – the testimony of Jesus and believers who had already died

baptized “for” the dead can mean:

“over” the dead, “above” the dead, “across” the dead, “beyond” the dead, “on behalf of” the dead, “instead of” the dead, “in the name of” the dead, “in reference to” the dead, or “with regard to” the dead, “because of” the dead





“The person who is baptized is not saved by being baptized, let alone a dead person. No one is saved by baptism, not living people, to say nothing of dead ones. Scripture teaches we are saved by faith in Jesus Christ. Baptism is simply an act of obedient faith that proclaims the testimony of salvation. Scripture doesn’t say, ‘It is appointed unto man once to die and after this the baptism’ – it says ‘after this the judgment.’ ... Some believers at Corinth were being baptized ‘because of’ the faithful witness of believers who had died.” John MacArthur

“Resurrection Incentives,” Oct. 9, 1977

<https://www.gty.org/sermons/1880/resurrection-incentives>