

Truth

On Tough Texts

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A MINISTRY OF GRACE BIBLE CHURCH

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“Upon This Rock”

Matthew 16:16–19

AND SIMON PETER ANSWERED AND SAID, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

What is “the Church”? A simple definition, offered by evangelical theologian William Evans in his classic work, *The Great Doctrines of the Bible*, is: “The Church is composed of the body of believers who have been called out from the world, and who are under the dominion and authority of Jesus Christ.”¹ One will find similar definitions and descriptions (with more detail, of course) among many other evangelical theologians and expositors.

What is the Church?

The evangelical view of the Church noted above is based upon an understanding of three Greek words.

First, there is the unique word *ekklēsia*. It is comprised of *ek*, “out,” and *kaleō*, “to call,” and therefore means “a called-out assembly.” It is found in Classical Greek from the 5th-century BC onward and was used for the assembling of citizens of the city (*polis*) for legislation and other public business.

Second, while *ekklēsia* occurs about 100 times in the Septuagint for the gathering of Israel for some definite purpose, the usual word is *sunagōgē* (“synagogue”), which appears about 225 times to translate various Hebrew words. It is amazing that Jesus’ followers didn’t describe their meetings using *sunagōgē*, since this would have been the natural word

for Jews to use. When it *is* used, it refers to the meeting place of the local Jewish community or assembly.

So again, *ekklēsia* is, indeed, unique, appearing some 116 times. As our Lord declared in our text, **Upon this rock I will build my church.** Our Lord truly transformed this word, using it to refer to *His* assembly, making it distinct from Judaism.

Third, our English word **church** actually comes from *kuriakos*, which is derived from *kurios* (Lord), and literally means “belonging to the Lord” (translated “Lord’s” in 1 Cor. 11:20 and Rev. 1:10).

So, combining all that, the church can be defined simply as: *the called-out assembly of New Testament believers that belongs to the Lord.* The Universal Church (the church as an *organism*) is comprised of all believers everywhere. Our Lord’s words in our main text, for example, emphasize His **church**, not *churches* (cf. 1 Cor. 15:9; Col. 1:18, 24; Eph. 5:23–27). The Local Church (the church as an *organization*) is a local assembly of believers organized according to Scriptural guidelines (e.g., Jerusalem, Acts. 8:1; Antioch, 13:1; Ephesus, 20:17; Galatia, Gal. 1:2; and Judea, 1 Thess. 2:14; Asia Minor, Rev. 2–3).

When one turns, however, to “other branches of Christianity,” as some erroneously term it, he finds something quite different. In Mormonism, for example, the structures of authority and authorization outlined in the *Doctrine and Covenants* comprise the “Church.” Without that authority, it is insisted, you have no “Church” in the capital “C” sense, but merely a lower-case “church.” God might love a Baptist or a Lutheran, for example, and be pleased with his work, but if he doesn’t accept the one authorized baptism of Mormonism, he is not of the “Church.”

Turning in still another direction, Roman Catholicism, the

Church is again defined far differently than it is in true biblical Christianity. As stated in one of the most authoritative works of Catholicism, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* by Ludwig Ott:

In the wider sense the designation “Mystical body of Christ” means the communion of all those made holy by the grace of Christ. These include: the faithful on earth; those in the place of purification [i.e., Purgatory] who are not yet completely justified; and the perfectly justified in Heaven. . . . In the narrower sense the Mystical body of Christ means the visible Church of Christ on earth.²

Even such a basic definition clearly states some of the false doctrines of Catholicism, such as Purgatory and the idea that people can become “completely justified” at some point *after* death.

Another definition, this one the classic by “Saint” Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621), Italian Jesuit and Cardinal, stated:

The Church is a union of men who are united in the profession of the same Christian faith, and by the participation in the same Sacraments, under the direction of their lawful pastors [i.e., priests], especially of the one representative of Christ on earth, the Pope of Rome.³

The errors here are even more dramatic: the sacramental system is at the core of “church membership”; priests are pictured as mediators; and, most notably, *the Pope is lifted up as being the actual representative of Christ on earth.*

What is the Rock?

It is that latter theory that commands our attention. For more than fifteen hundred years, the Roman Catholic Church has dogmatically asserted that the Pope is the supreme and authoritative representative of Christ on the earth, and it is our text that is appealed to as the chief “proof” that Peter was the first Pope and from whom all others have descended. So presumptuous and arrogant is this assertion, in fact, that the first Vatican Council (1870) pronounced a curse upon anyone who would dare challenge it:

If anyone says that the blessed Apostle Peter was not established by the Lord Christ as the chief of all the apostles, and the visible head of the whole militant Church, or, that the same received great honour but did not receive from the same our Lord Jesus Christ directly and immediately the primacy in true and proper jurisdiction: let him be anathema.⁴

Now, is this really all that important? What difference does it make? Well, it is not an overstatement to say that this is actually central to the entire Roman Catholic system. In his classic exposé, titled simply *Roman Catholicism*, Loraine Boettner (pronounced BET-ner, 1901–1990) wrote:

The whole structure of the Roman Church is built on the assumption that in Matthew 16:13–19 Christ appointed Peter the first pope and so established the papacy. Disprove the primacy of Peter, and the foundation of the papacy is destroyed. Destroy the papacy, and the

whole Roman hierarchy topples with it. Their system of priesthood depends absolutely upon their claim that Peter was the first pope at Rome, and that they are his successors.⁵

Again, that is not even the slightest exaggeration. It is absolutely essential for true Bible believing Christians to recognize that *everything* in the Roman system hinges on this single dogma. Therefore, if the Papacy can be shown to be without a shred of biblical support, what does that say about the entire system? What does that say also of the Reformation? Does it not dramatically demonstrate that the Reformers were, indeed, returning to biblical salvation? Does it not then say that those today who call themselves evangelicals but who are actually in sympathy with Rome and trying to undo the Reformation, and thereby return to Rome, are as apostate as the system they are defending?

Well, it is our purpose here to show with crystal clarity that the evidence against the Roman Papacy, and therefore the entire system, is utterly overwhelming. We also hope to demonstrate that any compromise with it is a betrayal of our Lord and His Word.

First, The words **Peter** and **rock** are, of course, central to the issue. **Peter** is the Greek *petros*, which refers to a stone that is small enough to throw. The word **rock**, however, is the Greek *petra*, which refers to a large rock, such as a boulder, cliff, bedrock, or even a mountain chain. So, it is a well known fact that this is a simple play on words. There are, however, a couple of ways this play on words has been understood.

One view maintains that our Lord is simply saying He will build His church, not on Peter (*Petros*, a throwable stone), as Catholicism teaches, but on Himself (*Petra*), who is the large rock, the bedrock. More specifically, it is to the Divine revelation and profession of faith in Christ in verses 16–17.

Another view also notes the two different words but with a different contrast, namely, that *petros* is masculine while *petra* is feminine. Based upon that, it is submitted, *petros* refers to Peter himself while *petra* refers to the larger group of apostles with Peter as the chief representative. This view, as well as the first one, matches Ephesians 2:20, which clearly proclaims the Church is built upon “the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone,” not Peter alone.

We can conclude from this that whichever of these views is the true meaning of **Peter** and **rock**, one thing is certain: the Roman view is wrong at its core. If that is not yet obvious, however, let us go on.

Second, if **Peter** was intended, why did our Lord change to the feminine *petra* (**rock**) in the middle of the sentence? Boettner puts this in a clever way, as if Jesus were saying, “And I say unto thee, that thou art Mr. Rock, and upon this, the Miss Rock, I will build my church.” The simple fact is that the Roman view simply cannot answer the change in gender. Like all false teaching, it is based on faulty exegesis.

Third, even more basic than that, if Peter were actually the **Rock**, is it not probable that Jesus would have simply said,

“Thou art Peter, and upon *you* I will build my church”? Would not this have cleared up any ambiguity?

Fourth, what seems to be ignored is that our Lord adds that it is because of that foundation that **the gates of hell shall not prevail against** (*katsichuō*, “overcome, overpower, vanquish”) His church. Was this true of Peter? Indeed not, for we read just a few verses later that Peter (the supposed **Rock** of the church) actually rebuked the Lord Jesus for His talk about going to Jerusalem to be killed. What was Jesus’ response? “Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men” (vv. 21–23). Does that sound like Pope material?

Fifth, if Peter was, in fact, the first Pope, why do the disciples ask Jesus in Matthew 18:1, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” Since they heard Peter’s confession and our Lord’s response, would they not already know that Peter was obviously the greatest? On the other hand, if they had just forgotten that little fact, would not Jesus have here reminded them of Peter’s superiority and again cleared up any confusion? A similar situation arose, in fact, two chapters later (20:20–21), the details of which are in Mark 10:35–37. This time it is James and John asking for chief honors. But again, why would they ask if Peter’s superiority had already been made clear to them?

Sixth, would not Peter himself have first *recognized* his superiority and then *reminded* others of it? Yes, he identified himself as an Apostle (1 Pet. 1:1; 2 Pet. 1:1), but not once did he claim a superior rank or position over the others. In fact, he referred to himself merely as a fellow “elder” with others (1 Pet. 5:1) and a “servant [*doulos*, bond slave] of Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:1). Is all that not a far cry from the Pope today who quite readily accepts genuflecting in his presence and kisses on his foot?

Seventh, is it reasonable to think that an infallible Pope comes from the fallible Peter? Not only do we see Peter’s miserable failure in Matthew 16:21–23, as noted above, but we see another recorded in Galatians 2:11–21. Paul “withstood [Peter] to the face” because of his compromise of doctrine, namely, complicity with the Judaizers in compelling Gentile believers to live as Jews. Does it not seem odd that Paul would treat the “first Pope” in such a manner?

Eighth and finally, there is no definitive proof whatsoever that Peter was ever actually in Rome. Now, Roman Catholics will take me to task on this, but the evidence is ambiguous at best. Their chief “proof,” of course, is 1 Peter 5:12–13: “I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand. The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son.” Based upon this, it is dogmatically asserted that this proves “Peter’s stay in Rome” because “Babylon is a symbolic designation for Rome.”⁶ The fact of the matter is, however, that there are several possibilities as to the meaning of “Babylon” here. Besides the *symbolic* Roman view, there was also a *literal* Roman outpost in northern Egypt named Babylon, which was a political, military, and Judean center. There was also, of course, the literal Babylon of Mesopotamia. As John Gill submits, in fact, “It is best therefore to understand it literally, of Babylon in Assyria, the metropolis of the dispersion of the Jews, and the center of it, to whom the

the dispersion of the Jews, and the center of it, to whom the apostle wrote; and where, as the minister of the circumcision, he may be thought to reside, here being a number of persons converted and formed into a Gospel church state.” Another obscure view was that “Babylon” was symbolic of Jerusalem because of its wickedness and resemblance to Babylon.

If I may also interject, any symbolic meaning here simply does not fit. Peter’s writing was consistently literal and practical. He was not the type to use symbolism. He consistently said what he meant and meant what he said. We would, therefore, submit that if he had *meant* Rome, he would have *written* Rome.

I also found it interesting during my research that, like Gill, older commentators (e.g., Albert Barnes, Calvin, Adam Clark, the Puritans [see Matthew Henry and *Geneva Bible* note], etc.), take Babylon in one or the other literal sense, while many contemporary ones actually defend the Rome view. Some, for example, make it sound more compelling by saying that Peter, writing from Rome, used “Babylon” as a code word so as not to endanger persecuted Christians in Rome in case his letter were found after his death. They cite John’s use of “Babylon” for Rome in the Book of Revelation as another example of this practice. But this again *assumes* a figurative meaning of Babylon there as well. A view that is growing in credibility today is that Babylon in Revelation does not refer to the revived Roman (European) Empire at all, as has been commonly taught for decades, rather *literal* Babylon in the form of Islam.⁷ In any case, is it not troubling that some evangelicals today seem to go out of their way to side with (or at least be tolerant of) Rome in subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) ways? If I may also lovingly add, *a typical trend in our day is to see things in the text that are not actually there.*

It is also asserted that certain Early Church authorities confirm that Peter was in Rome. Irenaeus (c.115–c.202), for example, maintained this, but on the other hand, he maintained that Peter also ministered with Paul while in Rome, an idea that is even more unprovable. Eusebius (c.263–339) also insisted that Peter was in Rome, but then again he also wrote that Peter founded the church at Antioch, which is clearly incorrect.

In the same vein, while those authorities say Peter was in Rome, does it not seem odd that there is not a single word from the greatest New Testament authority, *the Apostle Paul*, that Peter was in Rome? After all, Paul wrote four of his epistles during his first imprisonment there and two more during the second. But in all that correspondence, we read not even a hint of Peter’s presence, even though Paul mentions many other Christians, including fellow laborers, by name in his letters. One would think that the great Peter would get at least a mention if he were actually laboring in Rome.

Further, what about the letter to the Romans? In chapter 15 Paul mentions 27 members of that church, but no Peter. Why is this significant? Simply because Paul wrote that letter about 58 AD and Catholicism says Peter was there from 42 to 67 and was the head of the church. Do you see the problem? Are we to believe that Peter had already been the head of that church for 16 years when Paul wrote but Paul didn’t bother to

mention it?

Here's another little tidbit to ponder in Romans. Note Paul's statement in 1:11: "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established." "Established" is *sterizō*, from *histēmi*, "to make to stand up, raise, awaken, or rouse (of persons lying down or sleeping)." As M. R. Vincent puts it, "The word implies fixedness." But wait! Are we to think that Peter had already been in Rome for 16 years but the believers there were not properly established? In fact, with Peter there, why did they even need this greatest of doctrinal treatises in the first place?

So, we say again, there is no definitive proof that Peter was ever in Rome. Is it possible? Of course it is, though highly improbable. But for the Roman Church to say this dogmatically is indefensible and clearly prejudicial simply because it conveniently fits their theory of the Papacy. It says Peter was the **Rock** in Rome, and anyone who disagrees, regardless of any biblical or historical data, is cursed.

What is the Only Possible Conclusion?

Besides what we have already seen, the errors of Roman Catholicism are almost incomprehensible. The Mass alone, the recrucifying of Jesus and partaking of his literal body and blood is so blasphemous that it should literally nauseate us. Through the ages, Catholicism has steadily added this doctrine, that ritual, this other custom, and that other tradition to ultimately build such a monstrosity that it is unthinkable that any true evangelical, or any true Christian, would speak even a single positive word for it.

Here are but a few developments with their approximate dates: prayers for the dead and making the sign of the cross (300); veneration of angels and dead saints, and the use of images (375); The Mass as a daily celebration (394); exaltation of Mary, the "Mother of God" (431); doctrine of Purgatory, (593); prayers directed to Mary, dead saints, and angels (600); kissing the pope's foot (709); worship of the cross, images, and relics (authorized in 786); worship of St. Joseph (890); fasting on Fridays and during Lent (998); celibacy of priests (1079); The Rosary (1090); sale of indulgences (1190); Transubstantiation (1215); doctrine of Seven Sacraments affirmed (1439); Tradition declared of equal authority with the Bible (Council of Trent, 1545); infallibility of the pope in matters of faith and morals (Vatican I, 1870); and more. Added to that abbreviated list, consider also: "saints," monks, nuns, monasteries, convents, forty days of Lent, holy week, Palm Sunday, Ash Wednesday, All Saints day, Candlemas day, fish day, meat days, Christmas Day, Maundy Thursday, Easter Sunday, incense, holy oil, holy palms, Christopher medals, charms, novenas, and still more, all invented by Roman Catholicism, not only with no biblical support whatsoever but also with pagan influence and overtones.

If we may ask here: Should it not appall us when we hear these terms used in our evangelical churches? Should not the origins of such doctrines grieve us who profess to believe in the authority and sufficiency of Scripture alone—the Reformation doctrine of *sola Scriptura*? Should this not trouble us all the more as we see a growing number of Christians being influenced by ancient Roman Catholic mysticism? This is

dramatically demonstrated, for example, by how many evangelicals embraced the movie *The Passion of Christ*, as well as how many are falling for the so-called Spiritual Formation Movement, *lectio divina*, and other mystic trends.

So what is the conclusion? The unvarnished answer to that question offends many today, but the irrefutable fact is: *Roman Catholicism is not true Christianity*. To defend it as such, or try to find "common ground" as is often vocalized today, is utter folly and a betrayal of the true Christian Faith. I think Harry Ironside, in his commentary on Revelation, put it better than anyone I have ever read: "Romanism is Christianity, Judaism, and Heathenism joined together; and the Lord abhors the vile combination."

Inexplicably, in spite of all that (*and much more*), there are still those in Evangelicalism who downplay and even ignore that Christianity and Catholicism are, in plain fact, polar opposites. I would submit here a truly fascinating illustration of this that I pray you will carefully consider. In 1917, William C. Irvine published his book, *Timely Warnings*, the first of the modern counter-cult books. Renamed to *Heresies Exposed* in 1921, it went through 39 printings by 1985. In it he warned Christians of false religions and cults that denied the essential doctrines of biblical Christianity. Irvine's book stood alone for some 20 years as the single polemic against cults and false religions, and it is extremely significant that included in that book was a chapter exposing the cult that Roman Catholicism truly is. Inexplicably, however, that view vanished from virtually every book that followed. While *The Chaos of the Cults* (J. K. Van Baalen) came in 1938, followed by *The Kingdom of the Cults* (Walter Martin) in 1965, and others soon after, what is conspicuously absent from those two, and practically every other work that has followed since, is an exposé of Roman Catholicism. Why? Writing in 1938, Van Baalen himself gives us a clue in *The Chaos of the Cults*:

The writer has been asked repeatedly why Roman Catholicism has not been included as one of the major cults. The answer is that the Roman Catholic Church is a stone with many faces. It is a corrupt and exceedingly dangerous political machine, and it is a religious body full of doctrinal error and superstition. But it is also a church that stands upon the solid foundation of the Apostles Creed. It holds and defends such cardinal Christian doctrines as that of the Trinity, the Deity of our Lord, His resurrection, His second coming to judge the world, and the atonement by His substitutionary blood. Some of the outstanding apologetic work in our day is done by Roman Catholic scholars. Such a body does not come under the heading of unchristian cults as described in the present volume.⁸

Such misunderstanding of Roman Catholic dogma and its agenda is hard to fathom. It violently opposes true biblical Christianity as set forth in the five solas of the Reformation and is nothing short of blasphemous in its doctrines and practices. I know this is strong language, but there is no hiding the fact that it is *apostate* in its theology, *arrogant* in its attitudes, and even *amoral* in some of its practices. Inexplicable also is that while cult books point out the apostasy and wickedness of

Mormonism, Jehovah's Witness, and others, they ignore the demonstrable fact that Catholicism is essentially no different; it is just another works based religion. Frankly, in light of growing tolerance, we cannot help but wonder if even Mormonism will one day be removed from such cult exposés.

A noted exception to such cult books is Fritz Ridenour's, *So What's the Difference?* Updated and expanded in 2001, it is one of today's more honest polemic works, examining twenty worldviews, faiths, and religions in comparison to Christianity. Even it, however, has an ever so slight weakness in dealing with Roman Catholicism. While it does a good job pointing out Catholicism's departures from biblical Christianity, it does so in a section titled "Other Trunks of the Christian Tree," a section that also includes Eastern Orthodoxy. A better choice, we submit, would have been something such as, "Imitators of Christianity," because these are *not* part of the "True Vine" of Christianity at all. Another tiny weakness appears in the statement, "While Roman Catholics place high value on their liturgy and sacramental system, it is incorrect to say that they believe they are 'saved by works.' Roman Catholicism teaches that Christ's blood 'has become the instrument of atonement for the sins of all men.'" ⁹ That is poor wording, for faith *plus* works is no longer faith at all. Thankfully, Ridenour goes on to write in the very next sentence, "At the same time, they insist that faith in what Christ did on the cross in and of itself is not enough." That is correct and again underscores that Catholicism is not the true Christian faith.

In dramatic contrast to such anemic books noted earlier, prior to our modern era, in fact, the recognition that Catholicism is not Christianity was *never* called into question by Christian leaders (please read that again). A graphic example appears just a few years before William C. Irvine's book was published. In 1909 the first of twelve marvelous volumes, entitled *The Fundamentals*, appeared and was devoted to the exposition and defense of Evangelicalism. Completed in 1915, the set contained 90 articles defending the crucial, non-negotiable doctrines of the Christian faith. Contributors included: James Gray, G. Campbell Morgan, A. T. Pierson, J. C. Ryle, Thomas Spurgeon (Charles Spurgeon's son), Charles Feinberg, and dozens more. Another was T. W. Medhurst, a Scottish pastor who was the first student at Spurgeon's Pastor's College; Spurgeon even officiated at Medhurst's marriage in 1859. In an article titled "Is Romanism Christianity?" Medhurst began by writing:

I am aware that, if I undertake, to prove that Romanism is not Christianity, I must expect to be called "bigoted, harsh, uncharitable." Nevertheless I am not daunted; for I believe that on a right understanding of this subject depends the salvation of millions.

One reason why Popery has of late gained so much power in Great Britain and Ireland, and is gaining power still, is that many Protestants look on it now as a form of true Christianity; and think that, on that account, notwithstanding great errors, it ought to be treated very tenderly. Many suppose that at the time of the Reformation, it was reformed, and that it is now much nearer the truth than it was before that time. It is still, however, the same; and, if examined, will be found to be so different from, and so

hostile to, real Christianity, that it is not, in fact, Christianity at all.

Christian Friend, does that not well explain exactly what is happening today? Please recall that the purpose of that set of articles was to defend the crucial, *non-negotiable* doctrines of the Christian faith, so where does that put us today? Are we not, in fact, renegotiating? Does not any compromise or complicity with Catholicism betray biblical Christianity? "To aid such a system," Medhurst wrote, "is to fight against God."

Before we close, we do not want to overlook a very important question: Does all this mean we hate Catholics? Most certainly not! *Roman Catholics are a mission field*. While the common attitude among much of Evangelicalism today is that we should embrace our "Catholic brethren," nothing could be further from the truth. While there are certainly some Roman Catholics who are true believers, *those who hold to and trust that system* are not; they are blind and need the true Gospel of Jesus Christ. Why? Because *He* is the **Rock!**¹⁰

Dr. J. D. Watson
Pastor-Teacher

NOTES

¹ William Evans, *The Great Doctrines of the Bible*, Revised Edition by S. Maxwell Coder (Moody, 1912, 1974), 182.

² Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* (Tan Books and Publishers, 1955, 1960, 1974), 271.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Cited in Ott, 279, from Vatican I: Dogmatic Constitution "Pastor Aeternus" §1 (July 18, 1870).

⁵ Loraine Boettner, *Roman Catholicism* (P & R, 1962), 105.

⁶ Ott, 283.

⁷ See Joel Richardson, *Mideast Beast* (WND Books, 2012).

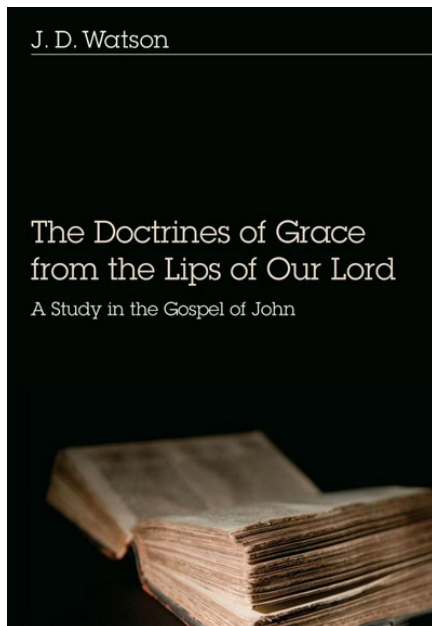
⁸ *The Chaos of the Cults* (Eerdmans, 1972), 5.

⁹ Fritz Ridenour, *So What's the Difference?* (Regal Books, 1967, 1979, 2001), 42–43. He quotes from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Doubleday, 1995), paragraph 1992.

¹⁰ **New Book Announcement:** This article is the final one to be added to the soon to be released second book from Sola Scriptura Publications: *Upon This Rock: Studies in Church History and Their Application*. This is the sequel to *Truth on Tough Texts: Expositions of Challenging Scripture Passages*. The articles in this 220-page sequel were omitted from the first collection partly for space reasons but primarily because I felt a separate volume was in order to deal with the historical matters they address. In addition to this article, the new book includes an expanded chapter on "Why Study Church History?" (originally TOTT #64). Also, at the core of this collection are six chapters on "The Five Solas of the Reformation," which are the full lectures that were abbreviated in TOTT issues 60 and 61. Also expanded is the follow-up "Target: Historical Evangelical Christianity" (#62), as well as both parts of "Once More Unto the Breach" (#77 & 78). One other bonus is an Appendix containing a reprint of the complete article by T. W. Medhurst mentioned earlier in this article.

Finally, like its predecessor, this second volume contains four exhaustive indexes (Subject, Persons, Scripture, and Foreign Words) and various conventions to aid in reading. Unlike the first volume, however, this one has the added bonus of 60 black and white illustrations, most of which were not in the original articles. Lord willing, this second volume will be released in November, and because of its shorter length will be priced much less than the first volume. Your prayer support for this and other future publishing endeavors will be greatly appreciated.

Just Released



The doctrine of salvation is the watershed doctrine of Scripture. Flowing from that doctrine will be not only all other doctrine but also personal practice and Christian ministry. The major controversy concerning salvation is whether it is a result of the sovereign grace of God alone or a mixture of “God’s part” and “man’s part.” Addressing that issue is absolutely critical to the very foundations of Christianity itself.

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Coming in November of 2012

This book’s predecessor, *Truth on Tough Texts: Expositions of Challenging Scripture Passages*, is a compilation of most of the articles that appeared in the first six years of the monthly publication, *Truth on Tough Texts*. A few were omitted in that collection partly for space reasons but primarily because I felt a separate volume was in order to deal with the historical matters they address.

The Reformation, for example, is misunderstood by many, ignored by some, and even attacked by others. It is, therefore, a major emphasis here in chapters 3 through 8. Even Church History itself, as is history in general nowadays, is viewed by many as unimportant, if not wholly irrelevant. “Why look backward?” it is argued. “We should only look forward and be about our Father’s business in the here and now.”

Such an attitude, however, is not only foolish but downright dangerous. As we will note in chapter 1, Spanish-born American philosopher and writer George Santayana (1863–1952) made the now famous statement, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” Well, the Church as a whole has, indeed, forgotten much of the past, and the lessons we should learn from it, and is repeating many of the same errors.

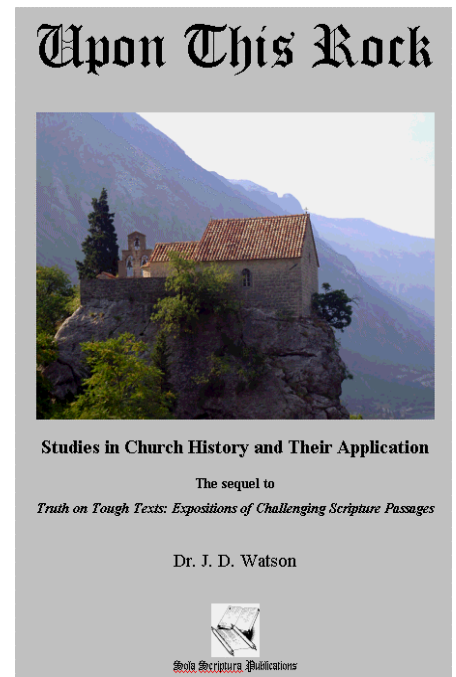
This book, therefore, begins in Part I with “Our Foundation,” in which we examine the value of studying Church History and then study the deep significance of the words of our Lord in Matthew 16:16–19, “Upon this rock.” Part II, “The Five Solas of the Reformation,” is the heart of our study in which we examine the core issues of the Reformation and are challenged with their importance for our day. Part III, “Other History Lessons,” addresses other historical figures and events that are critical for our understanding in a day of growing indifference to these matters. There are also more than 60 illustrations, most of which were not in the original articles. (220 pages)

I pray these studies will be to God’s glory and the reader’s good. You can get your copy either by using the enclosed order form (published by Sola Scriptura Publications) or from Amazon.com (**will also be available for Kindle**).

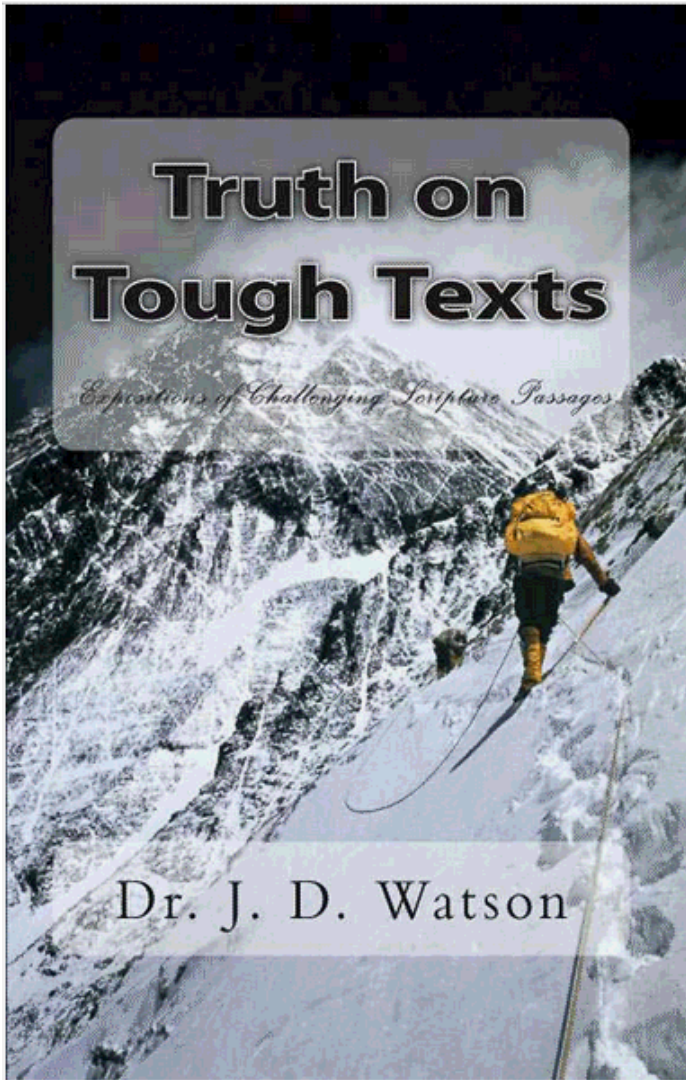
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