

# INTRODUCTION



## HOLD FAST

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*For God so loved the world, that  
He gave His only begotten Son, that  
whoever believes in Him shall not  
perish, but have eternal life.*

John 3:16

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*Jesus answered and said to her,  
“Everyone who drinks of this water  
shall thirst again; but whoever drinks  
of the water that I will give him shall  
never thirst; but the water that I will  
give him shall become in him a well  
of water springing up to eternal life.”*

John 4:13-14

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## CHRISTIAN MYTHS EXPOSED

While visiting Prague, my wife and I took a tour a short distance outside the city to the Terezin memorial. Following the occupation of the Czech lands by Nazi Germany, the small town of Terezin was turned into a concentration camp for Jews. It became a reception and transit point for the *Final Solution*, where most of the deported 150,000 men, women, and children from Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Denmark, and the Czech lands that came to Terezin were then sent on to their deaths in Auschwitz. It was a gruesome scene. In overcrowded conditions and with little food and water, camp life was deplorable. The conditions were so bad that more than one-quarter of the inmates perished in the Terezin Ghetto.

The tour arrangements were such that my wife and I were our very own tour group. The guide led us through the camp, explaining what life there would have been like and pointing out significant events at various locations. The guide's extended answer to one question was entirely unexpected and very intriguing. I had asked, "Do many Germans visit this memorial?" Surprisingly she responded that numbers do come. As a guide she had also been surprised that so many came to the memorial. In fact her curiosity was such that

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she inquired of an older German lady as to why she and other Germans came. The answer, “We didn’t do this to the Jews; the Nazis did!” Without remorse, this memorial to human depravity was only a historical site to which the average German does not relate personally.

The Czech guide indicated that she was taken aback by this response (just as we were), but then she said, “After considering the German lady’s response, I came to understand what she meant.” Continuing, she said, “I had done the same thing.” She explained that during the Communist occupation of the Czech lands, the common person was in fear of reprisal if he or she did not agree with the occupiers. For example to enter the university she had to provide the appropriate response to the question, “Are you a member of the Communist party?” If she answered “No,” admission would have been denied.

Her tone changed as she said, “You see, I had done the same thing as that German lady.” Our guide had become part of the Communist system. She too had rationalized that the Communists, not she herself, had created and sustained that system. She continued, “Just as the German lady didn’t consider herself to be a Nazi, I didn’t consider myself to be a Communist.” Solemnly, she said, “But I was the System!”

### Am I the Problem or the Solution?

As illustrated by these two women, each of us ultimately is either part of the problem or part of the solution. This is no less true in the church, particularly in the teaching of Christian myths. When you sit back and say nothing, you actually perpetuate the problem. In fact not to speak out or disassociate oneself from these erroneous beliefs is to support them. To blame your pastor, seminary, or denomination for involving you in an error is not an acceptable defense. So, what will you say when asked at the judgment of believers (2 Cor. 5:10),

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“Why were you part of the problem?” If your only response can be, “I just went along with it,” then you are the problem!

### What Are Christian Myths?

A myth is a popular but unfounded belief or notion. It is a teaching or concept that is passed on as true even though it is unsupported by evidence. In the church the basis for any teaching must be founded in the Scriptures. The Bible is the playbook, the blueprint, and the starting place for any belief or teaching. It should be readily acknowledged that even though the Bible is the only resource for knowing God’s desires, people come to entirely different interpretations of His Word. What might seem right to me might not seem correct to you. The problem then is not with Scripture but with our individual ways of understanding the Bible. In fact when two disagree with a particular explanation of a passage, both could be wrong and a third interpretation may be the correct one. However, the intent of this book is not to address hermeneutics (principles of biblical interpretation), but rather to tackle particular passages used to support Christian myths. In order to do so, differing interpretations of various proof passages will be considered.

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### False Teachers: Unintentional but Wrong

If someone blindly accepts an explanation of a passage without actually putting in study time of his own, he may have simply taken a position that may be invalid. Without a careful examination of a text, no one can support his explanation, because conclusions must be supported from the context. In reality we have seen this occur;

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not enough time to prepare for a Sunday school class, small group, or sermon leads to relying on whatever the available commentary, CD, or Podcast provides. The teaching is simply passed on, parroting what has been heard or read, whether truth or myth. Expediency is the motivation and biblical inaccuracy is often the result.

However, the blindly committed error is more insidious. Previous conclusions, whether correct or false, are forced on other passages and made to fit into a developing theological framework. Once locked into a particular viewpoint, every other passage is then shoehorned to form the same conclusion. The framework continues to expand over time to include the entire Bible; whereby the theological tentacles stretch out and maneuver to penetrate and encircle passage after passage to conform to the expanding theological structure. Questionable “scholarship” is the genesis of this error and false teaching is the product of imposed, cumulative conclusions, being blindly committed to a specific interpretive framework inevitably assures that Christian myths will continue.

### Maintaining Myths

These Christian myths carry more weight than you might assume. An underemphasis in biblical scholarship results in the *blind-acceptance error*; while an overemphasis in the study of systematic theology,<sup>1</sup> deemphasizing biblical theology,<sup>2</sup> produces the *blindly committed error*. The former occurs because of ignorance; the latter occurs because of preconceived conclusions.

Obviously only the most depraved person intentionally teaches what is known to be error. However, once a myth is “blindly accepted,” it is seldom discarded. Once one is “blindly committed” to a theological framework, a particular way of thinking, the blinders of that agenda obstruct biblical clarity. Breaking away from either error requires a willingness to question, explore, and study to find the truth. If this is not done, Christian myths will continue to be perpetuated.

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### Addressing Myths

The popularity of a myth is directly proportional to the repetition of the same fabrication over and over again. The continual exposure substantiates its validity. “Everyone is saying it, so it must be true!” As a result, repeatability, not biblical accuracy, becomes the authenticating factor. The church desperately needs for truth to be made clear. If truth is not seen clearly, it then cannot be lived out. It is vital for church leaders to rectify Christian myths, bringing the body of Christ out of confusion and into the light.

This book address a number of Christian myths concerning *issues at initial salvation* that not only distort the truth but also make believers weak as they strive to live obediently to the Word of God. Going back to the Problem or Solution above, you can be the Solution when you HOLD FAST to the Word and not to Christian myths.

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### Introduction, NOTES

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1. Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1986), pp. 14-15.

*Systematic theology correlates the data of biblical revelation as a whole in order to exhibit systematically the total picture of God's self-revelation.*

*Systematic theology may include historical backgrounds, apologetics and defense, and exegetical work, but it focuses on the total structure of biblical doctrine.*

2. Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1959), p. 11.

An over-emphasis in the study of systematic theology is typically associated with de-emphasizing biblical theology. However, biblical theology is the basis of systematic theology and therefore a requirement for accurately understanding systematic theology. Ryrie provides perspective:

*Biblical Theology is not Systematic Theology nor exegesis, nor is it merely a different arranging of the same material. Rather it is a combination which is partly historical, partly exegetical, partly critical, partly theological, and thereby totally distinctive. Biblical Theology is concerned with the reason why something was written as well as with the content of what was written. It not only examines the product but investigates the procedures and presuppositions that went into the writing of the Scriptures.*