

**Acts 17: 1-21; “To be Reformed – Sola Scriptura”; An Adult Sunday**  
**School class prepared by Pastor Paul Rendall,**  
**and Delivered on July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014.**

**1<sup>st</sup> – What does it mean to be Reformed?**

**A. A church which believes in the authority of the Holy Scriptures-** The principle of the Reformation is called – “Sola Scriptura”, or – Only the Scripture can define my faith and practice, and only the Scripture can define the way that we as Christians and we as a church should worship and serve God. The importance of the truth of God, objectively defined by Biblical truth, and set forth in the Bible, can scarcely be imagined when we realize that God cannot be glorified, and man cannot be saved from his sins and know eternal life without it. If a person is going to live a true Christian life, he should realize that Christianity is not a religion that was made up by a man, but that Christians claim to have received the only true written revelation of God to men. This is the Word concerning Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God which was given in the Old and New Testaments of the Holy Bible. Without the Bible, the truth about God and the truth about salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, could not be defined or understood. Every person who is a true Christian accepts this and receives the Bible as the Word of God. It is infallible, inerrant and sufficient for all matters related to our faith and practice. (1)

It was because the Roman Catholic church had added doctrines and practices to the pure and sound doctrine of the Scripture that the Reformation took place in the 16th century, beginning with Martin Luther.(2) The writings and traditions of the early church fathers and the edicts of popes became the basis of a Christianity which obscured the true gospel and many sound doctrines clearly set forth in the Scripture.(3) It was the Reformers such as Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, and John Calvin who began the reformation by returning to a careful examination and proclamation of Scripture.(4) Because of their preaching, many people, in many countries in Europe, seeing that the Roman Catholic Church would not be reformed, left it, and founded what were called Protestant churches, protesting against salvation by sacraments, the sale of indulgences, and the worship of Mary and the saints. The papal authority, to determine sound doctrine and practice, was called into question in the minds of many people.(5) The true authority of the living risen Christ, speaking to His church through the preaching of the Scriptures, was re-established in many places. Reformed Baptists believe in the authority of the Scriptures.(6) Those who are Reformed Baptists believe in holding together to a confession of faith as a church; a confession which they believe accurately represents the truth of the Scriptures. (7)

1) 2 Timothy 3: 16 2) Deuteronomy 4: 2 3) Proverbs 30: 5,6 4) 2 Chronicles 34: 15, 21

5) Matthew 23: 9 6) 2 Timothy 4: 1,2 Acts 20: 26-32 (7) 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 1: 3 and 4

1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3: 14 – 4: 5

**B. A church which believes in preaching that Salvation is all of God and His grace.** This point takes in all the other “Solus” which the Reformers brought forth in the time of the Reformation; Solus Christus – Through Christ’s mediatorial work alone. Sola Gratia – That salvation is all of God’s grace. Sola Fide – That salvation is by faith alone as far as the human

instrumentality of receiving the free gift of salvation. Soli Deo Gloria – To God alone belongs all the glory for the salvation of any sinner; their being brought to Christ, kept by his grace, and their persevering in their faith throughout their life after they are saved. The reformation brought to light the wonderful doctrines of God's sovereignty in salvation. People began to understand that salvation was by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, and that it was not of themselves. As they heard the Bible preached they began to understand that the depth of their sin was such that they could not save themselves. They began to understand that religious works and ceremonies could not of themselves, save anyone.(7) Once again the doctrine of Justification by Faith alone was preached to many people. The Bible truths of the doctrines of grace were proclaimed from many pulpits. People began to see that they could only be saved from their sins by hearing the preaching of what Christ had done and accomplished in His life and death. They began to understand that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word concerning Christ. They began to see that it was by means of faith alone in Christ's finished work that Christ was received, and not by the sacrament or the sacrifice of the mass.(8) People began to understand, when it was preached to them, that the regeneration of a sinful man's heart did not take place by baptism,(9) but by a sovereign work of the Spirit of God.(10) God initiates in the salvation of men from sin. He must choose, He must call, He must justify, He must give grace to persevere. People were coming to understand that without grace from Christ that they could not repent or be holy in the sense that pleased God. Reformed Baptists believe in preaching a salvation which is all of God's sovereign grace.

7) Galatians 6: 15 8) Hebrews 9: 24-28 and 10: 1-14 9) 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1:17 10) Titus 3: 5-7

### **C. A church which uses the regulative principle in Worship and Evangelism.**

The regulative principle of Worship, simply stated, is, that whatever the Bible has not commanded, either by way of precept or by way of Apostolic example, we do not attempt to introduce into the worship of the church in order make people happy. We do want people to experience the true and joyful reality of the Lord's special presence in public worship. And so we use this helpful Biblical principle to keep us from all the worldly and man-centered innovations that people attempt to bring into worship and evangelism.(11) It keeps us from bringing entertainment into worship, but does not exclude the joy of congregational singing. It maintains preaching at the center of worship, so that people will really have their spiritual needs addressed and grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ. In our evangelism we declare what Christ has done for sinners like us, and then we pray that God would open the heart.(12) This is the Bible way. The Apostles preached, they taught sound doctrine, they gave themselves to prayer, and the Lord saved people and added them to the church.(13) We as Reformed Baptists desire to follow that pattern and hope that you will come and worship with us soon.

(11) Deuteronomy 12: 28-32 12) Acts 16: 14 (13) Acts 2: 41, 42

### **Going one step further in the Reformation -**

#### **D. Reformed Baptists believe in baptism for disciples only.**

One of the things that came far too slowly to the minds of Protestant believers during the reformation is the truth that baptism in the Scriptures is commanded only of believers and disciples, and not of infants. Often, churches try to say that baptism of infants places them in covenant with God, or infuses or conveys grace in some way that gives them salvation, or leads to salvation. People are wrongly taught to believe that receiving the outward sign of water baptism will save them, or their children from sin, without having the inward reality of faith in

the gospel, and without experiencing the New Birth, or being born again.(14) But, the Bible consistently teaches that it is not the act of water baptism itself which saves us from our sins, but God Himself by His Spirit who convinces us of our need to receive Christ as the only Savior from sin.(14) Water baptism is our public declaration of what we believe Christ has done for us. It pictures and shows forth the believer's union with Jesus Christ, by faith in His death, burial, and resurrection.(15) The believer has died to sin and is raised to newness of life. Being lowered under the water pictures the fact that by faith all of our sins have been buried with Christ. Being raised out of the water pictures the believer as having been raised with Christ to live a life of righteousness by His power. The original sin of infants is better cared for by God Himself applying the benefits of Christ's death to them, rather than the church, which has no command to do so.(16) What the Church is commanded to do is to baptize disciples as it says in Matthew 28: 19, 20. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

(14) John 1: 12 and 13 (15) Colossians 2: 11 (16) Romans 6: 4 16) Matthew 18: 3-5  
Deuteronomy 12: 28-32

## **What are the Doctrines of Grace?**

**The Doctrines of Grace** is a phrase which is used by Christians to describe those 5 doctrinal points which state why the Salvation of our souls, which comes only through Jesus Christ, must be all of grace, and not of ourselves. Everyone who is an orthodox Christian believes that he was a great enough sinner, before he was converted, that he had to have God, through Jesus Christ, do a work for him and in him, that would save him from his sins. The Doctrines of Grace are truths which show us just how great a sinner we are before conversion, and just how much God has to do for us if we are to be saved from our sins. A true Christian should love the Doctrines of Grace because they show him the glory of God in what He has done and will do for any sinner who trusts in Jesus Christ for salvation. The Doctrines of grace are the basis for the gospel achieving certain tangible results. The gospel is the truth of what God has done for sinners through sending His Son Jesus Christ into the World. Christ is the gospel. In His love He obeyed God's law perfectly and fully. He went so far in His obedience to God's purpose as to die on the cross in the place of sinners, to bear the punishment that was due to them for breaking God's holy law. All sinners who trust in Christ will find and have eternal life if they are sincerely trusting in Him alone for their salvation. The Doctrines of Grace explain for us why it was necessary for God to do so much for every person who comes to Christ for salvation. And, to a certain extent they explain how He accomplishes this great salvation for everyone He has chosen. So, as I explain these precious truths to you, I do not want you to think that God does not offer the gospel freely to any person, just because God is this sovereign. You are commanded by God to believe in Jesus Christ and it will only be your fault if you do not. It will not be God's fault that you did not find grace in His sight. His offer is sincere and you are commanded to believe in Jesus Christ. Keeping this in mind, let us begin.

### **1st- Every person who has ever lived, with the exception of Jesus Christ, is Totally Depraved.**

The words, totally depraved, seem to imply, to a person not familiar with the Bible, the idea that every man is always as bad as he could be. This is not true and we know it, but total is rather a word which we are using here, as theologians of old have, to describe the fact that sin has affected every faculty and part of man's being. It is total in that respect.(1) The entrance of sin

into the world through the first man Adam, affected his mind, his heart, or feelings, and his will.(2) Adam has passed on this sin nature to all his descendants. Sin also affects man's conscience so that it does not do its job perfectly. Every person, apart from saving grace has a tremendous sinful problem with the way he thinks, the way he feels, with the choices that he makes, and with the motives for all that he does.(3) The inclination of his heart is not toward God from birth. He does not have to be taught by his parents to serve himself, he does so by nature. His bent is toward breaking or ignoring, or neglecting all of God's commandments.(4) Even when his parents teach him right from wrong and hold him to it outwardly, yet in many ways he still sins in his heart. All that he does do, that is right, is done from selfish or sinful motives, or to merit favor with God by His own righteousness, which he cannot possibly establish before God.(5) He is unable and unwilling, apart from grace to come to God to be saved from this condition and he is spiritually dead in his trespasses and sins. This is true of the most moral man who has ever lived.(6)

1) Genesis 8: 21 2) Isaiah 1: 5; Romans 8: 7 3) Jeremiah 17: 9 4) Psalm 58: 3 5) Psalm 53: 3  
Romans 10: 3 6) Ephesians 2: 1-3

**2ndly- Because of this, all people would have perished in their sins, were it not for God's Unconditional Election of some.**

God knew this even before He made the world or any man.(7) He knew that Adam, left to himself, and his own free will, would fall into sin, in eating of the forbidden fruit, and render himself and all his descendants helpless to save themselves.(8) So He determined, for His own glory, to Elect some to eternal life. All of mankind deserve to be punished for their sin forever in the lake of fire, so it is only God's mercy that any were chosen at all.(9) We cannot fault God with not choosing all, for He has holy reasons related to His attributes of Righteousness and Justice as to why He chooses some and not all to eternal life.(11) All deserve eternal punishment and it is an infinite mercy that any would be chosen. God's choice of any man is not due to anything good in him. He is merciful and we cannot fathom the reasons for His choice of some and not others.(12)

7) Ephesians 1: 3,4 8) Romans 5: 6 9) Romans 9: 15, 16 11) Romans 11: 7-11 12)  
Romans 9: 18-24

**3rdly- If God has Elected some, it only follows that He would have Christ die for them in particular.**

And the Scriptures bear this out. Christ's died for His sheep, for all who believe in Him, for the many, for His people, and all these blessings and benefits are most surely and definitely given to them and conveyed to them in God's appointed time.(13) God has chosen the Elect, and He has designed Christ's death for His Elect in particular.(14) Christ redeems God's elect people by His death, and purchases all that God will savingly apply to their souls, their bodies, and their lives. Romans 8: 32 sums it up well. "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

13) John 10: 15, 16 ; Hebrews 8: 28 14) John 17: 2

**4thly- Those for whom Christ died, God will effectually and irresistibly call to Himself by His Spirit.**

There is the general call of God to men through the preaching of the Word.(15) And then there is the effectual call when the Lord by His Spirit shines His light into the heart and mind, and overcomes the resistant will by a work of grace which changes the bent and direction of the whole soul of a person to seek Salvation through Jesus Christ.(16) A person may not at all understand why he now thinks differently about spiritual things, the Bible, and God's way of Salvation, but because of the power at work in this effectual call, a person is most certainly drawn to Christ, responds to the word preached, and is brought savingly to faith, not by his own power, but God's.(17) Now he can exercise faith and receive all that Christ has done for him, because God caused him to see his need of Christ. Christ and the salvation in Him, become irresistible to him.

15) Matthew 22: 14    16) 2 Peter 1: 3, 4    17) 2 Timothy 1: 9

**5thly- Those who have been effectually called, will most certainly persevere in faith and obedience to the end of their life.**

This is because God's powerful saving grace keeps them in the faith, even through many temptations and difficulties. They may even, for a time fall into grievous sins, but God will faithfully bring them back.(18) The heart of a true Christian is upheld, strengthened, and given grace moment by moment to continue to follow Christ. Because of the greatness of God's grace a true Christian will pray, he will repent, he will continue to pursue righteousness, all because God is faithful to continue and complete the work that He has truly begun.(19) These truths we have come to treasure because God has placed them in His Word.

18) Luke 22: 32    19) Philippians 1: 6