

SEVEN SCRIPTURES YOU NEED TO KNOW

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Several years ago I was sitting in class listening to my professor blather on about something I didn't agree with. I can't remember exactly what the topic was, but I know it had something to do with religion. I don't make a practice of interrupting my instructors every time I don't agree with them, so I tuned him out and began to imagine how I would witness to this professor if we were having a one-on-one conversation and I didn't have a prepared Bible study with me.

To my dismay, I had trouble recalling verses that would explain my beliefs to someone who, like my instructor, knew nothing about what I believed. I went home from class feeling like a failure and worried that I did not know my beliefs well enough to defend them. I immediately began to search the Bible, looking for those familiar highlighted verses that I obviously hadn't memorized. I soon realized the problem was not that I didn't know enough Scripture but that I had no idea where to start explaining my beliefs. With that realization, my focus shifted from memorizing more verses, to understanding the ones I already knew. My goal became a quest to find the smallest number of passages I needed to easily explain what I believed.

The following is a list of Bible verses that came out of this personal quest, with explanations for why I chose them. Using these seven verses, I believe I can explain to any person the basic principles of the Apostolic faith. This list has become like my own personal Bible study that I can take with me wherever I go. I've memorized these verses in this specific order because they are all linked to each other, and each verse triggers my memory to go on to the next one. I know, of course, the entire Bible can't be summarized in as few as seven verses, but my hope is that knowing these seven will help you when you find yourself giving an impromptu Bible study. Use the following list, or make your own list that works for you.

1. Deuteronomy 6:4—“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one .”

This is the foundation of everything: there is only one God! This truth was essential for the Jews because it separated their belief system from those of all the surrounding nations. Likewise, it is essential for Apostolic Pentecostals today because it separates us from all other doctrines. Our faith, our lives, and all of history begins and ends with God, separate, alone, and unequalled in all of time and space and beyond. In any conversation about the nature of God or the Trinity, there is still no argument more powerful than Moses' simple yet profound words: “The LORD our God, the LORD is one.”

2. Genesis 1:1—“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

Despite what science and the rest of the world says, we believe that God created all things.



Genesis 1:1 will spark all kinds of related issues and questions because so much of the world no longer believes it, or only believes parts of it. However, despite what the world says, it is still essential to believe this truth because it affects how one views the rest of the Bible. Any conversation about Deuteronomy 6:4 and the nature of God leads quickly to Genesis 1:1 because it introduces two important things about God's nature: (1) God existed before anything else ["In the beginning God . . ."]; and (2) He is all-powerful, for He created all things. These points can quickly lead to questions about other aspects of God's nature, and specifically the nature of Jesus Christ.

3. John 8:58—“Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.’”

Jesus is God. Period. Not only do we believe Him to be the same God who created the entire universe, but He Himself claimed to be that God. In this verse, Jesus drew a direct parallel between Himself and the Old Testament I AM who revealed Himself to Moses (Exodus 3). There is no mistaking Jesus' intent (the Jews certainly didn't—they tried to stone Him for what they thought was a blasphemous claim). John 8:58 is not the only place where Jesus claimed to be God, but I chose it because it was the first verse that proved for me that Jesus had claimed to be God.

4. John 3:16—“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

This is probably the most quoted Bible verse, but it's still absolutely essential to our doctrine because it tells of God's love for His people. Jesus Christ came and died so our sins could be washed away and we could have eternal life. This is the hope that lies within us, the central tenet of Christianity and a great starting point for any conversation about the gospel message.

5. John 3:5—“Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”

In John 3:16, Jesus said that whoever believes in Him will have eternal life. But He prefaced that truth by saying anyone who wants to be a part of His kingdom must be born again. In John 3:5, He explained exactly what the new birth means: being born of water and of the Spirit. We know He was talking about water baptism and the infilling of the Holy Spirit, which is still the only way to be saved. Those who truly believe in Jesus will do more than just “believe”; they will act on their faith by obeying His Word. John 3:5 also leads beautifully into other important doctrinal verses like Acts 2:38.

6. Matthew 28:19—“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

This verse outlines the mission of the church: to make disciples for Jesus Christ. We are not to



keep this wonderful news to ourselves. Understanding that this is the mission of the church is key to understanding the acts of Jesus and the apostles. This verse can also lead to important conversations about the oneness of God, for we know the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit—in which we are to be baptized—is Jesus.

7. Revelation 22:20—“He who testifies to these things says, ‘Surely I am coming quickly.’

Every Bible study should end with an emphasis on the fact that Jesus is coming back soon. The world must know the hour is urgent and all must be prepared for His coming. I’ve placed this verse last because it is a call to action; anyone who hears that Jesus is coming soon must either accept or reject that fact. Revelation 22:20 also provides the proper response for anyone who is ready to meet Him: “Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”

All Scripture verses are from the New King James Version of the Bible.