

SOLA SCRIPTURA:

IS NOT FAITH ONLY OR GRACE ONLY

By David Lee Burris



Eastern Orthodox @Sola Scriptura

Define **Sola Scriptura**. To me (orthodox writer) it means that all that's necessary for salvation is found in the scriptures, thus we should obey the command of Christ "That which ye have, hold fast till I come". I do not believe the definition of "sola scriptura" means "nothing is worth a thing if its not in the bible."

To discuss Sola Scriptura one must define it.

The thing with sola scriptura is that it has many definitions by many people. It means literally "only scripture" but only scripture for what?

- 1) To me the concept is entirely true if it is defined by prefixing "all that is necessary for salvation is found only in scripture".
- 2) If you add instead "All that is necessary for the Faith (Jude 1:3) is found only in scripture" I would also say it fits perfectly.
- 3) If you add instead "everything in the bible is proven by scripture only" I would agree that's wrong. It is proven by FAITH for instance about the prophecy of Enoch in Jude, but its not hard to have that Faith simply as it is there, and we believe the Epistle is inspired. Another example is "Jannes and Jambres" not mentioned in the OT but mentioned many times in the NT. But again here we have the bible telling us. Orthodoxy makes up names like Noah's wife was called "Na'amah" but Genesis 4:22 is not proven to be her.

Sola Scriptura is about bible fundamentals, like salvation, not peripheral issues. The Catholics add to salvation itself. Further Jesus insisted you keep only what was revealed and add nothing else in Revelation "that which ye have already hold fast till I come." **Revelation 2:25** is repeated in Jude: "The Faith which was once delivered unto the saints." **Jude 1:3**.

A stunningly significant bible verse, where Jesus himself directs the church, at an early stage in history to "keep that which ye have" all the way to his return to Earth, thus an order not to believe all the add-ons false churches teach.

THEOLOGICAL / TERMINOLOGICAL:

1) "Sola Scriptura (Latin, 'by [scripture](#) alone'). The belief that the truths of Christian faith and practice can be and must be established from the scripture alone, without additions from any tradition or development. It is thus in contrast to [Roman Catholicism](#) and [papal](#) definitions of truth in matters of faith and morals (see [INFALLIBILITY](#)), although theoretically such definitions are said to be rooted in scripture." **Encyclopedia.com**

2) "Sola Scriptura—A Definition

By sola Scriptura Protestants mean that Scripture alone is the primary and absolute source for all doctrine and practice (faith and morals). Sola Scriptura implies several things. First, the Bible claims direct revelation from God. As such, it has divine authority. For what the Bible says, God says." **equip.org** (goes on to define: definition, sufficiency, authority, clarity, interpretiveness)

3) "The phrase sola scriptura is from the Latin: sola having the idea of "alone," "ground," "base," and the word scriptura meaning "writings"—referring to the Scriptures. Sola scriptura means that Scripture alone is authoritative for the faith and practice of the Christian. The Bible is complete, authoritative, and true. "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" ([2 Timothy 3:16](#)).

Sola scriptura was the rallying cry of the Protestant Reformation. For centuries the Roman Catholic Church had made its traditions superior in authority to the Bible. This resulted in many practices that were in fact contradictory to the Bible. Some examples are [prayer to saints and Mary](#), the [immaculate conception](#), [transubstantiation](#), [indulgences](#), and [papal authority](#)." **got questions.org**

Sola Scriptura in scripture:

MARK 7:9

"And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition."

2 TIMOTHY 3:15

"And that from a child thou hast known **the holy scriptures**, which are **able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.**"

2 TIMOTHY 3:16

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:" (infallible as inspired word for word)

If the scriptures have all we need for salvation, it means the rites, rituals and traditions that are man-made add-ons can't possibly save & are furthermore therefore proven to be superfluous to salvation.

You must understand that the Roman Catholics & Eastern Orthodox really don't like the concept of "sola scriptura" as it confirms the promise of John 3:16. They want to glue their "add-ons" to the gospel that saves... penances & priestcraft salvation rituals. Basically, they want to deny the concept of a "saving faith." Thus, sola scriptura must be either denied, or modified into a strawman definition so it can then be denied more easily. – Internet Sourcing

Catholics & Protestants Diverge @ Sola Scriptura

The sixteenth century Reformation was responsible for restoring to the Church the principle of sola Scriptura, a principle that had been operative within the Church from the very beginning of the post apostolic age.

Initially the apostles taught orally, but with the close of the apostolic age, all special revelation that God wanted preserved for man was codified in the written Scriptures. Sola Scriptura is the teaching, founded on the Scriptures themselves, that there is only one special revelation from God that man possesses today, the written Scriptures or the Bible.

Consequently, the Scriptures are materially sufficient and are by their very nature (as being inspired by God) the ultimate authority for the Church. This means that there is no portion of that revelation which has been preserved in the form of oral tradition independent of Scripture. We don't possess any oral teaching of an Apostle today. Only Scripture therefore records for us the apostolic teaching and the final revelation of God.

Beginning With The Council of Trent Scripture Wasn't Sufficient

The Council of Trent in the 16th century declared that the revelation of God was not contained solely in the Scriptures. It declared it was contained partly in the written Scriptures and partly in oral tradition and, therefore, the Scriptures were not materially sufficient.

Early Church Leaders and the Apologists held to sola Scriptura

The view promoted by the Council of Trent contradicted the belief and practice of the Early Church. The Early Church held to the principle of sola Scriptura. It believed that all doctrine must be proven from Scripture and if such proof could not be produced, the doctrine was to be rejected.

The Early Church Fathers taught doctrine and defended Christianity against heresies. In doing this, their sole appeal for authority was Scripture. Their writings literally breathe with the spirit of the Old & New Testaments. In the writings of the apologists such as Justin martyr and Athenagoras the same thing is found. There is no appeal in any of these writings, to the authority of Tradition as a separate and independent body of revelation.

Irenaeus and Tertullian both specifically held to sola Scriptura

It is with the writings of Irenaeus and Tertullian in the mid to late second century we first encounter the concept of Apostolic Tradition (tradition handed down in the Church from the apostles in oral form). Irenaeus and Tertullian state emphatically that all the teachings of the Bishops that was given orally was rooted in Scripture and could be proven from the written Scriptures.

Both men give the actual doctrinal content of the Apostolic Tradition that was orally preached in the churches. From this, it can be seen clearly that all their doctrine was derived from Scripture. There was no doctrine in what they refer to as apostolic Tradition that is not found in Scripture.

In other words, the apostolic Tradition defined by Irenaeus and Tertullian is simply the teaching of Scripture.

It was Irenaeus who stated that while the Apostles at first preached orally, their teaching was later committed to writing (the Scriptures), and the Scriptures had since that day become the pillar & ground of the Church's faith. His exact statement is as follows:

"We have learned from none others the plan of our salvation, than from those through whom the gospel has come down to us, which they did at one time proclaim in public, and, at a later period, by the will of God, handed down to us in the Scriptures, to be the ground and pillar of our faith."

Tradition, when referring to oral proclamation such as preaching or teaching, was viewed as the oral presentation of Scriptural truth, or the codifying of biblical truth. There is no appeal in the writings of Irenaeus or Tertullian to a Tradition on issues of doctrine that are not found in Scripture.

Rather, these men had to contend with the Gnostics who were the very first to suggest and teach that they possessed an Apostolic oral Tradition that was independent from Scripture. Irenaeus and Tertullian rejected such a notion and appealed to Scripture alone for the proclamation and defense of doctrine.

The Bible was the ultimate authority for the Church of the Early Church. It was materially sufficient, and the final arbiter in all matters of doctrinal truth.

"Scripture and tradition were for the Early Church in no sense mutually exclusive: kerygma (the message of the gospel), Scripture and Tradition coincided entirely. The Church preached the kerygma, which is found in toto in written form in the canonical books. The tradition was not understood as an addition to the kerygma contained in Scripture but as handing down that." - *Heiko Oberman*

The Early Church definitely operated on basis of sola Scriptura

The Early Church operated on the basis of the principle of sola Scriptura. It was this historical principle that the Reformers sought to restore to the Church. The extensive use of Scripture by the major figures of the Early Church from the very beginning are seen in the following facts:

Irenaeus: He knew Polycarp who was a disciple of the apostle John. He lived from c 130 to 202 AD. He quotes from twenty-four of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament, taking over 1,800 quotations from the New Testament alone.

Clement of Alexandria: He lived from 150 to 215 AD. He cites all the New Testament, books except Philemon, James and 2 Peter. He gives 2,400 citations from the New Testament.

Tertullian: He lived from 160 to 220 AD. He makes over 7,200 New Testament citations.

Origen: He lived from 185 to 254 AD. He makes nearly 18,000 New Testament citations.

By the end of the 3rd century, virtually the entire New Testament could be reconstructed from the writings of the Church Fathers.

The Catholic Church's appeal to Tradition as any authority isn't valid.

The Roman Catholic Church states that it possesses an oral apostolic Tradition which is independent of Scripture, and which is binding upon men. It appeals to Paul's statement in 2 Thessalonians 2:15: "Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle."

Rome asserts that, based on Paul's teaching in this passage, the teaching of sola Scriptura is false, since the Apostle handed on teachings to the Thessalonians in both oral and written form. But what is interesting in such an assertion is that Roman apologists never document the specific doctrines to which Paul is referring which they claim they possess, and which they say are binding upon men.

We defy anyone to list the doctrines to which the Apostle Paul is referring in 2nd Thessalonians 2:15 which he says he committed orally to the church at Thessalonica. The only special revelation man possesses today from God that was committed to the Apostles is the written Scriptures.

This was the belief and practice of the early Church. This principle was adhered to by the Reformers. They sought to restore it to the Church after doctrinal corruption had entered through the door of tradition.

The teaching of a separate body of apostolic revelation known as Tradition that is oral in nature originated not with the Christian Church but rather with Gnosticism. This was an attempt by Gnostics to bolster their authority by asserting that the Scriptures were not sufficient. They stated that they possessed the fullness of the Apostolic revelation because they not only had the written revelation of the Apostles in the Scriptures but also they had their oral tradition, and additionally, the key for interpreting and understanding that revelation.

Just as the Early Church Fathers repudiated that teaching and claim by an exclusive reliance upon and appeal to the written Scriptures, so must we.

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" John 10:27.

Author: William Webster



Church in 1500's was ruled by money, not worship.



Printing the Bible changed everything.



When one scholar read the Bible for the first time he said:

Either this is not the Gospel, or we are not Christians!

A Bible was placed in every church.

How the Reformation Came About: Three Essentials

MILIEU



trouble inside and outside

MESSAGE



sola scriptura ✝ *sola gratia*
sola fide

MEANS



printing press

Roman Catholic and Protestant Emphases in the Reformation

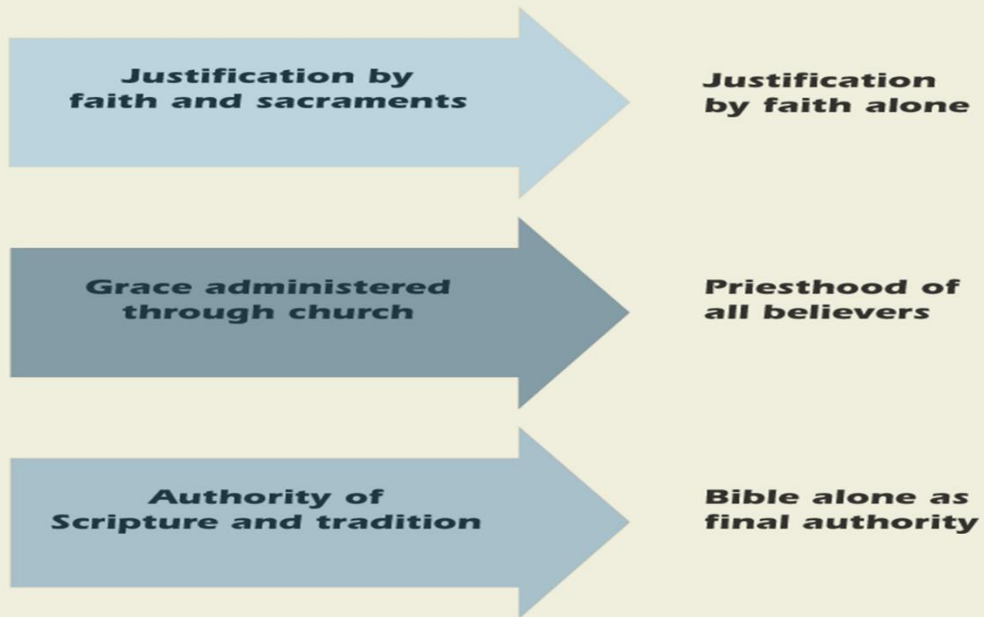


Chart 5

The Three Fundamentals of Protestant Reformation Teaching

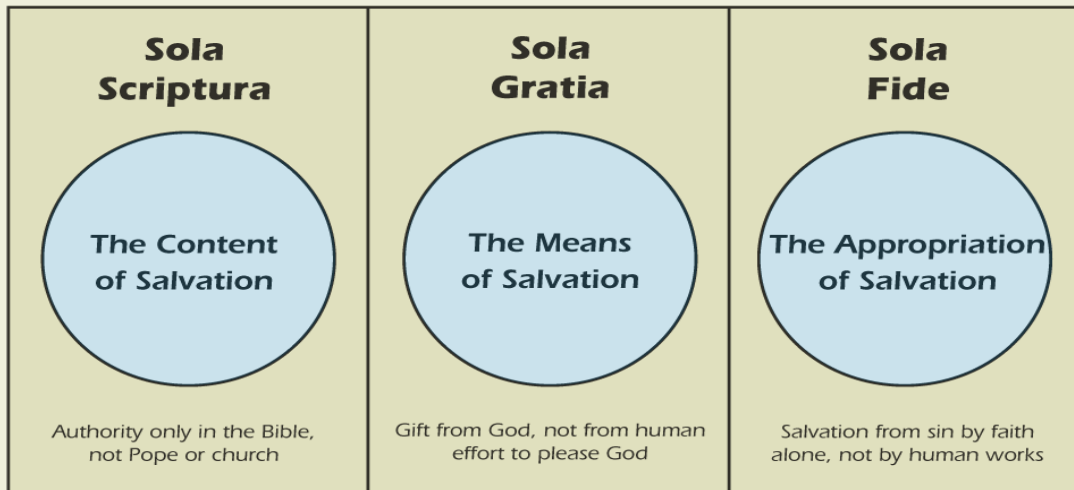


Chart 3

THE PROTESTANT UNDERSTANDING OF SOLA SCRIPTURA

Sola Scriptura—A Definition

By *sola Scriptura* Protestants mean that Scripture alone is the primary and absolute source for all doctrine and practice (faith and morals). *Sola Scriptura* implies several things. First, the Bible is a direct *revelation* from God. As such, it has divine authority. For what the Bible says, God says.

Sola Scriptura—The Sufficiency of Scripture

Second, the Bible is *sufficient*: it is all that is necessary for faith and practice. For Protestants “the Bible alone” means “the Bible only” is the final authority for our faith.

Sola Scriptura—The Authority of Scripture

Third, the Scriptures not only have sufficiency but they also possess *final authority*. They are the final court of appeal on all doctrinal and moral matters. However good they may be in giving guidance, all the fathers, Popes, and Councils are fallible. Only the Bible is infallible.

Sola Scriptura—The Clarity of Scripture

Fourth, the Bible is *perspicuous* (clear). The perspicuity of Scripture does not mean that everything in the Bible is perfectly clear, but rather the essential teachings are. Popularly put, in the Bible the main things are the plain things, and the plain things are the main things. This does not mean — as Catholics often assume — that Protestants obtain no help from the fathers and early Councils. Indeed, Protestants accept the great theological and Christological pronouncements of the first four ecumenical Councils. What is more, most Protestants have high regard for the teachings of the early fathers, though obviously they do not believe they are infallible. So this is not to say there is no usefulness to Christian tradition, but only that it is of secondary importance.

Solo Scriptura—The Interpretiveness of Scripture

Fifth, *Scripture interprets Scripture*. This is known as the analogy of faith principle. When we have difficulty in understanding an unclear text of Scripture, we turn to other biblical texts. For the Bible is the best interpreter of the Bible. In the Scriptures, clear texts should be used to interpret the unclear ones.

- Norman L. Geisler and Ralph E. MacKenzie

What Is Sola Scriptura?

By **Wayne Jackson**

•

There are at least three serious errors—advocated by the prevailing authorities of the Roman Catholic Church—that pertain to the nature of the Scriptures. First, it is contended that the sixty-six books of our common Bibles do not contain the whole of the collection of divine writings. Hence, Catholic Bibles are appended with several extra books known as the Apocrypha.

However, these supplementary books were not a part of the *original* Hebrew Bible. Moreover, they were never sanctioned by Christ, nor by the inspired New Testament writers. Finally, they do not bear the marks of inspiration that would be expected of a divine document; they thus are to be rejected (see **The Apocrypha: Inspired of God?**

Second, Catholic authorities allege that the common person cannot understand the Word of God. There needs to be, therefore, a “clergy” to instruct the “layperson” in terms of what he is to believe and practice.

This concept likewise is void of justification. Paul instructed the Christians in Ephesus to “be not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is” (Ephesians 5:17). The apostle told those saints that by reading his words they could understand those matters pertaining to Christ (Ephesians 3:3-4).

Additionally, the fact that the New Testament epistles were written to ordinary Christians—not to an upper-strata clergy—is, on the face of it, evidence against the papal theory.

Third, Catholicism contends that the canonical Scriptures were never intended to be the final body of authority in determining God’s truth for humanity. Rather, it is argued, “the Bible is not the only source of faith; it is but a dead letter.”

Supposedly, this means that the “tradition of the Church,” as such has been made known across the centuries through the councils and papal voices of the Roman institution, has been divinely intended to supplement Scriptures (see Conway 1929, 76-80). Allegedly, then, religious dogma evolves over the years by means of an expanding body of revealed truth. It is to this third proposition that we direct a sharper focus in this brief discussion.

The allegation that the sixty-six books of Scripture are an incomplete source of divine instruction stands in stark contradiction to the testimony of an inspired apostle. In a letter to Timothy, Paul wrote.

Every scripture is inspired of God, and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness. That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Several terms in this passage warrant amplification.

What Is “Scripture”?

“Scripture” renders the original word *graphe*, found about fifty-one times in the Greek New Testament. The term always refers to a sacred writing. Most commonly it denotes the holy writings of the Old Testament, but the absence of a Greek article in conjunction with *graphe* in this passage “leaves room for other writings that have a right to be called divinely inspired Scriptures” (Hiebert 1958, 100). Without question, the term “Scripture” embraces both Old and New Testaments. See 1 Timothy 5:18 and in 2 Peter 3:16 where the term is used comprehensively of both Testaments.

The Purpose of Scripture

The Scriptures are described as having been intended to make the “man [person] of God complete,” & “furnished completely” for accomplishment of “every good work.” The two terms “complete” (*artios*) and “furnished completely” (*exartizo*—an intensified verbal form of the previous word) suggest the idea of that which is “well fitted for some function, complete, capable, proficient,” the equivalent of “able to meet all demands” (Danker et al. 2000, 136; Balz and Schneider 1978, 159).

The compound form, *exartizo*, carries two ideas: “to finish” or “complete” (cf. Acts 21:5), and to “connect perfectly, fit to perfection” (Spicq 1994, 18).

The point we are making relative to the matter at hand is this: if the Scriptures are capable of making a person complete, and furnishing him completely for every righteous activity, then it cannot be argued that the Bible is but a “dead letter,” inadequate for one’s religious instruction. It must not be contended that the “voice of the church” is imperative—both traditionally and currently—to complete the Christian’s source of knowledge.

Sola Scriptura

That brings us to this matter. A Roman Catholic writer, James Akin, argues there are “practical problems” with the concept of *sola scriptura*. The gentleman disputes the proposition that all matters pertaining to the “faith and practice” of the Christian system must be derived from the Scriptures alone. Similarly, he denies that the individual Christian has the right of “private judgment in the interpretation of the Scriptures.”

In his ambitious effort to disprove the principle of *sola scriptura*, the Roman apologist offers a seven-point presentation that he believes establish the validity of “tradition” authority—also called “magisterium” (teaching authority)—as opposed to the exclusive authority of the Scriptures. Incredibly, in the gentleman’s essay there is not a solitary appeal to the Bible. Rather, the argument is based altogether upon factors which allegedly, from the very nature of the case, negate the concept of *sola scriptura*. In summary fashion, here are his seven points, along with our response.

Most Christians had no access to the Scriptures before the invention of the printing press; hence, the idea of *sola scriptura* cannot obtain where there is no widespread availability of the New Testament documents.

That gospel teaching was not originally circulated in the compact format in which the Scriptures now exist, constitutes no argument at all to negate the undisputed fact that in those early centuries multiplied thousands of people became Christians, grew in the faith, and died with the hope of heaven upon the basis of the simple gospel message. And all of this was achieved without the alleged interpretative skills or authority of popes, cardinals, archbishops, synods, or human credos—which conglomeration did not exist for centuries following the establishment of primitive Christianity.

One must also remember in earlier times, when printed materials were not so readily available, people relied upon the memory faculty of the human mind much more than is the case today. Sufficient gospel truth for human redemption, therefore, was spread abroad—even before New Testament records were completed.

As the New Testament documents were produced & began to be circulated, numerous copies were made, and vast quantities of those were committed to memory. To suggest, then, that the pattern for New Testament belief and practice was unknown in those early ages is to contradict known historical facts.

But reflect upon on the following data which suggest a widespread distribution of the Scriptures:

- Polycarp (ca. A.D. 70-155/60), who lived in Smyrna (Asia Minor) around, in his small epistle to the Philippians, quoted from—or alluded to—no fewer than thirteen of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament.
- Origen (ca. A.D. 185-A.D. 254), whose work was done principally in Alexandria and Caesarea, produced hundreds of writings pertaining to the Bible. In his various works there are contained more than 5,700 quotations from the New Testament.
- Tertullian (ca. A.D. 160-220), who lived in Africa, quoted the New Testament more than three thousand times in his various writings.

This sort of evidence could be multiplied many times over. Bruce Metzger, one of the foremost textual critics of our time, has observed that the New Testament quotations from the “church fathers” are so extensive that if the New Testament were destroyed entirely, it could be reconstructed from these sources alone (1968, 86).

Even more dramatic than the above is the fact that even infidel writers—e.g., Celsus (mid-second century) and Porphyry (early fourth century)—quoted profusely from the Scriptures in their vain attempts to discredit Christianity. How did they come to have access to the sacred writings if these documents were so scarce and so expensive in those days, as to be beyond the grasp of almost everyone?

The truth is, the early Christians copied the Scriptures extensively, and translated them into many different languages (in an age when literary translation was extremely rare). This constitutes powerful evidence for the reality that the biblical documents were perceived by early saints as divine entitlements for the masses & not merely a deposit to be hoarded by a select clerical elite who then would convey “official dogma” to the people.

Even when the Bible became available, copies were so expensive that few could afford them.

This assertion is answered by the data chronicled above.

In those early days, few could read; and so the Scriptures alone would do them little good. The voice of the Church was needed additionally.

This argument is seriously flawed—both logically and historically. The fact that one may not be able to read does not mean he cannot be taught the gospel by trustworthy people. Many who are not technically literate have obeyed gospel truth and enjoyed the benefits of salvation.

The objection which our “senior apologist” friend makes in this regard could be lodged against his own position. How would an illiterate Catholic learn of the official dogma of the Roman clergy if he is unable to read his catechism? And how would the “voice” of the papacy be “heard” by the masses in those times when there were no media outlets of rapid and universal communication?

It is quite incorrect to imply that the masses of people generally have been unable to read. An archaeological artifact, the Gezer Calendar, which dates from the tenth century before Christ, is a schoolboy's exercise. It clearly demonstrates that reading and writing were a part of ancient Israel's culture, even among the youth (Archer 1964, 52). The fact is, archaeology has demonstrated the existence of schools going back at least 2,500 years before the birth of Christ (Kramer 1959, 1ff). Archaeological and literary evidence have shown that in first-century Palestine most folks were conversant with three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek (Gundry 1970, 21).

Even Jesus could read and write (Luke 4:16ff; John 7:15; 8:6,8), though he was raised in a very impoverished family environment (cf. Luke 2:24, with reference to the "poor" offering; see also 2 Corinthians 8:9) and, early-on followed the trade of a carpenter (Mark 6:3). Peter and John, who were only humble fishermen—not scholastics (see Acts 4:13)—could read and write, as demonstrated by their respective contributions to the New Testament collection. The illiterate argument is much ado about nothing.

Unlearned people do not have access to "scholarly" sources, thus whatever knowledge they have is most likely flawed.

By the same token, a Catholic "layperson" could hardly know of the reliability of the dogma received from their clergy. They have no access to the volumes of decisions that have been handed down from the various Councils. How could they possibly assess the numerous controversies that have raged across the centuries in the very bosom of the Roman Church itself?

The truth is, one does not need to have "scholarly" sources to ascertain God's plan of redemption and submit thereto. An honest consultation of the New Testament provides adequate information for instruction regarding how to obtain salvation, the fundamentals of church government, worship procedure, godly living, and such like. While grammatical and historical minutia may be of value in honing the finer points of doctrine, it is not essential to attaining heaven.

Hardworking folks have little time for study, and so they need someone to tell them what to believe.

It requires no more time to study the New Testament than it does to peruse a catechism or listen to a priest recite dogma from some pope or council. Such a line of argumentation is embarrassingly impotent.

Through much of Christian history, people have had improper diets. This lack of adequate nutrition resulted in their brains being unable to function critically. Hence, they could not draw rational deductions from studying the Bible alone.

This argument, quite frankly, is pathetic. If it applies to those who desire to study the Scriptures, but cannot think clearly because of unnourished brains, it applies equally to the instruction received from the Catholic clergy. Why, pray tell, would it be more difficult to comprehend the teaching of the inspired New Testament writers, than it would be to ingest the teachings of uninspired Roman Catholic instructors?

Since a high level of critical skill is necessary for interpreting the Scriptures, and, as most folks do not possess such skill, common sense would dictate that Church officials do their thinking for them.

This final quibble is in the same vein as the previous three, and responses to those matters need not be reiterated here.

Conclusion

We would conclude this discussion with a reference to George Salmon's masterful volume, *The Infallibility of the Church*—a book so powerful in its exposure of Catholic claims, that it has never been answered by papal apologists. In fact, noted Catholic scholar P.J. Toner, who authored the article on "Infallibility" in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, described Salmon's work as "the cleverest modern attack on the Catholic position" of this issue (Toner 1910, 800).

"Cleverest" is an understatement; it is a devastating exposure of Catholic propaganda relative to the "authority" of the Roman Church.

Salmon points out that it is an undeniable historical fact that as the Roman ecclesiastical system evolved, the time came when Catholic clerics surrendered the idea that the doctrine and practice of the Roman Church could be defended by the Scriptures. Hence, by default, the notion arose that "the Bible does not contain the whole of God's revelation, and that a body of traditional doctrine existed in the Church equally deserving of veneration" (Salmon 1959, 28). This is precisely the point that we made earlier in noting the gentleman's total absence of scriptural argumentation.

Ambitiously-driven lusts for release from the authority of the Holy Scriptures has given birth to numerous heretical claims of special revelation from God. *Sola scriptura* remains as the valid procedure for pursuing the Mind of the Lord.

Reformers & Restorers Diverge @ Sola Scriptura

Faith ALONE Will NEVER Save!

“You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only” James 2:24



God's Plan of Salvation

- Hear the Word of God (Romans 10:17)
- Believe Jesus is the Son of God (John 3:16)
- Repent of your sins (Luke 13:3)
- Confess Jesus as Lord (Romans 10:9-10)
- Be baptized for the Forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38)

Water Baptism is Necessary for Salvation

Jesus says so:

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

“He who believes and is baptized will be saved.” Mark 16:16

Peter says so:

“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” Acts 2:38

There is also an antitype which now saves us -- baptism.” 1 Peter 3:21

Ananias says so:

“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” Acts 22:16

Things found in Christ:

- Every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3)
- Forgiveness of sins (Ephesians 1:7)
- No Condemnation (Romans 8:2)
- Grace (2 Timothy 2:1)
- Salvation (2 Timothy 2:10)
- Eternal life (1 John 5:11)

How we get into Christ:

“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Galatians 3:27

“Or do you not know that as many of us were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?” Romans 6:3

How we know baptism puts us into Christ:

“...buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.” Colossians 2:12

Only One Baptism Saves (Ephesians 4:5), Which is Water Baptism (Acts 8:36;10:47).

If “grace only” saves why did Noah build the ark?

Genesis 6:8

But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

Genesis 6:22

Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did.

Hebrews 11:7

By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

Faith is an action word, faith demands obedience. Noah was saved by the grace of God through his obedience.


A Self-Contradicting Belief:

“We believe in salvation by grace alone through faith alone .”

- 1.** “Grace ALONE” cannot allow even ONE condition. Thus, faith cannot be required at all.
- 2.** “Faith ALONE” cannot allow God’s grace to have any part.
- 3.** “Faith alone” does not tell us if any quality or ingredient such as repentance and confession or love is involved.
- 4.** Thus, the common expression is false as well as too vague.

More than one “alone”
cancels out the other

Terry W. Benton


www.facebook.com/answeringreligiouserror

When *Sola Scriptura* is Undermined...



- When the testimony concerning Christ originates outside of scripture
 - Personal experience
 - Extra-biblical books (LDS)
 - Man-made rituals
- When a rational or communal authority presides over scripture
 - Protestant Liberal Criticism
 - Christian Naturalism
 - Papacy
- When Scripture is handled in a way that destroys proper understanding
 - Out-of-context bible verse
 - Applying scripture to personal situation it does not address
 - Applying scripture to suit preconceived doctrinal positions

The All-Sufficiency Of The Scriptures

“All-sufficiency” is a compound term composed of two words: (1) all; (2) sufficiency. “Sufficiency” signifies: enough, equal to the end proposed,” and “all” means: totally, wholly, completely, without limitation. To speak of the “all-sufficiency of the Scriptures” is to say that they are completely equal to the accomplishment of the end for which they were designed by the God of Heaven. We must regard it as axiomatic that: whatever God institutes for specific purposes is always totally adequate for the accomplishment of those purposes. Otherwise, God would not be God. Other articles in this special issue of Guardian of Truth address themselves to: “The Validity of the Restoration Principle” and “The Restoration of Respect for the Authority of the Bible.” If one believes in the infinite wisdom, power, goodness of God, the verbal inspiration & authority of the Scriptures, and in the validity of the “restoration Principle,” he cannot escape the necessity of his embracing the conclusion that the Holy Scriptures are all-sufficient. The premise is irresistible. It never ceases to amaze, when those who profess to accept our first three propositions, theoretically and/or practically deny their obvious conclusion — the postulate that is the subject of this article. Yet, they do!

It should be obvious to them that: to deny, either theoretically or practically, the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures is tantamount to affirming that God was not wise enough to produce a revelation of Himself and His will that would complement man’s nature, capacity, spiritual and fleshly needs in his present environment, and his eternal destiny in the world to come.

On the other hand, if it be acknowledged that God was wise enough to” produce such a revelation, we may conclude that He did not possess the power to do so. If it be admitted that He had the power to do, so, but did not, we are forced to conclude that He did not will to do so. This would impeach His benevolence — His goodness. It is almost universally agreed among believers that man is a responsible and accountable being who will one day answer to God in judgment for “the deeds done in the body” (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:12). Hence, to repudiate the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures would be to impugn the justice of God. Under a system of justice, responsibility and accountability emanate from and their extent determined by a universally available, intellectually intelligible, and totally inclusive standard of human conduct. Therefore, it is with supreme confidence that we affirm the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures with reference to the conviction and conversion of the alien sinner and the sanctification, and eternal salvation of the child of God, believe implicitly, as we do, in the infinite wisdom, power, justice and goodness of God.

Amplifying this point, it should be noted that one who believes in the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures is obliged to acknowledge their authority, unless he is prepared to repudiate the right, of God to rule his life. If he acknowledges the right of God to rule his life, the verbal inspiration and authority of the Scriptures, and human fallibility – the proneness of human beings to err from the Divine standard, he is then compelled to acquiesce in the validity of the “Restoration Principle”; that is, a return to the original, Divine standard in his faith and practice.

The Scriptures Attest Their Own All-Sufficiency

It has been established that the acceptance of the verbal inspiration and authority of the Scriptures demands an acceptance of their all-sufficiency. The Scriptures profess to be Divinely revealed and verbally inspired by the Holy Spirit. Note the following passages:

But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:11, 12).

But as it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost ("the Spirit," ASV) teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual ("words," ASV) (1 Cor. 2:9-13).

The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21).

It has also been established that the recognition and acceptance of the Scriptures as authoritative in the realm of religious faith & practice demand an acceptance of their “all-sufficiency.” Being Divinely revealed and verbally inspired by the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures represent themselves as being infallible, imperishable, and authoritative. The New Testament Scriptures characterize themselves as an inerrant and complete record of the word of Christ, either spoken in His own person while on earth or thru His Holy Spirit inspired apostles and prophets after He ascended to His throne in heaven. They likewise represent themselves as being the standard of eternal judgment. Jesus Christ affirmed the inerrancy and immutability of Scripture in general when He said: “Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture can’t be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?” (Jn. 10:34-26) The expression “the Scripture can’t be broken,” affirms inerrancy and immutability.

It is acknowledged that the quotation of Jesus is from the Old Testament, yet His statement concerning Scripture is an appeal to a general principle governing all of the sacred writings. Jesus made it clear on many occasions that such was true of His words. Note several of these instances:

“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Mt. 24:35). “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48).

“Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things I commanded you. . .” (Matt. 28:18-20). “I testify to every man that heareth the words of the book of this prophecy, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Revelation 22:18,19).

The inspired apostles and prophets of Jesus likewise emphasized the inerrancy, inviolability, and authority of the words which the Lord spoke from heaven through them. They also set them forth as the standard of eternal judgment. Note several examples of this in the following Scriptures:

“If any man among you think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord” (1 Cor. 14:37). “If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:9). “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11). “Whosoever goeth onward, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God.” (2 John 9). “So, speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty” (Jas. 2:12).

On the basis of the preceding considerations, the conclusion is irresistible that: The gospel as God gave it is perfectly adapted to man as God made him & totally adequate for the accomplishment of the purposes for which God gave it, hence “all-sufficient.” To the correctness of this conclusion, Paul & Peter, apostles of Christ, gave their inspired testimony: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16,17). “Grace & peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God & our Savior Jesus Christ, according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (2 Peter 1:2,3).

The All-Sufficiency Of The Scriptures Practically Repudiated By Professed Christians

Many constituents of so-called “Christendom” give lip service to the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures while repudiating the principle in their practice. Roman Catholics do this. They profess to honor the Scriptures as the inspired word of God, but repudiate their all-sufficiency by recognizing two sources of authority, the “written word” and “the unwritten word.” By “unwritten word,” they mean Roman Catholic “tradition.” They believe that “the word” was delivered to the church at the beginning in unwritten form & that she was made the guardian & preserver of this “body of doctrine,” that the church has “infallibly” kept this body of doctrine “free from any admixture of error, from its foundation to the end of the world.”

This is accomplished, they believe, through “tradition.” This body of tradition they call “the deposit of faith,” and they insist that all Scripture be understood and applied by an “analogy of faith.” This simply means Roman Catholic “tradition” supercedes the obvious, literal meaning of any statement of Scripture relative to matters of faith, and morals. This point of view is well illustrated in the decree of the Council of Trent in its fourth session: “No one, relying on his own skill, shall, — in matters of faith, and of morals pertaining to the edification of Christian doctrine, — wresting the sacred Scripture to his own senses, presume to interpret the said sacred Scripture contrary to the sense which holy mother Church - whose it’s to judge the true sense & interpretation of the holy Scriptures — hath held & doth hold; or even contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers. . . .” Joseph-Dixon, Archbishop of Armagh and primate of all Ireland, explains this decree as follows: “The sum of this decree is, that no one is to presume, to interpret the scripture against that sense which the church has held and holds, nor against the unanimous consent of the fathers.” He goes on to say later, “We must not by any means, attach to any text of scripture such a sense, as would be irreconcilable with any portion of the doctrine, which the church teaches” (Introduction to the Sacred Scriptures, pp. 196-198).

In the formation of human creeds as bases of communion and fellowship, protestant denominations, despite their protestations to the contrary, repudiate the all-sufficiency of the revealed word of God. “Sola Scriptura” was one of the mottoes of the “Reformation” of the sixteenth century.

This means “Scripture only,” yet those who originated it were flagrantly guilty of repudiating it in their practice by formulating human creeds around which their followers rallied and upon the basis of which they formed separate communions of professed believers.

We pose the following objections to human creeds in religion: (1) They are unreliable, because they are based on the mere inferences of fallible human wisdom & understanding; (2) they're incomplete and inadequate, because, in the very nature of the case, they can contain no more than the combined wisdom and knowledge of the fallible men (however dignified) who formulate them; (3) they impeach, as we have previously established, the wisdom, power, and/or goodness of God because the sense of necessity that gave them birth is, within itself a repudiation of the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures; (4) they disparage, in the face of their very existence, the revelatory work of the Holy Spirit – i.e., they are formed and promoted on the assumption of the inadequacy of the Holy Spirit's revelation; (5) they aren't apostolic in origin – the apostolic church had only the words of the Holy Spirit; (6) and they are either evil or unnecessary – if they contain only that which Scripture teaches (as denominational scholars insist) they are unnecessary & if they contain less or more than the Scriptures, they are condemned (see Galatians 1:6-12). It is often argued that they are essential to unity. This is absurd. With the formulation of every human creed in history, a new sect has been born. Jesus' prayer for unity (John 17:20,21) was predicated on the words of the apostles as its basis.

Unity was attained in the apostolic age without human creeds, hence why should they be needed now to achieve it?

Modern cults such as: so-called “Jehovah’s Witnesses,” Seventh Day Adventists, Mormons, and so-called “Christian Scientists,” while professing to recognize the Scriptures as inspired of God, repudiate their all-sufficiency by the reverence which they manifest toward the writings of The Watchtower Society, Ellen G. White, Joseph Smith, and Mary Baker Patterson Eddy.

The only course consistent with the all-sufficiency the Scriptures is that expressed in the slogans which animated the churches in days. past: “To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is not light in them (Isa. 8:20); a thus saith the Lord for every act of Christian work or worship; let us call Bible things by Bible names and do Bible things in Bible ways; let us speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent.” Sad it is that brethren once dedicated to this course in religion, seek now for justification of religious faith and practice in a mythical “law of expediency” or smugly excuse obviously non-authorized teaching and practice with a shrug of the shoulders and a glib, “We do many things for which we do not have Scripture.” - *Guardian of Truth*



The “authority of the church” is undoubtedly the basic point of difference between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, with both Luther and Calvin agreeing that God rests His authority in His Word. But both theologians had accepted another basic tenet which cast doubt upon their “authority.” In his book, “Pattern of Authority,” Bernard Ramm discusses this matter in great detail, explaining: “(1) The human reason had come under certain darkening effects from sin; and (2) being fully persuaded by human reason the believer would still have nothing but human faith.” Ramm says, “The truer Protestant principle is that there is **an external principle** (the inspired Scripture) and **an internal principle** (the witness of the Holy Spirit).” This allows their principle of authority to fit their concept of inherited depravity and its solution, the direct operation of the Holy Spirit. But it argues that the Word given by the Holy Spirit was meaningless unless the hearer or reader also had the indwelling Spirit to enlighten and enable one to understand truth. – *Scripture & The Protestant Principle*

SOLA SCRIPTURA:

IS NOT FAITH ONLY OR GRACE ONLY

ONLY CANCELS OUT OTHER

SCRIPTURE ALONE = WRITTEN WORD

