

Sola Scriptura? - Is the Bible Alone Enough? ***(A talk for a patrician-type discussion.)***

Almost all Protestants follow the doctrine of *Sola Scriptura*. This doctrine claims that the BIBLE ALONE is the authority on matters of faith. Fundamentalists will begin their argument by stating, "Let us agree that the Bible is the sole rule of faith."

Unfortunately most Catholics would answer, "OK." But that would be wrong. We must answer with a firm, "NO!" They are really asking you to reject Sacred Tradition and the authority of the church, which predates the Bible, and in some ways may be more important.

Christ left a Church to teach, govern, and sanctify in His name until the end of time. To reject that authority is to reject Christ and His Gospel. Yet, I have had Catholics tell me they never so much as heard of Sacred Tradition -- Capitol S, Capitol T.

We Catholics, like Protestants, accept the Bible as AN authority in matters of faith because it is God's inspired word. However we cannot accept it as the ONLY rule of faith for good reasons.

The first reason should be understood by our Protestant brothers and sisters if they truly believe what they say that Scripture contains the full truth.

Write down these references: Christ institutes the church - Mt 16:13-20, 18:18, Lk 10:16. The church will last for all time - Mt 16:18, 28:19-20, Jn 14:16. Sacred Tradition is to be followed - 2 Thes 2:15, 3:6.

Further, the doctrine of *Sola Scriptura* goes against Scripture. In fact, the Bible confirms that not everything Jesus said and did is recorded in Scripture...

"There are still many other things that Jesus did; yet if they were written about in detail, I doubt there would be room enough in the world to hold the books to record them." (John 21:25) "To (the crowds) he spoke only by way of parables, while he kept explaining things privately to his disciples." (Mark 5:34)

and that we must also hold fast to oral tradition.

"I praise you because you always remember and are holding firm to the traditions just as I handed them to you." (1 Cor 11:2) "Now this "word" is the gospel which we preached to you." (1 Pet 1:25).

In 2 Pet 3:15-16 we are warned that Sacred Scripture can be difficult to interpret, and this implies the need for a Teaching Authority. He says, regarding Paul's letters, "There are certain passages in them hard to understand. The ignorant and the unstable distort them (just as they do the rest of Scripture) to their own ruin."

Yet, to the adherents of *Sola Scriptura*, every person is his own Pope, which may explain why there are so many different *Sola Scripture* religions, each teaching a different version of the "truth."

Sola Scriptura goes against history as well. As we know from prior discussions, the Bible as we know it did not exist until the third century, and it was the Church which determined which ancient writings were and were not Scripture. The idea that the Bible alone is the only source of divine revelation was almost unheard of for about 1,500 years before the Reformation.

Why are Protestant and Catholic Bibles different? The Catholic Bible is based on the Septuagint which was the work of 72 Jewish scholars -- according to tradition, six from each of the 12 tribes -- completed around 200 BC in Alexandria, Egypt, in Greek. Greek was the prevailing language of the time as Hebrew was a dying language. This is the Bible used by Jesus, his disciples and the early Christians. The Protestant Old Testament is based on the Palestinian canon about 100 AD. At the council of Hippo in 393 and again at Carthage in 397 AD, the Church declared the 46 books of the Alexandrian canon as the canon for the OT. Again, this was not seriously challenged for the next millennium until the Reformation.

Martin Luther's contention that those seven books should be rejected -- Wisdom, Sirach, Judith, Baruch, Tobit and 1 and 2 Maccabees, as well as parts of Daniel and Ester, was chiefly based --so he said -- on the fact that no Hebrew versions existed. However, research into the Dead Sea Scrolls found at Qumran discovered ancient Hebrew copies of some of the disputed books. If your Bible contains those 7 books you follow Jesus and the early Church. If your Bible omits the seven books, you follow the non-Christian Jews at Jamnia, and Martin Luther, a man who also wanted to throw out James, Esther, and Revelation and who deliberately added the word "alone" to his version of Romans 3:28. I ask you, "Which Bible contains more Truth?"

Historically the Catholic Church used her authority to determine which books belonged in the Bible and which did not, and to assure us that everything in the Bible is inspired. Apart from the Catholic Church, we simply have no way of knowing. Logically, Protestants should not quote from the Bible at all, for they have no way of determining which, if any, books are inspired, unless, of course, they accept the teaching authority of the Catholic Church.

To summarize, it is unfortunate that many Catholics so readily buy into the idea of *Sola Scriptura*. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (Ch 2, Art 2) tells us this:

- Ÿ 96. What Christ entrusted to his apostles, they in turn handed on by their **preaching** and writing, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit....
- Ÿ 97. Sacred Tradition **and** Sacred Scripture make up a single sacred deposit of the Word of God....
- Ÿ 98. The Church ... transmits to every generation ... all that she believes.
- Ÿ 100. The task of interpreting the Word of God authentically has been entrusted solely to the Magisterium of the Church....