

**I. Introduction.**

**II. The Bible alone is our authority in religious matters.**

- A. The Bible is infallible and inerrant. II Tim. 3:16a II Pet. 1:20-21 Deut. 8:3b**
- 1. The Bible is not merely a human document. It is “God breathed”.**
  - 2. God’s character demands that His Word be inerrant. John 17:17 Ps. 119:160 Pr. 30:5 Titus 1:2 Heb. 6:18 Ro. 3:4**
  - 3. The Holy Spirit guided the human authors through whose personalities Scripture has come to us. II Pet. 1:20-21**
  - 4. Every Word of Scripture is inspired, not merely the big ideas. Mt. 5:18-18 4:4**
  - 5. The Lord has guided the process of the preservation, recognition, and translation of His Word for His people.**
  - 6. We need the help of the Holy Spirit to understand Scripture. I Co. 1:18 2:14**
  - 7. The teaching of Scripture is clear and understandable by ordinary Christians.**
  - 8. While the Bible is infallible, not every interpretation of Scripture is infallible.**
- B. Scripture is sufficient. II Tim. 3:16b-17**
- 1. Scripture is necessary: General revelation in creation is not enough. Ro. 1:20ff**
  - 2. Scripture tells us what we need to know about God. II Tim. 3:16 4:3**
  - 3. The Bible tells us how to be saved (through faith in Christ). II Tim. 3:15 Jo. 5:39**
  - 4. God’s Word tells us how to run Christ’s church -- worship, offices, missions. II Tim. 3:17 4:1-5 I Tim. 3:1-15**
  - 5. The Bible tell us how to live holy lives in God’s service – family, vocation, etc.**
- C. Scripture is powerful.**
- 1. The Bible contains timeless truth which transcends history and culture. Isa. 40:8**
  - 2. God’s Word always fulfills God’s purpose. Is. 55:11**
  - 3. God’s Word gives spiritual life. Deut. 8:3 John 6:63**
  - 4. God’s Word is life-transforming. Heb. 4:12 Ps. 19:7-9**
  - 5. Scripture is glorious. Ps. 119**
- D. How can you be sure the Bible is God’s Word?**
- 1. Can you “prove” the Bible to be true using human science and reason?**
  - 2. The Holy Spirit bears witness. I Co. 2:12-15 John 14:26**
  - 3. God provides confirming evidence.**
    - a. Unity of the Bible. Luke 24:27**
    - b. Uniqueness of the Bible in supernatural beauty and quality. Ps. 19:8-10**
    - c. Fulfillment of Bible prophecy.**
    - d. Moral perfection of Scripture. Ps. 19:11**
    - e. The Bible has withstood all attacks throughout history.**
    - f. The Bible has transformed millions of lives. Ps. 19:7**
  - 4. Let the Scripture speak for itself! II Ti. 4:2**

**III. Don’t put anything in the place of His Word.**

- A. Some elevate fallible human reason above Scripture. Col. 2:8**
- B. Some put other religious beliefs on the level of the Bible. Lev. 18:3f Jo. 14:6 Acts 4:12**
- C. Some seek new revelation beyond the Scriptures. Dt. 18:20-22 Eph. 2:20 He. 1:1ff**

**D. Some add human traditions to Scripture.**

1. The Scribes and Pharisees added their traditions to God's Word. Mark 7:6-8
2. The Roman Catholic church elevates fallible human authority (tradition, councils, and offices) to the level of Scripture.
3. When the reformers began to study the Bible, they discovered that many teachings of the Roman Catholic church contradict Scripture.
  - a. The sinlessness, perpetual virginity, bodily ascension and mediation of Mary. Ro. 3:10-12 Heb. 4:15 Mt. 12:46 I Tim. 2:5
  - b. Purgatory, indulgences, penance, and the treasury of merit. Eph. 2:8-9 Luke 23:39-43
  - c. Worship and veneration of saints, relics, and icons. Ex. 20:4-5
  - d. Celibacy of the priesthood. Matt. 8:14 I Co. 9:5 I Tim. 3:2ff
  - e. The Mass as a repeated sacrifice of Christ. Heb. 7:27 9:29 10:10
  - f. No possible assurance of salvation. I Jo. 5:13
4. Protestant churches also have traditions which contradict God's Word.
5. Some misuse doctrinal and confessional statements.
6. We must never stop reforming as we judge our beliefs, practices and traditions against the standard of Scripture.

**E. Some follow men (religious heroes). I Cor. 3:4-5**

**IV. The Bible reveals the way of salvation -- which is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. II Tim. 3:15**

**A. Sola Gratia: We are saved by God's grace alone.**

1. All people are spiritually dead in sin. Eph. 2:1f Rom. 3:10-12,23 8:7-8
2. We deserve nothing but God's wrath. Rom. 6:23a
3. Salvation is God's gracious work. Ro. 3:24 Eph. 1:3-4 2:4-5 Jo. 1:12-13 I Jo. 5:1
4. This sets biblical Christianity against every other religious system.

**B. Sola Fide: We are saved by faith alone.**

1. We are justified by means of faith. Romans 3:28 5:1 Gal. 2:17 Gen. 15:6 Hab. 2:4
2. Justification by faith remains a controversial doctrine. Gal. 1:8

**C. Solo Christo: We are saved through Christ's work alone.**

1. There is no other mediator between God and men. I Tim. 2:5
2. We are saved through the work of Christ. Romans 8:3-4 3:25-26 I Pet. 3:18a
3. God gives us the perfect merit of Christ. Phil. 3:8-9 Rom. 5:18b
4. This also sets biblical Christianity apart from every other religion.

**D. Soli Deo Gloria: To God alone be the glory!**

1. The only difference between the saved and the lost is God's grace. I Cor. 1:30-31
2. The highest end in the universe is the glory of God. I Cor. 10:31 Romans 11:36

**V. Concluding applications: God speaks to you. Ps. 1 Dt. 8:3 Acts 17 Eph. 6:17 Jude 1:3-4**

**Discussion questions.**

1. Why is the Bible authoritative?
2. How have some replaced the Bible as our sole authority in matters of religious faith?
3. What are some errors of Roman Catholicism which were corrected by the Reformation?
4. How can we know the Bible is God's Word?
5. What does the Bible teach about the way of salvation?