

Sola Scriptura Examined

Introduction

I. What About Scripture and Tradition?

- A. The Church of Rome claims special divine and infallible authority for tradition

“In a special sense, there is but one source of revealed truth and this source is the divine Tradition. By this is meant the body of revealed truth handed down from the Apostles through the ages and contained in the doctrine, teaching and practice of the Catholic Church. As defined by the Council of Trent, this includes both the Scriptures and the unwritten oral traditions. It is the Church in her living magisterium, ‘the holder of Tradition,’ *which gives life to Scripture*” (Catholic Encyclopedia, italics added).

Vatican II: “It is clear that sacred tradition, sacred Scripture, and the teaching authority of the Church, in accord with God’s most wise design, are so linked and joined together that one cannot stand without the others.”

The Roman Catholic Church affirms one of two positions

Tradition II – Scripture and Tradition as equal and authoritative supplementary sources of revelation.

Tradition III – the teaching office of the Church is the real source of revelation

- B. Many evangelicals have abandoned tradition altogether, under the banner of “The Bible Alone.”

Tradition 0 position

- C. Biblically speaking there is good tradition
2 Thess. 3:6; 1 Cor. 11:2 (cf. 11:23; 15:3)

- D. Biblically speaking there is bad tradition
Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:1-6; Gal. 1:14; Col. 2:8

- E. The Protestant view of Scripture and Tradition
Tradition I Position–

II. What Do We Mean “The Bible Alone”?

- A. Many evangelicals have abandoned the Protestant view of “The Bible Alone” in favor of an individualistic version of “The Bible Alone.”
The **Tradition 0** position.

B. When we say “The Bible Alone” we mean the same thing as when we say “Faith Alone.”

C. “The Bible Alone” in the Reformation

III. The Real Issues of *Sola Scriptura*: The Church, Authority and Epistemology

A. The Church and Authority

The Word of God alone is inspired
2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21

The Word of God alone is infallible
God cannot lie (Num 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29; Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18).
All of God’s words are true, without error of falsehood (2 Sam. 7:28; Psa. 12:6; 119:89, 96; Jn. 17:17).

The Word of God alone is authoritative revelation
Isa. 8:20; 1 Thess. 2:13

The authority of the Bible, therefore, is in what it *is* and what it *does*
Ontological and functional
2 Tim. 3:16-17; Psa. 19:7-10

The Word of God alone is sufficient
It is wholly sufficient for spiritual birth (salvation)
1 Pet. 1:23; Jas. 1:18; Luke 16:31

It is wholly sufficient for spiritual life
Deut. 32:47; 1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Matt. 4:4; 2 Pet. 1:3-4

The relationship between the Church and the Bible
1 Tim. 3:15

B. Epistemology

1. Roman epistemology

2. Protestant epistemology