

THE FIVE SOLAS ~ SOLA SCRIPTURA

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us. (2 Th 3:6)

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. (Col 2:8)

You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (2 Ti 3:14-17)

Introductory

Robert Godfrey remarks that this sola was one of the two main points of departure between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants:

1. How a man is made right with God? Justification
2. What is the source of religious truth for God's people? Bible

The RC accused Protestants of being heretics, but now, 'departed brethren'; Protestants countered that RC had departed long before 1517.

What Sola Scriptura Does and Does Not Mean

Does not mean:

1. All truth is found in the Bible, from soup to nuts
2. All revelation has been deposited in the Bible
3. All Scripture is equally clear
4. No need of the illumination of the Spirit
5. No need for a teaching ministry (Amish and Quakers)
6. No need of the church to be the pillar and support of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15), to exalt Scripture and point men to the light

Does mean: All things necessary for salvation (faith and life) are taught clearly in the Bible alone, for ordinary believers with ordinary means to discover. The oral teaching of the apostles is granted, but that is not the point. Where does Scripture direct us to depend on a continued oral tradition plus Scripture? It doesn't; in fact, Peter directs us from his experience on the mount to the Bible.

Roman Catholic Response:

Review Peter's summary

The Roman Catholic Sola: *Sola Ecclesia*

Assert that Scripture Alone is insufficient and that we need (and are given) tradition and the teaching authority of the Church

1. Scripture alone insufficient in **authority** – the need of papal authority to augment
2. Scripture alone insufficient in **scope** – the need for tradition and decrees of an infallible papal see to augment
3. Scripture alone insufficient in **clarity** – the Bible needs reinterpretation

Vatican 2: “It is clear, therefore, that sacred tradition, sacred Scripture, and the teaching of the Church, in accord with God’s most wise design, are so linked and joined together that one cannot stand without the others, and that all together and each in its own way under the action of the one Holy Spirit contribute effectively to the salvation of souls.”

For Rome, it is not 3 but 1, neither Scripture, nor tradition, but church authority: sola Scriptura vs. Sola Ecclesia. “The Scriptures are not authentic except by the authority of the Church.” (John Eck) Pope Pius IX in the 1st Vatican Council in 1870, said, “I am tradition.” The early churchmen are cited as supporting the centrality of the Roman Bishop. Augustine’s line is a favored one: “Rome has spoken, the matter is settled.” That was when the Bishop agreed with Augustine. But when he didn’t, Augustine sang a different stanza: “Christ has spoken, the matter is settled.” See Robert Godfrey, *Sola Scriptura*, pp. 12-13, 30.

Conclusion: The RC approach is a synergistic approach to salvation, a Christ plus, faith plus, and grace plus. Their commitment to Scripture plus should not be surprising as they labor under a world-view dominated, not by the Christ of Scripture, but by the church as savior and repository of grace, truth, and authority. We will look more fully to the Bible’s own view of itself and what the early church actually did say about the Bible, and that it was Rome who is to be charged with novelty and not the reformers. We will also consider the organic connection between Christ, His Word, and His salvation, and why we must not trust anything less than the Word of His salvation!