

Why the Bible cannot be the only source of Christian authority

"Sola Scriptura" contradicts Sacred Scripture

Here are some of the reasons why the Protestant claim that the Bible and the Bible alone is the only source of Christian authority ("Sola Scriptura") does not hold up. The doctrine of "Sola Scriptura" was invented by Martin Luther in the 1500's as a justification for his break with the Church that Jesus himself had vested with his own divine authority.

1) This idea is not found in the Bible. While the Bible is authoritative, it nowhere says that it is the *only* authority we should rely on. Rather, it says just the opposite:

- a. Some Scriptures are hard to understand and easily distorted.

"In them there are some things hard to understand that the ignorant and unstable distort to their own destruction, just as they do the other scriptures." 2 Peter 3:16

- b. We need the living tradition of the Church to guide us in understanding the Scriptures

"So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him." Acts 8:30, 31

Peter writes: *"we have the prophetic word made more sure. You will do well to pay attention to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation..."* 2Peter 1:19-20

- c. When you remove the authority of the Church in interpreting Sacred Scripture, you can use bible passages, taken out of context, to support any number of contradictory doctrines. This is exactly the situation we have in the 30,000+ protestant denominations today that all claim the Bible as their only authority, even while they disagree with each other what the Bible really teaches about basic Christian doctrine.

2) Jesus gave his authority to the Apostles and his church, which predates the New Testament.

"As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." John 20:21

"Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Mt 18:18

"I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Lk 22: 29-30

"He who hears you hears me, and he who rejects you rejects me." Lk 10:16

3) The Bible itself acknowledges the authority of the Church to settle disputes and guard truth

"If he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector." Mt 18:17

"That through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known... according to the eternal purpose... realized in Christ..." Eph 3: 9-10

The Church is *"the pillar and foundation of truth"* 1 Timothy 3:15

4) Without the authority of the Church there would be no New Testament and we could not know which books should be in the Bible

It was the Church that established the criteria for determining which books would go in the New Testament. Without the authority of the Church, there would be no New Testament and the books of the Old Testament would be determined solely by the authority of Jewish tradition (which does not even acknowledge Jesus).