

Sola Scriptura

Definition and Importance

What does this term “sola scriptura” actually mean? A simple definition

The Bible alone is our only ultimate and infallible source of authority for salvation, faith and practice.

It is our final court of appeal for all doctrine and practice. As we will shortly see, Catholics often misunderstand and by assuming that Sola Scriptura means we regard the Bible as the source of ALL truth. This is clearly not the case, as evidenced by Martin Luther’s appeal at his trial – where he said that in order to recant he needed to be convinced by the testimonies of Scripture *or evident reason*.

By Bible, I mean the 66 books of the OT and NT, and by authority I am talking about infallible authority.

Sola Scriptura does not mean that we do not regard any other authority or source of truth. We do not regard any other source as being infallible.

What SS is not

1. Not a claim that the Bible contains all knowledge
2. Not a denial of the Church’s authority to teach truth
3. Not a denial that God’s Word at times, has been spoken. (oral)
4. Is not a rejection of tradition
5. Is not a denial of the HS in guiding the church

Scripture alone does not mean ME ALONE

Many **critics of sola scriptura** assume that SS was ‘invented’ by the reformers. We can confidently rest in the truth that it begins in the Bible itself.

1 Tim 3:15-17

*“... and how from childhood you have been acquainted with **the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.***

*¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ **that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.***

What about Jesus and the Apostles?

Peter refers to Paul’s writings as Scripture in 2 Peter.

Jesus treated the Word of God as a source of authority that cannot be broken.

Yes, we need teachers and preachers and evangelists and other gifted members of the body, but all of us together depend on the reliable truth of God’s Word. A person can get saved with no explanation or no intermediary, by the Word of God alone.

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- Look at what Jesus said. Matt 15:3-6 *So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God.*

Question

IF apostolic authority functioned the way the RCC position holds, would Luke have called the Berean Christians more noble than those in Thessalonica? See Acts 17:10-11

The Roman Catholic position (as in the catechism)

96 What Christ entrusted to the apostles, they in turn handed on by their preaching and writing, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to all generations, until Christ returns in glory.

97 "Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture make up a single sacred deposit of the Word of God" (DV 10) in which, as in a mirror, the pilgrim Church contemplates God, the source of all her riches.

98 "The Church, in her doctrine, life and worship, perpetuates and transmits to every generation all that she herself is, all that she believes" (DV 8 # 1).

99 Thanks to its supernatural sense of faith, the People of God as a whole never ceases to welcome, to penetrate more deeply and to live more fully from the gift of divine Revelation.

100 The task of interpreting the Word of God authentically has been entrusted solely to the Magisterium of the Church, that is, to the Pope and to the bishops in communion with him.

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SS and the Reformation

Conditions during the Reformation

Scriptures, Magisterium AND Sacred Tradition all are sources of revelation from God, all treated equally – on the same level of authority.

**If people do not have a Bible in their hands, guess what gains dominance??

As long as the Scriptures were in Latin, they were inaccessible to the general population.

People were pretty much dependent on the clergy for the welfare of their souls.

And what was the clergy preaching and teaching at the time?

Salvation via the Seven sacraments

simony was rampant

Indulgences sold for freedom from purgatory (a la Tetzal)

Extra-biblical Doctrines (immaculate conception, praying to the saints, infallibility of the pope, etc.)

Here is an example of how one newly minted RCC author defended Scriptures PLUS tradition

Michael Coren: {author of Why the Catholics are Right)

The Scriptures clearly acknowledge that they alone can never be sufficient for Christians – the Gospel of John states (quote John 20:30-31) and the incident between Philip and the eunuch.. Do you understand what you are reading?” Obviously Michael Coren confuses sufficiency with clarity.

The Bible never states that it is the sole source of Christian truth. P 115 – Why Catholics are Right

Michael Coren is not a theologian. He is a popularist author and commentator. There are far better and more rigorous arguments than his.

Has the RCC changed over time? Here is what Vatican II states.

From Vatican II

It is clear therefore 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, 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.

With this three legged stool approach, which, of the three sources of truth do you suppose becomes the dominant source? The Church. It decides on all matters. Correct interpretation, which traditions are authentic

So What about the Reformation?

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1. The pre-Reformers voices were echoing throughout Europe
 - a. Wycliffe, Lollards, Waldensians and Hus were all questioning the authority of the church.
 - b. In the meantime the printing press had been invented. (or should we say, popularized), the Chinese were actually the inventors)
 - c. Erasmus, a Catholic priest has produced a Greek and Latin text.
 - d. Martin Luther uses Erasmus’s Greek text (known as the Textus Receptus) to produce the German Luther Bible. Luther includes the Apocrypha, which in his view did not belong in the Canon but was valuable for reading.

What is the difference between the RCC Bible and Ours?

Protestant Bible has 66 books

RCC Bible has 73 books.

The deuteroconon (ie. "second canon") is a set of seven books — Sirach, Tobit, Wisdom, Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees, and Baruch, as well as longer versions of Daniel and Esther

IS there any harm in reading these books? No.

Why don't we include them?

Big topic. But here are some reasons.

1. The apocrypha teaches some things that contradict other Scriptures
 - a. Works salvation
 - b. Purgatory
 - c. Praying to the dead
 - Etc
2. Never cited in the NT
3. Never accepted as canon by the Jews.
4. It ended up only in the Greek Septuagint. When this happened, I don't know.
5. They don't show up on any canonical list till the late 4th century.