

THE BIBLE ORDERS US TO TAKE IT AS ONLY RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY

SOLA SCRIPTURA IS BIBLICAL

To be a Roman Catholic involves accepting tradition that is declared infallible, given by a God who cannot make mistakes, by the Church and scripture (the Bible) as the truth that God wants us to believe. This kind of tradition is spelled with a capital T. It and the Bible have equal authority. When tradition is being questioned the Church responds by making a dogma of it to protect it so it becomes more infallible than before. Funny that the Church has infallible tradition and was unable to officially have an inerrant Bible but had one, the Vulgate, with many corruptions and deletions and insertions? The Bibles the Church has depended on in the past prove that it is not infallible.

Contrary to the teaching of the Roman Church the only thing that Christian revelation says has the right to tell us what God wants us to believe and do is the Bible. The only Bible texts that are cited as proofs by non-Catholics to prove that the Bible is the only rule of faith are, Matthew 15:1-12; Luke 16:29; John 20:31 and Acts 17:11 and 1 Thessalonians 5:21 and 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 and Hebrews 1:1-3.

Romans has Paul telling the believers in Jesus in Rome that they were completely good and complete in their knowledge of the faith and fit to guide anybody. While this does not say scripture alone has authority, it does say the early Church had all knowledge. Anything then that cannot be clearly traced back to the early Church is to be rejected. That means the papacy is out! And prayers to Mary as something special! They are out too!

The Apostle in Galatians 3:28 wrote, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." The distinctions that are so important to most people should be left outside the worshipping Church that comes together in Jesus. Thus there should be no priests and bishops and popes with their dignities and ranks and alleged power of infallibility. So what is infallible then? Then scripture.

Matthew 15:1-12 has Jesus protesting against Jewish tradition indicating that scripture alone has authority from God. An example he used was when the Jews annulled the command to honour your father and mother by allowing a man who dedicated all his money to God, that is the Temple, to let them do without. The latter was a rule from tradition and the Jewish traditions were believed by them to come from Moses or another prophet for the Jews never taught that it was right to contradict God. They thought God made the honour your father rule but like any rule there could be exceptions just like God allowed killing of homosexuals and adulterers though he forbade taking life. The Law itself makes exceptions within itself. So Jesus condemned the rule that you could leave your parents wanting for the sake of giving your money for God DESPITE it not being intended to contradict the word of God and despite it being understood as complementing and explaining the word of God and it being thought to be the word of God itself in some sense. The claim of some that the rule about the money allowed a man to keep the money to himself though it belonged to the Temple bears no relevance. That is an abuse of the rule. If a man vowed his money to the Temple he had no right to use it himself. Jesus does not mention the abuse. He has the men who did not abuse the rule but gave their money to the Temple in mind for why would he talk as if he never meant the abusers? He doesn't give that impression that they were what was in his head.

Jesus was against traditions that allegedly agreed with the word of God or interpreted it for you. Jesus picked one example. But what about the vast majority of Jewish traditions that were easy to keep and seemed reasonable? He condemned all the traditions across the board. This means that only scripture alone should be regarded as the authority that requires obedience. Jesus then plainly told us that the doctrines of Rome, like priests having powers and praying to Mary, are heresies. We must ignore tradition no matter how reliable it seems and listen to the written word of God. By implication, if the Old and New Testaments are scripture as Christianity teaches then we must obey them alone.

The Jewish leaders followed both tradition and the Old Testament scriptures. The Catholic Mass comes from

Catholic tradition for there is no evidence that priests have the power to offer the sacrifice of the Mass from the Bible. In Matthew 23:2,3 Jesus tells the people to obey the scribes and the Pharisees and all they teach but not to copy them. Jesus then here was encouraging their tradition as well for that was a part of their religious practice and they were strict about it. But in Matthew 15 he said that they taught the ideas of men as doctrines from God and if they contradict the word of God with their tradition they prefer their tradition instead and condemned this as evil. How can these two assertions be made to fit together?

Two answers are possible.

Jesus meant that you obey the scribes and Pharisees even when they teach false doctrine for it is safer to listen to them than not to for now and this is expediency and not an indication that tradition is good or safe.

Jesus meant that you obey the scribes and the Pharisees as long as they explain the scriptures, the Old Testament, but not their traditions.

Neither answer allows us to make tradition equal to the Bible.

The scribes and Pharisees were only adhering to traditions they didn't make themselves. There was every reason why they thought the traditions must be the word of God too for just because something is tradition doesn't mean it's wrong. Then the Catholic can't argue, "When Jesus condemned tradition he condemned them for making things up as they went along not tradition like our Catholic tradition that has been handed down from previous generations for the Church can't be blamed for making them up now even if it has done."

Most of the traditions were not inventions but reasoned from the Old Testament. Jesus was not condemning the Jewish traditions because he thought they were wrong. They couldn't have been all wrong. What he was against was making human reasoning and interpretation equal to the authority of the Old Testament scriptures. The Roman Catholic Church certainly teaches that its own tradition is equal to the Bible, Old and New Testaments both. And it claims that much of this tradition is just what was practiced from the start of the Church and was not reasoned or developed from embryonic and undeveloped doctrines in the Bible. If Jesus condemned traditions created as deductions from scripture how much more would he condemn traditions from the constant practice of the Church? And the Church knows fine well that that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin and her assumption into Heaven and prayers to saints to name a few cannot even be traced to the first few generations after the apostles never mind the apostles themselves even though the Church claims that God stopped revealing his word with the death of the last apostle. The Church has made it binding irrevocable dogma that it doesn't give new revelations but claims it only clarifies existing revelation. That is a bare-faced lie.

Some say it was different for the Catholic Church to have and follow tradition and declare it equal to the Bible for unlike the Jews Catholicism is blessed with infallibility and Christ promised to look after his Church forever. But Catholicism doesn't use its infallibility much. It was only used three times in the twentieth century when Pius XI declared contraception wrong, Pius XII said that Mary was assumed into Heaven and John Paul II declared that the Church had no authority to ordain women. Most Catholic tradition is still out there circulating around without the full stamp of infallibility.

In Luke 16, Jesus tells the story of the rich man and Lazarus to drive home the point that only the Bible is needed to get the word of God. The rich man goes to Hell to feel the torment of fire forever and Lazarus is saved and happy. The rich man's pain is so bad that he madly desires a mere drop of water on his tongue. He asks for Lazarus to be raised from the dead to warn his brothers about the torment of Hell so that they might be avoided. He is told that his brothers don't need anybody to rise from the dead for they have the Law and the Prophets. So the Old Testament is sufficient. Catholics say this means the Bible shouldn't have the New Testament if the Old Testament is enough. So does that entitle them to ignore what Jesus taught? The New Testament claims that its message is in the Old Testament and that the gospel is in it. All the New Testament does is bring that out but it is not necessary. Nevertheless it is the word of God too according to non-Catholic Christianity which has no problem in accepting anything in this paragraph.

To stress the point that only the Old Testament is enough Jesus says that somebody rising from the dead to persuade bad people to repent is a waste of time when they have the scriptures. Then they have no excuse. He is saying he will not send visions and miracles to persuade people to turn to God. He will not send them even to

draw people to the scriptures. That is people's own affair. Anybody then that does not study with and learn from the scriptures will be held accountable for it. Jesus is saying that the scriptures stand for themselves without miracles to draw attention to them and or verify them.

Would that suggest that we have a memory here of a tradition that Jesus never did miracles? I think so. But Christians would say that Jesus is saying his miracles were predicted in the Old Testament. Therefore he is only doing them to obey and uphold the Old Testament. They would have to argue then that miracles such as those of Lourdes and Fatima and Medjugorje and Garabandal, in short the miracles reported by the Catholic Church are not prophesied. They would have to conclude that these miracles are precisely the kind of miracles Jesus said are useless and therefore not from God. They are as useless as raising Lazarus from the dead to plead with sinners to repent.

When Jesus said even a saint rising from the dead with God's message is useless and not even worth thinking about when the scriptures are there we know that he indicated that less impressive things such as tradition and miracles of healing and apparitions are even more useless and beneath divine dignity. By doing them God would be denying the sufficiency of the scriptures.

Acts 1:1 has the writer saying he wrote a first book that covered all that Jesus said and did. He is referring to the Gospel of Luke. Nobody thinks he meant literally all. He meant all we need to know. There is no contradiction with the John gospel which says Jesus did things that are not written about. Luke covers moral and ethical material that John leaves out. Luke obviously would not have considered the stories in John which he does not have to matter. John is in a way a denial that Luke has value.

John 20:31 says that the Gospel of John alone is enough for salvation and belief in Jesus. The verse goes, "Jesus did many other miraculous wonders in the presence of his disciples which are not recorded in this book. But I have written of the other signs so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God so that by believing you may have life in his name". In other words, it gives enough evidence for one to base belief on and be saved by that belief coupled with repentance. When John is enough and when John appeals to other scripture, but only from the Bible, as scripture it implies that there is no need for anything outside the Bible. Catholics say this interpretation infers that no Bible book is needed but the gospel of John. But there is no problem with that. John can be taken as a summary of the important and essential Bible teachings. God can give us extra information if he wants and that is what he is supposed to have done by providing us with the other Bible books. The Bible might be sufficient for our salvation but that does not mean that it cannot repeat itself and contain material we don't need for salvation.

When the gospel of John is enough by itself, that shows the Bible is enough by itself. The Bible is enough but more than what we need. What we definitely do not need is a Church and pope and Church tradition that claim to be infallible!

The Bible being sufficient for salvation does not mean that doctrines such as the virgin birth of Jesus need to be known about for salvation even if the Bible teaches the virgin birth doctrine. An inspired book that contains all the basics of the gospel of John can be sufficient. But what about the rest of the Bible? It isn't needed yes but that doesn't mean it is not inspired. It doesn't mean the whole Bible isn't the only word of God and sufficient.

The Gospel of John has Jesus saying that we must believe in him to have eternal life and that he who believes has eternal life. The John author never says that belief means belief that is acted out as well as just believed. His Jesus speaks as if he means mere belief. When that is the case, the gospel teaches salvation by belief alone without good works or sacraments as taught by many at the Protestant Reformation. This proves that the only candidate for being an additional source of the word of God, Catholic tradition, is in fact only the word of man and is to be dismissed for it contradicts and opposes that gospel message.

This gospel also says that Jesus is the bread of life and we must eat his body and drink his blood to have eternal life. It does not mention the last supper so this tells us not to read anything eucharistic or to do with communion into what he said.

Acts 17:11 praises the Bereans for listening to what Paul said and checking him out by studying the Old

Testament in case his doctrine was false. The Old Testament and the teaching of the New which was just verbal teaching at that time must then be the sole rule of faith and practice for Christians. They tested Paul though he was an apostle and as good as the twelve (2 Corinthians 12:11). This implies that all verbal teaching – even apostolic – must be tested for conformity to scripture. Only written scripture has ultimate and supreme authority that must never be criticised. The Bible totally contradicts the Romish view that tradition and Catholic teaching is equal in authority to scripture.

Colossians 1 says,

24 Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.

25 I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness—

26 the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord's people.

27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

28 He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.

29 To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.

He means he has to suffer to do the rest of the work of Jesus which is to spread the gospel and states that he teaches everybody and admonishes with all wisdom. The goal is to present everybody as fully mature in Jesus. The early Church then claimed to have the complete truth needed for one to be as wise and holy as humanly possible. This makes it possible that the Church put all that truth into the Bible. The early Church having all the truth denies the Catholic doctrine, "We admit that the early Church did not mention much Catholic doctrine. We hold that it had the seeds. The doctrines had to be clarified by the Catholic Church. They developed."

1 Thessalonians 5:21 says that Christians must prove all things and hold on to what is good. This eliminates oral tradition for it can prove nothing and puts revelation firmly in the written word of God. One can't add written tradition to this because nobody would know when to stop and there would be too much to prove. It wouldn't be that hard to prove a book of scripture is God's word if the canon was shut. Oral tradition was originally used in the early Church but it was monitored by the apostles who gave the tradition. Obviously oral tradition would be dangerous after they were gone. Nothing in the Bible indicates that tradition that was not monitored by the apostles had authority therefore Roman Catholicism is wrong to say tradition is the word of God like the Bible.

2 Timothy 3:16 says that all scripture is inspired of God and gets you ready for any good work. The original says breathed out by God. Archer in his Encyclopaedia of Bible Difficulties proves that this is the correct translation (page 416). Some say it says every scripture is inspired by God but that leaves things open for those who want to teach that there are some bits that are not meant to be taken as binding. But at the same time, every scripture could be everything in the Bible. In all things we must take the safe side, so we must assume that the whole Bible is meant especially when the Bible never advances the notion of partial inspiration. God would not keep bits from error without saying they are free from error unlike the rest.

THOSE WHO HOLD THAT CHURCH TRADITION IS EQUAL TO SCRIPTURE AND IS THE WORD OF GOD SHOULD NOTE THAT THIS TRADITION IS NOT SAID TO BE GOD-BREATHED TO THE EXTENT THAT SCRIPTURE IS SO THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD COMES FIRST AND WHAT IS NOT IN IT IS NOT TO BE TREATED AS INFALLIBLE REVELATION - DOUBTFUL REVELATION MAYBE BUT IT IS NOT TO BE TAKEN TOO SERIOUSLY.

2 Peter 1 says that the scriptures are totally reliable and their words spoken by God as much as the words that you would hear from his audible voice would be. When scripture is that god-breathed it follows that it has the final say and is the supreme authority.

2 Timothy 3:16 which is attributed to Paul must be read in the backdrop of 1 Corinthians 15:1-2 where Paul is clear that salvation is based on the people keeping to the word as Paul taught them. He did not mention any other apostle and stated his authority was enough. The complete revelation then existed in the days of Paul. This means the word was finished even if not all written down yet.

The verse says that scripture has the good man ready for every good work. Read that in the light of 1 Corinthians chapter 6.

1 If any of you has a dispute with another, do you dare to take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the Lord's people?

2 Or do you not know that the Lord's people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases?

3 Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!

4 Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, do you ask for a ruling from those whose way of life is scorned in the church?

5 I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers?

6 But instead, one brother takes another to court—and this in front of unbelievers!

This is clear that early Christians had a thorough knowledge of right and wrong and there is no room to argue that it needed developing or progress.

In the Gospel of John, you will read of Jesus stressing that he says only what God told him.

The Bible says that all of it is inspired by God and useful for correcting error so that the reader would be “thoroughly equipped for every good work” in 2 Timothy 3:16, 17. It personalises scripture, talks as if it is a person because it is God speaking to you in the words of scripture. The book is the voice of God. It says the scriptures make you wise meaning you will be wise just with the scriptures alone. The scriptures are sufficient – they might not answer every individual question but you know enough. The verses say scripture is able to make you wise and prepare you, its an ability of scripture.

The scripture would not equip anyone for every good work unless it contains all we need to know. Revealing God's truth is a good work so it is meant as well as other kinds of good works. If it had meant just non-evangelistic good works it would have specified them and the context puts no limit on the meaning. The Bible emphasises that God comes first and God alone matters and is to be loved with others being loved only because it is his will. Thus, any good work that was not done to bring glory to God and to excite interest in his gospel and word was really a bad work. This proves that the verse is saying that the Bible is all that is needed in matters pertaining to faith or morals.

Some protest that the verse does not prove the sufficiency for it refers to the Old Testament alone. In the preceding verse, Paul, or whoever wrote this, ponders about the Old Testament. But it is possible for him to stop meaning it alone and then to move to meaning all God's writings including the ones since then. By no stretch of the imagination could the Old Testament be said to be sufficient. Jesus said that he came to improve and fulfil it. The letter-writer did not mean the Old Testament alone but whatever God had written since as well or will write. He said all scripture which just means all scripture that God will send. The writer is not talking about the extent of scripture or what books are scripture but of the nature of scripture.

Catholicism answers that St Joseph of Cupertino was far from bright and knew just about nothing on the teaching of the Church but knew all he needed to become a saint. She says that this verse just means that some of the doctrines of the Bible are sufficient to get you into Heaven not that it contains all God requires you to believe. But the letter-writer is not writing to dunces and the author does not mean, “all the good works you can do”, but, “all the good works you should do”. There is a sense in which even the person with little intelligence and education

should know all good.

Hebrews 1:1-3 says that God in the past spoke to mankind in many different ways but through prophets but in these last days he speaks to us through his Son and by him. This tells us that instead of listening to prophets anymore we must listen only to Jesus. This implies that the apostles did not function like prophets but only told what was known to be the teaching of Jesus Christ. This implies a rejection of St Paul who did function like a prophet and who ignored the historical Jesus. It tells us that there is no new doctrine or prophet necessary. It tells us that things must be accepted not because the apostles said it but because it is known to be Christ's doctrine which totally eliminates the Catholic reliance on new revelations and oral tradition that supposedly existed from the time of Jesus' ministry.

Atheists adore the fact that the Bible is the only lawful Christian deposit of doctrine for it makes Christianity easier to refute. Just prove a contradiction in the Bible and Christianity is disproved.