

PROTESTANT SCHOLARS ON THE CATHOLIC CLAIM THAT THE CHURCH IS THE SOURCE OF GOD'S TRUTH AS IS THE BIBLE

In the book, *Roman but Not Catholic: What Remains at Stake 500 Years after the Reformation* by Jerry L. Walls and Kenneth J. Collins we read that the Catholic claim that God used the Church to give us the Bible instead of the Bible giving rise to the Church is false.

QUOTES:

Sola Scriptura is not Protestantism's fundamental doctrine. The fundamental doctrine of Protestantism is the essential claim of the gospel: that Christ died for our sins, that he was raised from the dead, that we are saved by grace through faith, and the like. Sola scriptura is a fundamental claim about the nature of authority, but it is not a first-order doctrine in the same sense as the incarnation, the resurrection, and the Trinity.

[Bible books] are canonical not because the church is infallible or because it created or constituted the canon, but because the church's reception of these books is a natural and inevitable outworking of the self-authenticating nature of Scripture."

When the canon is understood as self-authenticating, it is clear that the church did not choose the canon, but the canon, in a sense, chose itself. . . .

How we define the canon will determine how we date its origin. If we define the canon ontologically, we can say that the canon existed in its entirety the minute after the final book of the NT was written, likely sometime in the first century. If we define the canon functionally, we could date it sometime in the mid-second century, if not before, when most of the books were being used as Scripture in the early church.

It refers to

[Catholic] Catechism elaborates: "It is clear therefore that, in the supremely wise arrangement of God, sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture, and the Magisterium of the Church are so connected and associated that one of them cannot stand without the others."

It refers to scholar Heiko Oberman.

He suggests, citing recent scholarship, that the regula fidei as employed by Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria is best understood not as a rule for faith but as the rule constituted by faith or truth, that is, as "the historical acts of God's action in creation and redemption." This means, then, that the regula fidei is not simply the means or the mechanism to communicate revelation, but what is more important, it also constitutes revelation itself since it is made up of both faith and truth. "The rule of faith," Oberman observes, "is not to be regarded as authoritative interpretation of Holy Scripture. . . . [Rather] the rule of faith is revelation itself, the backbone and structure of Holy Scripture."

Here is another excerpt,

Kruger quotes J. I. Packer on this score: "The Church no more gave us the New Testament canon than Sir Isaac Newton gave us the force of gravity. God gave us gravity. . . . Newton did not create gravity but recognized it." Historians usually point to the Thirty-Ninth Festal Letter of Athanasius as the time (367) when this process bore its considerable fruit. Later councils, such as the Synod Hippo Regius in North Africa (393) and the Council of Carthage (397), simply reaffirmed a reality that had already existed in the ancient church. The canon emerged independently about the same time in the East, the West, and northern Africa. Simply put, Rome did not give us the Bible.

And,

The terminology of "Old" and "New" Testaments did not arise in the early church until the latter part of the second century in the writings of Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Clement of Alexandria.

[My comment, the Bible then is not Old and New Testament. It is just the Testament. Old does not mean obsolete but refers to where the books belong. It is like the Bible is sectioned into two.]

And, the Jews are regarded as not being reliable on what the Old Testament is, specifically with regard to the Council of

Jamnia where the list of books was allegedly decided.

Michael W. Holmes argues that “the consensus supporting this view (still defended in various forms) has largely collapsed, undermined primarily by (a) the recognition that the idea of an authoritative ‘council’ dealing with matters of canon at Jamnia is largely a myth.” Holmes, “The Biblical Canon,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, ed. Susan Ashbrook Harvey and David Hunter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 409.

One Roman Catholic apologist writes as follows: “The Jews at Jamnia had rejected Christ as God, let us not forget. Those who had accepted Christ had already become Christians. The remainder certainly had no rightful authority to decide anything about divine truth.” This statement suggests that not only is Christian revelation essential to understanding the OT aright, but also the Jews themselves, oddly enough, are not even fit to recognize their own canon.

