

BIBLE ONLY ARGUMENTS

PREFACE

The claim that Christianity has no right or authority to make new doctrines is common to both Catholics and Protestants. It is based on the notion that Jesus was the essential and last revelation of God. If Jesus claimed to be the prophet of Deuteronomy 18 then he would have been claiming to be the final prophet. The New Testament says Jesus made that very claim.

Indirect proofs that Christianity is to have no doctrinal or moral novelties is that Jesus prayed for it to be one religion and one family meaning clarity is there. Whatever the authority is for teaching the doctrine we have it. He stated that we should let the wheat and tares grow together and he would take care of the weeds on judgement day. In other words, there is a clear body of Christian truth with a clear authority to teach it for otherwise you could not let heretic sheep and heretic Church leaders loose but would have to get them away from the wheat. They refute themselves with their lies and nonsense.

The Protestants believe that only the Bible has the divine authority to tell them how to live and what to believe about God and Jesus. The Bible does not claim to be the only authority. If it did it would follow that you can rebel against Church leaders on a whim, disregard any authority your parents have over you and even regard the laws of the state as opinions not to be taken seriously if possible. The Bible commands respect for authority. The Bible does not claim to be the only authority. It claims to be the only authority that cannot err - not because it is a book that is always right but because it is God's communication with us.

The Catholic Church disagrees with Protestantism that the Bible is the only religious authority free from error. It insists that the one true Church, the Roman Church, also has infallible authority. It says that to disagree is to oppose the right of the Church to command you and rule you. The Bible is closer to Protestantism than Catholicism and the Church has known that from the start because it used to go as far as to forbid lay Catholics to read the Bible. The Synod of Toulouse in 1229 forbade the laity to have a Bible. They were only allowed to have the Psalms, the Breviary, the Blessed Virgin's Little Office and nothing more and these were not to be in the vernacular (page 155, Whatever Happened to Heaven?). Facts like this stand against the modern Catholic lie that it was only corrupted Bibles that were banned. We will see how the Bible opposes the authority the Roman Church has stolen for itself.

The Protestants say that sola scripture does not imply that the Bible has all the answers to every problem. It gives you the tools and the principles and the wisdom to figure things out. The Protestants say that sola scripture does not imply that the Bible alone is the word of God. They say God reveals himself through science and philosophy and people feel he is talking to them. They say merely that the Bible is the rule of faith and conduct. No revelation from God has the same authority as the Bible. It is like a king giving orders without making the orders law or investing them with his full authority. Protestants tend to hold that the Bible alone contains what God has sanctioned as his revelation. Other alleged revelations from God do not have this sanction and may not be from him at all.

THE BIBLE SAYS IT IS THE ONLY WORD OF GOD

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.

INDIRECT ARGUMENT FOR SOLA SCRIPTURA

PROTESTANT: Your Roman Catholic Church just disposes of the doctrine that the Bible is the only authority in matters of religion, or faith and morals, like last week's garbage. She asserts that she believes in the Bible but she reckons it is not enough and that other sources of divine revelation are needed as well. She says that her infallible decrees and tradition and reason are the other sources. She even declared at the Council of Trent, Fifth Session, that nobody had a right to study the Bible without consulting the unanimous consent of the fathers – the authorities such as St Augustine and Jerome etc – to get their interpretation and without accepting these and the interpretations officially laid down by the Church. It decreed punishment for the breakage of this rule.

CATHOLIC: And my Church is right. Nowhere does the Bible say that it is the only rule of faith.

PROTESTANT: I agree. However, the Bible says it implicitly. It implies it. I am going to prove to you that the fact that the Bible does not say that an additional source of doctrine is needed proves that it teaches that it alone is the word of God. And there is no verse saying that the Church is the rule of faith!

CATHOLIC: I suppose you are going to say that he would have told us in the Bible what the other source of truth was in unmistakable terms for silence would mean leaving the way open for us to be deceived?

PROTESTANT: Yes! Very good! If another infallible teacher were unnecessary any Church or person could claim to be it. And if clever enough their lies would be irrefutable. They could take advantage of the ineffable nature of God and his truth to invent all the nonsense they like. For example, when Jesus was fully God and also fully man they could invent other seemingly contradictory doctrines. They could say that if the Bible says there are three persons in God it only means there are three we know of and there could be more.

CATHOLIC: You are wrong. Not just anybody could claim to be the extra authority. God made Peter the Bishop of Rome and the first pope and the Church was infallible. The pope and the Church are the authority.

PROTESTANT: God did not say that Peter was meant to have successors. God's ways are strange from our limited viewpoint. He did not say that the Church was infallible.

CATHOLIC: Well then the authority must be the papacy and the Church for no other authority ever made the claims that they made. Nobody else made as credible a claim.

PROTESTANT: Needing an infallible authority would not mean that you would be right to believe that a person is that authority just because he claims to be it. You are just assuming.

Rome can't be infallible for many of the professed infallible doctrines are untrue. Transubstantiation, sacramentalism, the sinless existence of Mary, prayers to the saints, Church infallibility, the insertion of uninspired writings into the Bible (much of the Apocrypha), papal supremacy, purgatory, indulgences, penance and the infallibility of ecumenical councils are all false doctrines that the Church has infallibly and irrevocably declared to have been revealed by God. The truth or falsity of Roman Catholicism rests on its infallibility theory. But the claim is false and a mere guess.

DID BIBLE COME FROM CHURCH?

Did the Bible come from the Church? Did the Church make the Bible? Why are we given a fixed list for what books belong in the Bible?

The Bible itself does not tell us exactly what books should be in the Bible or not.

The Catholics say that the Church was infallible and was able to tell with God's power and authority what books he inspired. But it had the Bible list made up long before it claimed to have infallibly defined that the list was correct. Both Protestants and Catholics agree with that. Protestants though like to clearly state that the list of books is right not that it is infallible for you don't have to be infallible to be right. 2 and 2 make 4 but you don't need to be infallible to see that.

The gift of infallibility may be given even to an apostate Church for her to determine which books are canonical but that does not mean that she is infallible on other things.

TRADITION ITSELF COMMANDS BIBLE ALONE

The very tradition that the Catholic Church makes superior to the Bible and a supplement to the Bible says that it should be ignored in favour of the Bible! Rome no longer believes in Bible inerrancy in the full and complete sense though ancient tradition is against her in this and supports verbal and plenary inspiration.

The tradition that the fathers honoured and obeyed was tradition that restated or paraphrased or clarified what was in the scriptures and was in the scriptures. (See page 15, Traditional Doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church Examined.) St Cyprian is quoted as saying that tradition is just what is taught in the scriptures. Cyril of Alexandria said that the scriptures are enough and more than enough and Tertullian condemned Hermogenes unless he could show that his teachings were in the Bible and pronounced a curse on those who add to and subtract from the Bible and St Basil interpreted the apostles as saying that nobody should believe anything unless it is written in the Bible (page 16).

Justin Martyr was the first source of what Rome recognises as divinely inspired tradition to say that Christ forbade belief in

what man say and counselled his followers to believe only in what he himself and the Jewish prophets taught (page 26, Evangelical Catholics; page 23, But the Bible Does Not Say So).

St Irenaeus stated that the Church will find every doctrine it needs in the prophets and the gospels (page 26, Evangelical Catholics). He wrote that when the heretics are refuted from the scriptures they attack the scriptures as being incorrect or uncanonical so in that case he appeals to tradition to confute them (page 27, Church and Infallibility). But what Irenaeus meant by tradition was the practice of revering the scriptures as infallible. He argued that since they were believed to be infallible since the time of the apostles they were real and uncorrupted. A bible only believer would say much the same thing without regarding tradition as an additional authority.

St Athanasius wrote that the scriptures are enough for learning the truth in (Conte Gentes. 1,1).

St John Chrysostom commanded that no man must be listened to in religion without being checked out by the Bible first (2 Corinthians 6, Homily 13). The same instructed in his Homily on Romans that we must read no other but Jesus and need no other mind (page 27, Secrets of Romanism).

St Jerome protested against creating things as if they were tradition from the apostles without scripture saying they are true (commentary on Haggai, Cap 1.2). He informed Helvidius that anything that was not written in the Bible was to be rejected. He said the Church does not admit anything that is not found in the scriptures (page 23, But the Bible Does Not Say So).

St Basil (329-379) said that since Jesus said his sheep hear his voice and do not listen to strangers that it is wrong to make a doctrine that is not mentioned in the scriptures (De Fide, Garnier's Edition, Vol II, page 313). (See page 26, Evangelical Catholics).

Augustine commanded that any doctrine that is not in the Bible must be refused (page 26, Evangelical Catholics). In 400 AD he expressly stated that he bows only to the authority of the canonical books and that all that is needed for faith and living is in them (page 23, But the Bible Does Not Say So).

Reasonings from Rome such as that not everybody could get hold of the Bible in the past so it couldn't be the only true authority are misguided. They have nothing at all to do with proving the idea of scripture only to be an incorrect interpretation of scripture.

As for the principle of private interpretation, the Protestant idea that since there is no authority higher or equal to the Bible, each one must interpret it for himself, it is in the same boat. Catholics say it leads to chaos but that doesn't make the Bible deny that Bible alone is enough! Besides, the Catholic Church and Protestants hold that private interpretation does not mean you exclude the guidance of others or God but the contrary. Catholics say that faith is a gift from God that enables you to judge the Church to stand in the place of God and accept its teachings as true. So ultimately they believe in private interpretation too. So they leave themselves with no right to complain against the doctrine that it leads to chaos for that is blasting the bugle into their own feet.

Conclusion

The real Christian follows only the Bible. Catholics are not true followers of Jesus for denying this principle. As John Knox wrote, "Disobedience to God's voice is not only when man does wickedly contrary to the precepts of God, but also when of good zeal, or good intent (as we commonly speak), man does anything to the honour or service of God not commanded by the express word of God, as in the matter plainly may be espied."

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