

THE REFORMATION

Sola Scriptura

John 1:1, 14; II Timothy 3:16-17

The **church**, before the **Reformation**, had become riddled with abuse. The **Popes** were *worldly*...and *abuses* within the ranks of the church ranged from *nepotism* to *financial excess* to *simony* (the buying or selling of a church office or promotion), *immorality*, and *venality* (being open to bribery or overly motivated by money). The majority of clergy tended to live *scandalous* and *greedy* lives.

This *disdain* and *mistrust* of the **Catholic Church** was the major cause for the **Protestant Reformation**. Reformers particularly decried the *selling of indulgences* and *offering of forgiveness for sins in exchange for money*.

Another point of criticism of the church at the time was that the *common layperson didn't know much about Christianity, since the sermon was rendered in Latin so that common people couldn't understand them*.

As a result, **the Reformers rejected...**

- **The authority of the Pope.**
- **The merit of good works.**
- **Indulgences** (*pardons* and *clemencies*).
- **The mediation of...and prayers to...Mary and the Saints.**
- **All but the two sacraments instituted by Christ** (Baptism and the Lord's Supper).
- **The doctrine of transubstantiation.**
- **The attendance at mass as a sacrifice.**
- **Purgatory.**
- **Prayers for the dead.**
- **Confessions to a priest.**

- **The use of Latin in the services.**
- **And all the paraphernalia** (*icons and idols*) that expressed and/or supported these ideas.

Even though the **Roman Catholic** and **Eastern Orthodox** churches foundationally fall within *Orthodoxy* as most would define it, much of their teaching *beyond the basic tenets* is regarded as *erroneous* by conservative **Protestants**. In fact, they would say much of it is clearly to be regarded as *false teaching* which has *perverted the gospel* of God's grace in Jesus Christ. In general, evangelical **Protestants** see the **Reformation** as simply *a call back* to *biblical Christianity*.

Martin Luther

For years, Martin Luther, an **Augustinian** monk, had been critical of the **Catholic Church**, particularly of the idea of *selling of indulgences*, or the *reprieves that came from penance*. Luther had become disillusioned by what he saw as the Church's *corruption*, especially as manifested in the Pope's matter-of-fact *selling of those indulgences*. Deeply convicted, he had studied the problem and prayed for years to determine what he might do.

It came to a head in **1517**, when **Luther** became infuriated when **Pope Leo X** announced a *fresh sale of indulgences to help pay for the construction of St. Peter's Basilica*. In his passionate mood, he wrote the "**95 Theses**." The **95 Theses** were a devastating critique of what these *indulgences* were doing to the Christian faith. He then went and nailed a copy to the **University of Wittenberg's** chapel door. Within *two weeks*, printed copies spread throughout **Germany**...and throughout the rest of **Europe** within *two months*.

Strengthened in the belief that he was right, Luther continued writing and publishing tracts increasingly critical of the Catholic Church.

In **1521**, he was brought before the **Diet** of the church officials at the **city of Worms**...and called upon to renounce his beliefs. Martin Luther replied, *“My conscience is held captive by the Word of God. Therefore, I cannot, and I will not recant. To go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me.”* As a result, Luther was *excommunicated* for his beliefs and was in constant danger of being *burned at the stake*. It was **Friedrich III, Elector of Saxony**, who shielded Luther so that he might continue teaching.

Luther stood on Five basic truths:

- **Sola Scriptura** (*only Scripture*)

This doctrine maintains that *Scripture, as contained in the Bible, is the only authority for the Christian in matters of faith, life, and conduct*. The teachings and traditions of the church are to be *completely subordinate* to the Scriptures. **Roman Catholicism**, on the other hand, holds **Scripture** and **Tradition** to be of the same.

- **Sola Gratia** (*only Grace*)

This doctrine states that we are saved *by grace alone*. Hence the Reformers were calling the church back to the basic teaching of Scripture where the apostle Paul states that we are *“...saved by grace through faith and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God,”* (**Ephesians 2:8**).

- **Sola Fide** (*only Faith*)

This doctrine maintains that *we are justified before God (and thus saved) by faith alone, not by anything we do, not by anything the church does for us, and not by faith plus anything else*. It was also recognized by the early Reformers that **Sola Fide** is not rightly understood until it is seen as anchored in the broader principle of **Sola Gratia**,

- **Sola Christus** (*only Christ*)

“And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”

~Acts 4:12

Not through **Mary** or any *saint* within the church.

- **Sola Deo Gloria** (*To God’s Glory Alone*)

These are the foundational evangelical doctrines of Scripture.

Foundational truth regarding Scripture (Sola Scriptura):

I. INSPIRIED: God breathed. God is the origin or author.

The Bible claims that all Scripture is God-breathed.

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.”

~II Timothy 3:16

That means that God...who is **true**...breathed out **truth!!!**

“Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.”

~John 17:17

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.”

~II Timothy 2:15

Inspiration is God’s *working through human authors* so that, *using their own individual personalities*, they penned and recorded *without error* in the words of the original autographs...*His revelation to man*.

The Bible testifies that the men who wrote were *“moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God”* (**II Peter 1:21**). The Spirit thus is the source (coauthor) with each human writer of the Bible.

Scripture is called the **Word of God**...in both the Old Testament and New Testament. And there are numerous places in the New Testament where portions of the Old Testament that were written by various men are *assigned to the Holy Spirit as the author*. I.e. The Spirit is said to be the author of what **David** wrote in **Psalm 110** and when he was quoted in **Acts 1:16 (Psalm 41)** and **Acts 4:24-25 (Psalm 2)**.

II. INFALLIBLE: It is dependable...reliable...foolproof...unfailing. It has no mistakes.

“The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether.”

~Psalm 19:7-9

“For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.”

~Matthew 5:18

III. INERRANT: It has no errors.

“Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.”

~Proverbs 30:5

Testimonies of inerrancy:

- The trustworthiness of God’s character.
- The teaching of Christ.

“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.”

~Matthew 5:17

“...The Scripture cannot be broken.”

~John 10:35b

IV. AUTHORITATIVE: God is the final authority.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us...”

~John 1:1, 14a

“...For it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them’.”

~Galatians 3:10b

“To the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.”

~Jude 25

V. SUFFICIENT: It equips us for every good work.

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

~II Timothy 3:16-17

Illustration: Stu Tully and his family and all their trials.

VI. COMPLETE: Nothing needs to be added or taken away.

“You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.”

~Deuteronomy 4:2

“Do not add to His words or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar.”

~Proverbs 30:6

“I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.”

~Revelation 22:18-19

This is what *cults* and *false teachers* are guilty of...they always use the *four basic principles of math* in their *deceptive theology*:

- **ADD:** They always add to the Bible.

Mormons: Not just the KJV. Pearl of Great Price... Book of Mormon... Book of Doctrines and Covenants.

Jehovah Witness: Their own bible version. Watch Tower material.

Christian Science: Reading material of Mary Baker Eddy...Christian Science Reading Rooms.

- **SUBTRACT:** Subtract from the deity of God and the deity of Christ.

Mormons: God is flesh and blood. Jesus...virgin birth ...sired by God, Himself. Truth: God is Spirit, Jesus born of a virgin.

Jehovah Witness: Deny the deity of Jesus Christ.

- **MULTIPLY:** Multiply the way of salvation...i.e. works.

Grace x Faith + _____ = Salvation

Mormons: Two-year missions. 32-degree elevation.

Jehovah Witness: Door-to-door...propagating materials.

- **DIVIDE:** They divide the body of Christ. They divide families. They say that they are the only true Church. They are the only ones going to heaven.

LESSONS WE CAN LEARN:

- Scripture is God **SPEAKING** directly to us. God inspired... God breathed. The devil...*“Did God really say...”*
- Scripture is **EFFECTIVE**. When the Bible speaks...things happen. It transforms lives. Power...Don’t under-estimate the power of the Gospel.
- Two ways our enemy the devil attacks us in spiritual warfare is directly related to Scripture:
...To **DISCOURAGE** us.
...To **DISARM** us.