

A Scriptural Analysis Of Sola Scriptura

*“In those days there was no king in Israel;
every man did what was right in his own eyes.” – Judges 17:6*



There Are Hidden Dangers With Me And My Bible Alone¹

Welcome to this study on the topic of a Scriptural analysis of using the Bible ALONE for your ultimate authority on faith and morals (sola Scriptura).

Let's open in prayer.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful;
And enkindle in them the fire of Your love.
Send forth Your Spirit and they shall be created.
And You shall renew the face of the earth.

Let Us Pray . . .

O God, Who by the light of the Holy Spirit did instruct the hearts of the faithful,
grant that by the gift of the same Spirit, we may always be truly wise and ever rejoice
in His consolation, through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Hail Mary, Full of grace the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

¹ Art by my son Christopher.

Reference Summary Items And Notes

2nd THESSALONIANS 2:15 15 So then, brethren, stand firm and **hold to the traditions** which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter.

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM "Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you have been taught, whether by word or by our letter.' **From this it is clear that they did not hand down everything by letter**, but there is much also that was not written.

Like that which was written, **the unwritten too is worthy of belief**. So let us regard the tradition of the Church also as worthy of belief. **Is it a tradition? Seek no further**" (*Homilies on the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians* [A.D. 398-404]).

CCC 76 In keeping with the Lord's command, **the Gospel was handed on in two ways**:

- **orally** "by the apostles who handed on, by the spoken word of their preaching, by the example they gave, by the institutions they established, what they themselves had received - whether from the lips of Christ, from his way of life and his works, or whether they had learned it at the prompting of the Holy Spirit";[33]

- **in writing** "by those apostles and other men associated with the apostles who, under the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit, committed the message of salvation to writing".[34]

. . . continued in apostolic succession

CCC 95 "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**. Working together, each in its own way, under the action of the one Holy Spirit, they all contribute effectively to the salvation of souls."⁶²

Notes

Introduction

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- The objection that “The Bible is sufficient for me!”
- Verses that teach authoritative Apostolic Tradition
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Defining Sola Scriptura

“Sola Scriptura” is a Latin phrase that literally translates into “**The Bible alone.**” Sola Scriptura was considered one of the two “battle cries” of the Protestant Revolt or “Reformation” back in the 1500’s (the other one being “sola fide”²).

But what does sola Scriptura mean (how is it defined)?

In Protestantism there is no single accepted definition of sola Scriptura. This is “Private Interpretation”. I have talked to many Protestants and if I quote Luther or some other reformer on sola Scriptura, I have been told: “Luther has no authority with me.”

Subsequently I have seen many different definitions of sola Scriptura.

So I will use one that many of the Baptists that I have “fellowshipped” with have used for the purposes of this study (but realize when you talk to another Bible-only Christian, they MAY accuse you of “misrepresenting sola Scriptura” because they may follow a different definition of it).

The fact that there is not uniformity of belief here, illustrates the point that sola Scriptura is NOT found in Sacred Scripture (if it was, Protestants could just point to the verse and say: “That’s my definition.”).

Sola Scriptura — “The tradition of asserting that we use the Bible ALONE for all our final authoritative beliefs on faith and morals. The Bible is our sole (Latin “sola”) source for authoritative faith & morals.”

² It is beyond the scope of this study to go into “sola fide” or “faith alone” which also, like “sola Scriptura” is incomplete and thus erroneous. Latin was the scholars language of the day back then.

Sola Scriptura followers many times (not always though) allege they affirm Tradition but ONLY insofar as it agrees with their interpretation of Scripture. But you don't have to go "far" into Protestantism to see that this "affirmation" cannot settle doctrinal disputes. An obvious example is:

The Lutheran minister who says he holds to sola Scriptura and INSISTS on baptizing babies
as opposed to

The Baptist minister who says he holds to sola Scriptura and absolutely REFUSES to baptize babies.

They can "never arrive at a" certain "knowledge of the truth". Their private "interpretation" is the best they can give. These frequent doctrinal disputes lead to unending Protestant "church splits". See Table 1 to see between 2006 and 2014 that Christian denominations increased from 33,000 to 42,000³!

You will often hear those major differences brushed aside with a statement such as:

"The main things are the plain things and the plain things are the main things"⁴

Sola Scriptura has not led to greater unity within Christianity, it generates divisions.

WHEN Did Sola Scriptura Allegedly Begin?

A question sola Scriptura followers cannot uniformly answer is: "WHEN did sola Scriptura begin?"

If you listen to Catholic-Christian/Protestant-Christian debates, the debaters suggest sola Scriptura has ALWAYS been the way God spoke to us. They assert sola Scriptura was implied even in the Old Testament.

But was that the case?

HEBREWS 1:1-2 1 In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

NOT HEBREWS 1:1-2 1 In one way, and one way ONLY God spoke of old to our fathers; by the Scriptures ALONE, 2 and in these last days he has spoken to us by the Scriptures alone.

The fact is, the reason you cannot get a definitive answer about when sola Scriptura began, because it was never taught by God.

³ If you take a mere eight different beliefs and look at all the permutations and combinations of only eight differing beliefs, you COULD come up with: "How many denominations with ONLY eight different disputed beliefs?"
 $8 \times 7 \times 6 \times 5 \times 4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1 = 8! = 40,320$ different denominations based upon eight mere belief disputes.

⁴ This main things/plain things paradigm is sometimes referred to by Protestants as the "**Perspicuity**" (self-evident nature) of Scripture. But Scripture rejects this (2nd Peter 3:16). And WHO gets to be the "main things"/ "plain things" referee?

An Unsolvable Question Within The Realm Of Sola Scriptura

If a follower of sola Scriptura states they follow the Bible ALONE for ALL their authoritative doctrines on faith and morals . . . what if . . .

. . . What if the doctrine of sola Scriptura is NOT found in Scripture?

If that is the case (and this study will argue that this IS the case), to follow sola Scriptura, is to live out a self-contradiction. To KNOWINGLY live a self-contradiction would cause a person to have an extreme level of interior discomfort over a sense that there is conflicting beliefs.⁵

Basic Catechesis on Apostolic Tradition

God protects Apostolic Tradition in official teachings (from the official teaching office of the Church).

This official teaching office is sometimes called “**The Magisterium**”.

Magisterium is merely Latin for “teaching”.

Catholic Christians affirm the “Word of God” in its totality (primarily the person of Jesus Christ, but in the sense of Divine revelation, the “Word of God” **both** orally and in writing passed down through the ages in the Church by The Apostles (who were Bishops) and their successors, the Bishops⁶.

The Pope is the “Bishop of Rome” and has a special primacy with only him being given “The Keys”.
The “Magisterium” is the Pope + the bishops in union with him.

CCC 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.

The “Word of God” is passed on via “Apostolic Tradition” two ways.

Orally and in writing (Sacred Scripture). The “Word of God” should not be reduced to the printed page.

Remember. Scripture itself refers to Scripture as “Tradition” in 2nd Thessalonians 2:15 (we will look at that verse later). Scripture is PART of TRADITION. The reason it is important to know that is **some** people who hold to sola Scriptura will try to condemn “Tradition” altogether not knowing that Scripture itself is part of “Tradition”.

The “Word of God” is safeguarded and properly interpreted by the Magisterium’s OFFICIAL teachings.

Q: How do we know God will protect the Bishops in the preservation of ORAL Tradition?

A: The same way we know God will protect the Bishops in the preservation of WRITTEN Tradition.

He will not leave us “orphans” (John 14:18)⁷.

⁵ This interior struggle with trying to hold opposing beliefs is sometimes called by academics: “cognitive dissonance”.

This cognitive dissonance is not just in Protestantism. Cognitive dissonance makes it extremely uncomfortable for non-Catholic people including not just Bible-alone Christians, but also atheists, Jewish people, Muslims, etc. to have an open and honest discussion with **KNOWLEDGABLE** Catholic Christians. Many non-Catholics (as well as even Catholic Christians NOT TRYING to live out their faith) will try to AVOID deep religious discussions.

⁶ Today’s bishops are SUCCESSORS to the Apostles. They are not Apostles in the same sense of The Twelve along with Sts. Paul and Barnabas whom God **directly called** (see Acts 13:2, and 14:14 for Barnabas).

⁷ See also Ezekiel 34:15-16, 23 (Jesus fulfills David and is “the new David”), John 10:1-10.

Faith And Morals They Can Never Change

Faith and morals are preserved unchanged by Christ under the Bishops in their **official teachings only**.

Don't confuse unchanging "faith and morals" with changeable "customs and disciplines."

As a mnemonic, think of an old radio boom box. It had a switch that said AM, FM, CD.

Now just use the FM and the CD. **FM – Faith and Morals are unchangeable.**
CD = Customs and Disciplines, and these are changeable.

An example of a changeable "discipline" is the "Friday discipline", or meatless Fridays. The Church changed that discipline to have **a personal option** to use some other penance on Fridays instead⁸. The "Friday discipline" is a way we can universally honor our Lord Jesus' Crucifixion.

The Apostolic Tradition of "The Canon" Of The New Testament in Christianity

Sometimes a sola Scriptura follower will demand that you provide ONE ORAL TRADITION, "Just one!" that they HAVE to hold to that is not found in Scripture.

Almost anything you say will be rejected. But one thing they cannot reject . . .

Remind them that the Canon of the New Testament is Oral Tradition that they are bound to (at least if they want a full New Testament).

The "Canon" is just the official list of books/letters that belong there, that the Church recognized and authoritatively ratified, like Genesis, Exodus . . . Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, . . . Jude, and Revelation.

I favor using only the "New Testament" books in a **discussion**. Why? Because Protestants have removed books in the Old Testament. Also Eastern Orthodoxies (at least some of them), have added books to the Old Testament. I like sticking to what we have in common.

Therefore, if you say "The Canon of the Bible" instead of "The Canon of the New Testament" the person you are appealing to, may get side-tracked to the "which Canon is correct?" question.

This can cause an unneeded obstacle in your discussion on oral tradition being involved in recognizing and ratifying the New Testament Canon.

Since all Christians have the SAME NEW Testament, you can make the point without getting bogged down by a "Which Canon is correct?" argument because we all hold this NT Canon in common.

So . . . politely ask the sola Scriptura Christian "If ALL of your doctrines are IN Scripture, WHERE IN Scripture is the list of books that belong in the New Testament?"

⁸ In the Church we are all called to SOME Friday penance unless the Church exempts you (like they do for old and sick people).

They cannot answer that because there is NO VERSE that teaches the Canon. It doesn't exist.

NOT Matthew 1:1 In the New Testament, belongs the books and letters of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, . . . Jude and Revelation.

They get their New Testament Canon from Apostolic Tradition handed down from Catholic Bishops⁹. ("Why trust the Catholic Bishops on this but not on say, Purgatory?")

The first Bible printed by Catholic Johannes Gutenberg (died February 3, 1468) was a Catholic Bible and had all the books/letters, before the Protestant Reformation.

Protestant apologists often keep trying to make a list of characteristics that demonstrate a book or letter belongs in Scripture. And a Catholic Christian might even agree with many of those points But! those varying demonstration lists are NOT in Scripture either!

The fact is, the Bishops decided this list by Oral Tradition.¹⁰

The “Biblical Objection” Against Tradition

We are going to come back to this point but I want to summarize a common objection against Apostolic Tradition (Greek word for “Tradition” = Paradosis¹¹).

You may be told we need to condemn “tradition” because Christ condemns tradition in Matthew 15 and Mark 7.

This is a partial truth. Jesus condemns corrupt tradition, not ALL tradition. The Church likewise condemns corrupt traditions. More on this principle

The Pharisees Corrupt “tradition” Of Corban

The Pharisees COULD teach authoritatively.

The Pharisees sometimes would teach their OWN precepts over God's teaching.

When the Pharisees taught authoritatively, the people were held to those teachings (Matthew 23:1-3). But unfortunately, the Pharisees sometimes privately taught traditions of their own CONTRARY to what the people were given as traditional teachings too. Jesus called them out on this issue in Mark 7 and Matthew 15.

The word “Corban” in an ancient Judaism sense means “given to God”.

Remember. In Jesus' day there were no nursing homes. Family was and is expected to help one another. It is a duty. God taught through Moses that we need to honor our father and mother. And PART of that honor due includes caring for them as they age and get infirm.

⁹ See Table 3.

¹⁰ They polled the Churches to see what books and letters were read as Sacred and Apostolic in the Masses. Oral Tradition.

¹¹ Greek Root = Parados Singular = Paradosei. Plural = Paradosis. Same Greek word. See Table 4

The Pharisees (evidently to enrich themselves) instituted a terrible tradition where grown children not only could discard their own frail Mother and Father if they PAID the Pharisees enough MONEY in the name of being “given to God” (“Corban”), but were even “no longer permitted” to “do anything for his father or mother”.

This corrupt tradition of the Pharisees (“YOUR tradition”) in the context of the Gospels, was “Corban”.

This tradition of Corban that the Pharisees instituted, CONTRADICT God’s teachings (such as “honor your father and mother”). Let’s look at St. Mark’s Gospel (the synoptic passage of St. Matthew below¹²).

MARK 7:1, 9-13 1 Now when the Pharisees gathered together to him, with some of the scribes, who had come from Jerusalem,” 9 And he said to them, “**You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God, in order to keep your tradition!** 10 For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him surely die.’ 11 but you say, ‘If a man tells his father or his mother, **What you would have gained from me is Corban**’ (that is, given to God) -- 12 **then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother,** 13 thus **making void the word of God through your tradition** (Gr. = “Paradosei” singular¹³) which you hand on. And many such things you do.” . . .

Not only did the Pharisees wrongly institute THEIR tradition here, but they taught it as “doctrines”! This DESPITE Exodus 20:12 where the Israelites were officially and authoritatively taught to honor their father and their mother.

But does Mark 7 and Matthew 15 do away with ALL TRADITION merely because Jesus condemns corrupt tradition? No! More on that concept soon (we are going to find out that **the Bible itself is “Tradition”**).

Jesus says of these bad traditions:

“Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition.” (NIV Mt. 15:6)

“Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down.” (NIV Mk. 7:13a)

Incidentally. St. Paul in 1st Timothy 5 is almost certainly alluding to the Pharisee tradition of Corban . . .

1st TIMOTHY 5:7-8 7 Command this, so that they may be without reproach.
8 **If any one does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his own family, he has disowned the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.**

¹² **MATTHEW 15:1-9** 1 Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, 2 “Why do your disciples transgress the **tradition** of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat.” 3 He answered them, “And why do you transgress the commandment of God for the sake of **your tradition**? 4 For God commanded, ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him surely die.’ 5 But you say, ‘If any one tells his father or his mother, **What you would have gained from me is given to God**, he need not honor his father.’ 6 So, for the sake of **your tradition** (Greek = “paradosei” singular), **you have made void the word of God**. 7 You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: 8 ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; 9 in vain do they worship me, **teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.**’”

¹³ See Table 4 for the Greek.

Verses That Allegedly Teach Sola Scriptura (But Don't)

The follower of sola Scriptura have some verses that they **think** teach sola Scriptura. The classic verse you will be told that allegedly teaches sola Scriptura is 2nd Timothy 3.

2nd TIMOTHY 3:16-17 16 All scripture is inspired 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.

The verses here tell us . . . what?

The verses tell us that Scripture is . . .

- Inspired by God (literally “God-breathed” [see CCC 76 and 81 - Catholic Christians AFFIRM this])
- **Profitable** for teaching
- **Profitable** for reproof
- **Profitable** for correction
- **Profitable** for training in righteousness

That is what the verses teach us here about Scripture itself. (Catholic Christians affirm ALL of these things!)

Notice the passage doesn't say the word “ALONE” or “ONLY” anywhere! (NO “sola”.)

And even the “profitability” of the Scriptures only teaches that the man of God “**MAY**” be “equipped for every good work.” But if a person misinterprets Scripture, and/or they don't obey Scripture, they “**MAY NOT** be **EQUIPPED**” in a complete way too.

2nd TIMOTHY 3:17 17 that the man of God **may** be complete, **equipped** for every good work.

There are problems with reading sola Scriptura into the passage. Is there possibly MORE “equipment”? Does the Bible say anything else about making Christians “complete¹⁴? ”

Yes, it does. Let's see what God teaches us about steadfastness (**patience**). Let's go to St. James to see what he says about “patience” or “steadfastness” (RSV Protestant Edition¹⁵).

JAMES 1:4 (KJV) 4 But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

NOT James 1:4 4 And let **the Bible** have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

If we used the same faulty Scripture analysis of sola Scriptura **HERE** we COULD come up with a doctrine of “**patience ALONE**”. ADDING the word “ALONE” to ANY passage is a faulty way to unpack Scripture.

¹⁴ The Greek word for “complete” is actually stronger in James 1:4, than in 2nd Timothy 3:17!

¹⁵ **JAMES 1:4 (RSV)** 4 And let **steadfastness** have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Sola Scriptura followers with 2nd Timothy 3:17 have to **add the word “alone” to the passage (at least in their mind)** to come up with sola Scriptura.

Furthermore, the context of the passage of 2nd Timothy 3:16-17 is dealing with the OLD Testament. Catholic Christians affirm the passage is applicable to the New Testament too, but the passage, in context, it has to do with Scriptures that St. Timothy knew “from childhood”.

2nd TIMOTHY 3:14-16a 14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through in Christ Jesus. 16 All scripture is inspired by God and profitable . . .

The New Testament wasn’t written during St. Timothy’s “childhood” was it?

So if 2nd Timothy 3 was teaching about anything ALONE, in honest context, it would have to be teaching about Old Testament ALONE.

Yes, Catholic Christians apply this same inspiration to the NEW Testament too. And this makes sense for Catholic Christians because we are not constrained by Scripture ALONE. But the passage itself does NOT teach Scripture ALONE.

Does Revelation 22 Teach Sola Scriptura?

Sola Scriptura followers often cite Revelation 22:18 as a sola Scriptura proof-text (they omit Revelation 22:19 usually when making this argument). They assume Apostolic Tradition ADDS to “this book”.

REVELATION 22:18 18 “I warn every one who hears the word of the prophesy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book,

The problem with appealing to Revelation 22:18, is contextually “this book” that St. John is talking about is the book of Revelation that St. John is writing.

St. John had been exiled to the Island of Patmos and he doesn’t know if he will ever get off of there. If he dies someone will find “this book”. He warns them not to ADD or SUBTRACT from “this book”.

Now what “book” could St. John be talking about in context?
“The Book of Genesis?”
“The Book of Esther?”
“The Book of Numbers?”

NO! St. John is referring to “**the Book of Revelation**”! We as Catholic Christians would **also** say that this book (of Revelation) shouldn’t be added to . . . or subtracted from either!

REVELATION 22:19 19 “and if any one takes away from the words of the book of this prophesy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

The Bible Is Completely Sufficient For Me!

You can certainly get to Heaven with the information contained in the Bible (“material sufficiency”). But that assumes you interpret the Bible correctly and obey it. See Table on Material vs. Formal Sufficiency.

For example, Catholics ALSO affirm the CHURCH is the “pillar and foundation of the truth” as in 1st Timothy. Many sola Scriptura Christians who have come into the fullness of the Church have admitted, as Bible-only Christians they were very uncomfortable with this passage.

1st TIMOTHY 3:14-15 (NIV) 14 Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, 15 if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is the church of the living God,
the pillar and foundation of the truth.

Tradition Is Commended/Praised In Some Cases

Sometimes people appealing to Mark 7 and Matthew 15 where Jesus condemns corrupt traditions of men that nullify the word of God (esp. concerning “Corban”), to try to prop-up sola Scriptura try to make you think ALL tradition is bad.

But this is not the case. In 1st Corinthians “tradition” for example is commended or praised.

1st CORINTHIANS 11:1-2 1 Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.
2 I commend you because you remember me in everything
and maintain the traditions even as I have delivered them to you.

“Tradition” or (Greek) “paradosis” is used in a **positive sense** in the Bible too. It’s not all negative. We as Catholics agree, “tradition” or “paradosis” **can** be used in a negative sense. Paradosis is the exact same root word for tradition that is condemned in Mark 7/Matthew 15¹⁶!

¹⁶ See table.

Following After Tradition Is Even COMMANDED In Some Cases

In 2nd Thessalonians 2:15 we are commanded to hold to traditions “taught by us” EITHER written (that’s the Bible), OR by “word of mouth” (that’s the oral Tradition).

Here is Catholic Bishop St. John Chrysostom in about 400 A.D. writing about 2nd Thessalonians 2:15 (this is important because some sola Scriptura people think St. John Chrysostom taught sola Scriptura¹⁷) . . .

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM “Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you have been taught, whether by word or by our letter.’ **From this it is clear that they did not hand down everything by letter**, but there is much also that was not written.

Like that which was written, **the unwritten too is worthy of belief**. So let us regard the tradition of the Church also as worthy of belief. Is it a tradition? Seek no further” (*Homilies on the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians* [A.D. 398-404]).

And here is 2nd Thessalonians 2:15 . . .

2nd THESSALONIANS 2:15 (RSV Protestant Version¹⁸) 15 So then, brethren, stand firm and **hold to the traditions**^{19, 20} which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth **or by letter**.

WHO is the “us” that St. Paul is talking about here?

The **Apostles**. That’s where we get the term **Apostolic** Tradition from.

And if you keep reading on in 2nd Thessalonians, there is a “command” to follow after this tradition. Just listen to a couple of sentences later in 2nd Thessalonians 3:6 where it is repeated in harsher terms.

2nd THESSALONIANS 3:6 Now we **command** you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is living in idleness and not in accord with **the tradition** (Greek = “paradosis”) that you received from us.

The oral and written Apostolic Tradition is of the SAME FORCE because they are of the same source—God.

Let’s go back to the 300’s A.D. and see St. Basil (another Early Church Father who some try to say teaches sola Scriptura) discussing this very issue . . .

ST. BASIL THE GREAT “Of the dogmas and messages preserved in the Church, **some we possess from written teaching and others we receive from the Tradition of the apostles**, handed on to us in mystery. In respect to piety **both are of the same force**. No one will contradict any of these, no one, at any rate, who is even moderately versed in matters ecclesiastical (editor’s note: “ecclesiastical means “Church related”). Indeed, **were we to try to reject unwritten customs as having no great authority, we would unwittingly injure the gospel in its vitals**; or rather, **we would reduce the [Christian] message to a mere term**”

—St. Basil, *The Holy Spirit* 27:66 (A.D. 375)

¹⁷ St. John Chrysostom does not teach sola Scriptura. He challenges heretics to examine the Scriptures

¹⁸ Which is the SAME as the RSV Catholic Edition on this verse.

¹⁹ And by the way, the Greek word for “Traditions” here is “paradosis” again!

²⁰ BEWARE! The NIV translation in Mark 7 and Matthew 15 translate the root “parados” as “tradition”, BUT in

1st Corinthians 11:2, 2nd Thessalonians 2:15 and 3:6 they translate “paradosis” as “teachings”!

St. Augustine (yet another Early Church Father who some try to say teaches sola Scriptura) Bishop of Hippo, in about 400 A.D. says he wouldn't even believe the Gospel if it weren't for the Church!

ST. AUGUSTINE "If you should find someone who does not yet believe in the gospel, what would you answer him when he says: 'I do not believe'? Indeed, **I would not believe in the gospel myself if the authority of the Catholic Church** did not influence me to do so" *Against the Letter of Mani* [A.D. 397]

Some Examples Of Old Testament Oral Tradition Implied In The New Testament

Also in the New Testament you see Old Testament Oral Tradition matter-of-factly assumed if you look closely. Let's look at just three examples.

MATTHEW 2:23 23 And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

Which prophets (this is not "prophet" but "prophets" plural) taught about Jesus that "**He shall be called a Nazarene**"?

None of the prophets taught this in writing. More than one prophet evidently taught this ORALLY. And the Holy Spirit and St. Matthew thought this point was important enough to even mention "fulfillment" of Old Covenant prefigurations!

Let's go to Matthew 23

MATTHEW 23:1-3 1 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, 2 'The scribes and the Pharisees sit on **Moses' seat**; 3 so practice and observe **whatever** they tell you, but not what they do; for they preach, but do not practice.

Where is "Moses' seat" mentioned in the Old Testament? It's not. But Jesus did not have to teach the people about it. Why? The people already knew about Moses' seat (of authority). How did they know if not from Scripture? They knew from oral Tradition. Some synagogues even today have a "seat" for Moses too. They don't get this from Jesus or the Old Testament. They know this from Tradition.

Let's go to 2nd Timothy 3:8 for a moment.

2nd TIMOTHY 3:8 8 As Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of corrupt mind and counterfeit faith;

St. Paul KNOWS the NAMES of Pharaoh's magicians! Jannes and Jambres. How does he KNOW that? Their names are NOT in the Old Testament. He knows that from Oral Tradition.

Even in the New Testament we see implied Oral Tradition. Long after the Resurrection of Jesus, St. Paul was teaching the "overseers" (Bishops or in the Greek, "Episcopae") of "the church of the Lord" at Ephesus (think Ephesians) and discusses the words of "the Lord Jesus".

ACTS 20:28, 35 28 Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the **church of the LORD** which he obtained with the blood of his own. . . . 35 In all things I have shown you that by so toiling one must help the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, '**It is more blessed to give than to receive.**'"

Where in Scripture did Jesus say, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'? Nowhere. HOW did St. Paul know about this then? Oral Tradition.

Summary

We looked at a working definition of Sola Scriptura.

We saw confusion about when sola Scriptura exactly began.

The clear unsolvable issue is that . . . if ALL authoritative doctrines are to be found in Scripture you would expect to see sola Scriptura found in Scripture too. But it's not there.

We carried out some basic Catholic Christian catechesis on Scripture and oral Tradition.

We looked at the Apostolic Tradition of "The Canon" of the New Testament in Christianity. We noted there is NO VERSE that says: "In the New Testament belongs the books/letters of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, . . . Jude and Revelation."

That verse SHOULD be there if we are to assume sola Scriptura.

We looked at the Matthew 15/Mark 7 objections against tradition ("paradosin" [which is just "paradosis" in singular form]) and saw that Jesus was merely condemning corrupt tradition, not ALL tradition. We learned about Corban, the tradition that Jesus was explicitly condemning.

We saw how we are commanded to hold fast to Apostolic Tradition ("by us") either orally or in writing.

2nd THESSALONIANS 2:15 15 So then, brethren, stand firm and **hold to the traditions** which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter.

We saw verses that allegedly purport to teach sola Scriptura such as 2nd Timothy 3:16-17 and saw no "alone" and Revelation 22:18 which warns about adding/subtracting concerning the book of Revelation.

And we also saw today Catholic Christianity is consistent with "yesterday's" Catholic Christianity concerning the Scriptures and Tradition with the Early Church Fathers.

In the Tables, you can see for yourself how "Christian Denominations" constantly fracture and split. I would suggest to you that sola Scriptura is a big part of the reason for this.

Sola Scriptura is not taught in Sacred Scripture and therefore is a doctrine that falls under the condemnation of Jesus. Sola Scriptura is a tradition of men, that makes void the word of God.

Let's close with any questions, discussion, and a prayer.

Table 1

Christian denominations numbers. "Status of Global Mission". A Christian survey research organization. From the International Bulletin of Missionary Research. Vol. 30, No. 1 had the 2006 version in it.

Below I just screenshot the relevant portions (See separate handout passed around for more details) . . .

From 2006 . . .

43. Oceania (4 regions)	4,322,000	14,587,000	20,976,000	1.15	22,461,000	26,691,000
CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATIONS						
44. Denominations	1,900	18,800	33,800	1.97	38,000	55,000
45. Congregations (worship centers)	400,000	1,450,000	3,448,000	1.50	3,770,000	5,000,000
46. Service agencies	1,500	14,100	23,000	2.06	26,000	36,000

From 2010 . . .

40. Oceania (4 regions)	4,244,000	14,200,000	21,010,000	1.00	20,470,000	26,470,000
CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATIONS						
41. Denominations	1,900	18,700	33,800	1.95	2.2	41,000
42. Congregations (worship centers)	400,000	1,440,000	3,500,000	3.32	440	4,850,000
43. Service agencies	1,500	14,100	23,000	1.99	1.5	28,000

From 2014 . . .

40. Oceania (4 regions)	4,107,000	14,000,000	21,020,000	1.00	20,470,000	26,470,000
CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATIONS						
41. Denominations	500	1,600	18,800	34,200	1.98	2.4
42. Congregations (worship centers)	150,000	400,000	1,416,000	3,400,000	2.40	310

Table 2

Material & Formal Sufficiency of Sacred Scripture

Catholic Christians affirm the Material Sufficiency of Sacred Scripture.

According to the Catholicism, scripture is sufficient, but the question is, what kind of sufficiency?

Catholicism differentiates between material and formal sufficiency, and **believes that scripture is materially sufficient.**

It contains writings sufficient enough to draw theological truth from, however the interpretation of scripture is not always clear, as the scriptures themselves attest to, so **the scriptures cannot be formally sufficient** and cannot serve as the final or only authority for doctrinal truth.

This is seen most clearly in the abundance of denominations, in direct contradiction to Christ's call for His Church to be one (John 16:13).

Scripture needs an authoritative interpretation the Catholic Church is the only body that can claim to be able to do so legitimately. Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium are formally sufficient for this task of adequate, accurate interpretation.

http://www.catecheticonline.com/apologetics_scripture_bible.php

2nd PETER 1:20-21 20 First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 21 because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

2nd PETER 3:14-18a 14 Therefore, beloved, since you wait for these, be zealous to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. 15 And count the forbearance of our Lord as salvation. So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, 16 speaking of this as he does in all his letters. **There are some things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other scriptures.**

17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, beware lest you be carried away with the error of lawless men and lose your own stability.
18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. . . .

JOHN 5:37-40 37 And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness to me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen; 38 and you do not have **his word** abiding in you, for you do not believe him whom he has sent. 39 **You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me; 40 yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.**

2nd CORINTHIANS 3:5-8 5 Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; **our competence is from God**, 6 who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, **not in a written code but in the Spirit; for the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life.**
7 Now if the dispensation of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such splendor that the Israelites could not look at Moses' face because of its brightness, fading as this was, 8 will not the dispensation of the Spirit be attended with greater splendor?

Table 3
A Brief Word On The Accusation That
Catholics ADDED Books To The Bible At The Council Of Trent In The 1500's

Some sola Scriptura Christians accuse the Catholic Church of ADDING the seven books that are NOT in today's Protestant Bible²¹. This is not remotely true.

The Regional Councils of Hippo and Carthage in 393 and 397 A.D.²² affirmed the very same Catholic Canon we have today. Those Councils were ratified by the Pope.

Someone might object saying: "Well these were not "Ecumenical Councils" like Trent was!"²³

They don't have to be. But!

That is irrelevant too because the Ecumenical Council of Florence asserted the exact same books!

The Catholic Ecumenical Council of Florence²⁴ in 1431-45 in Session 11 in Feb of 1442 explicitly had the exact Canon of Scripture listed as Trent! This was almost a hundred years before the Protestant Reformation.

Table 4
Tradition, Greek “Paradosis” (directly from Bible Hub. NIV is inconsistent translating these!²⁵)

²¹ The original King James Version had ALL the Old Testament Canon. There is an original King James Bible at the University of Chicago. You can see it yourself (but you will have to look at the slides as they won't take it out of the case for you of course as they are old and fragile.)

²² Both of these REGIONAL Councils were ratified by the Pope at the time making this authoritative teaching.

²³ And the Ecumenical 2nd Council of Nicaea implicitly reasserted the same books of Hippo & Carthage when they proclaimed: "To summarize, we declare that we **defend** free from any innovations **all the written and unwritten ecclesiastical traditions that have been entrusted to us.**"

²⁴ Sometimes the Council of Florence is also called the Council of Basel-Ferrara-Florence, because of the meeting locations. You need to know this to look it up on some websites.

²⁵ The NIV's inconsistencies may give a reader the impression of **ALL TRADITION** is **ONLY BAD** because of this inconsistency. Mark 7 where Tradition is **bad**, translated as "**tradition**". 2 Thess. where Tradition is **good**, translated as "**teaching**" in NIV!