

SCRIPTURE ALONE: LOOK TO THE BOOK!

Chris was a flatmate of mine in Bible College.

Raised **Catholic**, Chris told me about a tragic experience from childhood church.

To set the scene, what Evangelicals call the **Lord's Supper/Communion**, Catholics call the **Eucharist**.

On the one hand [□],

Chris was taught in {DPa} the Catechism of the Catholic Church, specif. #2181, {DPb} that to miss the Eucharist is what Catholics call a "**mortal sin**" – a sin that *supposedly* ends your spiritual life, kicks you **out of salvation**, back under condemnation & eternal judgment, unless & until you make things right again: penance
Mortal sin is a distinctly Catholic doctrine (not Protestant, not Orthodox).

Eucharist is so important b/c Catholics believe in a doctrine called "transubstantiation" – lit. change of substance – that at the priest's blessing, the **bread & cup** of communion are *supposedly* transformed into the ACTUAL flesh & blood of Jesus, and **re-sacrificed** anew.

Bizarre & contrary to the Bible's clear teaching about Jesus' **once for all** sacrifice . . . but for a Catholic to miss the Eucharist is to miss out on Jesus' sacrifice & forgiveness.

On the other hand [□],

Chris was totally stressed out by Roman Catholic {DPa} Canon Law, spec. Canon#919 {DPb} "A person who is to receive the blessed Eucharist must **abstain** from any food and drink for **at least 1 hour** before holy communion."

I suppose **yummy in your tummy** is not allowed to mix with Jesus' flesh & blood!

Chris was taught it's also a **mortal sin** to partake of the bread & cup in an **unworthy** manner – with *yummy in your tummy*.

I had Chris type this out for me, so I could report it accurately:

"On one occasion when I was 7-years old, I snuck a chocolate bar into our car & ate it on our drive to Mass. When we lined up for the Eucharist, only about 45 minutes had gone by!. So I kept letting people go ahead of me in line, looking at my watch . . . but I ran out of time . . ."

According to Catholic teaching, Chris was, theologically, in a "**damned if you do, damned if you don't**" situation: {DP}

- [□] If he did NOT partake – mortal sin!
- If he DID partake with yummy in his tummy – mortal sin.

Chris finished off his written recollection:

"I remember crying myself to sleep convinced that I was going to hell because of this."

O, what spiritual **bondage**, being told you're in/out, in/out, in/out of salvation! all because of some □ man-made TRADITIONS! {OFF}

I share this story about Chris because it highlights the importance of my topic in our GBC network series that **revolves** **around** **ONE** crucial word that became **central** in the 16th century □ *Protestant* □ *Reformation*, a movement which began seeking to □ *reform* the Catholic church by □ *protesting* against its corruptions & unbiblical doctrines.

This one word is crucial because it distinguishes the true Good News of Jesus from every **counterfeit** gospel the world offers . . . to show you just how important this word is, **consider** who could AFFIRM this unqualified statement: **{DP}**

I believe in salvation by grace through faith in Jesus.

- **Catholics** would say, Amen!
- even Mormons & Jehovah's Witnesses would say, Amen! (but they've a *different* Jesus)
- Many faiths with *many* gods – like the **Hindu** faith – would say, Yes!
- Even Muslims would say, True!

All of the above agree: Jesus is awesome!

Hinduism, says Jesus is 1 of **many** appearances or avatars of the gods.

Muslims say Jesus is Messiah, God's sinless holy prophet, *telling* the way of salvation.

All of the above say belief in Him/His msg contributes **PART-WAY** towards salvation.

You see, **without** one essential word, the Gospel is lost!

{DP} The word that changes everything? . . . **ALONE!**

No well-informed Catholic or cultist would say, **{DP}**

*I believe salvation by grace alone through faith alone
in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone -*

because Scripture alone is my highest source of authority. [If they do, they're ignore Cath Cncls!]

These 5 "Alones" **{DP}** were rediscovered in the Protestant Reformation.

The last 4 Alones are unpacked in just a few verses **{DP}**

*Even though we were dead in our sins, God made us alive in **Christ** . . .*

*For you are saved by **grace** through **faith**, and this is NOT from yourselves; it is God's gift — NOT from works, so that **no one can boast**." (Ephesians 2:5, 8-9)*

Christ **alone** *pays* for our sins, making us righteous, giving life eternal!

Salvation is God's **gift**, by Grace **alone** – we do **not** deserve gifts; we deserve wages

This Gift is **received** through Faith **alone** – **not** achieved by our works.

This is God's way *SO THAT* no one can boast and God **alone** gets the *glory*!

THIS is the GOOD NEWS, which must be **proclaimed** & **protected**!

The significance of the 1st Alone, **{DPa}** SCRIPTURE alone is this: because of our boastful PRIDE, I **assure** you without as the infallible revealer & guardian of the gospel, we **corrupt** the gospel of God's grace. **We lose the good news.**

Whether Catholics or cultists, they will teach:

Jesus is awesome; He contributes **part-way** towards salvation.

BUT our *authoritative* TRADITIONS taught by Catholic Popes & bishops, or these OTHER Scriptures [Book of Mormon, Koran], teach that *your own good deeds* have to bring you the **rest of the way**.

That is the false Gospel the Reformers protested.

Foundational to correcting voices of 'authority' **contrary** to the Bible's Good news, was **reclaiming the Bible ALONE** is our highest earthly authority.

We sing the hymn:

*How Firm a **Foundation**, you saints of the Lord
Is Laid for your faith in His excellent Word*

Our **Main Idea** is similar (like the hymn, I made it rhyme!): **{DPa}**

*We lose the good news unless Scripture **alone** is the foundation of salvation (x2)*

And our **Outline** is simple: The doctrine of Scripture alone . . . **{DPb}**

- *What It's Not*
- *What It Is*
- *Why It Matters*

WHAT IT'S NOT **{DPA}**

Clarifying what something does NOT mean can help avoid confusion.

So here's what the doctrine "Scripture Alone" does NOT mean . . . **{DPb}**

1] *"Every Truth is contained in the Bible."*

The Bible does not teach directly about **many** things, from nuclear physics & penguin migration patterns to trouble-shooting your iPhone! That's not *why* it was written.

That said, as God's infallible word, whatever the Bible does speak about, it speaks about *truthfully, without error* – since God cannot lie and His word is faithful and trustworthy.

2] "Scripture Alone" does NOT mean: "Every *Spiritual* Truth is contained in the Bible"

The Bible itself is clear that it does not even come close to giving a comprehensive account of just Jesus' life & ministry.

John ends his Gospel,

"There are many other things Jesus did..." (21:25)

which were **not** recorded, heaps & heaps that would fill endless books, he says.

But the Bible is **sufficient** for life and godliness. (we'll talk more on that in a bit)

3] Scripture Alone does NOT mean "There are **NO OTHER** authorities"

It means there are no other EQUAL or Higher authorities.

Scripture is clear in Romans 13, **GOVERNMENT** is a God-given authority.
You **cannot** rip up a parking ticket because of the doctrine of Scripture Alone!:

“Officer – there’s no authority besides the Bible!”

You *only* disobey the government if it is forcing you
to disobey what Scripture commands you to obey.

Scripture is clear that **PARENTS** are a God-given authority to their children.

On holidays at Niagra Falls, if your 5-year old boy suddenly escapes your line of sight, only to be rediscovered stepping onto a tightrope to walk over the falls, he cannot reject your instruction to ‘step down’ by appealing to the doctrine of Scripture Alone!,

“Dad, ONLY the Bible is authoritative!

And there’s no verse in the Bible that kids cannot tightrope walk!”?

Dad replies, *“But there is a verse saying, ‘Rescue those stumbling towards death’ and, ‘Children obey your parents in the Lord.’ . . . So step back down now!”*

Even the **CHURCH** has God-vested authority, as the author of Hebrews writes,

*“Obey your leaders and submit to **their authority**,*

since they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account” (13:17)

PROTESTANTS are fine with having . . . Church

Councils to discuss debated doctrinal issues, . . . fine with having

Creeds to summarise doctrine briefly so you can memorise it, . . . fine with having

Confessions to unpack doctrinal distinctives of this/that denomination...fine w/using

Catechisms as Q&A teaching tools – this year we’ve all used the *New City Catechism!*

Councils, Creeds, Confessions & Catechisms – can be extremely **helpful** . . .

but they’re NEVER on equal footing with Scripture, the 66 books of the Bible.

{DPd} The doctrine of “Scripture alone” does not **eliminate** other authorities;
it **calibrates** other authorities!

Scripture Alone means the Bible alone is our “**SUPREME / HIGHEST COURT**”

Every other court of Authority – govts, parents, churches – are **District/Low courts**

And **good** Confessions of Faith state this clearly!

We are a Baptist church, and the London Baptist Confession begins, **{DP}**

*The Holy Scripture is the **ONLY** sufficient, certain and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith and obedience.*

That’s a really good description of the doctrine of Scripture Alone,
which brings us to . . .

WHAT IT IS {DPA} (WHAT THE DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE ALONE DOES MEAN)

A ‘rule of faith’ is **authority** to bind our conscience re. what to believe & how to live.

Notice how the LBC focuses on Scripture’s authority/rule of all **saving** knowledge.

The apostle Paul tells Timothy the **primary** reason the Bible was written: **{DPa}**

*"You have known the sacred Scriptures,
which are able to give you wisdom for **salvation** through faith in Christ Jesus."* (2 Tim 3:15)

"Saving knowledge" comes from God's **Word** . . .

Nature – God's **World** – tells us He is glorious & powerful, but does **not** tell us His **name** or His **plan** or our **hope**. Does God want to know us, guide us, save us?

If so, *how* can we be saved? We need more specifics.

God's **Word** reveals detailed knowledge of God, of humanity, of God's plan & fulfillment of salvation in Jesus, God's Son – crucified for repentant sinners, raised to life in victory – Jesus is the **only one without sin**, and therefore the **only name** by which people can be saved.

And Scripture's supreme **authority** comes from its supreme **Source**: **God** **{DPb}**

Peter writes [2 Peter 1:20-21],

*ABOVE ALL, you know this: No prophecy of Scripture comes from the prophet's own interpretation [**initiative** is better; Greek is lit., 'releasing'] ²¹ because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

"**Carried along**" describe how wind fills a ship's sail to carry it along, as in Acts 27

Since the ship was unable to head into the wind, we gave way to it and were carried along.

No **wind**, no movement of the ship – No **Word** from God, no prophecy of Scripture!

In similar language, 2 Tim 3:16 says **{DPb}**

"All Scripture is **God-breathed**" (2 Timothy 3:16)

Some Bible versions of 2 Tim 3:16, like the CSB, translate *God-breathed* as '**inspired**', emphasising the result: God-breathed **into** His word that abides.

So theologians use the phrase the 'doctrine of **Inspiration**':

The **origination & preservation of revelation** from God, by His Spirit at work in a prophet to ensure the accuracy & truth of what was written.

This is why the Bible is unique, special and supremely Authoritative –

it's is God **infallible words to us** . . . **preserved** for all time.

And 1 Timothy 3:16 describes the Church as "*the pillar and **support** of the truth*"

KEY: as the support of the truth, the Church is **UNDER** God's Word

We do NOT stand **over** the Word, or even **beside** it. But under it, submitting to it.

The issue of **AUTHORITY** is what *intensified* the Reformation in the 16th century, b/c the Leadership of the Catholic Church claimed **INFALLIBILITY equal** to Scripture!

Beside Scripture, **not** Under it.

Rome claimed/still claim 2 authorities as = **Sacred Scripture & 'Sacred Tradition'**
 (Sacred Tradition is supposedly teachings of Jesus & the apostles *orally* passed down the generations through Catholic popes + bishops – it's not written, not testable, not made known for all time ... but only brought forth/made known when it suits Catholic leaders . . . almost like a magician's rabbit out of a hat)

In response, the Reformers coined the slogan *sola Scriptura*, Latin4 "Scripture **alone**."

SCRIPTURE ALONE: {DP} WHY IT MATTERS

Let's 1st understand the burden of the Reformers, & THEN consider our context today where Scripture Alone is *incredibly relevant* even within the **PROTESTANT** where **errors** church go uncorrected due to not viewing Scripture as our highest authority!

THE REFORMERS: **Martin Luther** was ordained into the Catholic priesthood.

When he began lecturing at Bible College, he started rigorous Bible study, which led him to notice *glaring discrepancies* between teachings of Scripture & teachings of the Catholic Church.

A trip to Rome opened Luther's eyes further to the **moral corruption** in the church.

The nail in the coffin for Luther was **Pope Leo X**, who needed of **\$\$** to rebuild St. Peter's Basilica, a Cathedral in Rome. To raise funds, the Pope Leo claimed to be able to release souls of dead people who were *supposedly* trapped in a *supposed* place of limbo between heaven & hell called 'purgatory' – which is not taught in the Bible.

The Pope claimed he could release souls in limbo **for a price** – by the sale of indulgence letters. **Salvation for sale!** A 'coffer' = small treasure chest

And the fundraising slogan in every town was this: **{DP}:**

"When a Coin in the Coffer Rings, a Soul from Purgatory Springs!"

Benny Hinn & Kenneth Copeland *ain't got nothin'* on ol' Pope Leo!

At this, Luther said he could be "silent no more." In 1517, he posted his **{DP}** 95 *Theses* with the sincere hope of stirring reform within the Catholic Church.

Not one for subtlety, Luther's Thesis #32 said, **{DP}**

Those who believe that they can be certain of their salvation because they have indulgence letters will be eternally damned, together with their teachers.

This was no compliment to the Pope!, and was intended to get Catholic leadership seriously reconsidering their **blasphemous heresy** of 'salvation for sale.'

Luther was soon brought before a religious court that demanded Luther recant his writings calling out the Catholic church. His famous response was a clear expression of the doctrine of Scripture Alone: **{DP}**

Unless I am convinced by the **testimony of the Scriptures** . . . I will not recant. For I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves. **I am bound by the Scriptures** I have quoted and my conscience is captive to **the Word of God**. Here I stand.

Luther was promised safe passage, so they did not arrest him – *this time*. But Luther's appeal to *Scripture alone* was totally rejected.

They thought Luther had no business telling THEM to correct their interpretation of Scripture, because the Catholic hierarchy called the **Magisterium** – that is the Pope and his bishops – claims not only *infallible* authority, but also **infallible interpretation** of the Scripture.

Time allows just 1 example from a Catholic writing that's **{DPa}** "Imprimatur", officially declared free from any doctrinal error . . . Here it is: **{DPb}**

"No one shall . . . presume to interpret the Holy Scriptures **contrary** to that sense held by the holy mother Church, to whom it belongs to judge their true sense and interpretation."¹

Once the Magisterium issues an 'infallible **dogma**' it becomes an official, unchangeable, undeniable doctrine, unless you want to be branded a "heretic". . . dogma such as Mary's **Immaculate Conception** – **NOT** about the virgin birth of Jesus; but acc'd Pope Pious IX, it's about Mary herself "*being free from any hereditary or personal sin*" for her entire life . . . **sinless**.

If you try, "come let us reason together to reason **from the Scriptures**"
Romans 3:23, "*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" – only Jesus is sinless!
or Luke 1 – Mary called God "my **saviour**" – proving she needed saving from her sin!

Nuh-uh! No push-back from Scripture will be considered! It's **dogma** now.

Did you know the official title of **NORTH** Korea is
'The DEMOCRATIC People's Republic of Korea'.

Just saying so does not make it so!!

The Pope or Magisterium **just saying** that Jesus & the apostles passed this down, **does not make it so!**

You've likely realized anything that claims to be "equal" with Scripture, in practice become "**greater** than" Scripture, the **key** to interpreting Scripture

As proven by the title of the article from Catholic Answers: **{DPb}**

Sacred Scripture depends upon Sacred Tradition

RU sensing what Luther was up against & why the doc Scripture Alone is SO important?

¹ Heinrich Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 786 (Imprimatur).

- The **1st** & foremost Reason the Doctrine of Scripture Alone Matters – is our B.I. {DP} we **LOSE the Good News** unless Scripture alone is the Foundation of Salvation.

I want you to see this TODAY by looking at modern {DP} *Imprimatur* stamped Catholic writing, addressed to MARY... {DPa}

*“O Mother of Perpetual Help . . . You are my advocate.
In **your** hands I place my eternal salvation and to **you** do I entrust my soul
For if **you** protect me, dear Mother, I **fear** nothing
– not even my sins, because **you** will obtain pardon for me.*

Rubie, an ex-Catholic in our Logan congregation told me she used to pray *this* prayer every week –

a blasphemous prayer dethroning our Lord Jesus from being our Advocate & Redeemer, giving that honour to Mary instead.

Scripture Alone guards the good news of Jesus!

Jem, another ex-Catholic who became a member 2 weeks ago, wrote this in her testimony: {DPC}

Mary was more 'famous' than Jesus among family & friends.

I didn't know Jesus – except that He's the son of Mary.

Scripture Alone guards the good news of Jesus!

After I preached this sermon @ Logan, **Rett**, another ex-Catholic, he paid indulgences for his father to get out of purgatory.

Salvation is still for sale today in the Roman Catholic Church!

□ This is SO tragic! . . . and shows why the Reformation still matters SO much.

When the Catechism of the Catholic Church declares, {DP}

*“The INFALLIBILITY of the **Magisterium** . . . extends to all elements of doctrine, without which the **SAVING TRUTHS** of the faith cannot be **preserved**.”*

I hope you can see nothing could be further from the truth! {DP}

we lose the Good News unless Scripture alone is the Foundation of Salvation

A **2nd point** about Why Scripture alone Matters . . . like Rubie & Jem & Rett . . .

2] Be LIBERATED by Scripture's Sufficiency!

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus said,

*The scribes & Pharisees tie up **HEAVY LOADS** that are hard to carry
and put them on people's shoulders (Matthew 23:4)*

Pls Hear this: {DP} The Bible is SUFFICIENT to **bring us** to Christ & **conform us** to Christ
Hear this, and See this, in 2 Timothy 3:15-17: {DP}

“You have known the sacred Scriptures, which are able to give you wisdom for **salvation** through faith in Christ Jesus. [that’s the **bring us to Christ**]. All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be **COMPLETE, EQUIPPED** for every good work.” [that’s the **conform us to Christ**]. (2 Timothy 3:15-17)

Re. “**bring us to Christ**”: Scripture has the good news of salvation in Jesus.

O Friend, this morning be liberated, set free from your sin!

- Hear God’s word proclaiming the gloriously sufficient & undeserved grace God,
- that Jesus, the Holy One, offers to **take** your shame & guilt & sin upon Him and also **credit** His perfect righteousness to your account as a free gift
- a gift that can be received this very day by faith alone, clinging to Christ alone!

My heart is SO burdened at the *unnecessary* dilemma of Matthew Hood, a Catholic priest I read about, who 2 months ago was watching a family video of himself being baptized in 1990, only to realise the “proper” Catholic **formula** was not used. a **single word** was changed.

The priest baptising Matthew said, “**we** baptise” instead of “**I** baptise”.

Because Catholics believe the **words themselves** are actually bringing about a change in the person – almost like an “*incantation*” – the articles states, “*we have to be very precise in the words and the form*”.

In his own words, Matthew Hood describes the “shock & sadness” of the ripple effect that because of **1 pronoun**, his own baptism was not valid, his **ordination to the priesthood** was not valid, therefore all the “**sacraments**” he administered as a priest were invalid – including the Catholic sacrament of **marriage** – meaning those MARRIAGES were not valid according to the Catholic church!

This reads like **satire**, as if it were an article from the *Babylon Bee*!

But this is from straight from numerous Catholic websites, like the Jesuit Review.²

But more heart-breaking than any of those other things deemed invalid, is this statement from Matthew, **{DP}**

It was an alienating sense that even though I was following the Lord, I wasn’t a Christian.”

Not because of the Gospel, but because of a **pronoun?**

Salvation depends on speaking the right pronoun? O friend, be *liberated* from this **bondage** to man-made Traditions that are heavy burdens placed upon your shoulders.

² <https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2020/08/24/detroit-priest-invalid-baptism-canonical-consequences>

And, https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2020/08/26/interview-detroit-priest-invalid-baptism-ordination?utm_source=website&utm_medium=inline_promo&utm_campaign=related

Turn to Him in simple saving faith, relying completely on Christ, and be saved!

For salvation, be freed from bondage to unbiblical tradition.

For sanctification/Christian growth be free from bondage to unbiblical tradition

Vv. 16-17 of 1 Tim 3 speak of the Bible as SUFFICIENT to **conform us** to Christ.

All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be COMPLETE, EQUIPPED for every good work."
(2 Timothy 3:15-17)

Those are not all easy things: *rebuking, correcting, training*.

But they lead to maturity, being equipped for every good work, conformity to Christ.

And Scripture teaches on SO many things,

From the meaning of life, to how we live for God's glory & our good.

"Lord, in Your light, we see light" Psalm 36 says.

Remember what Paul wrote, *"For freedom Christ set you free!*

Don't submit again to yoke/harness of bondage."

If you come from a legalistic, authoritarian background, be **liberated** by Scripture Alone!

Traditions reaching *beyond Scripture / contrary to Script*, have no claim on you!
are **not** binding upon the Christian conscience!

Skirts being this many inches below the knee

Or that instrument or genre of music being un-Christian.

Scripture often does give not 'quantified codes' but instead liberating principles:

Dress modestly.

Let every instrument praise the Lord.

Examine your heart motive, in accountable community,
and do what you do for God's glory,

honouring lower God-given authorities, unless they call you to disobey Scripture.

The Bible is SUFFICIENT to **bring us** to Christ & **conform us** to Christ

31 With Liberty comes Responsibility!

Brothers & Sisters, God calls us to be people who are **{DP}**

"unashamed, rightly handling the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15)

We need to KNOW God's word, to handle it / study it / apply it carefully, honourably

Scripture twisters are hardly limited to the Pope & Catholic tradition!

There are plenty of '**Protestant Popes**' in both pulpits and pews, a law to themselves, Cowboy Christians – totally **ignoring** wisdom from Creeds of old and from wise Counsellors around you right now.

It's can be tempting to twist Luther's words about "conscience" and twist Scripture to try and make it say WHATEVER you want it to say.

Listen to Pastorette Patricia Hines, [DPa]

*"We gave up on all of that **sola** stuff a long time ago . . . We feel the true spirit of the Reformation today lies in the **questioning** of what is believed to be true, and seeking out **new** paths of spiritual exploration. That's essentially what Luther did."*

She continues, [DPb]

*"It was Luther who said **'My conscience is captive,'** and we must have the same attitude. Our consciences are free only when they become captive to our own free thinking." ?!?*³

Finish the quote!! Luther said,

*"My Conscience is help captive **TO THE WORD OF GOD!**
 . . . not captive to my own free thinking or desires & preferences!*

Our conscience is not inerrant! God's Word is.

Our conscience can be numbed/seared & needs regular RECALIBRATING by God's word . . . which restores the soul and renews the mind.

How many times have you heard a Christian say,

"God gave me a real peace about this decision"

When "this decision" is called sin or folly in Scripture!?

Jonah had a real peace, asleep in the boat, going the opposite direction God commanded.

Personal peace is not what binds our conscience! Scripture Alone does.

I read a **terrifying** survey last week, reminding me just how fast-growing viewpoints like that of Patricia Hines is . . . {DPa} Unlike the **Protestant Reformation**, whose goal was to return to Bible, this modern movement is the opposite . . . [it's from America, but Aussies tend to follow American trends 5 to 10 years later]

In a large survey conducted a survey in January of this year: {DPb}

42% of Evangelicals believe
a person can enter heaven "by being or doing enough good".

{DPc} And less than half, only 43% of Evangelicals believe Jesus is sinless!!

Based on these statistics, half of professing Christians in America today do not even know the Gospel, nor the God of the Gospel, believing Jesus is a **sinner**, Jesus is **not** the only way of salvation & that a person can be saved **by their own good works**.

³ From the Tominthebox News Network. The "About TBNN" preface makes it very unclear whether she is a real person being satirized, or a fictional character. [<http://tominthebox.blogspot.com/2007/10/martin-luthers-body-exhumed-found.html>]

WHY?... {DPC}

Because only 1 in 4 Evangelical Christians believe the Bible is the Word of God, trustworthy & reliable.

Can you SEE how much the doctrine of Scripture Alone still *really matters*

James White says in his book that I highly recommend, *Scripture Alone* {DP}

Church history has repeatedly & clearly proven that once the highest view of Scripture is abandoned by any theologian, group, denomination or church, the downhill slide in both its theology & practice is inevitable."

With Liberty comes Responsibility!

Jesus often asked people, "What do the Scriptures say?"

*One of the major achievements of the Protestant Reformation is the return to Scripture with no need of an external key for interpretation – whether that key be the Pope or the angel Moroni giving Joseph Smith special glasses to see the Bible differently and start Mormonism . . . **NO!** Scripture is sufficiently clear and supremely authoritative.*

Brothers and sisters, **LOOK to this BOOK!**

When the apostle Paul preached the good news of Jesus in Berea, Acts 17 says {DPa}

*Those in Berea were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, since they received the word with eagerness and examined the Scriptures **DAILY** to see if these things were so.*

Not leaders but laity, **everyone** was praised because they were a people who {DPb}

"Look to the Book"

If the Berean congregation was praised for testing **apostle Paul's** word against the Scriptures, most certainly we're noble in checking anyone's claim against the Scriptures.

Brothers & Sisters, **LOOK to this BOOK!** as your only Supreme spiritual authority.

Test what I say, what Ben says, what your elders say, test us by the Scriptures!

In midweek fellowship groups – 1 of the most important Qs in Bible studying is:

That's Fascinating! Where do you see that in the passage?

The **wrong** question is, "What does this passage mean to you?"

The **right** question is, "What did God mean by this passage?"

We have mixed up a multitude of *applications* with a multitude of *meanings*.

You shall not steal - has ONE meaning, don't steal! – but a multitude of applications:

What does stealing look like at? At school? From a neighbour?

Stealing ideas, stealing money, stealing software/video services, etc.

Be IN the Word!

Luther translated the NT into German in 1522 and in 1526 William Tyndale translated the NT into English . . . so that **everyone could read it.**

Months later, the Catholic Bishop of London, Cuthbert Tunstall, responded: **[DPI]**

“Children of iniquity, maintainers of Luther’s sect . . . wandering from the way of truth, have translated the New Testament into our English tongue . . . which truly without doubt will CONTAMINATE and INFECT the flock committed unto us, with most deadly poison!”⁴

Fancy that! **God’s word** = a most deadly poison!!

I thought Psalm 19 said,

The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul.

The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the SIMPLE.

The Catholic Church made translation into the mother tongue a “**crime**”, and actually ordered the **Bible** . . . to be **burned**!

It’s one thing for the Nazis to burn books considered traitorous in content, but I still cannot fathom the **Church** burning its **OWN** book!

While it’s *awful* for a Church to burn the Bible!

It’s worse for a Church to burn the **people** at the stake who make the Bible available. [like Tyndale & many others] **{OFF}**

God breathed out His Word so we might know Him forever

God breathed out His Word so we might know ourselves and be saved from our sin!

Prophets gave their lives to **record** God’s Word.

Ancient church members gave their lives to **preserve** the scrolls from persecutors

Men like Wycliffe & Tyndale gave their lives to **translate** it into our English language.

Now we have the Word in *readable, accurate, accessible* Bibles.

Tragically, the most precious thing any one of us owns often remains barely read.

*What is desperately needed in God’s church today, is not only a restoration of faithful biblical preaching, but also a **restoration of personal Bible reading**, so that Christians are feeding upon His Word every day.*

“The Bible is a book that reads us even as we read it.”⁵

Read it and be read by it.

Understand it, submit to it, obey it, be liberated by it and be responsible with it.

⁴ Christopher Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, vol. I, p. 122.

⁵ Eugene Peterson, *Solo*, “Introduction.”

CONCLUSION

I close with a memory of my wife as a secretary typing the order of a ceremony for her Boss who was a Mason, a member of the Masonic Lodge.

When she got home, she shared the order of ceremony with me:

The *carrying in* of the Bible . . . the *opening* of the Bible . . . podium *placing* of the Bible
Ceremony continues . . .

The *closing* of the Bible . . . the *exiting* of the Bible . . .

No **READING** of the Bible!

Brother & Sister, may that not be us!
Look to the Book and Look **IN** the Book!

*Will YOUR conscience be captive to the Word of God
so that you say, "Here I stand!"*

CLOSING PRAYER