

BEHIND THE BOOK

Connecting to the Bible

(Observation)

Galatians 1:8-9

(READ VARIOUS TRANSLATIONS)

SEPTEMBER 27TH, 2017

Sola Scriptura
Only Scripture

This month, Heritage is recognizing the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

Log onto this site and sign up to receive 31 daily e-mails during the month of October. If you do, you'll possess an excellent understanding of the Reformation and its major personalities.

<http://www.desiringgod.org/here-we-stand>

The Reformation, also referred to as the Protestant Reformation, was a [schism](#) from the Roman Catholic Church initiated by Martin Luther and continued by John Calvin, Huldrych Zwingli, and other early Protestant Reformers in 16th-century Europe. It is usually considered to have started with the publication of the *Ninety-five Theses* by Luther in 1517 and lasting until the end of the Thirty Years' War with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648.

First: A Short History of the Beginning of the Reformation

Pope Leo X excommunicated Luther as a heretic on Jan. 3, 1521, almost four years after his *95 Theses*.

The "95 Theses" were written in 1517 by a 34-year old, German priest and professor of theology named Martin Luther. Luther wrote his "95 Theses" (95 questions) to express his growing concern with the corruption within the Church. In essence, his Theses called for a full reform of the Catholic Church and challenged other scholars to debate with him on matters of church policy.

In 1517, a friar named Johann Tetzel began to sell indulgences in Germany to raise funds to renovate St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Indulgences allowed living people to buy their loved ones out of Purgatory or, at least, lessen the time in Purgatory.

Tetzel had a fee schedule for getting loved ones out of Purgatory. For instance,

Witchcraft: 2 ducats

Polygamy: 6 ducats

Murder: 8 ducats

Sacrilege: 9 ducats

Perjury: 9 ducats

Luther heard of Tetzel's ministry and wrote his "*Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences*," also known as "*The 95 Theses*," a list of questions and propositions for debate.

The first two challenges read:

1. When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, "Repent" (Mt 4:17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.
2. This word cannot be understood as referring to the sacrament of penance, that is, confession and satisfaction, as administered by the clergy.

In addition to his criticisms of indulgences, Luther also reflected popular sentiment about the "St. Peter's scandal" in the 95 Theses: "*Why does not the pope, whose wealth today is greater than the wealth of the richest Crassus, build the basilica of St. Peter with his own money rather than with the money of poor believers?*"

The next year, 1518, Luther was summoned to Augsburg, a city in southern Germany, to defend his opinions before an imperial diet (assembly). A debate lasting three days between Luther and Cardinal Thomas Cajetan produced no agreement. Cajetan defended the church's use of indulgences, but Luther refused to recant and returned to Wittenberg.

On November 9, 1518, the pope condemned Luther's writings as conflicting with the teachings of the Church. One year later (1519) a series of commissions were convened to examine Luther's teachings. The first papal commission found them to be heretical, but the second merely stated that Luther's writings were "scandalous and offensive to pious ears." Finally, in July 1520, Pope Leo X issued a papal bull (public decree) that concluded that Luther's propositions were heretical and gave Luther 120 days to recant in Rome. Luther refused to recant, and on January 3, 1521 Pope Leo excommunicated Martin Luther from the Catholic Church.

Later that month, Luther was called to stand before the Holy Roman Emperor - Charles V on April 18, 1521 at the Diet (Congress) of Worms (26 January-26 May). Copies of Luther's writings were laid out on a table and he was asked 2 questions: 1) if the books were his, and 2) whether he stood by what he had written. Luther confirmed he was their author, but requested time to think about the answer to the second question. He prayed, consulted friends, and gave his response the next day:

"Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (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. I cannot and I will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. I cannot do otherwise, here I stand, may God help me, Amen.”

- Martin Luther at the Diet of Worms in *Documents from the History of Lutheranism, 1517-1750*, ed., Eric Lund (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 32.

At the end of the diet, on May 25, 1521, the Holy Roman emperor Charles V signed an edict against Luther, ordering his writings to be burned. He declared Luther an outlaw, banning his literature, and requiring his arrest, making it a crime for anyone in Germany to give Luther food or shelter, even allowing anyone to kill Luther without legal consequence. Because of this, Luther's friends "kidnapped" him and put him into hiding in the town of Eisenach for 10 months, during which time he translated the Bible into German.

Luther had previously written against the Church's adherence to clerical celibacy, and in 1525 he married Katherine of Bora, a former nun. They had five children. Although Luther's early writings had sparked the Reformation, he was hardly involved in it during his later years. At the end of his life, Luther turned strident in his views, and pronounced the pope the Antichrist, advocated for the expulsion of Jews from the empire and condoned polygamy based on the practice of the patriarchs in the Old Testament.

IMP: - In 1529 a Diet met at Speyer, Germany to consider action against the Turks and attempt again to come to terms with the Reformation. The Diet forbade any extension of the Reformation until a German council could meet the following year. Charles V declared he would wipe out the Lutheran "heresy." Five reforming princes and fourteen cities drafted a protest, a formal legal appeal, for themselves, their subjects and all who then or in the future should believe in the Word of God. (It was not formally published until July.)

Eight years before, Martin Luther was a lone monk standing for the Word of God and liberty of conscience at the Diet of Worms. But by 1529, the world had changed: there was an organized party of government leaders with consciences bound by the Word of God against tyrannical authority. Not every protester was a Lutheran. The whole party of the reformers needed a name. From the protest and appeal at the Diet of Speyer, these breakaways from the Roman Church began to be called **Protestants**. - <http://www.christianity.com/church/church-history/timeline/1501-1600/protestants-1st-called-protestants-11629946.html>

Luther believed Scripture alone was sufficient for the faith and practice of Christian believers.

Second: What is *Sola Scriptura*? Only Scripture

Sola Scriptura is one of the five *solas* that form the theological pillars of the Reformation.

- 1.) "Sola Scriptura" (Scripture Alone: 2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- 2.) "Sola Gratia" (Grace Alone: Ephesians 2:8-9)
- 3.) "Sola Fide" (Faith Alone: Galatians 3:11)
- 4.) "Solus Christus" (Christ Alone: 1 Timothy 2:5)

5.) “Soli Deo Gloria” (To God Alone Be Glory: 1Peter 4:11).

Sola Scriptura is the doctrine on which the Reformation began and stood. It led to all the other Reformation affirmations.

Sola Scriptura was a direct refutation of the Papacy and the Roman Catholic Church as God’s conduit for revelation

Luther – “A simple layman armed with Scripture is greater than the mightiest pope without it.”

Catholic doctrine is based on the Scripture and Church tradition, and not equally – Church tradition ascends Scripture. For the RCC, the Scripture is part of the Church’s tradition.

"Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture make up a single sacred deposit of the Word of God in which, as in a mirror, the pilgrim Church contemplates God, the source of all her riches." – Catechism of the Catholic Church, 97.

Incorrect View of Canon	Correct View of Canon
Church Determines Canon	Church Discovers Canon
Church Is Mother of Canon	Church Is Child of Canon
Church Is Magistrate of Canon	Church Is Minister of Canon
Church Regulates Canon	Church Recognizes Canon
Church Is Judge of Canon	Church Is Witness of Canon
Church Is Master of Canon	Church Is Servant of Canon

<https://answersingenesis.org/bible-questions/how-did-we-get-the-bible-in-english/>

Sola Scriptura means that *the Bible is the infallible and final rule of faith and practice for Christians*. All secondary authority is derived from the Scripture and subject to it. This includes counsels, preachers, commentaries, denominations, churches, etc.

Galatians 1:8-9 - But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.⁹ As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

“The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man’s salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men.” —Westminster Confession of Faith

It does not mean the Bible is the only truth or authority Christians possess. “The most ardent defender of *sola Scriptura* will concede, for example, that Scripture has little or nothing to say

about DNA structures, microbiology, the rules of Chinese grammar, or rocket science.” (From Ligonier Ministries). It means Scripture is truthful in all it says and it is the final authority in what it says. The Bible has the ‘last word.’

Nor does sola Scriptura claim that everything Jesus or the apostles ever taught is preserved in Scripture. It only means that everything necessary, everything binding on our consciences, and everything God requires of us is given to us in Scripture (2 Peter 1:3).

Furthermore, we are forbidden to add to or take away from Scripture (cf. Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Rev. 22:18-19). To add to it is to lay on people a burden that God Himself does not intend for them to bear (cf. Matt. 23:4).
<http://www.ligonier.org/blog/what-does-sola-scriptura-mean/>

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Third: Knowing the Stakes

The Vulgate (Latin translation of the Bible) was the official Bible in western Europe from the late fourth century on. It was a translation that St. Jerome had made, by the order of Pope Damasus. And since Greek had begun to die out in western Europe after Constantine moved the capital to the east, Latin naturally became the language of the people in the west. By the middle ages, Greek was completely unknown in western Europe. (It would not be studied in any university until 1458, at the University of Paris.) All the clergy in the west for a thousand years had to learn Latin, but not Greek or Hebrew. In terms of longevity, the Latin Vulgate is the most influential translation of the Bible in history.

In 1382, John Wycliffe (1328-1384) translated the whole Bible into English from the Latin Vulgate but it was not translated from the Hebrew and Greek and was a literal, word-for-word, translation, often not making sense in its literalness.

Nonetheless, that version began to break down the political-religious power structures of Europe. Lay people could read the Bible, bypass the RCC and challenge secular rulers. By 1408, the Pope outlawed reading the Bible in English. In 1415, 43 years after his death, the Pope decreed that Wycliffe’s bones should be dug up, burned and thrown into the nearby river.

Side Note: Martin Bucer (11 November 1491 – 28 February 1551) was a German Protestant reformer based in Strasbourg. Bucer was originally a member of the Dominican Order, but after meeting and being influenced by Martin Luther in 1518 he arranged for his monastic vows to be annulled. He then began to work for the Reformation. In 1549, he was exiled to England where he influenced Thomas Cranmer in the *Book of Common Prayer*.

When he died at 59 in 1551, he was buried in Great St. Mary's Church in Cambridge. When **Mary I** (Bloody Mary) came to the throne, she had Bucer tried posthumously for heresy as part of her efforts to restore Catholicism in England. His casket was disinterred and his remains burned outside of the church building, along with copies of their books. On 22 July 1560, Elizabeth I formally rehabilitated him. A brass plaque on the floor of Great St Mary's marks the original location of Bucer's grave and another one marks the place outside the church where his remains were burned. Teana and I have stood where Bucer's remains and books were burned.

No new English version appeared between Wycliffe and Tyndale, who translated the entire New Testament and much of the Old Testament from the Hebrew and Greek.

In between Wycliffe and Tyndale, Jan Huss (Bohemia/Czech) discovered Wycliffe and wrote a multitude of treatises against the Catholic Church. Huss was forbidden to preach and then excommunicated but protected by his king. When Alexander V sold indulgences to raise an army, Huss wrote the Pope had lost his moral authority who was exploiting the Czech people, insulting the king who earned a profit from the sale of indulgences in the Czech Republic.

With that Huss lost the support of his king. His excommunication, which had been dropped, was now revived, and an interdict was put upon the city of Prague (no other city could trade with them or no persons could enter into the city; no child born in the city could be baptized; no one could receive communion or be buried on church grounds) as long as Huss continued his ministry. To spare the city, Huss withdrew to the countryside toward the end of 1412.

In November 1414, the Council of Constance assembled, and Huss was urged by Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund to come and give an account of his doctrine. Because he was promised safe conduct, and because of the importance of the council (which promised significant church reforms), Huss went. When he arrived, however, he was immediately arrested, and he remained imprisoned for months. Instead of a hearing, Huss was eventually hauled before authorities in chains and asked merely to recant his views.

Huss responded, *"I appeal to Jesus Christ, the only judge who is almighty and completely just. In his hands I plead my cause, not on the basis of false witnesses and erring councils, but on truth and justice."* On July 6, 1415, he was taken to the cathedral, dressed in his priestly garments, then stripped of them one by one. He refused one last chance to recant at the stake, where he prayed, *"Lord Jesus, it is for thee that I patiently endure this cruel death. I pray thee to have mercy on my enemies."* He was heard reciting the Psalms as the flames engulfed him.

His executioners scooped up his ashes and tossed them into a lake so that nothing would remain of the "heretic," but some Czechs collected bits of soil from the ground where Huss had died and took them back to Bohemia as a memorial.

Bohemians were furious with the execution and repudiated the council; over the next several years, Bohemia eventually reconciled with the rest of western Christendom the *Unitas Fratrum* ("Union of Brethren"), which became the foundation for the Moravian Brethren (Moravia is a

region in the Czech Republic), who would play an influential role in the conversion of the Wesley brothers.

Early in his monastic career, Martin Luther, rummaging through the stacks of a library, happened upon a volume of sermons by John Huss. *"I was overwhelmed with astonishment," Luther later wrote. "I could not understand for what cause they had burnt so great a man, who explained the Scriptures with so much gravity and skill."*

Fourth: The Bible in English

Please read this article: <http://www.ligonier.org/blog/fortress-truth-martin-luther/>

How we Got the English version

- c. 1400–400 B.C.** Books of the Hebrew Old Testament written
- c. 250–200 B.C.** The Septuagint, a popular Greek translation of the Old Testament, produced
- A.D. 45–85?** Books of the Greek New Testament written
- 90 and 118** Councils of Jamnia give final affirmation to the Old Testament canon (39 books)
- 140-150** Marcion's heretical "New Testament" incites orthodox Christians to establish a NT canon
- 303-306** Diocletian's persecution includes confiscating and destroying New Testament Scriptures
- c. 305-310** Lucian of Antioch's Greek New Testament text; becomes a foundation for later Bibles
- 367** Athanasius's Festal Letter lists complete New Testament canon (27 books) for the first time
- 397** Council of Carthage establishes orthodox New Testament canon (27 books)
- c. 400** Jerome translates the Bible into Latin; this "Vulgate" becomes standard of medieval church

ENGLISH VERSIONS FROM LATIN

- c. 650** Caedmon, a monk, puts Bible books into verse
- c. 735** >Historian Bede translates the Gospels
- 871-899** King Alfred the Great translates the Psalms and 10 Commandments
- 950** The 7th-century Lindisfarne Gospels receive English translation
- 955-1020** Aelfric translates various Bible books
- c. 1300** Invention of eyeglasses aids copying
- c. 1325** Both Richard Rolle and William Shoreham translate psalms into metrical verse
- 1380-1382** John Wycliffe and associates make first translation of the whole Bible into English
- 1388** John Purvey revises Wycliffe Bible
- 1455** Gutenberg's Latin Bible—first from press

ENGLISH VERSIONS FROM GREEK

- 1516** Erasmus's Greek New Testament, forerunner to the Textus Receptus used by KJV translators
- 1525** William Tyndale makes the first translation of the New Testament from Greek into English
- 1536** Tyndale strangled and burned
- 1537** Miles Coverdale's Bible completes Tyndale's work on the Old Testament
- 1538** Great Bible, assembled by John Rogers, the first English Bible authorized for public use

1560 Geneva Bible—the work of William Whittingham, a Protestant English exile in Geneva

1568 Bishop’s Bible—a revision of the Great Bible

1582 Rheims New Testament published

1607-1611 King James Version, the “Authorized Version,” is made

Dr. Philip W. Comfort is visiting professor of New Testament at Wheaton College and author of The Quest for the Original Text of the New Testament (Baker, 1992).

Fifth: Reformation Results

The Reformation began as a religious movement but since religion (acknowledged or not) undergirds all of life, it eventually affected all of life, another major reason the RCC attempted to stop it.

The Reformation resulted in:

- a) Higher literacy rates
- b) Lower gender gap in schools
- c) Higher primary school enrollment
- d) Higher public spending on schools
- e) The rise of scientific investigation (previously controlled by the RCC)
- f) Protestant work ethic
- g) Labor laws
- h) Free-market economy
- i) Pro-market attitudes
- j) Demise of monarchies and rise of feudalism and eventually the state system and Constitutionalism
- k) Capitalism
- l) Entrepreneurship
- m) Renovation of the Western legal system
- n) Welfare relief systems
- o) Life, liberty and the pursuit of land (All 3 could be taken by the monarch almost without question prior to the Reformation.

Conclusion:

*“I simply taught, preached, and wrote God’s Word; otherwise I did nothing....
The Word so greatly weakened the papacy that never a prince or emperor did such damage to it.
I did nothing. The Word did it all.”*

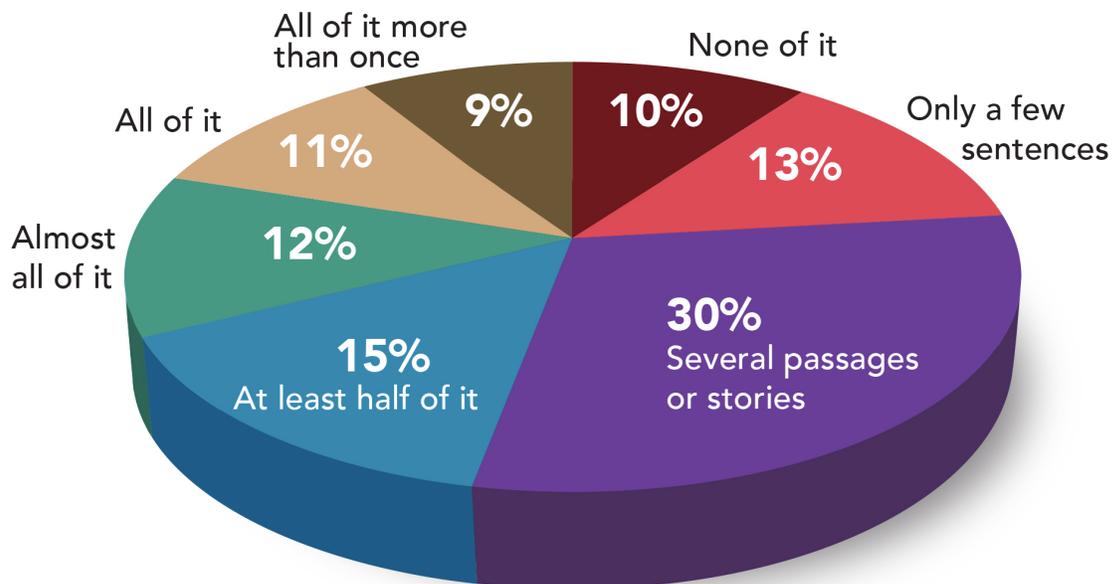
– Martin Luther as quoted in Timothy George, *Theology of the Reformers*, rev.ed. (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishing Group, 2013), 55.

Small Group Questions:

- 1 – What do we mean by *Sola Scriptura*?
- 2 – What don't we mean by *Sola Scriptura*?
- 3 – Why is *Sola Scriptura* important today?
- 4 – Why is it important to believe the Bible is God's revelation and not a normal book?
- 5 – What does Luther's comment about the Bible creating the Reformation say about the Bible's power in our lives today?
- 6 – 10 - Why should we submit to the Bible's authority above all other claims?
- 7 - How do you struggle to respond to God's word as your final authority?
- 8 – How does knowing so many people have suffered to give us the Bible affect your relationship to the Bible?

Among Americans:

How much of the Bible have you personally read?



- Almost nine out of 10 households (87 percent) own a Bible, according to the American Bible Society, and the average household has three.

- More than half of Americans have read little or none of the Bible.
 - Less than a quarter of those who have ever read a Bible have a systematic plan for reading the Christian scriptures each day.
 - And a third of Americans never pick it up on their own.
 - One in five Americans, LifeWay Research found, has read through the Bible at least once.
 - About half of Americans (53 percent) have read relatively little of the Bible.
 - One in 10 has read none of it.
 - 13 percent have read a few sentences.
- <http://lifewayresearch.com/2017/04/25/lifeway-research-americans-are-fond-of-the-bible-dont-actually-read-it/>

9 – Are you on a Bible reading plan?

10 – What keeps you from reading the Bible?

11 – How can you increase your interaction with the Bible?

12 – Looking for a Bible reading plan? There are several at this site:

<http://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-reading-plan/>