

I. Intro

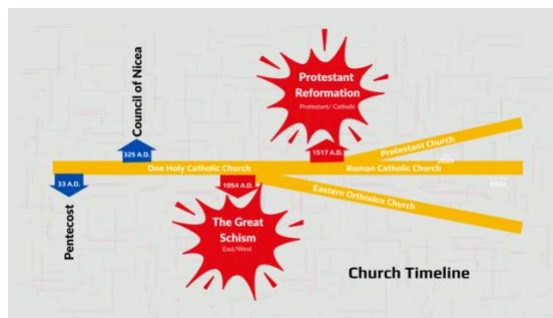
A. Opening Scripture: **Ps. 119: 153-160**

B. History: Remembering the Reformation

1. In the earliest days of the church, the Bride of Christ was growing in various cities and villages throughout Asia, and Africa, and even started to make its way into Europe.



2. In 1054 A.D., the Great Schism split the universal church in two.
 - a. Western Church (ruled, influenced, and centralized in Rome).
 - b. Eastern Church (also known as the Orthodox church) with each church maintaining local leadership in various cities and nations in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.



3. 500 years later, another split took place in the Western church.
4. The Protestant Reformation started as a small group of lower-class folks in the Western church in 1507, who refused to submit to corruption and the politicization of the church.

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5. **Sola Scriptura:** *The conviction that Scripture alone is the final and only infallible source for matters of faith and practice for all people and all times.*
 6. **Sola Scriptura**

C. 16th Century Setting

1. By the 1500's, the Western Church was so tied to national governments that it began to look nothing like the church of the 1st couple of hundred years.
2. Illiteracy (in Europe) was the common reality, and oftentimes, the only literate person in any given community might be the priest or monk of a local church.
3. In this environment, the church (with its hierarchy and its councils) became the soul determiner of salvation and deliverance.
 - a. The church gave people specific instructions on how to obtain salvation (and some of the examples are startling).

D. If there were one man we could look at to paint a picture of the discontent during these frustrating times, it was Martin Luther.

1. Martin Luther was a Monk from Germany.
 - a. Despite all of his efforts to do things right...
 - i. Martin Luther felt nothing but depression and despair (when it came to God).
2. Since he was a monk, Martin actually could study the scriptures for Himself.
 - a. In His studies, **Ps. 31:1-2** changed the way in which He viewed God (which changed his life forever).

"In You, O Lord, I put my trust; Let me never be ashamed; Deliver me in Your righteousness. Bow down Your ear to me, Deliver me speedily; Be my rock of refuge, A fortress of defense to save me." (Ps. 31:1-2)

3. The more Martin Luther studied the word of God, the more he saw the righteousness of God.
 - a. He saw the expansive gap between the righteousness of God and the pathetic righteousness of man.

But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.
(Is. 64:6)

4. Martin Luther saw that the righteousness of God was so glorious that it alone had the power to condemn/ punish.
 - a. But likewise, it alone has the ability to deliver.

"In You, O Lord, I put my trust; Let me never be ashamed; Deliver me in Your righteousness. (Ps. 31:1)

- b. So Martin Luther, like David, gladly agreed to trust in the righteousness of God (instead of his own).
 - c. All that rule-keeping as a religious leader, and Luther had missed the good news (until now):
 - d. Martin Luther only came to the liberating message of the gospel because he actually read the Bible for himself.
 - i. He believed that everyone (whether priest or not) should have that same opportunity.
5. Martin Luther, in an attempt to call the church to repentance, wrote down a list of 95 grievances that he had with the Church.
 - a. Luther had no idea that a popular revolution was already on the horizon.
 - i. Luther's theses simply gave voice to the grievances of peasants who felt oppressed by a salvation that was in part connected to monetary means.
6. Interesting development that shows the Providence of God.
 - a. The Guttenberg Press (1440) had recently been invented (which made the printing and distribution of written work far more affordable and accessible to everyday people).

II. Counsel of God vs. The Councils of Man

A. Position of the Church:

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1. It would be dangerous to *put a Bible in the hands of the common man.*
 2. Church Leadership in the church was given the same authority as the word of God.
- B. Problem #1: God, in His word never places The Counsel of Man on par With The Counsel of God. Quite the Opposite!
1. **Is. 55:8-9**: *"My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts*
 2. **Rom. 3:4**: *Indeed, let God be true, but every man be a liar...*
 - a. **Ps. 138:2b**: *For You have magnified Your word above all Your name.*
 3. **Prov. 30:5-6**: *Every word of god is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. Do not add to His words, Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.*
 4. **Ps. 19:7-8**: *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; The statutes of the Lord are Right rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.*
 5. **Ps. 119:105**: *Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.*
 6. **Deut. 8:3**: ³ So [God] humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.
 7. **Jer. 23:29**: *"Is not My word like a fire?" says the LORD, "And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?"*
- C. Problem #2: Human Counsels and Church Tradition sometimes demanded things that were not in the Word of God.
1. Jesus warned that religious tradition (though sanctioned by leaders or majority) could possibly be dangerous.
 - a. **Matt. 15:3, 6b**: *He answered and said to them, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because*

of your tradition?... You have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.

III. Conclusion: We believe God. We trust in his word.

Sola Scriptura: *The conviction that the Scripture alone is the final and only infallible source for matters of faith and practice for all people and all times.*

A. **Conclusion #1**: The Word of God is Unprecedented, Unrivaled, and Unparalleled.

1. **2 Tim. 3:16-17**

¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2. **Heb. 4:12**

¹² For the word of God [is] living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

3. **2 Pet. 1:16-20**

¹⁶ For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷ For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. ¹⁸ And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. ¹⁹ We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: ²⁰ Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. ²¹ For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

4. **Rom. 1:16-17**

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

B. **Conclusion #2:** The Established Church claimed that making the word of God accessible to the common man was dangerous. They were correct in some ways.

1. It's dangerous to put the word of God into just anyone's hand.
2. Also means that anyone could come up with their own sect, belief system, denomination, and even cult.
 - a. Divorcing oneself completely from community and accountability is a dangerous thing.
 - b. Studying the word of God in community produces humility: the proper heart posture to filter head knowledge.

C. **Conclusion #3:** Doctrine of Sola Scriptura helped pave the way for the Bible, the living word of God, to be made available for everyone in the Western world.

- a. 500 years ago: The word of God was outsourced to those who had the time, intelligence, and affluence to study the scriptures.
- b. Today: We have the word of God on our shelves, our computers, tablets, phones... but leave it to someone else to hear from God for us.
2. Sola Scriptura is not the only means that put a Bible in everyone's hands.
 - a. But it places a yearning in every man's heart to know God for himself!
 - b. Sola scriptura is dangerous, but it's worth it.

Sola Scriptura: *The conviction that Scripture alone is the final and only infallible source for matters of faith and practice for all people and all times.*