

I. Intro

A. Martin Luther was the Monkist Monk of all Monks

1. *"If it were possible to go to heaven based on monkish works, it would have been Martin Luther"*
2. His mentor and professor, Johann von Staupitz, tried to teach Luther one simple principle: *"Just love God"*.
  - a. Pointed Luther's mind away from continual reflection upon his own sin and tried to refocus him toward the matchless merit of Christ.
  - b. True repentance does not involve self-inflicted punishments but rather a spirit-induced change of focus and perception.
3. Von Staupitz helped arrange for Martin Luther to take his place as the chair of Theology at the University of Wittenberg.
  - a. He left the young professor with these instructions, *"Let the study of scripture become your chief occupation"*.

B. In His studies, **Ps. 31:1-2** changed the way in which He viewed God.

1. And the way in which He saw God 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**)

2. 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.
  - b. *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)*
  - c. The righteousness of God became abundantly incomparable and infinitely immeasurable.

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i. This truth ought to floor every believer  
*“In You, O Lord, I put my trust; Let me never be ashamed; Deliver me in Your righteousness. (Ps. 30:1)*

3. Martin Luther saw that the righteousness of God was so glorious and powerful that it alone had the power to condemn/ punish. But likewise, it alone had the ability to deliver.

a. So Martin Luther, like David, gladly agreed to trust in the righteousness of God (instead of his own).

b. I believe the revelation of God’s righteousness helped Martin Luther understand a truth that is repeated over and over throughout the Bible: The Gospel Truth!

C. Martin Luther looked through the lens of David in **Ps. 31** (Deliver me in Your righteousness) and it changed everything.

1. It even illuminated Rom. **1:16-17** for Martin Luther.

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. For it is the power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith’. (Rom. 1:16-17)*

## II. Counsel of God and The Counsels of Man

A. Tragedy: The truth of the gospel is reiterated over and over throughout the word of God. But it wasn’t widely taught or known.

1. As a religious man (a monk), Martin Luther had been in the church for years, but he’d never heard the Gospel.

2. Martin Luther had heard and read the word of God for years, but had never encountered the power of the Gospel laid out in scripture.

3. Martin Luther only came to the liberating message of the gospel because he actually read the Bible for himself.

a. He believed that everyone (whether priest or not) should have that same opportunity.

b. With the aid of technological advancements, Martin Luther and several other believers of his time pushed for the Bible to be accessible to common men and women in their own language.

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- B. The Religious Push Back: *“Do you know what will happen if you put a Bible in the hands of the common man? They will interpret it themselves and come up with all kinds of crazy ideas and heresies.”*

1. The Common People Need Counsels and Church Tradition to go hand in hand with the word of God
  - a. Church Leadership was given the same authority as the word of God.

*“There exists a close connection and communication between sacred Tradition and sacred Scripture. For both of them, flowing from the same divine wellspring, in a certain way merge into a unity and tend toward the same end. For sacred Scripture is the word of God inasmuch as it is consigned to writing under the inspiration of the divine Spirit. To the successors of the apostles, sacred Tradition hands on in its full purity God’s word, which was entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit.*

*“Thus, by the light of the Spirit of truth, these successors can in their preaching preserve this word of God faithfully, explain it, and make it more widely known. Consequently it is not from sacred Scripture alone that the Church draws her certainty about everything which has been revealed. Therefore both sacred Tradition and sacred Scripture are to be accepted and venerated with the same devotion and reverence.” (Dei Verbum, Second Vatican Council)*

- C. 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...*
3. **Phil. 2:10**: *At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,*
  - a. **Ps. 138b**: *For You have magnified Your word above all Your name.*

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4. **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.*
  5. **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.*
  6. **Ps. 119:105:** *Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.*
  7. **Deut. 8:3:** <sup>3</sup> 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.
  8. **Jer. 23:29:** *“Is not My word like a fire?” says the LORD, “And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?”*

D. **Problem #2:** Human Counsels and Church Tradition sometimes demand things that were not in the Word of God.

1. Example
  - a. Indulgences
  - b. Transubstantiation
2. Jesus warned that religious tradition (though sanctioned by leaders or majority) could possibly contradict God’s word.
  - 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.*
  - b. **Babel:** *“Let us make ourselves a city, and build a tower into the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered across the face of the earth” (Gen. 11:4)*

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, Unrivalled and Unparalleled.

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

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

- a. All scripture is God-breathed.

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

*<sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. <sup>19</sup> 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: <sup>20</sup> Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. <sup>21</sup> 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.*

- a. Nothing compares to the power of scripture.
- b. No counsel or committee compares to God.
- c. No opinion matters outside of the opinion of God.

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

- 1. 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. Divorcing oneself completely from history and culture is also a dangerous thing.

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C. **Conclusion #3:** Doctrine of Sola Scriptura paved the way for the Bible (the living Word of God) to be available to everyone in the Western world.

1. And partly because we detest history and tradition, we are now repeating similar mistakes that they made centuries ago (in some ways).
  - a. They lived in a time where the word of God was outsourced to those who had the time, intelligence and position to study it out.
2. Sola Scriptura is the not only the means that put a Bible in everyone's hands.
  - a. But it ought to place 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 the Scripture alone is the final and only infallible source for matters of faith and practice for all people and all times.*