



Introduction

- Sola Scriptura (Scripture alone)
- Sola Gratia (Grace alone)
- Sola Fide (Faith alone)
- Solus Christus (Christ alone)
- Soli Deo Gloria (To God alone be the glory)

The Reformers

- Luther proclaimed the authority of Scripture over the pope and church councils
- John Calvin recognized the authority of the Scriptures over the Church
- Heinrich Bullinger, the successor to Ulrich Zwingli wrote against the elevation of oral tradition above Scripture

Sola Scriptura

Sola Scriptura means that *only Scripture, because it is God's inspired Word, is our inerrant, sufficient, and final authority for the church.*¹

God's Inspired Word

- When Scripture speaks, God speaks
 - All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17 ESV)
- Intuition theory
- Illumination theory
- Encounter theory

¹ Matthew Barrett, *God's Word Alone – The Authority of Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 23.



- Dynamic theory
- Dictation theory
- Verbal plenary inspiration theory
 - For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:21 ESV)

Old Testament

- Jesus attributed the Old Testament writings to the Holy Spirit
- Jesus referred to Old Testament books as “Scripture(s)” from God
- Jesus used “Scripture” and “God interchangeably
- Jesus believed the Old Testament was fulfilled because it had God as its author
- Jesus’ enemies never questioned his belief that the Old Testament was inspired
- Jesus submitted himself to the authority of the Old Testament
- The New Testament authors appealed to the Old Testament as Scripture, which is apparent in the type of phrases and labels they used to identify the Old Testament
- The New Testament authors used “Scripture” and “God” interchangeably
- The New Testament authors attributed the Old Testament writings to the Holy Spirit
- The New Testament’s use of the Old assumes inspiration

New Testament

- Jesus believed his teaching was from God
- The New Testament authors believed their writings were inspired and authoritative.
 - In Ephesians 3:2-3 Paul speaks of the “stewardship of God’s grace...given to me for you” and the “mystery...made known to me by revelation”
 - In 1 Corinthians Paul tells the Corinthians that what he has written carries authority
 - Peter also believed Paul’s writings were in the category of Scripture



- In 2 Peter 1:16-18 he said that he and the other apostles were eyewitnesses of the majesty of Christ and heard the voice of God
- Peter goes on to say that those reading his letter should pay attention
- Any appeal to an ultimate authority is by definition circular. If there is a higher authority to look to then the Scripture cannot be the highest authority
- The Bible is true and authoritative because Jesus and the apostles say so. This is the foundation of every doctrine, not just the doctrine of Scripture
- It is not fair to say you can't look at what Scripture says about itself
- The fundamental issue is not that the Bible says it is God's Word (although it does), but that God says the Bible is his Word. The point is you cannot separate God from the Scriptures

God's Inerrant Word

- When all facts are known, the Scriptures in their original autographs and properly interpreted will be shown to be wholly true in everything they affirm, whether that has to do with doctrine or morality or with the social, physical, or life sciences.²
- The Bible (in its original writings) properly interpreted in light of which culture and communication means had developed by the time of its composition will be completely true (and therefore not false) in all that it affirms, to the degree of precision intended by the author, in all matters relating to God and his creation.³
- Inerrancy requires humility, that is, we must recognize we are finite and sinful and often ignorant of or blind to the truth
- When we claim the Bible is inerrant we mean that the Bible is true in everything it affirms
- When we speak of inerrancy we are referring to the original manuscripts
- Inerrancy and authority are vitally connected to the inspiration of Scripture

² Paul Feinberg, "The Meaning of Inerrancy," in *Inerrancy*, ed. Norman L. Geisler (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1980), 293, quoted in Barrett, *God's Word Alone*, 265.

³ David S. Dockery, *Christian Scripture: An Evangelical's Perspective on Inspiration, Authority, and Interpretation* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 1995), quoted in Barrett, *God's Word Alone*, 265.



God's Sufficient Word

- Sufficiency means that all things necessary for God's glory, salvation, and the Christian life are provided for God's people in the Scriptures
 - Scripture gives us the gospel, thus, everything someone needs to know and believe in order to be saved is found in the Scriptures
 - Scripture reveals to us God's will so his children can live in obedience to him and for his glory
- Sufficiency means that nothing should be added to the Bible
- Sufficiency does not preclude the inward illumination of the Holy Spirit
- Sufficiency does not annihilate general revelation

God's Clear Word

- God's Word is inerrant and sufficient, but it is also understandable
- The Bible expects God's people to hear, not just an explanation of God's Word, but God's Word itself
- Part of the Reformation's claim of Sola Scriptura was the clarity of the Bible

God's Authoritative Word

God's Word is our highest authority in matters of Christian faith and practice

Conclusion

We with the Reformers before us hold to Sola Scriptura. The Bible is God's breathed out Word to us. It is inerrant, sufficient, clear, and our ultimate authority. We dare not ignore it.