

Panel Questions Sola Scriptura

1. Today we are talking about Scripture Alone, or the belief that Scripture is the sole authority for life. What is meant by such a claim?

- From Justin Holcomb: “The Scriptures are our ultimate and trustworthy authority for faith and practice. This doesn’t mean that the Bible is the only place where truth is found, but it does mean that everything else we learn about God and his world, and all other authorities, should be interpreted in light of Scripture. The Bible gives us everything we need for our theology.”
- Most people look for authority in their lives from within (I just know it my heart – I am following my dreams), but the ultimate authority for life must come from outside of us – it cannot come from within ourselves. The heart is deceitful and not to be trusted. Jeremiah 17:9-10

2. What was the complaint that the Reformers had with the Catholic Church in its interpretation of Scripture? The 16th century Catholic Church believed in the authority of Scripture, so why did the Reformers feel the need to distinguish what they considered to be orthodox theology from that of the Catholic Church?

- The Reformers concluded that the church’s understanding of Scripture had become man-centered instead of God-centered. The leaders of the Catholic Church had become theologians of glory instead of theologians of the cross.
- The Catholic Church had become the standard by which the truth of Scripture was measured, not the other way around.

- In fact, the Church told the Reformers, “We gave you the Scriptures.” The Reformers responded, “Uh, No. All of us are judged by the Scriptures, even the Pope.”
- The Reformers understood that revelation – new truth – had ended with the death of the apostles. The Catholic Church believed that it had the authority to create new doctrine, equal in authority with Scripture.

3. Does Scripture alone mean that my interpretation is just as good as your interpretation or anyone else’s interpretation?

- The Reformers were not arguing for the right of private interpretation of Scripture, but, rather, arguing that all were invited to participate in the public interpretation of Scripture so that the church could find common ground and agreement about doctrine.
- Difference between Tradition (“big T” – when the Pope speaks ex-cathedra, or, “from the chair,” it is equal to Scripture) and tradition (“little t” – agreement on the truth of Scripture in the church through the ages as the majority beliefs emerged through councils of theologians coming to agreement after a great deal of prayer, study, and deliberation).
- Martin Luther: “We are not saying that everyone should interpret the Bible for himself. That would just mean that everyone would go to hell in his own way.”

4. What are some of the common perceptions that people have about the Bible in our day?

- From the White Horse Inn Roundtable: “A guide to life. Everyone has his or her own belief. It is not like one person is right and another is wrong. Who knows what is truth, really?” “If anything has been handed down by man, it has room for error, so you can’t take it too literally.” “It is there for therapeutic value.” “Rules of life.” A believer said this on the interview: “A message of peace

and harmony and hope for mankind. It spreads the message of ‘Be nice to everybody.’” We needed the prophets to be stoned and thousands of years of persecution and in the middle of history we needed a crucifixion to be told that we should be nice to people?

- One of the messages we need to recover is that this is a book about Jesus. It is not Chicken Soup for the Soul. We need something outside of ourselves. To find comfort and guidelines in the Scripture is to approach it with a plan to earn your salvation. No, Christ alone is your salvation.

5. How would you respond to someone who says that the Bible is outdated, that it is no longer relevant for contemporary culture? Talk about authority.

- The God of the Bible did not lose touch with the times. If we do not find our authority in Scripture, we lapse into a Disney sort of “Look within yourself and follow your heart. Follow your dreams and you will always find success.” Scripture tells us that the heart is deceitful – Jeremiah 17:9-10
- Much to say from there.

6. What does submitting to the authority of Scripture look like in my life?

- Believe it! (See Isaiah 43:10-11)
- Read and study it prayerfully
- Read with gospel-colored lenses
- Preach the gospel to yourself everyday
- As you read, repent of sin, as it is revealed, and lean on Jesus, thanking him for his sacrifice for your sin.

Isaiah 43:10-11

10 “You are my witnesses,” declares the Lord,
“and my servant whom I have chosen,
that you may know and believe me
and understand that I am he.
Before me no god was formed,
nor shall there be any after me.
11 I, I am the Lord,
and **besides me there is no savior.**