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—Michael Horton, from the Foreword

Foreword by Michael Horton
Edited by Don Kistler

Sola Scriptura
The Protestant Position on the Bible

Joel R. Beeke • Sinclair B. Ferguson
W. Robert Godfrey • Ray Lanning • John MacArthur
R.C. Sproul • Derek W. H. Thomas • James White

Religion/Christian Theology/General

978155874691852

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Senior pastor, Grace Baptist Church, Cape Coral, Florida
Executive director, Founders Ministries

“The Christian doctrine of Scripture, that the Bible alone is the Word of God, that it clearly and infallibly reveals the triune God and His truth in Christ, has always been at the heart of the faith. Since the sixteenth century, there have been three great assaults on this doctrine: the Romanist claim to authority over Scripture, the modernist rejection of the authority and truthfulness of Scripture, and the late-modern denial of the clarity and sufficiency of Scripture. The republication of *Sola Scriptura* is a most welcome response to each of these. This book is more relevant and necessary today than when it first appeared.”

—R. Scott Clark
Professor of church history and historical theology
Westminster Seminary California, Escondido, California
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Chapter One

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY SOLA SCRIPTURA?

– W. Robert Godfrey –

“Protestant Catholics” and Roman Catholics both claim to be catholic, that is, part of the apostolic, universal church of Jesus Christ. Roman Catholics believe we Protestants departed from that church in the sixteenth century. Protestant Catholics believe Roman Catholics departed from Christ’s church even earlier.

The theme of this chapter is one of the two main issues that still divides us: the source of religious truth for the people of God (the other main issue is the question of how a man is made right with God, which Protestants answer with the doctrine of justification by faith alone). As Protestants, we maintain that Scripture alone is our authority. Roman Catholics maintain that Scripture by itself is insufficient as the authority of the people of God, and that tradition and the teaching authority of the church must be added to Scripture.
This is a solemn topic. God has declared that whoever adds to or takes away from His Word is subject to His curse. The Roman church has declared that we Protestants are accursed ("anathematized") for taking away the Word of God as found in tradition. We Protestants have declared that Rome is a false church for adding human traditions to the Word of God. Despite sincere debates by fine apologists over the course of nearly five hundred years, the differences remain basically as they were in the sixteenth century.

In spite of the difficulty of this undertaking, I am eager to join the historic train of Protestant apologists in defending the doctrine that Scripture alone is our ultimate religious authority. I believe that it can be shown that this position is the clear teaching of Scripture itself. I hope that, by the grace of God, those committed to the Roman doctrine of tradition will come to see the tragic error of denigrating the sufficiency and perspicuity of God’s own inspired Word.

All Things Necessary for Salvation, Faith, and Life

Let me begin with certain clarifications so as not to be misunderstood. I am not arguing that all truth is to be found in the Bible or that the Bible is the only form in which the truth of God has come to His people. I am not arguing that every verse in the Bible is equally clear to every reader. Neither am I arguing that the church—both the people of God and the ministerial office—is not of great value and help in understanding the Scriptures. As William Whitaker stated in his noble work: “For we also say that the church is the interpreter of Scripture, and that the gift of interpretation resides only in the church: but we deny that it pertains to particular persons, or is tied to any particular see or succession of men.”

The Protestant position, and my position, is that all things necessary for salvation and concerning faith and life are taught in the Bible with enough clarity that the ordinary believer can find them there and understand.

The position I am defending is that which is taught in the Bible itself. For example, Deuteronomy 31:9 states: “Moses wrote down this law. . . .”
What do we mean by *Sola Scriptura*?

Moses instructed the people by writing down the law and then ordering that it be read to them so they could “listen and learn to fear the Lord . . . and follow carefully all the words of this law” (Deut. 31:9, 12). Moses declared to all Israel: “Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law. They are not just idle words for you, they are your life” (Deut. 32:46–47).

Notice the clear elements in these passages:

1. The Word of which Moses spoke was written.
2. The people could and must listen to it and learn it.
3. In this Word they could find life.

The people did not need any additional institution to interpret the Word. The priests, prophets, and scribes of Israel certainly functioned to help the people ministerially. But the Word alone was sufficient for salvation. The prophets, who were indeed inspired, came very much in the spirit of Micah, who said, “He has shown you, O man, what is good” (Mic. 6:8a). The function of the prophets and priests was not to add to or even clarify the law; rather, they applied it to the people.

If this principle of the sufficiency and clarity of the Word was true in the Old Testament, we can assume that it is all the more true in the New. The New Testament gloriously fulfills what the Old Testament promises. But we do not have to assume it; rather, the New Testament makes plain that Scripture is sufficient and clear. One example of that is found in 2 Timothy 3–4. Here Paul writes to his younger brother in the faith, Timothy. He writes that Timothy—who was instructed in the faith by his mother and grandmother—has also learned all about Paul’s teaching (3:10). Timothy has been mightily helped by all sorts of oral teaching, some of it apostolic. Yet Paul writes to Timothy:

> Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving
and being deceived. You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths. But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. (2 Tim. 3:12–4:5, NASB)

You see, Paul reminds Timothy that the Scriptures are able to make him wise unto salvation in Christ Jesus (3:15). He teaches that the Scriptures are useful for teaching, reproof (rebuking), correcting, and training in righteousness (3:16). Because the Scriptures have this character, they thoroughly equip the man of God for every good work (3:17). So Paul tells Timothy that he must preach this Word, even though the time is coming when people will not want to hear it, preferring teachers to suit their fancy, that is, teachers who will instruct them in myths rather than the truth of the Word (4:1–4).

The force and clarity of the apostle’s teaching here are striking. In spite of the rich oral teaching Timothy has received, he is to preach the Scriptures because those Scriptures clearly give him all that he needs for wisdom and preparation to instruct the people of God in faith and all good works. Scripture makes him wise for salvation and equips him with everything he needs to do every good work required of the preacher of God. The sufficiency and clarity of the Word are repeatedly taught here. John Chrysostom
What do we mean by Sola Scriptura?

paraphrased the meaning of Paul’s words to Timothy this way: “You have Scripture for a master instead of me; from there you can learn whatever you would know.”

Focusing on 2 Timothy 3

I have listened to several recorded debates on this topic. Protestant apologists often have cited 2 Timothy 3 against Roman Catholic opponents. The usual response of Roman Catholic apologists is to assert repeatedly that 2 Timothy 3 does not teach sufficiency. Sometimes they refer to James 1:4, Matthew 19:21, or Colossians 1:28 and 4:12 as parallel texts, claiming that the word complete in 2 Timothy 3:17 does not mean “sufficient.” But such passages are not parallel; a completely different Greek word is used. Where 2 Timothy 3:17 uses exartizo, which has to do with being fitted for a task, these other passages use the Greek word teleios, which has reference to maturity or having reached a desired end.

Repeated assertions do not prove a point; that is only a propaganda technique. Our opponents need to answer in a responsible, thorough way.

The confidence that Paul had in the Scriptures, and which he taught Timothy, was clearly understood by the great church father Augustine. In his treatise to prepare leaders of the church in an understanding of the Bible (On Christian Doctrine), Augustine wrote: “Among those things which are said openly in Scripture are to be found all those teachings which involve faith, the mores of living, and that hope and charity which we have discussed.”

We should not be surprised that the apostle Paul, the Old Testament, and the greatest teacher of the ancient church held to the sufficiency and perspicuity of Scripture. That is also the position Jesus took in one of the most important moments of His life. At the beginning of His public ministry, Jesus faced the focused temptation of the Devil in the wilderness. He faced the temptation as the Son of God, but also as the second Adam and the true Israel. How did He face that temptation? He did not appeal to the oral tradition of Israel; He did not appeal to the authority of the rabbis or Sanhedrin; He did not even appeal to His own divinity or the inspiration of the Holy
Spirit. Our Savior, in the face of temptation, turned again and again to the Scriptures. “It is written,” He said. That was all He needed to say.

The Scriptures had made Him wise; they had equipped Him for every good work. They were clear, as He implied that even the Evil One knew. When the Devil quoted Scripture (intentionally misapplying it), Jesus did not turn to some other authority. Rather Jesus said, “It is also written. . . .”

When the Evil One or his representatives misuse the Bible, or imply that it is unclear, Jesus teaches us that we must look more deeply into the written Word, not away from it.

**Roman Responses to Passages**

**Addressing Clarity**

Roman apologists attempt to convince us that these texts of Scripture do not mean what they clearly say. Let me rehearse some of their arguments and prepare you for some of the ways they tend to respond.

1. **The Word of God.** First, they say that the phrase “the Word of God” can mean more than just the Bible. I have already granted that. The question before us is whether anything *today*, other than the Scriptures, is necessary for knowing the truth of God for salvation. The Scripture texts I have cited show that nothing else is needed. Our opponents need to show not that Paul referred to his preaching as well as his writing as the Word of God—I grant that. They need to show that Paul taught that the oral teaching of the apostles was needed to supplement the Scriptures for the church *throughout the ages*. They cannot show that because Paul did not *teach* that, and the Scriptures as a whole do not teach that.

2. **Tradition.** Our Roman opponents, while making much of tradition, never really define tradition or tell you what its content is. *Tradition* is a word that can be used in a variety of ways. It can refer to a certain school of understanding the Scriptures, such as the Lutheran tradition. It can refer to traditions—supposedly from the apostles—that are not clearly disclosed in the Bible. It can refer to developing traditions in the history of the church that are more recent in their origin. Among the ancient church fathers, the
word *tradition* typically referred to the standard interpretation of the Bible within their community, and we Protestants value such traditions.

But what do Roman apologists mean when they assert the *authority* of tradition? Historically, they have not agreed among themselves about the nature and content of tradition. For example, one has said that tradition does not add anything to Scripture. But almost all Roman apologists, for more than three hundred years after the Council of Trent, argued that tradition *does* add to the Scriptures. Some Roman apologists believe that all binding tradition was taught by the apostles, while others believe that tradition evolves and develops through the centuries of the church so that there are traditions necessary for salvation that were never known to the apostles. It is impossible to know what the real Roman position is on this matter.

The Second Vatican Council expressed itself with deliberate ambiguity: “This tradition which comes from the apostles develops in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit. For there is a growth in the understanding of the realities and the words which have been handed down. . . . For as the centuries succeed one another, the Church constantly moves forward toward the fulness of divine truth until the words of God reach their complete fulfillment in her.” What does that mean? It certainly does not give us any clear understanding of the character or content of tradition.

Rome usually tries to clarify its position by saying that its authority is Scripture, tradition, and church together. Vatican II declared: “It is clear, therefore, that sacred tradition, sacred Scripture, and the teaching authority of the Church, in accord with God’s most wise design, are so linked and joined together that one cannot stand without the others, and that all together and each in its own way under the action of the one Holy Spirit contribute effectively to the salvation of souls.”

In fact, however, if you listen carefully, you will notice that the real authority for Rome is neither Scripture *nor* tradition, but the church. What is Scripture and what does it teach? Only the church can tell you. What is tradition and what does it teach? Only the church can tell you. As the Roman theologian John Eck said, “The Scriptures are not authentic, except by the authority of the church.” As Pope Pius IX said at the time of the First Vatican
Council in 1870, “I am tradition.” The overwhelming arrogance of such a statement is staggering. But it confirms our claim that, for Rome, the only real authority is the church: *sola ecclesia.*

Protestantism arose in the sixteenth century in reaction to such claims and teachings of the Roman church. In the Middle Ages, most within the church believed that the Bible and the tradition of the church taught the same, or at least complementary, doctrines. But as Martin Luther and others studied the Bible with a greater care and depth than the church had done in centuries, they began to discover that tradition actually contradicted the Bible. They discovered that, for example:

1. The Bible teaches that the offices of bishop and presbyter are the same office (Titus 1:5–7), but tradition says they are different offices.
2. The Bible teaches that all have sinned except Jesus (Rom. 3:10–12; Heb. 4:15), but tradition says that Mary was sinless.
3. The Bible teaches that Christ offered His sacrifice once for all (Heb. 7:27; 9:28; 10:10), but tradition says that the priest sacrifices Christ on the altar at Mass.
4. The Bible says that we are not to bow down to statues (Ex. 20:4–5), but tradition says that we should bow to certain statues.
5. The Bible says that all Christians are saints and priests (Eph. 1:1; 1 Peter 2:9), but tradition says that saints and priests are special castes within the Christian community.
6. The Bible says that Jesus is the only Mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5), but tradition says Mary is co-mediator with Christ.
7. The Bible says that all Christians can and should know that they have eternal life (1 John 5:13), but tradition says that all Christians cannot and should not know that they have eternal life.

The Reformers saw that the words of Jesus to the Pharisees applied equally in their day: “You nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition” (Matt. 15:6b).
The Reformers also discovered that tradition contradicted tradition. For example, the tradition of the Roman church teaches that the pope is the head of the church, a bishop over all bishops. But Gregory the Great, a pope at the end of the ancient church period and eventually a saint, said that such a teaching came from the spirit of Antichrist: “I confidently affirm that whoever calls himself sacerdos universalis, or desires to be so called by others is in his pride a forerunner of Antichrist.”

More directly related to our discussion is the evident tension in tradition about the value of reading the Bible. The Index of Forbidden Books of Pope Pius IV in 1559 said:

Since experience teaches that, if the reading of the Holy Bible in the vernacular is permitted generally without discrimination, more damage than advantage will result because of the boldness of men, the judgment of the bishops and inquisitors is to serve as guide in this regard. Bishops and inquisitors may, in accord with the counsel of the local priest and confessor, allow Catholic translations of the Bible to be read by those of whom they realize that such reading will not lead to the detriment but to the increase of faith and piety. The permission is to be given in writing. Whoever reads or has such a translation in his possession without this permission cannot be absolved from his sins until he has turned in these Bibles.

In marked contrast, Vatican II stated: “Easy access to sacred Scripture should be provided for all the Christian faithful. . . . Since the word of God should be available at all times, the Church with maternal concern sees to it that suitable and correct translations are made into different languages, especially from the original texts of the sacred books.” So, does tradition believe that the Bible is dangerous or helpful? (The Bible did prove dangerous to Roman Catholicism in the sixteenth century; most who read it carefully became Protestants.)

Such discoveries about tradition led the Reformers back to the Bible. There they learned that the Scriptures must stand as the judge of all
teaching. Scripture teaches that it is the revelation of God, and is therefore true in all that it teaches. But nowhere does Scripture say that the church is true in all it says. Rather; although the church as a whole will be preserved in the faith, wolves will arise from within the church (Acts 20:29–30), and even the man of lawlessness will sit at the heart of the church teaching lies (2 Thess. 2:4).

3. The church and the canon. Roman Catholics use the word church repeatedly. We Protestants normally interpret their use of church as referring to the body of the faithful, but that is not typically the way they use the word. When they refer to the authority of the church, they mean the infallible teaching authority of councils and popes. They draw this view of the church from the Middle Ages and, in a romantic way, read back into the ancient church period. So it is important to note carefully how they use the word church and to remember that neither the Scriptures nor the great majority of the fathers from the ancient church period understand the authority of the church in the way Roman Catholics do.

Two statements of Augustine are quoted often against the Protestant position on the authority of the church. First, at one point in his debate with the Pelagians, a bishop of Rome sided with Augustine, and Augustine declared, “Rome has spoken, the matter is settled.” (Later, however, another pope opposed Augustine on this subject, and Augustine responded by saying, “Christ has spoken, the matter is settled.” In that instance, Augustine did not bow to the authority of the bishop of Rome, but turned to the Word of Christ to evaluate the teaching of Rome.)

Second, Augustine said, “I would not have believed had not the authority of the catholic church moved me.” That seems very strong and persuasive. (However, in another place, Augustine wrote: “I would never have understood Plotinus had not the authority of my neo-Platonic teachers moved me.” This parallel shows that Augustine was not talking about some absolute, infallible authority in the church, but rather about the ministerial work of the church and about teachers who helped students understand.)

Let us look at the church authority issue further by raising a related issue: the canon of Scripture. Romanists try to make much of the issue of
the canon. They say that the Bible alone cannot be our authority because the Bible does not tell us what books are in the Bible. They argue that the church must tell us what books are in the Bible. When they say the church must tell us, they mean that popes and councils must tell us. This implies that we did not have a Bible until Pope Damasus offered a list of the canon in 382, or, perhaps, until 1546, when the Council of Trent became the first “ecumenical” council to define the canon. But the people of God had the Bible before 1546 and before 382.

In the first place, the church always had Scripture. In their preaching and writing in the first century, the apostles repeatedly established their credibility by quoting from the Old Testament. Quotations from and allusions to the Old Testament abound in the New Testament. The New Testament does not reject the Old but fulfills it (Rom. 1:2; Luke 16:29; Eph. 2:19–20). The church always had a canonical foundation in the Old Testament.

Second, we can see that the apostles sensed that the new covenant inaugurated by our Lord Jesus would have a new or augmented canon. Canon and covenant are interrelated and interdependent in the Bible. Peter testifies to this emerging canon when he includes the letters of Paul as part of the Scriptures (2 Peter 3:16).

Third, we must see that the canon of Scripture is, in a real sense, established by Scripture itself, because the canonical books are self-authenticating. As God’s revelation, they are recognized by the people of God as God’s own Word. As Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd; I know My sheep and My sheep know Me. They . . . will listen to my voice” (John 10:14–16). In the deepest sense, we cannot judge the Word, but the Word judges us. “For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing of soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). The self-authenticating character of the canon was demonstrated by the remarkable unanimity reached by the people of God on the canon.

Fourth, we must see that the canon was formed historically not by popes and councils; their actions simply recognized the emerging consensus of the people of God as they recognized the authentic Scriptures. Indeed, whatever
criteria were used by popes and councils to recognize the canon (authorship, style, content, witness of the Spirit, etc.) were available to the people of God as a whole.

We can see this basic understanding of the formation of the canon stated in *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, which says: “The canon, already implicitly present in the apostolic age, gradually became explicit through a number of providential factors forming and fixing it.”

We can also see this basic approach to the canon reflected in the words of Augustine in his important treatise titled *On Christian Doctrine*. This treatise was written between 396 and 427—after the supposedly authoritative decision of Pope Damasus on the canon and after a council held in Hippo had discussed the canon. Augustine wrote:

In the matter of canonical Scriptures he should follow the authority of the greater number of catholic Churches, among which are those which have deserved to have apostolic seats and receive epistles. He will observe this rule concerning canonical Scriptures, that he will prefer those accepted by all catholic Churches to those which some do not accept; among those which are not accepted by all, he should prefer those which are accepted by the largest number of important Churches to those held by a few minor Churches of less authority. If he discovers that some are maintained by the larger number of Churches, others by the Churches of weightiest authority, although this condition is not likely, he should hold them to be of equal value.

This statement shows that Augustine did not look to popes or councils for the answer to the question of the canon. He recognized the variety among churches and the appropriateness of a plurality of churches. He urged all students of Scripture to examine the question and to look for the emerging consensus among the people of God.

Like Augustine, we do not disparage the value of the witness of the people of God to the canon. We value the ministry of the church in this as in all things. But we deny that the church in its offices or councils authoritatively
establishes Scripture on the basis of some knowledge or power not available to Christians generally. The character of the canonical books draws the people of God to them.

4. Unity. Notice how Catholics use the word unity. They suggest that we Protestants disprove our claim of the clarity of the Scripture by our failure to agree about the meaning of various Scripture passages. We recognize that Protestants are divided into various denominations. But all Protestants who are heirs of the Reformation are united in understanding the gospel and in respecting one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. We have all found the same gospel clearly in the Bible.

When we discuss unity and authority, let us be certain that we are making fair and accurate comparisons. Our Roman opponents want to compare Roman theory with Protestant practices. That is not fair. We must compare theory with theory or practice with practice. In practice, neither group has the agreement it should have.

Remember that while Rome is united organizationally, it is just as divided theologically as is Protestantism broadly understood. The institution of an infallible pope has not created theological unity in the Roman church. Rather, Roman theologians are constantly disagreeing as to what the popes have taught and as to whether those teachings were proclaimed ex cathedra and are therefore infallible. The modern state of the Roman church really has shown that the institution of the papacy has not made clear the necessary content of Christian truth. Every honest member of the Roman church has to acknowledge that.

As early as the seventeenth century, the Reformed theologian Francis Turretin noted the serious theological divisions in the Roman church and asked why the pope did not settle these disputes if his office was so effective. Such theological problems are certainly much greater today than in Turretin’s time, and the question remains unanswered as to why the pope is so ineffective.

We should not be surprised that there are divisions in the church. Christ and His apostles predicted that there would be. The apostle Paul actually told us that such divisions are useful. He wrote, “No doubt there have to be
differences among you to show which of you have God’s approval” (1 Cor. 11:19). Differences should humble us and drive us back to the Scriptures to test all claims to truth. If we do not accept the Scriptures as our standard and judge, there is no hope for unity.

The church must have a standard by which to judge all claims to truth. The church must have a standard of truth by which to reform and purify itself when divisions arise. The church cannot claim that it is that standard and defend that claim by appealing to itself. Such circular reasoning is not only unconvincing, it is self-defeating. Rome’s argument boils down to this: we must believe Rome because Rome says so.

**Conclusions**

The Bible tells us that the Word of God is the light that enables us to walk in the ways of God. Listen to Psalm 119:99, 100, 105, and 130: “I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes. I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts. . . . Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. . . . The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.”

Roman apologists usually object to an appeal to Psalm 119 on the grounds that it speaks of the Word of God, not of the Bible, and therefore its praise could include tradition as well as Scripture. But their argument is irrelevant to our use of Psalm 119, because we are using it to prove the clarity, not the sufficiency, of Scripture, The psalmist is saying here that the light of the Word shines so brightly and clearly that if I meditate on it and obey it, I am wiser than any teacher or elder. The simple can understand it. The Word is like a strong flashlight in a dark forest. It enables me to walk on the path without tripping.

We must listen to the Scriptures so that we will live in accordance with God’s Word. Consider the story of Paul in Berea, Acts 17:10–12. Paul preached in the synagogue there and many Jews responded eagerly. We are told that after they listened to Paul each day they examined the Scriptures to see whether what Paul said was true. How did Paul react? Did he say that
the Scriptures were not clear, and that only he as an apostle or the rabbis or
the Sanhedrin could tell them what the Scriptures really meant? Did he say
that they should not expect to find the truth in the Scriptures because they
were incomplete and needed to be supplemented by tradition? Did he say
that they were insulting his apostolic authority, and that they should simply
submit to him as the infallible interpreter of the Bible? Or did Paul say that
they should defer to Peter as the only one who could interpret the Bible? No.
He did not say any of these things. The practice of the Bereans is praised in
the Bible. They are called noble because they evaluated everything on the
basis of the written Word of God.

If we would be faithful children of God, if we would be noble, we must
proceed as the Bereans did. We must follow the example of Moses, Paul, and
our Lord Jesus. We must not rest our confidence on the wisdom of men who
claim infallibility. Rather, we must stand with the apostle Paul, who wrote in
1 Corinthians 4:6, “Do not go beyond what is written.”

Notes

1 William Whitaker, A Disputation on Holy Scripture (Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 1849), 411.
2 Cited in Whitaker, 637.
4 The Documents of Vatican II, ed. Walter M. Abbott (New York: Herden and
Herden, 1966), 116. See also Dei Verbum 8 (Dei Verbum is the official title of the
English version of “Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation,” one of the prin-
cipal documents of Vatican II).
5 Ibid., 118.
6 John Eck, Enchiridion of Commonplaces, trans. by Ford Lewis Battles, (Grand
7 Cited in Jesef Rupert Geiselmann, The Meaning of Tradition (Montreal: Palm
8 Cited in Cambridge Medieval History, section written by W. H. Hutton, ed. H. M.
for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1821), 481.
10 The Documents of Vatican II, 125–126.
11 See Meredith G. Kline, The Structure of Biblical Authority (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf &
Stock, 1997).
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13 Augustine, On Christian Doctrine, II.viii.41.
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IS THE BIBLE ENOUGH?

_Sola Scriptura_
was a rallying cry of the Reformation, and it must also be ours. Much like in the sixteenth century, God’s Word is under assault on multiple fronts today. Skeptics dismiss its authority and pursue worldly philosophies. The Roman Catholic Church denies its sufficiency and exalts man-made traditions. And even among evangelicals, many exchange the power of preaching for self-help and entertainment.

In this book, several leading Reformed pastors and scholars respond to these modern-day threats and defend the Protestant doctrine of “Scripture alone” for a new generation. God’s Word is the sole rule of faith and life, and contrary to the spirit of our age, we must joyfully submit to it.

_Sola Scriptura: The Protestant Position on the Bible_ is a cautionary tale about the dangers of compromise and a timely call for Christians to recover a high view of Scripture.

“For the Reformers, the Bible was ‘canon’ as soon as it was written. The Word of God has inherent authority. The church is obliged to acknowledge that authority and to submit to it.”

—Dr. R.C. Sproul