

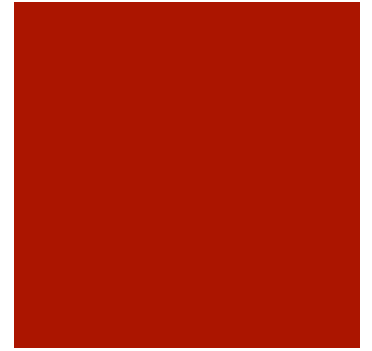


Orthodoxy

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Sola Scriptura


- Martin Luther (16th Century)
- Scripture alone
- **Assumption:** “something that we take for granted from the outset, usually quite unconsciously”
- "every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a bad tree bringeth forth evil fruit" (Matthew 7:17)
- **False Assumptions...**



NUMBER ONE

- **The Bible was intended to be the last word on faith, piety, and worship.**
- Does Scripture teach that it is “all sufficient?”:
- Maybe...? “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (II Timothy 3:15-17).”
- Not referring to New Testament.. Not written yet!! Excludes itself!
- In the same chapter: Jannes and Jambres opposing Moses(II Timothy 3:8). Not mentioned in OT (evidence for non-biblical oral tradition)



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- So why do we have a Bible?
 - Purpose to establish an authoritative list of books to protect Church from spurious books claiming authorship but were works of heretics (e.g. gospel of Thomas)
 - By putting together the Bible, Church did not imply that all of Christian faith and all information necessary were contained in them.
 - If we mistrust the Church's faithfulness in preserving Apostolic worship, then we must also mistrust her fidelity in preserving the scriptures.

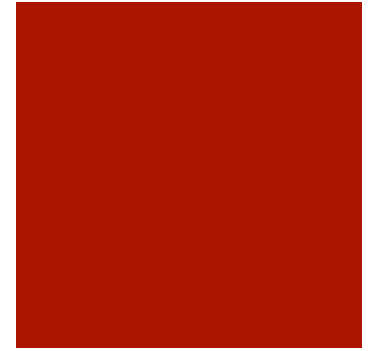
Is the Bible in practice “all sufficient” for Protestants




- Why write so many books on doctrine and Christian life in general?
- Why does it not produce the same results?
 - Why do they not all believe the same?
- Why have Bible studies if everything you need to know is in the Bible?
- Why teach or preach at all? Everything will just be in the Bible...
- Then why do they subscribe to Sola Scriptura?
 - Every Protestant sect has its own body of traditions, but will not usually call them that.
 - E.g. Jehovah's Witness believe the same, Baptists believe the same... but they don't believe in the same things. But it's all the SAME Bible?!?!?
- So which tradition can we trust? Which one has the correct interpretation?
 - ...probably the oldest (Apostolic Tradition of the Orthodox Church)

NUMBER TWO

- **The Scriptures were the basis of the early Church, whereas Tradition is simply a “human corruption” that came much later**
- Tradition seen as derogatory term
- Seem to have the idea that early Christians were like 20th Century Evangelicals!! Can't get their head around that they would have had any liturgical worship.
- Think that only when Church became corrupted that these things entered




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- Usually idea broken down when studying early Church and writings of the early Fathers
 - E.g. Early Christians didn't take Bibles with them to Church for Bible studies, very few people owned Bibles! Studied the Bible in groups (and mostly Old Testament)
 - So how did they know the Gospel, the life of Christ, how to worship etc.?
 - Only had Oral Tradition handed down from Apostles
 - Dependence upon tradition is evident in New Testament writings: "Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the **traditions** which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle" (II Thessalonians 2:15)
 - **Traditions** is the Greek word '**paradosis**' which means 'what is transmitted'

Traditions




- Same word used when referring negatively to false teachings of Pharisees (Mark 7:3,5,8) and when referring to authoritative Christian teaching (1 Corinthians 11:2, 2 Thessalonians 2:15).
- What makes the tradition of the Pharisees false and that of the Church true?
- THE SOURCE
- Christ makes this clear:
 - Calls the traditions of the Pharisees “the traditions of men” (Mark 7:8)
- St Paul: “I praise you brethren, that you remember me in all things and hold fast to the traditions (paradoseis) just as I delivered (paredoka, a verbal form of paradosis) them to you” (1 Corinthians 11:2)
 - Where did he get these traditions in the first place? “I received from the Lord that which I delivered (paredoka) to you”
- This is what Orthodox Church refers to when speaking of Apostolic Tradition
 - “the Faith once delivered (paradotheise) unto the saints” (Jude 3)
 - Source is Christ, delivered personally by Him to the Apostles through all that He said and did, which if it all were written down “the word itself could not contain the books that should be written” (John 21:25)

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- Apostles delivered this knowledge to the entire Church and Church having this treasure became the “pillar and ground of the Truth” (1 Timothy 3:15)
 - How did early Christians know which books were authentic and which were not?
 - Oral Apostolic Tradition!!
 - Protestants dislike idea of Holy Tradition as encountered only in Roman Catholicism (e.g. Papal Infallibility...new dogmas previously unknown to the Church)

But how can we know that the Church has preserved the Apostolic Tradition in its purity?



- Short answer....
 - Because He has promised to!
- He would build His Church and that the gates of Hell would not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18)
- Christ Himself is the head of the Church (Ephesians 4:16) and the Church is His Body (Ephesians 1:22-23)
- If the Church lost the pure Apostolic Tradition, then the Truth would have to cease being the Truth...Church is pillar and foundation of the Truth (1 Timothy 3:15)
- If the Church ceased to be, for even one day, then the gates of Hell prevailed against it on that day.
- If this was true.. In mustard seed parable (Matthew 13:31-32), He would have spoken of a plant that started to grow but was squashed, and in its place a new seed sprouted later on.
- Some still believe that there was some group of true-believing Protestants living caves somewhere for a thousand years (e.g. Waldensians 7), did not exist prior to 12th Century and left no historical evidence...

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- But there are those in Church history who taught things contrary to what others taught...
 - E.g. Roman Catholic Church did have new and corrupt “traditions”
 - Corrupted understanding of nature of Tradition.
 - Orthodox understanding is that Tradition is in essence unchanging and is known by its universality.
 - True Apostolic Tradition is found in the historic consensus of Church teaching.
 - If any belief can be shown to have not been received by the Church in its history, then this is heresy.
 - “there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest” (1 Corinthians 11:19)

NUMBER THREE




- **Anyone can interpret the Scriptures for himself or herself without the aid of the Church.**
- Assumes that meaning of Scripture is clear enough that anyone could understand it by simply reading it for oneself.
- Ethiopian Eunuch
- If we accept the Traditions of the Church:
 - Let us not allow ourselves to learn a new kind of faith which is condemned by the tradition of the Holy Fathers. “If anyone is preaching to you a Gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:9)

The doctrine of Sola Scriptura does not meet its own criteria



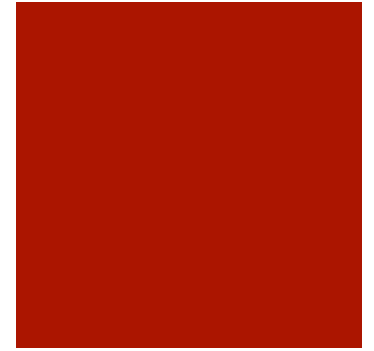
- “In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established” (2 Corinthians 13:1)
- There is not one single verse in the Bible that teaches the doctrine of Sola Scriptura.
- There are places where it speaks of its inspiration and authority...but nowhere where it teaches that only Scripture is authoritative for believers.
- If there was this teaching, then surely the early Fathers of the Church would have taught this doctrine.
- Thus Protestants' most basic teaching self-destructs, being contrary to itself.
- It's not that it's not taught – it's specifically contradicted by the Scriptures that teach that Holy Tradition is also binding to Christians (2 Thessalonians 2:15, 1 Corinthians 11:2)

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- The entire Gospel was originally a spoken tradition. Christ Himself didn't write a word of it.
 - Pentecost Acts 2:38 "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" He was preaching the Gospel – but what "version"?
 - The New Testament itself is just tradition written down.
 - Christ never spoke of a future book which would be the ultimate authority on Christian matters. But He did say "I will build my CHURCH" (Matthew 16:18)

ST MARY



- Orthodox believes that Mary remained ever-virgin.
- Joseph took Mary as his wife as an older man, widower, with existing children (James, Jude etc.)
- Some believe that Mary and Joseph had other children (.."knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son..") Matthew 1:25
- Language..."till", "until"..
 - "Sit on my right hand, **until** I make thine enemies thy footstool". Doesn't mean that Jesus will no longer sit at the right hand of His Father after his enemies are made His footstool!
- Greek word **eos** does not imply a change of status in the future.



- Status of Mary:
 - “..behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things” (Luke 1:48-49)
 - Elizabeth “filled with the Holy Ghost” (Luke 1:41) says “And whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? (Luke 1:43). Holy Spirit considers Lord’s mother to be someone extremely important.

Holy Communion




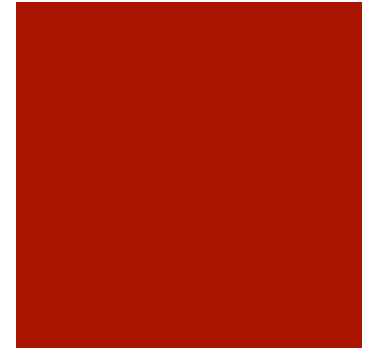
- No scriptural evidence for limiting the Lord's Supper to once a year
 - “..this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.” (1 Corinthians 11:25)
- It is a memorial of Christ (as He said), but this memorial can also be a true partaking of the Lord! “..whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 11:27). Cannot only be a symbol!
- Christ in Gospels speaks about eating flesh and blood, does not correct those who do not believe!

Similar to Old Testament Practices?



- Church buildings, furnishings, priests' robes similar to that in Old Testament temple. Argument that still following "traditions of men"
- But... what's wrong with that?
 - Old Testament is still a part of the Bible- not traditions of men, Exodus 25
- New Testament does not suggest that Christ or His followers rejected the temple and what it stood for. In Matthew 21:13, Jesus cleanses the temple and calls it "the house of prayer" (Isaiah 56:7)
- Christ *did* condemn scribes and Pharisees for following traditions of men... but these were the traditions that went against the Moses' teachings!

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- After Jesus ascended into heaven, His followers “...were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God” (Luke 24:53)
 - Early Christians never rejected the temple – the temple rejected them.
 - Founded New Testament temples, Christian churches.
 - Orthodox Church sees the worship of the Old Testament temple fulfilled in the New Testament.
 - Book of Revelation: Christian worship is described as including both heaven and earth “..I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment, and they had on their heads crowns of gold” (Revelation 4:4)
 - Elders = “clergy”. Clothing bishops and priests in “holy garments” at Liturgy, Orthodox Church is following precedent set in Scripture (Revelations)



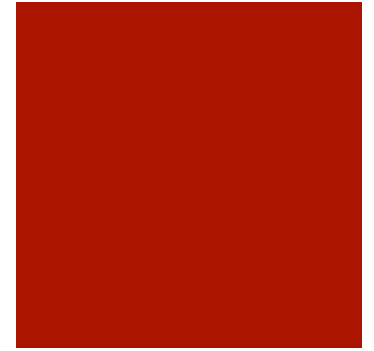
- Incense
 - “And another angel came and stood in the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne”

- So much more in Revelation.

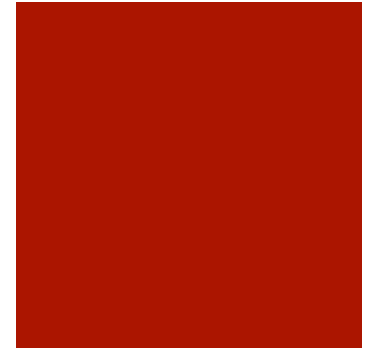
Icons



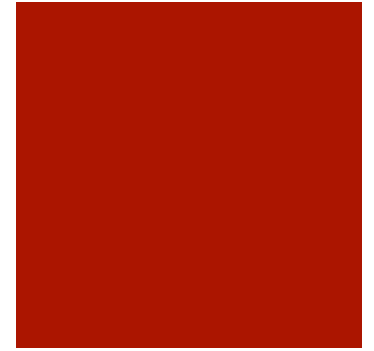
- What is an Icon?
 - An image (usually 2D) of Christ, the Saints, Angels, important Biblical events, parables, or events in history of Church
- Do Orthodox Christians pray to Icons?
 - Christians pray in the presence of Icons (just as Israelites prayed in the presence of Icons in the Temple), but do not pray to the image.
- Do Orthodox Christians Worship Icons? What's the difference between “worship” and “veneration”?
 - Not in the sense that the modern word “worship” is commonly used in modern English. We venerate icons, we pay respect to them because they are holy objects, reverence what the Icons depict. Like a flag.



- Doesn't the 2nd Commandment forbid Icons?
 - What does "graven images" mean? If it just means carved images, then images in temple would be in violation of this Commandment.
 - Look at what it meant in Hebrew. Translated the word to Greek simply as "eidoloi" i.e. "idols". Reference here is to pagan images rather than images in general
 - "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image (i.e. idol), or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor shalt thou serve (worship) them..." (Exodus 20:4-5)



- If we take this reference to images of any kind, then clearly the cherubim in the Temple violate this command.
- If we limit this as applying only to idols, no contradiction exists.
- If it applies to any image, then even a driver's license is an idolater.



- If Icons are so important, why do we not find them in the Scriptures?
 - But we DO find them!!
 - On the Ark – Exodus 25:18
 - On the Curtains of the Tabernacle – Exodus 26:1
 - On the Veil of the Holy of Holies – Exodus 26:31
 - Two huge Cherubim in the Sanctuary – 1st Kings 6:23
 - On the Walls – 1st Kings 6:29
 - On the Doors – 1st Kings 6:32
 - On the Furnishings – 1st Kings 7:29,36