

Week 2 - Sola Scriptura

By Scripture Alone

Defining "Authority"

? What have been some of the most influential "inputs" (people, books/authors, music, etc.) into your life up to this point? How have they shaped your worldview?

Hope Community Church's Statement of Faith regarding the Bible: We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

? What do you think it means for something or someone to have authority?

? How does something/someone acquire authority? What examples come to mind?

The Authority Of Scripture

2 Peter 1:16-21 (NIV)

¹⁶ For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷ He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."¹⁸ We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

¹⁹ We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. ²⁰ Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. ²¹ For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

? Where did Peter say that the apostles got their stories (vs. 16-18), and how does that impact their message's validity?

? In Matthew 28:18 (NIV), Jesus makes a radical proclamation, saying that “...All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” Where do we see God’s view of authority in Scripture? How does that compare and contrast with what you’ve encountered?

? In what ways have you seen the authority of Scripture abused? What can we do to avoid this ourselves?

? What does it look like to have a Gospel-shaped response in our interactions with Christians who have a different understanding of Scripture than we do?

Shaking Things Up

There were a few translations of the Bible in German during Luther’s time, but “The Martin Luther Bible...captured the German people.” He worked from the original Greek and Hebrew, and enlisted the help of a language scholar, Philip Malancthon. The German religious authorities strongly disliked the Bible being in the vernacular! People were hungry for the Word of God, but the leaders at that time wanted the power of biblical interpretation to remain in the church hierarchy’s hands. An archbishop said that “laymen and women could not understand the Bible,” and another leader even said it was “an evil thing to print the Bible in German.” Luther disagreed, and spent less than 11 weeks translating the New Testament. “...with its publication in 1522, Luther realized his dream that the people ‘might seize and taste the clear, pure Word of God itself and hold to it.’” He would go on to later translate the Old Testament as well.

Sources:

(www.greatsite.com/timeline-english-bible-history/pre-reformation.html), (www.bible-researcher.com/luther02.html), (www.christian-history.org/martin-luther-bible), *The Unquenchable Flame: Discovering the Heart of the Reformation* (Michael Reeves)

Scripture in Action

Isaiah 55:10-11 (NIV)

¹⁰ As the rain and the snow
come down from heaven,
and do not return to it
without watering the earth
and making it bud and flourish,
so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,
¹¹ so is my word that goes out from my mouth:
It will not return to me empty,
but will accomplish what I desire
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it

2 Timothy 2:15, 3:14-17 (NIV)

¹⁵ Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. ...

¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, ¹⁵ and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

? What actions of Scripture stand out to you from these passages?

? The passage from Isaiah utilizes the images of rain and snow to convey the impact of God's Word. How does God's Word bring life to "dry ground"?

? In what ways have you found Scripture to be "useful" in your life (2 Tim. 3:16)?

? Scripture can elicit a wide range of emotions--comfort, hope, difficulty, frustration, and so many more. What is your predominant feeling about Scripture as a whole? Why do you think that's your heart's response?

? How does the Holy Spirit guide our understanding of Scripture?

See John 14:26, 1 John 2:27, and Colossians 3:16.

? How do we live in such a way that Scripture is the lens through which we're evaluating all aspects of our lives?

For Discussion and Accountability

? Is Scripture, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ revealed in it, the ultimate authority in your life? What barriers stand in the way of this being a reality for you this week?

? How is God leading you to dive more deeply into His Word? How can we support each other in engaging with Scripture as a small group?

James 1:22-24 (NIV)

²² Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. ²³ Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror ²⁴ and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.