

SCRIPTURE ALONE: LOOK TO THE BOOK!

Chris was a former flatmate of mine.

Raised **Catholic**, Chris told me about a sad experience from childhood church.

To set the scene, what Evangelicals call the **Lord's Supper/Communion**, Catholics call the **Eucharist**.

On the one hand [👉],

Chris was taught in **{DPa}** the Catechism of the Catholic Church, specif. **#2181**, **{DPb}** that to miss the Eucharist is what Catholics call a "**mortal sin**" – a sin that *supposedly* ends your spiritual life, kicks you **out of salvation**, back under condemnation & eternal judgment, unless & until you make things right again: penance

Mortal sin is a distinctly Catholic doctrine (not Protestant, not Orthodox).

Eucharist is so important b/c Catholics believe in a doctrine called "transubstantiation" – lit. change of substance – that at the priest's blessing, the **bread & cup** of communion are *supposedly* transformed into the ACTUAL flesh & blood of Jesus, and **re-sacrificed** anew.

Bizarre & unbiblical doctrine . . . but you now understand for a Catholic to miss the Eucharist is to miss out on Jesus' sacrifice & forgiveness.

On the other hand [👉],

Roman Catholic **Canon Law**, spec. Canon#919 says,

*"A person who is to receive the blessed Eucharist must **abstain** from any food and drink for **at least 1 hour** before holy communion."*

I guess **yummy in your tummy** is not allowed to mix with Jesus' flesh & blood!

Chris was taught it's also a **mortal sin** to partake of the bread & cup in an **unworthy** manner – with *yummy in your tummy*.

I had Chris type this out for me, so I could report it accurately:

"Once, when I was 7-years old, I snuck a chocolate bar into our car & ate it on our drive to church. When we lined up to receive the Eucharist, only about 45 minutes had gone by!. So I kept letting people go ahead of me in line, looking at my watch . . . but I ran out of time . . ."

According to Catholic teaching, Chris was, theologically, in a "**damned if you do, damned if you don't**" situation: **{DP}**

- [👉] If he did NOT partake – mortal sin!
- If he DID partake with yummy in his tummy – mortal sin.

Chris finished off his written recollection:

"I remember crying myself to sleep convinced that I was going to hell because of this."

O, what spiritual **bondage**, being told you're in/out, in/out, in/out of salvation! all because of some 👉 man-made rules & traditions!

I share this story about Chris because it highlights the importance of my topic in our GBC network series that **revolves around ONE** crucial word that became **central** in the 16th century 🙌 *Protestant* 🙌 *Reformation*, a movement which began seeking to 🙌 reform the Catholic church by 🙌 protesting against its corruptions & unbiblical doctrines.

This one word distinguishes the true Good News of Jesus from *every counterfeit* gospel the world offers . . .

{DPb} The word that changes everything? . . . **ALONE!**

You may not be aware, Catholics and cultists, **{DP}** Hindus and Muslims can all affirm *Salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus*

They all agree:

Jesus is awesome! As God's sinless prophet,

Jesus contributes PART-WAY towards salvation; lovely gesture

But no well-informed Catholic or cultist would say, **{DP}**

*I believe in salvation by grace alone through faith alone
in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone -
because Scripture alone is my highest earthly authority.*

THIS is the GOOD NEWS which must be **proclaimed** & **protected**!

The significance of **{DP}** SCRIPTURE Alone is this: because of our boastful PRIDE, we **corrupt** the gospel of God's grace! – unless as Scripture Alone is recognized as the only infallible guardian of the gospel.

Whether Catholics or cultists, they will teach:

Jesus is awesome and contributes **part-way** towards salvation.

BUT our **authoritative** TRADITIONS taught by Catholic Popes & bishops,
or these OTHER Scriptures [Book of Mormon, Koran, or the Vedas],
teach that *your own good deeds* have to bring you the **rest of the way**.

Foundational to correcting voices of 'authority' **contrary** to the Bible's Good news, was the reformers **reclaiming the Bible ALONE** as our highest earthly authority.

We sing the hymn:

*How Firm a **Foundation**, you saints of the Lord, Is Laid for your faith in His excellent Word*

Our **Main Idea** is similar (like the hymn, I made it rhyme!): **{DPa}**

We lose the good news unless Scripture alone is the foundation of salvation (x2)

And our **Outline** is simple: The doctrine of Scripture alone . . . **{DPb}**

- *What It's Not*
- *What It Is*
- *Why It Matters* . . . so let's kick off with **{DPa}**

WHAT IT'S NOT

Clarifying what something does NOT mean can help avoid confusion.

So, here's what the doctrine "Scripture Alone" does NOT mean . . . {DPb}

1] "Every Truth is contained in the Bible."

The Bible does not teach directly about **many** things, like tuning your piano or trouble-shooting your iPhone! That's not *why* it was written.

That said, as God's infallible word, whatever the Bible does speak about, it speaks about *truthfully, without error* – since God cannot lie and His word is faithful and trustworthy.

2] "Scripture Alone" does NOT mean: "Every Spiritual Truth is contained in the Bible"

The Bible itself is clear that it does not even come close to giving a comprehensive account of Jesus' life & ministry.

John ends his Gospel, writing,

"There are many other things Jesus did..." (21:25)

which were **not** recorded – heaps & heaps that would fill endless books, he says.

But the Bible is **sufficient** for life and godliness. (we'll talk more on that in a bit)

3] Scripture Alone does NOT mean "There are **NO OTHER** authorities"

Scripture is clear in Romans 13, **GOVERNMENT** is a God-given authority.

You **cannot** rip up a parking ticket because of the doctrine of Scripture Alone!:

"Officer – there's no authority besides the Bible!"

You *only* disobey the government if it is forcing you
to disobey what Scripture commands you to obey.

Scripture is clear that **PARENTS** are a God-given authority to their children.

On holidays at Niagara Falls, if your 5-year old boy suddenly escapes your line of sight, only to be rediscovered stepping onto a tightrope to walk over the falls, in vain he rejects your instruction to 'step down' by appealing to the doctrine of Scripture Alone!,

"Dad, ONLY the Bible is authoritative!"

And there's no verse in the Bible that kids cannot tightrope walk!"?

Dad replies, *"But there is a verse saying, 'Rescue those stumbling towards death' and, 'Children obey your parents in the Lord.' . . . So step back down now!"*

Even the local **CHURCH** has God-vested authority, as the author of Hebrews writes,

*"Obey your leaders and submit to **their authority**,
since they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account" (13:17)*

PROTESTANTS are fine with having . . . Church

Councils to discuss debated doctrinal issues, . . . fine with having
Creeds to summarise doctrine briefly so you can memorise it, . . . fine with having
Confessions to unpack doctrinal distinctives of a denomination . . . fine w/using
Catechisms as Q&A teaching tools – this year we’ve all used the *New City Catechism*!

Councils, Creeds, Confessions & Catechisms – can be extremely **helpful** . . .
 but they’re NEVER on equal footing with Scripture, the 66 books of the Bible.

{DPd} Key: The doctrine of “Scripture alone” does not **eliminate** other authorities;
 it **calibrates** other authorities!

Scripture Alone means the Bible alone is our “**SUPREME / HIGHEST COURT**”
 Every other court of Authority – govts, parents, churches – are **District/Low courts**

And **good** Confessions of Faith state this clearly!

We are a baptistic church, and the London Baptist Confession begins, **{DP}**
*The Holy Scripture is the **ONLY** sufficient, certain and infallible rule of all saving knowledge,
 faith and obedience.*

That’s a really good description of the doctrine of Scripture Alone,
 which brings us to . . .

WHAT IT IS **{DPA}** (WHAT THE DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE ALONE DOES MEAN)

A ‘rule of faith’ is **authority** to bind our conscience re. what to believe & how to live.

Notice how the LBC starts w/ Scripture’s authority/rule of all **saving** knowledge.

The apostle Paul tells Timothy the **primary** reason the Bible was written: **{DPA}**

*“You have known the sacred Scriptures,
 which are able to give you wisdom for **salvation** through faith in Christ Jesus.” (2 Tim 3:15)*

“Saving knowledge” comes from God’s **WORD** . . .

Nature – God’s **WORLD** – tells us God is glorious & powerful, but does **not** tell us His
name or His **plan** or our **hope**. Does God want to know us, guide us, save us?

If so, *how* can we be saved? . . . We need more specifics.

God’s **WORD** reveals detailed knowledge of God, of humanity, of God’s plan &
 fulfillment of salvation in Jesus, God’s Son – crucified for repentant sinners, raised to
 life in victory – Jesus is the **only one without sin**, and therefore the **only name**
 by which people can be saved.

And Scripture’s supreme **authority** comes from its supreme **Source**: **God**

Peter writes [2 Peter 1:20-21],

*ABOVE ALL, you know this: No prophecy of Scripture comes from the prophet’s own
 interpretation [**initiative** is better; Greek is lit., ‘releasing’] ²¹ because no prophecy ever came
 by the will of man; instead, men spoke **from God** as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

“**Carried along**” describes how wind fills a ship’s sail to carry it along, as in Acts 27

No **wind**, no movement of the *ship* – No **word** from God, no prophecy of *Scripture*!

In similar language, 2 Tim 3:16 says {DPb}

“All Scripture is **God-breathed** . . .”, recording words spoken by God Himself.

Some Bible translations, like the CSB, translate *God-breathed* as '**inspired**', emphasising the result: God-breathed **into** His written word that abides.

So theologians use the phrase the 'doctrine of **Inspiration**':

The **ORIGINATION & PRESERVATION of revelation** from God, by His Spirit at work in a prophet to ensure the accuracy & truth of what was written.

This is why the Bible is unique, special & supremely Authoritative – it's is God **infallible words to us** . . . **preserved** for all time.

And 1 Timothy 3:16 describes the Church as "*the pillar and **support** of the truth*"

KEY: as the support of the truth, the Church is **UNDER** God's Word

We do NOT stand **over** the Word, or even **beside** it. But under it, submitting to it.

The issue of **AUTHORITY** is what *intensified* the Reformation in the 16th century, b/c the Leadership of the Catholic Church claimed **INFALLIBILITY** **equal** to Scripture! Beside Scripture, **not** Under it.

Rome claimed/still claims 2 authorities as = **Sacred Scripture & 'Sacred Tradition'** (Sacred Tradition is supposedly teachings of Jesus & the apostles **orally** passed down the generations through Catholic popes + bishops – it's not written, not testable, not made known for all time ... but only brought forth/made known when it suits Catholic leaders . . . often, it seems, like a magician's rabbit out of a hat)

In response, the Reformers coined the slogan *sola Scriptura*, Latin4 "Scripture **alone**."

SCRIPTURE ALONE: {DP} WHY IT MATTERS

Let's 1st understand the burden of the Reformers, & THEN consider our context today where Scripture Alone is *incredibly relevant* even within **PROTESTANTISM**, where **errors** church go uncorrected due to not viewing Scripture as our highest authority!

THE REFORMERS: **Martin Luther** was ordained into the Catholic priesthood.

When he began lecturing at Bible College, he started rigorous Bible study, which led him to notice *glaring **discrepancies*** between teachings of Scripture & teachings of the Catholic Church.

A trip to Rome opened Luther's eyes further to the **moral corruption** in the church.

{FAST!} The nail in the coffin for Luther was **Pope Leo X**, who needed of \$\$ to **rebuild** St. Peter's Basilica, a Cathedral in Rome. To raise funds, Pope Leo claimed to be able

to release souls of dead people who were *supposedly* trapped in a *supposed* place of limbo between heaven & hell called 'purgatory' – which is not taught in the Bible. The Pope claimed he could release souls in limbo **for a price** – by the sale of indulgence letters. ***Salvation for sale!*** A 'coffer' = small treasure chest

And the Pope's fundraising campaign going through every town had this 'slogan':

[DP]: "When a Coin in the Coffer Rings, a Soul from Purgatory Springs!"

Benny Hinn & Kenneth Copeland *ain't got nothin'* on ol' Pope Leo!

At this, Luther said he could be "silent no more." In 1517, he posted his **[DP]** 95 *Theses* with the sincere hope of stirring reform within the Catholic Church.

Not one for subtlety, Luther's Thesis #32 said, **{DP}**

Those who believe that they can be certain of their salvation because they have indulgence letters will be eternally damned, together with their teachers.

This was no compliment to the Pope!, and was intended to get Catholic leadership seriously reconsidering their ***blasphemous heresy*** of 'salvation for sale.'

Luther was soon brought before a religious court that demanded he recant, disavow his writings. Luther's famous response was a clear expression of the doctrine of Scripture Alone: **{DP}**

*Unless I am convinced by the **testimony of the Scriptures** . . . I will not recant. For I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves. I am bound by the **Scriptures** that I have quoted, and my conscience is captive to **the Word of God**. Here I stand.*

Luther's appeal to *Scripture alone* as our only infallible authority was totally rejected.

The highest Catholic leaders thought Luther had no business telling THEM to correct their teachings, because the Catholic hierarchy called the **Magisterium** – that is the Pope and his bishops – claims not only infallible authority, but also ***infallible interpretation*** of the Scripture!!

Time allows just 1 example from a Catholic writing labelled **{DPa}** "Imprimatur", officially declared free from any doctrinal error . . . Here it is: **[DPb]**

*"No one shall . . . presume to interpret the Holy Scriptures **contrary** to that sense held by the holy mother Church, to whom it belongs to judge their true sense and interpretation."*¹

Once the Magisterium issues an 'infallible **dogma**' it becomes an unchangeable, undeniable doctrine . . . dogma such as Mary's **Immaculate Conception** – **NOT** about the virgin birth of Jesus; but acc'd Pope Pious IX, it's about Mary herself "*being free from any hereditary or personal sin*". . . **sinless** for her entire life.

¹ Heinrich Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 786 (Imprimatur).

. . . If you appeal, “come let us reason together to reason **from the Scriptures**”
 Romans 3:23, “*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*” – only Jesus is sinless!
 or Luke 1 – Mary prayed to “God, my **Saviour**”, proving she needed saving from sin!
 . . . no matter; no push-back from Scripture will be considered! It’s **dogma** now.

Did you know the official title of **NORTH** Korea is
 ‘The **DEMOCRATIC** People’s Republic of Korea’.

Just saying so does not make it so!!

The Pope or Magisterium **just saying** that Jesus & the apostles passed this down,
does not make it so!

You’ve likely realized anything that claims to be “equal” with Scripture,
 in practice become “greater than” Scripture: the authoritative **key** to Scripture,
 as seen in the title of this article from a Catholic ministry: **{DPb}**

Sacred Scripture DEPENDS UPON Sacred Tradition

See what Luther was up against, and why the doct. of Scripture Alone is so important?

- **1st & foremost Reason** the Doctrine of Scripture Alone Matters – is our **B.I. {DP}**
 we **LOSE the Good News** unless Scripture alone is the Foundation of Salvation.

I want you to see this **TODAY** by looking at **modern {DP}** *Imprimatur* stamped
 Catholic writing, addressed to MARY... **{DPa}**

“O Mother of Perpetual Help . . . **You** are my advocate.

In **your** hands I place my eternal salvation and to **you** do I entrust my soul . . .

For if **you** protect me, dear Mother, I **fear** nothing

– not even my sins, because **you** will obtain pardon for me.

Rubie, an ex-Catholic in our Logan congregation told me she used to pray *this* prayer
every week –

a blasphemous prayer dethroning our Lord Jesus from being our Advocate & Redeemer,
 giving that honour to Mary instead.

Scripture Alone guards the good news of **Jesus!**

Jem, another ex-Catholic who became a member at Logan a few weeks ago, wrote
 this in her testimony: **{DPb}**

Mary was more ‘famous’ than Jesus among family & friends.

I didn’t know Jesus – except that He’s the son of Mary.

Scripture Alone guards the good news of **Jesus!**

Right after I preached this sermon @ Logan, **Rett**, another ex-Catholic, told me that
 he paid indulgences for his father to get out of purgatory.

Salvation is still for sale today in the Roman Catholic Church!

😞 This is SO tragic! . . . and shows why the Reformation still matters SO much.

So when the Catechism of the Catholic Church declares, **{DP}**

*"The INFALLIBILITY of the **Magisterium** . . . extends to all elements of doctrine, without which the SAVING TRUTHS of the faith cannot be preserved."*

I hope you can see nothing could be further from the truth! **{DP}**

*we **lose the Good News** unless Scripture alone is the Foundation of Salvation!*

Moving from the 'Categorical' to the **PERSONAL** . . .

a **2nd point** about Why Scripture Alone matters – like Rubie & Jem & Rett, personally

2] Be LIBERATED by the Sufficiency of Scripture!

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus said,

*The scribes & Pharisees tie up **HEAVY LOADS** that are **burdensome** to carry and put them on people's shoulders (Matthew 23:4). . . Just as true today w/some religs/ldrs*

Hear this: **{DP}** The Bible is SUFFICIENT to **bring us** to Christ & **conform us** to Christ

Hear this & See this, in 2 Timothy 3 **{DPa}**

*"You have known the sacred Scriptures, which are able to give you wisdom for **salvation** through faith in Christ Jesus. [that's the **bring us** to Christ]. **All Scripture** is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be **COMPLETE, EQUIPPED** for every good work." [that's the **conform us** to Christ]. (2 Timothy 3:15-17)*

Re. "**bring us** to Christ": Scripture proclaims & preserv. the good news of salvation in J

O Friend, this morning be liberated, set free from **YOUR** sin & condemnation!

- Hear God's word proclaiming His gloriously sufficient & undeserved grace,
- that Jesus, the Holy One, offers to **take** your shame & guilt upon Him and **credit** His perfect righteousness to your account as a free gift
- a gift that can be received this very day – by faith alone!

My heart is so burdened by the *tragic bondage* of not just my old flatmate Chris, but others just like him – such as Matthew Hood, a Catholic priest, who 2 months ago was watching a family video of himself being baptized in 1990, only to realise the "proper" Catholic **formula** was not used.

a **single word** was changed.

The priest baptising Matthew said, "**we** baptise" instead of "**I** baptise".

Because Catholics believe sacramental **words themselves** bring about a change in the person – almost like an "*incantation*" – this articles declares, "*we have to be **very precise** in the wording*".

In his own words, Matthew Hood describes the "shock & sadness" of the **ripple effect** because of **1 pronoun**, his own baptism was not valid, therefore his **ordination** to the priesthood was not valid, therefore all the "**sacraments**" he administered as a priest

were invalid – including the Catholic sacrament of **marriage** – meaning those MARRIAGES were not valid according to the Catholic church!

This reads like **satire**, as if it were an article from the *Babylon Bee*!

But this is from straight from numerous Catholic websites, like the Jesuit Review.²

But more heart-breaking than any of those other things deemed invalid, is this statement from Matthew, **{DP}**

It was an alienating sense that even though I was following the Lord, I wasn't a Christian."

Not because of a **wrong Gospel**, but because of a wrong **pronoun**!

Salvation depends on speaking the right pronoun? O friend, be *liberated* from this **bondage** to man-made Traditions that are heavy burdens placed upon your shoulders.

Turn to God in simple saving faith, relying completely on Christ, and be saved!

For salvation, be freed from bondage to unbiblical tradition.

For sanctification/Christian growth be free from bondage to unbiblical tradition!

Verses 16-17 speak of the Bible as SUFFICIENT to **conform us** to Christ.

All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be COMPLETE, EQUIPPED for every good work."
(2 Timothy 3:15-17)

Teaching/Rebuking doctrine true/false; Correcting/Training conduct poor/righteous

Those are not easy things.

But they lead to maturity, being equipped for every good work, conformity to Christ.

"Lord, in Your light, we see light" Psalm 36 says.

And God's word is a light to our path in **SO many** ways,

from *foundational* things like the meaning of life,

to *specific* priorities for life – how we can live for God's glory & our good

in our workplace ethics, our parenting, the use of our speech to build up,

the use of our feet to bring good news.

So Luther translated the Greek NT into German in 1522, then in 1526 William Tyndale translated the Greek NT into **English** . . . in order that **EVERYONE could read it**.

The Catholic Bishop of London responded immed. when he saw Tyndale's NT: **[DP]**

"Children of iniquity, maintainers of Luther's sect . . . wandering from the way of truth, have translated the New Testament into our English tongue . . . which truly without doubt will CONTAMINATE and INFECT the flock committed unto us, with most deadly poison!"

² <https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2020/08/24/detroit-priest-invalid-baptism-canonical-consequences>

And, https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2020/08/26/interview-detroit-priest-invalid-baptism-ordination?utm_source=website&utm_medium=inline_promo&utm_campaign=related

Fancy that! God's word = a most deadly poison!!

I thought Psalm 19 said,

*The law of the LORD is perfect, **reviving the soul**.*

The word of the LORD is trustworthy, making the SIMPLE wise.

Yet the Catholic Church made translation into the mother tongue a "crime", and actually ordered the Bible . . . to be burned!

It's one thing for the Nazis to burn books considered traitorous in content, but I still cannot fathom the Church burning its OWN book!

Even worse is a Church burning **people** at the stake who make the Bible available.
[what they did to Tyndale & many others] **{OFF}**

The Bible book called Galatians, says: "***For freedom Christ set you free!***
Don't submit again to yoke/harness of bondage."

If you come from a legalistic, authoritarian background, be **liberated** by Scripture Alone!
Traditions reaching *beyond Scripture / contrary to Script*, have no claim on you!
are **not** binding upon the Christian conscience!

Skirts being this many inches below the knee
Or that instrument or genre of music being un-Christian/demonic.

Scripture usu. does give not 'quantified codes' but instead **liberating principles**:

Dress modestly.

Let every instrument praise the Lord.

Examine your heart motive, *in accountable community*,

and do what you do for God's glory,

honouring lower God-given authorities, unless they call you to disobey Scripture.

Be liberated by Scripture: SUFFICIENT to **bring us** to Christ & **conform us** to Christ!

31 Finally, **With Liberty comes Responsibility!**

Brothers & Sisters, God calls us to be people who are **{DP}**

*"unashamed, **rightly handling** the word of truth."* (2 Timothy 2:15)

We need to KNOW God's word, to handle it / study it / apply it carefully, honourably
Scripture twisters are hardly limited to the Pope & Catholic tradition!

There are plenty of '**Protestant Popes**' in both pulpits and pews, a law to themselves, Cowboy Christians –**ignoring** not only wisdom from Creeds of old and wise Counsellors around you right now . . . but Twisting Scripture to try and make it say WHATEVER they want it to say.

Listen to Pastorette Patricia Hines, [DPa]

*"We gave up on all of that **sola** stuff [Scriptura Alone stuff] a long time ago . . . We feel the true spirit of the Reformation today lies in the **questioning** of what is believed to be true, and seeking out **new** paths of spiritual exploration. That's essentially what Luther did."*

She continues, [DPb]

*"It was Luther who said '**My conscience is captive**,' and we must have the same attitude. Our consciences are free only when they become captive to our own **free thinking**."*

God forgive us! Finish the quote!! Luther said,
"My Conscience is help captive TO THE WORD OF GOD"!

Our conscience is not inerrant! God's Word is.

Our conscience can be numbed/seared & needs regular RECALIBRATING by God's word . . .
 which restores the soul and renews the mind.

Psa. 119:11

*Your WORD I have **treasured** in my heart, so that I **may not sin** against you.*

How many times have you heard a Christian say,
"God gave me a REAL PEACE about this decision" . . .

when 'this decision' is called sin or folly in Scripture!? [dumping a spouse; becoming
 enslaved to inescapable debt, etc.]

Jonah had a real peace: **ASLEEP** in a boat going the opposite direction God commanded.

Personal peace is not what binds our conscience! Scripture Alone does.

I read a *terrifying* survey last month, reminding me how fast-growing is the viewpoint of pastorette Patricia in Protestant circles. {DPa} Unlike the **Protestant Reformation**, whose goal was to return to Bible, the modern movement is the opposite . . .

[It's re. American Christians, but Oz tend to follow American trends 5 to 10 yrs later]

In a large survey conducted in January of this year: {DPb}

42% of Evangelicals believe
a person can enter heaven "by being or doing enough good".

And less than half, **only 43%** of Evangelicals believe Jesus is sinless!!

Based on these statistics, half of professing Christians in America today do not even know the Gospel, nor the God of the Gospel, believing Jesus is a **sinner**, Jesus is **not** the only way of salvation & that a person can be saved **by their own good works**.

WHY?... o WHY? Hear this:

Because only 1 in 4 – **only 26%** of professing Evangelical Christians believe the Bible is the Word of God, trustworthy & reliable.

SEE how much the doctrine of Scripture Alone still *really* matters!

James White says in his book that I highly recommend, *Scripture Alone*
*Church history has repeatedly & clearly proven that once
 the highest view of Scripture is abandoned by any theologian, group, denomination or church,
 the downhill slide in both its theology & practice is inevitable."*

With Liberty comes Responsibility! {OFF}

Brothers and sisters, **LOOK to this BOOK!**

Jesus, Paul and more often asked people, "***What do the Scriptures say?***"

When the apostle Paul preached the good news of Jesus in Berea, *Acts 17* says,
*Those in **Berea** were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, since they received
 the word with eagerness and examined the Scriptures **DAILY** to see if these things were so.*

Not just leaders but laity, **everyone** was praised because they were a people who
"Look to the Book"

If the Berean congregation was praised for testing ***apostle Paul's*** word against the
 Scriptures, most certainly we're noble in checking anyone's claim against the Scriptures.

Test what I say, test what Craig & Rhoi say . . . test us ***by the Scriptures!***

Brothers & Sisters, LOOK to this BOOK! as your only supreme spiritual authority.

One of the major achievements of the Protestant Reformation is the return to
 Scripture with **no need of an external key for interpretation** – whether that 'key'
 be the Pope or the angel Moroni giving Joseph Smith special glasses to see the Bible
 differently and start Mormonism.

NO! Scripture is sufficiently clear and supremely authoritative.

A privilege of Protestantism is not just *personal* Bible reading but *group* study!
 In midweek fellowship groups – one of the most important Qs in Bible studying is:

That's Fascinating! Where did you see that in our passage?

This sort of question keep the focus on the text and God's meaning/intention.

In our relativistic postmodern era,

- The **wrong** question is, "*What does this passage mean to you?*"
- The **right** question is, "*What did God mean by this passage?*"

We have mixed up a multitude of *applications* with a multitude of *meanings*.

'You shall not steal' - has ONE meaning: don't steal!! But a multitude of applications:

*What does stealing look like at work? At school? From a neighbour?
 Stealing ideas, stealing money, stealing software/video subscriptions, etc.*

God breathed out His Word so we might know Him forever

God breathed out His Word so we might know ourselves and be saved from our sin!

Prophets gave their lives to **record** God's Word.

Ancient church members gave their lives to **preserve** the scrolls from persecutors

Men like Wycliffe & Tyndale gave their lives to **translate** it into our English language.

Now we have the Word in *readable, accurate, accessible* Bibles.

But is it read and studied in your home?

*What is desperately needed in God's church today,
is not only a restoration of faithful biblical preaching,
but also a **restoration of personal Bible reading**,
so that Christians are feeding upon His Word every day.*

The Bible is a book that reads us even as we read it.

Read it and be read by it!

Understand it, obey it, be transformed & liberated by it, and be **responsible** with it.

...to the glory of God

I close w/a story from when my wife was an exec secretary, asked to type the Order of a Ceremony for her boss who was a Free Mason, a member of the Masonic Lodge.

When she got home, she shared the Order of Ceremony with me 😊 . . .

The *carrying in* of the Bible . . . the *opening* of the Bible . . . podium *placing* of the Bible

The ceremony continues . . . then . . .

The *closing* of the Bible . . . the *exiting* of the Bible . . .

No **READING** of the Bible . . . no **LEARNING** from the Bible . . . no **OBEYING** the Bible

Brothers & Sisters, may that not be us!

Don't just Look **TO** the Book and Look **IN** the Book!

Will *YOUR* conscience be captive to the Word of God

So that you say, "Here I stand!" ?

CLOSING SONG

The Reformation Song

DISCUSSION QS

- 1] How does **Trust** in someone's word impact how you treat/respond to that word?
Does trust become more or less important when it is a "hard word"?
- 2a] If God spoke to you, how do you think you'd respond?
(Would you listen casually, or carefully/eagerly?)
- b] What is the Bible, if not God's Word to us? (see 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:20-21)
- 3] What is your view of the Bible's infallibility? Authority?
- 4] Discuss the 4 practical **values** of God's word for maturing us into Christlikeness that Paul gives in 2 Timothy 3:16-17
(Aid: consider them as pairs – teach & rebuking doctrine; correcting & training conduct)
- 5] A distinctive of the Reformation is reclaiming *personal* Bible reading & *small group* study:
 - a] How is motivation to personally study Scripture impacted when others religions say a person/group providing "**interpretive key**" is essential to rightly understand it?
(Consider the Catholic Magisterium; Joseph Smith's special "lenses" & "golden plates"; the Talmud in Judaism)
 - b] What is killing your motivation/hunger for God's word?
 - If it is social media, what should you do about this?
 - If it is lack of confidence in how to read/understand/study it, what should you do about this? (what is on offer from the Church to help with this? Online?)
 - Are you following any sequential reading plan (helps keeps Scripture in context)
Which plans have you found to be helpful, and why?