

Luther's view of sola Scriptura.

- Sola Scriptura Literally Means "By Scripture Alone"
- One question dealt with by the doctrine of sola Scriptura relates to the sources of divine revelation, of which there are at least two:
 - i. Nature: general revelation
 - ii. The Bible: special revelation
- The question is whether there is more than one source of special revelation.
- According to Protestants, there is only one source of special revelation - Scripture

The following excerpt is from Luther's response to his condemnation by the Catholic Church:

"This is my answer to those also who accuse me of rejecting all the holy teachers of the church. I do not reject them. But everyone, indeed, knows that at times they have erred, as men will; therefore, I am ready to trust them only when they give me evidence for their opinions from Scripture, which has never erred. This St. Paul bids me to do in I Thess. 5:21, where he says, "Test everything; hold fast what is good." St. Augustine writes to St. Jerome to the same effect, "I have learned to do only those books that are called the holy Scriptures the honor of believing firmly that none of their writers has ever erred. All others I so read as not to hold what they say to be the truth unless they prove it to me by holy Scripture or clear reason."

Source: <https://heidelblog.net/2020/03/was-sola-scriptura-a-reformation-slogan-and-doctrine/>

Roman Catholic Catechism – The Relationship between Tradition and Sacred Scripture

81 "Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit."⁴² "and [Holy] Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. It transmits it to the successors of the apostles so that, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, they may faithfully preserve, expound and spread it abroad by their preaching."⁴³

82 As a result the Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, "does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honoured with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence."⁴⁴

83 The Tradition here in question comes from the apostles and hands on what they received from Jesus' teaching and example and what they learned from the Holy Spirit... Tradition is to be distinguished from the various theological, disciplinary, liturgical or devotional traditions, born in the local churches over time. These are the particular forms, adapted to different places and times, in which the great Tradition is expressed. In the light of Tradition, these traditions can be retained, modified or even abandoned under the guidance of the Church's Magisterium.

Source: https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_PL.HTM

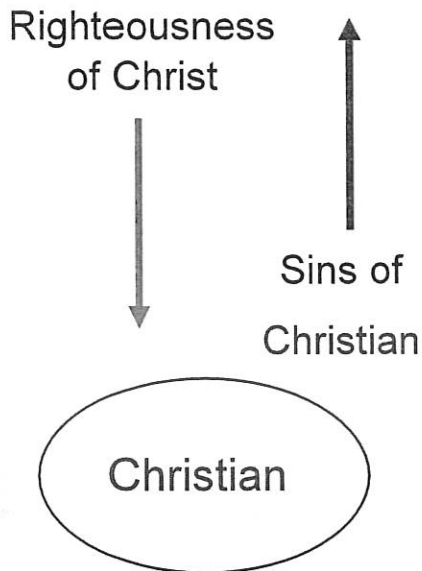
Introduction to Luther

- Born in 1483 in Eisleben Germany
- Father had been a miner, worked his way up to become the owner of several foundries
 - Parents were very strict; Luther seems to have been severe in his raising of Martin
 - Planned for young Martin to go into law
 - School was also very strict, whipped the students if they didn't know their lessons
 - Early years seem to have been characterized by depression and anxiety
- In 1505, Luther experiences a life-changing event, and joins a monastery in Erfurt
 - Terror experienced in a thunderstorm
 - Fear accumulated through his strict upbringing
 - Fear of Damnation preyed upon his mind
- The 22 year old Martin was a dutiful child of the church, availing himself of the means of salvation provided by the church
- Young Martin is finally happy

Luther's crisis – look up story about Luther's trip to Rome

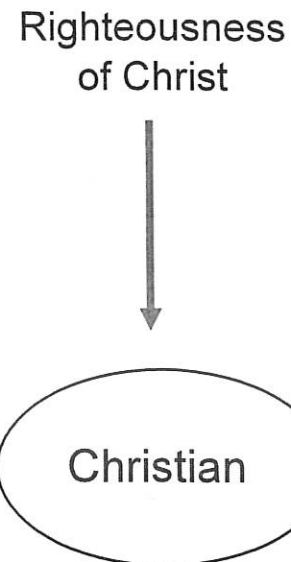
- Throughout Luther's novitiate, his superiors recognized his exceptional abilities, and recommended he become a priest
- Luther is ordained as a priest in 1507
- Luther was terrified when celebrating the mass
- These terrors intensified with time
 - Concerned about his sin
 - Fearful he hadn't done enough to deserve salvation
- Availed himself of confession and penance
- Came to a frightful recognition of the nature of the fallen state: Sin was a state of being, a condition – no amount of confession would suffice!
- Luther's confessor recommended him to read the teachings of the mystics
- Mystic taught – *Love God, and everything good will follow*
- In 1511, Luther made a pilgrimage to Rome, his experience there completely disillusioned him.
 - Luther climbed the scala sancta (sacred steps) by St. John's Lateran church
 - After ascending on his knees and reaching the top, he states "who knows if it is true"
- Martin envisioned God as critical Judge waiting to pass judgment on him; and came to hate God.
- 1512 Luther receives his doctorate and becomes chair of the University of Wittenberg Theology department

Imputation View (Protestants)



- Righteousness of Christ is imputed, or credited to the Christian
- Sins of Christian imputed, or credited to Christ on cross (he pays for them)
- Through this double-imputation, the sinner is justified in God's eyes
- This grace is the only means of justification, the only works involved are those of Christ
- This precedes sanctification

Infusion View (Rome)



- Righteousness of Christ is infused into Christian
- This is achieved through the means of the sacraments
- This grace can be lost through committing a mortal sin
- A "second plank" of justification can be achieved through penance
- At the point that this righteousness inheres to the Christian, God recognizes that person as righteous/just

- Shortly thereafter, Luther wrote another set of theses called “Ninety-Five Theses on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences”
- Attached the sale of Indulgences and its theological underpinnings
- This amounted to an attack on the income of the most powerful lords of the church and state
- This time, the response was deafening

The “beneficiaries”

- Sale that prompted response was authorized by Pope Leo X
- Albert of Brandenburg (member of the house of Hohenzollern) wished to purchase the most important archbishopric in Germany (Mainz)
- Agreed with Leo on a sum of 10,000 ducats (1 Venetian gold ducat = about 3.5 grams of gold, do the math = 35,000 grams; or somewhere around \$2 M USD)
- The proceeds of this sale would be divided between Albert and Leo.
 - Leo wished to refurbish the Basilica of Saint Peter
 - This basilica is now the pride of the catholic church
 - Over 5 million people visit this place every year

The Scheme

- Dominican John Tetzel is put in charge of the sales
- Indulgences would “Make the sinner cleaner than Adam before the Fall”, or “cleaner when coming out of baptism”
- “As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs”
- Many of the more learned opposed such schemes, and recognized this not only as a sign of corruption of the church, but also one more example of Rome fleecing the German people, exploiting their credulity to support the luxurious lifestyle of the lords of the church