

Why Are We 'Protestants'? #2 (We Affirm Sola Scriptura)

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We're here tonight to continue to answer the question, why are we Protestants? And for those of you that weren't here last week, we rejected the papacy and rejected the sovereign nation of the Vatican in the process, I guess. But we covered that, and that message is available online if you want to pick that up. And let me hasten to say, while I'm thinking about it, if you want the notes from tonight's message to kind of supplement anything that you write down, just email me and let me know. I'm happy to share those with you. I got a number of requests for the notes, so that was encouraging to me, and I'm basically going to follow these very closely here this evening. Now, the last week we answered the question why are we Protestants from a negative perspective. We said, "We reject the papacy." And so that's kind of a negative approach.

Tonight, in answering the question, why are we Protestants, we're going to put it in a positive form. And it's this. We affirm the principle of Sola Scriptura. Sola Scriptura. That's a Latin phrase that means "by Scripture alone," and we'll explain what that means in just a moment, but I want to acknowledge a limitation here in terms of what we're doing. All of these issues underlying the Catholic Church have centuries of very important church history behind them, and the Reformation, and all of that. And we realize that to really discuss this issue properly, you'd have to discuss those issues. We're not able to do that. We have to be selective tonight. And our approach is to focus on the 1994 Catholic catechism, their own official teaching, and to simply hold that up in the light of Scripture and see what Scripture would say about their teaching in their own words. And tonight we're going to examine the Catholic view of biblical authority, and this is just very foundational. And once again, just as we saw last week in the papacy, I promise you that what you're going to see is the Catholic approach to biblical authority. The authority of their tradition and the authority of their teaching is utterly incompatible with biblical truth. There is simply no other way to put it. That can't be qualified or softened. That is just the truth of the matter. And we have to deal with this carefully, because everything builds on biblical authority. And so, we're going to approach this in three major points here.

First of all, we're going to answer this question very quickly. What do we believe about biblical authority? What do we believe, we as Protestants, using that term very generically. What do we believe about biblical authority? Not every Protestant would

agree with this, but here at Truth Community what do we believe about biblical authority? Well, as I said at the start, we believe in the principle of Sola Scriptura, that phrase that means "by Scripture alone." And let me give you a couple of statements that help explain the implications of that. We adhere to the 1689 Baptist Confession here. In the very first paragraph of that confession it says, "The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience." Scripture is the only rule of saving knowledge, faith and obedience. In other words, everything that we believe is based on Scripture. Everything else is subordinate to Scripture. Stated in paragraph 6 it says that, "The whole counsel of God," the entire counsel of God, in other words, "concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture to which nothing is to be added at any time, either by new revelation of the Spirit or by the traditions of men." And what that means is that the Bible is a closed book. There is not more to be added to it once the Canon was closed with the close of the apostolic era. There's not new revelation coming. There's not more truth to be added on to what God has already said in the Scripture. And what we take from that is that God has said already, in the 66 books of the Bible, everything that is necessary for us to know in order to be saved, in order to live a godly life, in order to obey Him fully. Everything that we need to know has already been set forth in the 66 books of the Bible, and there is nothing else to come. There is no other authority that is equal to the authority of Scripture. The Bible is high and lofty, and I think it's in Psalm 138, the Bible says that God has exalted His Word above all His name. And so, God has put a premium on His Word, and that's what we believe about biblical authority. Everything is judged in light of the Scripture. Nothing shares authority with the 66 books of the Bible. That's what we believe about biblical authority.

Now, second question, why do we believe that? It's one thing to assert that. It's another thing to understand why we believe it. And so, we're already into our second point here this evening, and it's just barely 10 after 7. I'm just really racing through the material here. That's what we believe about biblical authority. Secondly, why do we believe that? And, beloved, this has just got to be very carefully considered. We believe in Sola Scriptura. We believe that the Bible alone is the only authority, and it's an infallible authority for spiritual life, because that's what the Bible claims for itself. That's what the Bible says. Turn to Psalm 19, and we'll start looking into some Scriptures here. Psalm 19 as we consider the infallible nature, the perfect nature, of the Bible. Psalm 19 verses 7 through 9 says that "The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether." And so, the Scripture is perfect. It is perfect to restore the soul. It is a sure foundation to make wise the simple. It's right. It's pure. It's clean. It's true. Everything about it is a flawless diamond through which everything is to be understood and by which everything is to be measured.

Now, the New Testament makes the same claim about its teaching. Turn to the New Testament in 2 Timothy chapter 3. 2 Timothy chapter 3 beginning in verse 15. 2 Timothy

3:15 where the apostle Paul, in the last words that he wrote before his execution really, said this, he said, "From childhood," as he writes to Timothy, he says "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." Saying this long before any of the accumulated tradition of the Catholic Church was written down, was fabricated, let's put it that way. It was never written down. Before they started their fabrications, Paul said that the Scriptures were sufficient to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Jesus Christ. Verse 16. "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." And so, notice that in verse 15 it says the Bible is sufficient. It is able. It has the intrinsic power through the written Word to give you the knowledge that leads to salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus. There is nothing missing in the Scripture that needed to be supplemented later on that would show people the path of salvation in Christ. Along with that, once a person comes to Christ, it says that the Scripture is sufficient. It's adequate. It's profitable. "So that the man of God may be adequate, thoroughly equipped for every good work." And in any situation that you and I face as Christians, we find in the Scriptures the spiritual resources that are more than sufficient to help us glorify God and obey Him. In the providential circumstances in which we find ourselves. Scripture is complete. It is adequate. It is sufficient. There is nothing that needs to be added to it.

And so, we can say dogmatically and based on scriptural authority that the Bible gives wisdom to show men their sin and lead them to the Christ who died for sinners. It teaches them that God will forgive them if they repent and believe in Christ, and these things are clear in the Scriptures. They aren't hidden. It's not murky water that we're trying to see to the bottom, but the the waters are flowing and too muddy to be able to see through. No, the Bible is a crystal clear lake of water that you can look through and see with clarity what is contained therein. And when a man comes to Christ, the Bible makes him adequate to honor God in every situation in life. That's what the Bible claims for itself. And so, to start to say, "We need something in addition to the Bible in order to find our way to God. We need something in addition to the Bible in order to lead a godly life," is a direct contradiction of the plain statements of Scripture about itself. And we get agitated when that kind of suggestion is made. When I say, "we," I'm talking me, I guess. But I think you share the sympathies of my heart and the affections of my heart on this. We do not need to look beyond the written Word of God for final authority on any essential doctrine about our faith or about our practice of the Christian life.

It's all here. God gave us a perfect book to guide us in Christ. We don't need to look, and as you continue to dig into the Scriptures you see that it says, "Indeed, we cannot do that without sinning against God." Go back to the book of Deuteronomy. I'll show you three passages here. We've seen the sufficiency of Scripture from Psalm 19 and 2 Timothy 3. Now, we're going to see the finality of Scripture in what we're going to look at here. Deuteronomy chapter 4. God from the beginning of His revelation instilled in Israel the principal that they should not go beyond what God has said. And so, it says in Deuteronomy chapter 4 verse 2, "You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God

which I command you." He restricts them. He forbids them from adding to what He had to say. And this is a principle that runs throughout Scripture.

Look over in the book of Proverbs chapter 30. Proverbs chapter 30. We're really just getting warmed up here. This is still by way of introduction in some ways. Proverbs chapter 30 verses 5 and 6. "Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. Do not add to His words Or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar." And so, you see again the Scriptures instilling in us a principle of reverence and sanctity toward this Word that makes us so that we are unwilling to lay our hand on it and add to it with our own words or with our own ideas. The Scriptures warn us about that. You remember when the Ark was about to fall off the poles as it was being carried, and they reached forward, and God struck them dead as they were reaching forward just to stabilize the Ark. Well, it's a picture of His holiness. It's a warning about that which He considers holy. You know, from that perspective to think about adding to His sacred Word which is already perfect and sufficient, to reach out as though it needed stabilization of its own from something that we could do is an utter denial of what Scripture says about itself. And it's only an act of the mercy of God that He doesn't strike people dead who do that, because this Word should never be tampered with in the way that people do so cavalierly. We're talking more generally than the Catholic Church there, but you get the idea.

Finally, turn to the final book, the final chapter of the Bible in Revelation chapter 22. You see this at the beginning of the Word of God. You see it in the middle of the Word of God. You see it at the end of the Word of God. The Apostle John is writing. He was the last living apostle. This is the last book of the Bible at the very end of it. This is an obvious period. An obvious punctuation mark is what I'm referring to, the period that ends a sentence. This is the period on divine revelation in verse 18 of Revelation 22. He said, "I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book." Verse 20. "He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming quickly.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen." And thus ended divine revelation. God closed the Canon at that point and said, "It is sufficient. It is finished." God's people were never to look beyond His written Word to them for instruction in the faith or instruction in the practice in life of godliness.

Now, follow me here. We've seen Psalm 19 describe the law as perfect. 2 Timothy says, "It's adequate to help you to live for God's glory." Don't add to His Word, or He'll reprove you and call you a liar. Look, this is so basic, so simple, and so clear. If anything further were necessary in order for us to know what was needed in order to have the forgiveness of our sins, if anything else was necessary, Scripture would not be complete. Scripture would not be perfect. Scripture would not be sure. Scripture would not be final. And what that means is that you must take the Bible alone, or you cannot take it at all. You can't add anything alongside the Bible without denying the Bible, and these very clear passages, and these assertions that it makes about itself. You take the Bible alone, or

you don't take it at all. And so, when Mormons tried to add up books of revelation and say, "These are of equal authority with the Scripture. God has revealed new, another, testament of Jesus Christ in these latter days." That can't be true. That's a denial of the Word of God that they say they believe. It denies the very thing that they say they believe. And when other people claim that they're getting revelations from God, and these things need to be known. It's just not true. It's a denial of the plain statements of Scripture about themselves. The Bible is clear. The Bible is final.

Now, as we come into our examination of the Catholic Church, what you're going to see is that Catholics reject that claim. Catholics deny that. They believe that their tradition is equal in authority to Scripture, and they believe that their ruling bishops are actually above their tradition and their Scripture. They put tradition beside the Scriptures and, actually over it, but we won't bother with that right now, and, then, they say that they have their teaching magisterium has authority over both. It's a complete denial of everything that the Scriptures say. And so, here's our third question for this evening then, is that how do Catholics deny the sufficiency of Scripture? How do Catholics deny the sufficiency of Scripture? It's not enough to simply say that they do. I want you to see it in their own words. As I said, we're looking, we're basing what we say here on the catechism of the Catholic Church, the 1994 official document published by Pope John Paul II. What does their own catechism say about their tradition and the Bible? Listen to this. This is clear. As I said last week, I'm grateful that they published that catechism, because it takes it out of the realm of uncertainty. No one can deny this that wants to defend the Catholic Church that this is what they teach. From paragraph 82 of the catechism, quote, "The church does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence." What our tradition tells you is entitled to, calls upon, demands upon, your conscience the same level of affection and reverence that you give to the books of the Bible. That's what that says and means. Now, look. As I was preparing this, this stuff makes me angry, quite frankly, because it is such a travesty and in such a denial of what the Scriptures say. You know, Jeremiah said, "Thy words were found, and I ate them." It was either Jeremiah or Job. There's two verses that I have in my mind. "Thy words were found, and I ate them. And Thy words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart, for I have been called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts." And when you love the Word of God like that, and you read things like this, there is a sense of righteous indignation that rises up against this falsehood and this attack on the sufficiency of Scripture.

So, they say you must accept our tradition with the same reverence that you do the Bible. Here's another quote. Paragraph 95 of the catechism says, "It is clear that sacred tradition, sacred Scripture, and the magisterium of the church are so connected that one of them cannot stand without the others. Working together under the action of the one Holy Spirit, they all contribute effectively to the salvation of souls." So, on the one hand, Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:15, "Scriptures are sufficient to give you the knowledge that leads to salvation in Christ Jesus." Coming hundreds, centuries of years later, the Catholic Church says, "No, our sacred tradition and our magisterium contribute effectively to the salvation of souls." I didn't include this in the final version. There is a paragraph in their statement

where they say that the church is the mother of all who believe. You don't believe in Christ unless you come through the Catholic Church. And so, they say, in plain language, "Sacred tradition and the magisterium of the church contribute effectively to the salvation of souls." That's a direct quote.

What does their tradition teach? Salvation by baptism. Seven sacraments. Transubstantiation in communion, the idea that the elements, the bread and wine, become the literal body and blood of Christ. Confession of sins to a priest. The idea of purgatory. The authority of the Pope, and an unbiblical view of Mary, and that's just for starters. There's none of that in the 66 books of the Bible. And yet, they teach that all of those things are necessary for salvation. And the reason that we get animated about this, and the reason that we have to refute that from Scripture and deal with this directly, is that they bind men's conscience under these falsehoods, under these things that they have made up, and they lead people into a broad road that leads to destruction. As we said last time, 1.2 billion Catholics in the world by the 2009 census produced by the Vatican. That's a lot of souls believing a lot of falsehood for an eternal damnation for a very long eternity. We would be unfaithful to Christ if we didn't call this out and condemn it for the falsehood that it is.

They piled these things up on the consciences of men and make them prerequisites to salvation. Their tradition denies the clear teaching of the Bible. Inevitably, whether it's Catholic tradition, or charismatic revelations, or something else, whenever you start to add revelation to the Bible, you put the Bible in the backseat, and the new revelation becomes that which governs the interpretation of everything that God set forth in His Word. But the truth of the matter, beloved, is that the Bible judges tradition. It's not that tradition judges the Bible. The Bible will not share its throne of authority with anyone or with anything. Now, some clear verses on this. I think there's one passage in particular that will make this really evident to you, but for now turn to the Gospel of Mark chapter 7. In many ways, the Catholic view of tradition is similar to what the Pharisees did in the first century, adding their oral teaching around the written Word of God. And in Mark chapter 7 beginning in verse 1 you see that, "The Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered around Him when they had come from Jerusalem, and had seen that some of His disciples were eating their bread with impure hands, that is, unwashed. For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thus observing the traditions of the elders." Drop down to verse 5. "The Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, 'Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?' And He said to them, 'Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men. Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men.'" And look at verse 13. You invalidate "the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that." That condemnation of the Pharisees applies with equal force to the tradition of the Catholic Church today. They add to the Word of God with their tradition. It contradicts and obscures the commandments of God, and it's condemned. It is a falsehood.

Turn over to the book of Colossians chapter 2. Scripture warns us about things like this. You know, the longer we go through ministry and life together here at Truth Community, you just see how alive the Scripture is. You see things jumping off the pages in Scripture and saying, "Wow! That's exactly what we're facing today." This is not a dead book from 2,000 years ago. It's the living authority for what we do today, and what we believe, and how we interpret the world around us. Colossians chapter 2 verse 8. "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form."

You know, one thing that I'll say, and those of you that have traveled overseas would testify to this, in America we see a very sanitized version of the Roman Catholic Church. And it's obviously different from evangelicalism, but it's toned greatly down. If you travel in Europe or in other parts of the world, you'll see things that will absolutely sicken you. You'll see things that will absolutely sicken you. When I was in Lebanon in 2012 last year, a little over year ago on February, there was a five story painting of a cross with someone on it. And it wasn't Christ. It was Mary. They proliferate these pictures of Mary on the cross being the one who is the Redeemer for our sins. You travel in Italy, and you see statues of Mary on street corners. It's just pagan idolatry and superstition. No better than what you see in a Buddhist place. I just kind of throw that out there to let you know that to really be able to see the evil and the wickedness of this, you have to really go outside the borders of our country to be able to see where it's unrestrained by a solid evangelical tradition of a couple of hundred years that acts as a restraint on it. And there's more that I could say about that, but you know, that's enough for that. That was a tangent that I just played on you.

But here's what I want you to see in terms of talking about the tradition. And they view this tradition as the oral tradition that the apostles passed down that are in addition to the written Word, and, therefore, it has an authority that is parallel. "There's one source and two streams flowing from the source," they say. "The written Word and the oral word. And it's this oral word that gives rise to our tradition," they would say. Well, Scripture shows us that, even in the time of the apostles, oral tradition was completely unreliable. It teaches us that you can't trust oral tradition, even when the apostles are present, let alone when they're gone. Look at the Gospel of John chapter 21. John 21. You remember the story. Jesus was resurrected. He had restored Peter three times to counteract the three denials that Peter made prior to His crucifixion. Great first pope you have there, Catholic Church. In verse 18 Jesus tells Peter that he's going to suffer a martyr's death. He says, "When you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go." Verse 19. "Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, 'Follow Me!' " And so, Jesus had given Peter a prophetic preview of what his life was going to be like. It was going to end in martyrdom. And then he says, "You're going to die for your faith. Now, follow me." Well, Peter in verse 20 had some questions about that. And this is all related to our question about their oral tradition, okay? So just stay with me here. "Peter," verse 20, "turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; the one who also had leaned back on His bosom at the supper and said,

'Lord, who is the one who betrays You?'" a reference to the apostle John. So you got Peter and John. John's a few steps behind him, or whatever, and "Peter seeing him said to Jesus, 'Lord, and what about this man?'" What about John. You told me me that I'm going to die, now what about him? What's going to happen to him?" Jesus said to him, 'If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow Me!'" And so, Jesus says, "Peter, that's none of your business. Even if I wanted John to stay until I return, that's none of your business. You have the life to live that I've appointed to you. Now, follow me in it, and let me lead my other disciples as I see fit."

Now, watch this. Verse 23. "Therefore this saying went out among the brethren that that disciple would not die." They took this statement of Christ and twisted it and perverted it and said, "John is not going to die." This was the development, this was the first strand of oral tradition, and they got it completely wrong. Based on a word from Christ with the apostle still there, they completely twisted it and misunderstood what Jesus was saying. Look at what it says there in verse 23. "Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but only, 'If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?'" You see, tradition, oral teaching, was unreliable, even when Christ said it. And what I mean by that, the problem isn't with what Christ said, but what people did with it. The apostles were still living. The Apostle John was living when he wrote this conclusion to the Gospel of John, and he's recording for us the fact that there was an unreliable oral tradition circulating around about the apostles while he was still alive.

Now, if it can happen under those most favorable circumstances, what do you think is going to happen over the accumulation of 20 centuries of fabrications being added, and faulty memories, and people who have agendas, who want certain truths to be established, so that they have more power or more prestige? What do you think is going to happen with that? You know, you're familiar with the telephone game, right? Where you whisper something into someone's ear, and they pass it along, and they pass it along. You know the outcome of that. The reason people play that game is to show that you can't trust oral repetition of truth. And yet, an entire system of religion is based on the fact that that is authoritative, sure, reliable testimony to what God intends for your salvation. This is a joke. This is an unspeakable fraud.

Now, Catholics like to point to a passage in the Scriptures to support their position. Look at 2 Thessalonians in the Pauline epistles. 2 Thessalonians. And as we said last time, Catholics will point to verses with no regard to context, as if they establish the truthfulness of everything that they stood for. 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 verse 15. Paul, writing to Thessalonica, said, "Brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us." Now, understand something: 1 and 2 Thessalonians were the first letters that the Apostle Paul wrote. He was still in the process of his ministry. It would be another almost 15 to 20 years before he would die. The New Testament Canon is still being written. It is still being developed when Paul said this. And he says, and he's referring them to things that he had taught them himself. This is no evidence for somebody to come 2,000 years later and say that what Paul meant by his traditions is the same equivalent thing as what we, as Catholics,

mean now 2,000 years later. That's ridiculous! That's a total perversion of context and the meaning of language to say such a thing.

This is a transitional statement that Paul is making here. It's referring to what the Thessalonians had heard directly from the apostles. It was meant to tide them over, as it were, until the New Testament was completed. It was not an authorization for a totally unbiblical and fraudulent falsehoods to be established as parallel to and superseding the written Word of God. We just have to call a spade a spade here and be clear and direct about it. This verse has nothing to do with Catholic tradition which denies the written Word of God, which makes the church the mother of salvation, which teaches salvation by works. There's nothing like that in the written Word of God. Let me remind you, turn over to the book of Galatians, of what Paul said. Galatians chapter 1 where Paul said, "If we," Galatians chapter 1 verse 8, "if we or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a Gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a Gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!" There is no question. The Catholic tradition teaches a Gospel that is contrary to that which is recorded in the 27 books of the New Testament. They cannot claim 2 Thessalonians 2:15 as justification for a whole infrastructure of lies that contradicts the Gospel revealed in the written Word of God. You cannot do that. That is not what Scripture teaches. And so, we believe in the principle of Sola Scriptura, by Scripture alone we judge these things. We believe that because of the passages that we looked at. Psalm 19, 2 Timothy 3, and others. How do Catholics deny it? They deny it with their tradition which they give equal authority to the Word of God with. And so, we've seen that.

Now, there's a second way that they deny the sufficiency of Scripture. It's not just with their tradition. They deny the sufficiency of Scripture with their magisterium. Their magisterium. M-a-g-i-s-t-e-r-i-u-m. Now, follow me here. This is a pretty short point. Actually, it's not a short point. It's longer than I remember. This is a long point. So, you still stay with me, okay? The teaching authority of Catholicism resides in their bishops and with the Pope. And they call that their magisterium. It's from a Latin word that means "master." Here's what they say about their magisterium, the small circle of bishops who along with the Pope have their teaching authority, okay? Paragraph 85 of their catechism. And I quote, "The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of tradition." Stop there. End quote there for a second. When they talk about the Word of God, they don't mean what we mean by that. When we say the Word of God, we mean the bound book of 66 books that are in our laps that we call the Bible. Well, they mean that, but they also include a lot of other stuff with that. They include their tradition along with that. And so, they say the Word of God has two parts. The written Word of God, which we would agree with, excluding their Apocrypha, which I'll come to. The written Word of God and their oral tradition. And so, when they say the Word of God, they mean something different than what you and I mean when we say that. Let me start over. "This means that the task of interpretation has been entrusted to the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome." So, what they're saying is only these bishops can properly interpret the Word of God. No one else can.

Paragraph 100 of their catechism saying virtually the same thing, "The task of interpreting the Word of God authentically has been entrusted solely to the magisterium of the church. That is," they clarify what they mean for it, "that is to the Pope and to the bishops in communion with him." Did you hear that? "The Word of God," they say, "is found both in the written pages of Scripture and in Catholic tradition, and, what is more, only Catholic leadership can determine what's true." And so, you have the written Word of God. You have the oral word of God, and over it is this small little collection of men whose center of power is in Italy. We will tell you what all of this means, and we only can tell you what it means. They claim exclusive authority over everything and preclude questions.

Listen to this. Look, if this doesn't somewhere start to make you a little bit angry, wake up! Quote, paragraph 119 of the Catholic catechism, "Interpreting Scripture is ultimately the judgment of the church." Paragraph 2,039 of the Catholic catechism. This one singed my hair it made me so angry. Listen to this. "Personal conscience and reason should not be set in opposition to the moral law or the magisterium of the church." They claim authority over your conscience. They claim authority over reason. They say, "You can't oppose us with reason or with personal conscience. Just submit." But, beloved, their arrogant boast and their false assertions of authority are so clearly contradicted by Scripture that you can reject it out of hand without fear of incurring the displeasure of God.

Let me take you to a familiar verse for you. Acts chapter 17 verse 11. Acts 17 verse 11. Catholics say, "The truth can only be determined by their magisterium." That's not what the Bible says. That's not what the Bible illustrates for us. Look at Acts 17 verse 10. "The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews." They started teaching. "Now these were more noble-minded," those Jews in Berea were more noble minded, "than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." An apostle came into their midst and started teaching them, and they received it, and they eagerly listened to it, but it wasn't a blind submission to even what an apostle was saying to them. They said, "Let's compare that with what we know from Scripture. Let's look at Scripture and see if what they're saying agrees with what the Bible says. Oh, it agrees. It must be true." But what you have to see is that the authority to judge these things was exercised by those who were hearing it. They had the privilege and the prerogative, and Scripture affirms the fact that they compared what they were hearing with Scripture. Catholicism specifically prohibits that.

And so, you know, our Pope and his circle of cronies will tell you what's true. You know what? That's not the way it worked out in the New Testament. I think we looked at this passage last week when we were talking about the Pope. Go to Galatians chapter 2 verse 11. Galatians chapter 2 verse 11. "When Peter came to Antioch, I," that is the Apostle Paul, "opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned." Verse 14. "I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the Gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, 'If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you

compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?' " Peter was contradicting the Gospel with his conduct, and Paul rebuked him. That's their first Pope being rebuked. Even in the Scriptures you see an utter contradiction of the authority that they assert and claim for themselves.

Listen to the Gospel of John. John chapter 20. Remember, John chapter 20, you can turn there, and as you're turning there, I'll remind you that what we're addressing in this portion of the message right now is the claims of the authority of their magisterium, their circle of bishops, or the pope and his cronies, as I like to call him. John chapter 20 verse 30 and 31. Again, familiar passage. You just need to see it in a fresh context to understand why it applies here. John has written his Gospel. He's shown the signs of Christ. He's spoken of the resurrection. He's quoted Thomas's great confession, "My Lord and my God." And in verse 30 he said, "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." This is a Gospel written to common, ordinary people to explain things in their language. The New Testament was written in koine Greek. That's simply a term that means "the common Greek." It was written in the language of the common man of the street. You can compare and find in the New Testament the words that were used in ordinary transactions, in love letters, in business transactions. This was just the common Greek that it was written in. And what I want you to see from this passage is that what John has done here. He said, "I wrote these things so that you would read them, that you would believe, and that you would have eternal life." A direct connection between the reader and the Word, nothing interjected in between. There's no room for a church to put itself between the Word and the reader and say, "You must get it from us, or you cannot get it at all." This is a satanic intervention into the power and the work of the Word of God in the individual mind and conscience of the one who would read and believe. Read, believe, and have eternal life. The Catholic Church is not inserted in between any of those steps.

Lorraine Bednar, who again I'll remind you, is a man, who wrote such a helpful book about Roman Catholicism some 55 years ago or so. He said this. He said, "Our Lord and the New Testament writers referred to Scripture as authoritative and final. Never once did they say or imply that extra scriptural tradition was needed to supplement Scripture, or that any man or group of men was authorized to give authoritative interpretations of Scripture." That's right. That's right. There's nothing of that in the Bible. This is all a colossal fraud. It is a colossal fraud by men with an agenda to preserve their power and to subjugate innocent, trusting people to their authority in darkness. There's just no other way to put it.

Now, third point under this question of, "How do they deny the sufficiency of Scripture?" What about the Apocrypha? What about the Apocrypha? And I'll deal with this pretty quickly. If you look at a Catholic Bible, and it's not a bad thing if you're going to interact with these issues to have a Catholic Bible handy. You'll see that in a moment. If you look at a Catholic Bible, you'll find seven additional books in the Old Testament along with long sections in the book of Esther and the book of Daniel that are not in your real Bible.

Those additions are called the Apocrypha. A word which means "hidden things." And those books of the Apocrypha were written between about 400 BC and the time of the coming of Christ. And so, in that what we call the Intertestamental Period between the 400 years between the Old Testament and the New Testament, that's where these apocryphal books were written. Now, even a minimal discussion of the Apocrypha is beyond the scope of what we have time for tonight. I'm already at the end of my time frame, but I just want to give you a few bullet points, and if you want these in writing, ask me for my notes. I'll be happy to give them to you. Here are a few reasons why we reject the Apocrypha. And the reason that we're covering it is this: is that Catholics, I'm sure you've had Catholics ask you this if you've interacted with them at all, Catholics will say, "Why do you leave out the Apocrypha? Why do you leave out those books from the Bible?" That's the wrong question altogether and shows a complete misunderstanding of the issue. The right question is, "Why did you add them to the real Bible?" And here's some reasons why we reject the Apocrypha. And I'll just go through these real quickly. Number one, the books of the Apocrypha do not claim the inspiration of God. They don't present themselves as being the inspired Word of God. There's not that authoritative, "Thus saith the Lord." There's not "the Lord spoke," and "I wrote" dimension to them. Secondly, and so the Apocrypha doesn't even present itself as inspired. Secondly, the Jews who lived in the land of Palestine never accepted the Apocrypha as inspired Scripture. Thirdly, our Lord Jesus Christ and the New Testament writers do not quote the Apocrypha like they do the rest of the Old Testament. If that was authoritative Scripture, they would've drawn upon it and used it like they did the rest of the Old Testament. They didn't do that. Fourthly, the early church as a whole rejected the Apocrypha as being inspired Scripture. So you see, there's a chronological progression here. When the Apocrypha was written, it didn't claim inspiration. The Jews who lived in Palestine at the time never accepted them as Scripture. Christ and the subsequent New Testament writers didn't quote them like they did the inspired Old Testament. After them, the early church as a whole rejected the Apocrypha. Get this. Even the Roman Catholic Church did not declare the Apocrypha to be inspired Scripture until the Council of Trent in 1546. Are you kidding me? 2,000 years after the fact you're going to claim that this is inspired Scripture? You're obviously playing a game here of some kind. Well, what was the game in the 16th century? The game was that the Catholic Church was being decimated by the biblical arguments of the Reformation, and so they had to pull in something else to buttress their assertions. And so, long after the fact, declare books to be Scripture, and then use those as a basis to refute the arguments of the reformers. Shameful! Has nothing to do with the pursuit of truth and everything to do about the preservation of power. Sixthly, the Apocrypha contains numerous errors of fact and history which are inconsistent with being the inerrant Word of God. Lorraine Bednar documents those at pages 84 and 85 of his book. Finally, I'm giving you seven reasons, and then I'm going to quote. I'll give you a quotation. Finally, Jewish scholars of the first century would affirm a book as being inspired Scripture, looking at their own writings, only if it was available in the original Hebrew. The Apocrypha is not available in Hebrew. Some of it was written in Greek, and, if it was written in Hebrew, there are no manuscripts of it in Hebrew. So, they rejected it and said, "That's a mark of it not being truly from God, because the underlying Hebrew, which it claims to have been written in, is not available,

and, therefore, cannot be verified." That's a lot of reasons to properly exclude it from the Scripture.

Now, here's a fun point. I love stuff like this. Even the Apocrypha recognizes its own inferiority. I love this. This is a quote from the New American Bible which is the Bible version approved by the Roman Catholic Church. Now, because it's the Roman Catholic Bible, it has the Apocrypha in it. You can turn to 2 Maccabees, one of the books of the Apocrypha, chapter 15 verses 37 and 38 where the writer of the Apocrypha says this. Or the writer of 2 Maccabees, okay? But it's representative of the whole group of books in the Apocrypha. What did he say about his own writings that they claim are inspired by God and of equal authority with the writings of Moses and the writings of Paul? Come on! What did he say? "I will bring my own story to an end. If it is well written and to the point, that is what I wanted. If it is poorly done and mediocre, that is the best I could do." Are you kidding me? Does that sound like an authoritative word from God to you? Please answer me. Does that sound like an authoritative word from God to you? Does that sound like someone, don't start, don't do too much, because you'll really get me going. I'm already animated as it is. Does that sound like someone saying, "Thus saith the Lord?" Does that sound like one of the prophets? Does that sound like a word from the Christ who drove the Pharisees out of the temple with a whip? It's not. You know why it doesn't sound like an inspired word of God? It's because it's not.

Beloved, what I want you to see, and what more than anything else, if you don't walk away with any other impression from this tonight than this, I want you to walk away understanding and remembering this: through their catechism, through their Apocrypha, through their own words, this doesn't meet the test. Their own words condemn them when compared to the Scriptures. It's not a close call. And so, they deny the sufficiency of Scripture through their tradition, through their magisterium, and through the Apocrypha.

Now, fourth point, and this has a clever title. Cheryl, you'll want to write this down. Summary. Yeah, okay. That's as good as it gets. Just by way of summary, in 1 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 6, you don't have to turn there. It's okay if you do, but you don't have to. 1 Corinthians 4 verse 6. The Apostle Paul says, "these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that," here's what Paul said, "in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other." Paul says, "Don't go beyond what is written." Catholics glory in that. This whole worldwide conglomeration, this whole worldwide criminal syndicate is based on a foundation that goes beyond what is written. And remember, remember, I'm speaking and addressing my sharp language to the core of their authority, not the individual Catholics. I understand that individual Catholics are just duped and deceived by this stuff and haven't heard anything better. It's all they know. So, we're not talking about individual Catholics. We're talking about that corrupt core of authority that's been perpetuating this on the innocent souls of men for centuries. That's who this is directed against. Understand that this is exactly what they do. They go beyond what is written. They teach oral tradition. They tell people, "Don't question us. There's a small circle of us to whom the interpretation of the things of God exclusively belong.

We've added these apocryphal books. Don't talk. Don't worry about your conscience. Don't worry about reason. Just submit."

Well listen, you see in 1 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 6 the outworking of what Paul said. Paul said, "Don't go beyond what is written, so that you won't become arrogant in behalf of one against the other." What could be more arrogant than saying the truth of God has been exclusively deposited to my care, and your conscience can't contradict it? You can't question me. I will tell you what it means, and there is no other appeal. What could be more arrogant than that? This is why Scripture tells us, this is why Scripture commends us to the four corners of the Bible. Why are we Protestants? I ended the message on the papacy this way. Why are we Protestants? Like the papacy, this is not a close issue. This is not debatable. This isn't flip a coin, because it's really a tough call. This is clear.

Number one, we are Protestants, because we have examined the Scriptures, and we affirm the principle of Sola Scriptura. Secondly, we are Protestants, because we have examined Catholic tradition, the Catholic magisterium, and the Apocrypha, and we reject them, because they violate Sola Scriptura. Thirdly, we are Protestants, because we base our authority on the Bible, not the Vatican. We start with Scripture, and we end with Scripture. We don't claim infallibility for our own teaching. "The spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets," Scriptures say. I'm not claiming the prophetic office. I'm just saying that the teaching in a properly Protestant church is always subject to the Scripture and subject to correction by the Scripture. The confessions that we hold we believe to be correct and accurate statements of biblical theology, but they are always subordinate to the Words of the Scripture. Scripture alone. That is why we're Protestants. Amen?

Look, it's a joy to study these things together, and it's a joy to prepare them and to do this work for you. Let's pray together as we close, okay? God bless you.

Father, we just commend these things to You, and we pray, Father, that You would give us opportunity to use this in the advance and the battle for Your kingdom and the battle for Your word. Father, we don't want to just gather around these things and congratulate ourselves for believing the right things, or even being just simply content in the fact that You've led us out of darkness into the light ourselves. Father, we want these things to be profitable and useful in our witness to Catholics, and that it would be useful for those who are still in darkness, Father, to awaken them to the light. And so, we pray that You would use it to that end.

Father, I thank You for these men and women, and these precious children that are in our midst. Father, I thank you for their love for Your Word. Lord, I haven't had to persuade them to love Your Word or to kneel before its authority. Father, You've already done that work in their heart, and I thank You that as brothers and sisters in Christ we can gather together around Your Word and be deepened and strengthened in what it teaches us about the authority of Your Word. So, Father, we pray. We know that we live in an area with a very strong Catholic influence. We're mindful that our neighbors and family members, in many cases, are Catholics and believe the very opposite of the things that we've said. Father, help us, that we would not be boastful or arrogant, but that with

gentleness and reverence we would handle these things before family, before friends, before neighbors and coworkers. That we would handle these in a way, and that You would use us as instruments, and use this teaching as an instrument in Your hands to advance your kingdom. Father some of us have even been delivered and saved out of Catholicism. We know the power of Your Word, and we just want to see You extend and exercise that power in the behalf of those that we know who are still in that system.

And Father, we thank You that eternity will right the wrongs of time, the false assertions of authority, the corruption that has marked the leadership of the Catholic Church for so very long. Father, it's not been lost on You. You know about it, and You will deal with it in Your way and in Your time, and when the records of eternity are displayed for all to see. You will be shown to have dealt truthfully and righteously with those who arrogantly raise themselves up against what You said in Your Word. And so, we rest in You. We trust in You, and we thank You for our salvation. Father, keep us as men and women of one Book, never to go beyond it, but to love and devote ourselves to its truth as long as You give us breath. Thank You for the opportunity to meet and fellowship together like this. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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