

## ***Sola Scriptura***

Introduction: *Sola Scriptura* is the doctrine that the Bible contains all the doctrines needed for salvation. Catholics, Mormons, and Jehovah's Witnesses all declare that the Bible is insufficient in doctrine, and that the doctrines presented are too complicated for ordinary people to understand. They also declare that the scriptures specifically state that certain things have been left out.

1. What does John 21:25 say about essential elements of our faith?
2. What does 2 Peter 3:16 say about our capability to understand the scriptures?
3. Read 2 Tim 3:16-17. Compare this to the texts just discussed. What can be said from this text about our ability to understand scripture?

Now that we have considered texts in isolation, let us look at CONTEXT. It is possible to take single texts out of context and prove almost anything. In order to gain a proper understanding of a teaching, we need to look at more than the simple words in a sentence. We need to look at the setting of that sentence, in both cultural and in textual contexts. For the next section, read 2 Peter 3:14-18.

4. What does the first word of verse 14 tell us about Peter's context?
5. What conclusions may we properly draw from this passage about the understandability of scripture?
6. Does this text say that it is impossible for us to understand the scriptures without an infallible interpreter?
7. Does this text say anything about whether we should study alone or together?
8. Read Acts 17:10-12. What activity of the Jews in Berea was regarded as praiseworthy? Was it done alone or together?
9. What source material did the Bereans use for their study?

Let us now return to the key text for the issue of *sola scriptura*. Read 2 Timothy 3:14-16.

10. What is the context of this statement? (See verses 12-13)
11. What sources was Paul commending to Timothy as being worthy of consideration? (See also Luke 24:44)
12. What does verse 15 say about the sufficiency of the "sacred writings"? (See also 2 Peter 1:3, Jude 3)
13. Does verse 15 say that the scriptures will teach us everything about God? (See 1 Cor 13:9-12)

14. What do the apostles say about what would happen to the message? 1 Timothy 4:1-3, 1 John 2:18-19, Acts 20:29-30

15. What guidance are we given as to how to avoid corruption of the message? 1 Corinthians 15:1-2, 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22, Hebrews 3:6,14; 4:14; 10:23, Revelation 2:25

16. How are we to identify when corruption has taken place? Is 8:20, 1 John 4:1, Deuteronomy 13:1-4, Deuteronomy 18:21-22, Matthew 7:15-16, 1 Cor 13:5, 1 Thessalonians 5:21, Revelation 2:2

**Challenge 1:** 2 Timothy 3:14-15 tells us that the “sacred writings” are able to give us wisdom for salvation in Jesus Christ. These writings are what we now call the Old Testament. Are there any doctrines needed for salvation which appear ONLY in the New Testament?

**Challenge 2:** Is any knowledge of Bible doctrines required for salvation? (See Psalm 19:1-2, Romans 1:20, Luke 23:39-43)

Resources:

The Roman Catholic Controversy, James R. White, Bethany House Publishers, 1996

How We Got the Bible, Neil R. Lightfoot, Baker Book House, 1988

The Canon of Scripture, F.F. Bruce, InterVarsity Press, 1988

Web Resources:

The Bible Light HomePage, <http://www.aloha.net/~mikesch>

The Baptized Way (Baptists) <http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/7626/index.html>

and <http://www.sqbcsv.org/solascrp.htm>

For the Roman Catholic view see:

Catholic Answers, <http://www.gate.net/~catholic>

BEWARE: Mario Derksen is a very good scholar. You must be well founded to see his errors.