

1

General (Natural) Revelation

- Both Protestantism and Roman Catholicism affirm that God's existence can be known by natural revelation.
- Both agree that natural revelation alone is insufficient for a personal knowledge of God and for salvation.
- Differences exist on the extent and kind of knowledge that can be known about God through natural revelation.
 - In the Protestant view, total depravity prevents man from rightly understanding his sinful condition and concluding the need and method for salvation from natural revelation
 - In the Catholic view, God can "be known by all men with ease and firm certainty and without contamination of error" – Vatican II *Dei Verbum* 6

2

Special (Divine) Revelation

- God's self-revelation is a divine gift which is given to man by a loving God for the purpose of salvation.
- Divine revelation is progressive in nature.
- Jesus Christ is the full and final revelation of God to man. No further *public* revelation is to be expected until Christ returns
- Divine revelation includes God's words and actions.
 - Thus says the Lord
 - The plagues, parting the red sea, the incarnation
- Divine revelation includes both written and spoken words

3

Scripture + Tradition

- Catholics hold that God communicates to his people both “orally” in the Traditions of the church and “in writing” through Holy Scripture.
- Traditions are the teachings of the apostles the Bishops and the Popes of the Church

4

“Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture are bound closely together and communicate one with the other. For both of them, flowing out of the same divine well-spring, come together in some fashion to form one thing and move toward the same goal.”

Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) 80

5

Scripture + Tradition

- Catholics hold that God communicates to his people both “orally” in the Traditions of the church and “in writing” through Holy Scripture.
- Traditions are the teachings of the Bishops of the Church.
- Beginning with Christ, teachings (Traditions) were passed to the apostles and in turn handed down through the ages to the bishops of the church who occasionally proclaim it as Church doctrine. (Ex. Immaculate conception and bodily Assumption of Mary – Pope Pius IX 1854)

6

Protestant Response – *Sola Scriptura*

- Weak biblical support
 - John 16:12 – “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now”
 - The Catholic interpretation of this passage misses the point!
 - They still did not fully grasp Jesus’ identity and work.
 - It wasn’t until after His death, burial and resurrection that they grasped (the Holy Spirit instructed and reminded them) His accomplished work and their commission into the world.
 - To understand John 16:12 in this way implies that there would still be significant ignorance requiring ongoing revelation beyond the close of the canon of Scripture.

7

Protestant Response – *Sola Scriptura*

- Weak Historical Support
 - When Paul tells the Thessalonians to “stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us either spoken word or by our letter” he was not saying that the oral and written were two different revelations but simply two delivery systems.
 - There was definitely an oral transmission of the gospel (tradition) that ensured a right understanding of Scripture and underscored sound doctrine.
 - The standard of faith or canon of truth was a doctrinal tradition that protected the Church from heresies that assailed her during the first few hundred years.

8

We have learned from none others the plan of our salvation, than from those through whom the gospel has come down to us, which they did *at one* time proclaim in public, and, at a later period, by the will of God, handed down to us in the Scriptures, to be the ground and pillar of our faith. For it is unlawful to assert that they preached before they possessed perfect knowledge, as some do even venture to say, boasting themselves as improvers of the apostles. For, after our Lord rose from the dead, [the apostles] were invested with power from on high when the Holy Spirit came down [upon them], were filled from all [his gifts], and had perfect knowledge: they departed to the ends of the earth, preaching the glad tidings of the good things [sent] from God to us.

Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.1.1 (AD 180)

9

We have learned from none others the plan of our salvation, than from those through whom the gospel has come down to us, which they did at one time proclaim in public, and, at a later period, by the will of God, handed down to us in the Scriptures, to be the ground and pillar of our faith. For it is unlawful to assert that they preached before they possessed perfect knowledge, as some do even venture to say, boasting themselves as improvers of the apostles. For, after our Lord rose from the dead, [the apostles] were invested with power from on high when the Holy Spirit came down [upon them], were filled from all [his gifts], and had perfect knowledge: they departed to the ends of the earth, preaching the glad tidings of the good things [sent] from God to us.

Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.1.1

10

We have learned from none others the plan of our salvation, than from those through whom the gospel has come down to us, which they did at one time proclaim in public, and, at a later period, by the will of God, handed down to us in the Scriptures, to be the ground and pillar of our faith. For it is unlawful to assert that they preached before they possessed perfect knowledge, as some do even venture to say, boasting themselves as improvers of the apostles. For, after our Lord rose from the dead, [the apostles] were invested with power from on high when the Holy Spirit came down [upon them], were filled from all [his gifts], and had perfect knowledge: they departed to the ends of the earth, preaching the glad tidings of the good things [sent] from God to us.

Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.1.1

11

Theology properly uses the authority of the canonical Scriptures as an incontrovertible proof, and the authority of the the doctors of the church as one that may properly be used, yet merely as probable. For our faith rests upon the revelation made to the apostles and the prophets who wrote the canonical books and not on the revelations (if any such there are) made to other doctors.

Thomas Aquinas 13th c.

12

Protestant Response – *Sola Scriptura*

- Weak Historical Support
 - It wasn't until the 14th century that leaders in the RCC began to make new claims about Tradition and then formalize them into official doctrine and dogma.
 - Key passage: 2 Timothy 3:16-17

13

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

14

Protestant Response – *Sola Scriptura*

- The Church has no Grounds for claiming Infallibility
 - To equate Scripture and Tradition as equal and inerrant, requires trust in the Church as inerrant.
 - This claim to infallibility was late in coming (14th c.) when the church was struggling to maintain sociopolitical authority and control.
 - Based on misinterpretation of Eph.5:26-27 and 1 Tim 3:15

15

Protestant Response – *Sola Scriptura*

- The Church has no Grounds for claiming Infallibility
 - John Calvin, commenting on Eph 5:26-27, “teaches what Christ does each day in the church rather than what he has already accomplished.”
 - The church (which is the assembly of all believers) has not yet attained full sanctification
 - Regarding 1 Tim 3:15, Calvin again comments, “the church is the ground and pillar of truth not because it’s infallible but because it is the ‘faithful custodian’ of the truth of God’s word.”

16

“Is Sola Scriptura in the Bible?”

- Sola Scriptura never meant the rejection of all other authority or traditions. Scripture is the ultimate authority upon which traditions and creeds are based. The reformation principle is *sola scriptura* not *nuda scriptura*.
- Peter Kreeft, a Catholic scholar, contends that no other Christian taught the principle of sola scriptura before Luther in the 16th c. – Not true
 - Athanasius 4th c.
 - Cyril of Jerusalem 4th c.
 - Vincent of Lerins 5th c.

17

“Is Sola Scriptura in the Bible?”

- Another objection by Kreeft: “The first generation church didn’t even have the New Testament”
 - The first generation church did have the Old Testament of which the apostle Paul states “you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God might be complete, equipped for every good work.” (2 Tim 3:15-17)

18

“Is Sola Scriptura in the Bible?”

- A third objection: “Scripture never teaches sola Scriptura *therefore* sola Scriptura is self-defeating”
 - Surely the Catholic church believes in doctrines that are not expressly taught in the scripture. For instance the Trinity.
 - It is not self defeating because sola Scriptura is developed from clear teachings in Scripture about the very nature of Scripture and divine revelation.

19

Inerrancy

- More agreement has historically existed between the RCC and Protestants regarding inerrancy.

20

Dei Verbum: The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation

“Therefore, since everything asserted by the inspired authors or sacred writers must be held to be asserted by the Holy Spirit, it follows that the books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching solidly, faithfully and without error that truth which God wanted to put into sacred writings *for the sake of salvation*.”

21

Inerrancy

- More agreement has historically existed between the RCC and Protestants regarding inerrancy.
- "It was actually Protestantism that led the way in undercutting belief in Scriptures inerrancy" - Gregg Allison *The Unfinished Reformation*
- Originally the RCC decried the liberal teaching out of Protestantism in the 17th and 18th centuries only to capitulate in the 20th century at Vatican II.

22

Interpretation

- In the RCC, official interpretation of Scripture is rendered by the Church's hierarchy

23

"The task of giving an interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Traditions, has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone."

Catechism of the Catholic Church 85

24

Interpretation

- In the RCC, official interpretation of Scripture is rendered by the Church's hierarchy
- The teaching office is composed of the Pope and the bishops of the Catholic church and is called the Magisterium
- When the Magisterium declares an interpretation or doctrine, it is binding on all Catholics.
- Three fold structure of authority – Scripture; Traditions; Magisterium

25

How are we to understand the word of God? Catholics respond, 'with dependence on, and in accordance with, the Magisterium's official interpretation.'

Gregg Allison and Chris Castaldo, *The Unfinished Reformation*

26

Protestant Response Regarding Interpretation

- There is no need for a Magisterium or "officially binding" interpretation.
- Protestants have always held to the clear meaning (perspicuity) of Scripture.
- Passages have been wrongly interpreted or doctrines invented by the infallible Magisterium that directly conflict with Scripture.

27

Protestant Response Regarding Interpretation

- OT and NT examples of Scripture being read and understood without the need of an official interpretation.
 - Deut. 31:11
 - Nehemiah 8
 - Colossians 4:16
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:27

28

Interpretive Free-For-All?

- Presumption of Clarity and Guidance by the Holy Spirit
- Free to interpret the Bible, not misinterpret the Bible.

29

Interpretive Free-For-All?

- Presumption of Clarity and Guidance by the Holy Spirit
- Free to interpret the Bible, not misinterpret the Bible.
- Rules of interpretation apply to Scripture as with any work of antiquity.
 - Type of literature - historical narrative, poem, gospel or letter.
 - Grammatical - interpretation should pay close attention to grammar and language
 - Historical Context - cultural background, author, original recipients; purpose for the writing
 - Redemptive Historical Context - relation to biblical covenants and progressive revelation.
- Biblical responsibility of elders/pastors and gifted teachers - Eph. 4

30

Apocrypha

- Eleven writings not found in the Protestant Bible
- Seven full books accepted by the RCC
 - Book of Wisdom (The Wisdom of Solomon c. 30BC)
 - Sirach (Ecclesiasticus 132 B.C.)
 - Tobit (c. 200 B.C.)
 - Judith (c.150 B.C.)
 - 1-2 Maccabees (c.110 B.C. - 70 B.C.)
 - Baruch (c. 150 - 50 B.C.)

31

Apocrypha

- Four partial books added to OT Canonical books
 - Additions to Esther (140 - 130 B.C.)
 - Prayer of Azariah (2nd or 1st Century B.C.) *Daniel 3:24-90*
 - Susanna (2nd or 1st century B.C.) *Daniel 13*
 - Bel and the Dragon (c. 100 B.C.) *Daniel 14*

32

Hebrew to Greek

- The Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek for the Jews of the Diaspora 250 - 150 B.C. - Septuagint LXX
- It gradually became the popular translation of the Hebrew Scriptures
- Gentile converts to Christianity could not read Hebrew. This increased the usage of the LXX in Christian Church of the 1st Century.
- Copying of the Scriptures in Greek began to be done almost exclusively by Christian scribes.

33

Hebrew to Greek

- Works of antiquity were copied onto scrolls. Each book of the Hebrew canon had its own scroll.
 - Protective
 - Cumbersome

34



35

Hebrew to Greek

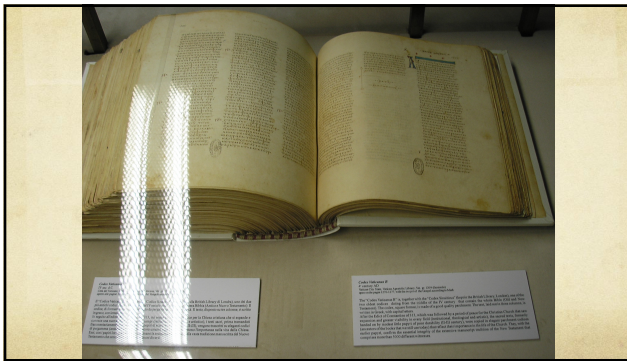
- Works of antiquity were copied onto scrolls. Each book of the Hebrew canon had its own scroll.
 - Protective
 - Cumbersome
- From the scroll to the bound leaf (codex)
 - Convenient
 - Efficient
 - Indiscriminant

36

Hebrew to Greek

- Works of antiquity were copied onto scrolls. Each book of the Hebrew canon had its own scroll.
 - Protective
 - Cumbersome
- From the scroll to the bound leaf (codex)
 - Convenient
 - Efficient
 - Indiscriminant
- Copyist began to produce bound works where the canon was placed next to non-canonical material.
- In time, the Church began to accept the non-canonical work as canonical authoritative works

37



38

Catholic Arguments

- The New Testament reflects the thought of the Apocrypha and even refers to events contained in it
- The New Testament quotes from the LXX, which contained the Apocrypha.
- Early church fathers quoted from the Apocrypha in public worship, and some accepted the books as canonical
- The Apocrypha appears in the Protestant Bible prior to the Council of Trent (1546 A.D.)

39

New Testament References

- There are absolutely no quotes from the Apocrypha in the NT; We never read “thus says the Lord,” “as it is written” or “the Scriptures say” connected to apocryphal writings.
- Catholics claim allusions from the Apocrypha but upon further investigation they are actual quotes from the Canonical books in the Septuagint.
 - Matt 4:4 is said to be an allusion to Wisdom of Solomon 16:26 but it is actually a direct quote from Deut. 8:3
 - Matt 4:15 appears to point to 1 Macc. 5:15 but is an actual quote from Isaiah 9:1-2

40

New Testament References

- Allusions to the Apocrypha do not affirm inspiration
 - Acts 17:28 – Paul is quoting a Greek secular writer
 - Titus 1:12 – Paul again quoting “a prophet of their own.” So are we to bring in all Cretan material as inspired?

41

Septuagint (LXX)

- The Greek translation of the Hebrew OT
- Not even a certainty that the LXX of the first century contained the Apocryphal writings. The earliest manuscripts of the LXX come from the 4th century A.D
- The RCC Bible (New American Bible) states about the Apocrypha:

“...[they are] religious books used by both Jews and Christians which were not included in the collection of inspired writings...[they were] introduced rather late into the collection of the Bible. Catholics call them deuterocanonical (second canon) books.” NAB, p. 413

42

Early Church Fathers

- Church fathers quoting or other wise using the Apocryphal works does not make the work canonical.
- There were some who regarded them highly and others who were vehemently opposed to their inclusion (Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Origen, and Jerome all opposed the apocryphal books.)

43

Early Church Fathers

- Augustine supported their canonicity, but his reasoning was erroneous. Inspiring though they may be, that is not the test for inclusion in the canon. Speaking of Maccabees he said,
 “These are to be held canonical, not by the Jews, but by the Church on account of the extreme and wonderful sufferings of certain martyrs.” –
 Augustine in *The City of God*

44

Early Church Fathers

- Even though Augustine supported the view of the canonicity of the Apocrypha, he also understood that this was not a view held by the whole Church
 “Now, in regard to the canonical Scriptures...he will judge according to the following standard: to prefer those that are received by all the catholic churches to those which some do not receive. Among those, again, which are not received by all, he will prefer such as have the sanction of the greater number and those of greater authority to such as are held by the smaller number and those of lesser authority.”

Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*

45

Protestant Bibles

- They were generally placed in another section because they were considered not canonical and of lesser authority.
- There was high regard among many as to their devotional value.
- Luther spoke out against the Apocrypha in 1543 and placed it at the back of his Bible.

46

Hebrew Canon

- Canon means “rule” or “standard” and refers to the list of inspired writings where a faith system develops its doctrine.
- The Palestinian Jewish Canon holds to 24 separate writings. (The same 39 we have in our OT Scriptures)
- Testimony from Early Jewish Authorities
 - Josephus (Early 1st Century) – Pharisee and Historian

47

“...we do not possess myriads of inconsistent books, conflicting with one another, but our books, those which are justly believed, are only 22...of these, five are the books of Moses, the prophets after Moses wrote the event of their own times in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God and precepts for the conduct of human life.”

Josephus, *Against Apion*

48

Hebrew Canon

- Canon means “rule” or “standard” and refers to the list of inspired writings where a faith system develops its doctrine.
- The Palestinian Jewish Canon holds to 24 separate writings. (The same 39 we have in our OT Scriptures)
- Testimony from Early Jewish Authorities
 - Josephus (Early 1st Century) – Pharisee and Historian
 - Philo (Early 1st Century) – Alexandrian Jewish Historian
 - Jerome (Late 4th Century) – First genuine Christian Hebrew Scholar – translated the Hebrew Scriptures into Latin (Vulgate)

49

Test for Canonicity

- The test for canonical authority is **not** *Christian Usage*
- The true test is *Propheticity*
 - True prophets were recognized immediately by the people of God
 - Their work was accepted and stored in a holy place
 - They were confirmed by miracles
 - They were confirmed by predictive prophecy coming to pass
- The Apocryphal works make no claim to prophetic authority nor to they receive any divine confirmation (4th Century B.C.)
- There are no predictive prophecies in the Apocrypha
- It is now in the RCC's canon because it was *infallibly* declared canonical by the Pope at The Council of Trent in 1546.

50

“The Synod...receives and venerates...all the books [including the Apocrypha] both of the Old and the New Testaments – seeing that one God is the Author of both...as having been dictated, either by Christ's own word of mouth or by the Holy Ghost...If anyone receives not as sacred and canonical the said books entire with all their parts, as they have been used to be read in the Catholic Church...let him be anathema”

Proclamation from the Council of Trent cited in Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, 2:81

51