

The Bible Alone?

by Sebastian R Fama

Suppose you were in the market for a boat. For your purposes you needed it to be able to carry a certain amount of weight and to cruise at a particular speed. You talk to two boat builders who both claim to have a superior design. Not being an expert yourself, you propose a test. Both boats would be loaded with the required weight and both would cruise by you at the desired speed.

The boat from company A goes first. It gets up to speed and cruises by you with relative ease. The boat from Company B goes next. It gets up to speed and immediately sinks. At this point the choice is clear, the boat from company A is the only boat that will fulfill your needs. This is not due to any ill intent by the designers from company B. No doubt they did their best. However, when put to the test, their design failed. This is not unusual in the realm of human activity. Only God is perfect.

We have two competing views for Church authority. The Catholic Church agrees with 1 Timothy 3:15 which proclaims that the Church is “the pillar and foundation of truth.” But our Protestant brothers and sisters claim that the Bible holds that position. They teach that the Bible is the sole rule of faith. However, such a doctrine cannot be found anywhere in Scripture.

It is true that 2 Timothy 3:16-17 tells us that Scripture is profitable for teaching, that the man of God may be complete. But there are no guarantees that any man will interpret it properly. In fact, 2 Peter 1:20 clearly states that Scripture is not a matter of one’s private interpretation. But privately interpret they did. And as a result, we have thousands of Protestant denominations all claiming authority from the Bible. And yet, all disagreeing with each other on some point. I think we can all agree that this was not the result Jesus prayed for in John 17:21.

The Bible can only make you complete, if it is interpreted properly. God gave us the New Testament through the Catholic Church. Thus, she is the Church mentioned in 1 Timothy 3:15. And that makes her the official interpreter. Supporting evidence would include the fact that her teachings have not changed in two thousand years. On the other hand, Protestantism changes continually.

The early Church understood how the truth is obtained and maintained. Irenaeus of Lyons wrote: “With that church [Rome], because of its superior origin, all the churches must agree” (*Against Heresies* 3:3:2 [A.D. 189])

So, we must reject the idea that the Bible alone is our authority because:

1. The Bible does not teach it.
2. The Early Church did not teach it.
3. It does not work.

And so, the Protestant boat has sunk into the depths of the ocean. But the Catholic boat continues to cruise effortlessly through the waves. And as Jesus said, you judge a tree by its fruit (Matthew 7:16).