

The Bible, Sole Rule of Faith?

by Sebastian R Fama

Protestants claim they do not need the Catholic Church as they have the Bible. The Bible, they claim, is their sole rule of faith. They further claim, the Church cannot be trusted, as it was corrupted when the emperor Constantine made Christianity legal in 313 AD. But where did they get the Bible? They got the Bible from the Catholic Church. The canon of Scripture (list of books) was first set at the councils of Carthage and Hippo in 393 and 397 A.D. That is decades after the Church was supposedly corrupted. So, why would Protestants accept the product of a “corrupt church” as their sole rule of faith?

If the Bible is a believer’s sole rule of faith, what did Christians do before the printing press was invented in 1439? That was fourteen centuries after Christ established His Church. Before that time, hardly anyone could have afforded a handwritten copy. Also, practically everyone was illiterate. In fact, as recently as 1900, the literacy rate in countries like Mexico, India, China, and the continents of Africa and South America was only 30%. How did Christians in those countries know what to believe?

If the Bible is the sole rule of faith, that would mean that any authentic Christian teaching would have to be explicitly taught by Scripture. The idea that the Bible is the sole rule of faith is itself a teaching. And yet that teaching cannot be found in the Bible. Therefore, the teaching of “Scripture Alone” rules itself out. Furthermore, those who say they only need a Bible, are divided into thousands of groups all disagreeing with each other on some point of doctrine. If they were truly being led by the Holy Spirit, as they claim, they would all agree. But they do not.

But, they say, “we only disagree on minor issues.” Not so. Some say you must accept Christ as personal Lord and Savior to be saved. Calvinists say God decides before you are even born who is going to heaven and who is going to hell. That is a big difference. But why would Protestants even disagree on minor issues? Are minor issues too hard for the Holy Spirit?

Jesus prayed that we would be one as He and the Father are one (John 17:21). If that was truly His desire, why would He create a system that would necessarily result in division? Obviously, He did not. And hence, Paul’s admonition: “Let there be no divisions (denominations) among you” (1 Corinthians 1:10). Doctrinal consistency, like we find in the Catholic Church, is a sign of God’s protection. Doctrinal chaos, like we find in Protestantism, is a sign of man’s folly.