

The General Trend of Catholic Doctrine

Peter Berthou, 1995

Catholic doctrine (teaching) differs from those who just believe the Bible in two main ways. Firstly, how people are saved. Secondly, official Catholic teaching places 'tradition' along side the Bible as having the same authority. The result is many extra-biblical teachings and also many anti-biblical teachings. This can be seen with the following examples where the human contribution is elevated:

- the elevation of 'good works' so that people "merit grace from Christ"¹. The Bible is clear that salvation is a gift (Ephesians 2:8), to be received (Luke 18:17), inherited (Hebrews 1:14), by God's mercy (Luke 18:13) because with man it is impossible to be saved (Luke 18:27). People working or earning their salvation is a denial of the whole basis upon which people are saved as spelt out in many passages. Ephesians 2:4-10 tells us that "it is not by works" but by God's grace, that is His generosity; His gift. In Titus we learn that it was "not because of the righteous things we had done but because of His mercy" (Titus 3:5), it was the "kindness and love of God our Saviour" (Titus 3:4)

- the imposing of human acts of penance "in expiation of the sins"² and for the "entire and perfect remission of sins"³. This is a direct denial of Jesus being our atoning (expiating & propitiating) sacrifice for our sins, this includes after we have become Christians (1 John 2:1-2). Jesus by his one sacrifice has made us holy and perfect for heaven for ever (Hebrews 10:13).

- the elevation of a human to the position of Pope who is known as the Holy Father⁴; the Supreme Pontiff which means High Priest; the Vicar (Representative) of Christ⁵. Does this honour the three persons of the Trinity: the *only* Holy Father (John 17:11), the *final* and perfect High Priest Jesus (Hebrews 9:11,10:12) and the Holy Spirit who was sent in Jesus name (John 14:16,26) after Jesus had returned to the Father?

- the elevation of human "ecclesiastical tradition"⁶ in determining truth for the Church today. This is despite the obvious warnings in Scripture against it (Mark 7:8, Colossians 2:8). As a result the sufficiency of God's revelation in Scripture is denied despite it being clear that Scripture alone makes us thoroughly (meaning completely) equipped (2 Timothy 3:15-17, John 20:31).

- the elevation of human priests as "instruments"⁷ of our forgiveness. This obviously takes away from the role of Christ as the final Priest and it takes away from God's appointed "instrument" by which forgiveness is imparted to us - namely God's grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8).

- the elevation of the "bloodless sacrifice"⁸ of the mass by human priests. Scripture states emphatically that Christ's sacrifice was a once for all time (Hebrews 10:11-12), never to be repeated event after which Christ sat down at the right hand of the Father (Hebrews 10:12). Hebrews 10:18 says that where sins have been forgiven "there is no longer any sacrifice for sin". Clearly the whole Roman practice teaches that Jesus' divine sacrifice was not once for all.

- the elevation of humans "saints" to receive "prayers or devotion"⁹. This is also blasphemy against God to whom we are to be devoted and who alone may receive prayer. This directly undermines the effectiveness of prayer to God and Christ's role as mediator (1 Timothy 2:5) when it is said that "the saints can help us to reach"¹⁰ God.

- the elevation of the human, Mary, to be the sinless, "Mother of God"¹¹, Mother of all people¹², Queen of Heaven¹³, dispenser of grace and Co-redemtrix¹⁴ and to whom special devotion and prayers are offered. This can only undermine the position of God who alone is good (Luke 18:19) and without sin, who is the Father, King of Heaven and of Earth (Matthew 11:25). The Father has given us grace in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:6) and it is in Christ Jesus that we have redemption (Ephesians 1:7) not by Mary.¹³

¹ p299, This is Catholicism by Catholic man John Walsh, 1st Ed

² p254, This is Catholicism by Catholic man John Walsh, 1st Ed

³ p265, Documents of the Christian Church by Henry Bettenson, 2nd Ed

⁴ p18f, The Official MacKillop Papal Visit Book 1995

⁵ p267, Canons of the Council of Trent taken from Documents of the Christian Church by Henry Bettenson, 2nd Ed

⁶ p267, Canons of the Council of Trent taken from Documents of the Christian Church by Henry Bettenson, 2nd Ed

⁷ p115, Catechism of the Council of Trent

⁸ p265, Canons of the Council of Trent taken from Documents of the Christian Church by Henry Bettenson, 2nd Ed

⁹ p207, The Catholic Religion - A Course of Twenty Lessons

¹⁰ p207, The Catholic Religion - A Course of Twenty Lessons

¹¹ p213, The Catholic Religion - A Course of Twenty Lessons

¹² ¹³ ¹⁴ p214, The Catholic Religion - A Course of Twenty Lessons

Traditional Catholic Teachings

1. God

Catholic belief about God is Trinitarian - that is one God in three persons. There is no basic disagreement between evangelical protestants and Catholics on this subject. A summary of Catholic belief is found in the Nicene Creed:

- We Believe in one God the Father All-sovereign, Maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible;
- And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of the Father before all ages, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made of one substance with the Father, through whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from the heavens and who was made flesh of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man, and was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried, and rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures and ascended into the heavens, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father, and cometh again with glory to judge living and dead, and of whose kingdom there shall be no end:
- And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and the Life giver, that proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and Son is worshipped together and glorified together, who spake through the prophets:†

2. Jesus

Again there is no basic disagreement between evangelical protestants and Catholics on this subject. A summary of Catholic belief about Jesus is found in the Nicene Creed above.

3. Sin

Catholics and evangelical protestants agree in the concept of original sin - that each of us has inherited our sinful nature from Adam. The understanding that Catholics place on this doctrine is however substantially different from the Bible's teaching. The Catholic understanding of sin centres more on individuals acts rather than seeing the acts as being expression of a heart turned from away from God. Thus sins can be divided into two groups depending on their seriousness. "Venial sin strains a person's relationship to God but mortal sin ruptures them"². Although both groups contain deliberate acts of rebellion (eg: Venial - Stealing something cheap; Mortal - stealing something expensive) is said that "venial sin is a less serious offense"³.

Catholic doctrine does not see the severity of the Bible's understanding our sinful nature. Before we became a Christian we were slaves to sin and wholeheartedly obeyed our sinful nature (Romans 6:17) making it impossible for us to please God (Romans 8:8). Catholic doctrine says it is deserving of hell to believe that "all works before justification are in truth sins"⁴

4. Salvation

Catholic doctrine acknowledges people's problem before God being their sin. Salvation is the saving of people from their sin and the anger of God for their sin. Catholic doctrine acknowledges that Jesus died on the cross for our sins - to save us. Catholic theology says that man cannot be "justified before God by his own works"⁵ and that without the Holy Spirit a man cannot repent and so be saved.

However, the Catholic Church teaches that the way we receive salvation is not by a once for all time declaration of your total innocence before God which the Bible calls being 'justified'. They teach that it is as though Christ had purchased for humanity a large punch bowl of 'grace' which by our adherence to the sacraments and by doing good works we earn the right to have ladled into our own cup the 'grace' of Christ. Our standing before God or our 'justification' is increased as we do more good works and so have ladled more and more grace into our cup. Some people manage to fill their cup in their lifetime and so are recognised by the Church as 'saints'. Mary was given a full cup before her conception so that she was without sin during her life. If you die without having made up for you sins you will be sent to purgatory to finish atoning for them.

Thus Catholics use the words 'grace', 'justification' and 'saints' but mean quite different things by these terms to what evangelical protestants do. The Bible says that when someone places their trust in Jesus Christ they become a saint (Ephesians 1:1). 'Grace' is God's generosity in declaring us 'justified' when we become a Christian (Romans 3:24).

¹ p26, Documents of the Christian Church by Henry Bettenson, 2nd Ed

² p42-43, This is Catholicism by Catholic man John Walsh, 1st Ed

³ p42, This is Catholicism by Catholic man John Walsh, 1st Ed

⁴ p263, Canons of the Council of Trent taken from Documents of the Christian Church by Henry Bettenson, 2nd Ed

⁵ p263, Canons of the Council of Trent taken from Documents of the Christian Church by Henry Bettenson, 2nd Ed

Quotes about the Forgiveness of Sins

Edited by Peter Berthon from Catholic Sources.

...our Lord gave not the power of so sacred a ministry to all, but to bishops and priests only. The same must be said regarding the manner in which this power is to be exercised; for sins can only be forgiven through the sacraments, when duly administered. The church has received no power otherwise to remit sin. Hence it follows that in the forgiveness of sins both priests and Sacraments are, so to speak, the instruments which Christ our Lord, the author and giver of salvation, makes use of to accomplish in us the pardon of sin and the grace of justification.

p115 of Catechism of the Council of Trent

it must be taught without any hesitation that, as the holy Council (of Trent) has also explained, the sacred and holy Sacrifice of the Mass is not a sacrifice of thanksgiving only, or a mere commemoration of the Sacrifice performed on the cross, but truly a propitiatory Sacrifice, by which God is appeased and rendered propitious to us. If therefore, with a pure heart a lively faith, and affected with an inward sorrow for our transgressions, we immolate and offer this most holy victim, we shall, without doubt, obtain mercy from the Lord, and grace in the time of need; for so delighted is the Lord with the odor of this victim that, bestowing on us the gift of grace and repentance, He pardons our sins.

p258-259 of Catechism of the Council of Trent

It is called the doctrine of supernatural merit. As we have seen already, Christ merited divine life for us. By the sublime acts of obedience and love which he achieved during His sojourn on earth and especially at the sacrifice of the cross, Jesus earned for us the graces we receive throughout life; each one of them has been bought at the price of His blood. Now, just as Christ merited grace for us, so in a similar fashion we can merit grace from Christ. Thus whenever a person in sanctifying grace resists a temptation to evil or performs an act of goodness he establishes, as it were, a claim on Christ's generosity, he becomes deserving of a recompense, he is entitled to a reward, he earns the privilege of drawing that much closer to Christ by an enrichment and a deepening of the divine life within his soul. In other words he merits an increase of sanctifying grace which God will never deny him.

p299 of This is Catholicism by John Walsh

[It is anathema to believe -]

That justification once received is not preserved and even increased in the sight of God through good works; but that these same works are only fruits of justification, not causes of increase.

p263, Canons of the Council of Trent taken from Bettenson, 2nd Ed

Q. Does the Catholic Church ever impose acts of atonement on her members ?

A. Yes, for example, at the conclusion of a confession the priest always assigns a definite act of piety (usually saying of some prayers) which the penitent is to perform in expiation of the sins which he has just confessed. This act of piety is called penance.

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Q. What happens if a person dies before he has had the opportunity to expiate fully for the sins he committed during life?

A. His soul is sentenced to suffer for a time in purgatory.

Q. How does purgatory differ from hell?

A. Hell is eternal; purgatory is temporary. Hell exists for the everlasting punishment of God's enemies, the apostate angels and men who die in mortal sin. Purgatory exists for the perfect cleansing of God's friends.

Q. Are the souls confined in purgatory certain of arriving in heaven?

A. Since they die on the state of sanctifying grace, the souls in purgatory, are absolutely assured of salvation. They possess complete certainty that after their period of expiation and atonement is over they will be admitted to the face-to-face vision of God.

p254 of This is Catholicism by John Walsh

Scripture Alone

Transcribed by Peter Berthon from a talk by Martin Foord, 1996

In 20 minutes to talk about Sola Scriptura (Scripture Alone) is almost an impossibility, but I will see what I can do in 20 minutes and we'll go from there.

Patrick talked about the sufficiency of scripture, now what does that mean by the sufficiency of scripture? It's not talking about a sufficiency that tells us everything about science or mathematics or a comprehensive history of the ancient world, or even a record of everything that Jesus did. **No when protestants talk about Sola Scriptura, they talk about the bible providing everything that is necessary for Salvation.** Being able to stand before God on the last day and be right with him.

Both Protestants & RC's believe God has revealed himself fully in the person of Christ as it says in John 14:9: *Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.* Yet Jesus establishes a special group of people to propagate this great revelation of himself. And it's these people that he called apostles. An apostle, called in originally the Hebrew background the 'Charlea', had the power of attorney from the sender in the Jewish legal system. To receive an apostle in the Jewish background means to receive the very sender himself. Jesus can say about his apostles that: *He who receives you, receives me.* So, an apostle, contrary to what Peter Craith would say in his book, *Fundamentals of the Faith*, could not in any way, from a Jewish background, confer his authority or the sender's authority on someone else. But the apostles shared this position of revealing Jesus to the world.

To help them in this special, gospel mission the apostles had to reveal Christ, Jesus promised them the special endowment to the Holy Spirit to lead them, into not some truth, but **all** truth. As it says in John 16:12-13, *but when he, the spirit of truth comes he will guide you into all truth.* Yet John very explicitly gives a promise and makes qualifications that this promise to lead you into all truth applies only to the original apostles. So in John 14:26, Jesus says "*The Holy Spirit will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have said.*" Only apostles, who followed around Jesus can be reminded of everything that Jesus has said and furthermore, later on in the chapter, Jesus says "*when the Counsellor, the Holy spirit comes, he will testify about me and you also must testify because you have been with me from the beginning.*" Only these 12, who were with Jesus were with him from the beginning. There can be no more.

Adding to this, there was the apostle Paul. He had a special function, he was called in a special way, called to be the apostle to the gentiles, hence that's why the majority of our NT, to us who are Gentiles, is made up of Pauline documents.

In speaking of his qualifications as an apostle, Paul says "*have I not seen Jesus our Lord*".

Associates of the apostles:

Apostolic authority flowed over to those who were co-workers of the apostles.

In 1 Thessalonians Paul can say about Silas and Timothy, who were his co-workers "*For you know what instructions we [namely Paul Silas and Timothy] gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.* And again later on "*So then my brothers stand firm and hold to the teachings we [Paul, Silas and Timothy] passed onto you whether by word of mouth or by letter.*" So even Paul's co-workers (co-workers of the apostles) share the authority of Christ.

Ephesians 2:20 "*Church is built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets*" The apostles being the original twelve plus Paul and the prophets being the co-workers of the apostles themselves.

So our conclusion is that the apostles and the associates had a once for all ministry of delivering a word, a command, a testimony, a deposit (they're all the words that are used in the New Testament) about Jesus to the world. In fact Jude in his letter in Jude 3 talks about it as "*the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.*" And this is what this debate hinges on:

Where is this once for all faith, deposit, word etc to be found ?

First place that this word deposit is to be found is the Old Testament. 1 Corinthians 15:1-3 Paul says: "*Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to*

you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: [here it is, the most important thing in the Christian life] that Christ died for our sins [and what does he say?] according to the Scriptures [meaning the Old Testament] that he was buried and that he was raised on the third day [what?] in accordance with the Scriptures.” The gospel of salvation itself can be found in the Old Testament.

Jesus himself says that. Luke 24:25 He said to them on the road to Emmaus, ‘“How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.’ Later in verse 46 He told them ‘Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.’

The basic gospel itself is even found in the Old Testament. So the Bereans in Acts 17:11 tested out Paul message against the Old Testament. *Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.*”

Of course the most significant statement of the apostle Paul is found in 2 Tim 3:15 where he says to Timothy “*and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*” There it is: if you know Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the Old Testament contains the whole message of Salvation. And that's why when popular Roman Catholic apologists such as Peter Craft and Jerry Matitics and Scott Hahn, talk about Sola Scriptura being unhistorical, because “how did the church survive before there was a Canon”, they have seriously misunderstood the classical Protestant position.

Oxford's Patristics scholar J.N. Beukelly (?) says of the mid first to mid second century, the time when the New Testament Canon was being put together, he says this “The importance of the Old Testament as a doctrinal norm in the primitive church cannot be exaggerated, while Scripture and the apostolic testimony were formally independent, these fathers seemed to have treated their contents as virtually coincident. What the apostles saw and proclaimed as eyewitnesses, the prophets testify to before hand in the minutest detail. There was no item in the message of the former which if one but search the Scriptures, the prophets could not be shown to have foreseen.” And so some of the apologists like Justin Martyr claimed that they had become Christians through reading the Old Testament.

Yet there is another place where we can find this deposit. It's been left to the hands of the apostles and the associates of the apostles. Now at first this message was oral and so that's how the church existed before the New Testament was written. It existed with the apostles delivering on their oral message and then they wrote down their once for all message, the gospel, and the New Testament became enscriptured.

So John can give the rational for his gospel in John 20:30-31 where he says “*Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*” He explains that he has recorded the totality of his salvific message.

Of course there is the great 2 Timothy 3:15-16 that teaches the same thing. And this doesn't just apply to the Old Testament, it applies to the New Testament as well. When Paul says that *all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching etc etc etc so that the man of God may be equipped for every good work*, he's talking about New Testament Scripture as well. he is talking about a Scriptural principal. Scripture as a principal. Why? Because in his earlier book he quotes from Luke gospel in 1 Timothy 5:18 and calls it Scripture. So he can't be just talking about Old Testament Scripture in there.

Indeed, the New Testament writers frowned upon a whole notion of some continuing oral tradition and so Peter in his letter in 2 Peter talks about why he is commuting his message to writing. He says “*I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will*

make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things." He is writing to secure the faith after his departure.

Luke at the beginning of his gospel gives the purpose for commuting the apostolic preaching to writing. He says in Luke 1:1-4, in later verse 3-4, *"it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught."* Luke writes so that his readers may be certain. Committing the faith to writing will ensure a greater certainty to those who have just received it by oral transmission. Thus the Bible teaches that it's materially sufficient to give a knowledge of salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

And Church history totally agrees. In fact we can have a look at the second century controversy, where Gnosticism which claimed to have a special access to an Apostolic tradition that needed supplementing of the scriptures. Irenaus and Tertullian, both in the second century, taught that the entirety of the Apostolic message was recorded in the New Testament. For instance as Irenaeus writes "we have learned from non others the plan of our salvation than from those 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."

The second thing they did say is that they did have oral access to the Apostolic preaching, they called it "the rule of faith." But the rule of faith was merely just a summary of what Scripture taught. It was something that was derived from the Bible itself. And so we can insist most firmly that if anyone claims as did the Gnostics that there is some extra Biblical tradition that is needed to supplement the teaching of Scripture (like the seven fold nature of the Sacraments or the immaculate conception or whatever) that they just weren't there in the beginning. They'd have to have be some later development. So for Irenaeus and Tertullian both the New Testament and the Old Testament Scripture was sufficient. As wrote the majority of the early church fathers. I've got many quotes but I want bother giving them to you.

So when Catholic apologist Scott Hahn can make this statement "the gospel in its totality is not found in the New Testament. It wasn't written for that purpose. Nowhere is that the express intention of any single book nor of the books taken commutatively," not only is this contrary to the plain teaching of Scripture teaching but it's contrary to the teaching of the first five centuries of church history.

The second thing that Protestants believe when they teach Sola Scripture. They believe the the in the Sufficiency of Scripture and they believe the clarity of Scripture. Protestants see the bible is clear. This doesn't mean that everything written in scripture in abundantly clear, but it does mean that the basic message of salvation is clear. The message of the OT may be somewhat opaque, but the New Testament message is one of clarity. Yes there are some things that are unclear in scripture, but these are relegated issues not essential to salvation and these are what most of the denominational differences about. Catholics often say that the bible teaches of itself that it is unclear, and so they point out 2 Peter 3:16, where Peter says that *Paul's letters contain some things are hard to understand which ignorant and unstable people distort.* This doesn't say that Paul is unclear, this verse just says that Paul is hard to understand, for example the new testament teaching on predestination is hard to understand, but it doesn't mean that it's not taught clearly.

But what does it mean, the Protestant view that scripture is clear? The once for all apostolic message that was transmitted to the common person, was transmitted without any interpreter, therefore its basic thrust must be clear.

When Paul preached to the Thessalonians or Epaphras went down to the Colossians, they didn't need some intervening interpreter, but just preached straight to the people and this utterly applies to the NT, because the NT is just a record about straight preaching. So Paul writes his letter to the Colossians, he doesn't write it to the Bishops of the church, so the bishops can interpret to the lay people, but to them directly and then he says, send it off to the Laodiceans, so that they can understand what it means. Indeed Paul says himself in 2 Cor 1:13, says it very clearly, *We, [meaning us apostles], do not write to you anything you cannot read or understand* and incredibly Paul goes even further by telling the Corinthian lay people to

individually interpret and test his statements for themselves when he says in 1 Cor 10:15, & 11:13, *Judge for yourselves what I say*. Thus the NT itself teaches its clarity and self interpretation.

A major RC objection to the clarity of Scripture is to say, "Look at the plethora of teachings found among the Protestant churches", but this assumes that the RC is unified, which is simply untrue. Talk to any RC, as I have over many years about purgatory, papal infallibility & contraception, transubstantiation and the like and you'll discover a great disunity immediately.

Rather let's boil it down and talk about it seriously and that is, comparing non-liberal Catholicism to non-liberal protestantism and here again, Catholicism enjoys no major improvement. Indeed non-liberal Protestants show far less deviation from biblical truth than do non-liberal Catholics do over fundamental doctrines like purgatory, apocrypha & papal infallibility. I've got many many catholic conservative friends who have different ideas on when the pope speaks infallibly. Catholicism attempts to bypass the problem of private interpretation by having an infallible interpreter of scripture. But the Catholic position doesn't solve that problem of correct interpretation, it just shifts it to another place. You see the question that needs to be asked is, "Who's got the true interpretation of the interpretation?". And so when my friend Patrick reads out from *dei verbum*, who's got the correct interpretation of that? Because what he read out from that could be interpreted in many, many ways in what it says about scripture & tradition. Thus there are many many theories about when the pope is speaking infallibly and all of the theologians that you read on it seem to go back to the 1870 definition of papal infallibility itself, which to me is very unclear.

Not only that, papal infallibility is impossible. How does one know when the pope is speaking infallibly? Some say the pope is always infallible when he speaks about faith and morals, but most Catholics rejected that because there have been so many cases where popes have made mistakes. Like Pope Liberius, who signed a document condemning Athanasius that taught that Jesus is not fully God. Pope Honorius who was condemned by the sixth ecumenical council for being a heretical monotheist, Pope Gelasius who claimed that the substance of the bread and wine don't change in the prayer of consecration, Pope Gregory the great who claimed that the OT apocrypha was not canonical. Most Catholics believe that a pope must fulfil certain conditions to speak infallibly about faith and morals. But as soon as you put conditions on a papal statement, you lose infallibility altogether, because if a pope makes a statement that is infallible, a future one can come along and then contradict it claiming that the original pope didn't fulfil the conditions that this later pope is now saying. Thus no one can ever know when the pope is speaking infallibly.

Furthermore the Catholic lay person can never know what the true truth is. The RC church has set up a hierarchy to teach the lay people how to interpret correctly the official documents. This supposedly gets them around the problem of private interpretation. Yet if a lay person can't correctly interpret the official documents, how possibly can they test whether a priest or a bishop or anyone speaks falsely. They can't go back to their Bible, they're not allowed to privately interpret, they can't go back to the documents, they're not allowed to privately interpret. Every now and then I'll come across a Catholic who says, yes there are certain parts of scripture that we're allowed to privately interpret, but where do you find out what parts of scripture they are? You originally have to be taught by someone and you don't know whether they're right or wrong, because everybody but the pope is fallible. Therefore without private interpretation the lay person can never know the truth.

Here is just a very very brief summary of *Sola Scriptura* as taught a little bit by the reformers. It's biblical, it's historical, it's practical and as I see the bible plus some form of papal interpretation it's unbiblical, unhistorical, impractical and impossible.

Thank you.