

Comparative Theology

St. George's Servant's Prep
Orthodox vs Protestantism

Orthodoxy and the non-Orthodox

- ⦿ All we have been given is the WAY
 - ⦿ God has never told us the spiritual status of the non-Orthodox
- you can't find it in any of the Fathers, or Scripture

Magisterial Reformation

- ⦿ Supported by the German magistrates
- ⦿ Martin Luther is the revolutionist who stated the Reformation with by nailing the **95 theses** to the door of the church in Wittenburg, Germany 1517

Protestant Reformation

- ⦿ Insisted on the abolition of the selling of “indulgences”
- ⦿ Affirming the supremacy of the Bible over Church hierarchy

The Five “Solas”

- ◎ 5 pillars of Protestant Reformation Theology
- ◎ “Sola” – Latin for “alone”
 1. “*Sola Scriptura*” – Scripture alone
 2. “*Sola Fide*” – “Faith Alone”
 3. “*Sola Gratia*” – “Grace Alone”
 4. “*Solus Christus*” - Christ alone”
 5. “*Sola Deo Gloria*” – “Glory to God alone”

“Sola Scriptura”

- ◎ *“I have the right to believe freely, to be slave to no man’s authority, to confess what appears to be true whether it is proved or disproved, whether it spoken by Catholic or heretic.... In matters of faith I think neither council, nor Pope, nor any man has the power over my conscience. And where they disagree with Scripture, I deny pope and council and all. A simple layman armed with Scripture is greater than the mightiest Pope without it.” (Martin Luther)*

Swiss Reformer Zwingli

- ⦿ the Bible is the single exclusive source of all Christian doctrine and practice

Orthodox disagreement of “Sola Scriptura”

- Orthodoxy by contrast holds the Scripture in extremely high regard, but holds it to be:

a book written by the Church, for the Church, and within the Church

Reading Scripture correctly requires the light of “Holy Tradition”

Reformers believe:

- ⦿ Christian doctrine may be derived from the use of reason, history, **and** textual study.

Orthodox Response

1. Sola scriptura fails its own test- this idea is found nowhere in the bible
 - ☰☰ “All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,” 2 Timothy 3:16

1 Timothy 3:15

- ◎ “15 but if I am delayed, *I write* so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in ***the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.***”

“Tradition” - *Paradosis*

“Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.” 2

Thessalonians 2:15

- ☐ English NIV translation distorts what the Bible says
- ☐ Teaching/ tradition

2nd Orthodox Response

2. The Bible has no systematic theology or catechism in the Bible

☰☏ They teach their own personal infallibility

☰☏ They violate their own principle every time the Bible is taught

“Sola Scriptura”

- ⦿ says that the Holy Spirit guides the individual reader
- ☰ Then why so much conflict within Protestantism

3rd Orthodox Response

- ⦿ Historically the doctrine of “sola Scriptura” is nowhere to be found in the writings of the Early Church Fathers
- ⦿ 367 AD St Athanasius instructed the churches which books were to be considered canonical

“Sola Fide” - *Faith alone*

- ⦿ Teaches justification comes by faith alone
- ⦿ - justification means being declared righteous/ Imputed righteousness
- ⦿ To be recognized as righteous by God without having any righteousness in the person
- ⦿ - change in legal status but not in personal holiness

Faith alone in Scripture

- ⦿ “You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.”

James 2:24

Ephesians 2:8-9

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

- ◎ St Paul preaches against the Jewish law for salvation, but not of good works themselves
- God's grace makes the transformation possible

“Sola Gratia” - *Grace*

alone

- ⦿ only by God’s grace that accomplishes salvation

- no act of man contributes to salvation in any way

Orthodox Response

- ◎ Grace of God working in cooperation with your will = synergy

Philippians 2:12

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;*”

Solus Christus- Christ alone

- ⦿ Denial of the priesthood
- ⦿ Christ is only one who has any role in our salvation
- ⦿ Emphasize the priesthood of all believers

Orthodox Response

- ⦿ Agrees to priesthood of all believers, but not the eldership
- ⦿ Clergy not mediators, but intercessors
- ⦿ Clergy have a role to play in salvation by administering the sacraments

Sola deo Gloria- God alone is due glory

- ⦿ Direct rejection of the veneration of the saints and other holy objects

Orthodox Response

- ⦿ God alone is worthy of our worship, veneration is given to saints because of **God's work in them**
- ⦿ Rejection of His **incarnation** and of His work in human beings in history to deny honor to those people
- ⦿ Rejection of God's work through the **material** world