



# The Church VS the Churches

BIBLE AUTHORITY

# Catholic View

- ▶ “Many claim that 2 Timothy 3:16–17 claims Scripture is sufficient as a rule of faith. But an examination of the verse in context shows that it doesn’t claim that at all; it only claims Scripture is “profitable” (Greek: *ophelimos*) that is, helpful. Many things can be profitable for moving one toward a goal, without being sufficient in getting one to the goal. Notice that the passage nowhere even hints that Scripture is “sufficient”—which is, of course, exactly what Protestants think the passage means.” ([www.catholic.com/tract/whats-your-authority](http://www.catholic.com/tract/whats-your-authority))
- ▶ **What we learn** is that Catholicism teaches the Scriptures are *insufficient*, not enough, to lead Christians in service to Christ. More (i.e., Church tradition) is needed!

# Bible

- ▶ Are we to understand that the Scriptures being *profitable, useful, helpful* is less than being *sufficient*?
- ▶ **2 Tim. 3:16-17** – “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” – ESV
  - ▶ **Profitable** to instruct, reprove/convict, correct, and train us in righteousness.
  - ▶ **Purpose** is to make us complete, capable, proficient (*BDAG*), equipping us for every good work.
  - ▶ **In what area of the Christian life** is the Scriptures insufficient?

# Methodist View

- ▶ **Book of discipline: Theological Guidelines: Scripture** – “United Methodists share with other Christians the conviction that Scripture is the primary source and criterion for Christian doctrine...While we acknowledge the primacy of Scripture in theological reflection, our attempts to grasp its meaning always **involve tradition, experience, and reason**. Like Scripture, these may become creative vehicles of the Holy Spirit as they function within the Church. They quicken our faith, open our eyes to the wonder of God’s love, and clarify our understanding.” (<http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/theological-guidelines-scripture>)
- ▶ **From this we learn** that though the Methodist Church holds Scripture to be the *primary, or chief*, authority, **church tradition, experience, and human reason** play a significant role in determining authority.

# Bible

- ▶ The Bible is the **only source of authority** in religion!
- ▶ Jesus only gave two choices concerning authority... either from God or man – Matt. 21:24-26
  - ▶ The Pharisees understood the point—if it was from God, obey it, if from man, reject it!
  - ▶ Tradition, experience, and reason all come from man and have no authoritative role in determining doctrine and practice!
- ▶ The N.T. church knows that...
  - ▶ Bible authority trumps tradition – Matt. 15:3-9
  - ▶ Bible authority controls our experiences – Col. 3:17; Mt. 7:21-23
  - ▶ Bible authority will judge human reason – 1 Cor. 1:20-25; 2 Cor. 10:4-5

# Presbyterian View

- ▶ “In matters of faith, life, and salvation, Scripture takes precedence over all other authorities. However, the precedence of Scripture does not call for the disregard of other authorities...such sources...include church councils, laws and decrees; ancient and modern theologians and thinkers in general; and various forms of knowledge and experience.”  
([www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/\\_resolutions/scripture-use.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/_resolutions/scripture-use.pdf).)
- ▶ “Presbyterians have always had a very strong doctrine of biblical authority, but historically most have shied away from calling that doctrine inerrancy. Inerrancy is a word that points to complete factual accuracy...Believing in the inerrancy of Scripture commits us to the factual accuracy of individual texts, while believing in the authority of Scripture presses us to know the message of Scripture as a whole.” (<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/what-we-believe/dont-believe/>)

# What We Learn

- ▶ Like the Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church believes the Bible to be the primary, but not sole authority.
- ▶ The Presbyterian Church teaches...
  - ▶ The message of Scripture *as a whole* is true
  - ▶ Not every verse, or passage, is true
  - ▶ The Bible is not inerrant—it contains errors, or statements that are not true.

# Bible

- ▶ The Bible claims that the words of God, Jesus, and the Apostles are true – Jn. 17:17; 8:31-32; Acts 26:25; 1 Cor. 2:13
- ▶ If passages of the N.T. spoken by God, Christ, and the Apostles are not true, then...
  - ▶ We can't know the truth as Jesus promised!
  - ▶ We can't know if the whole Scripture message is true!
  - ▶ Man is given power over the Scripture to determine what is true and authoritative!

# Conclusion

- ▶ Today's churches' views of Bible authority deviate from the Bible's teaching.
- ▶ The N.T. church teaches...
  - ▶ The Bible is the only source of authority in matters of doctrine and practice.
  - ▶ Human tradition, experience, and reason have no authoritative role in religion.
  - ▶ The Bible's authority over doctrine and practice is absolute, being the perfect, inerrant revelation of God's truth.
- ▶ Don't be led away by what is counterfeit. Come to God by faith and obedience to Christ!