

## The Church Vs. the Churches 2 – The Churches’ Views of Bible Authority – PT. 2

### INTRODUCTION:

1. This morning I want to continue our study of the churches of today versus the church of the Bible.
  - A. I chose to present this series because:
    - i. God is concerned about the doctrine and practices of local churches as proven by Revelation 2-3.
    - ii. God expects us to be able to discern between what is right and wrong, what is according to God’s will and what is not (Heb. 5:12-14).
    - iii. It is, therefore, important that we know and compare the doctrine and practice of any church, including this church, to what Christ has revealed and, therefore, expects of His churches.
  - B. In addition to that, studies like this help us as Christians to do as Paul was instructed by Christ to do (Acts 26:18) which is to take the truth to the world to “open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me [Jesus].”
2. Today I want to continue our study by – comparing the various churches’ views of the Bible’s authority over their doctrine and practice to what the Bible says about its authority.
  - A. These views cover a broad spectrum from very liberal to what appears to be very conservative.
  - B. What this study will show is that even though churches may claim to accept the Bible as their guide in faith and practice, that does not mean they submit solely to the Bible’s teaching.
3. So, today we will consider the **expressed view** of the Catholic Church and compare it to what the **Bible** says, which is what the true N.T. church must follow.
  - A. I do not intend to dedicate a whole sermon to every church’s view.
  - B. But the Catholic view by its nature required a bit more time than others.
  - C. And much of what I address concerning the Catholic Church is applicable to the views concerning the Bible’s authority held by the Jehovah’s Witnesses with their Watchtower publications, Seventh Day Adventists and the writing of Ellen G. White, and the Mormon Church with their Book of Mormon and church writings.

### BODY:

#### **I. Catholic Church:**

- A. Catholic View: The scriptures are profitable but not sufficient ([www.catholic.com/tract/whats-your-authority](http://www.catholic.com/tract/whats-your-authority)):
  1. Quote: “**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.”
  2. The article goes on to say that Paul exhorted Timothy to hold to the **pattern of oral tradition/teaching** received from Paul and only after doing that did Paul mention that Scripture is “profitable.”
  3. From this and further reading we learn that the Catholic Church believes:
    - a. That the Scriptures are *profitable* but *insufficient* (not enough) to lead Christians in their service to God.
    - b. We need further teaching in the form of *oral tradition*, teaching the apostles gave *orally* (by preaching/teaching) but that ***has not been recorded in Scripture.***
    - c. That this oral tradition is *provided* by the *teachings of the Catholic Church.*
  4. Though I believe the Catholic view to be an **extreme view** (though all unscriptural views are wrong and, therefore, extreme), the Mormon Church, Jehovah’s Witness Church, and the Seventh Day Adventist Church **share the same basic view**—that you need more than the Scriptures to serve God acceptably. So, what the Bible says about the Catholic view would apply to them as well.
- B. How does this compare **to the Church?**

1. Christ's church believes the Scripture's claim to be **profitable** and **sufficient** (2 Timothy 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).
  - a. The Catholic view ignores the very point of 2 Tim. 3:16-17
  - b. In this passage we learn that inspired Scripture:
    - i. Is **profitable** (useful, helpful, advantageous) for **teaching** [instructing], **reproof** [rebuke/convict], **correction** [to put right], and **training in righteousness**.
      - 1) The Catholic view that contrasts being **profitable** with being **sufficient** is fabricated (1 Tim. 4:8 – "for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but **godliness is profitable** for **all things**, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.").
      - 2) Now, should we take from this that the Spirit is saying that godliness is **helpful** but **insufficient**, that it is **good** but **not good enough**, for all things? No!
      - 3) This view is contrived to fit the Catholic doctrine.
      - 4) So, why is Scripture profitable in these areas?
    - ii. **Using inspired scripture** for teaching, reproof, correcting, and training in righteousness **results** in the Christian being made **complete** and **equipped** for every good work.
      - 1) "**Complete**" – "**capable, proficient**" (BDAG); NASB – **adequate** (synonym – sufficient)
      - 2) "**Equipped**" – BDAG – to furnish; **Strong's** – to equip **fully** (a teacher): — **thoroughly** furnish; **Mounce's** – to equip or furnish **completely**; **Thayer** – to furnish perfectly
      - 3) "**For every good work**"
        - a) This is not for just a few, but all/every good work.
        - b) This means that that Scriptures make a Christian capable, proficient, sufficient, and furnished with what is needed to do all that God wants us to do including instructing, reproof, correcting, and training other in righteousness!
    - iii. If inspired Scripture is *insufficient* and we *need of more revelation* as the Catholic Church claims to serve acceptably, how could Scripture do these things?
  - c. So, the Catholic view is simply false!
2. Christ's church rejects the idea that *we are missing needed oral teaching* from the apostles!
  - a. For, again, 2 Tim. 3:16-17 says that the inspired Scripture makes us proficient, complete, equipping us with what we need to do every good work. So, what else is needed?
  - b. Written Scripture is intended to reveal **the mystery of Christ** (Eph. 3:1-5 – "For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—<sup>2</sup> assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you,<sup>3</sup> how the **mystery was made known to me by revelation**, as I have written briefly.<sup>4</sup> **When you read this**, you can **perceive** [understand, comprehend] **my insight into the mystery of Christ**,<sup>5</sup> which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has **now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit**.").
    - i. Paul had previously written of this mystery (1:7-10 – "In him we have **redemption through his blood**, the **forgiveness** of our trespasses, according to the riches of his **grace**,<sup>8</sup> which he **lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight**<sup>9</sup> making known to us the **mystery of his will**, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ<sup>10</sup> as a plan for the fullness of time, **to unite all things in him**, things in heaven and things on earth.")
    - ii. Paul spoke of this mystery again (3:8-12 – "To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the **unfathomable riches of Christ**,<sup>9</sup> and to **bring to light** what is the **administration of the mystery** which for ages has been

hidden in God who created all things; <sup>10</sup> so that **the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known** through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. <sup>11</sup> This was in accordance with the **eternal purpose** which He **carried out in Christ Jesus** our Lord, <sup>12</sup> in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.)

- iii. So, when you read what Paul has written, you can understand Paul own insight into the mystery of Christ, the insight given him by the Holy Spirit concerning redemption, forgiveness of sins, God’s eternal purpose, uniting all in Christ, the riches of Christ, and the manifold wisdom of God made know in Christ.
- iv. When you read this, do you get the picture that something is missing, that what Paul told them they could learn by reading has left something out? NO!
- c. The Bible teaches that what the apostles and prophets spoke is interchangeable with, or the same as, what they wrote.
  - i. **Paul** showed this in his instructions to Titus (Titus 3:1-2 – “**Remind them** to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, <sup>2</sup> to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.”).
    - 1) These were not new instructions. To remind is to “put in mind again”!
    - 2) These **written** instructions that we now have were the same as what had been **preached** to them.
  - ii. **Peter** (2 Pet. 1:12-15 – “Therefore, I will always be ready to **remind you** of these things, even though **you already know them**, and have been **established in the truth** which is present with you. <sup>13</sup> I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of **reminder**, <sup>14</sup> knowing that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. <sup>15</sup> And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure **you will be able to call these things to mind.**”).
    - 1) Peter was reminding them of **the truth** that they **knew** and **were established in**.
    - 2) He **wrote down** these things because he knew the oral teaching they had received **would be forgotten**.
      - a) He did not say that the “Catholic Church,” or any church, was to be given charge over revealing these “oral teachings” to them throughout the centuries!
      - b) His **written epistle** was to do this!
    - 3) Thus, inspired Scripture was given so we may know the truth of God forever!
  - iii. **Jude** (Jude 3-5 – “Beloved, while I was making every effort to **write** you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to **write** to you appealing that you contend earnestly for **the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints**. <sup>4</sup> For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. <sup>5</sup> Now I desire to **remind you**, though you **know all things once for all**, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe.”).
    - 1) So again, 1<sup>st</sup> Century Christians were **reminded** of the truth preached to them.
    - 2) This truth, as Jude says, was “**once for all**” given, not given and will be continually revealed and changed by the Catholic Church, or any other church!
  - d. From these verses we see that the **spoken words** of the apostles are not to be seen as unknown, or different, or in addition to, the **words they wrote**.
3. Thus, the Catholic view that the inspired Scriptures are an insufficient authority for the church’s doctrine and practice falls far short of the Biblical view.
  - a. Thus, it must be rejected as a false foundation upon which that church is built.
  - b. Yet, we must be sympathetic to the plight of those misled by it and show Christ’s love by seeking to open the scriptures to them that they might know the truth and be saved.

CONCLUSION:

1. We have now seen serious deviations from the Bible among the churches:
  - A. Concerning the importance of the local church and a Christian's responsibilities concerning it.
  - B. Concerning where our authority in matters of our faith and practice are to be derived.
  - C. We will continue this discussion of Bible authority in one more lesson.
2. So, we need to be both aware and concerned about the truth revealed and how it requires of us to know it and seek to expose it to others for their salvation and ours.
3. If you have not submitted to the authority of Christ revealed in His word, why not do so today accepting Jesus as your Lord and Christ in faith and C-R-B that you might be raised to a new life and new hope of salvation through Christ?