

# GROW IN GRACE

NEWSLETTER

Volume 39, No.8, February 19, 2013 / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / **"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."** (2 Peter 3:18)

## ***Sola Scriptura or the Traditions of Man!***

**SOLA SCRIPTURA (Scripture Alone)** is a term to communicate, "that Scripture is the only infallible voice in the church, **and is to be interpreted, in its own light, and with the gracious help of the Holy Ghost**, who is promised to every Christian (1 John 2:20-27), **by each individual** for himself; with the assistance, though not by the authority, of his fellow Christians. Creeds and confessions, as to form, bind only those who voluntarily profess them, and as to matter, **they bind only so far as they affirm truly what the Bible teaches, and because the Bible does so teach.**" (A. A. Hodge) **"...The Word of God, as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only infallible rule of faith and practice."** (Charles Hodge) **[Do I believe that? Sure! But when what I want, like and practice is different from Scripture— is there genuine evidence that, indeed, I believe and live by Sola Scriptura?]**

**SOLA SCRIPTURA / SCRIPTURE ALONE—** *"The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."* (Psalm 19:7) *"But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."* (2 Timothy 3:14-17) **"The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, Having Been Given By Inspiration of God, Are the All-Sufficient and Only Rule of Faith and Practice, and Judge of Controversies.** Whatever God teaches or commands is of sovereign authority. Whatever conveys to us an infallible knowledge of his teachings and commands is an infallible rule. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the only organs through which, during the present dispensation, God conveys to us a knowledge of his will about what we are to believe concerning himself, and what duties he requires of us."

## **How Important Is Sola Scriptura?**

The answer that we are to give to the question, "*What is Christianity?*" depends quite largely on the view we take of Scripture. **\*\* If we believe that the Bible is the very word of God and infallible, we will develop one conception of Christianity. \*\* If we believe that it is only a collection of human writings, perhaps considerably above the average in its spiritual and moral teachings but nevertheless containing many errors, we will develop a radically different conception of Christianity, if, indeed, what we then have can legitimately be called Christianity. \*\*** Hence we can hardly over-estimate the importance of a correct doctrine concerning the inspiration of the Scriptures." (Lorraine Boettner) **\*\*[Likewise, if we claim to believe the Bible is the very word of God and even infallible; but that only some specific group of men or a pope can rightly interpret the Bible— then we will develop a conception of Christianity that is radically foreign to the Bible!] \*\*REALITY: Biblical Christianity can only be built on Sola Scriptura!**

### **WHAT the Doctrine of SOLA SCRIPTURA Does Not Say!**

*First of all, it is not a claim that the Bible contains all knowledge.* The Bible is not exhaustive in every detail. John 21:25 speaks to the fact that there are many things that Jesus said and did that are not recorded in John, or in fact in any book in the world because the whole books of the world could not contain it. **But the Bible does not have to be exhaustive to function as the sole rule of faith for the Church.** We do not need to know the color of Thomas' eyes. We do not need to know the menu of each meal of the Apostolic band for the Scriptures to function as the sole rule of faith for the Church... etc.

*Secondly, Sola Scriptura is not a denial of the Church's authority to teach God's truth.* [We are speaking here of the Church, the BRIDE of Christ— not the Harlot!] I Timothy 3:15 describes the Church as "the pillar and foundation of the truth." The truth is in Jesus Christ and in His Word. **The Church teaches truth** [Truth: CHRIST as revealed in the Word of God and illuminated by the Holy Spirit upon the Word!] **and calls men to Christ** and, in so doing, functions as the pillar and foundation thereof. **The Church does not add revelation or rule over Scripture.** The Church being the bride of Christ listens to the Word of Christ, which is found in God-breathed Scripture.

**[BEWARE: Cults, Harlot Churches and those who value their opinions over the pure revealed Word of God ADD to and/or deny or subtract from the Word of God and place themselves and/or their leaders OVER the Word of God.]**

*Thirdly, Sola Scriptura is not a denial that God's Word has been spoken.* Apostolic preaching was authoritative in and of itself. Yet, the Apostles proved their message from Scripture, as we see in Acts 17:2, and 18:28, and John commended those in Ephesus for testing those who claimed to be Apostles, Revelation 2:2. The Apostles were not afraid to demonstrate the consistency between their teaching and the Old Testament.

*And, finally, Sola Scriptura is not a denial of the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding and enlightening the Church.* The doctrine of Sola Scriptura, simply stated, is that **the Scriptures and the Scriptures alone are sufficient to function as the regula**

***fide*, the "rule of faith" for the Church.** All that one must believe to be a Christian is found in Scripture and in no other source. That which is not found in Scripture is not binding upon the Christian conscience. To be more specific, note the following definition:

The Bible claims to be the sole and sufficient rule of faith for the Christian Church. The Scriptures are not in need of any supplement. Their authority comes from their nature as God-breathed revelation. Their authority is not dependent upon man, Church or council. The Scriptures are self-consistent, self-interpreting, and self-authenticating. **The Christian Church looks at the Scriptures as the only and sufficient rule of faith and the Church is always subject to the Word, and is constantly reformed thereby.** (The above points are from James R. White; with added comments in brackets)

**A.A. Hodge asks and answers: "What arguments do the Scriptures themselves afford in favor of the doctrine that they are the only infallible rule of faith?"**

**1.**— The Scriptures always speak in the name of God, and command faith and obedience. **2.**— Christ and his apostles always refer to the written Scriptures, then existing, as authority, and to no other rule of faith whatsoever.— Luke 16:29; 10:26; John 5:39; Romans 4:3; 2 Timothy 3:15. **3.**— The Bereans are commended for bringing all questions, even apostolic teaching, to this test.— Acts 17:11; see also Isaiah 8:16. **4.**— Christ rebukes the Pharisees for adding to and perverting the Scriptures.— Matthew 15:7-9; Mark 7:5-8; see also Revelation 22:18, 19, and Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Joshua 1:7.

## **THE TRADITIONS OF MAN— The World is in United Approval!**

**For 2013, Fat Tuesday and Ash Wednesday are past. Lent is here and Easter is coming!** Easter is a day that is honored by nearly all of contemporary Christianity! **Churches and pastors have decreed that Easter** is the day to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In Evangelical/Bible-believing Churches, Easter often involves a church service at sunrise; and an Easter egg hunt, etc. **'Easter sermons' are packed with references about Easter as if it is absolute Bible truth that Easter = the Resurrection!**

**Never mind that, in reality, Easter has nothing (ZERO) to do with our LORD JESUS CHRIST! Does God give us the liberty to substitute our well intended human ideas in place of Scripture's divine revelation?**

### **A little HISTORY behind Man's Beloved traditions!**

**Long before the Crucifixion and Resurrection** of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, history records that the festival of "Easter" or "Ishtar," was a day that commemorated the supposed resurrection of one of the gods of the ancient world. (**Note:** This information is easily discovered from Encyclopedias and from books like, *The Two Babylons*, by Alexander Hislop; and from various **pro-holiday** books, etc.) ***These ancient religious practices were brought into Christendom with NO Biblical warrant. No one did more to***

**accomplish this than did the Emperor Constantine.** The following is not a 'Christian site'... but has some fascinating information about Constantine: [http://www.themystica.com/mystica/articles/c/christ\\_constantine\\_sol\\_invictus.html](http://www.themystica.com/mystica/articles/c/christ_constantine_sol_invictus.html)

**TRADITIONS OF MAN: Ash Wednesday marks the first day, or the start of the season of Lent,** which begins 40 days prior to Easter (Sundays are not included in the count). Ash Wednesday/Lent **is a time to prepare** for Easter by observing a period of fasting, moderation and spiritual discipline. During Ash Wednesday services, the minister will lightly rub the sign of the cross with ashes onto the foreheads of worshipers. The practice, which dates from the early Middle Ages, is common among Roman Catholics, Anglicans and Episcopalians, and many Lutherans. It has also been adopted by some Methodists and Presbyterians. More and more Evangelicals, including Baptists, are getting on board with the traditions of man.

**TRADITIONS OF MAN—** Easter is NEVER, ever biblically associated with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Thus, a few of us choose to use the term **“Resurrection Day”** rather than “Easter” when referring to a Biblical remembrance of Christ’s resurrection. **Again, Easter is NOT mentioned, promoted, or observed by Christians in the Bible!**

**THUS IT IS ASTOUNDING that Easter has such a POWERFUL grip on even genuine Christians— HOW DID IT HAPPEN? WHY DOES SOMETHING SO PLAINLY NON-BIBLICAL REMAIN SACRED AND DEEPLY DEFENDED BY CHRISTIANS?**

**How it happened and remains ingrained is shockingly simple:**

1. We like to reserve for ourselves the right to determine what is and is not acceptable in worship.
2. **If we practice something and if we don't see any harm or wrong in it— that settles it! It's our decision.**
3. IF WE ARE PLEASED with something and if we are sincerely doing it as worship to God— therefore God must be pleased, even though it is contrary to or foreign to what He has revealed and/or commanded.
4. **MOREOVER, we have a natural dislike for God's absolute authority.**
5. We are easy prey for deceptions, even as was Eve.
6. **We easily fall in love with our ideas— as Cain with his offering **and as Israel** with their golden calf.**
7. **And it seems that many pastors** today take their cue from Aaron, the great pragmatic facilitator, who apparently believed that his calling was to please the congregation rather than to obey God! (Exodus 32:1-6)

**But some claim that Easter IS in the Bible!**

**Yes, the word "Easter" is recorded once in the KJV.** In Acts 12, we learn that the death of the apostle James by King Herod so pleased the Jews that the apostle Peter was also taken prisoner by Herod. The plan was to later deliver him to the Jews. **Verse 3 says,** “Then were the *days of unleavened bread.*” **Now read verse 4:** “And when he [Herod] had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four

quaternions of soldiers to keep him; **intending after *Easter*** to bring him forth to the people.”

**QUESTION:** DOES THIS VERSE GIVE US Biblical authority for celebrating Easter as a Christian holiday or holy day for the resurrection of Jesus?

**REALITY:** The word translated *Easter* in the KJV is the Greek word ***pascha*** (derived from the Hebrew word *pesach*; **and it is always means and is translated as **Passover****. There is no original Greek word for Passover; for this reason, we find a *Hebrew* word used in the Greek New Testament. Other translations correctly render this word *Passover*.

**QUANTAM LEAP:** **Even if** one bows to the ‘KJV is the ONLY true Bible CROWD’ and grants that Herod indeed intended to speak of the pagan Easter— there is still ZERO connection between Easter and anything connected to Jesus Christ.

**REALITY:** **There are no verses, anywhere in the Bible, that hint, suggest, authorize or endorse the keeping of the Easter celebration. There is zero Biblical connection of anything ‘Easter’ to Jesus. Moreover,** the Bible says nothing about celebrating the death and resurrection of Jesus by means of sun rise services, Lent, eggs and egg hunts, baskets of candy, etc. **The histories of all of all these ‘Easter traditions’** are found in Babylon, Rome and/or later in the histories of various churches— but not in the Word of God! [Yes, the Old Testament does CONDEMN the worship of Tammuz and the worship of the sun at a sunrise service. (Ez. 8:7-18) There are no Sunrise Services in the New Testament as a way of responding to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ!]

**Nevertheless, many argue that participating in the various Easter traditions of man *is harmless, because today we don’t connect them to their Babylonian Mystery Religion roots.*****RESPONSE:** I suspect that there are many things we can say so as to justify this or some other HUMAN tradition.

**HOWEVER, the point of this article is ONLY that there is NO BIBLICAL WARRANT** (justification) to connect any of the Easter traditions with anything relating to the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**No Biblical warrant? What does it matter? BESIDES, we have** a great host of the world’s most respected preachers, who have BIG churches and ministries (with Bibles in hand), preaching EASTER! That makes it OK! **Moreover, we believe** that we accomplish much good by our traditions. **We set forth** our statistics of how many we say we got saved at an Easter egg hunt, etc. — that settles it. End of story. We are right and it is indeed our decision to do things our way. **Besides,** we ‘prayed about it; and we have ‘peace’ about it!

**QUESTIONS:** **1. If plain Bible truth is expendable in one area— what about in other areas as well? 2. If the Bible is not our infallible guide and rule** for doctrine and practice in one area— maybe it should not be in other areas as well! Which ones? **3. If we and our traditions get to decide what is and is not**

acceptable doctrine and practice— is anything not left subject to us? 4. IF we and our beloved traditions are embraced instead of obedience to the Word of God— that is making our will sovereign over God’s will!

**AGAIN: The real CORE SUBJECT of this article is not Lent or EASTER! RATHER, this article is about our attitude toward the Word of God!**

## **TRAGIC REALITY IN THE CHURCHES TODAY:**

MULTITUDES believe EVOLUTION rather than Biblical creation. They trust their experience rather than the Scriptures and their traditions over the Word of God. Psychology is seen as more relevant than the Word of God. Television is more true (and exciting) than the Bible. They believe their preachers even when they contradict the Bible.

**The reality is that if you and I really believed that the Bible is the authoritative Word of God, we would live very different lives and be very different people: WE WOULD BE OVERFLOWING WITH LOVE, HOLINESS, PURITY, FORGIVENESS, COMPASSION and EVANGELISTIC ZEAL.**

**The Bible says that** *“for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned”* (Matthew 12:36-37). **If we really believed that, every one of us would not say half the things we do say.**

**The Bible teaches that** unbelievers will be condemned to an eternity in Hell (Revelation 20:14-15). **If we really believed that,** we would be spending much more time on our knees in prayer. And we would be pleading with people to make right with God with a sincerity and conviction that would convince many that we actually believed what we were saying.

**The Bible teaches that** Jesus is coming soon and at a time when we least expect Him (1Thessalonians 5:2-3). Yet the vast majority of “Christians” live as though He is never coming back. **The Bible reveals that** God knows and sees everything all the time and yet we act as though God does not know or see what we do in secret and that He is unaware of our deceit, lies and hypocrisy.

**We need a fresh reverence, love and respect for and submission to the Bible.** It should not be the basis of speculation and debate but rather of obedience and practice. We need preachers who will unreservedly commit to the Bible, the whole Bible and nothing but the Bible. We need men who will “preach the word” (2Timothy 4:2) without fear or favor. We need Christians who are humble enough to believe God’s Word, no matter what others say or think. And we need churches that are committed to actually expect their members to live according to the Bible. **In short - we need to get back**

**to the Bible— back to Sola Scriptura!** (Several of the above paragraphs are drawn from Anton Bosch.)

## **SOLA SCRIPTURA: WHAT DOES IT MATTER?**

**1. IT DOES NOT MATTER AT ALL— IF THE BIBLE IS NOT THE SOLE RULE OF FAITH! \*\* BUT IF 'SOLA SCRIPTURA' is true— then we must line up with Scripture.**

**2. This is not a new problem— Satan's first strategy was to call into question the goodness of God and the absolute authority of God's pure Word to Adam and Eve!**

**SOLA SCRIPTURA—** “The doctrine of sola scriptura, simply stated, is that **the Scriptures and the Scriptures alone are sufficient to function as the *regula fide*, the "rule of faith" for the Church.** All that one must believe to be a Christian is found in Scripture and in no other source. That which is not found in Scripture is not binding upon the Christian conscience. To be more specific, The Bible claims to be the sole and sufficient rule of faith for the Christian Church.

**The Scriptures are not in need of any supplement. Their authority comes from their nature as God-breathed revelation. Their authority is not dependent upon man, Church or council. The Scriptures are self-consistent, self-interpreting, and self-authenticating.**

***The Christian Church looks at the Scriptures as the only and sufficient rule of faith and the Church is always subject to the Word, and is constantly reformed thereby.*** (James R. White)

**MARTIN LUTHER, “I'll trust in God's unchanging Word till soul and body sever. For though all things shall pass away, His Word shall stand forever!”**

### **IMPORTANT FINAL NOTE:**

**1.** NEITHER receive nor reject the teaching of this article based on anything other than — DOES IT AGREE with the Word of God! **2. PERSONALLY search the Scriptures** to see if these things are true according to the Word of God! (Acts 17:10-12) **3.** As a pastor, I am called to seek to set forth Biblical truth; I am called to seek to live out Biblical truth. It is the HOLY SPIRIT'S work to apply the Word of God to individual hearts! **4.** “Believer Priests!”— **let us all RECEIVE one another; and** let us each open the Word of God and hear, heed, and LIVE BY His every Word! (Matthew 4:4)

Grace to you! / James Bell / [www.southsidegallatin.org](http://www.southsidegallatin.org)

## **SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES!**

**1. Ladies Bible Study— ‘LORD, HEAL MY HURTS!’— Tuesdays @ 10:00AM! Call the church — 615-452-5951**

**2. WEDNESDAYS: PRAYER SERVICE at 7:00PM! / YOUTH: Wednesdays, 6-8pm @ Adam and Bethany’s home.**

**3. Thursdays @ 6:30pm: OUTREACH VISITATION**

**4. EVERY SATURDAY @ 8:00am: Men’s Fellowship and Bible Study**

### **Sunday Schedule for February 24, 2013**

**1. 9:30am- Sunday School /**

**2. 10:45am- Morning Worship / Children’s Church**

**3. NO Noon Fellowship Meal OR Early Afternoon Service on 2/24**

**4. Bethany Troutt’s Baby Shower, 2:00 - 4:00pm / Fellowship Hall  
TXT/call RSVP 615-448-8882, Shawn Lilly**