

GROW IN GRACE

NEWSLETTER

Volume 44b, No. 12, March 26, 2019 / Southside Baptist Church / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / **The Grow in Grace Newsletter is a WEEKLY Bible Study**, plus local church news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church; and is sent forth with the desire to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide), in the experience of 2 Peter 3:18. ***"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Savior JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."***

SCRIPTURE ALONE— Does God's Word Matter?

A. A. Hodge, wisely states, "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."** Charles Hodge states, "...The Word of God, as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only infallible rule of faith and practice."

What is the importance of Sola Scriptura? Loraine Boettner declares: "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." THIS BRINGS UP ANOTHER QUESTION: **What is the extent of Sola Scriptura? And... what the doctrine of Sola Scriptura does not say:** (The following is edited from James R. White)

***** *Sola Scriptura 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; [nor] 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.

***** *Sola Scriptura is not a denial of the Church's authority to teach God's truth.*** 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 and calls men to Christ and, in so doing, functions as the pillar and foundation thereof. **The true Church does not add revelation or rule over Scripture.** The true Church being the bride of Christ listens to the Word of Christ, which is found in God-breathed Scripture.

[NOTE: Cults, Harlot Churches and those who value their opinions over the pure revealed Word of God ADD to and/or deny or subtract from and place themselves and/or their leaders; and/or their TRADITIONS OVER the Word of God. Examples of such: Mormonism, Catholicism, Jehovah's Witnesses, and a growing host of Evangelicals.]

***** *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. [Note: Ephesians 2:19-22—¹⁹Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; ²⁰**And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;** ²¹In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: ²²In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. **[Apostles = New Testament] / [Prophets = Old Testament]**

******And, finally, Sola Scriptura is not a denial of the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding and enlightening the Church.***

What then is Sola Scriptura? The doctrine of Sola Scriptura, simply stated, is that **the Scriptures and the Scriptures alone are sufficient to function as 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, I provide 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.

In Outlines of Theology, 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?”

1st. The Scriptures always speak in the name of God, and command faith and obedience.

2nd. 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; Rom. 4:3; 2 Tim. 3:15.

3rd. The Bereans are commended for bringing all questions, even apostolic teaching, to this test. — Acts 17:11; see also Isa. 8:16.

4th. Christ rebukes the Pharisees for adding to and perverting the Scriptures. — Matt. 15:7-9; Mark 7:5-8; see also Rev. 22:18, 19, and Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Josh. 1:7.

“DOES GOD’S WORD MATTER REALLY MATTER TO ME?”

ONCE AGAIN, Fat Tuesday and Ash Wednesday have passed; we are in the midst of what is called Lent, and

Easter is coming! Easter is a day that is honored by nearly all of contemporary Christianity! Denominations, Churches, and pastors have ALL 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 even an Easter egg hunt, and **Easter sermons, packed with references about Easter as if it is Bible truth that Easter = the Resurrection!**

Well, does Easter have anything to do with our LORD JESUS CHRIST? What can we learn from history? More importantly, what can we learn from the Word of God? **Does it matter? HERE'S A BIT OF HISTORY:**

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. This god was called "Tammuz," and he was believed to be the only son of the moon-goddess and the sun-god. **In Genesis**, one of Noah's sons was Ham; Ham's son was Cush; and Nimrod was a grandson of Ham. The traditions of men claim that Cush married a woman named Semiramis; and to Cush and Semiramis was born Nimrod. After the death of his father, Nimrod married his own mother and became a powerful King.

This much IS sure, as Genesis 10:8-10 reads as follows: "And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar."

History records that Nimrod became a god to the people; and Semiramis, his wife and mother, became a powerful Queen of ancient Babylon. Nimrod was eventually killed by an enemy and his body was supposedly cut in pieces and sent to various parts of his kingdom. Semiramis told the people of Babylon that Nimrod had ascended to the sun and was now to be called "**Baal, the sun god.**" Queen Semiramis also proclaimed that Baal would be present on earth in the form of a flame, whether candle or lamp, when used in worship. Semiramis claimed that she was immaculately conceived and basically set up herself as a goddess. She taught that the moon was a goddess. She further claimed that she came down from the moon in a giant moon egg that fell into the Euphrates River. **This was to have happened at the time of** the first full moon after the spring equinox. Semiramis became known as "Ishtar" which is pronounced "Easter," and her moon egg became known as "Ishtar's" egg." Ishtar soon became pregnant and claimed that it was the rays of the sun-god Baal that caused her to conceive. **The son that she brought forth was named Tammuz.** Tammuz was believed to be the son of the sun-god, Baal. One day Tammuz was killed by a wild pig. Queen Ishtar told the people that Tammuz was now ascended to his father, Baal, and that the two of them would be with the worshippers in the sacred candle or lamp flame.

As time went on, Ishtar, who was now worshipped as the "Mother of God and Queen of Heaven," continued to build her mystery religion. The queen told the worshippers that when Tammuz was killed by the wild pig, some of his blood fell on the stump of an evergreen tree, and the stump grew into a full new tree overnight. This made the evergreen tree sacred by the blood of Tammuz. (The green trees became common in Baal worship: Isa. 57:5; Jer. 2:19-20).

Semiramis also proclaimed a forty day period of time of sorrow each year prior to the anniversary of the death of Tammuz. During this time, no meat was to be eaten. Worshippers were to meditate upon the sacred mysteries of Baal and Tammuz as they worshipped. Every year, on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox, a celebration was made. It was celebrated with rabbits and eggs, etc. Also, you may recall that the prophet Ezekiel saw some of the Jews weeping for Tammuz. (Ez. 8:6-18) (**Note:** This information is easily discovered from Encyclopedias and from various **pro-holiday** books.)

REALITY: ***These ancient religious practices*** were brought into Christendom with **NO Biblical warrant. No one did more to accomplish this than did the Emperor Constantine.** It may be a surprise and shock to some, but the truth is that both secular and Biblical histories reveal that Easter has nothing whatsoever to do with the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Nevertheless, Easter has a POWERFUL grip on even genuine Christians— HOW DID IT HAPPEN? Why is it still true for MANY or MOST who will read this article? REALITY:

More than we like to admit, we reserve for ourselves the right to determine what is and is not acceptable in worship. **** **If we practice something and if we don't see any harm or wrong in it— that settles it! It's our decision.** We believe that 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.

**** **MOREOVER, we have a natural dislike for God's absolute authority.** We are easy prey for deceptions, even as was Eve. We easily fall in love with our ideas, even as Cain and even as Israel with their golden calf. **And it seems that many pastors today** take their cue from Aaron, who apparently

believed that his calling was to please the congregation rather than to obey God! (Ex 32:1-6)

PROTEST: Easter IS in the Bible! Yes, the word "Easter" is recorded once in the King James Bible. We find this in Acts 12, where we learn that King Herod began to persecute the Church, culminating in the death of the apostle James. This pleased the Jews so much 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 [sixteen] of soldiers to keep him; **intending after *Easter*** to bring him forth to the people." **Is this verse, Bible authority for celebrating Easter as a Christian holiday or holy day?** In reality, the word translated *Easter* in the KJV is the Greek word ***pascha*** (derived from the Hebrew word *pesach*; there is no original Greek word for *Passover*), **and it always means Passover.** For this reason, we find a *Hebrew* word used in the Greek New Testament. Other translations correctly render this word *Passover*. **There are no verses, anywhere in the Bible, that hint, suggest, authorize or endorse the keeping of the Easter celebration!**

There is no Biblical connection between EASTER and the RESURRECTION of Jesus Christ. 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. It is impossible to show any Biblical support for any of this having any connection to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. **The histories of all of these are found in ancient Babylon, not in the Word of God!**

Nevertheless, many argue that participating in the various Easter traditions *is harmless, because we don't connect them to their Babylonian Mystery Religion roots. (That last phrase is certainly true!)*

I suspect that there are many things we can say so as to justify this or some other tradition.

****** HOWEVER, the point of this article is ONLY that there is NO BIBLICAL WARRANT, no Biblical authority, no Biblical example to connect any of the Easter traditions with anything relating to our Lord Jesus Christ. **Therefore, since there is No Biblical warrant— why will the religious masses and even many sincere Christians celebrate Easter? HERE IS THE UNCOMFORTABLE REALITY:** *** Biblical truth is expendable. → Our beloved traditions are not! *** **Moreover, we have** a great host of the world's most respected preachers, (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** and many will claim, “The Lord led us!” (**See Mark 7:6-9**)**

SERIOUS QUESTIONS:

1. If 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!

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 and ‘successful’ traditions are embraced OVER and instead of obedience to the Word of God isn’t that making our will sovereign over God’s will?

By the way, this is indeed the position of Roman Catholicism— namely that the Bible plus their Church tradition decide what is or is not truth and practice, with their Church and their traditions being in authority over the Word of God!

PLEASE UNDERSTAND: The real bottom line of this article is not Fat Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, Lent, or EASTER!

RATHER, this article is about our attitude toward the Word of God!

It's about whether or not we will be guided solely by the Word of God, quickened by the AUTHOR OF THAT WORD, THE HOLY SPIRIT...

Or, will we guided by the Word of God, unless we and our traditions are different from the revealed Word of God? Let us all confess with 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!”

Let us get back to the God revealed truth of the sure Word of prophecy, God's Holy Word; and let us sit at His feet and worship Him in spirit and in truth. (2 Peter 1:19; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-14; Matthew 4:4; John 4:23-24)

WHAT DOES IT MATTER?

1. IT DOES NOT MATTER AT ALL— IF THE BIBLE IS NOT OUR 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 and absolute authority of God's pure Word to Adam and Eve!

3. When Jesus was on earth, He confronted this issue head on: MARK 7:6-9— “He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. 7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, **teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.** 8 For **laying aside the commandment of God,** ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. 9 And he said unto them, **Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.**”

4. We are presently in a HUGE DOWNGRADE from the Word of God in Evangelical Christendom, for example, in all that relates to gender, sexuality, and marriage. Once again... Church leaders minimize the Word of God and elevate humanistic culture. IF ONE DOES THIS IN ONE AREA, YOU ARE SET UP ON A PATH TO DO IT IN OTHERS!

SOLA SCRIPTURA 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. (James R. White)

Grace and Peace in Christ! James Bell
www.southsidegallatin.org

SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES:

MONDAYS: Jail Ministry— (This ministry is ON HOLD... PRAY FOR opening of doors!)

TUESDAYS: Come and sing every Tuesday night at Gallatin Health Care Nursing Home. Meet at the front door at **5:15PM**.

WEDNESDAYS:

→ 6:30pm— Wednesday CHURCH PRAYER SERVICE → Enter via IRON STEPS, side door. → 6:30pm— Youth Activities and Bible Study— enter, side double doors. → 6:30pm— Young Family Prayer Time! THIS IS a time of Bible study and prayer geared toward **families with children in the nursery and pre-K class.**

***** LADIES BIBLE STUDY—** Next meeting scheduled for **Tuesday, April 2, 2019 @ 11:00am; Continuing in LUKE.** ENTER at the back of the church building, [*Doors open at 10:30am... re-locked at 11:10am*]

***** MEN: EVERY SATURDAY @ 8:00am:** Men's Fellowship/Bible Study! (**STUDY: THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN!**) ENTER AT THE back of Church building... under the drive-thru awning. [**DOORS OPEN FOR FELLOWSHIP, Juice, coffee, Hardee's biscuits & Donuts at 7:30am!**]

****** SHARE the Preaching of the Word of God!**

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SUNDAY SERVICES, MARCH 31

9:30am— Sunday School Classes for All Ages

10:45am— Sunday Morning Worship Service

SPECIAL NOTES FOR SUNDAY:

******* March 31— 6:00pm... 5th Sunday Evening PRAISE & Worship!**

This is an evening for EVERYONE to join in the SHARING OF BIBLE VERSES, and/or the sharing of Hymns, (solo, duet, trio, etc); and congregational singing. This month we will emphasize: "What A Mighty God We Serve!" // Please inform Adam or Bradley of your desires/plans to sing or share Scripture!

