

Lesson 5: “*Sola Scriptura*” → by Scripture Alone

Memory Text: “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12, NKJV)

Scripture as the Ruling Norm

- Paul wants us to be unified in the Spirit and Christ (1 Corinthians 1:10-17). Let us not evaluate or judge each other (4:1-4). For God will bring to light everything hidden thing in our hearts at the final judgement (v5). Let us not become arrogant but hold fast to the teachings of Jesus (v6).
- The people searched the scriptures daily to determine if what Paul and Silas preached was true (Acts 17:10-11).

The Unity of Scripture

- One of the qualifications Paul has for an elder, is someone who holds fast to the teachings of scripture and the ability to encourage and correct those who contradict its teachings (Titus 1:9).
- Paul urges Timothy to hold fast to the teachings and gospel of Christ he has shared with him (2 Timothy 1:13).

The Clarity of Scripture

- The Pharisees misunderstood Old Testament scriptures about the Messiah, the Corner Stone that the builders rejected (Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10)
- When the Pharisees tried tripping up Jesus, He explained to them that scripture was clear (Matthew 19:1-6).
- Jesus’ healing ministry was consistent with what Old Testament scriptures declared about the Messiah (Matthew 12). However, many Pharisees rejected Jesus as the Messiah because He did not fit into their notion of a Savior. Instead of reevaluating and comparing scriptures with scripture to determine if their understanding.
 - Think about a time when you didn’t understand some texts, only to have them clarified later. What did you learn from that experience that perhaps could help others struggling with something similar?

Scripture Interprets Scripture

- When the disciples where disillusioned after the crucifixion, Jesus went to them (Luke 24:13-35). He reminded them of the Old Testament passages (v25-27). Jesus reviewed with them multiple passages that described what happened at Jesus’ death (v44-47).
 - Think of a doctrine, such as the state of the dead, for which focusing on a few select passages could lead to error if other passages are ignored. What does this tell us about how important it is to gather and read all that the Bible says about a topic in order to understand best what the Bible teaches?

Sola Scriptura and other Prophets

- God declares the great value of knowing His word (Isaiah 8:11-20). God warns the people through Isaiah to not follow the customs of other people who listen to mediums, wizards, or the dead (v19). We are to test everything against God’s word. If it is not consistent with God’s word then it is not of God. There is no value or light in it (v20).

- This strongly echoes the statements made through Moses (Deuteronomy 13:1-4). Any words that detract from loving the Lord with your whole being should be ignored and are not of God.
- Writing a portion of the bible is not required to be a true prophet. Jesus highly esteems a prophet here who has no writings in the Bible (Matthew 11:11).
 - What does this mean for the ministry of prophets who have not become part of the biblical canon?

Suggested Readings:

Sections of “Biblical Interpretation” (*Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, 64-66)

- The Analogy of Scripture: “Scripture Is Its Own Interpreter,”
- The Consistency of Scripture
- The Clarity of Scripture

“Bible Teaching and Study,” (*Education*, 185–192)

“The Primacy of the Word” (*Selected Messages Book 3*, 29–33)

Discussion Questions:

- How your views on a topic changes after study more passages on the subject?
- What should we do when we come across texts or ideas that appear contradictory to each other in the Bible?
 - How do we work to resolve them?
- Jesus points to a prophet here who has no writings in the Bible (Matthew 11:11).
 - What does this mean for the ministry of prophets who have not become part of the biblical canon?