

**“For The Sake Of Your
Tradition”**



Sola Scriptura

- “100% of the information we need for salvation is found in scripture. This means that doctrines and liturgy not taught in scripture are superfluous to the will of God, and range from optional at best to condemned. All traditions are derived from and measured against scripture” (“Sola Scriptura”, www.bible.ca).
- On the other hand, many religious bodies only exist because of their traditions, whether they are written or orally transmitted. The traditions supersede scripture.

Matthew 15:1-9

“Why do yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition... This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. In vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.”



Early Christian Writers

- The so-called “Church fathers” (writers and church leaders in the time period immediately after the apostles) depended on the scriptures to defend the faith, and copied them with great care in their own material.
- Everything that was considered “oral tradition” at the time always took a back seat to scripture (apostolic tradition).
- There were never any “new” or posthumously produced apostolic works, since the faith was already once for all delivered (Jude 3, 2 Pet. 1:3, 2 Pet. 1:15-21, 1 Tim. 1:3-7, 1 Cor. 4:6).

The Canon



“Far from being hostile to the Bible, the Catholic Church is its true Mother. She determined which are the books of religion from the many writings circulated as inspired in early Christian ages, assembled them all within the covers of a single book, shielded it from destruction... and translated it into many languages long before Protestantism saw the light of day. If she had not declared the books composing the New Testament to be the inspired word of God, we would not know it... The Church is not the child of the Bible, but its mother.”

-John O'Brien, former president of Notre Dame

The Canon of Scripture

“That which measures up to a standard”

Council of Carthage (397) – Often considered the first assembly to officially canonize the Scriptures



The Canon of Scripture

“That which measures up to a standard”

“You have to understand that the canon was not the result of a series of contests involving church politics... When the pronouncement was made about the canon, it merely ratified what the general sensitivity of the church had already determined. You see, the canon is a list of authoritative books more than it is an authoritative list of books. These documents didn't derive their authority from being selected; each one was authoritative before anyone gathered them together”

(The Case For Christ, Strobel, p. 69).



The Canon of Scripture

“That which measures up to a standard”

Council of Carthage (397)

Eusebius (3rd Century)

Origen (2nd-3rd Centuries)

Clement, Tertullian (2nd-3rd Cent.)

Marcion (Mid 2nd Century)

Irenaeus (Early 2nd Century)

Polycarp

- He might have been born as early as 55 AD, and lived to around 155 AD.
- Irenaeus noted that Polycarp was a personal student of the apostle John and was familiar with other witnesses of the resurrected Jesus.



- He did not “canonize” the New Testament, but he did quote from a majority of NT books and epistles, indicating both familiarity with and high regard for the scriptures.
- His closeness to the apostolic period also gives credibility to his use of NT scriptures, as does his incredible story of faith and fidelity.



The Sequence Of Revelation

Oral teachings of Jesus (John 17:14-17, John 12:44ff)

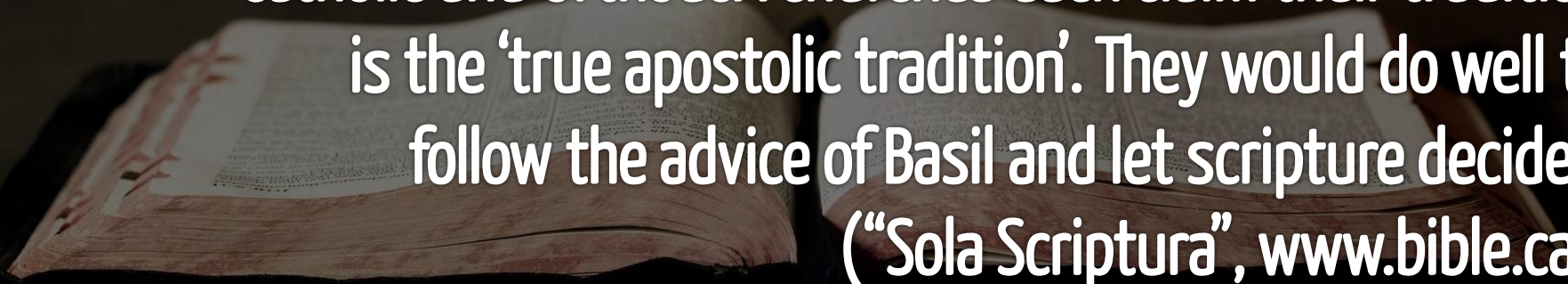


Oral teachings of the apostles based on inspired recollection
(John 16:5-15, 14:25-26, 1 Cor. 15:1-3, 1 Thess. 2:13)



Oral teachings of Jesus/apostles written for dissemination (2
Pet. 1:3, Eph. 3:3-5, John 21:24, Luke 1:1-4)

“When Basil and the Arians both claimed their tradition was correct, Basil said, ‘let God-inspired Scripture decide between us; and on whichever side be found doctrines in harmony with the word of God, in favour of that side will be cast the vote of truth.’ (Basil, Letter 189, 3) This proves that scripture was viewed by the Church Fathers as the supreme court of determining truth, when traditions contradict each other. Today, the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches each claim their tradition is the ‘true apostolic tradition’. They would do well to follow the advice of Basil and let scripture decide!” (“Sola Scriptura”, www.bible.ca).



“What About 2 Thessalonians 2:15?”

- Does the Bible sometimes use the word “tradition”? Of course! But be careful not to add a meaning to the word that is not warranted by the context!
 - Traditions found in scripture are not the same thing as human traditions that developed and collected over time!
 - 2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Thessalonians 2:15 and 3:6 mean the same thing: scripture is, in a sense, a tradition. It is a teaching that is passed down from one generation to the next.
 - Manmade tradition should never supersede God’s Word (Colossians 2:8, 2 Timothy 4:2-5, Mark 7:7-9).

