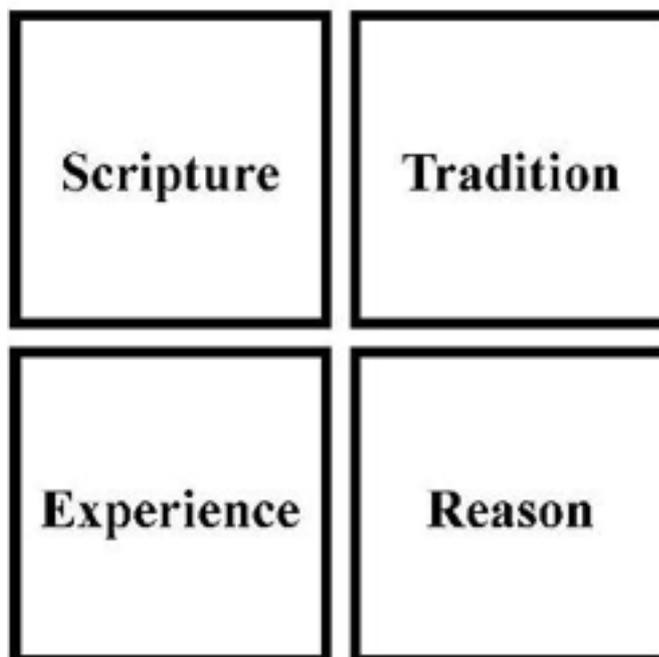


## Foundations of Faith – Scripture’s clarity and sufficiency

Key Question: How does God act in the world and make himself known?



**What does Jesus have to say about each of these in the following passages?**

Matthew 7:15-23; Matthew 4:3-4; Mark 7:5-13; Mark 12:18-27.

Key reformation conviction: *sola scriptura*. It does *not* mean . . .

It *does* mean...**1 Timothy 3:15-17**

**1) Scripture is sufficient for . . .**

**2) Scripture is sufficient for . . .**

**Case study 1:** Ellie has just moved into town and is weighing up which church to go to. She goes along to a lively church where the time of worship stirs up real emotion within her, such that she goes up to the front at the climactic altar call. The teaching is not so much grounded in the Bible but more the stories, experiences and revelations of the speaker. But she stays there as she finds herself going up to the front most weeks and loving the emotional experience she gets each week. She says you must hear the latest revelation the speaker has received.

**Case study 2:** John has attended the same church for 20 years. The only instrument played is the organ, and everyone either comes dressed in suits or else they are turned away at the door. Those who do attend churches with contemporary instruments are seen as those who have failed to treat God with respect and have left the faith. The Bible is treated as a book filled with doctrinal information and the phrase “God told me...” would be considered dangerous.

**Key Conviction:** The Spirit of God and the Word of God must *never* be separated.

Ephesians 6:17      Hebrews 3:7

### **3) Scripture is sufficient for . . .**

The sufficiency of scripture as expressed in 1) and 2) is not usually directly attacked. Instead the contention is that to *understand* scripture we need something extra. A classic Catholic go-to: 2 Peter 3:16.

**Case Study 3:** Erasmus used scripture itself to undermine the sufficiency of scripture. He reasoned this because the Bible speaks of a *transcendent* God, and this God chooses to conceal things. He also made the point that the Bible cannot be enough to understand what God wants from us otherwise there would not be so many disagreements about what it said. (Deuteronomy 29:29)

Luther's response was a distinction between:

a) External clarity

b) Internal clarity

The clarity of scripture does *not* mean . . .

Instead it means . . .

**The main things are the plain things, and the plain things are the main things.**

What difference does accepting this doctrine have to . . .

i) the place of the Bible in church? Compare how church may have been different before the Reformation.

ii) our attitude to children? Deuteronomy 6:6-7

iii) the place of preaching in the church? If scripture is clear then why is preaching necessary?

**\*\*\*BUT\*\*\***

**Why is it so hard to believe this in our hearts and to live this way?**

What application is there for you in the way you approach the Bible?

What difference does it make to see the Bible as a window into another world instead of a boring portrait on the wall?