



Lenten Apologetics Bible Study Series



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Weekly Topics



- **March 7th**
 - **"Why do I need the Church when I have the Bible?"**
- **March 14th**
 - "Is the Papacy in the Bible?"
- **March 21st**
 - "Why do Catholics Pray to Mary and the Saints?"
- **March 28th**
 - "Is the Eucharist Truly the Body and Blood of Christ?"
- **April 4th**
 - "Is Purgatory in the Bible?"
- **April 11th**
 - "Why the Catholic Church?"



Why do I need the Church when I have the Bible?



- Definition of Apologetics
- The Church
- Canon of the Bible
- Bible Alone (Sola Scriptura)
- Faith Alone (Sola Fide)
- Interpreting Scripture
- The Church and the Bible

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Apologetics



- “In the beginning...God.” (Gen. 1:1)
- Greek word for “defense” is apologia
 - “Apology” is derived from it
 - Admission of wrong (modern English)
 - Defense or justification of a belief (classical definition)
- “Apologetics” refers to the reasonable defense of the Christian faith

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Apologetics (Cont.)



- Faith is not opposed to reason
- Reason, rightly understood, is a support to faith
 - Love God with all our mind (Luke 10:27)
- Jesus laid the foundation for Christian apologetics
 - He presented many “proofs” of His resurrection (Acts 1:3)
 - Appeared to “doubting” Thomas (John 20:24-29)

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Apologetics (Cont.)



- Eyewitness (legal or scientific) testimony used to proclaim the gospel (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 2:32)
- Saint Paul engaged in apologetics
 - Sermon on the Areopagus (Acts 17:22-34)
 - He was determined to “become all things to all, to save at least some” (1 Corinthians 9:22)
- We should seek to follow his example in sharing and defending our Catholic faith

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Apologetics – Related Scripture



- Apologia (apology/apologetics)
 - Acts 22:1; 25:16; 1 Corinthians 9:3; Philippians 1:7, 16
- Dialeptomai (dialogue)
 - Acts 17:2, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8-10
- Suzeteo (disputing, debating about the truth of Christianity)
 - Mark 12:28 (Jesus) Acts 9:29 (Paul); 15:7 (Church council at Jerusalem)
- CCC, paragraphs 31-49 and 156-159

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The Church



- Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325 in response to the Arian heresy: “We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church” (Nicene Creed)
- Four marks (qualities or characteristics) which help to identify the true Church of Jesus Christ:
 - The Church is One
(Jn 10:16, 17:17-23; Eph 4:3-6; 1Cor 1:10, 4:4, 12:13; CCC 866)
 - The Church is Holy
(John 17:17, 19; Titus 2:14; CCC 867)
 - The Church is Catholic (Greek = Universal)
(Mt 24:14; Mk 16:15; Acts 1:8; CCC 868)
 - The Church is Apostolic
(Jn 15:16, 20:21; Mt 16:18, 28:18-20; Eph 4:11; Tit 1:5; CCC 869)

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The Church is One



- Unity in belief
 - Same teachings and traditions that were given to the Twelve Apostles (John 10:11-16, John 21:15-17)
- Unity in worship
 - Christ prayed “that they may be one” (John 17:11, John 17:22-23)
- Unity in government or leadership
 - One visible head of government and leadership, the Apostolic College with Peter and his successors as its head (Lk 22:32; Jn 21:17; Eph 4:11; CCC 813)

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The Church is Holy



- Holiness in its founder - Jesus Christ
- Holiness in its principles
 - Jesus prayed for the holiness of His Church, to “Sanctify them” (John 17:17), “consecrated in truth” (John 17:19)
- Holiness in its members
 - Consisting of His own sheep who have been purified for Him as an acceptable people (Titus 2:14)
 - There will be both holy and unholy people in the Church until the end of times (Mt 13:3-8, 24-30)
- Holiness in its miracles
 - (Healings, Eucharistic miracles, the Incorruptibles, etc.)

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The Church is Catholic



- From the Greek word *katholikos* meaning general or universal
 - St. Ignatius of Antioch to the Smyrnaeans around A.D. 110: “Wheresoever the bishop shall appear, there let the people be, even as where Jesus is, there is the Catholic Church”
- The Catholic Church consists of a universality in time and in place
 - The gospel will continue to be preached throughout the whole world until the end of time (Mt. 24:14), to the whole creation throughout all the world (Mk. 16:15), and by the power of the Holy Spirit to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8)

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The Church is Apostolic



- The true church must always teach the identical doctrines that were originally delivered to it by Peter and the Apostles (Mt. 28:18-20)
- Her ministers must derive their powers from the Apostles by an uninterrupted chain of succession
- Peter is the rock upon which Christ built His Church (Mt. 16:18) (the successor of Peter is the Bishop of Rome)
- Any church claiming to be Christ’s own must be able to trace its lineage in unbroken continuity back to the apostles (only the Catholic Church can make this claim)

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Catholic Priesthood Authority



- **Priesthood of the faithful**
(Heb 5:1-5; Rev 1:6, 54:9-10; 1 Pet 2:5, 9; CCC 784, 1119, 1546)
 - Christ gives the faithful a share in His priesthood through the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation
- **Ministerial priesthood**
(Rom 12:4; Jn 20:21-23; Lk 24:47; Mt 28:18-20; CCC 1547)
 - The priesthood of Christ is made present in a special way in the Church through the ministerial priesthood, conferred through the Sacrament of Holy Orders (CCC 1539, 1544, 1547, 1554)
- **True priesthood offers sacrifice**
(Heb. 5:1, 8:3)
 - Catholic priests offer the sacrifice of the Mass for the salvation of souls and for the glory of God

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Catholic Church Holy Sacrifice of the Mass



- **All gather together**
 - Eucharistic assembly presided invisibly by Christ
 - Bishop or priest acting in the person of Christ the head (all present participate in some way)
- **Liturgy of the Word**
 - Readings from OT/NT and Gospels, homily, prayers
- **Liturgy of the Eucharist**
 - **Transubstantiation:** The substance of bread and wine change into the substance of the Body and Blood of Christ under the appearances or “species” of bread and wine

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Canon of the Bible



- Greek word *biblia*
 - The Books
- Collection (Library) of many books or writings (Scriptures)
- Genesis (1300 BC) – First Book of OT
- Revelation (100 AD) – Last Book of NT
- Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic

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Hebrew and Christian Bibles



- NT contains the same 27 books
- Books in OT are different
 - Jews = 24 books
 - “The Twelve” minor prophets = 1 book
 - Protestants = 39 books
 - Catholics = 46
 - Different names used
 - Categorization of some books is different
 - Order of books is different

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Old Testament Comparative Chart



HEBREW BIBLE	Most ORTHODOX BIBLES (similar to the SEPTUAGINT)	CATHOLIC BIBLES	PROTESTANT BIBLES
Torah / Law	Law	Law	Law
Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy
Former Prophets	Historical Books	Historical Books	Historical Books
Joshua Judges Samuel (1&2) Kings (1&2)	Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Kingdoms (=1Sam) 2 Kingdoms (=2Sam) 3 Kingdoms (=1 Kings) 4 Kingdoms (=2 Kings)	Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah <i>Tobit</i> <i>Judith</i> <i>Esther (longer)</i> 1 Maccabees 2 Maccabees	Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther
Later Prophets			
Isaiah Jeremiah Ezekiel The Twelve: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi	1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles 1 ESDRAS 2 Esdras (=Ezra + Neh.) <i>Esther (longer)</i> <i>Judith</i> <i>Tobit</i> 1 Maccabees 2 Maccabees 3 Maccabees [4 Maccabees]		

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Old Testament Comparative Chart (Cont.)



HEBREW BIBLE	Most ORTHODOX BIBLES (similar to the SEPTUAGINT)	CATHOLIC BIBLES	PROTESTANT BIBLES
Writings	Wisdom Books	Wisdom Books	Wisdom Books
Psalms (150) Proverbs Job Song of Solomon Ruth Lamentations Ecclesiastes Esther Daniel Ezra/Nehemiah Chronicles (1&2)	Psalms (151) ODES (w/ Prayer of Manasseh) Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon Job Wisdom of Solomon Sirach, a.k.a. Ecclesiasticus PSALMS OF SOLOMON	Job Psalms (150) Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon Wisdom of Solomon Sirach, a.k.a. Ecclesiasticus	Job Psalms (150) Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon
	Prophets	Prophets	Prophets
	Hosea Amos Micah Joel Obadiah Jonah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi Isaiah Jeremiah Baruch Lamentations Letter of Jeremiah Ezekiel Daniel (longer)	Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Baruch (w/ Letter of Jer.) Ezekiel Daniel (longer) Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi	Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi

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Manuscripts



- No originals exist today
 - Early persecutors destroyed some of the sacred writings
 - Written on papyrus (from the bark of a reed) which perished over time
- Greek (parchment – sheepskin):
 - Sinaitic Manuscript (fourth century)
 - Vatican Manuscript (fourth century)
 - Alexandrine Manuscript (fifth century)
 - Parisian Manuscript (fifth century)
- Oldest Hebrew Manuscript (tenth century)

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How was the Bible Compiled?



- Council of Rome, 382 AD, under direction of Pope Damasus I, compiled first list of OT & NT books
- Council of Hippo, 393 AD, approved same list
- Council of Carthage, 397 AD, under direction of St. Augustine, confirmed and approved work of previous two Councils
- Settled and declared the OT & NT books
- OT was Alexandrian Canon (Septuagint including Deuterocanonicals)
- Pope St. Innocent I approved and closed the 73-book canon in 405 AD

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Alexandrian Canon - Septuagint



- Septuagint (LXX - Latin), “the work of the seventy”
- Reportedly translated from Hebrew to Greek by 70 (or 72) scholars for the Greek-speaking Jews of Alexandria (third century BC)
- Greek was the common language of the Mediterranean – NT written in Greek
- Quoted by Jesus and NT writers (300 quotes from Septuagint)
- Used by Catholics and Orthodox in their Bibles

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Hebrew (Pharisaical) Canon



- OT used by Hebrew-speaking Jews in Palestine
- Canon produced in the city of Jamnia in 90 AD
- Excluded the 7 books of the Deuterocanonicals (Wisdom, Sirach, Judith, Baruch, Tobit, and 1 & 2 Maccabees plus portions of Daniel and Esther)
- Used by Protestants in their Bibles

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Translations



- Original text was Hebrew (Semitic language), Greek, and Aramaic (branch of Semitic)
- Latin (St. Jerome, fourth century) called the Vulgate
- Other approved vernacular translations as early as the seventh century
- First book ever printed (1456 AD) – Gutenberg Bible in Latin
- Rheims NT (1582), Douay OT (1609)
- King James (1611)

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New Testament



- 27 books (the same in virtually all Christian Bibles)
- First book (1 Thessalonians) – 50 AD
- Last book (Revelation or Apocalypse) – 100 AD
- Four Gospels – Good News (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John)
- Acts of the Apostles (written by Luke)
- “Epistles” are letters of various kinds

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The Bible Alone



- *sola scriptura* (Latin: by Scripture alone)
- Protestant principle advanced during the Reformation (revolution)
- Notion of *sola scriptura* is not found in Scripture itself
 - *Nowhere does the Bible claim to be the sole, sufficient rule of faith for Christians*
- Goes against history and common sense

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The Bible Alone?



- Where did your Bible come from and does it contain all the books?
- Who decided which books should be included and which should be excluded?
- How were the people saved before the Bible was canonized in the fourth century?
- How did the people receive the Word of God in Sacred Scripture prior to the invention of the printing press?

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The Bible Alone? (Cont.)



- Why didn't Christ command His disciples to write down what He taught?
- Why did only five of the twelve apostles write books of the Bible?
- If the Catholic Church is not an infallible teacher, how do you know which writings are divinely inspired and which translation speaks divine truth?

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The Bible Alone? (Cont.)



- Why did Christ tell the apostles to go forth and preach (Mt 28:20) rather than write His gospel?
- If each individual reader is guided by the Holy Spirit to interpret correctly, why are there 30,000+ denominations disagreeing with each other about what the Sacred Texts mean?

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The Bible Alone? (Cont.)



- If you believe one translation is the word of God and your neighbor believes a different translation is, how do you know which (if either) speaks for God?

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Justification by Faith Alone



- *sola fide* (Latin: by faith alone)
- Principle advanced by Martin Luther during the Protestant Reformation (revolution)
- Martin Luther added the word *allein* (alone in English) to his German translation of Romans 3:28 (viz., “we maintain that a man is justified by *faith alone* without works of law”)

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Faith Alone (Cont.)



- Martin Luther's response to the Catholic hierarchy when accused of deliberately adding to Scripture:
 - “If your Papist makes much useless fuss about the word sola, allein, tell him at once: ‘Dr. Martin Luther will have it so,’ and says, ‘Papist and donkey are one thing...For we do not want to be pupils and followers of the Papist, but their masters and judges.’ ”
 - “Therefore the word allein shall remain in my New Testament, and though all the pope-donkeys should get furious and foolish, they shall not take it out.”

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Not by Faith Alone



- “You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.” (James 2:24)
- Luther's Bible eliminated the books of Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelation because they didn't square with his theology
- It is not faith alone, but faith working in love (formed by charity) which brings about pleasing obedience that is meritorious in God's eyes

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Justification by Grace Alone



- sola gratia (Latin: by grace alone)
- "Our justification comes from the grace of God. Grace is favor, the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to his call to become children of God, adoptive sons, partakers of the divine nature and of eternal life."
(CCC, paragraph 1996) (Ephesians 2:8-9)

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Justification by Christ Alone



- solo Christo (Latin: by Christ alone)
- "No one can merit the initial grace of forgiveness and justification". (CCC, paragraph 2010)
- "Salvation comes from God alone". (CCC, paragraph 169) (Acts 4:12)

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Interpreting Scripture



- Paul says to follow his sound words; guard the truth (2 Tim 1:13)
- No prophecy is a matter of private interpretation (2 Pet 1:20)
- Paul's letters can be difficult to grasp and interpret (2 Pet 3:15-16)
- Chair of Moses (Church authority); observe whatever they tell you (Mt 23:2-3)

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The Church and the Bible



- **Sacred Scripture** (Holy Bible)
 - The books (46 in OT and 27 in NT) which contain the truth of God's revelation, composed by human authors inspired by the Holy Spirit
- **Tradition** (capital "T")
 - The living transmission of the message of the Gospel in the Church (the oral preaching of the Apostles conserved and handed on as the deposit of faith through the apostolic succession in the Church)
- **Magisterium** (teaching authority)
 - The living, teaching office of the Church, whose task it is to give authentic interpretation of the Word of God

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Why do I need the Church when I have the Bible?



- The Catholic Church existed for 300 years before the Canon of Scripture was determined by the Catholic Councils of Rome, Hippo, and Carthage
- The Bible is a Catholic book, thus the Church can authoritatively interpret it in the light of Tradition
- The Bible itself points to Tradition and the Church as authoritative – not Scripture alone
(Mt 16:18-19, 18:17-18, 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-16; Lk 10:16; Jn 14:16, 26, 16:13; 1 Tim 3:15; 1 Cor 11:2; 2 Thess 2:15, 3:6; Acts 20:35)

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Why do I need the Church when I have the Bible? (Cont.)



- Scripture is not fully self-interpreting
(2 Peter 3:15-16; Acts 8:27-30)
- Scripture needs both a wider context of Tradition and a living, authoritative interpreter (the Church) if it is to be rightly understood
- The Church is the pillar and foundation of truth (1 Tim 3:15)

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Question and Answer



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