

Solus Scriptura

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October 26, 2008

I mentioned earlier, when we were studying the doctrine of sola fide, that two of the Reformation cries were especially damaging to the Roman Catholic Church. One was sola fide because by faith alone a person is saved. If that is true, then what that means is [that] the Roman Catholic Church does not save people [and] cannot take away somebody's salvation. Somebody just needs to hear the gospel and believe by faith and [he is] saved apart from any particular denomination or apart from any particular local church. The second great terror of the Roman Catholic Church was the doctrine of sola Scriptura because the Roman Catholic Church believes in [an] entire body of truth called the magisterium, [which] comes from the Church—the writings of the early Church fathers, the conclusions of Church councils, edicts, decrees, papal bulls, papal utterances, papal announcements. What is interesting, and what a lot of Protestants don't understand, is [that] Roman Catholics believe [that] that information is equal in authority [to], and sometimes above the authority of, Scripture.

Imagine in your mind going into a library, a large library, and the shelves are loaded with books. There are books, pamphlets, and folders full of all kinds of decrees [and the] writings of Church fathers and councils. Now, imagine going into that same library and it's completely empty except for one book: the Bible. That is the difference between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. Protestantism believes there is one divine source

of objective information, [which] comes from the Word of God. The Word of God is how we get information to be saved. The Word of God *alone* is the source of all matter of doctrine, faith, and practice.

Now you can imagine why the doctrine of sola Scriptura was a terror to the Roman Catholic Church. If you start reading the Bible, you instantly begin to realize that many of the rituals, practices, and beliefs of Roman Catholicism aren't in the Bible. For instance, the doctrines concerning the sinlessness of Mary, her perpetual virginity, her suffering for our sins, [and] her bodily ascension are found nowhere in the Bible. Purgatory, indulgences, penance, the treasury of merit, the worship and veneration of the saints, icons, and relics are not in there. Praying the rosary, saying Hail Marys, [and] Our Fathers are not in the Bible. Confessing to priests, the celibacy of the priesthood, and almost all the details of the Roman Catholic mass are not found in the Bible. They are all manmade doctrines that, over the years, like barnacles, began to cling to the hull of the Roman Catholic Church until [it] had so many barnacles clinging to [it] that it basically sank into false religion.

While each of the solas challenge certain doctrines and practices of Roman Catholicism, the doctrine of sola Scriptura laid waste to the entire system. The Roman Catholic Church knew this. That is why they didn't want people reading their Bible[s] [and] why they burn[ed] people at the stake for having Bible studies, translating the Bible, preaching the Bible, [and] teaching the Bible. Thus, when young Martin Luther, professor of theology at Wittenberg, began to teach verse-by-verse through the Bible, people were being saved; people were being transformed. The whole city was being transformed. Keep in mind that Luther was a very good Roman Catholic at the beginning. [He] once said that he had not even seen a Bible until he was twenty years old.

During Luther's time, [the] Roman Catholic system was a cesspool of immorality and corruption. Wicked priests were not teaching people the truth—they would [have been] self-condemned if they [had]. The mass was in Latin [and] most people didn't speak Latin. So, even though there are

a few verses and a little bit of truth contained in mass, when it's said in a language you don't understand, it benefits you for nothing. Some of you, probably, grew up in a Roman Catholic church, and can think back to when all the masses were said in Latin. You came [to church], and you just kind of watched. Depending on what the priest was doing, you would stand up, sit down, genuflect, or whatever, but you had no idea what was being said. You were not edified in any way. This is what the Church wanted. Why? [It is] because that's how you control people. If you can keep them in ignorance, you can control people.

At [the] time [of the Reformation], the printing press was a relatively new invention. It was invented in the 1400s, and it was—kind of like the Internet is today—the cutting edge technology for spreading the word back then. Martin Luther, at the beginning, was thinking, “You know, I should make use of the printing press to copy my sermons, write books, and spread the truth throughout Germany.” He wrote feverishly, and created a blizzard of sermons, books, and tracts, which blanketed all Germany and beyond.

Thomas Lindsay, one of Luther's biographers, gives some interesting facts, which he collected [from] Dr. Burkhardt, [an] archivist in Weimar, Germany:

[Burkhardt] tells us that the number of books which were issued from the printing presses in the German language within Germany, from 1480 to 1490, did not exceed 40 a year; that the numbers issued during the first 10 years of the sixteenth century [1500 to 1510] were not greater; and then he gives the exact numbers for individual years.

In the year 1513, the number of books in the German language issued from German presses was 35; in 1514 it was 47; in 1515, 46; in 1516, 55; and in 1517, 37.

Keep in mind [that] 1517 was the year Luther nailed his ninety-five theses to the Castle Church door in Wittenberg. [Lindsay] goes on to say:

Then Luther's printed appeals to the German people began to appear in the shape of sermons, addresses, short tracts, etc., and the German publications of the year 1518 were 71, no less than 20 of which were from Luther's pen; in 1519 the total number of German published books was 111, of which 50 were Luther's; in 1520 the number of printed German books rose to 208, of which 133 were Luther's; while in 1523 the whole number of German books had risen to 498 of which no less than 183 were from Luther's pen.¹

Luther was writing half of everything being printed in Germany. His sermons, tracts, treatises, [in which he was] taking the Bible and addressing it to certain doctrines and issues in society, were impacting all of Germany and beyond. Rome was feeling the shockwaves of Luther's preaching of the Word of God.

You need to realize that Luther was still in [a] transition stage. At first, he began to have questions as he studied the Bible, and the more he studied the Bible, the more he began to have problems with doctrines in the Church. He started off believing the doctrines of the Church *and* the Bible, but then began to realize that the Bible was self-sufficient. Also, keep in mind that Luther was called to Wittenberg to be a professor of theology, not a preacher. The problem [was that] the pastor in the town became ill, and they needed somebody to fill in. So, Luther said, "OK." When he started to preach, people realized he had incredible preaching gifts, and so he slid into the role of pastor and never left. [He] was [both] pastor and professor in Wittenberg.

Luther's biographer describes [Luther's] preaching with these words:

In the convent chapel he had preached to persons who could perhaps appreciate learned discourses but he had now to do with the common rude man, with "raw Saxons" as he said, and

¹Thomas Lindsay, *Luther and the German Reformation* (Stearns Press), n.p.

he knew that the first merit in a sermon is that it can be understood. The people had no Bibles, but most of them knew the Lord's prayer and the Ten Commandments. "The common people heard him gladly." He spoke in plain nervous German.

He gathered collections of German proverbs and many country sayings, and used them as illustrations. He noticed that our Lord used the homeliest illustrations, talking of tilling the ground, of mustard seed, of sparrows and sheep and fish; and he went and did likewise. It is impossible to misunderstand Luther's sermons. Above all, he had a way of making the Bible living, of showing that it was full of histories of men and women who had lived and talked and eaten and slept and married and given in marriage.²

Luther wasn't some sort of heady theologian. When he came out of the university and he stood before the common man, he took complex doctrines that he was understanding from his study of the Scriptures in the original languages, and began to teach them to peasants in simple, understandable language. As Luther studied and preached through books of the Bible, his theology became more and more biblical. He saw more errors in the Roman Catholic Church and [its] practice[s]. He passed down [to the people] the discoveries he was making, showing them [directly] from the Word of God what the [Lord] said. The Reformation was under way.

It's interesting to read [the writings of] secular historians as they try to figure out what caused the Reformation. [They write things like], "There must have been some sort of economic [changes]. We're seeing, economically, that there were certain factors, and there were certain rulers, and [there was] discontent among the nobles. There was the peasant revolt." There was this, and there was that. They're always trying to find out some reason why the Reformation happened. Well, it happened because the Word

²Ibid., pg. 33–34.

of God was unleashed. That's what happened. That's what caused the Reformation.

You see the same thing happening in the life of John Calvin. As Luther is doing his thing in Germany, John Calvin comes to Christ in 1534 in France. Of course, France, then, is strongly Roman Catholic, and he realizes he cannot be a Protestant and live in France without risking his life. So, he goes on a [trip], and he's passing through Geneva, Switzerland. There in Geneva, he decides to stay one night before moving on. But there was a man in the town by the name of William Farel, a very aggressive and passionate Reformer. He had heard of Calvin, had heard how godly Calvin was, and learned how brilliant Calvin was, so he sought him out, found him, and begged Calvin to stay in Geneva and preach the Word. Calvin said, [respectfully], "No," because he didn't want to be a preacher. He wanted to be a theologian. He just wanted to find a place where he could study the Bible, read, and just indulge himself in the Scriptures.

Well, when William Farel heard him say "no," he then called down an imprecation upon [Calvin]. He told him [that] the wrath of God would be upon him [and] would chase him to hell if he didn't preach the Word in Geneva. Calvin was so scared [that] he said, "OK." Calvin, like Luther, began to preach verse-by-verse through books of the Bible in plain, understandable language, and people started getting saved. Their lives were being changed. Those people went out into society, and they changed society. Geneva was being transformed.

Just as problems arose in Germany because of [the spread of God's Word], so it happened in Geneva. Pretty soon, there were the Roman Catholics who didn't like the change, and there were the Protestants who did, and the religious political infighting became so tense that there was a Sunday [when] Calvin refused to administer communion to his people. He said, "Your hearts aren't right within you. You're grumbling, you're complaining, you're angry, you're bitter, you're fighting with one another. We're in no mood here to be giving communion." They got so mad at him that they exiled him from Geneva. He was glad to go.

He left, and then he went to Strasbourg, where he had a very fruitful and pleasant ministry with Martin Bucer. [He] was having a great time there until the consequences of his teaching and [the teaching of] others in Geneva began to have its inroads, and Protestantism finally won the day. William Farel called him up, and said, “Come back to Geneva.” Of course, [Calvin] didn’t want to go. He referred to his time in Geneva as a “cross” and “torture chamber.” Yet Calvin, after praying, felt it was God’s will that he should return to Geneva. Upon returning, Calvin began to preach in the very next verse in the very book and chapter where he [had] left off years previously. It was like he was never gone. [He started back up in] the next verse of Scripture. He kept preaching and preaching, and he basically preached through every book of the Bible. I think there [are] twenty-some volumes of his sermons, expositions through the Word of God. It was if he had never left off. He kept on preaching, and he transformed all of Geneva.

In many people’s minds, if you’re a Calvinist, if you believe in the sovereignty of God or predestination, then you don’t believe in evangelism. That is so antithetical to the truth. The greatest evangelists of all times believed what Calvin believed, and Calvin himself was a rabid evangelist and a trainer of missionaries. He trained hundreds of preachers to go out and preach through the Word of God, one of them being John Knox. Knox was the great Scottish Reformer, who, after sitting under the teaching of Calvin, went back to Scotland and shook all Scotland for the cause of Christ. As the truth was being preached in Germany, Switzerland, Scotland, and England, the Bible became known and it became obvious that things like indulgences, Purgatory, and the treasury of merit were false. They were not even in the Bible. They contradicted other doctrines.

Of course, this made the pope furious. The truth of the Word of God was cutting into his cash cow, especially in Germany, where Luther’s writings almost put an end to [any funds] leaving the country to go to Rome. In order to stop Luther, a critical council was held—the Diet of Wyrms. We mentioned it earlier. (A diet is a council, [and this one] got together in the city of Wyrms.) It was there that Luther was to be tried, exposed as a heretic,

condemned, and summarily burned at the stake. That way they would have [gotten] rid of that pestilence in Germany.

By this time, Luther had made full transition from believing in the Bible *and* the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church to believing the Bible only as a rule of faith and practice. During the Diet of Wyrms, Luther was asked to recant his heretical teachings. He knew that if he refused he would be burned at the stake. So there he was, standing before Charles V—the emperor of the entire realm of Spain, France, Germany, and almost all of Europe—[and] in front of cardinals, monks, and bishops, and they’re asking him, “Are you going to recant [the] works that you have written, or not?” In other words, “Are you going to let everybody know that everything you’ve taught from the Bible is false, or not?” Luther asked for one more night to pray, and [then he would] come back and answer. The next day, he came back, and they pressed him. They just wanted a short, simple answer. Luther replied:

I believe not the pope, neither his general councils that have erred many times and have been contrary to themselves—my conscience is so bound and held captive by the Scriptures and the Word of God that I will not and may not revoke any manner of thing. It would be ungodly and unlawful for me to go against my own conscience. Hereupon I stand and rest. I don’t have anything else to say. God have mercy upon me!

They then pressed Luther for a shorter and simpler answer still: “Will you or will you not recant what you have written?” Luther said: “My conscience is bound by the Word of God. Here I stand, so help me God.” In saying that, Luther was declaring that he believed implicitly in the doctrine of sola Scriptura, [which teaches] that doctrine, faith, [and] practices [are] all to come from the Word of God and the Word of God alone, that the Bible [is] over the Church, and the Church [is] not over the Bible.

This brings us to our text in Deuteronomy 8, a text which is going to teach us some important things about this doctrine of sola Scriptura. I was

tempted to preach from Isaiah 40:8, which we read earlier: “The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.” But I thought [Deuteronomy 8] would be a good text because [it] is very convicting because it not only tells us that the Scriptures are sufficient, but it really works at our heart[s] to help us understand why.

Just to give you a bit of context, Deuteronomy was written by Moses when Israel was camped across the Jordan River from Jericho. They had been wandering in the wilderness for forty years. Of course, [this was because] they didn’t believe God, they didn’t believe the promises of God, and so, they had to go on a death march until that entire generation had died off. So it’s some forty years later. They’re now getting ready to enter the [Promised] Land. [Remember], Moses, in a fit of anger, struck the rock [to bring forth water at Meribah] [because he was] exasperated by the people [see Numbers 20:1–13]. He did not trust God, [so] God said, “You can’t go into the land. You’re going to die. I’ll let you look at it, but you can’t enter in.” So, [Moses] knows he’s going to die [and] he knows the people are going to enter into the land and take possession of it.

So [Moses] writes the book of Deuteronomy, which means “second law,” not because it is a second law [containing] new information—it is the same information given in Exodus, Leviticus, and the first ten chapters of Numbers—but it is that law applied practically, or illustrated, in certain situations that [the Israelites were] going to encounter in the Promised Land. So, it’s kind of a practical guide for how to apply the Law of God to your life in the Promised Land as a Jew under the old covenant. So, in [Deuteronomy] 1–4, Moses gives a quick historical survey, in chapter 5 he restates the Ten Commandments, and then in chapters 6–9, he gives this spiritual pep talk. If you read, [you see that he] tells them not to forget, not to forsake the Lord, to remember God’s commandments, and to stick to the covenant. He keeps exhorting them over and over again before he begins to apply the law to various situations.

Our text comes in the middle of this spiritual pep talk. I'm going to read [Deuteronomy 8:]1–6, and then we're going to focus on verse 3. Moses writes:

All the commandments that I am commanding you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to give to your forefathers. You shall remember all the way which the Lordy-our God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord. Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. Thus you are to know in your heart that the Lordyour God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son. Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the Lordyour God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him.

What I want to do this morning is focus your attention on verse 3 and three important truths about sola Scriptura [that] you must learn and live by so that you are not lead into false doctrines and unbiblical practices.

The first [truth to learn] is an example for you to remember. Look at [Deuteronomy 8:]3, where Moses speaks to Israel, and says: “He humbled you and let you be hungry.” Just stop there. What’s Moses talking about? He’s talking about how God led them from Egypt, had them camp at Mount Sinai, said, “Stay here,” and then waited. What did He wait for? [He waited] so that they would become hungry. “But,” you say, “why would God do that? Why, after bringing them out of Egypt, and doing all the plagues [see Exodus 3–12], and the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night

[see Exodus 13:21], after the Red Sea [see Exodus 14], why would He just let them become hungry?” Well, if you look back at [Deuteronomy 8:]2, it tells us. Starting in the middle of the verse, Moses says, “that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.” This is why God let Israel become hungry.

First, He wanted to humble them. Humility is a difficult lesson to learn, isn't it? Right when you finally think, “You know, I'm pretty humble,” you're probably prouder than ever. Because we're just naturally proud, God has to use painful trials and circumstances to break our will and to make us humble ourselves so that we trust in Him. Humility is one of those lessons that we need to always be learning a little bit more of because we like attention, power, fame, to be the best, to be number one, to have things our own way, to trust in ourselves—our own strength, our own ingenuity, our own resources. We don't want to submit. It's common because we're sinners. Yet Jesus said in Matthew 18:4: “Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” You want to be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Then be the humblest. That is just so antithetical to the world. Jesus said in Matthew 23:12, to the religious leaders: “Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.”

In James 4:10, James says: “Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you” in due time. You have to choose to humble yourself, to not grasp for power [or] position, [to] not trust in yourself, [to] not rely on your own strength, [and] to let God, someone else, other people get the attention, position, [or] thing [that you want]. Let God promote you, but you don't promote yourself. Peter, knowing that pride is especially great in young men, says this in 1 Peter 5:5–7: “You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders.” Then he says:

And all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the

humble. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

There is a whole year's worth of sermons here. [There are] just a couple things in that Peter verse, which is so good, [that I'll point out]. [Note] the constant exhortation to humble yourself, which means *you* have to choose to do it. *You* humble yourself. [Remember, however, that] God *will* humble you if you don't humble yourself. The other thing is in [1 Peter 5:]7, where [Peter] says: "Casting all your anxiety on Him." Think about that. At the root, at the core, at the heart of anxiety is a refusal to believe that God is sovereign, a refusal to believe God is in control, a refusal to trust Him and His promises. It's pride. Then, the fruit of pride, a lot of times, is anxiety, fear, fretting, and worry because you don't believe God is in control, [that] He's going to take care of you, [that] His Word is true. Otherwise you wouldn't be anxious. So, [Peter] says, "[cast] all your anxiety on Him," after he says to humble yourself three times. Who cares for you? God cares for you. Over and over again, the Word of God tells us to humble ourselves. Humility seeks to give glory [to God] for all things good, seeks to rely on God for all things, and takes responsibility for all things bad.

Israel was rejoicing when they left Egypt to go to the Promised Land. They thought it was great. They saw all those plagues come upon the people of Egypt who were putting them to slave labor, and the Egyptians had to suffer and [the Israelites] didn't. [The Israelites] got to escape from the death of the firstborn. By the time that last plague came and the firstborn [sons of the Egyptians] died, the Israelites were so loathsome in the sight of the Egyptians [that] the Egyptians just got out all their money, jewels, and gold, and said, "We're paying you: Leave!" [see Exodus 12]. That's why the Scriptures say [the Israelites] plundered the Egyptians. It was as if God made the Egyptians pay Israel for all of their slave labor.

[The Israelites] left, with God on their side, loaded with cash, [and headed] out into the wilderness. But what [was] the first thing God did?

He led them to a dead end, and said, “Yeah, camp everybody right here next to the Red Sea in this little box canyon.”

Then what happens? Pharaoh changes his mind, [and says], “What did I just do? I just fired my workforce.” So, he sends his army [out to recapture the Israelites], and what happens? The people [of Israel] have been put into an impossible situation [from which] they cannot deliver themselves, and there’s no hope of escape. Then what does God do? He delivers them. Unlike any time ever before, He parted the sea, and they crossed [to] the other side on dry land. Then when pharaoh’s army came and tried to do the same, they were all destroyed. [The Israelites were] delivered by something they never even imagined.

Then, God led them to Mount Sinai, and they must have been [saying], “Man, we got rid of the Egyptians. Did you see the army [get] wiped out? Man, look at all the cash I got. My master gave me all this before I left.”

“Well, I got this.”

“Well, look what I got!”

They’re all excited about their freedom. And you know what happens. As soon as you get a whole bunch of people [together], and they’re free, people assert themselves. “You know, I think I need to be mayor. I think I need to lead this group here. Moses is a good guy, but I can be in charge.” There are all these petty things going on. [If] you have 2 million people [together], you know it’s happening. People are self-appointing themselves [to positions of authority]. [So,] God is trying to teach them a lesson: He is God and they are not. He is in control, and they’re not. They need to trust Him and His promises, not themselves.

What does He do? He takes them out, and says, “Here, camp at Mount Sinai,” and then God just chills out for a while. Pretty soon, they start getting a little hungry. [After all], two million people gobble up all the snacks quick[ly].

All of a sudden, it begins to dawn on people, as their stomachs begin to growl, as they see grandma and grandpa with no food, and their children with no food, and them[selves] with no food, “What am I doing out here

in the middle of the desert? I can't survive out here? There's not enough food for 2 million people. There's not even enough food out here for two [people]. We're going to die! We're going to die!" What do they do? Some of those assertive people [say], "OK, we need to make a plan here. Let's get a committee together. What are we going to do? We cannot survive out here. It's impossible. There's no way we're going to live. We're all going to die! We [have] to go back to Egypt. We could volunteer to be slaves again. At least we had melons and leeks to eat [in Egypt]" [see Numbers 11:5].

Does that sound at all familiar to you? Isn't that so familiar? I find it interesting [when] people read Exodus, and they [say], "Man, what's wrong with those people?" What's wrong with *us*? How many times have you had a trial come upon you—a financial burden, a sickness, you need a job, you want to get married, you need an education, whatever it is—some thing comes into your life, and the first person you turn to is who[m]? You—your Visa, your wisdom, your bank account, your stocks. "I have to figure out how to deliver myself. I need to become my own messiah." Where is God in all of this? Where is the God who created the heavens and earth? Where is He in the midst of your trials? Has He died? Has He ceased to be powerful? [Have] His promises ever failed? Has He left you and forsaken you [see Hebrews 13:5]? Not on your life.

You have left God. That's what's happened. You have become proud. You forgot the Lord. You're trusting in yourself, in your resources, in created things. God doesn't like this. If you don't humble yourself, God will humble you. I do this very same thing myself. I have things to do. I'm busy, you know. I'm a pastor. [Do] you think I have spiritual goosebumps all over me? I don't. I get to the office, I have piles of things to do, I try and get them done every day, and I never finish. I just postpone until next week what I can't get done the week before, and it never ends. Sometimes [I] think, "OK. All right. I have to get going here. I have to start studying. Let's see, I could do this. I think if I worked hard I could finish this. I could do that. I can do that. I can do this." And then, all of a sudden, [I] realize,

“I probably should bring God in here somewhere. I probably should pray. I should probably do what I tell everybody else to do.”

And you know what? I realize [that] I haven't thought of the Lord, I haven't prayed yet, I haven't reminded myself of His promises. I'm not trusting in the Lord. I'm fleshing it out. Then, Jeremiah 17[:5–6] comes to mind: “Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind And makes flesh his strength. . . . For he will be like a bush in the desert And will not see when prosperity comes, But will live in stony wastes in the wilderness, A land of salt without inhabitant.” Then when I look in the mirror, that's what I see: [a] dying bush in the desert. God brings trials into our lives to humble us, and to test us, why? So He can see what's in our heart[s]. Are we going to trust Him and obey His commandments or not?

Look again at [Deuteronomy 8:]3: “He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know.” Stop there. This is just so good! Don't miss this, here. He takes 2 million people out [of Egypt]. That is a lot of people. Takes them out, has them camp by this mountain in the middle of nowhere. There [are] just rocks, dirt, and scorpions [out there]. Not very many people eat scorpions, although they do in China, but not very many people do. What do you do when you [have] 2 million hungry people and it's impossible to feed them? Well, first, they start[ed] hoarding their [food]. They start[ed] being selfish, and then they [tried] to figure out their own deliverance. Then [they] ration[ed] as much as [they could], try[ing to] make it stretch out as much as [they could]. [This happens to all of us.] When you finally run out of all of your resources, when you're at the end of your rope, you finally turn to. . . God, [who] you should have turned to at the beginning.

Since [the Israelites] weren't turning to Him, He *made* them turn to Him. Then they finally said, “God, we don't have anything to eat!”

“OK, I'll rain down bread out of heaven for forty years.” Then God did the impossible. Why? [It is] because God had promised He would be their God, they would be His people, [and] that He would take care of them. God cannot break His word. He can't break His promise. He is the God

who cannot lie. He can never do it. In order to hold His word, in order to maintain His character, He rained bread out of heaven for 40 years to feed 2 million plus people. That's radical. The lesson to learn here, I think, is pretty clear: Don't trust in yourself. Don't trust in your resources. Don't be anxious. Don't fret. God will not break His word. He *cannot* break His word. He was willing to feed 2 million people for forty years so He [didn't] break His word. Surely He can deal with you and your trial.

We must remember this when [a] trial comes. We must stop, and say, "OK, who is God and who is not? Who is in control and who is not? Who has the resources and who doesn't? Who is the God of the impossible?" We need to remember not to trust in ourselves but [to] cling to God and His promises.

[The second truth from Deuteronomy 8:3 is] what you should not live by. Look at [Deuteronomy 8:]3 again. "He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone." This is a very hard lesson to learn. In the world, cash is king, food is king, and clothing is kind, but God is not king. Yet, [from] where do we get our wealth? God is the one who gives us the power to make wealth. [From] where do we get our clothing? God is the one who gives us that. [From] where does food come? God. The Scriptures tell us over and over [that] we are to trust in the Lord because all of those good things come from His hand. Yes, He uses different means to bring them to us, but they all come from Him.

You could watch primetime TV news, you could read the CNN website, you could read the major news magazines for a month, for a year, and just try and find one headline that says, "Trust God and His Word and Everything Will Be Fine." Will you ever see that? It is not there. It will never be there because Satan is the god of this world, and he doesn't want you trusting in God or His Word. This is why we *must* trust God and His Word. This is why we must labor to read, study, meditate [on], and memorize the Word of God. It's why we all need to be involved in a small group, a Bible study,

a Sunday School class, [to] come here faithfully, listen to good sermons on the Internet, and read good books that are saturated in the Scriptures. Why? So God can speak to us, [that's why].

I have people come to me, [and say], "I just don't know what God wants me to do."

"Have you read your Bible?"

"Well, no."

"Well, He says quite a bit in there, and if you read this Book, you might discover that He actually addresses your situation and gives you the very wisdom you need to deal with it." If you want God to speak, open the Bible: He speaks. Don't look for some experience, or [to] sense some thing, or [to] have a vision inflated without cause by your fleshly mind [see Colossians 2:18]. Go to the Book. He tells you right there. It's objective. It's written down. Read the Bible. You *have* to do this. That's how God speaks to us. He speaks to us through His Word. He *wants* to speak to us. We need to let Him speak to us. We need to put ourselves in those positions where He can.

Jesus quoted the very text we're looking at when He was tempted in the wilderness. In Matthew 4:4 and Luke 4:4, do you remember what happened? Satan comes to Jesus, and where was Jesus? [He] was in the wilderness. How did He get there? The Spirit led Him out there. Just like God led Israel out into the wilderness, so the Holy Spirit led Jesus out into the wilderness. Jesus had fasted. It was the Father's will that He fast for forty days. So God let Jesus become really hungry, and He let Israel become hungry—not forty days hungry, but hungry. Then, the temptation came. Satan says, "Jesus, why don't You just take this rock and turn it into a loaf of bread and eat, if You are the Son of God?" [see Matthew 4:3]. Well, He *was* the Son of God. He had infinite resources as the Son of God.

The parallels here are amazing, because both Israel and Jesus wandered in the wilderness; both of them knew God promised to take care of them; both were allowed to become hungry; both had the opportunity to trust in God's word. Israel did not do it, and instead grumbled and complained, and Jesus did [trust in God's word]. Jesus was the Son of God. He spoke the

universe into existence. He [could have made] a loaf of bread, with butter on it. Jesus is the example here. Jesus humbled Himself. He submitted to the trial. He said, “God promised to take care of Me, and I’m not going to exert My will contrary to His will. I am going to submit until He feeds Me.”

So, the question is: Are you going to act like Israel, or are you going to act like Christ? Are you going to trust in yourself and your resources, and grumble and complain, or are you going to remember that God is perfectly faithful, that He never breaks His word? [Deuteronomy 8]:3 says [that] God wants you to understand that “man does not live by bread alone.” What God is teaching us through Moses is that we are not to trust in things that God created, but in the sovereign God who created them. So get ready. Trials will come upon you. If you’re not going through one now, just get ready. Whenever things are going [well], I know that’s just kind of the lull in between the next wave [of trial] that hits. He will bring trials into your life to humble you, to test you, to see whether or not you are going to trust Him, to see what’s really in your heart. What is your first response going to be? “I’ve got to go to God, pray, meditate, remember the Scriptures, and have faith in them,” or, “[I am] going to look to my own resources”?

[The third truth from Deuteronomy 8:3 is] what you must live by. Look toward the end of [Deuteronomy 8]:3: “But man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord” Notice the first word “but,” which tells us a contrast is being made between what should and shouldn’t be trusted in. Don’t trust in your own physical strength, intelligence, bread, money, jobs, government, the next president, but instead trust in everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord. What does proceed out of the mouth of the Lord? The Word of God, the Bible, [does].

Do you remember what Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:16–17? He says: “All Scripture is inspired by God,” God-breathed, is what it literally reads, “and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness,” why? “so that the man,” the woman, “of God may be adequate, equipped for,” how many good works? “every good work.” Oh,

you want to be equipped for any kind of good work? [Rely on] the Word of God and the Word of God alone.

Do you remember what Peter says in 2 Peter 1:3–4? He says: “Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness,” that pretty much covers it, but where does that stuff come from?

Through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

“Everything pertaining to life and godliness” [comes] through this Book. Then he talks about the true knowledge that God will give us as we study the Word, and then toward the end of this section in [2 Peter 1:]19–21, Peter says, “Don’t trust in your experiences because”

We have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

You want to know what this is? This is God speaking to you. You want to hear from God? You read the Book, you hear the Book, you talk about the Book with people who know the Book. Then God speaks to you. This is why Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Bucer, Peter Martyr, John Knox, and the rest were instrumental in the Reformation: because they unleashed the Book. The secular historians aren’t going to tell you, “Well, obviously, the Bible is ‘living and active and sharper than any double-edged sword’ [see Hebrews 4:12], and when they read it it did its work.” You’ll never read that

from a secular historian. [There have] even [been] some who profess to be Christians who didn't say that.

But think with me. Isn't it true of what the Bible says? I mean, think about it. In Matthew 4 and Luke 4, when Jesus is tempted, what in every case does He turn to when He's tempted? The Scriptures. In Matthew 5:17–18, what does Jesus say will never pass away? The Scriptures. In Matthew 26:54[–56] and Luke 24:44, what did Jesus say would have every detail accomplished? The Scriptures. When Jesus argued and debated with the Pharisees, scribes, and lawyers, [to] what did He always refer? The Scriptures. In Luke 24:27, 44, and 46, what did Jesus refer to when speaking with the disciples on the road to Emmaus? The Scriptures.

In John 5:45–47, what did Jesus say would judge all men in the final day? The Scriptures. In John 10:35, what did Jesus say could not be broken? The Scriptures. What did Paul, when he was in Ephesus, remind the Ephesian elders of in Acts 20:20–32? [What did he teach] them night and day, both publicly and from house to house for a period of three years? The Scriptures. In Acts 17:11, what did Paul say made the Bereans more noble than those in Thessalonica? They searched the Scriptures. In 1 Corinthians 15:1–4, when Paul lays out that little, condensed version of the gospel, what does he say it is based on? The Scriptures.

In Ephesians 6, what [does it say] is the believer's only offensive weapon? The Scriptures, the Word of God. In Colossians 3:16, what [does it say] we [are] to allow to dwell in us richly? The Scriptures. In 1 Timothy 4:6 and 13, what does Paul tell Timothy to teach, to give attention to, to be absorbed in, to take pains with night and day? The Scriptures—the preaching and teaching of the Word of God. He tells Titus the same thing in Titus 1:9, 2:1 and 2:15. What, in Jude [1:]3 does Jude say we are to earnestly contend for? “The faith which was once for all handed down to the saints,” which is found where? [It is found] in the Scriptures.

You wonder why the Reformers came to believe in *sola Scriptura*? [It is] because that's what the Bible teaches. You know what? If you read biographies of Martin Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and John Knox, you're going

to find [that] these guys were sinners. They made stupid mistakes. They did evil things. They were not perfect. They were sinners, they wrote things that were wrong, they said things that were wrong, [and] they had flawed theology, but I'm telling you, they did one thing right. That one thing is [that] they believed in sola Scriptura, they preached through the Scriptures, they preached through the Word of God, and it changed all of world history. The world has never been the same and will never be the same.

Luther eventually died, along with the rest of the Reformers, but [he] left behind a huge gift for the German people: the Word of God in the common language. [In an] almost unprecedented [feat that] borders on the miraculous, [Luther] translated the entire New Testament from Greek into German in ten weeks—1,500 verses a day. Even if you knew Greek perfectly it would still be a nightmare to do that. And he did a good job. He gave that Bible to the German people [so] they could read it for themselves, and there was no turning back. You can't stop the work of God in the world when the Bible is unleashed. You want to change society? You want to see people change? You want to see morality come about? Then unleash the Word, talk about the Word, live the Word. That's what changes people, and *people* change society, not government, not laws, not politics. The Word of God unleashed by the people of God is what has always transformed societies from evil to good. The great power to change the world is contained in this Book.

As you leave here today, I hope that each of you realizes you can have your own little Reformation in your neighborhood, at your workplace, [or] among friends. You just need to live this truth, and speak this truth. And you know what? You're going to receive opposition, just like Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and John Knox did, from those who don't like it. But you know what else you're going to do? [You're going to] cause reformation. Let's pray.

Father, we thank You so much for this text. What a great text to remind [us] that we are not to be living on bread alone, but everything that proceeds out of Your mouth, which comes from Your Holy Word [see Deuteronomy

8:3]. Father, if there is somebody here who doesn't know you, somebody here who has never [given] his or her life to Jesus Christ, who has never repented of his or her sins and trust[ed] completely in Christ alone, by grace alone, through faith alone, receiving the truth of the gospel alone from Your Word alone, Father, may that happen this morning. May he or she realize that Jesus died for him or her, shed His blood on his or her behalf, that through faith and faith alone [he or she] can receive the free gift of eternal life, that You are willing to forgive [him or her], and change [him or her], and transform [him or her] into [a] new creature in Christ [see 2 Corinthians 5:17]. And for the rest of us, may we leave here committed to becoming our own little reformers in whatever sphere of influence You have given us. We pray this in Christ's name, Amen.

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