

# Sola Scriptura Debate Cheat Sheet (Updated with Canon Arguments)

## FOUNDATIONAL: WHAT EVEN IS "SCRIPTURE"?

### The Devastating Question

Before discussing "Scripture Alone," ask: **What constitutes Scripture? Who decided which books are in the Bible?** The answer requires **church authority** → destroys Sola Scriptura.

### 1. Jesus Used a DIFFERENT Bible Than Protestants

**Two OT Canons in Jesus' Time:**

**Septuagint (LXX):** Greek translation with **46 OT books** (39 + 7 deuterocanonicals). **Jesus & apostles used this.**

**Hebrew Bible:** ~39 books. Canon not officially closed until AFTER Jesus died.

**Proof NT used Septuagint:** Protestant scholars Archer & Chirichigno: **340 NT citations from LXX** vs. only 33 from Hebrew. Jesus quoted LXX (Mark 7:6-7).

**The 7 Missing Books (Deuterocanonicals):** Tobit, Judith, 1-2 Maccabees, Wisdom, Sirach, Baruch + additions to Esther/Daniel.

*Archer/Chirichigno; Catholic Answers*

### 2. Hebrews 11:35 Makes NO SENSE Without 2 Maccabees

Heb 11:35: "Some were tortured, refusing release that they might rise again to a better life"

**Where is this story in Protestant OT?** It's NOT there. It's in **2 Maccabees 7** (mother & 7 sons tortured, believing in resurrection).

**Other NT references to deuterocanonicals:** Rom 1 adapts Wisdom 13-14; Matt 11:28-30 echoes Sirach 6:23-30, 51:18-27; James 1:19 = Sirach 5:11.

*Catholic Answers; Scripture Catholic*

### 3. Protestant OT Follows Rabbis Who REJECTED Jesus

**Masoretic Text** (Protestant OT basis): Compiled **7th-10th centuries AD**—600-900 years AFTER Christ!

**"Council of Jamnia" (c. 90 AD):** Pharisees who rejected Jesus as Messiah discussed Hebrew canon, excluding deuterocanonicals.

**Question:** Why follow a canon determined by those who denied Christ? The OT Jesus used had MORE books!

*Catholic Answers; Wikipedia*

### 4. Luther Removed Books Christians Used for 1,500 Years

**Early Church (393-1500 AD):** Councils of Hippo (393), Carthage (397, 419) affirmed 46 OT books. St. Augustine presided. Christians used 73-book Bible for **1,500 years.**

**Luther's 1534 revision:** Removed 7 deuterocanonicals, placed in "Apocrypha" section. Called them "not equal to Holy Scriptures."

**By what authority?** His personal preference! Also doubted Hebrews, James ("epistle of straw"), Jude, Revelation.

*National Catholic Register; Wikipedia*

### The Protestant Dilemma

**Which OT is "Scripture"?**

**Option 1:** Septuagint (73 books)—used by Jesus/apostles, early church. Problem: Has deuterocanonicals Protestants reject.

**Option 2:** Masoretic (66 books)—compiled 600-900 yrs after Christ. Problem: Didn't exist when NT written!

**Protestants chose Option 2**—following Jews who rejected Jesus. **Bible doesn't tell you which OT to use** → **need extra-biblical authority** → **Sola Scriptura destroyed.**

### 5. Who Decided the 27 NT Books?

**NT canon developed gradually over 300+ years:**

- Churches disagreed on Hebrews, Revelation, James, 2 Peter, 2-3 John, Jude
- Some used Shepherd of Hermas, Epistle of Barnabas, Didache as Scripture
- Muratorian Fragment (170-200 AD): Excludes Hebrews, James, 1-2 Peter; includes Wisdom & Apocalypse of Peter

**Athanasius (367 AD):** First to list exactly 27 NT books.

**Councils confirmed:** Hippo (393), Carthage (397, 419).

**Criteria (NOT in Scripture):** Apostolic origin, orthodox content, universal acceptance, antiquity, liturgical use, inspiration.

**Key: Church applied these criteria.** Books didn't have "INSPIRED BY GOD" on cover. Church discerned inspiration.

*Wikipedia; Catholic Answers*

### DEVASTATING SUMMARY: Canon Destroys Sola Scriptura

1. Bible has no list of canonical books
2. **Church** (councils, bishops, tradition) determined canon
3. If Church had authority to determine canon, it has authority **beyond** canon
4. **Therefore, Sola Scriptura is false**

**St. Augustine:** "I would not believe in the Gospel, had not the authority of the Catholic Church already moved me."

**You cannot have the Bible without the Church.**

## I. FATAL FLAWS OF SOLA SCRIPTURA

### 6. Self-Refutation: Bible Never Teaches It

**Logic:** If Sola Scriptura true, Scripture must teach it. Doesn't. Therefore false by own standard.

**Protestant admission:** Geisler/MacKenzie: "Sola Scriptura **not formally stated or taught anywhere in Scripture.**"

**Problem:** Need extra-biblical authority to establish it → contradicts doctrine.

*Catholic Answers; Geisler/MacKenzie*

### 7. Failed Proof Text: 2 Timothy 3:16-17

**5 Refutations:**

1. Paul referred to **OT only** (NT not written when Timothy was child)
2. "Profitable" ≠ "sufficient alone" (prayer is profitable, not "prayer alone")
3. "Complete/equipped" modifies **MAN** not Scripture
4. Context (v.14) prioritizes **learned faith from teachers**
5. Same logic proves "Patience Alone" (James 1:4 stronger language!)

*Catholic Answers; Jimmy Akin*

### Question:

If 2 Tim 3:16-17 teaches Sola Scriptura, why NO Christian interpreted it that way for 1,500 years until Luther?

### 8. Bible ACTUALLY Teaches: Scripture + Tradition + Authority

2 Thess 2:15: "Hold TRADITIONS... by WORD or EPISTLE"

1 Tim 3:15: "CHURCH... PILLAR AND GROUND OF TRUTH"

Matt 18:17: "Tell it to CHURCH... if neglects church, let him be as heathen"

**Acts 15:** Apostles made binding decisions; believers submitted. No "Bible alone."

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## 9. Circular Reasoning

**The Circle:** "Bible is sole authority" → "Bible says so" → "How know Bible true?" → "It's God's Word" → "How know?" → "Bible says so" ← Circular!  
Must prove point **outside text** to avoid fallacy. Need external authority → Sola Scriptura collapses.

*Coming Home Network*

## 10. Interpretive Chaos: 33,000+ Denominations

**Statistical reality:** 33,000-40,000+ Protestant denominations (World Christian Encyclopedia).

**All claim:** "Bible alone" + "Holy Spirit guides" → Yet contradict on baptism, communion, salvation, predestination, church govt, etc.

**Catholic:** "Disintegration into factions = **practical failure of sola scriptura.**"

*EWTN; World Christian Encyclopedia*

### Defense: "In essentials unity; non-essentials liberty"

**Fails because:**

1. Who decides what's essential? Bible has no list.
2. Everything God inspired is essential.
3. Divisions ARE over essentials (Reformation split on justification, sacraments).
4. Admits Sola Scriptura failed to produce unity Jesus prayed for (John 17:21).

## 11. Historical: Early Church Never Practiced It

**Impossible pre-printing press:** 1,400 years, Bibles rare/expensive, most illiterate.

How could "Scripture alone" guide those who couldn't read/own Bibles?

**NT writers couldn't teach it:** Paul wrote before most NT existed. Full NT not complete until ~95 AD.

**Church Fathers affirmed tradition:** Irenaeus (180): "Refer to **tradition from apostles**"; Basil (375): "Written + **apostolic tradition have same force.**"

*Catholic Answers; EWTN; Church Fathers*

**Catholic Consensus:** Catholics wrong on papal infallibility, purgatory, transubstantiation. But **absolutely correct Sola Scriptura is false.** If even Rome sees it doesn't work, why can't Protestants?

## II. LDS SOLUTION: LIVING PROPHETS

### Biblical Case for Living Prophets

Amos 3:7: "Lord GOD... revealeth secret to PROPHETS"

Eph 4:11-14: "He gave APOSTLES... PROPHETS... TILL WE ALL COME TO UNITY OF FAITH"

**Have we achieved unity?** NO (33,000+ denominations). **Conclusion:** Still need apostles/prophets.

Acts 3:21: "Times of RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS"

**LDS:** Restoration of apostolic authority, priesthood, truth through Joseph Smith.

### LDS Structure: First Presidency + Quorum of Twelve

- **President (Prophet) + 2 counselors:** Hold priesthood keys
- **Quorum of Twelve:** All prophets, seers, revelators
- **Succession:** Longest-serving apostle becomes prophet (Acts 1:20-26)
- **Personal revelation:** Members receive for themselves/families within spheres

### How Living Prophets Solve What Sola Scriptura Cannot

- **Canon Problem:** Prophets determine/receive new scripture (BoM, D&C, JST)
- **Interpretation:** Authoritative interpretation (not "my opinion vs. yours")
- **Unity:** One prophet, unified teaching → true unity (not 33,000 divisions)
- **Modern Issues:** Continuing revelation for issues Bible doesn't address

### Answering Objections

**Objection: "Revelation ceased (Heb 1:1-2)"**

**Response:** Doesn't say revelation ceased. "Last days" = Christ's ministry until return. Acts 13:1 has "prophets" (present). 1 Cor 14:1: "Desire to prophesy"—why if ceased?

**Objection: "LDS prophets made mistakes"**

**Response:** Biblical prophets fallible: Moses (struck rock, barred from Promised Land), David (adultery/murder), Peter (denied Christ 3x), Jonah (disobeyed). Authority ≠ perfection. Prophets speak as men vs. as prophets.

**Objection: "Deut 18:22—failed prophecy = false prophet"**

**Response:** Applies to predictions "in name of LORD." Not personal opinions or conditional prophecies. Jonah prophesied Nineveh's destruction—didn't happen (repented). Still true prophet.

## BOTTOM LINE: The Choice

**Sola Scriptura:** Self-refuting (not in Bible), circular reasoning, canon problem unsolvable, 33,000+ divisions, never practiced historically, logically incoherent.

**Catholic/Orthodox:** Correctly reject Sola Scriptura but rely on post-apostolic uninspired tradition, papal infallibility, etc.

**LDS Restoration:** Biblical pattern restored—living apostles/prophets receiving revelation. True unity, authoritative interpretation, continuing revelation.

**Pattern:** OT: God spoke through prophets. NT: God spoke through apostles/prophets. **Today: God speaks through LDS prophets.** Why would He stop?

**The Test (Moroni 10:3-5):** Read Book of Mormon. Ask God if true. If yes, Joseph Smith was prophet. **Don't settle for broken Sola Scriptura. Embrace restoration.**