

The Sum of God's Word

1. People: Persons who are the object of God's love and favor

Chronologically, the people of God are Adam and Eve, the patriarchs, the Israelites, the tribe of Judah, Jesus Christ, and the Church. All of God's people, both pre- and post-Christ's incarnation receive his love and favor as adopted sons and heirs through union with Jesus Christ the Son of God, who is the true 'people of God' (Rom 8:14-17) (Mat 3:16-17) (Isaiah 42:1, 49:1-3).

2. Man: Judge of the world

Man is created to judge Satan at the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:15) (I Cor 6:3). Adam is tempted by Satan and fails to judge him (Gen 3:1-7), and God appoints his offspring to judge Satan instead (Gen 3:15). Jesus Christ is tempted by Satan and successfully resists him, thereby becoming the Son of Man who has authority to judge angels and men. (Mat 4:1-11) (John 5:26-27). God's people are transferred from union with Adam in death to union with Christ in life and share in his nature as judge of the world (Rom 5:12-21) (I Cor 15:21-22,45) (Mat 12:41-42).

3. Kingdom/Land/City: Residence of God's people

God plants the Garden of Eden to be Adam's kingdom, which he was supposed to expand to incorporate the entire world (Gen 2:8) (Gen 1:28). Adam's kingdom is lost due to disobedience (Gen 3:23-24), and the patriarchs become wandering pilgrims. God gives the Israelites the land of Canaan to be their kingdom (Gen 15:18-21). The Israelites' kingdom is overthrown due to disobedience (2 Kings 17, 24-25), and the Israelites become captives and exiles. God returns the land of Judah and the city of Jerusalem to the exiled Judeans, albeit being under the authority of pagan empires (Ezra 1). Christ regains the kingdom of the entire world (the present age and new Earth) due to his obedience (Mat 28:18) (Dan 7:13-14). God's people receive citizenship of this kingdom as co-inheritors through union with Christ (Eph 1:18-13) (Dan 7:27)

4. King: Ruler of God's people.

Adam is made king over the Garden of Eden and the world (Gen 2:15) (Gen 1:26). Adam's kingship is revoked due to disobedience (Gen 3:23-24). Saul is made king over Israel (I Samuel 15). David is made king over Israel (I Samuel 16:1-13) and God establishes his descendants as kings due to his obedience (2 Samuel 7). Solomon is made king over Israel (I Kings 1:28-53) and his descendants are made kings over only Judah due to his disobedience (I Kings 11-12:1-24). Christ is made king over the world (Luke 1:30-33) (Rev 19:16). God's people become co-rulers through union with Christ and reign with him forever (Rev 3:21-22)

5. Temple/Sanctuary: Location of the Holy Spirit's special presence.

The garden of Eden becomes God's sanctuary (Gen 3:8). Access to the Garden sanctuary and the tree of life is lost due to disobedience (Gen 3:22-24). The pillars of cloud and fire become God's presence with his people (Ex 13:17-22). The ark of the covenant and the Tabernacle become God's sanctuary (Ex 25-27, 30). The Temple becomes God's sanctuary (I Kings 6, 7:13-51, 8). The Holy Spirit leaves the Temple due to the Judeans' disobedience (Ezek 8, 10:18-19, 11:22-23) and the Babylonians destroy it (2 Kings 25:8-9). The Temple is rebuilt but with lesser glory (Ezra 3:8-13, 6:13-18) (Haggai 2:1-5). The Holy Spirit anoints Christ as the true Temple of God (Mat 3:16-17) (John 2:13-22). God's people are united to Christ by indwelling of the Holy Spirit and become his sanctuary (Acts 2:1-4, 10:44-48) (Rom 8:9-11) (I Cor 6:19-20) (Rev 21:3).

6. Sacrifice: Atonement for Sins

God sacrifices an animal to make skins to cover Adam and Eve's guilt (Gen 3:21). Adam and Eve's descendants practice ritual sacrifice as an acknowledgement of the need of substitutionary punishment for remission of sins. (Gen 3:21). The passover lamb is sacrificed to avoid God's wrath against sin (Ex 12:1-32). The Israelites practice ritual sacrifice (Lev 1:1-9). Jesus Christ is sacrificed as the true passover lamb for the remission of sins for God's people. (Col 2:13-14). Consequently, his people offer themselves as spiritual sacrifices made acceptable to God through union with Christ. (Mat 16:24-25) (1 John 3:16) (Phil 2:17) (2 Tim 4:6).

7. Priest: Intermediary between a Holy God and sinful man, Guard of God's Temple

Adam is made priest of the Garden of Eden and is commanded to guard it from defilement (Gen 2:15). Adam fails to defend the Garden sanctuary from demonic defilement, so God places the cherubim to protect it instead. (Gen 3:24). The Levites slaughter the Israelites who broke the covenant at Mount Sinai and are instituted by God as priests (Ex 32:25-29). The Levites guard the sanctuary from intruders and administer the ordinances under the law of Moses (Num 3:5-10). Jesus Christ is the true priest who guards his Temple (i.e. his people) from defilement (1 Cor 3:16-17) (Rev 2:16) and administers his blood on the heavenly altar once and for all as a sacrifice sufficient for all time (Heb 9:24-26). God's people become co-priests through union with Christ and administer spiritual offering of thanksgiving and good works made acceptable Christ (1 Pet 2:5,9).

8. Law: God's requirements of man

God creates man with an inherent understanding of what is good and what is evil (Rom 2:14-15). Adam is commanded not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:16-17). Adam breaks God's law and is punished with exile (Gen 3:23-24). The Israelites are given the law of Moses and are eventually punished with exile (Ex 32:1-9). Christ gives the Sermon on the Mount (Mat 5-7). Christ successfully resists temptation from Satan (Mat 4:1-11), obeys natural law (Rom 2:28-29), Mosaic law (Luke 2:22-24) (Mat 5:17-18), and law given at the Sermon on the Mount. God's people are freed from the curse of the law by Christ's sacrifice and obedience (Rom 3:21-24) and are enabled to obey God's law through union with Christ (Rom 6:17-18, 7:4).

9. Covenant: Commitment between God and his people

Creational covenant: God creates man in his own image (Gen 1:26-27)
Messianic covenant: God promises that the offspring of woman will destroy Satan and rescue his people (Gen 3:15). Noahic covenant: God promises that the natural order will continue until the time of the end (Gen 8:20-22, 9:1-17). Abrahamic covenant: God promises that Abraham's offspring will multiply and possess the land of Canaan (Gen 15,17). Mosaic covenant: The Israelites promise God that they will obey his commandments (Ex 19-24). Davidic covenant: God promises David that his descendants will be kings (2 Samuel 7). New Covenant: Jesus Christ promises his people that his sacrifice will result in the forgiveness of sins through union with his body (Mat 26:26-29).

10. Prophet: Pronouncers of judgement and redemption

God prophesies judgement on Satan and redemption through offspring of the woman (Gen 3:15). Enoch prophesies judgement against the world for its ugliness (Gen 5:21-24 (Jol 14-15)). Moses pronounces judgement on Egypt and Pharaoh for resisting God's command to let his people worship him (Ex 7-14). The prophets pronounce judgement against Israel and Judah for breaking the Mosaic covenant and call for them to return to God in obedience. They also announce redemption for God's people and destruction for their wicked enemies. (Isaiah-Malachi). Christ prophesies judgement against his churches for disobedience and calls for them to repent and return to him in obedience. He also prophesies salvation for his people and the destruction of their wicked enemies (Revelation)

11. Judgement and Redemption: Punishment for wickedness and salvation through righteousness

God punishes Satan, woman, and man both temporally and eternally for their transgression, but redeems Adam, Eve, and a remnant of their offspring through an heir (Gen 3:14-19). God destroys the world with a flood because of its wickedness, but spares Noah because of his righteousness (Gen 6-7). God destroys Sodom and Gomorrah with sulfur and fire from Heaven because of their wickedness, but spares Lot and his family because of his mercy (Gen 19:1-29). God kills all the firstborn in Egypt because they persecuted his people, but spares the firstborn of the Israelites through sacrifice of the passover lamb (Ex 12). God rescues his people from the Egyptians who pursued them (Ex 14). God overthrows Israel and Judah for breaking the Mosaic covenant, but redeems a remnant from exile (2 King 17, 24-25) (Ezra 1). God punishes Jesus Christ for the sins of his people, but redeems him because of his righteousness (Acts 2:23-28). Christ judges the world because of its wickedness (Rev 20:11-15), but rewards his people because of his own righteousness imputed onto their account through union with him (Rom 4:5-8) (Titus 3:4-7).

Notice the pattern? The Word of God is and always has been about Jesus Christ. No matter where you open Scripture, there you will find Christ. It is not without reason that Jesus Christ is called The Word. He is God communicated to us. He is God spoken to us. He is God written to us. He is the one who expounds to us who God is, for he himself is God (John 1:18).

The Victory of Christ's Gospels over Roman Catholic Corruption

Every difference in the doctrine between the Reformed faith and Roman Catholic heresy can, ultimately, be traced back to a single foundational question: Where does the authority of God's Word lie? How one answers this question forms the premise for all theological conclusions that logically proceed from it. It is at this battlefield, therefore, where the Catholic Reformers emerge victorious and the Roman Catholics lie slain.

The papists believe that because the Church existed before the biblical texts and was the very institution that decided which writings were canonical, the authority of God's Word must lie in the Church. Since the church created the bible in the first place, its meaning and purview are established by the Church. The Church cannot contradict God's Word, but it can formulate doctrines and ceremonies that go beyond it. In this way the Church and Scripture are on an equal footing.

The problem with this view is that it fails to grasp the nature of God's Word. Throughout the majority of human history God did not communicate with his people through written texts, but rather the spoken Word. When God's terrifying presence rushed through the Garden of Eden to confront Adam in a paradigmatic 'day of the LORD', God spoke and pronounced judgement on him (Gen 3:17-19). If one believes in the historicity of the Bible's teachings, he must affirm that at some point in time, way in the past, God actually and truly spoke to Adam in a theophanous voice that occurred independently of the written Word. It follows then that the spoken Word came before the written Word. When God commanded Abraham to take his only son Isaac and sacrifice him, Abraham did not add or take away from God's Word (as the papists do), but instead obeyed the voice (or Word) of the Lord in respectful fear (Gen 22). He did not call to mind that Isaac was the son whom God would establish covenant through (Gen 17:19) and, therefore, question in his heart "If the promise is through the offspring of Isaac, how can God keep his word if he commands me to kill him before he has any children?" He did not conclude that he must add to God's Word by deciding that God must have meant for him to sacrifice Isaac only after he had children. Rather, faithful Abraham obeyed the Word of God as it was spoken to him and immediately set out in the early morning to sacrifice Isaac. As it

turned out, God kept his word and was only testing Abraham, who passed with flying colors. The point is that the Church did not come before the Word of God, and it does not have the authority to add or take away from it (Rev 22:18-29). the authority of God's word depends not on any church, but on God himself, who is the one who spoke it (Heb 1:1-2) (2 Tim 3:16). The spoken Word came first, then the spoken Word of the Holy Spirit through the prophets (2 Pet 1:20-21; note the insistence that God is responsible for prophecy, not the prophets themselves), then the spoken Word of God (Jeremiah 36:1-2), then Jesus Christ, who is the true Word of God (John 1:1-3; the Church did not create the Word, the Word created the Church), spoke the Word to the apostles and gave them the Holy Spirit (John 19:25-26; note that the Holy Spirit teaches them God's word and makes them remember Christ's Word, not the apostles themselves), and finally the Holy Spirit speaks to us by his written word through the apostles (2 Tim 3:16).

The arrogant belief of the papists that the Church decided which writing were the Word of God is patently false. The Holy Spirit decides what is scripture -not humans (I Cor 2:9-13). The only way people can discern what is Scripture -that is, The Word of God- "is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts" (John 2:20,27) (John 16:13-14) (Isaiah 59:21). The Church in this age is fallible. Throughout history it has made errors. Some of which dragged on for centuries. The correction occurs when Christ's Word written and within us actively and presently speaks to us (Rev 2:16). Some churches are more correct than others (Rev 2-3). The Holy Spirit will recognize Christ when he hears him (Rom 8:26-27). As the Westminster Confession states, "*The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.*" (Mat 22:29,31) (Eph 2:20) (Act 28:25). The Word of God (whether spoken or written; whether past or present) is interpreted correctly only by the indwelling of the Spirit (John 6:45, 65) (I Cor 2:14-16) both individually (Gal 1:15-17) and corporately (Acts 15:13-21; not that James relies on the written Word of the Holy Spirit through the prophets, which was before the NT church for proper doctrine).

The reformation was not a schismatic movement. The beliefs of the Catholic Reformers were the same beliefs held by many in the church centuries before Luther. It was only after the Roman Catholic church piled on more and more errors that the Reformers -stirred by the Holy Spirit with an earnest zeal for the orthodoxy of the Roman Catholic Church- began to reprove their brothers more fervently and openly turn away from the useless elemental spirits of the world, and return to Christ the Head (Col 2:16-23 (Gal 5:1). After many appeals it became clear that the papists would stubbornly resist Christ and never turn back to him. After expelling the Catholic Reformers from their Synagogue of Satan, the Reformers formed churches of their own. It is true that many Protestants were, and are, heretics, but the Reformers staunchly condemned them and continue to do so.

The greatest irony is that the 'conservative' papists today find themselves in the exact same position the Reformed Catholics were in. For they firmly disagree with the Second Vatican Council and hold to the teaching of the previous popes instead. What, pray tell, will the 'conservative' papists do if their convictions are never institutionally implemented, or if the 'liberal' papists begin purging them from their ranks? Indeed their hypocrisy reaches the heavens. (Rev 18:5)

As John Fesko beautifully writes, "without the Word of God there would be no church, and therefore, the Roman Catholic Church cannot claim that it created the word and thus has the authority to define the Canon or claim that the church tradition are as authoritative as Scripture." What happened to the Pharisees and the Saducees and the Jews has happened to the antichrist papists (Mat 15:1-9) (Mat 22:29) (Acts 28:25-27). One can only rejoice that the supremacy of the Word of God -which was in the beginning, was with God, and was God, and created all things- has triumphed over the papist heresy, and that the Word himself slays the

papists with the sword of his mouth and will cast the false prophet who deceives them into the lake of fire. (Rev 19:20-21).