



Orthodox Views on Protestantism

The Orthodox Perspective on Protestantism

- Five Solas
 - Sola Scriptura: Scripture Alone
 - Sola Fide: Faith Alone
 - Sola Gratia: Grace Alone
 - Solus Christus: Christ Alone
 - Soli Deo Gloria: Glory to God Alone
- Eternal Security
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- Communion

Sola Scriptura

- Every text demands to be interpreted; Holy Scripture is no exception. In Nehemiah, we read that the Levites “helped the people to understand the law” (Neh.8: 7) and that they “gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading” (Neh.8: 8).
- Our Lord Jesus Christ interpreted many Old Testament passages to His disciples, “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Lk.24: 27).

Sola Scriptura

- He also challenged the views of the Pharisees about the Sabbath by introducing the correct interpretation of the commandment, “If you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice’ you would not have condemned the guiltless...Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath” (Matt.12: 7-12).
- There is a sense in which the history of Christian theology can be regarded as the history of biblical interpretation.

Sola Scriptura

- Irenaeus insisted that the apostolic Church faithfully preserved the 'rule of faith', and that it had found its expression in the canonical books of Scripture.
- The Church had faithfully proclaimed the same gospel from the time of the apostles until the present day.
- Irenaeus thus emphasized the continuity of the teaching and preaching office of the Church and its officials.

Sola Scriptura

- Tertullian adopted a related approach. Scripture, he argued, is capable of being understood clearly, provided that it is read as a whole.
- However, he conceded that controversy over the interpretation of certain passages was inevitable.

Sola Scriptura

- Heretics, he observed gloomily, can make Scripture say more or less anything they like.
- For this reason, the tradition of the church was of considerable importance, as it indicated the manner in which Scripture had been received and interpreted within the church.

Sola Scriptura

- The right interpretation of Scripture was thus to be found where true Christian faith and discipline had been maintained.
- A similar view was taken by Athanasius, who argued that Arius' Christological mistakes would never have risen if he had remained faithful to the church's interpretation of Scripture.

Sola Scriptura

- Tradition was thus seen as a legacy from the Apostles, by which the church was guided and directed toward a correct interpretation of Scripture.
- It was not seen as a 'secret source of revelation' in addition to Scripture, rather it was seen as a means of ensuring that the church remained faithful to the teaching of the Apostles, instead of adopting idiosyncratic interpretation of Scripture.

Sola Scriptura

- Martin Luther argued that every individual had the right to interpret Holy Scripture as he or she pleased, without adhering to tradition.
- The way was thus opened for individualism, with the private judgment of the individual raised above the corporate judgment of the Church resulting in the myriad of Protestant denominations we see today.

Sola Fide & Sola Gratia

- Those who believe in salvation by faith alone base their belief on one verse or part of a verse.
- For instance, Eph 2:8-10 states “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

Sola Fide & Sola Gratia

- Alone, this verse seems to support the concept of Sola Fide, however the next verse states: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them"

Sola Fide & Sola Gratia

- The term faith is a multi facet term:
 - Living faith: "Faith without works is dead" (Jas 2:20). Such dead faith, void of works, cannot save anyone, "What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?" (James 2:14). St. James also says, "Even the demons believe and tremble" (Jas 2:19), does this mean that the devils are saved?
 - Faith working through love: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love" (Gal 5:6).
 - Faith and love: St. Paul says, "And though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing" (1 Cor 13:2).

Sola Fide & Sola Gratia

- Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself informed us about Judgment Day.
- He will discriminate between people based on their previous performance on earth, putting some to His right hand, and others to His left hand.

Sola Fide & Sola Gratia

- "I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in" because of such good works He said to those on the right, "Come, You blessed of My Father inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Mt 25:31-46).

Sola Fide & Sola Gratia

- St. Peter also speaks about judgment according to works, "And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear" (1 Pet 1:17).

Sola Fide & Sola Gratia

- Many take the thief on the right side of the Cross as an example of someone who has attained salvation through faith alone.
- This is not the case, since the thief did not only believe in the Lord in the midst of very hard circumstances, but he also declared a complete confession of the Lord, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom” (Lk 23:42).

Sola Fide & Sola Gratia

- He confessed his own sins and admitted that he deserved to be punished.
- He rebuked the thief on the left cross saying to him, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds" (Lk 23:39-41).
- He also evangelized in defending the Lord "but this Man has done nothing wrong" (Lk 23:41).

Solus Christus & Soli Deo Gloria

- The Orthodox Church believes in a "royal priesthood" which encompasses all believers. However, it recognizes that the Lord set apart certain individuals for specific roles, some were Apostles, others healers, others teachers.

Solus Christus & Soli Deo Gloria

- In order to establish and maintain good order within the community of believers, certain individuals were specifically ordained by the laying on of hands to specific ministries, particularly that of bishop and deacon.

Solus Christus & Soli Deo Gloria

- The Lord gave the power to forgive and retain sins to the Apostles, not to all believers. The Apostles delegated this authority to the bishops, but not to deacons.

Solus Christus & Soli Deo Gloria

- In the fullness of time, as congregations grew beyond the ability for a single bishop to administer, the office of presbyter was established. Specific men were chosen, ordained by the laying on of hands, to be the officiator in place of the bishop in the parishes for the Eucharist.

Solus Christus & Soli Deo Gloria

- Even as there was a Levite priesthood and the priesthood of the order of Melchizedek for ancient Israel, we have the ordained priesthood and the royal priesthood in the New Israel.

Eternal Security

- Our Lord Jesus Christ says that “I will give them eternal life and no one will snatch them out of my hands”, and “they are in my Father's hands.”
- However, in the book of Hebrews, it says it is impossible for someone who had accepted our Lord Jesus Christ and tasted the heavenly gifts, when he falls to be restored.

Eternal Security

- Who are the ones that shall never perish? The verse that proceeds gives the answer: and the condition for not perishing. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (John 10:27).
- Those who continue to hear Christ's voice, and to follow Him, shall never perish.

Eternal Security

- In the Holy Book of Hebrews 3:12 and 6:6, St. Paul is referring to deliberate apostasy, as a defection from the faith.
- If a sinner rejects the only available sacrifice of the New Testament, Jesus Christ, then his repentance for sin would be vain, and their salvation impossible.

Eternal Security

- Matt 7:22-23: “Many will say to Me in that day, “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!”

Eternal Security

- 2 Corinthians 13:5: “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?--unless indeed you are disqualified.”

Infant Baptism

- The mention of infant baptism is quite clear in the writings of the early fathers. Here are just few examples.
- Infant baptism is assumed in Irenaeus' writings (since he affirms both that regeneration happens in baptism, and also that Jesus came so even infants could be regenerated).

Infant Baptism

- **Irenaeus:** "He [Jesus] came to save all through himself; all, I say, who through him are reborn in God: infants, and children, and youths, and old men. Therefore he passed through every age, becoming an infant for infants, sanctifying infants; a child for children, sanctifying those who are of that age... [so that] he might be the perfect teacher in all things, perfect not only in respect to the setting forth of truth, perfect also in respect to relative age" (Against Heresies 2:22:4 [A.D. 189]).

Infant Baptism

- **Hippolytus:** "Baptize first the children, and if they can speak for themselves let them do so. Otherwise, let their parents or other relatives speak for them" (The Apostolic Tradition 21:16 [A.D. 215]).

Infant Baptism

- **St. John Chrysostom:** "You see how many are the benefits of baptism, and some think its heavenly grace consists only in the remission of sins, but we have enumerated ten honors [it bestows]! For this reason we baptize even infants, though they are not defiled by [personal] sins, so that there may be given to them holiness, righteousness, adoption, inheritance, brotherhood with Christ, and that they may be his [Christ's] members" (Baptismal Catecheses in Augustine, Against Julian 1:6:21 [A.D. 388]).

Communion

- The Lord Jesus Christ Himself instituted the Holy Communion on the Thursday of the Covenant, in the Upper Room of Zion, a few hours before His arrest and trial.
- After He had celebrated the Rite of the Jews' Passover, He rose and washed His holy disciples' feet as a sign of repentance and preparation; and then He sat down and instituted the Passover of the New Covenant that is the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

Communion

- "He took bread, blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat this is My Body, then He took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them saying: Drink from it all of you, for this is My Blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:26-28) and St. Paul repeats these same words 1 Cor 11:23-25.

Communion

- There is no delineation or actual words from the Lord Jesus Christ, which speak as to how the change occurs. Therefore the Lord Jesus Christ's actual words are intended as a Mystery.

Communion

- There are so many very important biblical verses about the Holy Communion that allude to its Mystery:
- "He who eats My Flesh, and drinks My Body abides in Me, and I in him" (John 6:56). By receiving this Sacrament "we become members of His Body, of His Flesh and of His Bones" (Ephesians 5:30) also we become partakers of the Divine Nature (Peter 1:4).

Communion

- It gives us eternal life, "Whoever eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood has eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day. He who eats this Bread will live forever" (John 6:54,58).

Communion

- It grants us growth in the Spirit, holiness and life in the Lord Jesus Christ as He said, "For My Flesh is food indeed, and My Blood is drink is indeed. As the living Father sent me, and I live in Him because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me" (John 6:55,57).

Communion

- Just like when we eat substantial food we nourish our bodies making them strong and healthy; likewise when we eat the Holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ we strengthen our souls and God's grace grows continuously in us.

Communion

- It gives remedy to the soul, body, and spirit, as we say in the Offertory Mystery: "That they (Holy Body and Precious Blood) may become to us all for participation and healing and salvation for our souls, bodies, and our spirits."