It Is Written

THE GOSPEL REVEALED · PART 8

Galatians 1:11-12 | Arvin Assembly of God | Pastor Brian Overturf | October 11, 2026

MY NOTES

INTRODUCTION

For two weeks now we've been sitting on one phrase in verse 14… the traditions of my fathers.

> **Galatians 1:14**
> **[14] And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.**

The Pharisees added to the Word. The Sadducees took from it. Last week we looked in the mirror first… and then we put Rome's system on the scale, in its own words. When tradition gets equal standing with the Word, it doesn't stay equal. It wins.

A battle for the Bible. It goes all the way back to the garden… and the very first question the serpent ever asked.

> **Genesis 3:1**
> **[1] Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"**

THE BATTLE FOR THE BIBLE

Ever since that question, what God has said has been under attack.

- Inspiration… it comes from God. It's divine revelation.
- Inerrancy… what it says is the truth, with no error in any of its claims in the original manuscripts.
- Authority… it's the final word.
- Interpretation… how it's rightly read.
- Sufficiency… is the Bible enough? That's where the battle is today.

Jesus, plus. That's the exact battle Paul was fighting in Galatia. Nobody was saying, throw Jesus out. The false teachers were saying Jesus plus circumcision… Jesus plus the law of Moses… Jesus plus the traditions of the fathers. In other words… Jesus isn't enough. The gospel isn't enough.

Paul's answer: the gospel he preached didn't come from man, a teacher or a tradition. It came by revelation… from Jesus Christ Himself. And if it came from God… it doesn't need anything added to it.

The Catholic Church has traditions… and arguments against what we believe about the Bible. This morning: the four best arguments, stated fairly and in their own words… and then the Bible answers. If what we believe can't stand up to the best arguments, it doesn't deserve to be the first thing in our statement of faith.

Here's our first Fundamental Truth.

> *"The Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, are verbally inspired of God and are the revelation of God to man, the infallible, authoritative rule of faith and conduct."*
>
> **Assemblies of God, Statement of Fundamental Truths #1**

When tradition and God's Word disagree, which one wins?

1. The Claim ("The Bible never says 'Bible alone.'")

Paul says his gospel came by revelation. That's a claim about authority… and a claim about sufficiency. Here's the first argument against it, from Peter Kreeft, one of the best-known Catholic writers in America.

> *If we believe only what the Scripture teaches, we will not believe sola Scriptura, for Scripture does not teach sola Scriptura.*
>
> **Peter Kreeft, Fundamentals of the Faith, quoted in Geisler and MacKenzie, Roman Catholics and Evangelicals**

The Trinity test. You won't find "Bible alone" in a row… and you won't find the word Trinity either. But the Bible says there's one God, and that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are God. Put together what it says… and you get the Trinity. A doctrine doesn't need a slogan in the text. It needs to be taught by the text.

An example. Kangaroos are never mentioned in the Bible… but it says God created everything. And kangaroos are part of everything.

So does the Bible teach that the Bible is enough? Look at Paul's last letter, written just before he died.

2 Timothy 3:15-17
15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Enough. Able to make you wise for salvation… enough to get a man saved. God-breathed… only Scripture belongs in that category, exclusively. Complete. Thoroughly equipped. For every good work. If the Scriptures make the man of God complete… what's missing? If another authority stood beside Scripture, Paul's last letter was the moment to say so. He didn't.

Rebuttal: "But Paul was talking about the Old Testament." Listen to how Peter talks about Paul's letters.

2 Peter 3:15-16
15 and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, 16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

Peter puts Paul's letters right alongside the Scriptures. The New Testament was being received as Scripture while the apostles were still alive.

And then there's the way Jesus argued. Here's Jesus in the wilderness. One scholar counts the phrase "it is written" ninety times in the New Testament.

Matthew 4:4
[4] But He answered and said, "<u>It is written</u>, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, <u>but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God</u>.' "

It is written. Satan came at the Son of God… and the Son of God answered with the Scriptures. The basis for the Bible alone and the sufficiency of Scripture is found right here.

Then there's one we already know.

Galatians 1:8
[8] But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

Every word from God is to be received. And every word that isn't from God… even from an apostle, even from an angel… is to be tested.

Paul puts it in one line to the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 4:6
[6] Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us <u>not to think beyond what is written</u>, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.

The Bible doesn't just claim to be true. It claims to be enough.

<u>EVERYDAY LIFE</u>
The Bible is enough…

- When you're grieving and you don't know what to believe about the one you lost.
- When you're facing a decision and everybody's got an opinion.
- When you're tempted and your feelings are shouting.
- When somebody tells you there's a secret you need that isn't in there.

2. The Command ("Paul said hold the traditions.")

The Catholic answer: read your own Bible. Paul told a church to hold on to tradition… and he did.

2 Thessalonians 2:15
[15] Therefore, brethren, stand fast and <u>hold the traditions which you were taught</u>, <u>whether by word or our epistle</u>.

There it is… the word tradition. In the Reina-Valera it says doctrina… but the word Paul uses here is tradition.

The Second Vatican Council points to this very verse when it explains what Catholic Tradition is.

"Therefore the Apostles, handing on what they themselves had received, warn the faithful to hold fast to the traditions which they have learned either by word of mouth or by letter (see 2 Thess. 2:15), and to fight in defense of the faith handed on once and for all (see Jude 1:3)."

Second Vatican Council, Dei Verbum §8 (1965)

Two different meanings. What they mean by tradition is very different from what the Bible calls tradition. Who taught the Thessalonians? Paul, Silas and Timothy… the apostles, standing in the room… and then in the letter they were holding in their hands. What did they teach? The gospel. Christ died for our sins. He rose again. He's coming back.

James McCarthy, in The Gospel According to Rome, puts it this way.

> *"No reasonable comparison can be drawn between Roman Catholic Tradition and the apostle Paul personally and directly instructing the Thessalonians in the Christian faith."*
>
> **James G. McCarthy, The Gospel According to Rome**

A simple test. Last week we looked at the Assumption of Mary. Was that one of the traditions Paul taught the Thessalonians? If it was… why isn't it in the Bible… and why did nobody write it down for six hundred years?

The good kind of tradition is gospel tradition… handed down once, from Christ, through the apostles.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4
[3] For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, [4] and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

And Jude tells you how many times it was handed down.

Jude 3
[3] Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

Once for all. Not delivered a little bit at a time. Not developed over nineteen centuries. We hold every tradition the apostles delivered… and we know where to find them. In God's Word, and God's Word alone.

And remember what Jesus called the other kind of traditions.

Mark 7:13
[13] making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."

TWO KINDS OF HANDING DOWN

- The one that comes from God through the apostles… once for all.
- The one that comes from men… and makes the Word of no effect.

The whole question is which one you're following.

3. The Canon ("The Church gave you the Bible.")

In almost every debate, a Catholic apologist or priest will open to the table of contents and say, the Catholic Church gave you this list… you should thank us for the Bible. But their own teaching says different. Here's the Catechism.

> *It was by the apostolic Tradition that the Church discerned which writings are to be included in the list of the sacred books.*
>
> **Catechism of the Catholic Church, §120**

Discerned. You don't discern something you made. You discern something that's already there.

The great scholar F. F. Bruce put it this way.

> *"The New Testament books did not become authoritative for the Church because they were formally included in a canonical list; on the contrary, the Church included them in her canon because she already regarded them as divinely inspired."*
>
> **F. F. Bruce, quoted in Geisler and MacKenzie, Roman Catholics and Evangelicals**

The grader on the line. In the carrot sheds and packing houses around Arvin, somebody on the line grades the produce. This one's number one. This one's a cull. But the grader didn't grow a single carrot… they recognized what the field already produced. The Church didn't grow the fruit. It recognized it.

An old argument from the Reformation that Martin Luther used comes from John the Baptist.

John 1:29
[29] The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "<u>Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!</u>

John wasn't making Jesus the Lamb of God. He was testifying to Jesus as the Lamb of God. He discerned something that was already true.

Before anybody made a list. When Jesus walked this earth, He held the Old Testament in His hands and said, it is written. No pope had ruled on it. No council had voted on it. God entrusted those Scriptures to Israel, and Jesus received them as the Word of God.

A closed canon. It's a common mistaken idea that a council voted on what would and wouldn't be Scripture. The truth is, the councils simply affirmed what was already there. The New Testament was already circulating and being affirmed by the end of the first century. The canon closed when the last apostle, John, died.

4. The Chaos ("Without Rome you get five hundred denominations.")

Kreeft puts it like this. The argument rests on the infallible interpretation of the Catholic Church.

> *…let five hundred people interpret the bible without Church authority and there will soon be five hundred denominations.*
>
> **Peter Kreeft, Fundamentals of the Faith, quoted in Geisler and MacKenzie, Roman Catholics and Evangelicals**

Some truth in it. Drive through Arvin and Lamont and count the church signs. Protestants have split over some pretty silly things… carpet colors, hymnals, who got to be on the board. That ought to grieve us, because Jesus prayed for His church to be one.

John 17:20-21
[20] "I do not pray for these alone, but also for <u>those who will believe in Me through their word</u>; [21] <u>that they all may be one</u>, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

Division hurts our witness. But notice where the unity comes from… through their word… the apostles' word. And three verses earlier, in the very same prayer…

John 17:17
[17] Sanctify them by Your truth. <u>Your word is truth</u>.

One people, one truth. Jesus prayed for one people, gathered around one truth. Walk into a Baptist, Nazarene, Wesleyan, Calvary Chapel or Assembly of God church. They'll argue about baptism and the gifts. But ask them… Who is Jesus? Is He God? Did He rise from the dead? You'll get the same answer out of the same Bible.

<u>HOW WE LIVE IT IN ARVIN</u>

- Where the Bible is clear, we stand together.
- Where good people who love the Bible disagree, we give each other room.
- Where anybody… Catholic, Protestant or Pentecostal… adds to it or takes from it, we must say so, with love.

The cure for division isn't less Bible. It's more of it.

CONCLUSION

Five hundred years ago. In 1517 Martin Luther was a priest and professor of theology in Wittenberg, Germany. The church was selling indulgences… pardons from purgatory… to help pay for St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Luther couldn't find it in his Bible, so he wrote out 95 reasons why it was wrong and nailed them to the church door. He kept writing… on grace, on faith, on the sacraments, and on the authority of the pope. By 1521 the pope had thrown him out of the church, and he was called to stand trial. A stack of his books sat on a table in front of him, and they asked him two questions. Are these your books? Will you take back what's in them?

"Unless I am convinced by the testimonies of Scripture or evident reason… I am the prisoner of the Scriptures."

Martin Luther at Worms (1521), quoted in Geisler and MacKenzie, Roman Catholics and Evangelicals

<u>SO WHAT DO YOU DO WITH THIS?</u>

- Search the Scriptures daily, like the Bereans.
- Test everything by it… your culture, the podcast, the video, the prophecy, the family tradition… and this pulpit.
- When the Bible and any tradition disagree… go with the Bible.

Not a prisoner of my fathers' traditions. Not a prisoner of what I feel. A prisoner of the Word.

Because Paul says it again.

Galatians 1:11-12
[11] But I make known to you, brethren, that <u>the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man</u>. [12] For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, <u>but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ</u>.

This gospel didn't come from man. It came by the revelation of Jesus Christ. And when that same Jesus stood against the devil himself… He didn't need anything else.