

I grew up in the light of the teaching of Evangelical Baptists. Being a school boy in the 11th-form of the secondary school, I was baptized in the Church membership and through some time entered the Pentecostal Theological Seminary. Biblical Theology was not a subject with which I could deal as easily as my friends. I know that some people develop their belief in the so-called “spirit of discerning Scripture” simply through reading and prayer, but in my personal experience this practice did not always work out.

I remember that the majority of the teachers in Seminary school were from different denominations. Some of them simply decided to devote their lives to theology study. Many of them had their own understanding and interpretations, which were considered by them to be true. When a teacher quoted someone in Biblical theology, he would often say “that one has that opinion, and that one has that opinion”. I was confused and embarrassed. Why were we comparing the Scripture with Scripture? Why are there multiple interpretations among our Evangelical denominations? Can we decide the problem of different interpretations by referring in these interpretations to another interpretation?

We can not read the Scripture just by the ‘surface reading. In order to know the Bible, you can’t simply rely on your ability to read. Speaking of which, my grandfather can not even read. And it’s the twenty first century! He is almost 90 years old. It is also not possible to solve the problem through Bible study., because we need to decipher the material with guide-books and dictionaries. We must know by reading the Bible who and when? Who has written each piece of religious literature, and what was their story? We must take into consideration the culture of those times, and the historical and linguistic contexts of what is written. By reading the Bible we can test, examine, and explore the Scripture, but we need also to have the ability to have a proper and adequate way of exploring the texts. It is better to say by our Evangelical language – we need to have the Spirit of discerning! But what is most interesting is the fact that by having all these qualities we can not eventually escape the multiple interpretations in some verses of the Scripture. This fact was incomprehensible and obscure to me.

Why does the Bible allow these multiple interpretations? Can the Scripture by itself - the Scripture which allows more than one interpretation in some verses and plenty of propositions in other verses – decide the problem of authority outside of the tradition of the Catholic Church? The Church, which decided the canon of the Scripture? I remember speaking with one young brother, the Pastor of the Youth Evangelical Church, who was proving to me that if certain partes in the Scripture were true, then the Bible would address it, but if the Bible did not, then it is not permitted, or God delivered it to us to decide if it is permitted or not. When I heard that, I became even more worrier and I knw that to think like in that fashion was dangerous.

In my opinion, the Bible says what it says and nothing more. In ancient times, potatoes was forbidden to eat, just because people were not told to eat them in the Bible. The example with potatoes looks ridiculous today, right? However, today there are scientific experiments which are forbidden and sinful, and even though they are not mentioned in the Bible as right or wrong, they are still permitted. I know that many of our brothers and sisters in North America and Western Europe who are trying to educate our Evangelical congregations through their literature, pamphlets and magazines, measure everything by the Scripture but they have totally different opinions on many important issues. Notice that with the same Bible, they seem to operate with a totally different concept of spirituality, totally different spiritual idealities on these very important matters.

Our forefathers, who founded the Protestant community, declared that the Bible by itself decides the problem of authority. But after learning theology in the Evangelical Seminary, I can not agree with that statement. I find myself in with a choice to make: In what I should believe? In my own interpretation of the Scripture? Or how my denomination teaches the Scripture?

I revealed that Scripture is not authentic itself. None of the original manuscripts have survived. There are thousands of the manuscripts. There are plenty of Bible versions. The Bible doesn’t even touch on everything that Jesus did in his life: Mark 4:33 6:34 Luke 2:15,16 24:25,27 John 16:12 20:30 21:25 Acts 1:2,3. .The idea of the Scripture existing outside of the Church would have been unthinkable to the early Church. The conception of the Sola Scriptura had it’s form no earlier than the 14th century. So, the question is this: Did Christ, who did not write even one word in the Scripture, has leave the book, or did he leave the Church? Must the Church be ranked and aligned to the book, or does the book, which is part of the Church tradition, have to be ranked and aligned to the teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ? The Bible calls not the Scripture, but the Church, a “Pillar and foundation of the truth”. You can’t even find the word “Bible” in the Scripture. When Apostle Paul commands the Christians to be submissive to the Apostles’ tradition, he doesn’t say to be submissive to the Bible.

I have discovered that Evangelicalism, which is split by thousands of denominations, requires theological erudition, which in essence does not exist at all. Because among the labyrinths of Charismatics, Jehovah Witnesses, Adventists and Baptists, there are a lot of educated people who have been studying the Bible for years. The Evangelical experience - me, Scripture and Holy Spirit - looks like the experience of a chicken without hen, life without a mother. The chicken who by instinct feels that there must be a hen. So the Evangelical experience is similar to that of the confused chicken.

Finally, I came to this conclusion: the right understanding of the Bible without the Church is impossible. There is no Scripture without the Church. The context of the Scripture is the Church. And to interpret the Scripture outside of the Church is to interpret the Scripture outside of its proper context. Otherwise how can we avoid our own mistakes when interpreting the Scripture? I am confident that Jesus would never separate the Scripture from the Church. Because the Scripture is the part of the Church organism. Like the heart is the part of the human body.

What are my reasons for believing the Catholic Scripture? Because the Catholic interpretation of the Bible doesn't worship the letter of the text, but rather follows the spirit of the text. The Catholic interpretation of the Bible doesn't disfigure someone's innocent earthly joys. The Catholic interpretation of the Bible doesn't teach to be indifferent to the rest of society. The Catholic interpretation of the Biblical prophecies does not mix up the symbolic and spiritual with the materialistic and literal. Because the Scripture is the book of the Catholic Church. In short, the truth about the Bible has led me to the truth about the Church.