

Gospel-Shaped Focus

We know the Bible is the word of God, the Sword of the Spirit, but the truth is we are always tempted to read it through the lens of our culture, and not read the culture through the lens of Scripture. You can easily have the appearance of a commitment to Scripture but by adding in other authorities, dilute its message and compromise its integrity. In a culture of competing voices we need to be certain of the Bible, fight for its centrality and understand the subtle temptations to compromise.

Leonardo De Chirico is the pastor of Breccia di Roma, a church that he helped plant in Rome in 2009, and Vice Chairman of the Italian Evangelical Alliance. Previously, Leonardo planted and pastored an evangelical church in Ferrara, Italy from 1997 to 2009. He earned degrees in history (University of Bologna), theology (ETCW, Bridgend, Wales) and bioethics (University of Padova). His PhD is from King's College (London); it was published as *Evangelical Theological Perspectives on Post-Vatican II Roman Catholicism*. His recent books are *A Christian Pocket Guide to Papacy* (Christian Focus, 2015); *A Christian Pocket Guide to Mary* (Christian Focus, 2017), and *Same Words, Different Worlds. Do Roman Catholics and evangelicals believe the same gospel?* (IVP, 2021). He is a lecturer of historical theology at Istituto di Formazione Evangelica e Documentazione in Padova, Italy. Additionally, Leonardo is the director of the Reformanda Initiative, which aims to equip evangelical leaders to better understand and engage with Roman Catholicism, and the leader of the Rome Scholars and Leaders Network (RSLN).

Introduction

1. A Sketch of the Bible's View of itself

- 1.1 God Spoke, God Speaks (Heb 1)
- 1.2 What Scripture Says, God Says (Jesus and the OT)
- 1.3 Useful to educate (1 Timothy 3:16)
- 1.4 The heart of the Bible: the "gospel"

2. Three Temptations We All Face in Reading the Bible

- 2.1 The Roman Catholic Temptation: Scripture in between Tradition and Magisterium
- 2.2 The Liberal Temptation: Scripture under Culture
- 2.3 The Sentimentalist Temptation: Scripture under my feelings

3. Three Guiding Principles to Read the Bible

- 3.1 *Sola Scriptura*: Scripture as ultimate authority
- 3.2 *Tota Scriptura*: the whole of Scripture
- 3.3 *Scriptura Sui Ipsius Interpres*: the Bible interprets itself

Conclusion

Helpful readings:

W. Grudem, J. Collins, T. Schreiner, *Understanding Scripture. An Overview of the Bible's Origin, Reliability and Meaning* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2012)

D. Carson, *The Enduring Authority of the Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016).