

*“Immediately:” The Gospel of Mark’s Concise Guide to Following Jesus*

Four Responses to the Bible

Mark 4:1–20

Page 22 in the ESV Scripture Journal

The Lord’s Day Morning

Reformation Sunday

October 25, 2026

On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther posted 95 Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenburg, Germany. This was a formal protest and an invitation to debate the teachings of the Roman church. This act helped spark the Protestant Reformation, which, among other things, affirmed the authority of Scripture alone (*sola scriptura*). Because Scripture is God’s Word, it is the final authority by which all truth claims, including church traditions, creeds, and councils, are judged. The Reformers sought to avoid two errors:

| Error 1: Scripture Plus Tradition<br><i>Scriptura et Traditio</i>                                                                                | Scripture Alone<br><i>Sola Scriptura</i>                                                                                                                                                                                              | Error 2: Scripture Only<br><i>Solo Scriptura</i>                                                                                                  |
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| <b>The Elitists:</b> We the “learned” experts will tell the “unlearned” people what the Bible says and our interpretation is equal in authority. | <b>The Diligent:</b> The experts equip the people to become experts who can interpret the Bible by practicing “the due use of ordinary means” using sound interpretive principles (hermeneutics) in full reliance on the Holy Spirit. | <b>The Populists:</b> We the “unlearned” people can interpret the Bible without help from the “learned” experts by relying on spiritual feelings. |

Understandably, the Protestant Reformation, put the Bible in the hands of ordinary Christians in their own language. Since all of Scripture presents Christ, to reject the written Word of God is to reject the incarnate Word of God. You don’t get Jesus without the Bible. Here are four responses to the Word:

1. True \_\_\_\_\_: Summarily dismiss Christ without careful \_\_\_\_\_.
2. False \_\_\_\_\_: Enthusiastically claim to follow Christ without \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Pragmatic \_\_\_\_\_: Pragmatically use Christ until a better offer \_\_\_\_\_.
4. True \_\_\_\_\_: Believe the Bible and follow Christ \_\_\_\_\_.