**John has been away at seminary for a couple of years and has now come back to his hometown with some new ideas he wants to go over.  Wes, his old college buddy and Christian brother, is anxious to hear what’s on John’s mind these days.  Though they haven’t seen each other in quite some time, the pair has a long history of being able to discuss controversial matters in a courteous, non-confrontational way.**

**We encounter them at a local coffee shop, opening their Bibles and just beginning to go at it:**

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***JOHN:****Let’s start off with a question I’ve been meaning to ask.  It might sound funny at first, but bear with me—there’s a purpose to it.  Here we go.  Wes, do your teachers here teach you the Word truly or falsely?*

**WES:**  Uh…truly.

***JOHN:****How do you know?*

**WES:**  That’s simple.  They only teach what the Bible teaches.

***JOHN:****How can you be sure of that?*

**WES:**  Because the truth is written right there for anyone to see.

***JOHN:****Then why do you need a teacher?*

**WES:**  Oh.  I see what you’re saying. Well…I guess they bring out the *fullness* of what’s written.

***JOHN:****Do they do this truly or falsely*?

**WES:**  Truly.

***JOHN:****How do you know?*

**WES:**  You can see whether what they’re saying lines up with the Word or not.

***JOHN:****So you understand the Word just as well as your teachers?*

**WES:**  Well, no…

***JOHN:****Then how can you be qualified to say whether they’re handling it well or poorly?*

**WES:**  I don’t think you *need* a lot of qualifications to understand the Bible.

***JOHN:****If that’s true then I have to ask again…what do you need teachers for?  And how can you simultaneously be the teacher’s pupil but also his supervisor?*

**WES:**  I’m not sure I follow you.

***JOHN:****Let me put it this way.  The person being taught and the person judging the accuracy of the teaching can’t possibly be the same individual.  That would be like putting a first year Algebra student as the head of the Math Department.  I mean, think about it—if you don’t know the material until someone teaches it to you, on what basis are you to judge whether the material you don’t know is being taught to you correctly?*

**WES:**  What about the noble Bereans? [flipping to Acts 17:11].  Weren’t they praised by the Apostle Paul for checking everything he said against the Scriptures—rather than just taking his word for it?

***JOHN:****Are you sure you’re reading that passage correctly?  After all, the Bereans weren’t even Christians…they were Jews.  Don’t forget that the whole purpose of the Scriptures the Jews had was to prepare them to recognize the Redeemer when He came.  So in this passage, Paul has just presented the Rabbis there at Berea with Jesus of Nazareth’s credentials as a claimant to the title of Hebrew Messiah.  Now he is praising them for actually going to the trouble of checking those credentials against the Old Testament prophecies…rather than just sticking their fingers in their ears as most of the others had done.*

**WES:**  Gee, I hadn’t realized that.  I was skipping the context, I guess.

***JOHN:*** *Well, yes, Paul couldn’t possibly have been inviting a bunch of unbelievers to verify his exegesis—he never allowed anybody to do that.  Look at what he says over here in Galatians 1:8: “Though we or an angel from heaven should preach another gospel to you besides that which we have already preached, let him be anathema.”  That certainly doesn’t sound like a man inviting the public to correct him, does it?*

**WES:**  Well then, who *is* supposed to check up on what the pastor is saying?

***JOHN:****Suppose you tell me.*

**WES:**  I still say what I said before…the congregation is responsible for making sure that their teachers stick to the truth.

***JOHN:*** *Just how exactly will the congregation go about determining which truths he should stick to…since they can’t trust their teachers?*

**WES:**  They have their Bibles…that ought to be enough.

***JOHN:*** *You mean that same book the Ethiopian eunuch was reading when Philip asked him if he understood what he read?*

**WES:** That’s the one.  Umm, tell me again what the eunuch’s reply was…?

***JOHN:*** [Turning to Acts 8:31] *He said “How can I understand, except some man should guide me?”*

**WES:**  [Smiling] That’s cute.  You set me up, didn’t you?  I see you haven’t changed a bit.

***JOHN:*** *[Grinning] Just making a point.*

**WES:**  Well, anyhow, that doesn’t count.  The Eunuch wasn’t a Christian, either.  Probably he wasn’t even a Jew, but just what they used to call a “God-fearer.”  But today’s Christians have the Holy Spirit living inside as a guide.  With His help, they *can* understand the Bible and then use it to judge their pastors.

***JOHN:****And they all agree about what the Bible means?*

**WES:**  Yes.  Well, there’s a mainstream consensus, anyway.

***JOHN:****In other words, you’ll take a vote.*

**WES:** Yes.

**JOHN:** So it’s “*Vox populi, vox Dei”* eh?

**WES:**  [Uncomfortably]  I didn’t quite put it that way.

***JOHN:****Well, if that’s the way it is—then I hate to say it, old buddy, but you’d have to become a Roman Catholic, because worldwide they outnumber all other Christians by a margin of about 2 to 1.*

**WES:**  Waitasecond, I meant a vote among Bible-believing Christians!

***JOHN:****The Catholics say they are the Bible-believing Christians!*

**WES:**  Oh, come on.  Anyways, we know that’s not true.  They’ve departed from the Bible in a lot of areas.

***JOHN:****You say that.  They say you’re the one that departed.  Now, how can I know which of you is correct?  [Good naturedly] Am I just supposed to bow the knee to your vast biblical expertise?  Are you an infallible judge in doctrinal matters?*

**WES:** [Indignantly] No, of course not.  I’m no pope.  I don’t ask anybody to take my word.  Open up the Book and look for yourself.

***JOHN:****How in the world is that supposed to help?  I’m no more an infallible judge than you are.  How is adding one more person’s interpretation in to the mix supposed to clear anything up?  A minute ago we had your interpretation and the pope’s.  Now we have yours, his, and mine.  What we’re looking for is some way to judge between us…some way to establish which one of us got the right answer…*

**WES:**  But the Bible is our judge!

***JOHN:****How can the Bible be our judge when the subject of what the Bible has or has not, in fact, pronounced in judgment is the very thing we’re disputing over?  Look, we all agree to submit to the authority of the Bible…once we’re certain that we really understand what it’s saying to us.  What we don’t seem to have is some way to know with certainty what that is.  How can we be sure we’re interpreting it properly?*

**WES:**  It’s just not that hard!  It isn’t about “your interpretation” or “my interpretation.”  The Bible interprets itself!

***JOHN:****To whom?*

**WES:**  To anybody!  To anyone who bothers it study it, anyhow.

***JOHN:****Come on now, Wes!  You don’t think they have any Bible scholars at all in those other denominations?  And where did all these other denominations come from in the first place? After all, there’s hundreds and hundreds of them…and just about every one of them insists that all in the world they did was just open up the Bible and allow it to interpret itself.*

**WES:**  Okay, smart guy.  What’s the answer?

***JOHN:****I’m not after the answer right now.  I’m just trying to get somebody to see the question!*

**WES:**  [Taking a deep breath] Okay.  Let’s step back for a minute and start over.  I think the Holy Spirit lets you know when somebody is teaching the truth.

***JOHN:****Does He do this for everyone or just the people in our denomination?  Or maybe just to you, personally?*

**WES:** For everyone.  All Christians, anyway.

***JOHN:****Then how come the people in the other denominations get a different answer than you do?  Does the Holy Spirit contradict Himself?*

**WES:**  No, that’s impossible.

***JOHN:****Obviously.  So then He must be telling them the same things He tells you.*

**WES:**  [Uncomfortable again] I suppose…

***JOHN:****Then why don’t they listen?*

**WES:**  What do you mean?

***JOHN:*** *If the Holy Spirit is telling all these other groups that your doctrines are the correct ones, how come they’re teaching otherwise?*

**WES:**  Well, you have to be tuned in to what He’s saying.

***JOHN:****How does one go about this “tuning in”?*

**WES:**  By spending time in the Word, praying, meditating in the Spirit…that sort of thing.

***JOHN:****And is our denomination the only one that does those things?*

**WES:**  No…I don’t guess it is.

***JOHN:****Well, does our group do them more often or better than the other denominations?*

**WES:**  Probably not.

***JOHN:****So then it’s possible to do all these things you listed for getting in touch with the Holy Spirit—and still get the wrong answer?*

**WES:** I guess so.

***JOHN:****Then we’re back to square one, aren’t we?*

**WES:**  Let me get this straight, John: Are you telling me that the Holy Spirit *won’t* lead us into all truth if we ask Him sincerely?

***JOHN:****I’m not telling you anything—I’m asking.  How do you personally know that you have committed yourself to the correct doctrine?*

**WES:**  Well, it’s like I said before.  I feel like I have asked in all sincerity for the Holy Ghost to teach me.  And I’m comfortable with the answers I’ve gotten.

***JOHN:****And your comfort level is a reliable guide to truth?*

**WES:**  [Looking a bit hurt] Okay, you’re right.  You got me.  That came out wrong.  I guess what I’m really saying is that I feel like I’ve done all that anyone could be expected to do.

***JOHN:****Wouldn’t a…Jehovah’s Witness, for example, have the same kind of feeling?*

**WES:**  [Irritated now] How should I know?

***JOHN:****Sorry.  [Pausing]  I’ve haven’t forgotten our old “rules of engagement.”  I’ll stop anytime you ask…*

**WES:**  No.  No, I’m okay.  I remember something, too.  Wasn’t our old motto to *“Follow the truth wherever it leads”*?

***JOHN:****Good man.*

**WES:**  [Smiling again] Anyhow, I want to see what you’re getting at here.  It must be something rich, I gotta say.  Now, what was the question again?

***JOHN:****Wouldn’t these other groups say that the Holy Spirit has led them to their various distinctives?*

**WES:**  I guess.

***JOHN:*** *And so a person can be totally convinced that they have gotten a certain teaching from God…and be totally mistaken?*

**WES:**  Apparently so.

***JOHN:****Then how do you know you aren’t doing that?*

**WES:**  I beg your pardon?

***JOHN:****Well, if it’s possible to be sincere, godly, and wrong anyhow about these things…then how do you know that it’s the other guy doing this and not you?*

**WES:**  I just know in my heart that I’m right, that’s all…I know God has taught me.

***JOHN:****Once again, wouldn’t a JW say the same thing?  How can you fault him then, if he’s using the exact same methodology that you use?  What happened with the technique in his case?  What went wrong?*

**WES:**  Jeremiah 17:9 says “the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked…”

***JOHN:****Well, pardon me…but how come you’re always so certain that it’s the other guy whose heart has deceived him…and never your heart doing any deceiving?*

**WES:**  [Long pause].  All right, John.  You’ve got to come clean with me now.  What are you getting at?

***JOHN:****Just this.  You may remember that when I left town for seminary I was pretty sure of myself, theologically speaking.  I felt like I already had a good grasp on Bible doctrine and only needed to pick up a little Greek and Hebrew, maybe shore up one or two shaky points, and then collect my diploma.  In fact, I chose to attend the particular seminary I did precisely because I knew in advance that they agreed with the beliefs I already had!  But once I got there I found an incredibly wide variety of theological positions being argued back and forth—and all just within our own denomination.  The really troubling thing, however, was that all of them sounded good!  Every one of them sounded persuasive while you were listening and all of them—without exception—were being presented by godly, holy men.  As a matter of fact, I got to know some real saints on both sides of every issue.*

**WES:**  I recall that from some of your letters.

***JOHN:****Right.  So I guess I started to acquire a little humility.  Who was I to walk in off the street—Mr. Know-It-All who’s just here to collect his diploma—and start telling all these saints who got it right and who got it wrong?  If all these brilliant guys can read the same Bible for 50 years, pray to the same Holy Spirit, seek the truth with prayer and fasting…and still get 20 different answers…then what hope was there for me?*

**WES:**  Well, I guess I’m starting to see what you’re saying.  But I’ve gotta tell you, John, I really do think you’re overreacting a bit.  I mean, surely all these differences of opinion were about minor, secondary matters, weren’t they?  When it comes to the central, core doctrines of the faith—all the things necessary for salvation—the Bible is pretty clear, isn’t it?

***JOHN:****Well, yes…I took refuge in that idea for a while, too, until I thought it over a bit more.  First of all, where in the Bible do we get a list of two columns: one marked ‘Core Doctrines—To Be Held Firmly” and another marked ‘Minor Doctrines—Feel Free to Argue Over These”?*

**WES:**  Nowhere, I guess.

***JOHN:****So any such list has got to be a man-made invention, right?*

**WES:**  I guess so.

***JOHN:****And therefore, fallible…which, of course, renders this whole subject of what should and should not be considered a ‘primary doctrine’ just one more bit of human theology to wrangle over.  What we need is God’s list of what’s primary—not a list of our own.  But there isn’t one, as far as I’ve been able to make out.  All of the Bible is the Word of God, and every bit of it comes with the same divine authority.*

**WES:**  I guess you’re right.

***JOHN:****Secondly, why is it that God finds Himself able to communicate clearly only those parts of His teaching ‘essential to salvation’?  Or, to put it another way—whatever God did to keep the ‘essential’ parts clear…why couldn’t He just do that for the whole thing?*

**WES:**  No, come on now.  It’s not what God failed to do…it’s *us* that’s the problem.  It’s our own sin that keeps us from understanding everything.

***JOHN:****Then you do admit that something keeps us from understanding the Scriptures?*

**WES:**  [Hesitant] Maybe.  But it’s nothing the matter with the Bible.

***JOHN:****I never said it was.  But the Bible was written to sinners…not unfallen angels.  Sinners are the audience that God was presented with.  And so the Bible must communicate to sinners or to nobody at all.  After all, what good is an infallible book without an infallible interpreter?  In other words, if all the readers are fallible sinners, and every hermeneutical system the creation of fallible sinners, then how does the infallibility ever get off the printed page?*

**WES:** Wow.  I see what you mean.  I…I can’t say I ever thought of that before.

***JOHN:****Okay.  Here’s a good example.  Do you remember last winter, when you and Stephanie were having some problems, and you went in to our church counseling center for help with your marriage?*

**WES:**  Do I ever…that was a real trial.  Praise the Lord *that’s* over with now!

***JOHN:****Absolutely.  But do you remember that application form you told me about?  The one they asked you to complete before coming in?*

**WES:**  Oh yeah.

***JOHN:****And what was that question you objected to?*

**WES:**  I remember it word for word: *“Are you willing to accept God’s answer to your problem?”*

***JOHN:****And your response was?*

**WES:**  My response was “*Of course* I’m willing to accept God’s answer!  But what I’m not willing to do is just blindly accept that your answer here *is* God’s answer.”  They’ve got their own theological approach down there, you know…

***JOHN:****That’s exactly what I’m saying!  I’m pretty sure all of us would agree to submit to “what the Bible says.”  What we hesitate to do is to submit to somebody else’s idea of what the Bible says.  But what alternative is there?—to trust nobody’s ideas about the Bible except my own?  But what makes my ideas about it so special?  Don’t you see that I myself am just…“somebody else’s somebody else”?*

**WES:**  [Long pause] I’ll have to stew on that one a while.

***JOHN:****[Smiling] Please do.*

**WES:**  John, I do believe you’re going to give me a headache today.

***JOHN:****Sorry.  Ready for number three, now?*

**WES:**  [Mock grumbling] Go ahead if you must.

***JOHN:****My third discovery about these so-called “central & secondary” doctrines was probably the most fatal of all.  There at the seminary I started to realize that, in one sense, these allegedly “minor doctrines” are actually the most important points.  That’s because they’re the ones that actually concern the day-to-day living of the Christian life.  Yes, certainly, all of us at school agreed about the Trinity, the Blood Atonement, Original Sin…all the remote theological propositions.  But when it came to the practical details of how to live as a Christian—well, everything went to pieces.  For example: can a Christian be divorced?  If so, can he remarry without committing the sin of adultery?  If he does commit adultery does he lose his salvation?  Then, if any of these marriages produces children, should he have them baptized as infants or wait until they’re older?  And so it goes…on and on and on.  These are just a few examples off the top of my head but you get the idea.*

**WES:** Well, you know I do feel like the Bible is pretty clear about the infant baptism issue.  For example, if you turn over to Matthew’s Gospel…

***JOHN:****Look Wes, don’t you think I already know all the various arguments in favor of our position on that issue?  [Smiling] If I’m not mistaken, I taught you some of them!  No, I’m not really interested in rushing right back into the fray right now with a lot of Scriptural tit-for-tat.  What I’m saying is that however clear you and I might think the Bible is on this point, it apparently wasn’t clear enough to keep even giants like Luther and Calvin and Wesley, for example, from taking the other side!  And if all those great men could be sincere, godly, and wrong anyway on an issue like that…well, I’m sorry.  I just got to the point where my own headstrong confidence in my own opinions wasn’t getting it done anymore.  I’m after the Truth…not just some position I can get comfortable with.*

**WES:**  What did your professors say?

***JOHN:****Everybody at the seminary told me to be content with my own interpretation—just decide on your story and stick to it.  To tell you the truth, it was a little weird once you noticed it.  In all these disputed matters there just seemed to be this big unspoken agreement that every man should do what seems right in his own eyes.  But—doggone it—isn’t this saying that God wasn’t really able to communicate His teachings to us in an unambiguous way?  Why not?  What’s stopping Him?*

**WES:** [Concerned] Are you saying you’ve started to doubt your faith?

***JOHN:****In Jesus—never.  What I’ve finally begun to doubt is myself.  My own fleshly self-confidence that I’m always going to end up on the side of the angels; watching from above while so many deluded Lutherans and Methodists and Assemblies of God people thrash around helplessly, not listening to the Holy Spirit.*

**WES:**  Well, look John…all this is fine and good.  I mean, of course I’m all in favor of humility and all that.  But…well, it’s like you asked a minute ago: *what alternative is there?*  What else can I do except open up the Bible and see what it says to me?  And then pray that God will help me do the best I can and somehow please Him in spite of myself?

***JOHN:****That would seem to be the only thing to do under the circumstances.  But is that Christianity?  Does that really sound to you like the Faith taught by Peter and Paul?—with the Bible a kind of “ink blot test” to be read on a wing and a prayer, in hopes that your lucky number might come up on Judgment Day and—surprise!—your beliefs actually turn out to have been the correct ones?  I mean after all, how different is that approach from modern existentialism—the idea that the only alternative to despair is to just make a leap in the dark, hoping that something will be there to cushion the blow when you land?*

**WES:**  Well, have *you* found some kind of alternative?  You don’t sound particularly despairing today.

***JOHN:****Let me just ask this—and don’t get excited; it’s just for the sake of argument.  What if we missed a step somewhere?  What if we made our fatal mistake right at the beginning…by calling the Bible our only authority in the first place…*

**WES:**  Huh?  You want me to put something *else* up as my authority besides God’s Word?

***JOHN:****I didn’t say instead of God’s Word…*

**WES:**  Okay, well…in addition to the Bible, then.  Either way it means setting up somebody’s human opinion along side the Word of God!

***JOHN:****But Wes—haven’t we established today that there’s no way to avoid doing that?  Think about it: the only possible way to keep human opinion completely away from the Bible is to leave the Bible on the shelf unread!  Because the minute I open it up and start reading I absolutely do submit it to at least one human opinion—my own.  So to say “the Bible is my only authority” really means that I am the only authority I recognize.  Me…my ideas about what’s Scriptural, my ideas of what’s true and right, my ideas about what God means in this passage or that…*

**WES:**  Fine.  But once again—what’s the alternative?

***JOHN:****What if there’s a living voice?*

**WES:**  Huh?

***JOHN:****What if there’s something or someone who can stand back, watch all our debates—all our careful, prayerful exegesis, our word studies and textual criticism—listen respectfully to the 20 different opinions which emerge from it all…and then say which one of us got it right?*

**WES:** What are you talking about?  And anyway, wouldn’t this so-called living voice itself be adding just one more human opinion into the mix?

***JOHN:****Not if it was something more than human.*

**WES:**  Like what?  Like some kind of prophet or something?—like Joseph Smith or Reverend Moon?

***JOHN:****Like the Church, for example.  Something set up by Jesus Himself.  We know that Jesus did establish the Church.  So what if the Church is the living voice?*

**WES:**  [Slightly irritated] Which Church?

***JOHN:****The only one there is.  The Bride of Christ.  The Body of Christ, in fact*.

**WES:**  You’re losing me.  How can the Church be the living voice?  “The Church” means the very people that are doing all this denominational squabbling you keep harping on.

***JOHN:*** *Think back on your Church History.  Hasn’t there ever been any way in which the Church was able to speak with a unified voice?  I mean, speak in such a way as to silence that kind of squabbling and partisan spirit?*

**WES:** You mean…what?  The old Church Councils?  Like Chalcedon and Nicea?

***JOHN:****Well, that’s a start.*

**WES:**  I see what you’re saying now.  You know, it’s funny you should mention but I was just doing some reading on that a couple of weeks back.  Anyhow, I’ll surprise you John—I’m more open to what you’re saying than you might realize.  I’m “Reformed” enough in my theology to believe that God did speak through the great Ecumenical Councils.

***JOHN:****All right.  Could God still do that kind of speaking?  Today?*

**WES:**  I don’t know.  I suppose He could, if He wanted to.  At any rate, I’m like Calvin—I don’t have a problem with any council, so long as it checks against the Word of God.

***JOHN:****But confound it, that’s just the problem, Wes.  It was the Councils themselves that were supposed to be doing the checking!  You remember how it went: whenever some important matter came under dispute in the Church, and people needed the issue settled for the sake of peace and harmony, a Council would be called and then staffed to the rafters with Bible experts.  These guys would then thoroughly check every proposed solution against the Word of God—the whole process took years sometimes—before declaring the final answer to the Church and defining some article of belief.  Now if, after all this testing some other test has to be made—to satisfy Calvin, or Luther, or just plain ol’ you and me—then won’t yet another test also be needed?  A test of the test?  And then what’s to stop somebody else from asking for a third test, to determine if the second was faithful?—and then a fourth to test the third?  The whole darn idea behind the Councils was that they were the “Court of Last Resort.”  Once the Council had spoken the faithful weren’t to supposed to revise—but just receive.*

**WES:**  But the Bible is our…

***JOHN:****Yes?*

**WES:**  I was about to say that the Bible is our only Court of Last Resort.

**JOHN:**  *Why don’t you say it?*

**WES:**  Because I’m not a hard-headed mule.  You would then tell me that this is only a fancy way of saying that there is no Court of Last Resort; since each individual—in the name of rejecting mere human opinion—answers only to himself, a human, about what is and isn’t biblical.

***JOHN:****Well put.*

**WES:**  Thank you…doggone it.  But look, didn’t the later Councils go wrong—drop off into error?

***JOHN:****How would you know if they did?*

**WES:**  You’d check what they said against the Bible.

***JOHN:****Who would check it—you, yourself alone?  Or would you summon your own Council to help?*

**WES:**  Well, listen, John…these darn things can’t be infallible can they?

***JOHN:****Some people say they are—under certain conditions.*

**WES:**  That’s not Biblical.  The Bible says nobody is infallible except Jesus.

***JOHN:****Where exactly does it say that?  I don’t remember that part.*

**WES:**  You know what I mean.  I’m saying all human beings have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

***JOHN:****You’re quite right there, of course.  No, what I’m really saying is this…what if Jesus was to lend the Council some of His infallibility?*

**WES:**  Hmm.  Well…maybe that could happen and maybe it couldn’t.  I guess I’m no big shot seminary graduate like you [grinning] but I don’t recall the Bible saying a thing about any infallible human teachers.

***JOHN:*** *Wait, now.  I bet I can name a mere human you think was infallible.  How about Matthew when he wrote the book of Matthew?  Luke when he wrote Luke?  Paul when he wrote 2nd Corinthians?  Isn’t that an example of Jesus lending a touch of His infallibility to some mere mortals?*

**WES:**  That’s different.  That’s the Bible.  But what about *Sola Scriptura*—our doctrine that the Bible and the Bible alone is to be our authority?

***JOHN:*** *Where, exactly, does the Bible teach that?  What verses, I mean?*

**WES:** [Another long pause] You said what?

***JOHN:*** *I said, where in the Scriptures do the Scriptures teach Sola Scriptura?*

**WES:**  Umm…nowhere, as a matter of fact.  Not in so many words, exactly.

***JOHN:****Then Sola Scriptura is, itself, an extra-biblical human doctrine?*

**WES:**  [A very long pause this time] You’re making me crazy, you know that John?

***JOHN:*** *Not before doing it to myself, I assure you brother.*

**WES:**  All right.  I got one more question and then I’ve got to go somewhere and rub my skull for a few days.

***JOHN:****Shoot.*

**WES:**  You’ve been talking about Church Councils.  I ask again…*which Church?*  I mean, dozens of denominations have called their own Councils and Synods through the centuries…and they’ve disagreed with each other on practically every point there is.  So look, smarty pants.  Which of these Churches holds the *infallible* Councils?  I’ve learned enough logic to understand at least this: that they can’t all be infallible…not and contradict each other.  So which Church conducts this supposed “Court of Last Resort” you’re talking about?

***JOHN:****How about the one Paul called “the pillar and foundation of truth.” [1 Tim 3:15].  The one that Jesus said the gates of hell would not prevail against [Mat 16:18].  The one “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.” [Eph 2:20].*

**WES:**  And which one, pray tell, is that?

***JOHN:****That, old buddy…is a whole nother subject for a whole nother day.*