

THE REFORMATION
Solo Christo...Christ Alone
Acts 4:12; Romans 5:6-18

A lot of people...and even some religions will admit that Jesus Christ was a *good man*...some will even say that He was a *prophet*. But He was much more than that...*He is God in human form*.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

~John 1:1, 14

As a matter of fact...when Jesus, after His death, *rose from the grave*, Thomas was so amazed at His *victory over death*, that he cried out...*“My Lord and my God”* (**John 20:28**).

But just as important as *who He is...is what He did*. He *died on the cross* and *rose from the dead*, to *pay the penalty for our sins*, and to *purchase a place in heaven* for us which He offers as a *free gift*.

Record book: Let's imagine this book in my hand is a detailed account of my life. Each page details a particular day ...every word I have spoken, every thought that ever crossed my mind, everything I've ever done.

Here is the problem...my sin. God loves me but He hates my sin and must punish it.

To solve this problem, He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world. The Bible says...

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”

~Isaiah 53:6

All of my sin, which God hates, has been placed on His Son. Christ bore our sin in His own body on the cross.

“He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.”

~I Peter 2:24

If anyone is *saved*, it is on the basis of *Christ alone*. There is *salvation in no one else*. God gives *no other name under heaven* by which men *can be saved* (**Acts 4:12**).

- **Muhammed** will not save you.
- **Buddha** will not save you.
- **Mary** will not save you.
- The **Pope** will not save you.
- **Parents, presidents, politicians,** and *political movements* will not save you.
- **Good works** will not save you.

This truth separates *Christianity* from all other *false religions*: **Sinners are saved in Christ alone**.

Jesus alone. His cross alone. To His glory alone.

The first great **Reformers** like **Martin Luther, John Calvin,** and **Ulrich Zwingli** never summed up their teaching with the tidy set of *five phrases* that we now know as the **five solas** today. The *solas developed over time* as a way of capturing the essence of what the **Reformation** was mainly about in its dispute with the **Roman Catholic Church** and its *indulgences*.

Sola is **Latin** for “*alone*” or “*only*.” The **five solas** are:

- **Sola Scriptura** (*as taught with the final and decisive authority of Scripture alone*)...inspired...inerrant...infallible...sufficient...authoritative...complete.

- **Sola Gratia** (*by grace alone*)
- **Sola Fide** (*through the means of faith alone*)
- **Solo Christo** (*on the basis of Christ alone*) (Acts 4:12).
- **Soli Deo Gloria** (*to the ultimate glory of God alone*)

Through Christ's death we are *accepted before God*. Such doctrines as...

- **Redemption** (**Romans 3:24**)
- **Reconciliation** (**II Corinthians 5:19-21**)
- **Forgiveness** (**Romans 3:25**)
- **Deliverance** (**Colossians 1:13**)
- **Assured future glorification** (**Romans 8:30**)...and...
- **Justification** (**Romans 3:28**)

...All come as a result of that death...His completed work on the cross.

“For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.”

~Romans 3:28

JUSTIFICATION: *Justification is the declaration of righteousness by God for sinners through His grace in Christ. By His atoning death we receive His imputed righteousness that is our salvation.*

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him...For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.”

~Romans 5:8-9, 17

The **five solas** provide wonderful clarity about the *crux of the Reformation* and *the heart of the Gospel*, when and if the *clause* that the *five prepositional phrases modify* is *“Justification before God is...”*

Justification before God is...

- *By grace alone*, with no merited, earned, or deserved favor whatsoever...(no effort from man)...
- *On the basis of Christ alone*, which means that no other sacrifice or righteousness can be the basis or source...
- *Through the means of faith alone*, which does not include any human works whatsoever...
- To the end that all things lead ultimately to *the glory of God alone...*
- As taught with final and decisive authority in the *Scriptures alone*.

That is why evangelical **Protestants** see the **Reformation** as simply *a call back* to the **Bible**...to *biblical Christianity*.

Again, to *justify* is to *declare righteous*. It's a *judicial term* indicating that a *verdict of acquittal* has been announced...excluding any and all possibility of *condemnation*.

“Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh.”

~Romans 8:1-3

“He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

~II Corinthians 5:21

“The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification.”

~Romans 5:16

“Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God who also intercedes for us.”

~Romans 8:33-34

The claims of God’s Law against the sinner have been *fully satisfied*. **Justification** isn’t because of any *overlooking*, *suspending*, or *altering* of *God’s righteousness*...but because *in Christ all* of His demands *have been fulfilled*. Christ’s *perfect life* of obedience to the Law and His *atoning death* that *paid its penalty* are the bases for our **justification**. **Justification** could never be based on our *good works*, because God *requires perfect obedience*, which is *impossible* for man.

“Much more then, having been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.”

~Romans 5:9

The **Reformation** called the church back to *faith in Christ* as the *sole mediator between God and man*. While the Roman church held that *“there is a purgatory and that the souls there detained are helped by the intercessions of the faithful”* and that *“Saints are to be venerated and invoked...that their relics are to be venerated”*...the reformers taught that *salvation* was *by Christ’s work alone*...not by any man or saint.

Solo Christo summarizes the **Protestant Reformers’** basic belief that *salvation* is obtained through the *atoning work of Christ alone, apart from individual works*, and that Christ is the *only mediator* between God and man. It holds that *salvation cannot be obtained without Christ*.

“For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all...”

~I Timothy 2:5-6a

As **John Calvin** said in the **Institutes of the Christian Religion**, *“Christ stepped in, took the punishment upon Himself and bore the judgment due to sinners. With His own blood He atoned the sins which made them enemies of God and thereby satisfied Him. We look to Christ alone for divine favor and fatherly love!”*

Likewise, the **Heidelberg Catechism, Question 30** asks, *“Do such then believe in Jesus the only Savior who seek their salvation and happiness in saints, in themselves, or anywhere else? They do not; for though they boast of Him in words, yet in deeds they deny Jesus the only deliverer and Savior: for one of these two things must be true...that either Jesus is not a complete Savior...or that they who by a true faith receive this Savior must find all things in Him necessary to their salvation.”*

“For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

~Colossians 1:13-14

“Jesus said... ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me’.”

~John 14:6

The means of **justification** is **faith**.

“Even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ (has been manifested to) all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed...For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.”

~Romans 3:22-25, 28

Faith is the ***means*** or ***channel*** through which God’s ***grace*** can ***impute*** to the believing sinner the ***righteousness of Christ***. When we believe ***all that Christ is***...God puts that into our account. Thus, we are ***acquitted***. Then God can justly announce that ***acquittal***, and that pronouncement is ***justification***.

To deny ***solo Christo***...***on the basis of Christ alone***...is to deny the ***atoning death*** of Christ and His ***victory over death*** by His ***resurrection***. The ***consequences*** of such ***denial***...

“Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.”

~I Corinthians 15:12-17