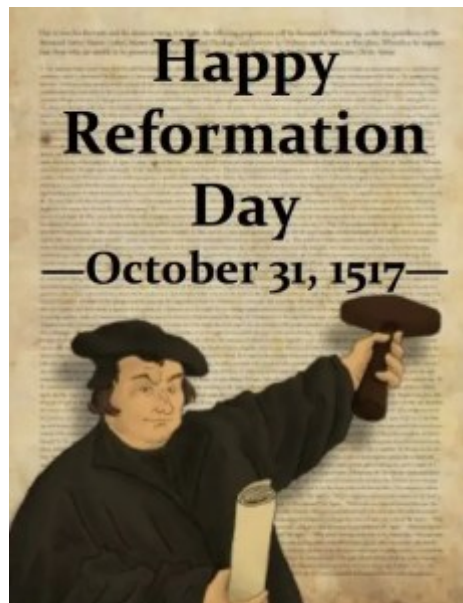


# The Five Solas of the Protestant Reformation



Happy Reformation Day! I found a [PDF file of this](#) and thought it would be a great article to post today, October 31, the day Martin Luther started the ball rolling by posting his 95 Theses on the door of a church in Wittenburg Germany. The Reformation liberated half of Europe from the tyranny of the popes of Rome and led to the establishment of a republican form of government most of the nations of the Western world enjoy today. Forget Halloween. Christians should not observe pagan holidays! It's witchcraft!

The Scriptures in the PDF file I got this from were not from the KJV. The ones in this article are.

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A Brief Statement  
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This document was originally written for the 1993 Reformation Celebration at Audubon Drive Bible Church in Laurel, MS, as part of a worship service.

## ***Sola Scriptura:* □ The Scripture Alone is the Standard**

The doctrine that the Bible alone is the ultimate authority was the "Formal Principle" of the Reformation. In 1521 at the historic interrogation of Luther at the Diet of Worms, he declared his conscience to be captive to the Word of God saying, "Unless I am overcome with testimonies from Scripture or with evident reasons – for I believe neither the Pope nor the Councils, since they have often erred and contradicted one another – I am overcome by the Scripture texts which I have adduced, and my conscience is bound by God's Word." Similarly, the Belgic Confession stated, "We believe that [the] holy Scriptures fully contain the will of God, and that whatsoever man ought to believe unto salvation is sufficiently taught therein...Neither may we consider

any writings of men, however holy these men may have been, of equal value with those divine Scriptures nor ought we to consider custom or the great multitude, or antiquity, or succession of times and persons, or councils, decrees or statutes, as of equal value with the truth of God... Therefore, we reject with all our hearts whatsoever does not agree with this infallible rule" (VII).

**As the Scripture says,**

Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law...I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name...But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. **All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.** (Psalm 119:18; Psalm 138:2; II Tim. 3:14-17)

### ***Soli Deo Gloria!* For the Glory of God Alone**

The Reformation reclaimed the Scriptural teaching of the sovereignty of God over every aspect of the believer's life. All of life is to be lived to the glory of God. As the Westminster Shorter Catechism asks, "What is the chief end of man? Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever." This great and all consuming purpose was emphasized by those in the 16th and 17th Centuries who sought to reform the church according to the Word of God. In contrast to the monastic division of life into sacred versus secular perpetuated by Roman Church, the reformers saw all of life to be lived under the Lordship of Christ. Every activity of the Christian is to be sanctified unto the glory of God.

**As the Scripture says,**

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. (1 Co 10:31; 1 Pet 4:11; Rev 1:6; 2 Pet 3:18; Eph 3:21; Rev 7:12; Rom 11:36)

### ***Solo Christo!* By Christ's Work Alone are We Saved**

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. 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 expiated the sins which made them enemies of God and thereby satisfied him...we look to Christ **alone** for divine favour and fatherly love!" Likewise the Heidelberg Catechism, Question 30 asks, "Do such then believe in Jesus the only Saviour 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 Saviour: for one of these two things must be true that either Jesus is not a complete Saviour or that they who by a true faith receive this Saviour must find all things in him necessary to their salvation."

**As the Scripture says,**

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. (1 Tim 2:5-6; Col 1:13-18)

### ***Sola Gratia: Salvation by Grace Alone***

A central cry of the Reformation was salvation by grace. Though the Roman church taught that Mass is a "sacrifice [which] is truly propitiatory" and that by the Mass "God...grant[s] us grace and the gift of penitence, remits our faults and even our enormous sins" – the reformers returned to the biblical doctrine of salvation by grace through faith. Our righteous standing before God is imputed to us by grace because of the work of Christ Jesus our Lord. In contrast to the doctrines of self-merit taught by Rome, *sola gratia* and the accompanying doctrines of grace – total depravity, unconditional election, particular redemption, and perseverance of the saints – were preached by all the reformers throughout the Protestant movement. As the Baptist Confession of 1689 says, "Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are justified; and did, by the sacrifice of himself in the blood of his cross, undergoing in their stead the penalty due unto them, make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice in their behalf;...their justification is only of free grace, that both the exact justice and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners."

**As the Scripture says,**

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; (Ephesians 1:3-8)

### ***Sola Fide: Justification by Faith Alone***

The "Material Principle" of the Reformation was justification by faith alone. As the Westminster Confession of Faith says, "Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification: yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love." The Genevan Confession likewise pointed out the necessity of those justified living by faith saying, "We confess that the entrance which we have to the great treasures and riches of the goodness of God that is vouchsafed us is by faith; inasmuch as, in certain confidence and assurance of heart, we believe in the promises of the gospel, and receive Jesus Christ as he is offered to us by the Father and described to us by the Word of God (Genevan 11).

**As the Scripture says,**

Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, **The just shall live by faith.** (Galatians 3:6-11)