

FIVE REFORMATION SOLAS

John Calvert

Study 2 – *Sola Christus*

We stand on the clear understanding that Christian belief is based **only** upon the substitutionary death and resurrection of God's only Son, Jesus Christ. His sinless life and **substitutionary atonement alone** are sufficient for our justification, repentance and reconciliation to the Father. Confidence in human ability is a product of fallen human nature. This false idea fills the evangelical world; a self-esteem, health and wealth consumerism couched in pragmatic belief. The truth of justification by faith alone in Christ alone as the one and only basis for acceptance by a Holy God is neglected. We are not saved by faith alone as a virtue that earns merit with God, but by Christ alone. Princeton theologian, **B.B. Warfield** (1852–1921): *'It is from its object [Jesus Christ] that faith derives its value ... The saving power of faith resides thus not in itself, but in the Almighty Saviour on whom it rests ... It is not faith [itself] that saves, but faith in Jesus Christ ... It is not strictly speaking, even faith in Christ that saves, but Christ that saves through faith.'*

(a) Jesus Christ reveals God for it is impossible to speak of "God" within the parameters of the Christian tradition without relating such statements to the person and work of Christ. – Otherwise; which God or god???

(b) Jesus Christ is the Bearer of salvation. Matthew 1:21; you will call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.

Redemption in His name & only through His blood. Resurrection impact; *He is risen!!*

(c) Jesus Christ defines the shape of the Redeemed Life; Romans 8:28–39: v29 For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers.

(d) Jesus Christ is Central to Christianity; Acts 4:12; And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved. Luther said that Jesus Christ is the "centre and circumference of the Bible".

The Swiss Reformer **Huldrych Zwingli** [1484–1531] wrote sixty-seven theses; in the first four: "The sum of the gospel is that our Lord Jesus Christ, the true Son of God, has made known to us the will of His Heavenly Father and redeemed us by His innocence from eternal death, and reconciled us

unto God ... Therefore, Christ is the only way to salvation to all who were, and are, and who shall be saved ... Whoever seeks or shows another door errs, yea, is a murderer of souls and a robber'. Zwingli's declaration with other Reformers, proclaimed: *Sola Christus*. Only in Christ is life, and outside of Him is death; God's justice can be satisfied only through Christ's obedience. Outside of Christ, God is an everlasting, all-consuming fire; in Christ, He is a gracious Father.

US theologian **Richard Niebuhr** [1892–1971] referring to bankrupt nineteenth-century Christological Protestant liberalism, (called 'new' by those who see Jesus as a moral example); are today proclaiming, 'a God without wrath who brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross'.

1: God's self-revelation. *Colossians 1:13–23; v.15, He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn (honour) of all creation. Hebrews 1:1–5 & John 1:1–14. Incarnation; Cross; Resurrection; Ascension; Glorification.*

2: God's only Saviour. Our pluralistic society & pragmatic styled churches see exclusivity as wrong, intolerant, judgmental: but Jesus declared; **John 14:6**: *I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except by me*; plus the *Seven "I am's" of Jesus: Bread of Life; Light of the world; The gate/door; Good Shepherd; Resurrection & Life; Way, Truth, Life; True Vine.* -- The Reformers emphasised Christ as the only Saviour in opposition to false & perceived means; sacraments, saints, indulgence = buying pardon & reducing purgatory time plus idea of Mary as co-redeemer.

3: God's Triunity in Unity. Colossians 1:18: *And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.* The centrality of Jesus Christ does not minimise the Father or the Spirit for God is ONE in Three.

4: God's 'It is finished'; tetelastai. Financial term; 'paid in full'; **John 19:28–30.** *Sola Christus* affirms that our Saviour dies as complete Substitute & did everything necessary to deal with **ALL** our sins; past, present, future. We are saved by God, from God. The second Adam has conquered all evil.

The gospel is *sola Christus* for, from beginning to end, it has everything to do with who Christ is and what He has accomplished outside of us, for us, in our place. He is our Prophet to teach us; our Priest who made perfect sacrifice for us, intercedes for us and blesses us; and our King to rule and guide us.

SOLI DEO GLORIA