

# Sola Christus

Jack Hughes

October 15, 2006

This is Reformation month, so we're trying to look at each of what are called the five "solas" of the Reformation. This morning, [I] want to look at "solus Christus," which [means] "Christ alone."

In Acts 4:5-12, the Church was going through the labor of being born. The Holy Spirit was energizing the apostles, they were doing miracles, [and] they were preaching the gospel. Peter, who had denied Christ three times at His crucifixion, was now empowered, and changed, and a transformed man—a formidable preacher. The apostles were proclaiming the gospel, healing the sick, and filling Jerusalem with their teaching, but the Jews didn't like this. And so, [the Jews] had Peter and John jailed. Then Luke tells us this in Acts 4:5-12:

On the next day, their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem ; and Annas the high priest was there, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent. When they had placed them in the center, they began to inquire, "By what power, or in what name, have you done this?" [4:5-7]

The "this" they are referring to is the healing of somebody right in the immediate, preceding context.

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers and elders of the people, if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by this name this man stands here before you in good health. He is the **STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED** by you, **THE BUILDERS**, but **WHICH BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER** stone. 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.” [4:8-12]

The Jewish leaders of the first century had a problem with this. They had a problem [with] thinking that Jesus was the Son of God. They had a problem [with the idea] that Jesus was their long-awaited Messiah and [that] they crucified Him. They had a problem with [the fact of] Jesus rising from the dead. They had a problem with Jesus being the only name given among men by which they had to be saved. [They thought this doctrine] was very narrow, it was dogmatic, it was inflexible, and theologically rigid. In fact, the unbelieving masses have always had a problem with these truths. There is just something about “only Jesus” that causes people who don’t want to submit to Jesus to reject Him.

As the first century came and went, and as the apostles died with it, the Church slowly departed from this central doctrine of salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone. When Martin Luther visited Rome, there was much talk of Christ, there were statues of Christ, there were paintings of Christ, there were carvings of Christ, there were songs about Christ, and stained-glass windows of Christ. Christ was everywhere but in the hearts of the people. Jesus was reduced to a mere symbol. He was the “conquering Savior who died on the cross for our sins,” and everyone knew this [but didn’t put that knowledge into practice].

Someone had replaced Christ. The Roman Catholic Church had replaced Christ with Mary, the mother of Jesus. The worship of Christ was replaced by the worship and veneration of Jesus' mother. This is why one of the Reformation cries was "solus Christus"—Christ alone. Starting in the fifth century, the Roman Catholic Church started to undermine the biblical doctrine of "Christ alone" by elevating Mary to the position of deity, something that continues to escalate to this very day.

In the August 25, 1997, issue of *Newsweek*, they did a story entitled "The Meaning of Mary." The reporter said that during the previous four years, the Roman Catholic Church had received 4.3 million signatures petitioning the pope to exercise his papal infallibility and declare Mary to be "Co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix of all Graces and Advocate for the people of God." Signatures included 500 bishops, 42 cardinals, and notables like Mother Theresa, John O'Connor of New York, and several cardinals serving in the Vatican at that time. They all believed that Mary participates in the redemption of sinners with Christ, that all saving graces come to us through Mary's intercession, and that all [of the] prayers and petitions of the saints must flow through Mary.

It all started in AD 431, when the Church gave Mary the official title of "Mother of God." [This] first step led to the Roman Catholic Church teaching that Mary was perpetually a virgin, [and] to saying she was born without sin or a sin nature. This then led to saying Mary never died, but physically ascended into heaven just like Jesus. Then they began to encourage people to pray to Mary, to worship Mary, to super-venerate her, which is called "hyperdulia." The *Roman Catholic Encyclopedia* says: "Mary was not subject to the law of suffering and death, which are penalties of the sin of human nature, even though she knew these, experienced them, and endured them for our salvation."

Pope John Paul II declared: "It was on Calvary that Mary's suffering, besides the suffering of Jesus, reached an intensity which can hardly be imagined from a human point of view but which was mysteriously and supernaturally fruitful for the Redemption of the world."

The classic Roman Catholic work *The Glories of Mary* by St. Alphonsus Liguori affirms [that] “sinners receive pardon by Mary,” and claims that Mary “is truly a mediatrix of peace between sinners and God.” Roman Catholic priest, Father Stephen Scheier, said, “We have an advocate in Mary that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit cannot say no to. It is impossible for them to say no to her.” The teaching of the Roman Catholic Church is that if you want anything from Jesus, you must go through Mary. Mary holds the keys of the kingdom and the power.

Pope Leo XIII said, “Nothing is imparted to us except through Mary,” and “nothing comes to us except through Mary’s mediation for such is God’s will.” Mary, in the Roman Catholic system, has undermined the doctrine that salvation is through Christ and Christ alone.

We teach what the Reformers taught, what Martin Luther taught, what Calvin taught, which all of the people in the line of the Reformers taught: that “there is no other name given among men by which we must be saved” [Acts 4:12] than the Lord Jesus Christ, that God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ, and that there is salvation in none other.

J.C. Ryle, in his classic work, *Holiness*, writes:

Is Christ all? Then learn the enormous folly of joining anything with Christ in the matter of salvation. There are multitudes of baptized men and women who profess to honor Christ, but in reality do Him great dishonor.

They give Christ a certain place in their system of religion, but not the place which God intended Him to fill. Christ alone is not all in all to their souls.

No! It is either Christ and the church, or Christ and the sacraments, or Christ and His ordained ministers, or Christ and their own repentance, or Christ and their own goodness, or Christ and their own prayers, or Christ and their own sincerity and charity, on which they practically rest their souls.

Calvary Bible Church teaches what the Reformers have taught, what the Scriptures affirm, and that is that salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, through Christ alone.

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