

# Solus Christus (Christ Alone)

## Key Issue / Question

How is grace mediated to us?

## Point of Contention

Teaching of Rome	Teaching of the Reformation
<p>God's grace is mediated <b>through Christ + the Church</b> via an elaborate <b>system of priests and sacramental works</b>.</p> <p>Through this sacramental system, Rome effectively controlled the Christian's life from birth (baptism) to death (extreme unction) and even beyond (masses for the dead).</p>	<p>God's grace is mediated <b>through Christ alone</b>. There is no other mediator, not the pope, not the priests, not the Saints, not Mary. Christ is the only Mediator between God and man. (1 Tim 2:5) We receive grace directly from Christ, through faith.</p> <p>The reformers argued that <b>Rome</b>, through this sacramental system, <b>had usurped the prerogatives of Christ</b>, making itself the dispenser of God's grace. <b>It is Christ ALONE</b>, and not the church, <b>that dispenses grace</b>.</p> <p>Solus Christus.</p>

Consider the following for a taster on the differences of teaching:

- How am I justified?
  - Rome says yes to the merit of Christ death **BUT** I obtain justification through the sacrament of baptism, and then if I lose it through mortal sin, I get it back through the sacrament of penance. So you have Christ + Baptism + Penance.
  - Reformation: Scripture says by faith in the Person and Work of Christ alone (Rom 4:23-25).
- How can my sins be forgiven even after I become a Christian?
  - Rome: Sacrament of Penance: Confess to the priest and do penance. Penance is essentially an attempt to punish yourself for your sins again. Christ + Earthly priest + self-punishment
  - Reformation: Repent and confess your sins to Jesus. There is no need to punish yourself for your sins. Christ is the perfect sacrifice. His blood cleanses us from every sin. (1 John 1:9, 1 Tim 2:5).
  - Note: Rome says **DO PENANCE** while Scripture says **REPENT**. See WSC 87: repentance is not something you do to punish yourself. It is a change, a turning around of heart and mind. Jesus told the woman caught in adultery to go and sin no more, not go and do some good deeds, much less go and inflict punishment on yourself. [Works religion will try to atone for sin by doing good or by inflicting punishment on self.]
- What happens when I die?
  - Rome: Unless you live an exceptionally good and holy life, you will end up in a temporary place called purgatory: a temporal punishment for sin, and for the cleansing from the attachment to sin. It is a place for people not bad enough to go to hell and not good enough to go to heaven. [**So Christ's work is not perfect - you still need to be purged of your sins.**] How do you get out of purgatory quickly? You need indulgences (penance that the living do for the dead) + intercession of dead saints + prayers of those living catholics. [**This means Christ's work is not sufficient. You need Christ + all the above excesses.**]
  - Reformation: Christ death fully satisfies God's justice for my sins. He kept the covenant of works perfectly. He merited heaven for me. When I die, my soul is made perfect.

Note: Rome's system of priests and sacramental works **is built upon the wrong belief that the sacraments HAVE INHERENT POWER IN THEM**. Rome calls it *ex opere operato*: "by the very fact of the actions being performed". In the reception of the grace conferred *ex opere operato*, FAITH IS NOT NECESSARY. Any positive effect comes not from worthiness or faith but from the sacrament as an instrument of God.

If you apply this concept of 'inherent power' to the water in the sacrament of Baptism, you will end up with the doctrinal error of baptismal regeneration (all who are baptised are saved).

[Catechism of the Catholic Church, para 1238] The baptismal water is consecrated by a prayer of epiclesis (either at this moment or at the Easter Vigil). The Church asks God that through his Son **the power of the Holy Spirit may be sent upon the water**, so that **those who will be baptized in it may be "born of water and the Spirit."**

Similarly, in the sacrament of the Eucharist (what we call the Lord's Supper), with inherent power in the bread and wine, they end up in the rabbit hole of transubstantiation:

[Catechism of the Catholic Church, para 1333] At the heart of the Eucharistic celebration are the bread and wine that, **by the words of Christ and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, become Christ's Body and Blood.**

This is **SUPERSTITION**.

## Westminster Standards

- **WSC 21:** Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?  
A: The **ONLY Redeemer of God's elect, is the Lord Jesus Christ**, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, for ever.
- **WCF 27.3:** **The grace which is exhibited in or by the sacraments rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them;** neither does the efficacy of a sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that does administer it: but upon the work of the Spirit, and the word of institution, which contains, together with a precept authorizing the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers.
- **WSC 96:** What is the Lord's Supper?  
A: The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is shewed forth; and the worthy receivers are, **NOT** after a corporal and carnal manner, **BUT BY FAITH**, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace.
- **WSC 87:** What is repentance unto life?  
Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, **turn from it unto God**, with full purpose of, and endeavour after, new obedience.

## Scriptural Proofs

- [1 Tim 2:5] For there is **one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus**
- [John 14:6] Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: **no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**
- [Acts 4:9-12] If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that **by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.**

## Other Quotations

- *Heidelberg Catechism Q30*: Do such then believe in the only Saviour Jesus, who seek their salvation and welfare of saints, of themselves, or anywhere else?  
A: No; although they may make their boast of Him, yet in act they deny the only Saviour Jesus. For either Jesus is not a complete Saviour, or they who by true faith receive this Saviour, must have in Him all that is necessary to their salvation.
- *Zwingli (Article 17/67)*:  
“That Christ is the one eternal high priest; from this we deduce that all those who pretend to be high priests, oppose the honour and power of Christ; indeed, they reject it.”
- *C.H. Spurgeon*:  
“If there be one stitch in the celestial garment of my righteousness, which I am to insert myself, then I am lost. If there be one drachma in the price of my redemption which I am to make up, then must I perish. If there be one contingency—one “if,” or “though,” or “but,” about my soul’s salvation, THEN AM I A LOST MAN!”