

The 5 Sola's of the Protestant Reformation

From Pentecost Through Persecution

- A.D. 30-A.D. 305
- The persecutions by the Jews
- Gradually transitioned into persecutions sanctioned by, or sponsored by, the Roman Empire
- As the influence of Christianity grew, it became recognized as clearly distinct from Judaism
- Then became blamed for woes in the Empire

From Persecution to Legalization

- The final “official” persecution ended in A.D. 305 (Diocletian)
- In A.D. 311, Emperor Galerius issued an edict of Toleration
- In A.D. 313, Emperor Constantine (along with Emperor Licinius) issued the Edict of Milan, which legalized Christianity in the Roman Empire.
- Christianity now had the same legal status as paganism

From Legalization to Domination

- Constantine came to power at a time of great internal turmoil in the empire.
- When he became Emperor in A.D. 306, he ruled the western part of the Empire, and Licinius ruled the eastern part of the Empire
- In A.D. 324, Constantine went to war against him, defeated him, and ruled as sole emperor

- He convened the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325 (Nicene Creed—the orthodox position on the Trinity)
- He moved the capital of Rome to a new city (Byzantium), which he renamed Constantinople (modern day Istanbul)
- Constantine set the precedent for civil authority to wield influence over the Church
- He died in A.D. 337

- In A.D. 379, Theodosius became emperor
- He was the last emperor of a united Roman empire
- In A.D. 380, he issued the Edict of Thessalonica, which made Christianity the only legal religion in the empire
- When Theodosius died in A.D. 396, the Visigoths concluded that their treaty with Rome had ended. In 410, they pillaged Rome
- In 476, Odoacer became the first non Italian king of Rome. This “begins” the “Dark Ages”

From Domination to Corruption

- Over the course of the next 1000 years, the Church grew in power
- Around the 9th century, Europe began the process of nation building: Spain, France, and England would exist under one government
- The papacy would gain power as it allied itself with European monarchs—or fought against them.

- In A.D. 1453, the Muslims captured Constantinople. This marks the “end” of the “Dark Ages.”
- The fall of Constantinople greatly contributed to the Protestant Reformation
- Refugees from Constantinople fled west, bringing with them knowledge and books that had been lost to the west for many years
- This influx of information gave birth to the Renaissance (new birth)

- The Renaissance gave rise to humanism: the study of the humanities (grammar, rhetoric, history, poetry, and philosophy).
- The most influential men of the Reformation were humanists: Luther, Calvin, Erasmus, etc.
- In 1444 Johannes Gutenberg invented the moveable type printing press, which enabled mass communication

- On October 31, 1517, a monk named Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the Church door in Wittenberg, Germany
- Which was the equivalent of posting your grievances on Facebook.
- Very quickly, the Roman Catholic Church found itself facing an onslaught of opposition
- Protestants were criminalized, and their writings were banned
- Some nations and cities were havens for Protestants

Although a variety of denominational positions developed, Reformers agreed on 5 basic principles, that later became known as the “5 sola’s of the Reformation”

- “Only Scripture.” The Bible must rule even the Church; the Bible is not subject to the Church
- II Timothy 3.16
- It was this principle that insisted upon Bible’s translated into the language of the people

- “Only Faith.” Faith alone is the human requirement for salvation. All good or religious works are rejected.
- The Roman Catholic position was, “Faith and good works yield justification.”
- Ephesians 2.8-9

- “Only Grace.” People are saved because God is gracious, not because people deserve it
- The Roman Catholic position was that good works cooperate with grace to gain even greater grace
- Since you could merit more grace than was needed, you could distribute excess grace to others who needed it.
- Ephesians 2.8-9

- “Only Christ.” People are saved only through the work of Christ, not through any sacrament
- The Roman Catholic position was that sacraments were an essential part of salvation, and had to be administered by a priest.
- Hebrews 10.1-18
- This reinforced the doctrine of the priesthood of believers, and why so much controversy revolved around “vestments”

- “Only God’s glory.” only Christ is glorified in salvation.
- The Roman Catholic position was veneration of saints
- Romans 11.36