

“The Great Transformation”
Sola Scriptura

Introduction:

1. On October 31, 1517:
 - A German Monk, By The Name Of Martin Luther:
 - Made His Way To The Castle Church:
 - Of The College Town Of Wittenberg, Germany!
 - Where - Seeking To Reform Many Of The Corruptions That Had Infiltrated The Established Church Of That Time - He Nailed A List Of “95 Thesis” Or Doctrinal Points That He Wished To Debate:
 - Using The Scripture As His Guide!
 - But Through That Simple Event:
 - A Great Movement Began, That Has Become Known As:
 - The “Great Reformation!”
 - And All This Took Place Exactly 500 Years Ago This Month!
2. But - Even Though The Great Reformers:
 - Like Martin Luther Of Germany:
 - John Calvin Of Switzerland & John Knox Of Scotland:
 - Sought To “Reform” The Established Church:
 - From The Errors & Corruptions That Had Crept In Over Hundreds Of Years:
 - I Believe A Better Description:
 - For What They Accomplished Would Be:
 - A “Great **Transformation!**”
 - Because - What Actually Happened When Their “Reforms” Started To Take Hold?
 - Instead Of Remaining In The Roman Catholic System, Many Were Truly Saved & Came Out!
 - Because The Truths:
 - That The Reformers Rediscovered:
 - And Espoused:
 - Were Truths That Would **Transform:**
 - Not Merely *Reform!*
3. Over Time - These Truths Became Known:
 - As The “Five Solas!”
 - “Sola” Is The Latin Word For *Only Or Alone!*
 - And Each Truth - When Discovered & Espoused By Anyone:
 - Will Truly Transform Their Hearts & Lives!
 - Because These Truths, In Their Very Essence, Reflect The Gospel Of Jesus Christ Itself!
 - The “Five Solas” Are:
 - “Sola Scriptura / Sola Fide / Sola Gratia / Solus Christus / Solo Deo Gloria!”
 - The First Sola - “Sola Scriptura” - Simply Means:
 - Scripture Alone! That Is - The Scripture Alone Is The Standard For Our Beliefs & Lives As Christians!
 - The Second Sola - “Sola Fide” - Means:
 - Faith Alone! That Is - Justification / Salvation Is By Faith Alone In The Finished Work Of Jesus Christ!
 - Faith And Nothing Else!
 - The Third Sola - “Sola Gratia” - Means:
 - Grace Alone! Ephesians 2:8-9 - “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast!”
 - The Fourth Sola - “Solus Christus” - Means:
 - Christ Alone! That Is - Salvation Is Through Christ, Not Through Any Other Man Or System Or Work!
 - The Fifth Sola - “Solo Deo Gloria” - Means:
 - For The Glory Of God Alone!
 - This Is The Ultimate Aim & Purpose For Our Salvation & Justification!
4. So - To Help Us Celebrate:

- This Important 500th Anniversary Of The Great Reformation:
 - We Are Going To Focus Our Attention On:
 - Each One Of These Truths!
 - And Even Though They Were Meant To “*Reform*” The Abuses Of The Established Church Of That Day:
 - When We Believe In & Hold To These Truths Today - They Will **Transform** Us More & More Into The Image Of Jesus Christ Himself!
5. And So - The “Great Reformation” Began:
- Against The Dark Back-Drop Of The Medieval:
 - Roman Catholic Church:
 - Which Was The Largest & Most Prominent Of Christian Institutions!
 - Now - We Must Not Make The Mistake:
 - In Thinking That The Roman Catholic Church:
 - Was The Only Church - Because They Weren’t!
 - There Were Other True Churches During That Time! But They Were Often Suppressed & Persecuted!
6. But This Time-Period Became Known As The “**Dark Ages!**”
- And It Was A Very *Spiritually* Dark Age - To Be Sure!
 - Because The Established Church - Which Was Supposed To Be A Light To The World:
 - Was Very Dark Itself - As It Became More & More Political & Powerful!
 - The Roman Catholic Church Exercised Its Power:
 - ***In Its Leadership*** - Through The Pope - Known As The “Vicar Of Christ” - “A title of the pope implying his supreme and universal primacy, both of honour and of jurisdiction, over the Church of Christ!” (Roman Catholic Encyclopedia)
 - ***In Its Interpretation*** - And Doctrinal Authority - Not The Bible Alone / But The Church!
 - The Latin Vulgate Was The Standard - The Only Translation Allowed By 600!
 - ***In Salvation*** - To Be Saved - You Had To Be A Part Of The Roman Catholic Church / Baptized / Works Based! A “Mechanical System!”
 - ***In Politics*** - Great Control Over Kings & Nations / Their Souls Were At Stake!
 - In **England**, King John Had Even Put His Crown & Nation Under The Authority Of The **Pope** - “In Order To Expiate My Sins!”
 - And This Went On For **1,000** Years!
 - Throughout These “Dark Ages” There Were Little Sparks / Fires Throughout The World - Where The Pure Gospel Was Preached & Practiced!
 - But Many Were Denounced As Heretics & Imprisoned & Killed!
7. But It Was Into This “Darkness” That God:
- Was Going To Bring A Brighter Light:
 - And Witness To The Truth Of The Gospel!
 - But It Started Even Before 1517! About 200 Years Before!
 - And To Prepare The Way, He Used An English Man Named John Wycliff - As The “Morning-Star” Of The Coming “Reformation!”
 - Before The Reformation:
 - The Bible Was A Closed Book!
 - And Translations Into Other Languages Were Strictly **Forbidden** By The Church!
 - One Of Their Laws - “We Forbid The Laity To Possess Any Of The Books Of The Old And New Testaments — But Having Any Of These Books Translated Into The Vulgar Tongue, We Strictly Forbid!”
 - But Wycliffe Understood The Importance:
 - As Well As The Power Of The Word Of God:
 - So, Beginning In **1380**, Wycliffe & His Followers Began Translating The Bible From Latin Into English!
 - Each Copy Was **Handwritten!**
 - And Took **10 Months** Each To Be Copied!
 - But They Became Very Popular!
 - People Would Scrimp & Save / Co-op / Borrow / Memorize / Even Pay A Load Of Hay To Read Or Hear God’s Word In Their Own Language!
 - And Even Though The Church Burned & Tried To Ban His Bibles In Every Country, We Still 170 Original Copies Are Around!
8. And So - Beginning With John Wycliffe:

- “Sola Scriptura” Became One Of The Key Truths:
 - Of The Reformation!
 - The Bible Alone Is Our Highest Authority!
 - Because The Bible Alone Is The Powerful Word Of God!
- And John Wycliffe:
 - And All The Other Reformers Knew This!
 - And That Is Why When God’s Word Was Unsheathed - It Became God’s Powerful Weapon Once Again!

9. We See This From:

- In Ephesians 6 - That Famous Passage On:
 - The Armor Of God!
- In Ephesians 6:10-11, Paul Begins:
 - “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. / Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil!”
 - Then He Lists Several Pieces Of Spiritual Armor That Every Christian May Possess:
 - In Order To “Resist The Devil!”
 - But When We Come To 6:17:
 - We Find Not Just Another Piece Of Defensive Armor:
 - “The Helmet Of Salvation!”
- But We Also Find The Only Artifact:
 - That Is Offensive In Nature!
 - And That Is - Again, In 6:17 - “The Sword Of The Spirit, Which Is The Word Of God!”
- This Description:
 - Of The Word Of God:
 - Should Help Us Today & Every Day:
 - To See The Importance Of God’s Word In Our Every-Day Lives As Christians!
- Paul Describes The Word Of God:
 - As A Sword!
 - And This Is Not The Only Place Where You Will Find This Description!
 - Hebrews 4:12 Also Tells Us That:
 - “The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword!”
 - The Word Of God:
 - Is Like A Sword!
 - But How? And In What Ways?

I. Like A Sword – The Word Of God Can:

- Pierce & Penetrate!
 - The “Sword Of The Spirit”:
 - Can Pierce Into Even The Hardest Of Hearts!
- Again - Hebrews 4:12 Tells Us That:
 - “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart!”
- This Is First & Foremost What:
 - Every One Of Us Needs!
 - The Powerful Piercing & Penetration Of God’s Word:
 - To Change Our Hearts!
 - We All Begin Our Lives With:
 - Hearts Of Stone!
 - But The Lord, Through His Word & Through His Spirit – Gives To Us A Heart Of Flesh – So That We Can Be Saved!
- This Was The Experience Of Paul:
 - When He Brought The “Sword Of The Spirit” Into The City Of Thessalonica!
 - Listen To What Happened There!
 - 1 Thessalonians 2:13 - “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe!”
 - The Word Of God Pierced & Penetrated Their Hard & Sinful Hearts:

- And Brought Them To Life & To Salvation Through Faith In The Lord Jesus Christ!
- Have You Experienced The “Sword Of The Spirit”:
- In Your Life?
 - Has It Pierced & Penetrated Deep Into Your Heart?
 - To Show You Your Sinfulness!
 - To Show You Your Savior!
- But If So - Be Thankful & So Grateful:
 - To The Lord!
 - And Then Let The “Sword Of The Spirit” Continue To Carve Into Your Heart Until You Become What God Would Have You To Be!
- This Is The Amazing Power:
 - Of The “Sword Of The Spirit!”
 - But Also:

2. Like A Sword – The Word Of God Can:

- Protect & Preserve!
 - **IE:** Like A Roman Soldier Using His Small-Sword To Deflect The Attacks Of His Enemy!
 - The “Sword Of The Spirit”:
 - Can Protect & Preserve:
 - All Those Who Belong To The Lord!
- The “Sword Of The Spirit” Is Powerful:
 - To Protect Us:
 - From All The Deep Spiritual Dangers That We Face!
 - Even If The Devil Himself Would Try To Destroy Us!
 - Remember When Satan Tried To:
 - Destroy Jesus Through Temptation?
 - In Matthew 4, With Every Attack By The Devil, The Lord Jesus Skillfully Parried Him Away, How?
 - With The “Sword Of The Spirit, Which Is The Word Of God!”
 - Three Times, Jesus Used The “Sword Of The Spirit” To Drive The Devil Away!
 - Three Times, As Jesus Said: “It Is Written”, The Sword Came Out Of Its Scabbard, And The Devil Met His Match!
- God Has Been So Gracious To Us:
 - To Give Us His Word:
 - As The “Sword Of The Spirit!”
 - To Protect Us From The Dangers We Face From The Outside!
 - But Also To Preserve Us On The Inside!
 - Psalm 119:11 - “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee!”
 - Sometimes We Need To Turn The “Sword Of The Spirit” Around, And Use It As A Tool For Our Own Spiritual Surgery!
 - To Cut Out & To “Mortify The Deeds Of The Body!” (Romans 8:13)
- The Power Of The “Sword Of The Spirit”:
- To Protect & Preserve Us:
 - Is Great!
 - But How Many Times Do We Keep It In Its Scabbard?
 - How Many Times Does It Remain On The Shelf?
 - Let Us Take It Off!
 - And Pull It Out!
 - So That God Can Continue To Protect & Preserve Us With His Sword! But Also:

3. Like A Sword – The Word Of God Can:

- Project!
 - **IE:** Like A Roman Soldier Holding His Sword In His Hand, To Intimidate His Enemy!
 - The “Sword Of The Spirit”:
 - Can Project:
 - God’s Power & Might To Those Who Oppose Him!
- How Many Wars Have Been Fought:
 - In Order To Force Others To:

- Change Their Thinking & To Change Their Beliefs?
- And How Successful Have They Been?
 - Often, When There Is External Force, The Internal Resolve & Belief Grow Stronger, Not Weaker!
- This Is Why Paul Says In 2 Corinthians 10:3-5:
 - “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: / (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) / Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ!”
- It Is The “Sword Of The Spirit”:
 - That We Use To Change Hearts:
 - And Win Souls To Jesus Christ!
 - We Project:
 - Not **Our Own** Might Nor **Our Own** Power:
 - When We Use The “Sword Of The Spirit!”
 - But We Project:
 - The Mighty Power Of God!
 - “By The Word Of Truth, By The Power Of God!” (2 Corinthians 6:7)

* The Word Of God:

- Is Like A Sword!
 - It Is “The Sword Of The Spirit!”
 - And It Has Great Power!
- Power To:
 - Pierce & Penetrate:
 - Even The Hardest Of Hearts!
 - Like Mine & Like Yours!
- Power To:
 - Protect & Preserve:
 - All Those To Whom It Has Been Given!
 - All The People Of God!
- Power To:
 - Project:
 - The Wisdom & Might Of God!
- The “Sword Of The Spirit”:
 - Can Go Where Nothing Else Can Go!
 - The “Sword Of The Spirit”:
 - Can Do What Nothing Else Can Do!

Conclusion:

1. It The Power Not Merely To Reform:
 - But It Has The Power To Transform!
 - And So - “Sola Scriptura” Needs To Be Our Motto As Well!
2. Charles Spurgeon - “This Volume Is The Writing Of The Living God! Each Letter Was Penned With An Almighty Finger! Each Word In It Dropped From The Everlasting Lips! Each Sentence Was Dictated By The Holy Spirit!”
 - Of Course - Each Human Author:
 - Used Their Own Backgrounds & Choice Of Words:
 - But God Designed It So That Even The Words They Chose Were The Words Chosen By God:
 - Before The World Began!
3. So - How Can:
 - This Reformation Truth:
 - Transform Our Lives?
 - Three Applications:
 - First:
 - Need To Love The Word Of God!
 - Psalm 119:97 - “O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day!”
 - Do You Love God’s Word?
 - Can You Say Along With Job - “I have esteemed the words of his mouth more

than my necessary food!” (Job 23:12)

- Second:

- Need To Long For The Word Of God!

- 1 Peter 2:2 - “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby!”

- Do You Long For God’s Word?

- Third:

- Need To Live According To The Word Of God!

- Because - Psalm 119:1-5 - “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path!”

4. When This Is Your Attitude Toward:

- The “Sword Of The Spirit, Which Is The Word Of God!”

- Then - The Truth Of “Sola Scriptura” Will:

- Transform Your Life!

- Even As It Did In The Time Of The Reformation!

- “The Scripture Alone Is The Standard For Our Beliefs & Lives As Christians!”

Grace Baptist Church

Stephen Elmer, Pastor

4245 North 200 West

Greenfield, Indiana 46140

317-326-2362

www.sermonaudio.com/wordofgrace

www.growatgrace.org

pastor-elmer@hotmail.com