

Interviews with God

•**I ASK:** *When is the Singing of Men Pleasing to Thee?*

•**THUS SAITH THE LORD:** ‘O Sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless His name: show forth His salvation from day to day.’ Ps. 96:1,2.

‘Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good: sing praises unto His name for it is pleasant.’ Ps. 135:3.

‘Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.’ Eph. 5:19.

•**TO WHICH I RESPOND:** ‘Lord our God, Thou hast commanded us to sing, and Thou hast given us the repeated assurance that the song of consecrated lips is pleasing and acceptable to Thee. Let Thy grace so fill our hearts with melody that every hymn we sing may be an act of true worship. Let our singing on earth be a rehearsal for our part in the praised of heaven, where they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb. Amen.’

‘O bless the Lord, my soul!
Nor let His mercies lie
Forgotten in unthankfulness,
And without praises die.’

Matthew 8:23-24

v. 23. ***And when He was entered into a ship, His disciples followed Him.***

v. 24. ***And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves. But He was asleep.***

In the Greek language the words ‘a great tempest’ are one word—seismos. A seismologist studies earthquakes and a seismograph measures them. So the storm the disciples were in must have shaken them to the core.

There’s an important lesson here. Getting on board with Jesus doesn’t mean you will never go through a storm. Jesus said, (John 16:33),

“In the world ye shall have tribulation;”

In spite of God’s promise to protect and prosper us, you’ll still have to deal with things like disease, lack, and fear. The difference is: the unbeliever faces the storm without Christ, but as a believer you go through the storm confident that all will be well because Jesus is on board.

Jesus concluded the verse:

“but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

Does that mean you will never experience panic? If only it were so! But it isn’t. Looking at the swelling waves and the sleeping Saviour, the disciples asked, (Mark 4:38),

“Master, carest Thou not that we perish?”

This is why fear is so deadly. It corrodes your confidence in God's goodness. It unleashes a swarm of doubts. It deadens your memory and confidence in the power of Jesus. By this time the disciples had witnessed Jesus, (Matthew 4:23)

“...healing all manner of disease among the people.”

Fear creates a form of spiritual amnesia. It dulls your miracle memory. It makes you forget what Jesus has done and how good God is. That's why you must starve your doubts and feed your faith on God's Word, for faith is what will take you through the storm.

Brief History of the Church -- Life and Deeds of Dr Martin Luther



[Since what the late *Professor Koch* teaches is so true, "**History is a great teacher**", let us take note of the following lessons of History and value God's grace in preserving His Word with us.]

CHAPTER VIII. LUTHER'S ORDINATION AS PRIEST. (Continued from the Jan-Feb 2018 issue of the **Messenger**)

FALSE DOCTRINE OF ORDINATION OF PRIESTS

The glory was great in the papacy when one was ordained as priest and read his first mass. "Blessed was the woman," says Luther, "who bare¹ a priest, and father and mother, with all their friends, rejoiced." For "a consecrated priest was to other baptized Christians as **the morning star to a smoking wick.**" "Consecration raised the subject even above apostles, bishops and martyrs who had not been priests, such great efficacy was in the chrism²." "The first mass was held in high estimation and yielded much money, for offerings and gifts poured in like flakes in a snowstorm. Then the dear young lord had to dance with his mother, if she was living, so that the spectators wept for joy; if she was dead, he read mass for her soul and delivered her from purgatory."

The fathers³ had resolved that Luther's ordination should take place on **Cantate Sunday⁴, May 2, 1507**. He invited his father and other friends to be present. The former made preparations as though he were going to a wedding, rode to the cloister in pomp, and presented his son twenty florins⁵. Luther testifies: "When I read my first mass at **Erfurt**, I nearly died; for there was **no faith, and I looked merely at my own worthiness**, and was concerned merely not to be a sinner and to omit none of the manipulations and displays of the Mass."

There was a regulation that, under pain of excommunication, no priest who had begun the mass and said the prayer should, without absolute necessity, leave the altar and permit another to finish the mass. To this penalty he came very near exposing himself. When he had read the words: "I bring to Thee, **the living God, this sacrifice⁶**," he fell into such consternation that he thought of leaving the altar and would have done so if his preceptor⁷ had not deterred him. "For," he thought,

¹ Gave birth to

² Chrism here refers to that part in the ordination service where the man is anointed to be a priest. This is where he falsely believes he is made more holier than the ordinary lay person and that through this he falsely believes that he receives some of Peter's holiness that has passed down through the ages by ordination.

³ His superiors.

⁴ **Cantate Sunday** is the fourth Sunday after Easter.

⁵ The Florentine florin was a coin struck from 1252 to 1533 with no significant change in its design or metal content standard during that time. It had 54 grains of nominally pure or 'fine' gold (3.5 grams, **0.1125** troy ounce) worth approximately 140 modern US dollars.

⁶ The Catholic Church still today **falsely** believes that Christ's work of Redemption on the cross was **not sufficient to pay for the sins of the world**. They falsely claim that **the priest has the power in the Mass to offer up Christ's body and blood as a further un-bloody sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead**. What also troubled Luther greatly was that he **falsely** believed that due to the **Catholic error of Transubstantiation** he was holding Christ's body in his hands when he held up the wafer.

⁷ The teacher who was supervising him.

"who am I that I should address the great Majesty, when all others tremble to appear in the presence of a prince or a king, or to address them?" "Since that time," he said to some friends, "I have always read Mass with great horror."

When he was ordained the bishop placed the cup in his hand, and said: "Receive the power to sacrifice for the living and the dead." Of this **Luther** subsequently wrote: "That the earth did not then open and swallow us both up was owing to the infinite patience and long suffering of God." Notwithstanding all anti-Christian additions, however, he always acknowledged the validity of his ordination⁸. Saying mass, on the other hand, he declared to be **the greatest sin of his life, because he thus so frequently denied the only perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ**⁹.

Luther's Father Was Not Happy That He Became A Priest

After the Mass they gathered around the festive board. At the table the new priest began to converse with his father, whom he wished to convince of having been in the wrong, saying: "Dear father, why did you so vehemently oppose my becoming a monk, and grow angry at it, so that perhaps you are not even now quite satisfied with my choice, seeing it is such a comfortable, divide state." "Yes," said old **John Luther**¹⁰, before all the doctors, masters and others, "Have you not thought of the 4th commandment, **'Honour thy father and thy mother?'** In opposition to this commandment, you have forsaken me and your dear mother in our old age, and gone into the monastery against our will, when we should, because I have devoted so much expense and pains to your studies, **have had some consolation and aid from you**¹¹."—"But," answered Martin, "in this state I can be of more service to you, by prayer and other devotions, than if I had chosen some secular calling." "O, would to God," replied old Luther, "this were so." In general his aged father, even at this time, consented but reluctantly, and would rather have said: No, I am not pleased with it, which he indicated by saying: "I must be here and eat and drink, but would rather be away."

Luther afterwards declared: "At these words of my father, teaching me to remember the commandments, I was so terrified that it seemed as though a sword had pierced through my soul, and I could never forget them. Thus my father would not be satisfied with my spiritual calling as long as I was in the cloister. But afterwards when, enlightened by the grace of God, I laid aside the cowl and took a wife, **he received me into his favour and I became his dear son again.**"

"Once, when he visited me, I again asked him why he had always opposed me in my monastic life. 'O, it always seemed to me', he said, **'that there was nothing in the clerical order but dissimulation¹² and knavery¹³.'** Thus my father became reconciled again, from which it is manifest that God always preserved many honest hearts even under the papacy."



Luther Would Secretly Read His Beloved Bible In The Monastery

When Luther had become a priest, his brother monks **took the Bible away from him** again and gave him the writings of the schoolmen. To render obedience, he read them so diligently that he could repeat several almost

⁸ Luther later rejected the Catholic errors connected with Ordination but accepted the fact that his ordination ratified the Call from God for him to teach the Word.

⁹ Heb.10:14, **"For by one offering He (Christ) hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."** Kretzmann comments: " There is, then, **no need of any further sacrifice: For by a single offering He has perfected for all time them that are sanctified.** The fact that He gave Himself into death as the Substitute of mankind once, the fact that He paid the price of all men's ransom with the price of His holy blood once, **that is sufficient. No more needs to be done, no more can be done. Salvation, the reconciliation of man with God, is secured forever.** In the one sacrifice of Christ there is a cleansing sufficient for all men, both to bring them into fellowship with God by imputing to them the perfect righteousness and holiness of God through faith, and to keep them in this fellowship by renewing their hearts by daily contrition and repentance and causing them to dedicate themselves, their lives, to God anew with every further day of their lives."

¹⁰ Luther's father. He later in faith believed in Christ and rejoiced over Luther's Work of Reformation.

¹¹ He wanted Luther to become a lawyer, earn a lot of money and look after his parents in their old age.

¹² Pretence, deceit, trickery, hypocrisy.

¹³ Roguish, dishonest behaviour.

word for word from memory. But chiefly did he study the works of Augustine, which he also retained most readily. **As often, however, as he found time and opportunity, he hid himself in the library of the monastery and faithfully pondered his clear Bible.**

(From *Life And Deeds of Dr. Martin Luther* by Rev. Hermann Fick (an old Missouri pastor) and translated by Prof Loy, pages 37-40. to be continued).

Luther's Legacy



The three guiding principles of Luther, and of the Reformation, are *sola fides* (faith alone), *sola scriptura* (Scripture alone), *sola gratia* (grace alone), and the priesthood of all believers.

1. Faith alone (*sola fides*)

Salvation is the gift of God, acquired through faith **alone**, received through God's grace **alone**, ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#)):

v. 8. *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God;*

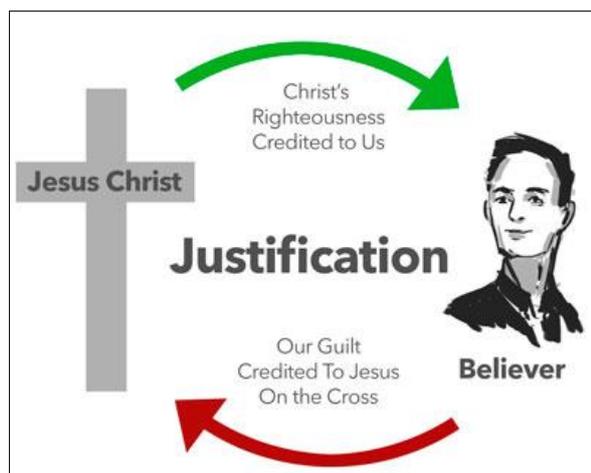
v. 9. *not of works, lest any man should boast.*

v. 10. *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

because of Christ **alone**. Christ's death on the Cross, followed by His resurrection, was not only *necessary* but was also both *complete* and *sufficient* to pay the total penalty for our sins and thereby discharge our sin-debt to God in full ([Hebrews 7:25](#)):

v. 25. *Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

This is the Gospel, ([1 Corinthians 15:1, 3-4](#)), and there is none other that saves ([Acts 4:12](#); and [Galatians 1:8](#)).



We can not merit His grace by anything we do ([Galatians 2:16](#)):

v.16. *knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the Law; for by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified. (And 3:3):*

v. 3. *Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?*

The Apostle Paul says this is for several reasons: ([Romans 4:16](#)).

v. 16. *Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the Law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.*

1.

Works “nullify the grace of God”, so that if we could earn righteousness, “Christ died for no purpose” ([Galatians 2:21](#)):

v. 21. *I do not frustrate the grace of God; for if righteousness come by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain.*

2.

Because then “grace would no longer be grace” ([Romans 11:6](#)).

v.6. And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work.

3.

If works were acceptable, God could owe us salvation ([Romans 4:4](#)),

v. 4. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

which He does not ([Romans 3:23](#)),

v.23. for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God;

4.

In fact, all attempts to earn God’s favour will fail and incur God’s curse ([Galatians 3:10](#)),

v. 10. For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them.

5.

So that “we have peace with God” ([Romans 5:1](#)),

v. 1. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;

According to the Bible, believers’ sins are covered by the atoning blood of Jesus ([Hebrews 9:12–14](#); and [Romans 5:9–11](#)):

v. 9. Much more, then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

v. 10. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

v. 11. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

never to be exposed again. The Apostle Paul says that God nailed the record of our sins to the Cross ([Colossians 2:13–14](#)).

So then, on the authority of the Word of God, our sinful past no longer exists in the records of heaven. When we are forgiven, the King of kings makes us His heirs ([Romans 8:17](#)),

v.17. and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.

so that believers are princes and princesses of the King of kings—not only when we get to heaven, but right here and now. God has purposed that we do not merit His grace by anything we do, ([Galatians 2:16](#); [3:3](#)).

One practical aspect of this is that believers can have absolute certainty of their salvation and that they are no longer damned sinners! Why? Because our eternal destiny does not depend on how well we have performed works in this life, nor yet on our having suffered enough temporal punishment for our sins after we die. But rather because we have been declared righteous by the Eternal Judge Himself ([Romans 8:1](#)),

v. 1. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

and He has adopted us as His own sons and daughters ([Romans 8:14–17](#)). Indeed, those who do not believe what God has said brand God a liar ([1 John 5:10–12](#)).

2. Scripture alone (sola Scriptura)

Sola Scriptura is the doctrine that the Bible as the Word of God is the sole infallible, authoritative, and *sufficient* authority in all matters of doctrine, faith, and conduct. It is based on the Apostle Paul’s statement that “All Scripture is God-breathed,” Greek: θεόπνευστος (*theopneustos*) in ([2 Timothy 3:16–17](#)):

v. 16. *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,*

v. 17. *that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

Thus Scripture originates from God Himself, who cannot err, and therefore the authority of Scripture is God's error-free authority.

Sola Scriptura is important for these reasons:

I.

What God requires us to believe is what He Himself has actually said in His Word, the Bible. God has provided in the Bible, in clear, understandable, and reliable words, His full and final revelation regarding what we must believe to be saved, and all that is necessary for the Church's mission in the world. It is infallible, binding, and authoritative today, and thus is complete as to doctrine. (John 17):

v. 17. *Sanctify them through Thy truth; thy Word is truth.*

v. 20. *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word.*

II.

Sola Scriptura negates all doctrines originated by human beings (which, sadly, increase as time goes by), and directs our attention to what God says rather than to what man formulates. Thus, God's Word needs no addition from any human wisdom.

In the Bible, repeatedly, God commands us humans not to add to what He has said:

([Galatians 1:8–9](#)):

v. 8. *But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.*

v. 9. *As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.*

The Bible closes with the apostle John's dire warning: ([Revelation 22:18–19](#)).

v. 18. *For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book;*

v. 19. *and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his parts out of the Book of Life and out of the Holy City and from the things which are written in this book.*

3. The priesthood of all believers

The Bible tells us that no further sacrifices for sin are needed now, because Christ's 'once-for-all-time' sacrifice was and is totally sufficient before Almighty God ([Romans 6:9–10](#)).

v. 9. *knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him.*

v. 10. *For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, He liveth unto God.*

God showed His *perfect satisfaction* with Christ's atonement for our sins by the Resurrection. God raised Christ up ([Acts 2:24](#))

v. 24. *whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it.*

Note that the penalty for sin is death ([Romans 6:23](#)), so God can pardon sin only when the penalty that He has pronounced has been paid. With the penalty paid, God can pardon the repentant sinner and remain righteous at the same time, as Paul writes in [Romans 3:26](#).



How then are all believers priests?

Believers have direct access to God through Christ alone, (Rom 5:1, 2):

v. 1. *Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

v. 2. *by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

It is not in the sense that we are obliged to offer sacrifices today, but because we have direct access to God through Christ alone (1 Timothy 2:5),

v.5. *For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, and thus without the necessity for any earthly intermediary priest (Hebrews 9:15; 12:24).* We are in fact joined to the resurrected Christ in a spiritual union which is profoundly real and intensely intimate (John 15:4–5).

v. 4. *Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in Me.*

v. 5. *I am the Vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in Me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing.*

We share in God the Father's love for His Son (John 17:26), and as a result faith moves us to love God and our neighbour. One practical aspect of this is that all Christians are called to be God's witnesses, representatives, and ambassadors in whatever capacity or profession we find ourselves (2 Corinthians 5:18–20).

v. 18. *And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;*

v. 19. *to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the Word of Reconciliation.*

v. 20. *Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God.*

Conclusion

Salvation is by faith *alone*, by grace *alone*, in Christ *alone*, on the authority of Scripture *alone*, and for the glory of God *alone*. These principles give, to those who will accept them:

1. The complete forgiveness of sins here and now (Romans 10:9–10);

v. 9. *that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

v. 10. *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

(Hebrews 10:12):

v. 12. *but this Man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God;*

2. The absolute assurance of salvation (John 5:24):

v. 24. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.*

(1 John 5:13):

v. 13. *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

and hence peace with God and freedom from the fear of death or what happens after death, (Philippians 1:21, 23):

v. 21. *For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain.*

v. 23. *For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better;*

3. Union with Christ, which is God’s comprehensive and ultimate purpose for our lives, both now and for all eternity (John 14:23):

v. 23. *Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him.*

Notes on the Reformation

Luther Did Not Let Disappointments Affect Him

You have learned it; keep it well fixed in your mind that a Christian heart is one which hears the Word of God concerning forgiveness of sins and believes it without doubting, though it neither sees nor feels it.



Martin Luther
House Postil, Quinquagesima

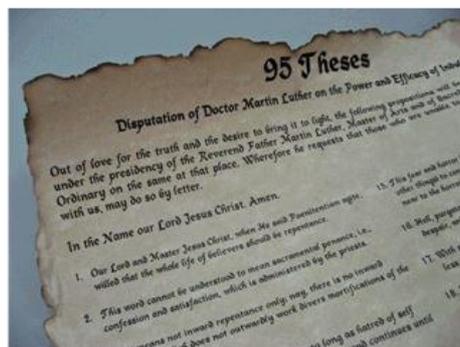
Convergence of Talent

- Bugehagen – Pastor to common man.
- Jonas – Tongues, Latin linguist.
- Melancthon – Scholarship.
- Luther – All around.



On Angel’s Wings

It was one of the first events in history affected by a new technology: the printing press with moveable type, invented by Johannes Gutenberg around 1439.



95 Theses

- 95 Theses written against the sale of indulgences
- Nailed to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517
- 95 Theses translated, printed, & distributed throughout Germany within 2 weeks

