

# 95 Reasons Why I'm Reformed

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Steve Hereford, Pastor-Teacher

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## INTRODUCTION

- Today we are concluding our series on the Protestant Reformation.
- During this month, we have looked at John Wycliffe and John Huss, two pre-reformation reformers.
- Today were looking the teaching that has come from the Reformation.
- Last week we saw Rome's view of justification versus the biblical view.
- This is the article upon which the church would rise or fall according to Martin Luther.
- As we celebrate Reformation Day today, we are reminded of Martin Luther nailing his 95 Theses to the door of Wittenburg castle church.
- This was to provoke discussion concerning papal indulgences.
- It was also an invitation to debate any or all the propositions listed.
- A month earlier, he wrote a thesis on the topic of scholastic theology.
- Both of these documents together were intended to invite discussion on the topic.
- When you read his theses, you see that the tone was humble rather than an academic, though that is there.
- But the overall thrust of the document was nonetheless provocative.
- The first two of the theses contained Luther's central idea, that God intended believers to seek repentance and that faith alone, and not deeds, would lead to salvation.
- The other 93 theses, a number of them directly criticizing the practice of indulgences, supported these first two ([https://www.history.com/topics/reformation/martin-luther-and-the-95-theses#section\\_4](https://www.history.com/topics/reformation/martin-luther-and-the-95-theses#section_4)).
- If you notice the title behind me, 95 Reasons Why I Am Reformed, you immediately think of the 95 thesis.
- But the title is much more than that.
- It is an overall summary of what the Reformers taught then, and 102 years after the Reformation, and even today.

- So I have two main points that I want to share with you today about *being reformed*.
- And rather than answer what it means to be reformed, I'm going to let what I share today define that for you.
- So instead of us looking at 95 points of debate by Martin Luther, we are going to look at 10 major teachings that have come from the Protestant Reformation.
- So my two major points are reasons why I am reformed.
- I am Reformed for two reasons: it is biblical and it preaches the true gospel.
- Those are main reasons why we refer to ourselves as a Reformed Baptist Church, it is biblical and it preaches the true Gospel.

## **LESSON**

· Let's begin with the first...

### **I. It is Biblical**

- What developed later from the Protestant Reformation came 10 major doctrines (total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, perseverance of the saints, sola scriptura, sola gratia, sola fide, sola christus, soli deo gloria).
- Three of the five solas were used by Martin Luther, the rest were taught over time.
- The other 5 doctrines, commonly referred to as the doctrines of grace or the 5 points of Calvinism were affirmed 102 years after the Protestant Reformation on May 9, 1619.
- To understand those 5 points you have to go back to 1610.
- This was one year after the death of James Arminius
- His followers drew up five articles of faith based on his teachings:
- Those articles were: free will, conditional election, universal atonement, resistible grace, and falling from grace.
- These were presented to the state of Holland in the form of a "protest."
- The followers of James Arminius, who were commonly known as Armenians, insisted that the Belgic Confession of Faith and the Heidelberg Catechism which was the official expression of the doctrinal position of the churches of Holland be changed to conform to the doctrinal views contained in the protest.
- A national synod was called to meet in Dort in 1618 for the purpose of examining the views of Arminius in the light of Scripture.
- The Great Synod was convened by the State General of Holland on November 13, 1618 with 84 members and 18 secular commissioners. Included were 27 delegates from Germany, the Palatinate (a region of Germany), Switzerland and England.

- There were 154 sessions held during the 7 months that the Synod met together to consider these matters, the last meeting was on May 9, 1619.
  - The five articles of faith presented by the Armenians' were unanimously rejected.
  - As part of their rejection, the Synod produced the five points of Calvinism.
- > So as we began our study this morning, I want to summarize each of these...

> The first is...

- Total Depravity

Total depravity teaches that man is completely helpless in his sinful state, is under the wrath of God, and can in no way please God.

Man will not and cannot seek to know God until grace prompts him to do so.

To put it another way: The Bible teaches, as a result of Adam's fall, the entire human race is affected; all humanity is dead in trespasses and sins. Man is unable to save himself.

- Man in his natural state is dead in trespasses and sins - [Ephesians 2:1](#), "1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins."
- Man in his natural state is wicked - [Genesis 6:5](#), "Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."
- Man's heart is deceitful more than anything else - [Jeremiah 17:9](#), "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?"
- Man is not righteous. He doesn't understand or seek for God - [Romans 3:10-18](#), "10 as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one; 11 There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God; 12 All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one." 13 "Their throat is an open grave, With their tongues they keep deceiving," "The poison of asps is under their lips"; 14 "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness"; 15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood, 16 Destruction and misery are in their paths, 17 And the path of peace they have not known." 18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

> The second teaching is...

- Unconditional Election

> That means...

- God chooses who He will save
  - [Ephesians 1:4](#), "just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love"

- The word “chose” is the Greek word eklego. It means “to pick out, select” (Vine) or “choose out for one’s own self” (Wuest). This word “indicates God’s totally independent choice” (MacArthur).

- [Acts 13:48](#), “When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.”

John Piper said, “Election is a condition for faith. It is because God chose us before the foundation of the world that he purchases our redemption at the cross and quickens us with irresistible grace and brings us to faith.”

› **Jesus said to His disciples in...**

- [John 15:16](#), “You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.”

› **When Paul wrote to the Thessalonians he said in...**

- [1 Thessalonians 1: 3-4](#), “3 constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father, 4 knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you.”

› **He said it again in his second letter to the Thessalonians...**

- [2 Thessalonians 2:13-14](#), “13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. 14 It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

- God decided this “before the foundation of the world”

The word “foundation” used in [Ephesians 1:4](#) is the Greek word katabole. It comes from ballo, which means “to throw,” and kata, which means, “down.” It is a “‘throwing or laying down.’ It describes God throwing down a universe into space, speaking a material universe into existence which had no existence before” (Kenneth Wuest, Word Studies in the Greek NT, 31).

- In [Matthew 25:34](#) Jesus tells us that “the kingdom” was “prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”
- Remember the Gentiles who had believed in [Acts 13:48](#) had done so because they had been “appointed to eternal life” beforehand
- Even God’s plan of salvation in Jesus was “before the foundation of the world”
  - [1 Peter 1:20-21](#), “20 For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you 21 who through Him are

believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.”

- The word “foreknown” (proginosko) means “to know beforehand or in advance” (GING)

“In eternity past, before Adam and Eve sinned, God planned the redemption of sinners through Jesus Christ. The Father did not react to the Fall with a last-minute fix; before the Fall—even before the creation—He predetermined to send His Son as the Savior” (John MacArthur, The MacArthur Study Bible).

› Peter said in...

- [Acts 2:23](#), “this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.”

› Later you hear the apostles praying in...

- [Acts 4:27-28](#), “27 “For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, 28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.”

› We even hear Paul telling Timothy in...

- [2 Timothy 1:8-9](#), “8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, 9 who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity.”

› Total depravity, unconditional election. The third teaching is...

- Limited Atonement (also called “particular redemption”)
  - Christ took the judgment for the sin of the elect upon Himself thereby paid for their lives in His death

John Piper said, “The Atonement applies to the elect in a unique, particular way, although the death of Christ is sufficient to propitiate the sins of the whole world. The death of Christ effectually accomplished the salvation for all God’s people” (John Piper, Summary of the Sovereignty of God in Salvation, December 10, 1997).

In other words, “limited atonement means that “Christ died especially for the elect, and paid a definite price for them that guaranteed their salvation.”

- [Ephesians 1:7-8](#), “7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight”

- The “we” and “us” are the “saints” and “faithful in Christ Jesus” ([Eph.1:1](#)).
- They are those who have been “blessed...with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” ([Eph.1:3](#)).
- They are those whom God “chose” for Himself “before the foundation of the world” (v.4).
- They are those who have been “predestined...to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ” (v.5).

› **Scripture teaches that...**

- Jesus died for His people
  - [Matthew 1:21](#), “She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”
  - [Matthew 26:28](#), “for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many (not all) for forgiveness of sins.”
  - [John 10:11](#), “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.”
  - [John 10:15](#), “even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.” (Who are the “sheep”)
  - [John 10:24-29](#), “24 The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, “How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.” 25 Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father’s name, these testify of Me. 26 “But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. 27 “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. 29 “My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.”
  - [John 17:9](#), “I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours;” (everyone was not given to Him)
  - [Isaiah 53:12](#), “12 Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many (not all), And interceded for the transgressors (not all transgressors).”

› **The forth teaching is...**

- Irresistible Grace
  - This is the work of the Spirit in changing the entire nature.

Paul Enns says, “Irresistible grace is the supernatural work of God wherein He works in the soul of the individual, changing the entire nature by the Holy Spirit’s operation” and “makes the individual willing to come” (Paul P. Enns, The Moody Handbook of Theology [Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1997, c1989]. 484).

Louis Berkhof says, “By changing the heart it makes man perfectly willing to accept Jesus Christ unto salvation and to yield obedience to the will of God” (Ibid., Enns).

It is the Holy Spirit intervening in man’s heart and sovereignly giving Him the new birth, faith, and repentance of which he does not resist.

Apart from this intervention, he resists the outward call of God.

- This is the work of all three members of the Trinity
  - The Father gives the individual to Jesus and they come to Him - Jesus said in [John 6:37](#), “37 “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.”
  - The Father draws the individual to Christ
    - Jesus said in [John 6:44](#), “44 “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.”
    - Verse 45 says, “...Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me.”
- There is no resistance when the Father “draws him” or when they have “heard and learned from the Father.” They come to Christ.

› Verse 63 says how that is done:

- The Spirit gives spiritual life
  - Jesus said in verse 63, “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.”
  - They come because God is drawing them.
  - They come because they have “heard and learned from the Father.”
  - They come because “the Spirit” gives them “life”
  - They come because God “grants” it to them. Verse 65 says, “And He was saying, “For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father.””

R.C. Sproul says, “To be ‘born again’ is to experience a second genesis. It is a new beginning, a fresh start in life...Regeneration by the Holy Spirit is a change. It is a radical change into a new kind of being. To be regenerated does not mean that we are changed from a human being into a divine being. It does mean that we are changed from spiritually dead human beings into spiritually alive human beings. Spiritually.”



dead persons are incapable of seeing the kingdom of God. It is invisible to them, not because the kingdom itself is invisible, but because the spiritually dead are also spiritually blind” (The Mystery of the Holy Spirit, 93).

> We have seen the teaching of total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, last notice...

- Perseverance of the Saints

- God preserves all the elect

- [1 Peter 1:3-5](#), “3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”
- [John 6:39](#), “This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.”
- [John 6:44](#), “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.”
- [John 10:27-29](#), “27 “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. 29 “My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.”
- [John 17:12](#), “While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.”

- God causes the elect to persevere in faith and obedience to the end. None are continually back-slidden or finally lost.

In other words, “Saints persevere until the end because God preserves them until the end” (Gingrich).

Roy Gingrich says, “The first of the post-apostolic church fathers to explicitly teach this doctrine was Augustine but he taught it in a modified form. He taught that some believers are elect believers and that others are non-elect believers and that elect believers cannot fall from grace but that non-elect believers can and sometimes do, fall from grace. The Roman Catholic church, refusing to follow the teaching of Augustine on this point of doctrine, denied the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints throughout the Middle Ages. The Protestant reformers restored the doctrine to the church (but they, contrary to the teaching of Augustine, taught that all true believers are elect believers and that all true believers persevere until they are finally and fully saved). John Calvin perfected the doctrine.



The Lutheran church soon turned from the doctrine and later many other of the Reformation churches turned away also, choosing to follow the new Arminian system of theology. Only the Calvinistic churches continued to believe and teach the doctrine. Today, it is believed and taught only by the Calvinistic churches” (The Perseverance of the Saints).

› But the Bible teaches “perseverance”

- [Hebrews 10:36-39](#), “36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. 37 For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay. 38 But My righteous one shall live by faith; And if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him. 39 But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.”
- [1 Corinthians 15:1-2](#), “1 Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast (katecho, pres.act.ind.) the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.”
- [John 8:31](#), “So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;”
- [Colossians 1:21-23](#), “21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, 22 yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach— 23 if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.”

· So I am reformed because it is biblical. I am also reformed because reformation theology...

## II. It Preaches the True Gospel

The true gospel is seen in the 5 points of Calvin but also in the 5 solas:

“We are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone according to Scripture alone for the glory of God alone.”

- Sola Scriptura
  - *Sola scriptura* emphasizes the Bible alone as the source of authority for Christians.
  - By saying, “Scripture alone,” the Reformers rejected both the divine authority of the Roman Catholic Pope and confidence in sacred tradition.
  - Only the Bible was “inspired by God” (2 Peter 1:20-21) and “God-breathed” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

- Anything taught by the Pope or in tradition that contradicted the Bible was to be rejected.
- *Sola scriptura* also fueled the translation of the Bible into German, French, English, and other languages, and prompted Bible teaching in the common languages of the day, rather than in Latin (<https://www.gotquestions.org/five-solas.html>).

#### > The second sola is...

- Sola Gratia
  - *Sola gratia* emphasizes
  - grace as the reason for our salvation.
  - In other words, salvation comes from what God has done rather than what we do.
  - Ephesians 2:8-9 teaches, “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

#### > The third sola is...

- Sola Fide
  - *Sola fide* emphasizes salvation as a free gift.
  - The Roman Catholic Church of the time emphasized the use of indulgences (donating money) to buy status with God.
  - Good works, including baptism, were seen as required for salvation.
  - *Sola fide* stated that salvation is a free gift to all who accept it by faith (John 3:16).
  - Salvation is not based on human effort or good deeds (Ephesians 2:9).

#### > The fourth sola is...

- Sola Christus
  - *Sola Christus*, “through Christ alone”) emphasizes the role of Jesus in salvation.
  - The Roman Catholic tradition had placed church leaders such as priests in the role of intercessor between the laity and God.
  - Reformers emphasized Jesus’ role as our “high priest” who intercedes on our behalf before the Father.
  - Hebrews 4:15 teaches, “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.” Jesus is the One who offers access to God, not a human spiritual leader.

#### > The 5th and last sola is...

- Soli Deo Gloria
  - *Soli Deo gloria* emphasizes the glory of God as the goal of life.
  - Rather than striving to please church leaders, keep a list of rules, or guard our own interests, our goal is to glorify the Lord.
  - The idea of *soli Deo gloria* is found in 1 Corinthians 10:31: “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

## CONCLUSION

- The five *solas* of the Protestant Reformation offered a strong corrective to the faulty practices and beliefs of the time, and they remain relevant today.
- We are called to focus on Scripture, accept salvation by grace through faith, magnify Christ, and live for God’s glory.
- Is your life consumed with Scripture?
- Since God has magnified His word above His name, we ought to magnify Scripture in our life by constantly being saturated with it.
- As a child of God, this must be your passion.
- If you’re not a child of God, your passion is not God’s Word.
- It is self, sin, and Satan.
- You need to be freed from that bondage today.
- Come to Christ who alone provided forgiveness for your sin at the cross.
- He bore the penalty of your sin and has provided a way to God through Himself.
- Jesus said in [John 14:6](#), “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”
- Come to Him and be saved.
- Let’s pray.