



HOLY HERESY 3: CHRIST ALONE (SOLUS CHRISTUS) MARCH 6, 2025

JOHN CALVIN AND SOLUS CHRISTUS

- I. **Christ's Two Natures: Fully God and Fully Man**
 - a. Calvin defends the **hypostatic union**, affirming that Christ possesses both divine and human natures without confusion or separation: *"For we affirm that Christ, as he is God and man, consisting of two natures united but not confounded, is one person."* (Institutes, 2.14.1)
 - b. He insists that Christ's divinity ensures His power to save, while His humanity enables Him to represent humanity: *"It was necessary for the Mediator to be both God and man. If he had been only man, he could not have sustained the burden of eternal death; if he had been only God, he could not have been subject to death."* (Institutes, 2.12.3)

- II. **Christ's Threefold Office: Prophet, Priest, and King:** Calvin develops the **threefold office of Christ** (*munus triplex*) to explain how He fulfills His mediatorial role:
 - a. **Christ as Prophet** – The final revelation of God's truth: *"We see that he was anointed by the Father to be a herald and witness of his grace, and not in the common way, for he is not one of the number of prophets, but the Prince of Prophets, differing from all in this, that he is the source of prophecy."* (Institutes, 2.15.1)
 - b. **Christ as Priest** – The perfect and final sacrifice for sin: *"The priestly office belongs to Christ alone because by the sacrifice of his death he has blotted out our guilt and made satisfaction for our sins."* (Institutes, 2.15.6)

- c. **Christ as King** – The ruler of His Church and sovereign Lord: *"As King, he governs us by his word and Spirit, and defends and sustains us by his power."* (Institutes, 2.15.3)

III. Christ Alone as the Sole Redeemer

- a. Calvin unequivocally asserts that Jesus Christ is the **only** redeemer of humanity, rejecting any claim that salvation could come through the Church, saints, or human effort: *"For we are directed to Christ alone, that we may seek salvation in him, which is placed in his death and resurrection alone."* (Institutes of the Christian Religion, 2.16.1)
- b. This reflects **Acts 4:12**, which Calvin frequently cited: *"And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."* (Acts 4:12, ESV)
- c. Calvin insisted that **salvation is not found in sacraments, good works, or the Church's authority, but solely in Christ.**

IV. Christ's Atonement: A Once-for-All Sacrifice

- a. **Christ's Atoning Work Is Sufficient and Final**
 - i. Calvin strongly rejected the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Mass as a **re-sacrificing** of Christ. Instead, he affirmed that Christ's **one-time sacrifice is completely sufficient** for salvation: *"Christ, by his obedience, truly acquired and merited grace for us with his Father. By the shedding of his sacred blood, he made expiation for our sins, that his sacrifice might be effectual unto eternal salvation."* (Institutes, 2.17.3)
 - ii. This aligns with **Hebrews 10:12**: *"But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God."* (Hebrews 10:12, ESV)
- b. Calvin affirmed that Christ's **death is fully sufficient** for salvation:
 - i. *"For we are directed to Christ alone, that we may seek salvation in him, which is placed in his death and resurrection alone."* (Institutes, 2.16.1)
 - ii. *"Christ, by his obedience, truly acquired and merited grace for us with his Father."* (Institutes, 2.17.3)

V. Christ as the Only Mediator Between God and Man

- a. Calvin asserts that sinful humanity can only be reconciled to God through Christ alone. He rejected the idea that priests, saints, or Mary could serve as additional mediators. He pointed to **1 Timothy 2:5**, affirming that only Christ bridges the gap between God and humanity.
 - i. *"For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."* (1 Timothy 2:5, ESV)
 - ii. *"There is no other priest, no other sacrifice, no other way to approach God, but through Jesus Christ alone."* (Institutes, 2.15.6)
 - iii. This directly opposed Roman Catholic teachings, which upheld **priestly mediation and intercessory prayers to saints.**

VI. Union with Christ: The Only Way to Receive Salvation

- a. Calvin taught that believers are **saved only through union with Christ**, not through external rituals or church membership: *"We must, above all, remember this: Christ is not outside us, but we are ingrafted into him, and accordingly, we derive life from him."* (Institutes, 3.11.10)
- b. *"God, therefore, the moment he sees us in his Son, is pleased with us, and loves us."* (Institutes, 2.16.2)
- c. Through **union with Christ**, believers share in His benefits: *"By partaking of him, we principally receive a double grace: namely, that being reconciled to God through Christ's blamelessness, we may have in heaven instead of a Judge a gracious Father; and secondly, that sanctified by Christ's Spirit we may cultivate blamelessness and purity of life."* (Institutes, 3.11.1)

VII. Christ's Resurrection secures our justification and new life: *"Christ was raised again for our justification, that by his resurrection he might restore and secure to us righteousness."* (Institutes, 2.16.13)

VIII. Conclusion: Calvin's Absolute Commitment to *Solus Christus*

- a. John Calvin's Christology in the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* presents **Jesus Christ as the Mediator**, fully God and fully man, who alone accomplishes salvation.
- b. Calvin Emphasized Christ's **two natures** (*hypostatic union*), and His role as the **sole redeemer** of humanity.
- c. Calvin emphasizes Christ's **threefold office** (*munus triplex*) as Prophet, Priest, and King,
- d. Calvin's Christology is **deeply biblical and central to his theology**.
- e. This means:
 - i. **Faith unites believers with Christ.**
 - ii. **Salvation is entirely through Christ, not human effort.**
 - iii. **Christ is the only source of righteousness before God.**
- f. John Calvin **unwaveringly affirmed** that **Jesus Christ is the sole redeemer of humanity**, rejecting any additional mediators, human merit, or institutional authority. His Christology is centered on the **absolute sufficiency** of Christ's atonement, His **exclusive role as mediator**, and the necessity of **union with Him for salvation**.

ECO ESSENTIAL TENETS

Although we are each deserving of God's eternal condemnation, the eternal Son assumed our human nature, joining us in our misery and offering Himself on the cross in order to free us from slavery to death and sin. Jesus takes our place both in bearing the weight of condemnation against our sin on the cross and in offering to God the perfect obedience that humanity owes to Him but is no longer able to give. All humanity participates in the fall into sin. Those who are united through faith with Jesus Christ are fully forgiven from all our sin, so that there is indeed a new creation. We are declared justified, not because of any good that we have done, but only because of God's grace extended to us in Jesus Christ. **In union with Christ through the power of the Spirit we are brought into right relation with the Father, who receives us as His adopted children.**

Jesus Christ is the only Way to this adoption, the sole path by which sinners become children of God, for He is the only-begotten Son, and it is only in union with Him that a believer is able to know God as Father. Only in Jesus Christ is the truth about the Triune God, fully and perfectly revealed, for only He is the Truth, only He has seen the Father, and only He can make the Father known. Only Jesus Christ is the new Life that is offered, for He is the bread from heaven and the fountain of living water, the one by whom all things were made, in whom all things hold together. The exclusivity of these claims establishes that God's love is not impersonal, but a particular and intimate love in which each individual child of God is called by name and known as precious; that God's love is not only acceptance, but a transforming and effective love in which His image within us is restored so that we are capable of holy living.