

## 1. The Reformation Story of the Lady Jane Gray

February 10, 1554. It is 37 years, 4 months, 10 days after the German monk, Martin Luther nailed his invitation to an academic debate to the doors of the castle chapel at Wittenberg. The Catholic chaplain to Queen Mary visits the cell of a 17 year old girl being held in the Tower of London awaiting execution. The young woman is the Lady Jane Gray. Just six months before, she had been the Queen of England herself, for all of nine days, before her cousin, Mary gathered an army to depose her.

Mary, known to history as “Bloody Mary,” was devoutly Catholic and determined to return rebellious England to the folds of the Roman church. Jane was Protestant, convinced of the validity of the Reformation and the return to true, biblical Christianity.

February 10, 1554. It is 37 years, 4 months, and 10 days since the Luther challenged the church on the issue of indulgences. It is three days after Queen Mary signed her cousin’s death warrant. It is two days before Jane climbs the scaffold and loses both her head and her life.

John Feckenham, the Catholic chaplain, enters Jane’s cell in the Tower of London in the hopes of saving her soul, of wooing her back into the arms of the Mother church. He fails.

February 10, 1554. A teenager walking the valley of the shadow of death faces the professor, the religious magistrate, the professional theologian, the royal priest. A charged debate follows — Feckenham the Catholic apologist and Jane the Reformed teenager. He presses that justification comes by faith and works; she stands her ground on *sola fide* - faith alone. He asserts that the Eucharistic bread and wine are the very body and blood of Christ; she maintains that the elements symbolize Jesus’s saving work. He affirms the Catholic Church’s authority alongside Scripture; she insists on *sola Scriptura* – that the church sits underneath the piercing gaze of God’s word, that God’s word alone is the final authority on all matters of faith and practice.

February 10, 1554. The Catholic chaplain makes his parting shot: “I am sure we two shall never meet [again],” implying her damnation. But Jane takes the last word, the good word, and turns the warning back on him: “Truth it is that we shall never meet [again], unless God turn your heart.”

Jane Gray was a child who used her Greek and Hebrew to study the Scriptures in their original tongue. Jane Gray was sent to Henry VIII’s court for grooming, only to meet Jesus through the Christian witness of Queen Katherine Parr. Jane Gray, Protestant, Reformed, Christian, fearless Jane Gray faces trial, imprisonment, and beheading with God’s very words on her lips.

Jane spent her final days preparing a brief speech for her execution and sending some last remarks. On the inside of her Greek New Testament, she wrote to her younger sister, Katharine,

*This is the book, dear sister, of the Law of the Lord. It is his testament and last will, which he bequeathed unto us wretches, which shall lead you to the path of eternal joy. . . . And as touching my death, rejoice as I do, good sister, that I shall be delivered of this corruption, and put on incorruption. For I am assured that I shall for losing of a mortal life, win an immortal life.*

February 12, 1544. 37 years, four months, 12 days since the passion of a single German monk for the revelation of God and grace he found on the Bible began to bring the world back to Christ, 17 year old

Jane Gray, the Nine Day Queen, the child of God came with all her Reformation hope in the grace and glory of God to the wall of the central White Tower, where a small crowd and an executioner awaited her arrival. Turning to the onlookers, Jane announced, “I do look to be saved by no other mean, but only by the mercy of God, in the blood of his only Son Jesus Christ.” She then knelt and recited Psalm 51: “Have mercy on me, O God. . . .”

Once blindfolded, Jane groped her way to the execution block and laid her head in its groove. The last sound the crowd heard before the axe thudded into the block was a prayer from Jane’s seventeen-year-old voice: “Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” So began the heavenly, face to face existence of Lady Jane Grey in the unobstructed love and glory of God she trusted to receive by faith alone in Christ alone through grace alone according to the word alone for the glory of God alone.

(My thanks to Scott Hubbard of [desiringgod.org](http://desiringgod.org) for the basic accounting of Jane’s story that I have reworked here.)

**2. Jane Gray and myriad others stood on faith and gave their lives for a truth rediscovered in their day that changed their lives, their perception of God and His grace, and their hope for peace with God and eternal glory.**

**3. What did the Reformers discover and what does it mean for us today, 500 years later?**

**a. In a day when the Catholic church interposed itself and its teachings as the only means of grace available to human beings, the only way to God and forgiveness of sin and heaven, the Reformers uncovered this treasure that had been hidden under centuries of corruption and false teaching:**

- i. “The Bible alone is God’s infallible revelation of His glory, which reveals His grace in Christ—grace that becomes ours through faith, all redounding to His glory.
- ii. In other words, we are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone according to God’s word alone.
- iii. In still others words, salvation is all about God . . . alone.

**b. R.C. Sproul, Jr:**

- i. “The solas remind us not just how we might have peace with God but that peace with God is not the full and final end of all things.
- ii. “They remind us that the story of the Bible isn’t simply how we who are in dire straits can make it to safety and how nice God is to play such an important role in making that happen.
- iii. “Instead [the solas] remind us that God is the end, and we are the means.
- iv. “The story is about Him and His glory more than us and our comfort.”

**4. What are the five solas that came out of the Reformation and why should they matter to us today?**

**a. The Five Solas**

(Slide #2)

- i. Sola Scriptura - Scripture alone
- ii. Sola Gratia - Grace alone
- iii. Sola Fide - Faith alone
- iv. Solus Christus - Christ alone
- v. Soli Deo Gloria - To the Glory of God alone

**b. The Five Solas, one at a time**

i. Sola Scriptura

(Slide #3)

- (1) The Scriptures alone are the inspired word of God and, therefore, the only infallible (and therefore ultimately authoritative) rule for life and doctrine.
- (2) God’s own word, not God’s word in conjunction with church teaching or

majority tradition, God's word alone tells us everything we need to know to know God and gain eternal life.

- (3) Martin Luther (Diet of Worms 1521): Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. May God help me. Amen."

ii. **Sola Gratia**

(Slide #4)

- (1) The sinner is saved by the grace of God alone; nothing the sinner does commends him to the grace of God; the sinner does not cooperate with God in order to merit his salvation. From beginning to end, salvation is the sovereign gift of God to the unworthy and undeserving.
- (2) Asking Jesus into your heart is not what saved you.
- (3) What saved you was the gracious choice of God to rescue you from the otherwise inevitable justice that awaits all of us at the bottom of the down escalator!

iii. **Sola Fide**

(Slide #5)

- (1) The only means by which Christ's perfect work is received with benefit for the soul is by faith alone. Sinners are declared righteous in God's sight not on the basis of their good works but by faith alone in Christ alone by God's grace alone.
- (2) Roman Catholic church condemns this idea:
  - (a) Council of Trent 1547
  - (b) "If anyone says that the sinner is justified by faith alone, meaning thereby that no other cooperation is required for him to obtain the grace of justification, and that in no sense is it necessary for him to make preparation and be disposed of a movement of his own will; let him be anathema (eternally cursed)."
- (3) Reformation restored the conviction that the burden of pleasing God and gaining forgiveness of sin accompanies faith in Jesus Christ and requires no additional personal effort on our part.
  - (a) As a result of faith in Christ God pardons all our sins, past, present, and future.
  - (b) As a result on faith in Christ, the sinner is accepted as righteous in God's sight.
  - (c) (Imputation - he is counted as one who has kept every dimension of every law, because this is what Jesus did.)

iv. **Solus Christus -**

(Slide #6)

- (1) There is only one means to reconciliation with God: Christ alone! There is no other Savior and no other means of salvation.
  - (a) Martin Luther - Jesus Christ is the "center and circumference of the Bible."
  - (b) Zwingli - "Christ is the Head of all believers who are His body and with Him the body is dead."
- (2) Union with Christ is the only way of salvation.

v. **Soli Deo Gloria**

(Slide #7)

- (1) The goal of salvation, as of all of creation and all of life, is the glory of God alone.

- (2) Habakkuk 2:14 “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”
- (3) Everything God does, He does for His glory and to promote the knowledge of His glory in all He has created.

**c. Why should these five statements matter to us today? (Slide #8)**

- i. Personal Reason - Assurance of salvation, which comes when you are certain salvation is a result of God’s power and not your performance, vanquishes fear and presumption.
  - (1) In regards to fear
    - (a) You do not have to wonder or fear that you may not have asked Jesus deep enough into your life or opened the doors of your heart wide enough.
    - (b) If salvation is all of God and none of you, your performance cannot cause God to love you more nor love you less.
  - (2) In regards to presumption
    - (a) Just as you need not fear being lost when God has saved you, you also need not presume there is anything you can do to save yourself that might somehow advance your position with God.
    - (b) **These solas are not merely doctrines to hold but lives to be lived.**
- ii. Theological Reason - Joy and glory still matter to God and to us.
- iii. Congregational Reason -
  - (1) headed into a time of exploring, understanding, and adopting this theology as our basis for life and ministry.
  - (2) They matter because they represent the gospel we live by
  - (3) They matter because they declare the gospel we offer others