

The virtually unanimous interpretation of the papacy as the Antichrist of prophecy, by all Protestant groups in all lands, led Roman Catholic leaders to attempt to divert the accusing finger and to direct Protestant attention away from the medieval Catholic system. In this they were highly successful. Francisco Ribera and Luis de Alcazar, both 16th-century Spanish Jesuits, rose to meet the challenge by introducing plausible counterinterpretations of prophecy. Both the Preterist and Futurist schools put forth by Jesuit scholars to divert the Protestant application of Daniel's "little horn" prophecy and Revelation's "beast" prediction to the rise and work of Papal Rome began to make inroads.

Spanish Jesuit Francisco Ribera (1537-1591) published a commentary on the book of Revelation in which he assigned the first few chapters to ancient Rome but proposed that the bulk of the prophecies would be fulfilled in a brief three-and-one-half-year period at the end of the Christian era. He claimed that a single individual who would be the antichrist would rebuild the Jerusalem Temple and be received by the Jews, would pretend to be god, and conquer the world. So from this view, the Protestant contention that the apocalyptic symbols of antichrist denoted an apostate religious system was set aside, and the focus of the prophecies was diverted from the time of ancient Babylon to the present to the far distant future.

Another Spanish Jesuit, Luis de Alcazar (1554-1613), also published a scholarly work on Revelation to refute the Protestant view, and this system of interpretation became known as

preterism (from the Latin praeter, meaning 'past'). He wrote that all the prophecies of Revelation had been fulfilled in the past, that is, by the fifth and sixth centuries A.D., the early centuries of Christianity.

...thereafter [1870], the distinctive systems of counterinterpretations began successfully to penetrate Protestant thought. This was picked up and now many leaders in mainstream Protestant churches have changed what was held from the start of the Reformation and backed away from teaching the apostasy of the Roman Catholic Church...

The spread of dispensationalism doctrine has led conservative Protestants to drop the traditional interpreting of the Book of Revelation as predicting events that have taken place throughout history (historicism) and pushed it to some far off future events (futurism) so there is no application to the Roman Catholic Church. This has resulted in a re-interpretation of the end times;...they have dropped the Protestant Reformation view...(From Wikipedia, "Great Apostasy", accessed 31/08/2016).

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ORIGINAL

PROTESTANTISM

The Five solae are five Latin phrases (or slogans) that emerged during the Protestant Reformation and summarize the reformers' basic differences in theological beliefs in opposition to the teaching of the Catholic Church.... The Latin word sola means "alone", "only", or "single".

The use of the phrases as summaries of teaching emerged over time during the Reformation, based on the overarching principle of sola scriptura (by scripture alone). This idea contains the four main doctrines on the Bible: that its teaching is needed for salvation (necessity); that all the doctrine necessary for salvation comes from the Bible alone (sufficiency); that everything taught in the Bible is correct (inerrancy); and that, by the Holy Spirit overcoming sin, believers may read and understand truth from the Bible itself, though understanding is difficult, so the means used to guide individual believers to the true teaching is often mutual discussion within the church (clarity).

...they [the reformers] had a different understanding of the process in which truths in scripture were applied to [the] life of believers, compared to the Catholics' idea that certain people within the church, or ideas that were old

enough, had a special status in giving understanding of the text.

The second main principle, *sola fide* (by faith alone), states that faith in Christ is sufficient alone for eternal salvation. Though argued from scripture, and hence logically consequent to *sola scriptura*, this is the guiding principle of the work of Luther and the later reformers. Because *sola scriptura* placed the Bible as the only source of teaching, *sola fide* epitomises the main thrust of the teaching the reformers wanted to get back to, namely the direct, close, personal connection between Christ and the believer, hence the reformers' contention that their work was Christocentric. Justification by faith alone — [is] The belief that believers are justified, or pardoned for sin, solely on condition of faith in Christ rather than a combination of faith and good works. For Protestants, good works are a necessary consequence rather than cause of justification.

The other *solas*, as statements, emerged later, but the thinking they represent was also part of the early Reformation.

Solus Christus: Christ alone

The Protestants characterize the dogma concerning the Pope as Christ's representative head of the Church on earth, the concept of works made meritorious by Christ, and the Catholic idea of a treasury of the merits of Christ and his saints, as a denial that Christ is the only mediator between God and man. Catholics, on the other hand, maintained the traditional understanding of Judaism on these questions, and appealed to the universal consensus of Christian tradition.

Sola Gratia: Grace alone

Protestants perceived Roman Catholic salvation to be dependent upon the grace of God and the merits of one's own works. The reformers posited that salvation is a gift of God (i.e., God's act of free grace), dispensed by the Holy Spirit owing to the redemptive work of Jesus Christ alone. Consequently, they argued that a sinner is not accepted by God on account of the change wrought in the believer by God's grace, and that the believer is accepted without regard for the merit of his works, for no one deserves salvation. [Matt. 7:21]

Soli Deo Gloria: Glory to God alone

All glory is due to God alone since salvation is accomplished solely through his will and action—not only the gift of the all-sufficient atonement of Jesus on the cross but also the gift of faith in that atonement, created in the heart of the believer by the Holy Spirit. The reformers believed that human beings—even saints canonized by the Catholic Church, the popes, and the ecclesiastical hierarchy—are not worthy of the glory. (From Wikipedia, "Protestantism", accessed 31/08/2016). Please contact us, contact details are at the end of this tract.

Christian eschatology is a major branch of study within Christian theology. Eschatology, from two Greek words meaning "last" (ἔσχατος) and "study" (-λογία), is the study of 'end things', whether the end of an individual life, the end of the age, the end of the world and the nature of the Kingdom of God. Broadly speaking, Christian eschatology is the study of the destiny of humankind as it is described in the Bible, which is the primary source for all Christian eschatology

studies. The major issues and events in Christian eschatology are [Sabbath (Saturday) vs Sunday], death and the afterlife, Heaven and Hell, the Second Coming of Jesus, the Resurrection of the Dead, the Rapture, the Tribulation, Millennialism, the end of the world, the Last Judgment, and the New Heaven and New Earth of the world to come [and much more]. Eschatological passages are found in many places in the Bible, both in the Old and the New Testaments....(From Wikipedia, "Christian eschatology", accessed 31/08/2016). Please contact us, contact details are at the end of this tract.

Many Protestant reformers, including Martin Luther, John Calvin, Thomas Cranmer, John Thomas, John Knox, and Cotton Mather, felt the early church had been led into apostasy by the Papacy and identified it as the Antichrist.

Martin Luther stated:

"We are not the first to declare the papacy to be the kingdom of Antichrist, since for many years before us so many and so great men have undertaken to express the same thing so clearly."

The Historicist biblical interpretation was the viewpoint of almost all Protestant Reformers from the Reformation into the 19th century. Because Rome realized that the Reformation could jeopardize her position as a religio-political power, the Roman Catholic church used what became known as the Counter Reformation with alternative methods of prophetic to deflect what it showed. Quite simply, the two alternative methods of prophetic interpretation were developed during the Roman Catholic Counter Reformation to oppose the historicist's interpretation that the Antichrist was the Roman Catholic church.