Glory to God Alone
The Reasons to Accept Soli Deo Gloria

The reformers loved the word “solus” meaning “alone;” there is sola Scriptura, Scripture alone; sola fide, faith alone; sola gratia, grace alone, sola Christus, Christ alone; now we come to the final solas, Soli Deo Gloria, to God alone be glory (Romans 11:36).

The Esteem Given to Mary by the Roman Church

Many protestants believe that Catholics worship the Virgin Mary and give her the same glory that belongs to God alone; Catholics deny this saying that they are not worshipping Mary but giving her proper respect; to venerate Mary and the saints is to give glory to God.

The Recognition of the Virgin Mary

The perpetual virginity of Mary... Outside the virgin birth this is the earliest teaching about Mary; it means that while Joseph and Mary were married they never consummated their marriage; she remained a virgin throughout their marriage; it is based on John 19:26-27 where Jesus on the cross asked John to take care of His mother; the argument is, if Jesus had half-brothers who were born to Mary He would have asked one of them to care for her; the Bible says, His brothers were unbelievers (John 7:5).

The doctrine of perpetual virginity goes back to 120 AD and was first found in a document called the Protoevangelium of James; the purpose of the document is to “prove the perpetual and inviolate virginity of Mary before, in, and after the birth of Christ.”

When Jesus began His ministry in His hometown of Nazareth the locals, including His brothers and sisters were reluctant to accept His ministry (Mark 6:3-4).
Catholics teach that they were children of Joseph and not Mary; that Joseph was previously married; it was Jerome who introduced the possibility of Christ’s “brethren” as His cousins, since in Jewish idiom cousins were also referred to as “brethren.”

Matthew and Mark’s account of the same event connect Mary with His brothers and sisters, not Joseph; therefore Mary and Joseph had their own sons and daughters who were half-brothers and half sisters of Jesus (Matthew 13:53-58).

It would seem strange that God would ask Joseph to marry Mary and to never consummate the marriage; he married her before Jesus was born (Matthew 1:24-25); he did not “know her till she brought forth her firstborn Son;” to “know her” is a sexual term referring to sexual intimacy (Genesis 4:1); Catholics teach the primary purpose of marriage is have children yet they deny this to Mary and Joseph.

The doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary was never a problem to the reformers--- like Luther, Calvin, Zwingli among others.

*The Immaculate Conception of Mary...* Mary was free from original sin and lived her entire life as a sinless woman; first declared by Pope Pius IX and reaffirmed at Vatican Council I in 1870.

Mary acknowledged her need of a Savior (Luke 1:46-47); the Bible says all have sinned (Romans 3:23); Mary is never made an exception; she brought two offerings to God as prescribed by the Mosaic Law--- a burnt offering and a sin offering (Luke 2:22-24; Leviticus 12:6-8); Thomas Aquinas, Augustine and two Popes, Gregory the Great and Innocent III all denied the sinlessness of Mary.

*Mary the Mediator of All Grace...* Pope John Paul II in his 1984 encyclical declared Mary as “the dispenser of all gifts that Jesus has won for us with His death and his blood, She is the principal agent in distributing graces.” Paul says otherwise (Ephesians 1:7).

*The Bodily Assumption of Mary into Heaven...* It was Pope Pius XII who spoke *ex cathedra* November 1, 1950 saying: “On the third day after Mary’s death, when the apostles gathered around her tomb, they found it empty. The sacred body had been carried up to the celestial paradise...” The Church comes very close to Mary worship; Pope Pius XII said we are to be “casting all our cares on Mary”
(see 1 Peter 5:7); he continued, “She sits on the throne above every mere creature... the Queen of Heaven”... “the fountain of faith”... “the conqueror of evil and death”... She is the one who “dries the tears, heals the wounds, comforts the humble, quenches hatred, sweetens harshness, and guards the purity of the Church.” He concluded with these words: “You are all beautiful, you are our glory, you are our joy, you are the honor of our people.”

To refer to Mary as “The Queen of Heaven” is to associate her with the Babylonian goddess Ishtar or Venus, the mother goddess, primarily worshipped by women and who provoked the anger of the Lord (see Jeremiah 7:18).

The Bible says that Jesus is “the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2); the conqueror of sin and death (1 Corinthians 15:3-4); the healer of the brokenhearted (Luke 4:18-19) and that all glory belongs to God (Romans 16:27).

Mary was undoubtedly the most virtuous women to ever live; she was chosen to bear the Christ child; as the maidservant of God she gives all glory to God as she says, “My soul magnifies the Lord;” but acknowledges that “henceforth all generations will call me blessed” (Luke 1:48-55).

Yet, in worldwide Catholicism more prayers are focused on Mary than on Jesus; she is even seen as “co-redeemer with Jesus;” Pope Benedict XV in 1918 issued this statement: “... to satisfy the justice of God, she (Mary) sanctified her Son, as well as she could, so that it may be justly said that she together with Christ has redeemed the human race;” the Pope is saying that Mary offered her Son on the cross; it was her decision to have Him crucified, not God’s decision alone, and in doing so she is as much responsible for man’s salvation as is her Son Jesus; it was Cardinal Spellman who said: “O Mary, gate of heaven, none shall enter except through thee.”

The Rise of Mary Worship

The first case of Mary worship is recorded in Luke 11:27-28 where Jesus is speaking to a crowd, a certain woman raises her voice and says to Jesus, “Blessed is the womb who bore You and breasts that nursed You!” But He said, “More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it.” Jesus acknowledged His mother was blessed but it is more blessed to hear God’s word and keep it.
There are parts of the world today--- South and Central America, Italy, Ireland and other parts of Europe where Mary is more honored than Jesus; there is “the Cult of the Virgin” in many countries and it has raised much concern in the Roman Catholic Church.

The Exaltation of God Alone

While the reformers had great respect for Mary, they did not believe she should receive adoration; hence a motto of the Reformation: *Soli Deo Gloria* --- Glory to God alone.

*It is based on who God is*... God is an eternal God (Deuteronomy 32:27); He exists in all time at the same time (Isaiah 57:15); Jesus likewise is eternal (John 8:58; Micah 5:2); He is all powerful, all present, all knowing.

*It is based on God’s creation*... “The heavens declare the glory of the LORD and the firmament shows His handiwork” (Psalm 19:1); the heavens declare His glory in that they prove His existence (Romans1:20); the glory of God is bigger than our planet, bigger than our universe, bigger than all space put together (Psalm 89:11).

*It is based on God’s sovereignty*... “For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen” (Romans 11:36); everything exists for His glory for He is the sovereign One; He raises up kings and removes them from power (Daniel 2:21-22); “Great is our LORD and mighty in power, His understanding is infinite” (Psalm 147:5); Once Nebuchadnezzar realized who He was he praised Him (Daniel 4:34-35); Ezekiel beheld the glory of God and fell face down (Ezekiel 1)

*It is based on God’s work of salvation*... We need to glorify God because of His grace and forgiveness of sins (Ephesians I:7); He has transformed us into a new creation in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17-21); when this life is through we have the promise of eternal life with Him (John 3:16); He who began a good work in us will continue that work until the day we see Him face to face (Philippians 1:6).

The Expression of Our Praise

By giving God glory... How do we glorify Him?
1. Praise Him for what He has done; He has created us in His image and likeness, He has given us His Word; He has given us faith; He has given us grace; He has given us His Son, He has given us salvation, He has given us eternal life; give God the glory!!!

2. Praise Him for who He is; He is the eternal, creating, sovereign God; a God of grace that saves us from our sins; give God the glory!!!

There is no one else that deserves glory; He said through Isaiah, “I am the LORD, that is My name! I will not give My glory to another, or My praise to idols” (Isaiah 42:8; see 48:11)

_by growing in numbers to shake the world_... The 16th Century Church succumb to deep corruption; they tried Church Councils, internal purges, monastic orders; nothing worked; God raised up men who proclaimed the truth of His sovereignty, the truth of His grace, the truth of His salvation; it was these truths that brought a multitude of God’s children into a new sense of dependency upon the relationship of Jesus Christ; this group started the Reformation; at first small in number and lacking for money and influence, but by the power of God they shook the world! To God be the glory!

“No to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen” (Jude 1:24-25).