

## The 5 Solas: Soli Deo Gloria (God's Glory Alone) 1 Corinthians 10:31

### INTRODUCTION

Five hundred and four years ago, on **October 31, 1517**, one of the most significant events in history took place when a monk named Martin Luther nailed his now famous "Ninety-five Theses" to the door of the All-Saints Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. **A church door was like a bulletin board, tacking a notice to it was an accepted way of requesting a debate on an issue. Today's equivalent of a blog.**

Though originally written in Latin, the 95 Theses were translated to German and thanks to Gutenberg's recently invented printing press, thousands of copies were quickly disseminated in Germany and beyond. Luther had unintentionally changed his history and world history! What was rediscovered in the 16<sup>th</sup> century was organized and formally arranged as the **5 Solas** of the Protestant Reformation in the 1900s.

This morning, we come to our final Sola, "**Soli Deo Gloria.**" That is, "*To God alone be the glory.*" The five **Solas** are brief statements that encompass crucial Biblical truths recovered during the Reformation period. Each of them are linked together in an unbreakable chain with soli deo gloria – God's glory alone – usually listed last because it is the culmination and purpose of the other four.

With this in mind, please turn in your Bible to **1 Cor 1:26-31**. What we just read is extremely important: If sinners can contribute anything to their own salvation, then they can share the glory with God. But if God saves sinners through Christ's finished work alone, by grace alone, through faith alone, and it's all a gift, then no one can boast. And this is why the Lord challenges us with the following words found in **1 Corinthians 10:31**: "*So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*"

*First, please note...*

### **I. Soli Deo Gloria:** \_\_\_\_\_

If the Roman Catholic Church of Martin Luther's day would have outright denied the concepts of scripture alone and faith alone, it did not deny the concept that glory belonged to God alone. **They certainly wouldn't have suggested that God shared His glory, and yet the reality of practiced theology revealed something a bit different. What we say we believe is always revealed in how we practice our faith,** and Rome's practice did not add up to this idea of Soli Deo Gloria. **The doctrine of God's Glory Alone reminds us that biblical Christianity is not ultimately about us.** One author writes: "*Simply put, the fact that salvation is by faith alone, grace alone, and Christ alone, without any meritorious contribution on our part, ensures that all glory is God's and not our own.*" (VanDrunen, *God's Glory Alone: The Majestic Heart of the Christian Faith and Life*, p. 15) If the other four solas are true, then the drive logically to this point: God receives all the glory for salvation and the Christian life.

If you happened to grow up in church, then it is quite likely that you have heard many references to "*God's glory.*" You probably sang about it, heard sermons in which it was mentioned, and you may have even included in your prayers that He be "*glorified.*" But when is the last time you paused to consider what "*the glory of God*" really means? In the mind of the 16th-century Reformers, salvation was a gift of God's "grace alone" ("Sola Gratia"), in "Christ alone" ("Solus Christus") and received by "faith alone" ("Sola Fide"). Such an awareness arose out of "Scripture alone" ("Sola Scriptura"). Only if and when all those things were so, could the "glory be God's alone" ("Soli Deo Gloria"). Therefore, the **litmus test** that the Reformers applied to all theology in their day is the same that must be applied to our belief systems today. **Namely, does what we believe and hold to be true cause all glory to given to God alone, or do we insist on holding onto some of the glory for ourselves?**

One of the difficulties in defining the nature of God's "glory" lies in the fact that there are more than a dozen Hebrew words that are used in the Old Testament for that one English word. Far and away the most common is "*kabod*," which in itself has a range of implications, including "*splendor*," "*brightness*," "*dignity*," "*beauty*," "*adornment*," "*excellence*," "*abundance*," "*worth*," "*honor*," "*importance*," and "*acclaim*." The concept of "*glory*," therefore, is much more complex than we might imagine. The New Testament summarizes all of those qualities into a single word, "*doxa*," which is meant to convey "*the intrinsic worth or value of God*."

What is the glory of God? Here are a couple of definitions for your **consideration**:

- **John Piper:** "*The glory of God is the infinite beauty and greatness of God's manifold perfections.*" (<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-is-gods-glory--2>)
- **The Gospel Coalition (Christopher Morgan):** "*The glory of God is the magnificence, worth, loveliness, and grandeur of his many perfections, which he displays in his creative and redemptive acts in order to make his glory known to those in his presence.*" <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/the-glory-of-god/>

The "*glory of God*" is the radiance of His manifold perfections. It is the sum of all that He is. It is that character of God which separates Him from all else.

*Soli Deo Gloria explained...next please note...*

## **II. Soli Deo Gloria:** \_\_\_\_\_

How does Soli Deo Gloria apply to our life today? Is it relevant today? Yes, it is! *To begin with,*

### **A. Sin \_\_\_\_\_ us from the glory of God (Romans 3:23)**

It is clear that man has fallen from his exalted position and can't get up. We must recognize that to be the case and we must admit our plight before we are in any position to be helped. And the help we need—in fact, the only help that can address our desperate circumstance—must come from God. **But how?**

*The Bible provides the answer...*

### **B. Jesus Christ is the \_\_\_\_\_ of the glory of God (2 Corinthians 4:1-6)**

*Thirdly, please note that...*

**C. All of life is to be \_\_\_\_\_ to the  
glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31)**

*Lastly, please note that...*

**D. Everyone will one day \_\_\_\_\_ before  
the glory of God (Philippians 2:5-11)**

## **CONCLUSION**

What can we take with us this morning? These *FIVE SOLAS* still live on to this very day. They define what the gospel is for evangelicals worldwide, and also provide a helpful summary—a cheat sheet even—of what marks the true gospel from a religion of works. **In fact, each one of these five is an answer to a particular question that every person needs to consider and rightly answer:**

- What must I \_\_\_\_\_? *Sola* \_\_\_\_\_
  
- What must I do to be \_\_\_\_\_? *Sola* \_\_\_\_\_
  
- What must I \_\_\_\_\_? *Solus* \_\_\_\_\_
  
- What must I \_\_\_\_\_? *Sola* \_\_\_\_\_
  
- What is the \_\_\_\_\_? *Soli Deo* \_\_\_\_\_

**As you look at your life, who gets the glory?** Who is the one who receives ultimate praise and allegiance? God or you...your desires, your pleasures, your kingdom?