

The Five Solas of the Reformation

Soli Deo Gloria - Part 5

August 16, 1998

- **1 Chronicles 16:7-36**
- **Outline**
 - Sola Scriptura
 - Solus Christus
 - Sola Gratia
 - Sola Fide
- **Soli Deo Gloria**
- **Review and Introduction**

We come to this last of the five Solas because truly the other four are summed into the fifth. It is the Scriptures alone that are our only ultimate and infallible source of authority. This is so because God in His mercy and faithfulness has seen fit to preserve the Scriptures down through the centuries. The proper roles of Church tradition or the teachings of the officers within the church are the same; all in submission to the ultimate authority of the Scriptures. God is therefore glorified alone.

It is the incarnate second person of the Trinity to which the Prophets and Scriptures point. It is the ministry of Jesus Christ sent by the Father to accomplish His purposes in His covenant of Redemption. There is no other Mediator nor Redeemer other than the one provided by the Father Himself to fulfill the righteous requirements of His law. God is therefore glorified alone.

It is only by His inestimable grace that we may stand before Him. Through the good pleasure of His mercy, He graciously imputed to us the righteousness of His son and imputed to His Son our sin where it was judged upon the cross. God is therefore glorified alone.

The grace of God has its affect upon us by faith alone. We do not merit the grace (otherwise grace would not be grace) nor is this grace infused in us in order to make us righteous in ourselves. Instead, the grace of God imputes the righteousness of Christ to us and we believe this by faith alone. We have no other basis upon which to rely than the accomplishments of Christ, the imputation of the work to us and the faith given to us so that we may believe Him and these things. God is therefore glorified alone.

- **Historical Background**

There were many battles during the Reformation where this principle was the central issue. The Reformers took on the Catholic church with regard to her glorification of idols and images. They also opposed the glorification of the office of the Pope and the other church officers. Another dispute was the glorification of Mary who was elevated to be above Christ in many ways and parallel to Him in the rest. Soli Deo Gloria was the overarching principle of the Reformation and related to every battle of protest by the Reformers.

- **Defining Glory**

Over the centuries and especially in our days of modernity, we are very accustomed to the word glory but if you were to ask a number of Christians to define glory you would get probably three times as many definitions. We must remember that when we consider the glory of God, we use both a noun term and a verb term. The noun glory is similar to honor but is the outward manifestation of all of the attributes of God. As His goodness or power or righteousness, or whatever attribute it may be, is displayed in the universe, God's glory is revealed. All of His attributes shine forth His glory or honor. They declare His uniqueness in all ways. Although we were made by Him in His image, we are infinitely not Him.

The second part of glory is the verb to glorify. This is the declaration of high praise, honor or worship to God. It is an acknowledgement of who God is and who we are. All that God does manifests His honor to the universe.

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- **A Biblical Defense of Soli Deo Gloria**

- *Psalm 148:13*;
- *Romans 16:27*;
- *1 Timothy 1:16*;
- *Jude 25*;
- *Revelation 15:4*

The Scriptures declare that God is a jealous God and requires that nothing else be worshipped in His place. Whether we substitute the church or ourselves, any substitution of the ascribing of greatness and declaring glory is idolatry.

- **Sinners Glorifying God?**

There are many ways that the Scriptures tell us to glorify God:

- All of the nations will glorify Him; *Psalm 86:9-10*.
- We are to glorify Him through belief as did Abraham; *Romans 4:19-22*.
- We are to glorify God with our bodies through sexual purity whether single or married; *1 Corinthians 6:20*.
- We are to clothe ourselves with good works so that when the ungodly bring false accusations against us, God will be glorified; *1 Peter 2:12*.
- Because God has predestined us to salvation by grace through faith in Christ, God is glorified; *Ephesians 1:11-12*.
- God declares His glorious wisdom by means of the Church; *Ephesians 3:8-13*

One of the central issues however, during the Reformation was the improper exultation of the officers in the Church. Even beginning during the third century, there began to develop the mindset that the highest form of worship toward God could only be offered by those in full time ministry. The service of God was the only "calling" and all other vocations were mundane and inferior. This is not to say that they believed work to be unimportant; rather they all believed that ordinary working was necessary, but demeaning

By the time of the Reformation, the Reformers saw this principle fully blossomed in the self aggrandizing worship of the saints and officers in the church. The purest form of worship, the highest of all callings, or the vocation which alone glorifies God was deemed by the church to be those offices which performed the "work of God".

- **The Protestant Work Ethic**

At the heart of this debate were the words "calling" and "talent". The Reformers began to use the term calling to be any vocation for which God had equipped someone to perform. They believed that whatever work God had given us to do, if done faithfully would be equally glorifying of Him as other faithful work. In *1 Corinthians 10:31* Paul teaches that whatever it is that we do whether mundane or extraordinary, all should be done by faith to the glory of God. They also used the term talent to be that given by God for the purpose of accomplishing work.

The Reformers made no distinction between the spiritual or temporal; sacred or secular. They believed that God had created us to be workers or producers and that whether you were in the pulpit, orchard, or kitchen all that we do when done by faith would bring glory to God. *Isaiah 60:21*.