

# FIVE SOLAS ~ SOLI DEO GLORIA<sup>1</sup>

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*Non nobis, Domine, non nobis...* Psa 115.1

*For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.* Rom 11.36

Creation, life, salvation too,  
And all things else, both good and true,  
Come from and through our God always,  
And fill our hearts with grateful praise.  
Come, lift your voice to heaven's high throne,  
And glory give to God alone!<sup>1</sup>

## Introductory

Soli Deo Gloria! Glory to God Alone! "S.D.G." – the initials placed at the end of every score of Johann Sebastian Bach's works (sacred and secular). This surely is the capstone of our study – that God alone is to be glorified for His so richly revealing Himself in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; to Him be the glory for all of our redemption – for Christ who alone is our Savior and Substitute; for faith alone which is the instrument to receive the gift of justification; and for grace alone which protects us from taking any of the glory for our salvation – from beginning to end, to ourselves. Soli Deo Gloria is preserved by the other 4 solas indeed. But it would be unbiblical to squeeze such a vast, first-catechism-answer into such a narrow field. SDG is the full flower that blooms and brings forth an abundance of fruit as it grows out of the other solas.

## GLORY

1. The term 'glory' from the Hebrew 'kabod' and Greek 'doxa' speaks of honor; kabod meaning weightiness, abundance, thus honor, glory; doxa of a good opinion, praise, thus honor.
2. These words appear over 350 times in the Bible. The study of God's glory might be termed a divine axiology, the study of worth. Glory is used of the Lord in three distinguishable ways, all of which can be seen in the advent of Christ:
  - a. As an attribute of God: "We beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten, full of grace and truth." Glory is what God is infinitely, eternally, unchangeable. This is the excellency of His essence. It is an attribute, or the attribute which suffuses all the other attributes. God is not God if God is not glorious. Question: how can His glory not be everywhere filling all in all?
  - b. As the revelation of God: "and the glory of the Lord shone around them." This is the manifestation, the emanation of His glory, the effulgence, the communication of His glory.

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<sup>1</sup> Hymns written for 10<sup>th</sup> Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia

His glory is seen in creation, in providence, and especially in redemption. Question: how is it that Christ set aside glory when humbled and had it restored to Him at His ascension?

- c. As the ascription to God: “with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest.’” Giving glory to God is in no way an adding or subtracting from His perfection. (See WCF 2 below) We give God glory as we are vessels of His glory, reflectors of His majesty and brilliant greatness. Question: doesn’t all things give glory to God? Should we not divide between actively and passively glorifying God?

*God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of Himself; and is alone in and unto Himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which He hath made, not deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting His own glory in, by, unto, and upon them: He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things, and hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them whatsoever Himself pleaseth. (WCF 2:2)*

## **ASPECTS OF GOD’S GLORY**

1. God’s creation and providence showcase His glory. Calvin referred to the world as the theater of God’s splendor. This glory is especially seen in man, who is the image of God. But man, fallen as he is, cannot glorify God any more than a broken mirror can properly reflect a true image. Man glorifies himself, makes himself god, and so seeks to suppress the glory of God, to eclipse it, to hide it from sight. The gospel remakes, recreates, renews, and resurrects this image in man.
2. The Gospel of Jesus not only saves us from darkness and sin but ushers in light and godliness, which is nearness and conformity to God. The God of glory is brought back as the sun at the center of the solar system. God’s glory shines at the head of the three major subjects of our confessions: theology, obedience, and piety.
  - a. Theology – the proper study of the elect of God is God! “The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy, which can ever engage the child of God, is the name, the nature, the person, the work, the doings, and the existence of the great God whom he calls his Father.” (Spurgeon, first sermon!) This is the great divide among the children of men. Are we self-centered or are we God-centered? Piper remarks that either the rivers of our thinking run toward God, or they all run toward man.
  - b. Obedience – at the head of our life lived for God is the first commandment – no other God before Him, that He alone is God – Soli Deo. Without Him, what do we have? Empty morality indeed.
  - c. Piety – the first petition of the perfect prayer is “hallowed by your name!”

## **NEXT TIME: GLORY TO GOD ALONE IN THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD**