

**“What it Means to be Reformed”; Session #80, Soli Deo Gloria – To God Alone Belongs Glory - “God is worthy of all glory”, prepared by Pastor Paul Rendall For the Adult Sunday School Class on June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016.**

**Revelation 4: 11** - (NKJV) – “You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.”

Soli Deo Gloria, the last of the 5 Solas of the Reformation, means – To God alone belongs the glory for creating all things, sustaining all things, redeeming His elect people, and applying this great salvation to every single one of them, through Jesus Christ our Lord, and by the power of the Holy Spirit. The word glory here (Δοξα) refers to everything excellent in God or man; in this case, it is the praise, adoration, and worship (everything which is excellent in us) which should be given to God because He is great and good and glorious in the most perfect sense. He is by far, the most excellent of beings; He is holy, righteous, true and faithful. To Him belongs all the glory for all that He is, and all that He does. And this means that He is indeed worthy in every way that praise should be rendered to Him for the great and good things that He has done.

**Revelation 4: 11 - King James Version:** “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”

### **I. To God alone belongs glory because He alone is God.**

**Herman Bavinck says:** “Every attribute of God is precious to believers. They cannot do without any of them. They desire no other God than the only true God, who has revealed Himself in Christ, and they glory in all His perfections in truth. Their adoration, their love, their thanksgiving, and praise are aroused not only by God’s grace and love but also by His holiness and righteousness, not only by God’s goodness but also by His omnipotence, not only by His communicable but also His incommunicable attributes. Now when we attribute supreme perfection to God, we thereby acknowledge that all the perfections we discover either positively or negatively in observing God’s creatures belong absolutely and preeminently, that is, to the highest degree, to God. This implies, however, that they cannot all be attributed to Him in the same sense. Some attributes belong to Him characteristically, such as eternity, simplicity, and so on, which after all are not found in creatures. Others, such as intellect and will, belong to Him preeminently, and because a faint reflection of these can also be discerned in creatures. Still others are ascribed to Him only figuratively, such as physical sight and hearing, because these attributes are present in Him in a divine way, not in a literal creaturely sense. But whatever difference this may make in the way in which we must ascribe this or that attribute to God, He nevertheless remains the sum of all conceivable perfections, the highest perfection in Person, infinitely far removed from all defects and limitations.”

### **II. To God alone belongs the glory for He alone has created all things.**

Albert Barnes says: “**And for thy pleasure they are** - They exist by thy will - *διὰ τὸ θέλημα* dia to thelēma. The meaning is, that they owe their existence to the will of God, and therefore their creation lays the foundation for praise. There is no other reason why the universe exists at all than that such was the will of God; there is nothing else that is to be adduced as explaining the fact that anything has now a being. The putting forth of that will explains all; and, consequently, whatever wisdom, power, goodness, is manifested in the universe, is to be traced

to God, and is the expression of what was in him from eternity. It is proper, then, to “look up through nature to nature’s God,” and wherever we see greatness or goodness in the works of creation, to regard them as the faint expression of what exists essentially in the Creator.”

“Creation is the foundation of all the other works of GOD, and therefore it is the ground also of all the thanksgiving which arises from His creatures.” (Johann Albrecht Bengel)

**Herman Witsius** says that the Creation “is that act of God, in which, by the all-powerful command of His will He made out of nothing, and perfected, the whole Universe, in the space of six days.”

**He further says:** “Satisfied with Himself, with His own infinite perfections, and with the most ample knowledge, love, and enjoyment of those perfections, God found in Himself the most consummate happiness, and happiness becoming His character; for which reason the Apostle Paul calls Him, “the Blessed”. It pleased Him, however, to display His attributes in certain works that are without Himself, (outside Himself) the form and image of which He had most wisely delineated in His mind from eternity. And since He needed no assistance from any, as nothing exists or even can exist independently of Him, He commanded all things that are, to rise out of nothing, by the mere act of His sovereign will. He hath made the earth by His power; He hath established the world by His wisdom; and hath stretched out the heavens by His discretion.”

Hebrews 11: 1 and 2 – “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” “For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.” “By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which were visible.”

**John Gill says:** “they (the worlds) were not made from pre-existent matter, but out of nothing, out of which the rude and undigested chaos was formed; and from that invisible mass, covered with darkness, were all visible things brought into a beautiful order; and all from secret and hidden ideas in the divine minds; and this also is the faith of the Jews, that the creation of all things is מֵאֵין, "out of nothing" (1). There seems to be an allusion to the word ברא, used for creation, which signifies to make appear a thing unseen; and is rendered in the Septuagint version by δεικνυμι, Numbers 16:30 and καταδεικνυμι, Isaiah 40:26 to show, or make appear; and thus God created, or made to appear, the heavens and earth, which before were not in being, and unseen, Genesis 1:1 and created to make, as in Genesis 2:3 that is, made them to appear, that he might put them into the form and order they now are.

Psalms 33: 6-9 – “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.” “He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deep in storehouses.” “Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.” “For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.”

Jeremiah 10: 12 – “He has made the earth by His power, He has established the world by His wisdom, and has stretched out the heavens at His discretion.”

Colossians 1: 15-17 – “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.” “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible,

whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers.” “All things were created through Him and for Him.” “And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.”

Nicolas Byfield on Colossians 1: 17 – “The doctrine of the creation should teach us divers duties: First, the admirableness and variety of God’s works should provoke us to contemplation: How dear are Thy thoughts unto me.” (Psalm 139, verse 17) “Secondly, In affliction, we should willingly commit ourselves to God, and trust in Him, though our means be little or unlikely; for He is a faithful Creator, - His love to us affords Him will to do us good, and the creation proves His power.” “Thirdly, the greatness of the work in creation should imprint in us reverence and fear, and force us to the duties of the adoration and worship of God. (Revelation 4: 11, Psalm 104: 31) Fourthly, the knowledge of the glory and greatness of the Creator should inflame in us indignation against idols and the worship of the creature.” “Fifthly, The remembrance of our Creator and creation should work in us an abatement of our pride and jollity, and dull the edge of our fierce appetite to sin.” And Sixthly, the consideration of our equality in our creation should keep us that we transgress not against our brethren: We have all one Father, and one God hat created us.” (Malachi 2: 10, Job 31: 14 and 15)

Psalm 29: 1 and 2 – “Give unto the Lord, O you mighty ones, give unto the Lord glory and strength.” “Give unto the Lord the glory due to His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

Psalm 139: 17 – “How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God!’ “How is the sum of them.” “If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; when I awake, I am still with you.”

Psalm 19: 1-4 – “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.” “Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge.” “There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.” “Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.”