



HOLY HERESY 5: FOR GOD'S GLORY ALONE
(SOLI DEO GLORIA)
MARCH 26 / 27, 2025

I. Introduction: The Five Solas and the Ultimate Purpose

- a. The Reformation was shaped by five foundational ideas:
 - i. Sola Gratia (Grace Alone)
 - ii. Sola Scriptura (Scripture Alone)
 - iii. Solus Christus (Christ Alone)
 - iv. Sola Fide (Faith Alone)
 - v. Soli Deo Gloria (For the Glory of God Alone)
- b. *Soli Deo Gloria* is the final and ultimate *sola*, the goal to which all others lead.

II. The Five Solas Reflected in Ephesians 1:11-14

- a. ¹¹ In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.
- b. Solus Christus (Christ Alone) – "In Him we have obtained an inheritance."
- c. Sola Gratia (Grace Alone) – Our salvation is grounded in God's eternal plan and sovereign will.

- d. Sola Fide (Faith Alone) – We are sealed by the Holy Spirit, not by works but by faith.
- e. Sola Scriptura (Scripture Alone) – We have faith because of God's revealed Word.
- f. Soli Deo Gloria (For God's Glory Alone) – Twice Paul declares that all God has done is for the praise of His glory.

III. What is the Glory of God?

- a. The Bible describes God's glory in many ways:
 - i. The radiance that made Moses' face glow (Exodus 34:29).
 - ii. The purity that convicted Isaiah's heart (Isaiah 6:5).
 - iii. The intensity that made John fall to his knees (Revelation 1:17).
 - iv. The majesty that makes the angels sing (Revelation 4:11).
- b. Definition: God's glory is the manifestation of His holiness, greatness, and beauty breaking through into the world.
- c. *Psalm 19:1* – "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork."

IV. The Purpose of Creation: To Glorify God

- a. Everything exists to reflect God's glory, not to elevate humanity.
- b. John Piper: "This universe and everything in it is mainly about the glory of God."
- c. The Westminster Shorter Catechism asks: "*What is the chief end of man?*"
Answer: "*Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.*"

V. The Conflict: The Modern Obsession with Self-Glory

- a. Modern culture prioritizes self-exaltation, fame, and recognition.
- b. UCLA study: Fame is the #1 goal for today's youth.
- c. Pew Research: We've moved from the "Me Generation" to the "Look at Me Generation."
- d. Rick Warren: "*It's not about you. The purpose of your life is far greater than your own personal fulfillment.*"

VI. Calvin on Glory: The Centrality of God's Glory

- a. *Soli Deo Gloria* is foundational to John Calvin's thought and serves as the ultimate purpose of creation, redemption, and human life.
- b. Calvin's theology is radically God-centered, emphasizing that all things exist to glorify God.

- c. *"The chief end of human life is that we know the majesty of our Maker, and thereby glorify him"* (Institutes, 1.2.2)

VII. Calvin on Glory: The Sovereignty of God's Glory in Creation and Providence

- a. God's glory is the purpose of creation. The world was made to reflect God's greatness.
 - i. Humanity, created in God's image, exists to glorify Him.
 - ii. *"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork."* (Psalm 19:1)
 - 1. *"We are not our own; therefore, let us live for Him and die for Him. We are God's; therefore, let His wisdom and will preside over all our actions."* (Institutes, 3.7.1)
 - iii. God's providence ensures His glory in all things
- b. Everything happens according to God's sovereign plan for His glory.
 - i. *"For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen."* (Romans 11:36)
 - ii. *"The Lord has created all things for His glory, and He directs all things to the same goal."* (Institutes, 1.16.1)

VIII. Calvin on Glory: The Glory of God in Salvation

- a. Salvation is by grace alone for the glory of God alone
 - i. Human merit plays no role; salvation is entirely God's work.
 - ii. *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."* (Ephesians 2:8-9)
 - iii. *"The salvation of the elect is so placed in God's hand that his glory may be fully displayed in it."* (Institutes, 3.21.7)
- b. Justification by Faith Alone Excludes Human Boasting
 - i. No human effort contributes to salvation; therefore, all glory belongs to God.
 - ii. *"Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."* (1 Corinthians 1:31)
 - iii. *"We never truly glory in Him until we have utterly discarded our own glory."* (Institutes, 3.13.2)
- c. The Work of Christ Brings Ultimate Glory to God
 - i. Christ's atonement reveals God's mercy and justice, glorifying Him.
 - ii. *"To the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved."* (Ephesians 1:6)
 - iii. *"The Lord himself, and no other, is the only author of salvation; therefore, it is he alone who must be glorified."* (Institutes, 2.17.1)

IX. Calvin on Glory: The Christian Life: Living for God's Glory

- a. Worship is directed to God alone
 - i. True worship exalts God rather than human traditions or rituals.
 - ii. *"You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve."* (Matthew 4:10)
 - iii. *"The worship of God should be pure and simple, without the corruption of human inventions."* (Institutes, 4.10.23)
- b. Good works flow from gratitude and glorify God
 - i. The purpose of obedience and sanctification is to reflect God's holiness.
 - ii. *"Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."* (Matthew 5:16)
 - iii. *"Since God has so bound us to Himself, it follows that we must wholly dedicate ourselves to Him."* (Institutes, 3.7.1)
- c. The Church exists for the glory of God
 - i. The true Church is not for human prestige but for the display of God's glory.
 - ii. *"To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations."* (Ephesians 3:21)
 - iii. *"The Church must be ruled by the Word of God alone, so that His glory is not diminished by human authority."* (Institutes, 4.8.1)

X. We Glorify God Through Worship and Devotion

- a. Worship is a public declaration that God matters.
- b. Matthew 22:37: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind."
- c. Luther: *"No friend has ever done for me what Jesus has done."*
- d. Our daily choices—church attendance, prayer, Scripture reading—demonstrate God's priority in our lives.

XI. Living as Illustrations of God's Glory

- a. The Reformers—Luther, Calvin, Tyndale, Knox, Cranmer—saw *Soli Deo Gloria* as the reason for all doctrine and life.
- b. Ephesians 1:12: "So that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of His glory."
- c. John Calvin: *"We must eventually become illustrations of the glory of God."*
- d. I Corinthians 10:31: "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."