

The Five Solas: Soli Deo Gloria

Various Passages

Psalm 73:25-26—*Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. ²⁶My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*

Context

"Soli Deo gloria" is a Latin phrase meaning "glory to God alone". It is one of the core "five solas" of the Protestant Reformation. The primary emphasis is that human beings cannot take credit for salvation and that all praise belongs to God. Moreover, it is God and God alone who is to receive the glory for the wonders of His work of creation and of redemption.

At the heart of the sixteenth-century controversy over salvation was the issue of justification before God by grace. It was not a question of man's need for grace. It was a question as to the extent of that need.

Because our justification before God is a gift from God. He alone is to receive glory. In fact, salvation is of the Lord from beginning to end. One must indeed believe and respond to the gospel, but for anyone to affirm that glorious reality, the heart must first be changed by the sovereign, effectual power of God the Holy Spirit.

And again, we would say, Soli Deo Gloria.

Fun fact: Johann Sebastian Bach would affix the initials SDG at the bottom of each composition, signifying that it is God and God alone who receives the glory for His wonders.

One of the ways we give God glory is through a doxology. Although the word *doxology* is familiar to most Christians, many of us may not fully understand it. *Doxology* comes from two Greek words: *Doxa*, which means "glory," and *logos*, which refers to a word or saying. Therefore, a doxology is a word of praise about God. It is giving thanks to God by means of praise.

There is much for us to be thankful for and plenty of reasons to praise God. We thank God for the temporal blessings of friends, family, and earthly comforts. We thank God for every aspect of our salvation: election, regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. We thank God for our union with Christ and baptism into the body of Christ.

Admittedly, when we consider all that we have to be thankful for, we genuinely can be filled with great joy and overwhelmed with the goodness of the Lord. The fullness of that joy is seen in the scriptures expressed with a doxology.

Most of those expressions of praise come because of some majestic work of God. They generally come as a punctuation mark concluding a discussion of something transcendent and marvelous—particularly God's plan of salvation.¹

When we consider the unworthy state before a holy, righteous God, and the marvels of His incredible grace to redeem us, it is no wonder that the expression that follows is one of bursting praise.

Let us consider some of them this morning and again be overwhelmed with praise to God for such overwhelming grace, mercy, and love.

Major Doxologies in Scripture

I. The Old Testament

A. **Genesis 24:27** (Rebekah is Chosen)

¹⁵Before he had finished speaking, behold, Rebekah who was born to Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor, came out with her jar on her shoulder. ¹⁶The girl was very beautiful, a virgin, and no man had had relations with her; and she went down to the spring and filled her jar and came up. ¹⁷Then the servant ran to meet her, and said, "Please let me drink a little water from your jar." ¹⁸She said, "Drink, my lord"; and she quickly lowered her jar to her hand, and gave him a drink. ¹⁹Now when she had finished giving him a drink, she said, "I will draw also for your camels until they have finished drinking." ²⁰So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough, and ran back to the well to draw, and she drew for all his camels. ²¹Meanwhile, the man was gazing at her in silence, to know whether the LORD had made his journey successful or not. ²²When the camels had finished drinking, the man took a gold ring weighing a half-shekel and two bracelets for her wrists weighing ten shekels in gold, ²³and said, "Whose daughter are you? Please tell me, is there room for us to lodge in your father's house?" ²⁴She said to him, "I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor." ²⁵Again she said to him, "We

have plenty of both straw and feed, and room to lodge in." ²⁶Then the man bowed low and worshiped the LORD. ²⁷He said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken His lovingkindness and His truth toward my master; as for me, the LORD has guided me in the way to the house of my master's brothers."

B. Exodus 15:1-21 (The Song of Moses and Israel)

C. 2 Samuel 22:1-4

And David spoke the words of this song to the LORD in the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. ²He said, "The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; ³My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge; My savior, You save me from violence. ⁴"I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, And I am saved from my enemies.

D. 1 Chronicles 16:1-3, 7-36 (A Tent for the Ark & a Psalm of Thanksgiving)

And they brought in the ark of God and placed it inside the tent which David had pitched for it, and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before God. ²When David had finished offering the burnt offering and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD. ³He distributed to everyone of Israel, both man and woman, to everyone a loaf of bread and a portion of meat and a raisin cake...

⁷Then on that day David first assigned Asaph and his relatives to give thanks to the LORD.

⁸Oh give thanks to the LORD, call upon His name;
Make known His deeds among the peoples.

⁹Sing to Him, sing praises to Him;
Speak of all His wonders.

¹⁰Glory in His holy name;
Let the heart of those who seek the LORD be glad.

¹¹Seek the LORD and His strength;
Seek His face continually.

¹²Remember His wonderful deeds which He has done,
His marvels and the judgments from His mouth,

¹³O seed of Israel His servant,
Sons of Jacob, His chosen ones!

¹⁴He is the LORD our God;
His judgments are in all the earth.

¹⁵ Remember His covenant forever,
 The word which He commanded to a thousand generations,
¹⁶ The covenant which He made with Abraham,
 And His oath to Isaac.
¹⁷ He also confirmed it to Jacob for a statute,
 To Israel as an everlasting covenant,
¹⁸ Saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan,
 As the portion of your inheritance."
¹⁹ When they were only a few in number,
 Very few, and strangers in it,
²⁰ And they wandered about from nation to nation,
 And from one kingdom to another people,
²¹ He permitted no man to oppress them,
 And He reprov'd kings for their sakes, saying,
²² "Do not touch My anointed ones,
 And do My prophets no harm."
²³ Sing to the LORD, all the earth;
 Proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day.
²⁴ Tell of His glory among the nations,
 His wonderful deeds among all the peoples.
²⁵ For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;
 He also is to be feared above all gods.
²⁶ For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
 But the LORD made the heavens.
²⁷ Splendor and majesty are before Him,
 Strength and joy are in His place.
²⁸ Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples,
 Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
²⁹ Ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name;
 Bring an offering, and come before Him;
 Worship the LORD in holy array.
³⁰ Tremble before Him, all the earth;
 Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved.
³¹ Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
 And let them say among the nations, "The LORD reigns."
³² Let the sea roar, and all it contains;
 Let the field exult, and all that is in it.
³³ Then the trees of the forest will sing for joy before the LORD;
 For He is coming to judge the earth.
³⁴ O give thanks to the LORD, for He is good;
For His lovingkindness is everlasting.
³⁵ Then say, "Save us, O God of our salvation,
 And gather us and deliver us from the nations,
 To give thanks to Your holy name,
 And glory in Your praise."
³⁶ Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel,
 From everlasting even to everlasting. Then all the people said, "Amen,"
 and praised the LORD.

E. **1 Chronicles 29:11** (David's prayer)

¹⁰ So David blessed the LORD in the sight of all the assembly; and David said, "Blessed are You, O LORD God of Israel our father, forever and ever. ¹¹ Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion, O LORD, and You exalt Yourself as head over all. ¹² Both riches and honor come from You, and You rule over all, and in Your hand is power and might; and it lies in Your hand to make great and to strengthen everyone. ¹³ Now therefore, our God, we thank You, and praise Your glorious name.

F. **2 Chronicles 5:13** (The Ark is Brought into the Temple)

¹¹ When the priests came forth from the holy place (for all the priests who were present had sanctified themselves, without regard to divisions), ¹² and all the Levitical singers, Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and their sons and kinsmen, clothed in fine linen, with cymbals, harps and lyres, standing east of the altar, and with them one hundred and twenty priests blowing trumpets ¹³ in unison when the trumpeters and the singers were to make themselves heard with one voice to praise and to glorify the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice accompanied by trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and when they praised the LORD saying, "He indeed is good for His lovingkindness is everlasting," then the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud,

G. **2 Chronicles 20:21** (Jehoshaphat's Prayer)

²⁰ They rose early in the morning and went out to the wilderness of Tekoa; and when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Listen to me, O Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, put your trust in the LORD your God and you will be established. Put your trust in His prophets and succeed." ²¹ When he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who sang to the LORD and those who praised Him in holy attire, as they went out before the army and said, "Give thanks to the LORD, for His lovingkindness is everlasting." ²² When they began singing and praising, the LORD set ambushes against the sons of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; so they were routed. ²³ For the sons of Ammon and Moab rose up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir destroying them completely; and when they had finished with the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another. ²⁴ When Judah came to the lookout of the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude, and behold, they were corpses lying on the ground, and no one had escaped. ²⁵ When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take their spoil, they found much among them, including goods, garments and valuable things which they took for themselves, more than they could carry. And they were three days taking the spoil because there was so much.

H. **The Psalms**

1. Almost by definition, are inundated with words of praise and blessings to the Lord God.
2. The Psalms are songs, prayers, and thankful or lamenting cries to God.

I. **Psalm 41:13**

Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Amen and Amen.

J. **Psalm 72:18-19**

¹⁸Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, Who alone works wonders. ¹⁹And blessed be His glorious name forever; And may the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and Amen.

K. **Psalm 89:52**

⁵²Blessed be the LORD forever! Amen and Amen.

L. **Psalm 106:48**

⁴⁸Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting even to everlasting. And let all the people say, "Amen." Praise the LORD!

II. **The New Testament**

A. **Glory to God alone is seen repeatedly in the NT.**

1. It extends from the Gospels to Revelation.
2. If God is most glorified in His work of salvation through the work of His Son, the revelation of His incarnation would naturally bring much praise and glory to Him.

John 17:1-5—*Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, ²even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. ³This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. ⁴I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. ⁵Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.*

John 13:31-32—Therefore when he had gone out, Jesus *said*, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; ³²if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately.

John 12:27-28—"Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

3. Jesus perfectly reveals the Father.

John 1:18—No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

John 14:9—Jesus *said* to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

John 10:30—"I and the Father are one."

Hebrews 1:3—And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

B. **Romans 11:33-36**

³³Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! ³⁴For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR? ³⁵Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN? ³⁶For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

1. In some ways, this doxology summarizes all the others.
2. It is a sweeping exclamation of praise for all of God's work.
 - a. It identifies God's incomprehensibility.
 - b. Paul gives this marvelous doxology in the context of God's temporarily setting Israel aside.
 - c. He identifies God's sovereignty, integrity, and generosity. Nothing more can be added.
 - d. God's gracious omnipotence is wholly beyond human understanding.

- e. That includes Paul.
- f. The outpouring of praise is Paul's response.

³³ Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

3. Who can explain an infinite and holy God to finite and sinful men?

How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!

- a. *Unfathomable* (*anexichniastos*)—that cannot be searched out, that cannot be comprehended; literally refers to footprints that are untraceable, such as those of an animal that a hunter is unable to follow. ²

Psalm 77:19—*Your way was in the sea And Your paths in the mighty waters, And Your footprints may not be known.*

- b. God has given us His Word for the purpose of enlightening us and bringing us to Himself.

- c. He does that when we seek Him with all our heart

Jeremiah 29:13—*You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.*

- d. We are to diligently study and apply His truths.

- e. However, no matter how diligently we may have studied, we acknowledge we have limited capacity.

Psalm 139:6—*Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot attain to it.*

4. Three rhetorical questions:

- a. ³⁴*For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD,*

- b. *OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR?*

Isaiah 40:13—*Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, Or as His counselor has informed Him?*

- c. ³⁵*Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN?*

Job 41:11—*"Who has given to Me that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole heaven is Mine.*

- d. Answer: no one.

- e. No one was before God, and none can give to God.

² Strong's G421

- f. God is His own counselor.
- g. The extension of the things we do not know is countless.
 - 1) Including the things we do know, but only have partial knowledge.
 - 2) Including the things which are way beyond our comprehension

Deuteronomy 29:29—*"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.*

- h. God is indebted to no one.
 - i. God is sovereign, self-sufficient, and free from any obligation except those He places on Himself. He owes the Jew nothing, and the Gentile nothing.³
5. Our response: we stand in awe.

³⁶For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

(Rev 4:10-11; Cf. 1 Cor 15:24-28).

6. After the first eleven chapters of the epistle navigating all the great realities of our salvation, Paul was left with a glorious punctuation: *to Him be glory forever. Amen.*

C. **Galatians 1:3-5**

³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵to whom be the glory forevermore. Amen.

D. **2 Timothy 4:16-18**

¹⁶At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them. ¹⁷But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth. ¹⁸The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

³ MacArthur, 136.

E. Revelation 5:11-14

11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." 13 And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever." 14 And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped.

F. Romans 16:25-27

25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, 26 but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith; 27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

G. Ephesians 1:1-6

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love 5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

H. Philippians 4:15-20

15 You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; 16 for even

in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs. ¹⁷Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. ¹⁸But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. ¹⁹And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. ²⁰Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

I. **1 Timothy 1:12-17**

¹²I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service, ¹³even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; ¹⁴and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. ¹⁶Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life. ¹⁷Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

J. **Jude 20-25**

²⁰But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. ²²And have mercy on some, who are doubting; ²³save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh. ²⁴Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, ²⁵to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

Conclusion

Our God alone is to be praised. He will not share His glory with another.

Isaiah 42:8—*“I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to graven images.*

When we think of all His marvelous works, the high point of that praise (our doxology) is an overwhelming thankfulness to God for the salvation He has provided. It is right and good that we thank Him for all good things, but the greatest gift we receive from God is redemption in Christ. That is what should provoke the most gratitude from our hearts.

I pray that the doxologies from the scriptures would fill your hearts and your minds and be ever expressions on your lips.

Benediction

Psalms 29:10b-11—*Yes, the LORD sits as King forever. ¹¹The LORD will give strength to His people; The LORD will bless His people with peace.*

Sources

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