

The Five Solas of The Reformation

1. Sola scriptura “by Scripture alone”

- a. the issue: authority: Only the Scripture is inspired by God, having full authority over doctrine and duties. Tradition, creeds, councils, churches, confessions, are all subservient to God word.
- b. passages: Ps. 19:7, II Tim. 3:16, II Pet. 3:15-16
- c. relevance: Scripture interprets Scripture. No one person, confession, church, or creed is the infallible interpreter of God’s word. “The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself” (WCF I:9).
- d. abuses: Mr. Isolationist: “I only need the Bible, not the local church or other people to help me understand it.”
Mr. Know It All: “I can interpret the Bible all by myself, without historical creeds and confessions.”
Mr. Heretic: “Extra-biblical words and terms are unbiblical like ‘trinity’ and ‘incarnation’.”

2. Sola fide “by faith alone”

- a. the issue: having/receiving/possessing justification: What is the instrument, tool, or means that we use to have a right legal standing with God? Answer: faith “is the alone instrument of justification” (WCF XI:2).
- b. passages: Rom.4:2-3, 16; Gal. 3:8; James 2:24 (this verse teaches the *type* of faith that justifies, which is not the alone-type of faith. The alone-type of faith is a demonic faith, a dead faith.)
- c. relevance: Faith and its fruit are both necessary, and necessarily distinguished. The fruit of good works and “all other saving graces” (WCF 11:2) are not the means by which one receives justification, but evidence thereof.
- d. abuses: Mr. Dead Faith: “I have a faith that *is alone*, without any good works, lest I try to earn my salvation!”
Mr. Gnostic: “Having faith simply means having *true knowledge*, and has nothing with my lifestyle.”

3. Sola gratia “by grace alone”

- a. the issue: The experience, reception, continuance, maintaining, and inheriting of God’s salvation and all its aspects in this life and in the life to come is by grace alone.
- b. passages: Rom. 11:6, Eph.2:7-9, I Cor. 15:10
- c. relevance: Our confessional definitions of “justification”, “sanctification”, “adoption”, “saving faith”, “repentance”, and “good works” are all prefaced, or flow out of, God’s grace. God’s grace enables all we do.
- d. abuses: Mr. Lover of Sin: “The more I sin, the more God’s grace abounds in my life!”
Mr. Human Logic: “Since it is all of grace, then I have nothing to do with it, and don’t need to do anything.”

4. Solus Christus “through Christ alone”

- a. the issue: God’s redeeming, forgiving, and saving work is accomplished only through the work of Christ.
- b. passages: Col. 1:14-18, John 14:6
- c. relevance: Concerning salvation we are very exclusive and politically incorrect, offending all other viewpoints that oppose the lordship of Jesus Christ. Other religions cannot save a person’s soul.
- d. abuses: Mr. Anti-Church: “Christ alone is my savior, therefore I read my Bible at Starbucks on Sunday by myself.”

5. Soli Deo Gloria “to God alone be the glory”

- a. the issue: God receives all the praise, worship, and glory for everything in creation, redemption, and glorification.
- b. passages: Rom. 11:33, Eph. 2:7
- c. relevance: God is to be glorified and praised for bringing us from glory to glory. God glorifies Himself by glorifying us. (Rm.8:30) God will not give His glory to another in sense that idols will not receive His praise (Is.42:8).
- d. abuses: Mr. Bad View of God: “God is glorifies Himself, therefore He is just selfish.”
Mr. Unappreciative: “God alone is to be praised, thanked, and glorified; so I do not thank others.”

Notice that illogic, unbiblical reasoning, or a sinful heart will distort any and all of these gospel truths.