

THE FIVE SOLAS GRACE, FAITH, CHRIST, SCRIPTURE, GLORY TO GOD

A few events in history have an actual day that changed an epoch, but for the Reformation we have such a day—October 31, 1517. The church would never be the same as people went back to actually read the Bible to see what God really had to say about salvation. What Martin Luther discovered was that we are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone according to Scripture alone and all this for the Glory of God alone.

I. *Sola Gratia*: We are Saved by the Grace of God Alone

From **Ephesians 2:8-9**, we see that our salvation from start to finish is predicated on sovereign grace. In keeping with Augustine's emphasis on divine initiative in election and justification, "grace alone" expresses the reality that God has loved us from before the beginning of time, predestined our salvation, and orchestrated its accomplishment in concert with the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Reformers insisted that such grace excludes human merit. Grace alone saves.

II. *Sola Fide*: We are Saved by Faith Alone

From **Romans 5:1-2**, we are justified (accepted by God) only through faith in Jesus Christ. Faith alone expresses the conviction that justification is received by opening empty hands of faith to receive the divine gift of acceptance. Through this means, sinners receive the imputed righteousness of Christ, and on this basis alone become children of God. Human works do not secure such favor in God's sight, so that no person can boast.

III. *Solus Christus*: We are Saved by Christ Alone

From **I Timothy 2:5-6** and **Acts 4:10-12**, we see that Jesus Christ alone is our Lord, Savior, and King. He is the Son of Man who represents us to the Father—and He is the penal substitute, the one true Savior who has redeemed us by His blood. We find much encouragement in studying the lives of great Christian men and women (Mary and the Saints), but we look to Christ alone as the Mediator through whom God has accomplished salvation. The church is provided by our LORD as the vehicle by which the Good News of Christ's salvation is to be presented to the world.

IV. *Sola Scriptura*: Scripture Alone is our Source of Truth

In **2 Timothy 3:16-17**, Scripture is seen as divinely inspired by God, and thus is our only supreme source of authority. It is God's Word, speaking to us in a manner that is fully authoritative, sufficient, and altogether reliable. Scripture is "God breathed" according to this verse, which means that it is divinely inspired, and authoritative over natural law, the conclusions of theologians, and interpretations of popes or church councils.

V. *Soli Deo Gloria*: We Live to the Glory of God Alone

Romans 11:33-36 points out that we are called to live for the glory of God alone. This is the intended outcome of the other four *solas*. It highlights the God-centered nature of the Christian faith—that men and women in Christ live not by their own authority (according to their autonomous free will) or for their own purposes (for selfish gain), but rather for the exaltation of God alone. How should we then live? The Reformers were clear that we do not live to advance institutions, but rather we live to uphold God as the one valid object of devotion over all other practices.