

## OUTLINE

Study 1...	Sola Scriptura
Study 2...	Solo Christo
Study 3...	Sola Gratia
Study 4...	Sola Fide
Study 5...	Soli Deo Gloria

Studies prepared by Dr. Andrew Corbett ([www.andrewcorbett.net](http://www.andrewcorbett.net))





Denominations are generally waning in this “Post-Modern” era. Along with the rise of non-denominationally aligned churches has been a growing doctrinal vacuum as preachers become life-coaches and the

emphasis is on making the Bible a “How to...” book. A casual reading of some of these churches doctrinal statements reveals some glaring departures with historic Christianity, which should cause us to wonder how, or why, they differ so much with the 5 Pillars of Biblical Christianity...

## ***SOLA SCRIPTURA***

Biblical Christianity commences with the authority of Scripture. Some might say that it commences with Christ. But without the revelation of Scripture we wouldn't know that! Against the backdrop of a Papal Church usurping authority to lord it over those who would follow Christ, the Reformers protested that such usurping was contrary to what the Scriptures permitted.

1. When confronted with the option of obeying God's Word or the contradictory commands of men, what did the early apostles say in Acts 5:29?

---

---

2. What does the Bible claim about its own authority in 2Timothy 3:16-17?

---

---

William Tyndale was one of the first reformers to defy the Papal church leadership and teach that the Bible was a higher authority than the Pope. For this stand he paid a terrible price (being burned alive at the stake). Not only did he teach this doctrine of *Sola Scriptura* he trained lay preachers (derogatively referred to as "Lollards" 'empty heads') to preach it across England. He then worked on translating the Scriptures into the common language of the people and was able to do



something that Wyclif over a hundred years earlier was unable to do: he published his English Bible by means of the newly invented *printing press*. Tyndale died to make the English Bible available to the Spiritually hungry. I wonder what mixed emotions he would feel today if he could see the number of Bibles in the homes of Christians today and how little they were actually read! (Research shows that only 2% of Christians have read the entire Bible.)

3. What frequency does God's Word exhort for the believer to hear from God's Word? (Note, Proverbs 8:34 and Acts 17:11)

---

---

One of the best Bible reading programs ever invented is to open the Bible at Genesis 1:1 and read as much as you can daily until you reach the last verse of Revelation 22.

Sola Scriptura means that God has given us no higher revelation of His Will, Ways and Word than the Bible. We don't worship the Bible, but we heed its message that God deserves worship. Neither does Sola Scriptura mean that God has not given us *other* reliable revelations of His truth.

4. What do the following passages reveal about how God has also revealed Himself?

Psalm 97:6

Psalm 19:1

Romans 1:20



Therefore, *Sola Scriptura* is not saying that Scripture is the only way of knowing the truth, but it is saying that Scripture is the *highest* authority of the truth. It was Thomas Aquinas who reasonably argued based on these Scripture passages that the truth of God is communicated via the created order (apprehended by 'reason') and the Scriptures (apprehended by 'revelation').

*But while reason and revelation are two distinct sources of truths, the truths are not contradictory; for in the last resort they rest on one absolute truth -- they come from the one source of knowledge, God, the Absolute One.*

Thomas Aquinas (1225 - 1274)

It was Clement of Alexandria (ca.160 - ca. 215AD) who is credited with saying something similar to this first when he said, *All truth is God's truth wherever it may be found.* But Sola Scriptura declares that Scripture has a unique authority for the truth. Therefore, while Scriptural revelation does not need to be established by the testimony of nature, its authority is most certainly

*confirmed* by it. This means that archaeology does not “prove” Scripture’s authority, it merely confirms it. The same can be said for physical science. For example, cosmologists observe that the universe is moving (expanding) from a central starting point.

5. Note what Job 9:8, and Psalm 104:2 says about how God created the universe. How does this confirm what cosmologists now observe?

---

---

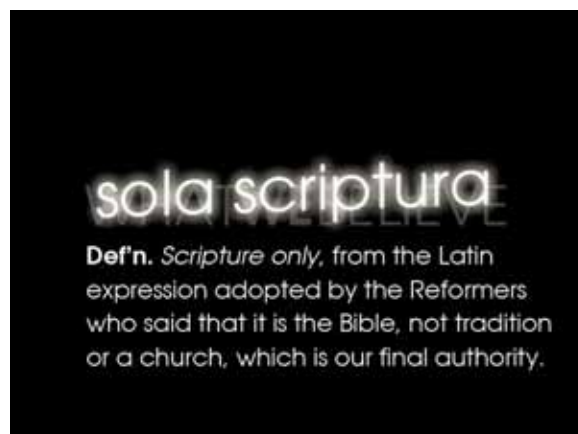
But charismatic Pentecostals generally don't subscribe to Sola Scriptura in practice.

6. How should we regard prophecy according to 1Thessalonians 5:20 and 1Corinthians 12:10?

---

---

Too many charismatic Pentecostals have attributed personal prophecy to the status of Scripture. Most however don't realise they are even doing this. Yet when a person prophesies that God is about to pour out His Revival Spirit, how many people realise this is counter to what the Scripture says is the commissioned way to disciple people to Christ?



*Amen.*



“Christ Alone!” The cry of the Reformers was that salvation was revealed in the Scriptures alone (Sola Scriptura) which is based on the work of Christ alone.

1. According to 2Corinthians 3:14, how many ways can the veil of spiritual blindness be removed?

---

---

When we say ‘Christ alone’, we are emphatically stating that Scripture reveals salvation in and through no one other than Christ.

2. Based on Acts 4:12 how many Saviours has God provided mankind?

---

---

3. What did Jesus Christ mean in John 17:3?

---

---

Solo Christo is not primarily a declaration of Christ's uniqueness - although He is altogether unique (unlike any other who may only be unique in personality and appearance).

*Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another obscure village, where He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty, and then for three years He was an itinerant preacher. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put his foot inside a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place where He was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but Himself. He had nothing to do with this world except the naked power of His divine manhood. While still a young man, the tide of public opinion turned against Him. His friends ran away. One of them denied Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth while He was dying - and that was his coat. When he was dead He was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend. Nineteen wide centuries have come and gone and today He is the centerpiece of the human race and the leader of the column of progress. I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that ever were built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned, put together have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that One Solitary Life.*

James Allan Francis (1864 - 1928), "One Solitary Life", pp. 1-7

4. How does John 14:6 reveal the uniqueness of Christ among the world's other religious leaders?

---

---

The Reformers could have simply echoed the message of their day, which nearly offered salvation through membership with, and obedience to, the Church. This would have been *sola ecclesia*. But this is not the message that Christ, the apostles, or the New Testament proclaimed.



Today there are some who promote something that sounds like Solo Christo, when in fact they are promoting an illogical, nonsensical, imitation of the real Christ. They do this by proclaiming "Jesus Only". And by this they mean that Jesus was His own Father, and is now the Holy Spirit.

5. How do the following Scriptures destroy the notion that God is monolithic (*one* Person) rather than monotheistic (one God)?

Matthew 3:16-17 \_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 28:19 \_\_\_\_\_

Luke 10:21 \_\_\_\_\_

Luke 11:13 \_\_\_\_\_

John 14:26 \_\_\_\_\_

John 15:26 \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 2:33 \_\_\_\_\_

This false doctrine completely undermines the work of the Cross (since He gave His life as a ransom [payment] to His Father for the sins of the world. It also makes a mockery of Christ crying out to His Father when He was dying on the Cross as if He was just maintaining a charade of an imaginary relationship. And it makes the baptismal 'formula' given by Christ in Matthew 28:19-20 a hoax.

When we say *Solo Christo* we are stating our belief that salvation (the forgiveness of our sins and a new and right relationship with God) is possible only by the work of Christ being merited to us. Salvation is not through the Church, Mary, the Saints, or our own efforts.

## solo Christo

**Def'n.** *Christ only*, from the Latin expression adopted by the Reformers who said that salvation was because of Christ's work on the Cross alone.

If we could only grasp Solo Christo better we would have less distrust for His Church since our expectations of what the Church is about would be made subordinate to that of Christ.

## THE ATONEMENT ONLY THROUGH CHRIST

It is only through Christ that we are saved. For some, this salvation includes the composite of all God's grace towards us (healing, provision, deliverance). That is, for some, salvation is not just about spiritual new birth. For those who regard the Atonement (the death of Christ on the Cross) as the full expression of God's grace, they are likely to view eternal life as just one of those graces made possible through the atonement. To express this, such phrases as "healing is in the atonement", "prosperity is in the atonement" (or the misquoted Scripture- Jesus became poor to make us rich), "the baptism in the Spirit is in the Atonement" are employed. It is highly doubtful that this is what the Reformers ever intended the expression Solo Christo to mean.

But because we regard the atonement primarily for our redemption, and not the means for the graces of God to be made available to us, we are not saying that these graces are not available.

6. What did Christ commission His disciples do according to Mark 16:18?

---

---

The basis for such healings seems to be the grace of God, not the atonement.

7. Note First Corinthians 12:28 and list the gifts mentioned there, and discuss whether these are the *direct* result of the Atonement.

---

---

These spiritual gifts were not the purpose of the Cross (The Atonement).

8. Some appeal to such Scriptures as "by His stripes we are (were) healed" (1Peter 2:24). But is this verse actually about physical healing?

---

---

The grace of healing or provision was available before the Cross, and one might argue that it could be provided by God to us even if there was no Cross. But the same cannot be said of our redemption. Without the Cross, there is no means of salvation and there would be no atonement. Before the Cross, Christ healed the sick but did not regenerate anyone. This point alone makes should cause people to realise that God's grace of healing, provision and deliverance were possible without the Cross- but our atonement wasn't.

When the Reformers cried Solo Christo they not only declared that it was His exclusive work of atonement on the Cross that provides the basis of our spiritual regeneration through the Holy Spirit's agency, but that it had to be Christ who died to provide that atonement. No angel. No created being. No mortal. Christ alone. "He alone is worthy." (Rev. 5:12). If Christ be not God in the flesh, then there would eternally be the doubt that God was "beatable". But since Christ has conquered death there is no longer any doubt that God is supreme over every foe.

9. According to 1Corinthians 15:26, what matter did Christ's atonement settle?

---

---

*Solo Christo!*

Amen.



“Grace alone!” Perhaps the most abhorrent and repulsive summary of the most sublime news anyone could ever herald.

Abhorrent? Indeed. We are so conditioned to earn every merit or reward that comes our way that the concept of

someone else paying our debt with no thought of seeking any form of payment is truly abhorrent. Repulsive? Certainly. The attitude of “I got myself into this mess and I’ll get myself out of it!” is so entrenched in most people’s thinking that the notion of another exhausting all their resources to rescue us- and then making no demand for *any* kind of repayment is indeed repulsive! Yet that which most find abhorrent and repulsive is the core of the Gospel: *God’s grace*.

So alien is the genuine concept of God’s grace that there is no analogy to compare it to. So used to the thinking that gifts are given to procure to some favour from the recipient that when sincere Christians began to teach if God has saved us, we should repay Him by serving Him, that no one for several centuries ever challenged it. Not until this teaching was carried through to its logical conclusion – that we are saved by what Christ has done for us *and* how we respond to that gift determines whether we are saved or not (this is known as “Semi-Pelagianism”, Christ+our works=our salvation).

1. Discuss the parable that Christ taught in Matthew 18:23-35 and how it relates to grace. Who was gracious in this parable? Who was the recipient of grace? (Careful with the second part of this question.)

---

---

---

Benefiting from God's grace is not necessarily the same as *experiencing* God's grace. An experience of God's grace where it grips your soul in total wonder and amazement and leaves you in perfect restful peace causes you to relate differently to people- especially those who have offended (*indebted themselves to*) you. Gracious living is perhaps the hallmark trait of someone who has *experienced* God's grace of salvation. It is therefore not to be understood as that which causes God to be gracious (this thinking betrays the condition of a soul who has not *experienced* God's grace).

*Someone has said that 'religion' is spelt: D – O, while  
Christianity is spelt: D – O - N – E!*

Since we all benefit from God's grace in some way theologians like to distinguish saving grace from God's general grace. The grace from God that allows us the awesome privilege of living on this planet, enjoying the pleasures of life, giving and receiving, working, playing, and expressing ourselves is referred to as "Prevenient Grace". Everybody benefits from this grace, but only a few go on to experience *saving grace*.

2. How has God fully revealed His grace to the world? (Jn 1:17)

---

---

3. Note what Paul said in Acts 13:43 to recently converted Jewish Christians. If grace cannot be earned, and you don't work to keep it, what on earth did he mean?

---

---

---

It's imperative to distinguish between *what saves us* and *what happens when we are saved*. One is the *reason* we are saved the other is the *result* of our salvation. Therefore two people can be living out the commands of Scripture for totally different reasons.

This understanding of grace has caused some to think that God doesn't care how we live after we've accepted His grace because we are already forgiven.

4. How does Paul respond to this thinking in Romans 6:1, 15?

---

---

---

5. How does the New Testament reveal that we are saved? (Romans 11:6)

---

---

We are not saved by belonging to, or attending, a church, being water-baptised ('baptismal-regeneration'), or making "a decision" for Christ ('decisional-regeneration'). Salvation by grace is something that the New Testament consistently says we must simply "accept" or "receive" (note Mark 4:20; 1Cor. 2:14; Mark 10:15). When CS Lewis was confronted with the grace of God to save His soul he looked for any other way to find peace for his soul. But none was to be found in what would in reality be derived from his own mental, physical, material, or spiritual efforts. He said something like, *I was left with no other option but to simply fall into the hands of God's grace.*

# Sola Gratia

**Def'n.** *Only Grace*, from the Latin expression coined by the Reformers to emphasize that anything we receive from God is because of His grace.

While the Reformers cried *sola gratia* they were countering the Papal teaching that salvation was achieved by Christ's work *combined* with our work. But grace is not limited to prevenient grace, or saving grace. There is another aspect to God's grace.

6. What other aspect of God's grace does the New Testament describe?  
(Note 1Corinthians 15:10; 2Corinthians 12:9)

---

---

7. Note the very last verse of the Bible. What kind of grace might this be referring to?

---

*Amen.*





“Faith alone!” Against the backdrop of a State Church, which taught that salvation was earned by a person’s righteous efforts, the Reformers reaffirmed the Biblical position that salvation was received by faith, not works.

1. How is “faith” different to “belief”? (Note James 2:19)

---

---

Many people claim to ‘believe’ in God, yet they have never received the gift of faith from God. Therefore, simply believing certain facts does not give us the means of being regenerated. After all, James 2:19 says that even demons believe in God! (And they are not regenerated!)

In Old Covenant times the word “faith” rarely (if ever) occurs in the same way that it does in the New Covenant.

2. Note Habakkuk 2:4 and determine what Habakkuk meant by the word “faith” in this verse (you may need to refer to the Bible Translator’s footnote).

---

---

This verse is cited in the New Testament (Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38) but “faith” is now given a different meaning to that of the Old Testament. “Faith” in the New Testament is about: *trust*.

The kind of faith that saves is a gift from God. While we distinguish 'belief' from 'faith' there is a necessary connection between them. For faith to become acceptable the Gospel of Christ first becomes believable.

3. Refer to Romans 10:4 and observe what is necessary for the righteousness of Christ to be imputed to someone-

---

---

Belief therefore precedes faith.

4. According to Romans 10:6 what is the basis of Christ's righteousness being imputed to the believer?

---

---



The heart cannot accept as true what the head declares to be false. Removing obstacles to belief and giving reasons to believe does not necessarily save a person. But doing this may be a necessary in order for someone to accept

Christ and His saving faith. In August 2006, former investigative journalist and Current Affairs anchor, Michael Willesee, spoke of how he began to investigate Christianity and became convinced of its truthfulness. If someone had asked him if he was a believer at this time he probably would have said *yes*. But as Willesee himself said, *I still didn't have the gift of faith*. Not until he came to a point of surrendering to Christ, confessing his sin, and putting his trust in Christ did he experience what he calls *conversion* and received what he refers to as *the gift of faith*.



5. Note the source of our faith according to Galatians 2:20 according to the King James Version of the Bible-

---

---

6. What is the gift(s) of God being referred to in Ephesians 2:8-9?

---

---

7. How is faith referred to in 2Corinthians 4:13? What does this imply about the source of saving faith?

---

---

When God calls us to Himself by His all conquering grace and gives us the gift of faith to be saved through Christ He also *converts* us.

8. Based on Galatians 5:6 how does faith 'work' and therefore what is the logical fruit of God-given faith? (Note also Ephesians 3:17)

---

---

9. Do you think that there different kinds of faith? Explain.

---

---

If faith is a gift from God, and its measure is determined by God (Romans 12:1-3), does it grow? Some people have taught that 'faith' in the New Testament always refers to the one thing: *our ability to believe*. In this paradigm of faith, faith that saves us from our sins is "beginner's" faith or "small" faith, while the faith that can work miracles is "matured" or "great" faith. While some New Testament passages seem to lend support to this view, the weight of the New Testament seems to tip the scales toward there being different ways *faith* is referred to.

10. Examine Paul's statement in 2Thessalonians 1:3. Is he referring to the Thessalonians' growing ability to work miracles? Is this what he means by 'growing faith'? What else could he be referring to?

---

---

"Faith" is referred to as both a verb and a noun in the New Testament. On the one hand it is something we *do*- we believe. But on the other hand the New Testament also refers to faith as *something*- the faith. In this latter instance it seems to refer to the entire corpus of Christian doctrine (the framework of our belief). This seems to be how Paul uses it in 1Timothy 6:10. Some have suggested that the New Testament also alludes to *the faith* as representing the fellowship of believers (the church). When someone wanders from the faith (1Tim. 6:10) they not only turn their back on sound doctrine but the fellowship of believers as well (note Galatians 6:10). Therefore, we need to take great care not to embrace the dodgy doctrine that God will not answer our prayers because we did not have enough faith. Miracles and answers to prayer are the result of God's grace not our ability to manipulate God with our ability to believe. The kind of faith that Jesus referred to as "great" was the kind of faith that led people to trust God enough to fully obey Him and acknowledge His supremacy in all things (eg. Matt. 15:28).

*Amen.*



The final statement in The Five Pillars of Biblical Christianity is *Soli Deo Gloria* – for the glory of God alone! The reason we are saved is so that we can glorify God. In one sense it is true that reason Christ died for

us was to save us from our sins and just wrath of God for sinning. But the main reason Christ died to redeem us was for the glory of God.

1. Where did Jesus say our focus for glory should be? (John 5:44; note John 12:43)

---

---

2. What was one of Christ's last prayers for His disciples as recorded in John 17:24?

---

---

God's glory is described several times in Scripture. In this sense, God's glory is a visible reality (a noun).

3. Note how God's glory is described in these Scripture references-

Exodus 16:10 - \_\_\_\_\_

Exodus 24:17 - \_\_\_\_\_

1Kings 8:11 \_\_\_\_\_

2Chronicles 7:1, 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Ezekiel 10:4 \_\_\_\_\_

But in another sense glory is what we should give God. Therefore, living for the glory of God is a *verb*: it is something we should *do*. The real purpose of our salvation is not merely to avoid hell, but to give God glory! God has saved us for His glory.

4. What should be the result of our trust in Christ? (Ephesians 1:12)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. According to Psalm 85:9 how is the land filled with God's glory?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. What is the result of people coming to Christ according to 2Corinthians 4:15?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The first article in the Westminster Shorter Catechism goes like this-

*Q. 1 What is the chief end of man?*

*A. The chief end of man is to enjoy God and glorify Him forever.*

Salvation is the doorway to being able to glorify God. We are saved to give glory to God. For some Christians this means what they do on Sunday in a church service.

7. How does First Corinthians 10:31 challenge this?

---

---

8. What should be the goal of our Christian fellowship according to Romans 15:7?

---

---

9. How is the church described in Second Corinthians 8:23?

---

---

10. What are ways that you can give God glory?

---

---

Many people spend a great proportion of their lives searching for their life's purpose. No matter what conclusions anyone comes to regarding this pursuit, one thing is certain: *everyone's purpose is to glorify God!*



## A SUMMARY OF THE FIVE PILLARS OF BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY

The <b>Revelation</b> of Salvation:	Scripture Alone (Sola Scriptura) (Not the writings of a man or group)
The <b>Provider</b> of Salvation:	Christ Alone (Solo Christo) (Not any human "Vicar")
The <b>Basis</b> for Salvation:	Grace Alone (Sola Gratia) (Not because we can earn it)
The <b>Means</b> of Salvation	Faith Alone (Sola Fide) (Grace is received by the gift of faith)
The <b>Reason</b> for Salvation	Only for God's Glory! (Soli Deo Gloria)

*Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth  
be filled with his glory! Amen and Amen!*

Psalm 72:19