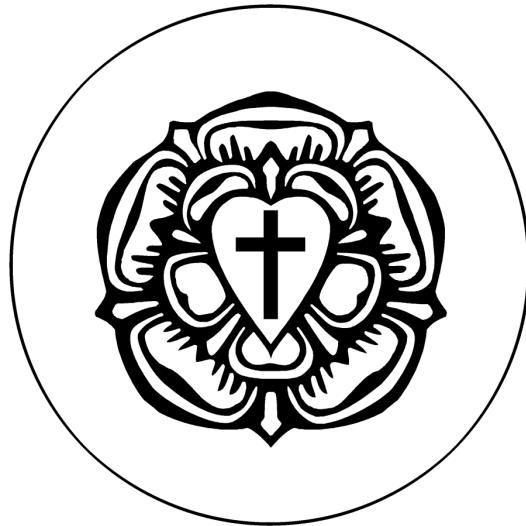


Lutheran Doctrine Class

For Adults

Last modified: (Wed Nov 28 2001)



Grace Lutheran Church
Evangelical Lutheran Synod

by Rev. Jesse Jacobsen

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Foreword

This book is intended for use with the accompanying overhead slides, which complement the material contained here. If you have any suggestions for improvements or corrections, please feel free to contact the author at pastor@grace-els.org or the address on page ii.

This presentation and content was drawn from several older instruction courses. Special thanks goes to Professor Erling Teigen of Bethany Lutheran College for his fourteen-lesson course, which was the basic model for the approach used here.

These materials were written using only free software. The Debian GNU/Linux system was the platform, L^AT_EX was the typesetting software, and images were produced and edited using The Gimp and Xfig. Text editing was accomplished with a combination of GNU Emacs and Vim. Bible quotations and searches were accomplished with a program written by the author in the Python language. For more information on these and other fine and free software tools, see the Debian web site at www.debian.org.

Chapter 1

God

How do you know that there is a god? Consider these verses:



Psalm 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork.

Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse. . .

Acts 14:16, 17 “. . . who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.”



One way we know about God is:

From this, we can know that God is **strong**, **wise**, and **smart**. In fact, it's apparent that God is much stronger, wiser, and smarter than we are. We use the words **omnipotent** and **omniscient** to express the ideas that God is all-powerful and all-knowing.

Another way we know about God is described in this verse:



Romans 2:15 [people] . . . who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them . . .



From this source, we know that God is **good** and **holy**.

On Another Note

Bible Interpretation

The question of how to interpret the Bible is a source of much disagreement between different Christian churches. Does that mean that there's no objectively "right" way to interpret the Bible? Or, is there a way you can use the Bible to check up on what you are taught?

You can find an interesting description of Biblical interpretation at <http://grace-els.org/confirmation/interpretation>, entitled *The Ten Commandments of Bible Interpretation*. These "commandments" are explained and illustrated in a colorful, informative way.

The answer to our questions above is "Yes, you can interpret the Bible objectively to find out whether a particular interpretation is right or wrong." This is possible for anyone to do, and the more familiar one is with the contents of the Bible, the easier it becomes.

1.1 God's Word

The two sources of knowledge about God mentioned above are common to everyone on earth. However, they fail to show us everything there is to know about God. There are some things we can't deduce from observation or reflection. Philosophy can't discover everything there is to know about God. Consider what these verses say about how we know God:



Hebrews 1:1, 2 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds . . .

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

Matthew 11:27 "All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him."



What is this new source of knowledge about God?
Where do *we* find this knowledge? Consider these verses:



John 20:31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness . . .

- 2 Peter 1:21** for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.
- 1 Corinthians 2:13** These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.
- 1 Thessalonians 2:13** For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.
- 2 Peter 1:19** And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts . . .



Where can we find the knowledge of God that His Son reveals?
 What makes this source of knowledge different from anything else we might find in the local library under "Philosophy" or "Religion?"

 These verses describe the function and power of God's Word:



- Romans 1:16, 17** For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."
- 2 Timothy 3:15** . . . and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.
- John 17:17** "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth."
- John 8:31–32** Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
- Romans 10:17** So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
- John 17:20** "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word"
- 1 Peter 1:23** having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever. . .
- 1 Corinthians 4:15b** . . . for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.
- James 1:18** Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.
- Ephesians 1:13** In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise . . .



On Another Note

The Lutheran Confessions

Speaking of Bible interpretation, Lutherans have found it convenient, practical, and often necessary to use writings that summarize the teachings of the Bible. These are usually called **Creeds** (from the Latin for “I believe”) or **Confessions** of faith. The three Ecumenical^a Creeds are the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed. They are constantly used in our Divine service.

The rest of the Lutheran Confessions were written during the Reformation period between 1525 and 1580. They are:

- The Augsburg Confession
- The Apology (defense) of the Augsburg Confession
- The Small Catechism
- The Large Catechism
- The Smalcald Articles
- The Formula of Concord

Historically, Lutherans have accepted these confessions as a statement or summary of what the Scripture teaches and as confessions of their faith. We accept them because they are a correct exposition of the teachings of the Scripture. They define Lutheranism, but they are never to be considered equal to Scripture. Rather, they are drawn from Scripture.

Biblical examples of creeds and their use are found in Psalm 116:10, Matthew 10:32, Matthew 16:13–16, John 6:66–69, and 1 Peter 3:15.

^aEcumenical here means “universally accepted in Christendom from ancient times”

What, then, is the function and power of the Word, or more specifically, of the Gospel?

.....
But how can I personally, in my heart, be convinced that the teachings of Christ and the Bible are divinely true?



John 7:17 "If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority."

John 6:29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

John 6:40 "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."



We teach that the Scripture is not just a collection of stories describing how some people have thought about God. It's not just a history book, either. Rather, the Scripture is God's communication to mankind, to tell us about God, the nature of man, and what God has done for us.

1.2 God's Being

We know a lot about God from His Word. We have already mentioned a number of His qualities, or **attributes**, and these are important for us to know and remember. There is something else that's vitally important for us to know about God, because it distinguishes Him from every false god. God is what we call a **trinity**, which is a custom-made word specifically for describing God. Nothing else is exactly like Him.

How do we know this? Why do we refer to God as "Him" and not "Her" or "It?" We know from what He has revealed in the Bible. Of course, God has no gender as we know gender — He is the Creator of gender! But we follow the example of His Word when we refer to God as "Him" or "He." (By the way, the capitalization of nouns and pronouns that refer to God is pure custom. It's like calling a judge "your honor" or a king "your majesty.")

What do the following passages say about God?

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Isaiah 44:6 "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God.'"

John 17:3 "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."

Deuteronomy 6:4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!"



Who does the following passage say is God?



1 **Corinthians 8:6** yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.



Who do the following passages say is God?



1 **John 5:20** And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

Romans 9:5 ... of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.

Colossians 2:8-9 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;



Who do the following passages say is God?



Acts 5:3, 4 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

1 **Corinthians 3:16** Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

John 14:16 "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever ..."

John 15:26 "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me."



What do all of these passages together suggest, together with the passages below?

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Matthew 3:13–17 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?” But Jesus answered and said to him, “Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Matthew 28:19–20 “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.



The word “trinity” is like the word “unity,” with a prefix added that refers to the number three. Hence, **trinity** refers to the scriptural teaching that God is **three persons** (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) in one **essence** or **substance**. In other words, there is only one God, but within that God are three persons, each fully God, independently of the others. Yet they are all united in such a way that we cannot say there are three Gods. This is a teaching of the Scripture that we cannot fully grasp.

The purpose of the entire Bible is to show us Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the second Person of the Trinity. To accomplish this, God has included two main teachings in the Bible. One shows us our need for a Savior, and the other describes Him for us. Practically speaking, you will understand what the Bible says about itself much better once you have a full grasp of these teachings: the **Law** and the **Gospel**. As we cover the next two sections, it is important that you understand not only that the Word of God is true, but that its message also applies to *you* personally.

Chapter 2

God's Law

The first main teaching we will cover is the Law. Why? Not because it is more important, but because we cannot understand or believe the Gospel without first understanding and believing the Law. Therefore, we must cover the Law first.

The Law is an important message found throughout the Bible from God to you, showing you what your human nature is like, and the effect that it has on your relationship with God. Often, the Law is that part of a sermon that makes us feel uncomfortable, edgy, or restless. We don't enjoy hearing it, because it highlights our faults and declares that we are ultimately at fault for our own problems. Let's let God speak for Himself. As we read, consider what these verses say about the nature of man.



Genesis 1:26–27 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Genesis 2:7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it.

Psalms 139:14 I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well.

Psalms 8:4–8 What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor. You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, All sheep and oxen — Even the beasts of the field, The birds of the air, And the fish of the sea That pass through the paths of the seas.

Ephesians 1:4 . . . just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, . . .

On Another Note

Creation

The book of Genesis was written by Moses, who lived at the time of Exodus. He was an eyewitness of most of the events in Exodus through Deuteronomy, but the events of Genesis occurred from thousands of years before his time to several hundred years before his time. How is it possible that the accounts contained in Genesis are trustworthy?

One common assumption today is that the theory of evolution and the theory of the “big bang” are correct. These are popular theories among some scientists that help them explain the origin of the universe and the variety of life on earth without allowing for the possibility of God or any miraculous work on His part. Other scientists have pointed out severe flaws in these theories, and areas where scientific evidence contradicts them. Yet because there is no other alternative that eliminates God from the picture, these theories are still championed by many. In fact, popular magazines and even public education usually work under the assumption that the theories of evolution and the big bang are true.

The first chapter of Genesis describes how God created the universe, and in particular, the earth. God tells us how He created all things in seven 24-hour days. Chapter two backs up a little and focuses on the the creation of the human race, and chapter three describes the Fall into sin. The temptation that Adam and Eve eventually fell to is the same one offered by many modern theories on the Beginning: “Has God indeed said, . . . ?”

2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Genesis 1:31 Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.



What do these passages tell us about the nature of man in his created state? .

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Following the terminology in the Creation account in Genesis, we say that man was created “in the image of God.” That does not mean that God has a body like ours, but rather that the human will was completely in agreement with God’s will, and that the human race was perfectly capable of upholding all of God’s expectations. However, this image did not last.



Genesis 3:1–13 Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden’?”

And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’”

Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, “Where are you?”

So he said, “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.”

And He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?”

Then the man said, “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.”

And the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?”

The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

Genesis 5:1–5 This is the book of the genealogy of Adam. In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female, and blessed them and called them Mankind in the day they were created. And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. After he begot Seth, the days of Adam were eight hundred years; and he had sons and daughters. So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died.

Romans 5:12–21 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned — (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)

Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.



Summarize what the following passages say about sin.

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Genesis 8:21b ... Then the LORD said in His heart, "I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although *the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth*; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done. ..."

Romans 7:19–20 For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

Romans 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

Ephesians 4:18, 22 ... having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; ... that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ...

James 1:14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

1 John 3:4 Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.



Look up the following verses in your Bible to see what it says about who has been affected by sin. Just how far does this corruption reach?



Genesis 6:5–6

Psalms 14:3

Psalms 51:5

Job 14:4

John 3:6

Romans 3:23



The simplest way to define death is with the word “separation.” There are three different kinds of death: spiritual, temporal, and eternal. All three result from any sin against God.

Spiritual Death is what Adam and Eve experienced the moment they disobeyed God. They were separated from Him in a permanent, spiritual way.

Temporal Death is what we experience at the end of our lives. Our bodies are separated from our souls.

Eternal Death is total separation from God’s mercy and providence, lasting forever in the ultimate place of suffering: hell.

2.1 God’s Expectations

Is it fair for God to expect perfection from us when we can’t live up to it? It would *not* be fair if God had made us imperfect from the start. But the fact is, He did make human beings perfect. It’s our ancestors who introduced sin into the world. God is not at fault.

God summarized His expectations from us in a few different ways. One of the shortest expressions of the Law is found in Deuteronomy 6:4–5, and was quoted by Jesus.

On Another Note

Creed: First Article

The topic of Creation is covered in the first article of the Apostles' Creed, among other places. Here it is with the explanation from the *Small Catechism*.

I believe in God the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

What does this mean?

I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still preserves them; that He richly and daily provides me with food and clothing, home and family, property and goods, and all that I need to support this body and life; that He protects me from all danger, guards and keeps me from all evil; and all this purely out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me; for all which I am in duty bound to thank and praise, to serve and obey Him. This is most certainly true.



Mark 12:28–31 Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, “Which is the first commandment of all?”

Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”



These two commandments are a brief summary of the Ten Commandments given by God to Moses on Mt. Sinai. By themselves, these two commandments should be enough to show us exactly what God wants from us. However, our sinful nature (or “sinful flesh”) is such a deep corruption that our conscience is often wrong, and our powers of reason fail us. So God also summarized His law in the Ten Commandments. We study them closely in our youth Confirmation classes.

Martin Luther, concerned about the lack of Christian education in the parishes of Germany, wrote the *Small Catechism* to help the situation. The first chief part consists of the Ten Commandments, along with concise, memorable explanations that apply them to our lives. One priceless insight expressed in his explanations is the phrase that begins each one: “We should fear and love God . . .,” putting the Ten Commandments in the same light as the two commandments quoted by Jesus above.

Luther also wrote a *Large Catechism* at about the same time. It covers the same general topics, but goes into much greater detail. Still much smaller than a short paperback, the *Large Catechism* is well worth reading. These catechisms are never

intended to be replacements for the Scripture, but faithful summaries of what God has written.

Does God expect us to keep all Ten Commandments, plus the two mentioned above? Yes, He does! Consider these verses:



James 2:10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.

Deuteronomy 6:5–6 “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.”

Luke 11:28 But He said, “More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”

1 Timothy 1:5 Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith,



We close this section with the Conclusion of the Ten Commandments from our Small Catechism:

“I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, and showing mercy to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.”

What does this mean?

God threatens to punish all who transgress these commandments. Therefore we should fear his wrath and do nothing against these commandments. But He promises grace and every blessing to all who keep these commandments. Therefore we should also love and trust in Him and faithfully do according to His commandments.

2.2 Using God's Law

The first way we use the Law applies to the whole world. Remember that certain knowledge about God comes from our consciences. That knowledge is a gift left over from the time before the Fall, when mankind still possessed the Image of God. The main thing our consciences tell us about God is that He is just: punishing evil and rewarding good. They often show us what is evil and what is good, but they can't do so perfectly.

One benefit of the conscience is that the natural knowledge about God's law that we all have — imperfect though it is — helps to **curb** the evil in the world. That natural sense of right and wrong may vary from place to place, from time to time, and from person to person, but it is still observable everywhere you go.

The second way we use the Law applies to all sinners. Recall that without the Word of God, we have only our consciences and nature to tell us about God, and that knowledge is incomplete. The Law, found in His Word, shows us that we are

On Another Note

Ten Commandments

1. You shall have no other gods.

We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

2. You shall not take the name of the Lord, your god in vain.

We should fear and love God, so that we do not curse, swear, practice witchcraft, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

3. You shall keep the day of rest holy.

We should fear and love God, so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

4. Honor your father and your mother, that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.

We should fear and love God, so that we do not despise our parents and superiors, nor provoke them to anger, but honor, serve, obey, love, and esteem them.

5. You shall not murder.

We should fear and love God, so that we do no bodily harm to our neighbor, but help and befriend him in every need.

6. You shall not commit adultery.

We should fear and love God, so that we lead a chaste and decent life in word and deed, and that husband and wife each love and honor the other.

7. You shall not steal.

We should fear and love God, so that we do not take our neighbor's money or goods, nor get them in any dishonest way, but help him to improve and protect his goods and means of making a living.

8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

We should fear and love God, so that we do not lie about, betray, or slander our neighbor, but excuse him, speak well of him, and put the best construction on everything.

9. You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

We should fear and love God, so that we do not craftily seek to gain our neighbor's inheritance or home, or to get it by a show of right, but help and serve him in keeping it.

10. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his cattle, nor anything that is his.

We should fear and love God, so that we do not tempt, force, or coax away from our neighbor his wife or his workers, but urge them to stay and do their duty.

sinner. Like a **mirror** can show you how others see you, the Law of God shows us how God sees us: imperfect, sinful, and even rebellious.

The third way we use the Law applies to Christians only. For those who believe in Christ, whose sins are forgiven, the Law serves as a **guide**, to show us how to live in a way that's God-pleasing. Why is it only for Christians? Because non-Christians (unbelievers) don't care about following God's will. But even if they did care, none of us can follow His will well enough to deserve salvation.

Why do Christians need the Law at all? Because without it, we still only have our consciences and nature to tell us about God. That knowledge is incomplete and often wrong.

We name each of the three uses of God's law with a single word that illustrates that use. Can you name all three uses?

Chapter 3

God's Gospel

The word "Gospel" comes from an Old English word meaning "good news." It means the same today. Knowing that it's good news distinguishes the Gospel from the Law, because the Law is bad news for those who cannot keep it. Notice what these verses say about God's nature and attitude toward man:



Leviticus 19:2 "Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: 'You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.'"

Deuteronomy 32:4 He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He.

Psalm 5:4 For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness, Nor shall evil dwell with You.

Psalm 92:15 To declare that the LORD is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

Psalm 145:17 The LORD is righteous in all His ways, Gracious in all His works.

Isaiah 6:3 And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!"



Now, consider the following verses. They highlight another characteristic of the same eternal, unchanging God. It may seem to be contradictory, yet it's plainly stated in the Scripture, as you see below.



Matthew 19:17 So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments."

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Psalm 145:9 The LORD is good to all, And His tender mercies are over all His works.

1 John 4:8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

Nehemiah 9:17 They refused to obey, And they were not mindful of Your wonders That You did among them. But they hardened their necks, And in their rebellion They appointed a leader To return to their bondage. But You are God, Ready to pardon, Gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, Abundant in kindness, And did not forsake them.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Titus 3:4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, ...

Romans 3:24 ... being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ...

John 3:17 "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."

Exodus 34:6 And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, ..."

Romans 8:38–39 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.



The Gospel may seem contradictory to the Law, but it's not. God is holy and just, but He is also love and full of mercy. In His mercy, He found a way to solve our problem of sin for good: by sending His Son to be our Substitute under the punishment of the Law. Our guilt was placed on Him, and in return, we receive the credit for His perfect life.

This message is the Good News, the Gospel. The Gospel, like the Law, is found in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. In the Old Testament it takes the form of God's promises. In the New Testament it is good news that God has fulfilled those promises.

3.1 God's Promises

Let's say that the future is here, and you are already in heaven. Let's suppose that you want to outline the history of how you arrived there. It's a long story. In fact, your story of salvation begins even before you did. Consider this verse:



Romans 8:29–30 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.



This verse summarizes all the things that God has done for you spiritually.

- First it mentions foreknowledge. God knew you from the beginning of time, even though you did not yet exist. This makes sense, since God knows all things. (*Omniscience*: see section 1.)
- The verse above also shows us that God predestined you for salvation. Before the beginning of time, God knew that you would be born sinful and His enemy. Yet He intended to save you by sending His Son and bringing you to faith so that you will receive eternal life.
- The verse continues by saying that God called you (to faith, through His Word), and justified you. Objectively, our **justification** happened when the Son of God died for the sins of the world. However, the benefits of that are received only through faith. When God calls you to faith, you receive that justification subjectively.
- The last thing mentioned by Paul is that God glorified you. This is something that will be completed in full on the Last Day, but even now it is so certain that we can speak of it as already accomplished.

From the Scripture, it is obvious that God had the entire plan of our salvation in mind from the very beginning. Therefore, when we read the Old Testament, we are reading about the same thing contained in the New Testament, only viewed from a different perspective. For the Old Testament believers, the Gospel was contained in the *promises* of God. They looked forward to the fulfillment of those promises.

The first Gospel promise was very soon after the Fall into sin. It was repeated many times after that, in connection with other promises. As we read through the Old Testament, we can see the unfolding of how God ordered history so that in the “fullness” of time, when all was ready, He could fulfill that oldest promise.

The following verses contain a few examples of God’s Old Testament promises relating to our Savior.



Genesis 3:13–17 And the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

So the LORD God said to the serpent: “Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life. And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, *And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.*”

Genesis 12:1–3 Now the LORD had said to Abram: “Get out of your country, From your family And from your father’s house, To a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; *And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*”

Isaiah 7:14 “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”

Isaiah 11:1–5, 9–10 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. His delight is in the fear of the LORD, And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears; But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist. . . . They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea. “And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious.”

Isaiah 53:4–6 Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Jeremiah 33:14–16 ‘Behold, the days are coming,’ says the LORD, ‘that I will perform that good thing which I have promised to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah: ‘In those days and at that time I will cause to grow up to David A Branch of righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In those days Judah will be saved, And Jerusalem will dwell safely. And this is the name by which she will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.’



3.2 God's Fulfillment

God's promises of a Savior in the Old Testament are fulfilled in the New Testament. Specifically, they were fulfilled by Jesus Christ.

The name *Jesus* was a Jewish name, the Greek form of the name *Joshua*, which means “God is my help.” The word *Christ* is the Greek word for *messiah*, or “the anointed one.” We learn about His life in the first four books of the New Testament (the Gospels).

The Scripture shows us that Jesus was more than a normal boy who grew into a great teacher and died a martyr. The Bible says that Jesus was the Son of God from eternity, Who took upon Himself human flesh and has remained true God and true man. Consider these passages.



Psalm 2:7 “I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.’”

Romans 8:32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

On Another Note

Creed: Second Article

The second article of the Apostles' Creed covers the person and work of Jesus Christ. It's a summary of our justification, the fulfillment of God's promise in Genesis 3:15. Here it is, along with its Small Catechism explanation.

And in Jesus Christ,
His only Son, our Lord;
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified,
died and was buried.
He descended into hell;
The third day He rose again from the dead;
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
From there He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

What does this mean?

I believe that Jesus Christ is true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary; and that He is my Lord, Who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood, and with His innocent suffering and death; in order that I might be His own, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness; even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

Matthew 16:16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."



As true man and true God, Jesus has two natures in one person: a human nature and a divine nature. This is hard to understand. There are some ways of understanding it that are wrong, so we need to know what the Bible says about each of Jesus' natures before we can put it all together. These verses describe His divine nature.



1 John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

Romans 9:5 ... of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.

John 1:1, 6 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.



Do these passages say that Jesus is *similar to* God or that He *is* God?

.....
Someone may say, "So Jesus is God, but that doesn't mean that we should obey Him as God and that the Father treats Him also as God." The next group of verses show that Jesus also has the full power and authority of God. As we read them, consider what divine qualities Jesus possesses.



Matthew 28:18–20 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Hebrews 1:3, 6 ... who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ... But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: "Let all the angels of God worship Him."

Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Matthew 9:6 "But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" — then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house."

John 5:23–26 “that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself ...”



What qualities then does Christ have through His divine nature?

.....
 The Bible certainly speaks of Jesus as true God. Yet it also speaks of Him as true Man. Consider these verses, and note what they say about His moral character.



1 Timothy 2:5–6 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, ...

Luke 24:32 And they said to one another, “Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?”

Luke 2:1–7 And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.

Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Matthew 26:38 Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.”

John 11:35 Jesus wept.

John 19:28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, “I thirst!”

Hebrews 4:15b ... but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Hebrews 7:26 For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens ...

John 8:46 “Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?”

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.



On Another Note Athanasian Creed

The Athanasian Creed is the longest of the ecumenical creeds, and it expresses several important doctrines that we’ve already covered. It is the youngest of the creeds, but still well over one thousand years old. You can find it on page 29 in the front of the *Hymnary*.

From these passages, we clearly see that Jesus is fully human. What do they say about His moral character?

.....

Jesus was as human as we are, yet was without sin. Sometimes, we may speak of sin as a part of “human nature,” as though it were impossible for someone to be human if he had no sin. Yet we should be careful not to give that impression, because it’s not true. Adam and Eve were fully human, even before they ever sinned. God also promises to raise up all the dead on the Last Day. Those who are raised to life will still be fully human, even though our sin will be no more.

The union of the two natures of Christ in one Person is referred to as the **personal union**. Many false teachings in Christian history somehow reflect themselves in a false teaching about the personal union of the two natures in Christ. To be sure, we cannot understand this union fully. However, we *can* believe what God’s Word reveals, so if something contradicts the Bible, it must be false.

Was it necessary for the Messiah, the Christ, to be both true Man and true God? Yes it was. What reasons are given in the following verses?

.....

.....



Galatians 4:4–5 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Romans 5:19 For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous.

Hebrews 2:14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, . . .



To describe the personal union, Lutherans have used a framework called the “communication of attributes.” It was developed to express what the Bible teaches about the two natures, while avoiding what the Bible either calls untrue or does not address. (Feel free to ask questions throughout this section. It is the most involved part of Christian theology.)

On Another Note

The Symbol of Chalcedon

Here is the full text of the creed produced by the Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD. Though it was not included in the Lutheran Confessions, Lutherans consider this to be a true expression of scriptural doctrine. Note the emphasized words, which stress the importance of not mixing Jesus' two natures as though they were one nature, or splitting them into separate persons.

We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable [rational] soul and body; consubstantial [coessential] with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother [bearer] of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, *inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably*; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets from the beginning [have declared] concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.

Attribute: a quality or characteristic of a person or thing.

Why has so much energy been spent on this topic? Because it lies at the very heart of our Christian faith. To deny Jesus' human nature makes His sacrifice no longer apply to us. To deny Jesus' divine nature makes his sacrifice insufficient to cover all the sins of the world.

When we speak of one of the natures of Christ or its attributes, we are speaking abstractly, as though in theoretical terms. When we speak of the person of Christ and His attributes, we are speaking concretely, in terms that reflect the current status of things. The reason we must speak about the natures and attributes of Christ is simply that some teachers have either confused the two natures, as though there were only one, or divided them, as though there were two Christs.

Lutherans are careful to avoid either extreme, following the statement produced by the Council of Chalcedon in the year 451, which dealt with these false teachings.

The following table uses some of Jesus' attributes to show how we speak about them in relation to His natures. In the center is a list of attributes. Each attribute comes from one or the other nature, and is **communicated** to the other. The arrows show the direction of this communication. Because the two natures are united, *both of them possess all these attributes*, but only one possesses it "by nature." The human nature possesses divine qualities as a "communicated gift." It possesses exceptional

human qualities as a “created gift” through the personal union. Jesus’ divine nature also possesses all His human qualities, but “by participation” rather than “by nature” or as a “gift.”

Divine Nature	<i>Attribute</i>	Human Nature
By Participation ←	Height	By Nature
By Participation ←	Eye-color	By Nature
	Excellent Health →	As a Created Gift
	Great Strength →	As a Created Gift
By Nature	Life and Light →	As a Communicated Gift
By Nature	Blood of Forgiveness →	As a Communicated Gift

If the material above is confusing, it might help to return to it after we come to the end of this section. The verses below describe the work of Jesus, first in a summary form, then in detail.



Ephesians 4:24 ... that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

Colossians 3:10 ... and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him ...

2 Corinthians 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Romans 5:19 For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous.

1 John 2:2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

Galatians 4:4–5 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Matthew 5:17 “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.”

1 Timothy 2:6 who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time ...

1 Peter 1:18–19 ... knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

Isaiah 53:5-6 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.



At the heart of the Good News is a term that we've encountered several times already, **justification**. To justify is to declare that someone is just (righteous or holy). It's a courtroom term, and means that God has *declared* those who have committed sins to be perfect and innocent — even holy. According to the following passages, on what basis has God justified us?

.....



Romans 4:22–25 And therefore “it was accounted to him [Abraham] for righteousness.” Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.

Romans 5:18 Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.

2 Corinthians 5:19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

1 Peter 2:24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness — by whose stripes you were healed.



To accomplish the work of our salvation as our Substitute, Jesus kept the Law in our place. This includes both things that He did to satisfy God's law (**active obedience**) and things that were done to Him in our place, to satisfy the punishment of our guilt (**passive obedience**).

In the margin next to each verse below, write an “a” or a “p” to show whether it refers to Jesus' active obedience or passive obedience.



Matthew 3:13–17 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?”

But Jesus answered and said to him, “Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Galatians 4:4–5 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Luke 4:1–13 Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry. And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread."

But Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'"

Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours."

And Jesus answered and said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"

Then he brought Him to Jerusalem, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'"

And Jesus answered and said to him, "It has been said, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.'" Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.

Romans 5:18 Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.

1 John 2:2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.



We can sometimes think that the Gospel message is complete with the life and death of Jesus Christ. However, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is equally important. Consider these verses:



Romans 4:25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.

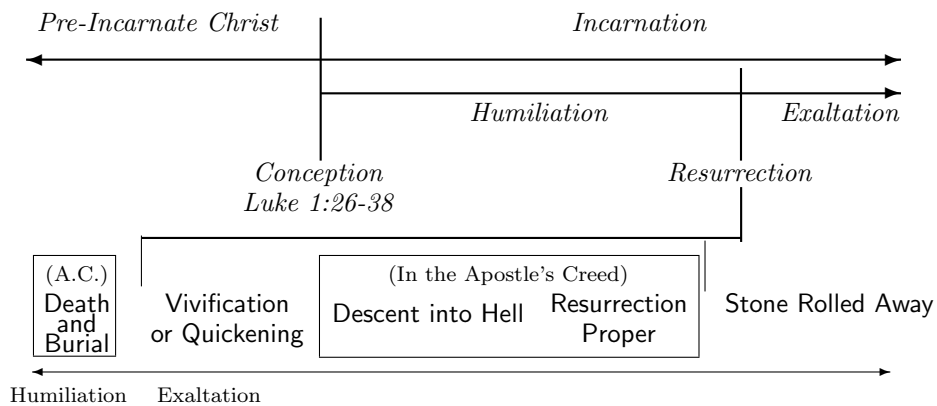
1 Corinthians 15:14–21 And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up — if in fact the dead do not rise.

For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead.



When we think of the Second Person of the Trinity, whom we call Jesus Christ, there are two eras we usually have in mind: the time before He was miraculously conceived in the virgin Mary, and the time since then. To describe the time when He took on human flesh, we use the term **incarnation**. To describe Him before that, we use the adjective **preincarnate** to show that he had not yet taken His human nature. After the incarnation, we can call Him the **incarnate** Christ.

After the incarnation of Christ, there are two subdivisions of time, relating to the work He did to save us. The first is described in Philippians 2:5-8, called His **humiliation**. This period is the time when Jesus set aside His divine powers and full glory, during His life on earth. He used them only from time to time in performing miracles. But most of the time, they were set aside or hidden. After His humiliation, and continuing into the future, is Jesus' **exaltation**, when He once again took up His full divine power and glory. In the time line of the *Apostles' Creed*, this begins with His descent into Hell. The chart below illustrates the humiliation and exaltation of Christ as they coordinate with the events surrounding His resurrection.



Finally, what do you conclude from the following verses?

.....

.....



Acts 4:12 "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Mark 16:16 "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."

John 17:3 "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."

John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name . . .



We close this section with a quotation from the *Augsburg Confession*. Here is Article IV, on Justification.

Also they teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor, and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who, by His death, has made satisfaction for our sins. This faith God imputes for righteousness in His sight. Rom. 3 and 4.

On Another Note

The Formula of Concord is the closing document in the Lutheran Confessions, applying the Scriptures to questions and controversies that had arisen in the time between 1536 and 1580. Here's what Article III, paragraph 15 says on the topic of Justification:

For since Christ is not man alone, but God and man in one undivided person, He was as little subject to the Law, because He is the Lord of the Law, as He had to suffer and die as far as His person is concerned. For this reason, then, His obedience, not only in suffering and dying, but also in this, that He in our stead was voluntarily made under the Law, and fulfilled it by this obedience, is imputed to us for righteousness, so that, on account of this complete obedience, which He rendered His heavenly Father for us, by doing and suffering, in living and dying, God forgives our sins, regards us as godly and righteous, and eternally saves us.

3.3 God's Spiritual Gifts

Where is Jesus now? The following verses describe His role on our behalf until the end of time.



Luke 24:50–51 And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.

Acts 1:9–11 Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

Matthew 28:20 "... teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Ephesians 1:20–23 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Romans 8:34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.



Describe the place or location where Jesus is now.

.....
 What benefit is there for us that Jesus has ascended to "the right hand of God?"

.....
 When we say that Jesus is "at the right hand of God," we must include both His divine and human natures. Why would it be wrong only to include His divine nature? How is it possible for His human nature to be at the right hand of God, when we know our own human natures are not capable of that?

Consider again the following passage:



Romans 8:29–30 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.



Earlier, we said that all of these things are so certain that they can be written in the past tense. It is so certain that we are forgiven and that through faith we will enter heaven, that St. Paul could write "these He also *glorified*." However, that has not been completed yet from our perspective. From our place in history, we know that God has called us and justified us, but we have not yet entered the glory of heaven.

3.3.1 The Word of Grace

Recall that justification can be considered both *objectively* and *subjectively*. Objectively, our justification was completed by Christ. We know that from the following verse.



John 19:30 So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.



However, the benefits of justification are received subjectively only through faith. Since we know that the sinful human nature makes it impossible to come to faith, it follows that if we ever have faith, it must come from God. How does He give us faith? Another way to ask the same question is: How does God bring objective justification from the cross to you and me?

The answer should not be surprising at this point: through His Word. That means that the Word of God is much more than information. (See the verse list beginning on page 3.) The Word is “the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.” Law and Gospel have the innate, God-given ability to accomplish their purposes in the heart of man. We call this ability **efficacy**, saying that the Word of God is **efficacious**.

The Word of God

Write your own meaning for each of the following words, showing how it describes the Word of God (the Scriptures, or the Bible).

Clear

Sufficient

Efficacious

Inerrant

Is it possible for God to work directly in us, without using some external means? Yes. Has He told us that He will? No. In fact, God has warned us to watch out for deceptions from all sources that contradict what we know is taught in the Bible.

Is the Bible, then, the only gracious contact that we can expect from God? No. We are to seek God wherever He promises to be found. One place is in His Word. However, there are two other places where God has promised us His gracious forgiveness: holy Baptism, and the Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Word of God and these two sacraments together are called the **Means of Grace**: the means that God uses to teach us about Jesus and grant His forgiveness and justification to us as individuals.

On Another Note

The Nature and Blessings of Baptism

From the *Small Catechism*:

The Nature of Baptism

What is Baptism? Baptism is not just water, but it is the water used according to God's command and connected with His Word.

What is that Word and command of God concerning Baptism? Jesus says: "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you." Matthew 28, 18-20.

The Blessings of Baptism

What does Baptism give or profit? Baptism effects forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, just as the words and promises of God declare.

Which are these words and promises of God? Christ our Lord says, Mark 16, 16: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."

3.3.2 God's Gift of Baptism

Look up the following verses and summarize what they teach about Baptism.



Mark 1:4

.....

Matthew 28:19-20

.....

Mark 16:16

.....

Acts 2:37-42

.....

Acts 8:27-38

.....

Acts 9:17–18

Acts 16:25–32



“To baptize” means to apply water. It can refer to complete immersion or to washing in some other way. The word used in the following verse for “wash” is the same used for Baptism in the original Greek.



Luke 11:38 When the Pharisee saw it, he marveled that He had not first washed before dinner.



The Gospels also include accounts of Jesus’ Baptism. But Jesus was perfect, so He did not need to be Baptized as we do. It’s fair to say that Baptism needs Jesus more than He needed Baptism. In light of the following verses, what was the purpose of His Baptism?



Matthew 3:13-17 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?”

But Jesus answered and said to him, “Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Galatians 4:4–5 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

2 Corinthians 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Hebrews 2:17–18 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.



On Another Note

The Power and Meaning of Baptism

From the *Small Catechism*:

The Power of Baptism

How can water do such great things? It is not the water that does these things, but the Word of God which is in and with the water, and faith which trusts this Word of God in the water. For without the Word of God the water is simply water, and no baptism; but with the Word of God it is a baptism, that is, a gracious water of life and a washing of regeneration in the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul says, Titus 3, 5–8: “According to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; that having been justified by His grace, we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying.”

The Meaning of Baptism

What does such baptizing with water mean? Such baptizing with water means that the old Adam in us should, by daily contrition and repentance, be drowned and die with all sins and evil lusts; and that a new man daily come forth and arise, who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

Where is this written? St. Paul writes, Romans 6, 4: “We are buried with Christ by baptism into death, that just as He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

One question that has often been raised about Baptism, especially in recent years, is whether or not infants should be baptized. Here are some verses that apply to this important question:



Mark 10:13–15 Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was greatly displeased and said to them, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. “Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.”

Matthew 18:1–6 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. “Therefore whoever humbles

himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me. But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”



Based on the verses above (which can refer to infants in the original Greek), can little children believe? To think that children cannot believe is to confuse faith with intellectual development. Recall what God's law tells us (from chapter 2), particularly the verses listed on page 13. Even infants need Baptism. Like adults, they also need God to create saving faith in their hearts miraculously, because without it they are in unbelief, outside the grace of God.

3.3.3 The Sacrament of the Altar

Besides Baptism and the Word of God, He has promised us forgiveness and other spiritual blessings in the Lord's Supper, also called the Sacrament of the Altar. We call it the Lord's because He is the One who instituted it for His disciples to eat and drink. Another name often used is **Communion**, or **Holy Communion**, which brings out the unity that exists between Jesus and the recipients of the supper. An ancient term for the Lord's Supper, especially in the liturgical context of the church service, is the **Mass**.

Read the following accounts that describe the institution of the Lord's Supper, and note what Jesus says when He takes the bread and the cup in His hand.



Matthew 26:26–29 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.” Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. “For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. “But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.”

Mark 14:22–25 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.” Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. And He said to them, “This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many. “Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

Luke 22:17–20 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves; “for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.

*On Another Note***From "Soul, Adorn Thyself with Gladness," *ELH* 328**

He who craves a precious treasure
Neither cost nor pain will measure,
But the priceless gifts of heaven
God to us hath freely given.
Though the wealth of earth were proffered,
Naught would buy the gifts here offered:
Christ's true body, for thee riven,
And His blood, for thee once given.

In my heart I find ascending
Holy awe, with rapture blending,
As this mystery I ponder,
Filling all my soul with wonder,
Bearing witness at this hour
Of the greatness of God's power;
Far beyond all human telling
Is the pow'r within Him dwelling.

Human reason, though it ponder,
Cannot fathom this great wonder,
That Christ's body e'er remaineth
Though it countless souls sustaineth,
And that He His blood is giving
With the wine we are receiving.
These great mysteries unsounded
Are by God alone expounded.

Jesus, Bread of Life, I pray Thee,
Let me gladly here obey Thee.
By Thy love I am invited;
Be Thy love with love requited.
From this Supper let me measure,
Lord, how vast and deep love's treasure.
Through the gifts Thou here dost give me
As Thy guest in heav'n receive me.

1 Corinthians 11:23–29 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes. Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.



When Jesus says “this,” to what is He referring?
 On the basis of the following passages, what is Jesus saying that the bread and wine really are?



1 Corinthians 10:16–17 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.

1 Corinthians 11:27 Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

1 Corinthians 11:29b . . . not discerning the Lord’s body.



When Jesus said “This do, as often as you drink it” (See the 1 Corinthians account above), what does He mean by “this?” In other words, what should Christians do?

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The difference between the “worthy” and the “unworthy” recipients of this sacrament is whether or not they have examined themselves. We should consider what we believe about this sacrament and what it means for us, personally. We should use the Law and the Gospel to remind ourselves that we do need the Sacrament and receive it with hearts of faith and thanksgiving. An excellent help is found on pages 38 and 39 of the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary*: a series of questions and answers written by Dr. Luther to aid in preparation for receiving the Lord’s Supper.

Also notice that St. Paul calls the two elements “bread” and “cup,” showing that they do not undergo a complete transformation from one thing into another. Rather, we speak of the presence of Christ’s body and blood as “under” the bread and the wine.

This sacrament is called “communion” partially on the basis of 1 Corinthians 10:16–17 above. Recipients have a communion with Jesus Christ, but that’s not the end of the story. Reading that verse again, with whom do we have this communion, *besides* Jesus? The following verses also mention this communion.

On Another Note

Sacrament: Nature/Benefit

From the *Small Catechism*:

The Nature of the Sacrament of the Altar

What is the Sacrament of the Altar? The Sacrament of the Altar is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ himself, for us Christians to eat and to drink.

Where is this written? The holy evangelists Matthew, Mark and Luke, together with St. Paul, write thus: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying, 'Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way also He took the cup after supper, gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, Drink from it, all of you; this cup is the New Covenant in My blood, which is shed for you for the remission of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.'"

The Benefit of the Sacrament of the Altar

What benefit do we receive from such eating and drinking? The benefit which we receive from such eating and drinking is shown us by these words: "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins," namely, that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.

On Another Note

Sacrament: Power and Reception

From the *Small Catechism*:

The Power of the Sacrament of the Altar

How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things? It is not the eating and drinking that does this, but the words here written: “Given and shed for you for the remission of sins.” These words, along with the eating and drinking, are the main thing in the Sacrament; and whoever believes these words has exactly what they say, namely, the forgiveness of sins.

The Proper Reception of the Sacrament of the Altar

Who then receives this Sacrament worthily? Fasting and bodily preparation are indeed a fine outward training; but he is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words, “Given and shed for you for the remission of sins.” But he who does not believe these words, or doubts them, is unworthy and unprepared; for the words “for you” require truly believing hearts.



1 Corinthians 1:10 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

Romans 16:17 Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.

Ephesians 4:3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.



Partaking of the sacrament is an expression of complete unity of faith with other participants. In light of this, with whom should we partake of the Lord's Supper?

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Chapter 4

The Christian Life

The Law and Gospel of God are powerful. Through them, He changes human beings from enemies into adopted children. This is a fundamental change in a person's life that influences everything else. Instead of the sinful human nature, Christians are ruled by a new man created in them by the Holy Spirit in the image of our Savior. As long as we live in this world, we will have both the Old Adam and the New Man. We're like Dr. Jeckyll and Mr. Hyde. The only thing that can keep Mr. Hyde at bay is regular use of the Means of Grace.

4.1 The Christian's Faith

A Christian's life is different because of faith. But since "faith" is a common word used for just about anything someone wants to use it for, we should define it more precisely. Faith has three components:

1. Head knowledge (*scientia*): knowing with your brain
2. Application to self (*assentia*): assenting with your tongue
3. Feeling of trust (*fiducia*): trusting with your heart

With only one or two of the three components, someone does not have real faith. All three are created by the Holy Spirit through the Means of Grace. The following verses speak of our conversion, when the Holy Spirit turns us around from unbelief to faith.



1 Corinthians 6:11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

John 15:16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,

<p><i>On Another Note</i></p> <p>The third article of the Apostles' Creed covers the work of the Holy Spirit throughout a Christian's life on earth to life in heaven. Here it is from the <i>Small Catechism</i>.</p> <p>I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints, the Forgiveness of sins, the Resurrection of the body, and the Life everlasting.</p> <p><i>What does this mean?</i></p> <p>I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith; just as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian Church He daily and richly forgives me and all believers all our sins; and at the last day He will raise up me and all the dead, and will grant me and all believers in Christ eternal life. This is most certainly true.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Creed: Third Article</p>
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1 Peter 1:23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,

Philippians 1:29 For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,

Romans 10:17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

1 Corinthians 12:3 Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.



What do these verses say about how we are brought to faith?

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Faith is called the “receiving organ” because it’s the hand that grasps and receives the spiritual blessings of Christ: forgiveness of sins, etc. We still can’t take any credit, nor would we want to, because there is great comfort in knowing that God has accomplished our salvation completely. Without the Holy Spirit, we’re like an empty glove, which cannot hold onto anything. But He, working through the Means

of Grace, makes us hold tightly to God's promises and thus receive His gracious gifts.

We also distinguish between "saving faith" and a "weak or strong faith." If someone believes in Jesus Christ as his Savior from sin, that person has saving faith. It can be weak or strong, and it's usually growing weaker or stronger at any moment in time. A weak faith holds to the same Savior and receives the same forgiveness and eternal life that a strong faith receives, but is in greater danger of being lost in a time of trial or temptation. How do you think we can keep our faith strong?

4.1.1 The Faith Believed

The following passage shows a close connection between what we believe and what we confess to be true:



Romans 10:8–11 But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."



If we know what the Bible says backwards and forwards but cannot apply the Gospel to ourselves, then it doesn't do us any good. We must actually believe the Gospel: that we have forgiveness. And of course, the chief article of faith, justification, hinges on Jesus Christ. If we refuse to believe a part of what the Bible says, that refusal may invalidate whatever else we believe. For example, if we refused to believe that Jesus has risen from the dead, or that He was born of a virgin, it changes the meaning of His sacrifice. We could no longer be sure that we *are* forgiven, because there would be no reason to believe that Jesus was anything but a wise man. Wise men cannot redeem mankind by given their own lives as a ransom — only the Son of God can do that.

On the other hand, there are certain errors we could hold that would not challenge our faith as much. For example, suppose we believed that the body and blood of Christ were not really present in the Lord's Supper. Many in fact do believe this on the basis of human reason, thinking that "the finite (a human body) is not capable of the infinite (being in many places at once)." This is a grievous error, because it would deprive us of the Lord's Supper. However, it would still be possible for us to believe that Jesus died for our sins, and that we have forgiveness and eternal life through Him.

This is not to say that errors are tolerable. They are not, because even a small error has a way of leading to larger errors more central to the Christian faith. For example, it might be possible for a Christian to doubt that Moses wrote all of the first five books of the Bible. But if that Christian searched the Scriptures, he would

find that Jesus referred to those books as having been written by Moses. That could mean one of several things:

1. Moses *did* write those books.
2. Jesus was wrong or ignorant.
3. Jesus was deceiving his hearers.

If the Christian opts for one of the last two explanations, then his Christian faith is on the line, because then Jesus could not be the good and gracious only-begotten Son of God. Fortunately, human beings have an enormous capacity to be inconsistent. When we believe in an error yet still believe the central articles of the Christian faith, we call that a “happy inconsistency,” because it means that as long as the error does not destroy our faith in the central doctrines, we still have saving faith.

In the Lutheran Reformation, there were three watchwords that summarized what Lutherans believe about how we are saved, and how we know we are saved. They are:

- Grace alone (*sola gratia*)
- Faith alone (*sola fide*)
- Scripture alone (*sola scriptura*)

How does each of these watchwords remind us to avoid doctrinal error and remain in God’s truth?

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How should we use the Lutheran Confessions?

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4.1.2 Faith Responding to God’s Grace

The good works that we do in our lives are not necessarily good works to God. As we saw in section 2.1, God expects perfection. That means if we live as absolute saints in all ways except one, we’ve failed to do what God demands. And if we perform such a wonderful deed that it’s world-famous for its goodness, but our motive was not pure, then our good deed counts for nothing before God. Recall the verses on page 15.

But in Christ, we are forgiven. And because of that forgiveness, a Christian still wants to please God. Though our sin makes this impossible to do perfectly, we still want to live as God’s children. It’s only possible for believers in Christ to want this, because unbelievers remain enemies of God and His Word as long as they are in unbelief. So what can we do as Christians in response to God’s grace? Consider the following verses:



Psalm 1:1–2 Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.

Psalm 119:35, 47 Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, For I delight in it. . . . And I will delight myself in Your commandments, Which I love.

Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Deuteronomy 12:8, 28, 32 “You shall not at all do as we are doing here today — every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes — . . . Observe and obey all these words which I command you, that it may go well with you and your children after you forever, when you do what is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God. . . . Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.”

Romans 13:9 For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not bear false witness,” “You shall not covet,” and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”



On the basis of these passages, what can we do in response to God’s grace? ..

.....
 These passages are God’s Law, but we’re using them in the third way mentioned in section 2.2: as a **guide**. The following verses show the motivation of a Christian’s good works.



Matthew 22:36–40 “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

Romans 13:10b Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Galatians 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

1 John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.



The Bible teaches clearly that we are saved through faith alone in the merits of Christ, by God’s grace alone and not through our own works. But there is still a reason for us to take notice of Christian good works. On the basis of the following passages, what are these good works evidence of?

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Galatians 5:22–23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Titus 2:14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

James 2:14–18 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.



Furthermore, even though our works do not merit God’s grace or forgiveness, the Bible does speak of a reward for our good works, and that we will be judged on their basis. Considering Hebrews 11:6 and James 2:14–18 above, how can it be said that God judges us according to our works?

The following passages describe how a Christian’s life of good works is accomplished. Notice how all good works (fruit) flow from Christ (the vine). Without the Vine there can be no fruit, and the branches are worthless.



John 15:1–6 “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.”

1 John 4:19–21 We love Him because He first loved us. If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.



4.2 The Christian's Life

The life of a Christian may look outwardly like the life of any moral person. Inwardly, however, a Christian has a treasure that unbelievers cannot have: eternal peace with God. Of course, this peace fluctuates as faith strengthens and weakens, and temptations come and go. This peace also leads to new priorities, and a new reason for doing things. These last sections cover a few aspects of Christian life that are unique to the fellowship of believers and sometimes misunderstood.

4.2.1 Christian Prayer

The following passages define what the Scripture means by prayer. Summarize this definition in your own words:

.....



Philippians 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. . .

Psalm 63:1–3 A Psalm of David when he was in the wilderness of Judah. O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water. So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory. Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You.

Psalm 84:2 My soul longs, yes, even faints For the courts of the LORD; My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.

Psalm 143:6–9 I spread out my hands to You; My soul longs for You like a thirsty land. (Selah) Answer me speedily, O LORD; My spirit fails! Do not hide Your face from me, Lest I be like those who go down into the pit. Cause me to hear Your lovingkindness in the morning, For in You do I trust; Cause me to know the way in which I should walk, For I lift up my soul to You. Deliver me, O LORD, from my enemies; In You I take shelter.

Proverbs 28:9 One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, Even his prayer is an abomination.

John 9:31 "Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him."

On Another Note**The Keys and Confession**

The Office of the Keys is the basis of the holy ministry, to which God calls men to serve as His spokesmen in preaching and teaching His Word, Law and Gospel. Here is the explanation of this office and the practice of confession, from the *Small Catechism*.

What is the Office of the Keys?

The Office of the Keys is the special authority which Christ has given to His Church on earth: to forgive the sins of the penitent sinners, but to retain the sins of the impenitent as long as they do not repent.

Where is this written?

The evangelist writes, John 20, 22–23: “Jesus breathed on His disciples and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; and if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’”

What is Confession?

Confession consists of two parts: one, that we confess our sins; the other, that we receive absolution, or forgiveness, from the pastor or confessor as from God himself, and in no way doubt, but firmly believe that our sins are thereby forgiven before God in heaven.

What sins should we confess?

Before God we should acknowledge ourselves guilty of all sins, even of those which we do not know about, as we do in the Lord’s Prayer. But before the pastor or confessor we should acknowledge those sins only which we know and feel in our hearts.

Which are these?

Here consider your own situation according to the Ten Commandments, whether you are a father, mother, son, daughter, employer, employee; whether you have been disobedient, dishonest, lazy; whether you have injured anyone by word or deed; whether you have stolen, neglected, wasted anything, or done any harm.

Romans 10:14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?



God Himself invites us to pray, and tells us that we should pray continuously for all kinds of things that are God-pleasing. What kinds of things are those? Consider these verses.



Mark 11:24 "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them."

Luke 11:13 "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

1 Timothy 2:1 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men . . .

John 16:23 "And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you."

Daniel 9:18 "O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies."

James 1:6–7 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord.

Romans 8:26–27 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.



God does not set down a specific form that our prayers must take. Instead, He gives us many examples throughout Scripture, along with descriptions of prayer, and promises to hear those who pray in faith. There is also no prescribed place where all prayers must be made. We may pray silently or aloud, at work, while traveling or at home. Any time we can spare enough attention to address God, He will listen. However, prayer is not reserved as private communication from one Christian to God. Consider these verses:

On Another Note

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, Who art in heaven. God would hereby tenderly invite us to believe that He is our true Father, and that we are His true children, so that we may ask Him with all boldness and confidence, as children ask their dear father.

Hallowed be Thy name. God's name is hallowed when His Word is taught in its truth and purity, and we as the children of God live holy lives according to it. This grant us, dear Father in heaven! But he who teaches and lives otherwise than the Word of God teaches dishonors God's name among us. From this preserve us, heavenly Father!

Thy Kingdom come. The kingdom of God comes when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and live godly lives here in time and hereafter in eternity.

Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. God's will is done when He breaks and hinders every evil counsel and will, which would not let us hallow His name nor let His kingdom come, such as the will of the devil, the world and our own flesh; but strengthens and keeps us steadfast in His Word and in faith until our end. This is His good and gracious will.

Give us this day our daily bread. Daily bread includes everything needed for this life, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, fields, cattle, money, goods, God-fearing spouse and children, faithful servants and rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, order, honor, true friends, good neighbors, and the like.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look upon our sins, nor on their account deny our prayer; for we are not worthy of anything we ask, neither have we deserved it. But we pray that He would give us everything by grace, for we daily sin much and deserve nothing but punishment; and we on our part will heartily forgive and readily do good to those who sin against us.

And lead us not into temptation. God certainly tempts no one to sin, but we pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world and our own flesh may not deceive us nor lead us into misbelief, despair and other shameful sin and vice; and though we be thus tempted, that we may still in the end overcome and retain the victory.

But deliver us from evil. We pray in this petition, as the sum of all, that our Father in heaven would deliver us from every evil of body and soul, property and honor; and at last, when the hour of death shall come, grant us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this valley of sorrow to Himself in heaven.

For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen. Amen means that we should be sure that these petitions are acceptable to our Father in heaven and are heard by Him; for He himself has commanded us so to pray and has promised to hear us. Amen, Amen: that is, Yes, Yes, it shall be so.



2 Chronicles 7:14–16 “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place. For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.”

Matthew 18:19–20 “Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

Acts 1:14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Romans 16:17 Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.

1 Corinthians 1:10 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.



God wants each of us to pray, but He also wants us to come together to pray. Like participation in the Lord’s Supper, our prayers together express a unity in faith. What caution should we take then whenever we pray with others?

.....

4.2.2 The Divine Service

Lutherans recognize the true church where the Word of God is taught in its purity and where the Sacraments are rightly administered. These marks are *objective*, or solid. They are based on what anyone can read in the Bible. Therefore, there is a biblical explanation for the elements of our worship, and our service is constructed around God’s Word. Lutheran services are filled with objective events that bring us to the cross of Christ and give us the forgiveness that He won once, for all.

The divine service is the one place where all the different aspects of the Church come together. Here is where the Church does its greatest service to the community, by witnessing accurately and boldly to God’s truth. Here is where non-members will discover the greatest treasures of all time. Here is where Christians come to receive the eternal gifts of God: forgiveness of sins, and a new birth through Jesus Christ into a life that will never end.

Our worship services are chiefly services of God to us, where He comes to create and sustain faith in our hearts through the means He has given for that purpose. Our worship also contains many times when we return thanksgiving, praise, and prayer

in response to God's grace. Finally, some parts do double duty, both teaching us the Word of God and providing an organized response.

The Gifts of God We are sensitive in our worship planning both to the spiritual needs of the congregation and to the instruction of our Lord. More than anything else, Christians need to be recharged and refocused on Sunday with the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ. God has promised us the power of this forgiveness in the preaching of His *Word* (Romans 10:14-15), in the *Sacrament of Baptism* (1 Peter 3:21, Ephesians 5:26), and in the *Sacrament of the Altar* (Matthew 26:26-28, 1 Corinthians 10:16). Accordingly, our worship is centered on these events as God's service to us. Our Lord Himself meets our spiritual needs through His Word and the Sacraments. We ensure that these needs are met at each church service through the use of a standard order of worship, or liturgy.

Another important part of our worship is the *confession of sin* and the *absolution*. This event should remind each of us of our Baptism, just as the *Small Catechism* says concerning the Keys and Confession. God has promised to hear us and to forgive us, without limit. And so we bring our burdens of guilt before His altar and bow our hearts in humble submission. The pastor then announces the forgiveness of God as the voice of Christ Himself. We can firmly believe this, because Jesus promised "He who hears you, hears me" (Luke 10:16).

When we use the Means of Grace in our worship, our faith is strengthened by the working of the Holy Spirit. We actually receive the forgiveness of sins that God's Son won on the cross. There are also parts of the service that give us opportunity to respond to these rich blessings.

Our Response to God One response is our confession of faith, in which we recite together one of the three universal (or "ecumenical") Christian *creeds*: the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and sometimes the Athanasian Creed. These were crafted in the early centuries of the New Testament to summarize briefly the chief parts of what we believe. This is an important part of our service. It brings us together in the unity of our common faith, and it expresses that faith in such a way that we can carry it into our daily lives. The creeds were based on the formula for Baptism that our Lord gave us in Matthew 28:19, so reciting the Creed is an excellent way of reminding ourselves of just what our Baptism means, and the forgiveness and eternal life it gives.

We also include several *prayers* in the service. They are another special response to God's grace. We thank Him for His gifts, and ask Him to continue His blessings. There are usually two short prayers called "collects" that address specific needs in that church service. One summarizes the main topic of the day, giving thanks and praise, while including a simple petition from the congregation as a whole. The other is usually the closing collect, thanking God for his divine service and asking for the continued presence of His Word in our hearts. Another prayer commonly follows the sermon, and comes before the offering. It's called the "General Prayer" or the "Prayer of the Church." In this prayer, the Church unites in asking God for things such as peace in the land, good weather, and good government. We also pray for orphans, widows, those who are sick or in trouble, and those with special needs. In particular, we ask for unity in the Christian Church based on the pure Word of God.

Christian Hymns Finally, what would a church service be without singing? The Lutheran Church has historically been known as “the singing church” because of our powerful *hymns* and liturgy. For most of its existence, the Lutheran Church has even sung the Bible readings and the collects in the church service, whenever it was possible. Today, we have a myriad of hymns from lots of sources. The hymns in our *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* were carefully chosen and collected for their beauty and faithfulness to God’s truth. Overall, there are two great purposes that these hymns serve in our worship: they teach us the Christian doctrines of the Bible in ways that are easy to grasp and remember, and they aid us in our worshipful response to God’s grace: a response of praise, prayer, and thanksgiving. Many churches today have added another purpose to their hymns: entertainment. The confessional Lutheran Church has resisted this trend, because a focus on entertainment detracts from the main purpose of God’s service. Besides, there are other, more appropriate settings for musical entertainment, some of which may also take place in the church building.

Not all the hymns in our services are on their own page with a hymn number. There are a handful that have been treasured over the ages so greatly that they have been placed into the liturgy itself. Each serves a special purpose in its liturgical placement, expressing the Church’s responses and prayers during the course of the gracious dialogue between God and man. The *Gloria in Excelsis* (“Glory in the Highest”) follows the wonderful Words of the absolution, echoing the song of the angels at the birth of our Lord. The *Sanctus* (“Holy”) expresses the awe and wonder of the church as we anticipate the Sacramental presence of our Savior in the Sacrament of the Altar. It’s based on the Words of the angels in Isaiah 6:3. The *Agnus Dei* (“Lamb of God”), is a special prayer addressed to Christ, identified by John the Baptizer in John 1:29 as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” This is sung after the Words of institution are spoken over the elements of bread and wine, recognizing the real presence of Christ’s body and blood under those elements.

There are other standard hymns as well, used at various times in various liturgies. Three that are included in our orders of Matins and Vespers are the *Benedictus*, the *Nunc Dimittis*, and the *Magnificat*. These are based on the songs of Zechariah, Simeon, and Mary, respectively, recorded in the first two chapters of St. Luke’s Gospel. Another hymn in the order of Matins is the *Te Deum Laudamus*, a very old hymn of praise and prayer to God for all the spiritual blessings of salvation.

The Church Year You might wonder where the readings come from that we use each Sunday, or how the pastor chooses the collects or his sermon text. Almost always, these things are determined by the Church year. Like the regular year, it’s composed of seasons, beginning on the fourth Sunday before Christmas. You can find a listing of all the seasons and various festival days on page 5 of the *Hymnary*. Here are those seasons and what they observe:

Advent A season of repentance in preparation for the advent (coming) of Christ.

Christmas The time of our Savior’s birth.

Epiphany A season of joy when we celebrate the spread of the Gospel to Gentiles.

Pre-Lent and Lent Another season of repentance as we examine our Savior’s path to the cross.

Holy Week The busiest time of the Church year, when we recognize special events in the last week and passion of Jesus Christ’s life on earth.

Easter A time of great joy in celebration of the resurrection of Christ. The Easter message should be a part of every season.

Pentecost Our celebration of the Holy Spirit’s work of building the Church on earth.

Trinity The longest season, in which we focus more on the life of a Christian and less on the life of Christ.

On pages 199–203 of the *Hymnary* you will find all the Scripture lessons organized into lectionaries. The Historic Lectionary dates to the first few hundred years after Christ. On pages 142–166 you will find other elements of the liturgy that have come to us from ancient times. You may find the prayers from page 167 through 172 to be useful in your private or family devotions. There are prayers for any morning and evening, as well as prayers for mornings and evenings on each day of the week.

4.2.3 Christian Fellowship

If you’re unfamiliar with Lutheran churches, then you may not understand some of the words we use. The word “synod” is taken from the Greek word for “road” or “pathway” with a prefix meaning “together.” A **synod** is a collection of congregations which are walking together down the same path. By joining together, small congregations can pool their resources and support missionaries and projects much greater than they could support on their own. Currently there are three large Lutheran synods in the United States. The Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) is smaller than those three. There are also a number of bodies that are smaller than the ELS.

Why have congregations banded together into synods this way? In general, there are two reasons: historical roots and doctrine. Some, like the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), have roots among the German immigrants of the 1800’s. The ELS, on the other hand, has its roots in Norwegian immigrants. The largest synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), is also one of the newest, having come into existence in 1987 with the combination of three smaller synods.

Sadly, a school of thought that questions many central articles of the Christian faith has dominated the ELCA’s schools and administration, even dating from well before the 1987 merger. Most of the lay people don’t realize it, but their seminaries actually train ELCA pastors to give up the Christian faith they learned in Sunday School as children. This state of affairs is well documented in a book written by a former ELCA pastor and one of his members, *What’s Going on among the Lutherans?*. Our Church library has a copy. It should be clear why the ELS did not participate in the merger that produced the ELCA: it would have been unfaithful to God’s Word.

The other large synod that currently exists is the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LC-MS). There was a time when the WELS, the ELS, and the LC-MS cooperated in mission work, freely transferred members from one congregation to another, exchanged pastors and teachers, and enjoyed other benefits of Christian fellowship. They composed most of the Synodical Conference. However, from the 1930's to the 1950's, the LC-MS began to change its priority from faithfulness to the Scripture to achieving unity with Lutherans everywhere. As a result, the ELS and the WELS left the Synodical Conference.

Today, the WELS and the ELS remain in fellowship with one another. There are also Lutheran Church bodies around the globe who have joined with the ELS and the WELS to form the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference: an international body of Lutherans in full doctrinal agreement with one another on the basis of the Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. We have Lutheran brothers and sisters in places like Norway, Sweden, Latvia, Germany, Peru, Chile, Ukraine, the Czech Republic, Japan, and Zambia. Other Lutheran Church bodies are added periodically.

Of course, there are many Church bodies that are not Lutheran, from the Roman Catholic Church to Methodists to Baptists to the Russian Orthodox. Their origins are beyond the scope of this class, but we can say that wherever the Word of God and the Sacraments are found, there will be some Christians present. However, wherever a Church teaches contrary to Scripture for some reason, we are bound by God's Word not to seek outward fellowship where no *doctrinal* fellowship exists. That means we should not participate in their worship. In particular, we should be wary of participating in prayer and the Sacrament of the Altar along with people who do not believe as we do.

Sometimes a group is not known as a Church, yet still teaches things that are contrary to Scripture. Examples of this are the Masonic Lodge and the "animal" lodges. To a degree, even the Boy Scouts of America promotes a works-righteous attitude, and encourage common expressions of faith between members who believe differently. When we become members or participate in any such group, we should examine their beliefs and practices in light of God's Word to see whether it's compatible with our own faith.

On the other hand, whenever we do have doctrinal unity with others, we should treasure it. Take advantage of the opportunities that God gives you to worship and enjoy fellowship with your brothers and sisters in Christ. It's a great blessing to have the Word of God available to us: taught and preached at Church, and ready for devotions in the home. Use it when you can, and God will keep you safe in the palm of His hand until the time comes for this life to end, and for your life in heaven to begin.

Appendix A

Review and Discussion Questions

The Sacred Scriptures

1. What are the ways that man can know about God, and what are the limits of each?
2. What is the function of the Gospel?
3. What (in general) are the Lutheran Confessions, and how does our church use them?
4. What does it mean that the Scriptures are inerrant?
5. What is meant by the term “Verbal Inspiration?”

The Nature of Man

1. What is the difference between man in his original created state and man after the Fall into sin?
2. What is meant by the term “Original Sin” or “Original Guilt?”
3. What are the effects of original sin on our bodies, minds, and souls?
4. What is the purpose of God’s Law? Explain the three uses of the Law as a mirror, a curb, and a guide.

The Nature of God

1. Describe some of the qualities of God that we know from the world around us, from our consciences, and from Scripture.
2. What is meant by the “grace” of God?
3. What two facts are important to remember about the nature of the Trinity?
4. Which Person of the Trinity became a man? (John 3:16)

Creation

1. What is the purpose for having creeds like the Apostles' Creed?
2. What does the Apostle's Creed tell us about what God the Father has done and who He is?
3. According to the Scriptures, how did God create all things?

The Nature of Christ

1. In what way does the Old Testament teach about Christ? The New Testament?
2. What does the Bible teach about the person Jesus Christ? What does the "personal union" of His two natures mean?
3. Why did the Savior have to be both true God and true Man to accomplish our salvation?
4. What is the difference between what we call the "humiliation" of Christ and His "exaltation?"

The Work of Christ

1. Describe how Jesus restored man to perfection before God.
2. What is the biblical doctrine of "Justification?"
3. What do the terms "active obedience" and "passive obedience" mean?
4. What do we mean by Christ's "vicarious atonement?"
5. What was accomplished by the death of Christ?
6. What does the resurrection of Christ mean to us?

The Work of the Spirit

1. What work has the Holy Spirit done, and continue to do?
2. Why can't we by our own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ or come to Him? So how *do* we end up with faith?
3. What is meant by "conversion" or "regeneration?"
4. What components are there in a believer's faith?
5. Is faith a good work by which we deserve salvation, or is it the hand through which God's gifts in Christ are received?

Prayer

1. What is a simple definition for prayer?
2. What things should our prayers contain?
3. What effect does prayer have? What effect does prayer not have?
4. What is our model prayer?

The Means of Grace

1. What do we mean by the term “Means of Grace?”
2. What is included under the label “Means of Grace?”
3. What is a sacrament? Which are the sacraments that Christ has given to the Church?
4. What is the power and meaning of Baptism?
5. Should young children be Baptized?

The Keys and Ministry

1. What is the office of the Keys?
2. How do we use the “absolution?”
3. How do we use the authority to retain sins?
4. What does it mean to be a part of the “Universal Priesthood?”
5. What is the importance of the public ministry of the Word?

The Lord’s Supper

1. In what books of the Bible is the institution of the Lord’s Supper recorded?
2. What does Jesus say the bread and wine are?
3. For what purpose are the bread and wine given?
4. What does it mean to prepare oneself for receiving the Lord’s Supper?
5. What does it mean to be unworthy to receive the Lord’s Supper?
6. Why is the Sacrament also referred to as a “communion?”

The Church

1. What's the difference between the "Holy Christian Church" and a local congregation?
2. How can we know who is a member of the "Holy Christian Church" and who is not?
3. Where can the "Holy Christian Church" be found?

The Christian Life

1. What is the motivation for a Christian's good works?
2. Good works are visible evidence of something that's invisible. What is that invisible thing they indicate?
3. How can we know the difference between something that's good to do and something that's not?
4. How can it be said that God judges us on the basis of our works?
5. What is a good summary of God's law?

Death and Eternal Life

1. What is the goal and certain hope of the Christian faith?
2. On what basis do we have this hope?
3. What is death, and how does the Christian faith make it different?
4. What use will our bodies be after they are decayed?
5. What are some of the signs that Jesus gave to indicate that He will soon return?
6. Who knows exactly when Jesus will return?