

See Matt. 4:48; Lev. 19:2; Deut. 27:26; Rom. 3:20

SIN

Lutherans teach that every thought, word, and deed contrary to God's Law is sin; that every human being is a sinner by birth; that all evil in the world is the consequence of man's sinning; and that sin is wholly damnable.

I John 3:4; John 3:6; Gen. 8:21; Rom. 5:12; Psalm 5:4

THE GOSPEL

Lutherans teach that the Gospel is not a new or higher law, but the special revelation of that which a loving and merciful God through Christ has done, and still does, for the salvation of mankind; that it freely offers to all sinners the righteousness which is in Christ Jesus; and that it will save forever those who trustingly accept its promises.

See Ezek. 33:11; I Tim. 2:4; Luke 4:18-19; John 3:16; Rom. 3:21-24; 1:16

THE SAVIOR

Lutherans teach that Jesus Christ is the son of God and equal to the Father in every respect; that He is also the Son of the Virgin Mary and was made man in order that He might redeem the world; that He satisfied the demands of the divine Law for all mankind by keeping God's Commandments in our stead; that He bore the punishment of our sins by suffering and dying in our stead on the cross; that He rose bodily from the dead and lives today; and that He will come visibly for the second and last time at the world's end to judge the living and the dead.

John 5:20, 23; 10:30; 14:9, 19; Matt. 1:18-25; I Pet. 2:2; 2:24 Gal. 4:4-5; 3:13; I John 2:1-2; Rom. 4:25; Acts 1:11; 10:42

JUSTIFICATION

Lutherans teach that everything needed to reconcile the world to God was done when Jesus Christ gave His life on the cross; that God has for Christ's sake declared mankind free from the debt and guilt of sin; that this justification of all mankind becomes the property of the individual through personal acceptance thereof; and that all who thus by faith apply to themselves God's gracious

declaration of reconciliation are righteous in the sight of God - not by any merit of their own, but solely by the grace of God for Christ's sake, through faith.

II Cor. 5:19; Rom. 5:18-19; 3:22-24; Acts 10:45; Eph. 2:8

REPENTANCE

Lutherans teach that repentance, in the Biblical sense of the term, is acknowledgment of, and sincere regret for sin, together with a trustful appeal to God for forgiveness in Christ's Name; that it is a condition of the heart without which no man can hope to be saved; and that every truly repentant sinner is assured of God's free and full pardon.

Isa. 55:6-7; Matt. 4:17; Mark 1:15; Luke 18:13-14; Acts 2:38; II Cor. 7:10

FAITH

Lutherans teach that faith is a penitent sinner's acceptance of Jesus Christ as his real and only Savior and full reliance on His merits for forgiveness of sins and salvation; that such faith is not a personal achievement or an act of human merit, but a work of the Holy Spirit; that he who endures in this faith to the end will be really, fully, and eternally saved; and that without it no salvation is possible.

John 1:12-16; 3:36; Acts 10:43; 16:32 Gal. 2:16; I Cor. 12:3; I Pet. 1:5; Matt. 24:13;

CONVERSION

Lutherans teach that conversion is not a mere changing of habits, but a change of heart, a spiritual rebirth of man; that it is brought about by the power of God working through the Word; and that it takes place in and through the acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

Joel 2:13; Ezek. 11:19; Jer. 31:18; John 1:12-13; Rom. 10:17; I John 5:1

SANCTIFICATION

Lutherans teach that holiness of life and conduct follows conversion and is the fruit and outcome of faith; that all true Christians must be, and are, active in good works; and that, though such sanctification is progressive, perfection therein will not be attained until man enters eternal life.

John 3:3; II Cor. 7:1; Gal. 5:6, 25; I Thess. 4:3; Eph. 2:10; I Peter 1:15; Rom. 7:15-25; Phil. 3:12-14

THE CHURCH

Lutherans teach that there is an INVISIBLE Church, which consists of all such as in their hearts truly and sincerely accept Jesus Christ as their Savior; that this Church is one; that Jesus Christ is its only Head and Lord; that all members thereof enjoy equal rights; that it may be found wherever the Gospel of Christ is known; and that it will endure forever.

Lutherans also teach that there is a VISIBLE Christian Church, consisting of all such as profess the Christian faith and gather about God's Word; that among these there are hypocrites, defenders of false teachings, and supporters of unchristian practices; and that it is the duty of every sincere Christian to unite with that section of the visible church which stands for pure preaching and right practices and to avoid religious fellowship with all such as depart from the divine Word.

John 18:36; 8:31-32; Luke 17:20-23; I Cor. 12:13; 11:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 2:19-22; Isa. 55:10-11; Matt. 16:18; 13:47-48; 22:2-14; 15:9; II Thess. 3:6-14; Rom. 16:17; II Cor. 6:14-18

BAPTISM

Lutherans teach that Baptism is a divinely instituted washing of regeneration; that it is intended for old and young without exception and may be administered by sprinkling, pouring, or immersing; and that by it all who in faith receive this Sacrament are given the grace of God, forgiveness of sins, and the promise of eternal life.

Matt. 28:19; Titus 3:5; Mark 10:14; Acts 16:15; Heb. 10:22; Acts 22:16; 2:38; Mark 16:16

THE LORD'S SUPPER

Lutherans teach that the body and blood of Jesus Christ are truly present in, with, and under the bread and wine in the Sacrament of Holy Communion, are taken by all who eat and drink at the Lord's Table, are received by the believing Christian for the strengthening of his faith and his growth in godliness, and should be given to those only who have professed their Christian faith.

Matt. 26:26-28; 7:6; I Cor. 10:16; 11:26-29

PRAYER

Lutherans teach that prayer is a Christian's communion

with God; that, though it is not an act by which merit or reward is won, it is divinely commanded, should be regularly practiced by every Christian for his own sake and for the benefit of others, and, if made in faith, has God's definite and sure promises of gracious acceptance and ready answer.

Ps. 19:14; 50:15; Matt. 7:7-8; 21:22; I Tim. 2:1, 8; I John 5:14; Isa. 65:24

DEVIL AND HELL

Lutherans teach that there is a great host of powerful evil spirits (called devils by the Bible), who are the bitter enemies of God and His Church, and who have been cast down to hell; and that at the Last Day all those human beings who have died without faith in Christ will be consigned to the same hell of eternal torment and doom.

Eph. 6:12; I Pet. 5:8-9; Jude 6; Matt. 25:41; Isa. 66:24

DEATH AND AFTER

Lutherans teach that the body, which in death was separated from the soul, will be raised on the Last Day and reunited with the soul; that all men will be judged by Jesus Christ; that all believers in Christ will be given eternal life in heaven, while all unbelievers will be sent into eternal condemnation.

John 5:28-29; Matt. 25:31-46

SPECIAL ISSUES

CREEDS

Lutherans teach that a creed, as the word itself implies (credo = I believe), is simply a statement of what one believes; that every professing Christian has a creed whether he admits it or not; that a true creed is not an addition to the Bible, but only a necessary emphasis of the truth against those who misuse the Bible for the support of their false teachings; and that without a creed no church can hope to save itself from the inrushing flood of errors.

I Pet. 3:15; Matt. 10:32

RELIGION AND SCIENCE

Lutherans teach that Christianity and true science do not disagree; that, where the utterances of present day scientists differ from the revelation of divine truth, the Bible is always right and human systems are wrong;

and that the theory of evolution, which largely determines the views held by many scientists today, is not true science, but mere guess work, was invented by infidels, is being used for the purpose of undermining the trustworthiness of the Bible, tends to destroy spiritual life and to corrupt the morals of humanity, is flatly contradictory of divine truth, and must therefore be rejected.

I Timothy 6:20

CHURCH UNION

Lutherans teach that the divided state of the visible church is a deplorable situation and condition, for which, however, not the supporters of divine truth, but the teachers and upholders of false doctrines are responsible; that there can be no true outward union without inward unity of faith; and that the hope for a united Christianity will become a reality just as soon as all professing Christians have become one in rejecting all error and accepting every doctrine set forth in the Word of God.

Rom. 16:17; Eph. 4:3-6

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Lutherans teach that the American principle providing for the separation of church and state is in harmony with the spirit and letter of the Bible; that, therefore, the enforcement of civil laws is the business of the state and not of the church; that the church addresses itself to the human heart and operates, not through compulsion, but by persuasion; and that interference of church and state in each other's affairs cannot but result in religious persecution and the destruction of free government.

John 18:36; Matt. 22:21; Rom. 13:1-7

DIVORCE

Lutherans teach that the marriage bond must be kept inviolate; that before God no divorce is valid except in cases of fornication or malicious desertion; and that the present tendency to make light of engagement and the marriage relation must result in immeasurable harm to the home, the children, the church, the state - in fact, to the whole structure of human society.

Matt. 19:9; I Cor. 7:15

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What Lutherans Believe

In the following paragraphs we shall give a brief summary of Lutheran teachings.

THE BIBLE

Lutherans teach that the Bible in all its words is the Word of God; that, consequently, all the facts related in it are absolutely true; that it is without error; that it needs no human interpretation; that it is the only divine truth known on earth; that it should be diligently heard and studied; and that it will save all who trustfully accept it.

See II Peter 1:21; I Corinthians 2:13; John 5:39; Luke 11:28

GOD

Lutherans teach that God is triune, i.e., one God in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that these three persons are equal in all things; that to ignore and deny one is to disavow all.

See Deuteronomy 6:4; Matt. 28:19; John 5:23; I John 2:23

MAN

Lutherans teach that man is not the product of an alleged evolution, but that he was made by God through an act of direct creation; that he was given an immortal soul, was originally endowed with perfect holiness, and created for eternal life; that, however, he sinned, deprived himself of a loving communion with God, became wholly depraved, and fell a victim to death; and that in his natural state he cannot, by any powers of his own, re-establish right relationships with his God.

See Gen. 2:7, 1:27, 3; Ps.14:3; 146:1 Rom. 5:12; Isa. 64:6

GOD'S LAW

Lutherans teach that God's Law demands perfection of heart, thought, word, and deed; that it wholly condemns all who transgress it; that it cannot save sinners; and that its chief function since the Fall is to lead man to the knowledge of his depraved conditions.