

# What Lutherans Believe

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

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## The Fundamentals: A Refresher

### But first, some shameless trolling for future class topics:

1. Which elements of Lutheran church practice, teaching, or doctrine are of the most concern to you?
2. Are any of these controversial in our society? In our church?
3. Which are the most opaque, or difficult to understand?
4. Are there any that are difficult to accept?



## Foundational Principles for Bible Study

- Inspiration. The Bible is "God breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16). Although Genesis is the first "Book of Moses", God is the author. It's easy to think "The Old Testament contains law, the New Testament contains gospel," but in fact we find both of these two great doctrines (law and gospel) throughout the Bible.
- Purpose. The main purpose of the Bible is to make us "...wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15). When we read the Bible with that in mind, we read it not only to learn history and hear about interesting people; we read the Old Testament in anticipation of the Messiah, and the New Testament as the singular revelation of Jesus Christ as our Messiah, Savior, and Lord.
- Method. Sections and even entire books of the Bible have been interpreted and re-interpreted numerous ways by different Christians and churches for many years, but perhaps never so much as in the last century or so. LC-MS Lutherans interpret what we read using the "historical/grammatical" method. That means that we accept the accounts in the Biblical text to be actual historical events unless there is something in the grammar or the words themselves that indicate they are to be taken differently. God used, and uses, real events, real human beings, and real human languages to communicate eternal truths to us.
- Context. When we read the Bible we pay attention to the context of the passage. While there are many verses in the Bible that stand alone and don't require context to be clearly understood, *there is never a downside* to reading the entire paragraph, chapter, book, and even other Biblical books to inform our understanding.
- "Sola Scriptura" all the way. Related to paying attention to context, because God is the Author of the entire Bible, and because God never intends to confuse us (I Corinthians 14:33), we always seek to "let Scripture interpret Scripture." God often addresses the same matter in two or more places in Scripture. Very often one passage can help us understand another passage. Therefore we seek to always let the clear passages help us interpret the obscure ones, not the other way around.

Given the above principles, then, it follows that Lutherans consider the Bible to be both the **source** and the **norm** of all Christian theology.

## **What Lutherans Believe about God**

**One True God:** Exodus 20:3, Isaiah 45:5, 1 Corinthians 8:4

**He is Immutable:** Malachi 3:6, James 1:17

**He is Infinite:** 1 Kings 8:27

**He is Eternal:** Psalm 90:2, 2 Peter 3:8

**He is Omniscient:** Proverbs 15:3, 1 John 3:20

**He is Wise:** Romans 11:33, Job 12:13

**He is Omnipotent:** Psalm 33:9, Psalm 115:3, Luke 1:37

God is a **Trinity** of Persons:

- Genesis 1:26, Isaiah 48:16
- John 17:3, 1 Corinthians 8:6
- 1 John 5:20, John 15:26
- Acts 5:3-4

**He is the Creator:** Genesis 1:1, John 1:1-3, Colossians 1:16, Hebrews 1:2, Hebrews 11:3, Colossians 1:17

**He was pleased with His creation:** Genesis 1:31, Psalm 104:24, Revelation 4:11

**He preserves His creation:** Colossians 1:16-17, Acts 17:27-28

**He does not provoke evil in man:** Matthew 12:36, Romans 2:14-15

**He has dominion over all:** Matthew 5:45

**He uses evil to accomplish good:** Genesis 50:20, Romans 8:28

## **What Lutherans Believe about Jesus Christ**

**He is true God:** John 1:1-3, Colossians 2:8-10, 1 John 5:20, John 10:30

**He is true Man:** John 1:14, Galatians 4:4-5. Romans 1:3

**He was humbled and exalted:** Philippians 2:5-11

**He is the only mediator between God and man:** 1 Timothy 2:5, John 14:6

**He is the only way to salvation:** Acts 4:12

**He had no sin:** 2 Corinthians 5:21

**He was born to be a sacrifice:** 1 John 2:2

**Righteousness comes only through Him:** Romans 3:21-26

**He rose from the dead:** 1 Corinthians 15:3-5

**He “Takes away” our sin:** John 1:29

**He is now “higher than all the heavens”:** Ephesians 4:10-12

**He defines where the Church is:** Matthew 18:20

**His will and work were/are (the same as) the Father’s:** Matthew 5:17-30

**He is the King who will judge and save:** Matthew 25:31-46

## **What Lutherans Believe about the Holy Spirit**

**He is a co-equal person of the Trinity:** Genesis 1:2. Matthew 28:19, Deuteronomy 6:4, 1 Corinthians 8:4

**He is the Creator:** Job 33:4

**He is omnipresent and omniscient:** Psalm 139:7-10, 1 Corinthians 2:10

**He lives in and with believers in Jesus:** 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

**He is the Father of Jesus, the Son of Man:** Luke 1:35

**He is the Divine Agent of and in our baptism:** John 1:33

**He was Jesus' Divine Agent, too:** Matthew 3:16, Luke 4:16-21

**He cannot be understood apart from faith:** 1 Corinthians 2:14

**Only by His power can anyone have faith in Jesus:** 1 Corinthians 12:3

**Rejection of the Holy Spirit is rejection of Jesus and the Father:** Matthew 12:31-32, Luke 12:10

**He is "Visible Presence" of God in His believers:** Acts 8:17, 9:17, 10:44

**He "renews" His believers:** Titus 3:5-6

**He is the One who guarantees our salvation:** Ephesians 1:13-14

**He authored the scriptures:** 2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21

**He empowered the prophets:** Ezekiel 2:2-3, Micah 3:8

**He is promised to all believers:** John 14:16ff

**According to Pastor K., the "Acts of the Apostles" should instead be titled the "Acts of the Holy Spirit":** Acts 1:5,8, Acts 2