

## **When Lutherans Open the Scriptures**

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### **From the Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

Chapter 2. CONFESSIO OF FAITH

2.01. This church confesses the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

2.02. This church confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.

a. *Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate*, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.

b. *The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God*, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

c. *The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God*. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.

2.03. This church accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.

### **A Brief Instruction on What to Look for and Expect in the Gospels (Martin Luther, 1521)**

And the gospel should really not be something written, but a spoken word which brought forth the Scriptures, as Christ and the apostles have done. This is why Christ himself did not write anything but only spoke. He called his teaching not Scripture but gospel, meaning good news or a proclamation that is spread not by pen but by word of mouth. So we go on and make the gospel into a law book, a teaching of commandments, changing Christ into a Moses, the One who would help us into simply an instructor.<sup>1</sup>

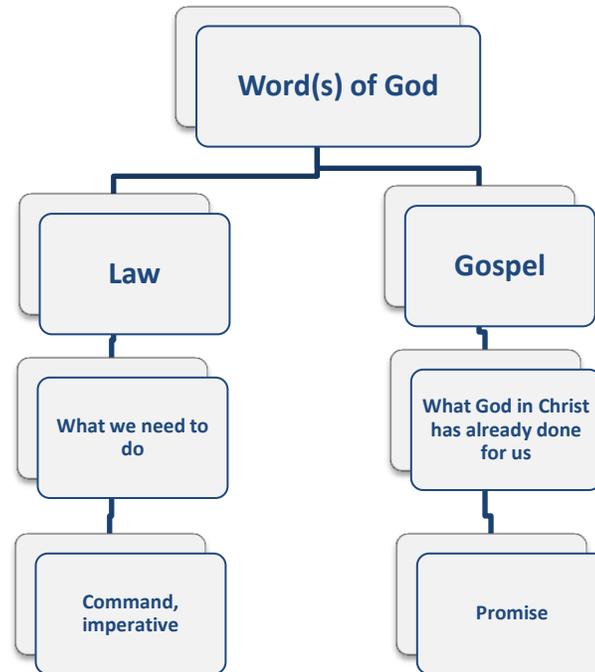
### **Apology of the Augsburg Confession**

All Scripture should be divided into these two main topics: the law and the promises. In some places it communicates the law. In other places it communicates the promise concerning Christ, either when it promises that Christ will come and on account of him offers the forgiveness of sins, justification, and eternal life, or when in the gospel itself, Christ, after he appeared, promises the forgiveness of sins, justification, and eternal life.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>*Luther's Works*, Volume 35, 124.

<sup>2</sup>Kolb, Robert ; Wengert, Timothy J. ; Arand, Charles P., *The Book of Concord : The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. Minneapolis : Fortress Press, 2000, page 121.



### How Christians Should Regard Moses (Martin Luther, 1525)

“...it is true that God commanded this of Moses and. spoke thus to the people; but we are not this people. Land, God spoke also to Adam; but that does not make me Adam. God commanded Abraham to put his son to death [Gen. 22:2]; but that does not make me Abraham and obligate me to put my son to death. God spoke also with David. *It is all God’s word. But let God’s word be what it may, I must pay attention and know to whom God’s word is addressed. ...*

One must deal cleanly with the Scriptures. From the very beginning the word has come to us in various ways. *It is not enough simply to look and see whether this is God’s word, whether God has said it; rather we must look and see to whom it has been spoken, whether it fits us.* That makes all the difference between night and day. God said to David, “Out of you shall come the king,” etc. [II Sam. 7:13]. But this does not pertain to me, nor has it been spoken to me. He can indeed speak to me if he chooses to do so. You must keep your eye on the word that applies to you, that is spoken to you.

The word in Scripture is of two kinds: the first does not pertain or apply to me, the other kind does. *And upon that word which does pertain to me I can boldly trust and rely, as upon a strong rock.* But if it does not pertain to me, then I should stand still. The false prophets pitch in and say, “Dear people, this is the word of God.” That is true; we cannot deny it. But we are not the people. God has not given us the directive.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *Luther's Works, Vol. 35, 170*