

Bible Truths For Lutheran Friends

The confessions of faith of Lutheran churches commendably follow Martin Luther in teaching many essential Biblical doctrines, such as the Trinity, the inspiration of Scripture, and the authority of the Word of God for faith and practice. Faithful Lutherans also agree with what the Bible teaches about the sinfulness of humanity. God's Word teaches that all men sinned in Adam (Rom 5:12-19) and all are born with a terribly sinful nature: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer 17:9). Because of this sin, "the wickedness of man [is] great in the earth, and . . . every imagination of the thoughts of his heart [is] only evil continually" (Ge 6:5). Indeed, you are so sinful by nature that until you are "born again" (Jn 3:3) and given a new nature by God (Eze 11:19) even your most seemingly righteous actions are actually sinful: "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" (Is 64:6). You must recognize that "there is none righteous, no, not one . . . all the world [is] guilty before God" (Rom 3:10, 19). God's standard is: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Mt 5:48), but you have fallen so miserably short of His standard of sinless perfection that you—like all the children of Adam—actually cannot please God at all until God sees you with a righteousness as pure and perfect as His own. Luther described this complete depravity of man in his book *The Bondage of the Will*, and Lutheran confessions of faith also agree: "[S]ince the fall of Adam all men begotten in the natural way are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence [sinful lusts and desires]; and that this disease, or vice of origin, is truly sin, even now condemning and bringing eternal death upon those not born again" (*Augsburg Confession (AC)*, Article 2).

Indeed, any and every failure to perfectly conform to the holy standard of God's Law is sin (1 Jn 3:4), but you have committed numberless sins, every one of which is written down in God's books (Rev 20:11-15). The Lord Jesus Christ said that unjust anger is murder (Mt 5:21-22), and a lustful thought is adultery (Mt 5:27-28), so you are a murderer and an adulterer. You have lied (Prov 6:16), been proud (Pr 6:16-19), bitter (Ro 3:14), unthankful (2 Tim 3:2), covetous (2 Tim 3:2), and hypocritical (Is 33:14). You continually break the greatest commandment of all: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God

with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” (Mt 22:37). Indeed, until you are born again, you “cannot please God” (Rom 8:8) in any way, but are “defiled and unbelieving” with “nothing pure; but even [your] mind and conscience is defiled” (Tit 1:15). You cannot truly please God at all—but even one act of sin makes you deserve the wrath of God and His judgment! “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (Jam 2:10). God’s Law warns: “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Gal 3:10), yet you have not continuously and perfectly obeyed, so you are cursed. Since “the wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23), you are subject to both physical death, the separation of the soul and spirit from the body (Heb 9:27), and spiritual death, the separation of man from God. The sobering truth is that you are “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:1), your “damnation is just” (Rom 3:8), and you are consequently headed for the second death, eternal separation from God in the lake of fire: “This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev 20:14-15). In the lake of fire you “shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and [you] shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of [your] torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and [you] have no rest day nor night” (Rev 14:10-11). You need to admit that you are a terrible and exceedingly wicked sinner who deserves nothing other than the wrath of God in hell, or you will never be saved (Lu 5:32). As Martin Luther said: “[T]he Law was instituted . . . to tear to pieces that monster called self-righteousness. As long as a person thinks he is right he is going to be incomprehensibly proud and presumptuous. He is going to hate God, despise His grace and mercy, and ignore the promises in Christ. The Gospel of the free forgiveness of sins through Christ will never appeal to the self-righteous. This monster of self-righteousness, this stiff-necked beast, needs a big axe. And that is what the Law is, a big axe. Accordingly, the proper use and function of the Law is to threaten until the conscience is scared stiff. . . . The Law is a mirror to show a person what he is like, a sinner who is guilty of death, and worthy of everlasting punishment.” (*Commentary on Galatians (COG)*, 3:19). Have you accepted the teaching of God’s Word about your own sinfulness? Have you ever come to a point where you recognized that you were headed to hell for your

sins—and that eternal damnation was exactly what you deserved in strict justice because of your incurably sinful nature and your awful crimes against God? If not, you will certainly be damned because of your self-righteous pride. “Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished” (Prov 16:5). Hear the words of the Son of God: “Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” (Mt 23:33)

Happily, as the Bible teaches and Martin Luther recognized, God has provided a way of salvation from sin and hell through His Son, Jesus Christ! The Lord Jesus existed from eternity past with the Father and the Holy Spirit, the three Persons of the one and only true God (1 Jn 5:7). The Son took to Himself a human nature, so that, although He was still 100% God, He became 100% Man as well. He lived a sinless life and then died on the cross, where His Father “made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor 5:21). Christ then rose bodily from the grave and ascended to heaven, showing that He had paid in full the penalty for your sin. He will soon return to judge the world. On the cross, God laid your transgressions on His Son, who suffered to pay your sin debt. The Law demands perfect righteousness for entry into heaven, but Christ died as your Substitute so that His death and shed blood could pay for your sin, and you could have His righteousness put to your account and be counted perfectly righteous in God’s sight for the Savior’s sake. You can be saved, not through your own works, but through His work; not by your attempts to obey the Law, but by Christ’s perfect obedience to it and death to satisfy it. “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us” (Gal 3:13). “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but [made alive] by the Spirit” (1 Pet 3:18). Since by “one offering he hath perfected for ever” those that are washed in His blood (Heb 10:14; Rev 1:5), there is nothing that you can do to save yourself or to keep yourself saved. “Salvation is of the LORD” (Jon 2:9). Luther said: “Christ took all our sins and died for them on the Cross. . . . Christ was charged with the sins of all men, that He should pay for them with His own blood” (*COG* 3:13).

Both the Bible and Lutheran confessions recognize that faith in Jesus Christ is the only way to have His blood wash away your sins. “He that believeth on the Son hath

everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (Jn 3:36). Saving faith in Jesus Christ involves:

a.) Repentance. “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Lu 13:3). “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out” (Ac 3:19). When you repent, you agree with God that you are as bad as the Bible says you are, you recognize that you are headed to hell and deserve it for your sins, and you turn from your sins to submit unconditionally to God as your Master and trust in His Son. The Lord Jesus said, “Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life [wants to live his own way and will not turn to God’s way] shall lose it [in hell]; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:34-36).

b.) Trust in the Lord Jesus alone to save. You do not trust in or believe on Jesus Christ for salvation if you think that any good deed you have done, are doing, or will do, or any religious ritual, such as baptism or communion, has a particle to do with the forgiveness of your sins. Scripture says, “For by grace [undeserved favor] are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.” (Eph 2:8-9). The Bible states, “to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth [declares righteous based on Christ’s work on the cross] the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. . . . God [credits] righteousness without works . . . a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Rom 4:5-6; 3:28). If salvation is “by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work” (Rom 11:6). You must forsake all confidence in your supposed goodness and place your confidence in the Savior’s death, blood, and righteousness alone. Lutheran confessions agree with Scripture on this truth: “They also are rejected who do not teach that remission of sins comes through faith but command us to merit grace through satisfactions of our own. . . . [M]en cannot be justified [declared righteous] before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for Christ’s sake, through faith . . . their sins are forgiven for Christ’s sake, who,

by His death, has made satisfaction for our sins.” (*AC* 4, 12). As Luther stated: “To keep the Law in order to be justified means to reject grace, to deny Christ, to despise His sacrifice, and to be lost. . . . the true Gospel has it that we are justified by faith alone, without the deeds of the Law. . . . The true way of becoming a Christian is to be justified by faith in Jesus Christ, and not by the works of the Law” (*COG* 2:21; 2:4-5; 2:16).

Have you ever become a Christian? Attending a Lutheran church, trying to live a moral and religious life, being baptized and taking the Lord’s Supper, or being catechized and confirmed do not make you a Christian. Luther was a devout monk without having understood the gospel. He testified: “[B]efore I was enlightened by the Gospel, I was as zealous . . . as ever a man was. I tried hard to live up to every law as best I could. I punished myself with fasting, watching, praying, and other exercises . . . I was so much in earnest that I imposed upon my body more than it could stand. . . . Whatever I did, I did with a single heart to the glory of God” (*COG* 1:14). Yet with all of these moral and religious deeds, he had not understood the way of salvation!

Have you ever come to a specific point in your life where you recognized that you were on your way to hell—that you were lost, and needed to become a Christian? “The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was LOST” (Lu 19:10), and to “call . . . SINNERS to repentance”—not those who think they have no need (Lu 5:31-32). When a lost sinner repents and comes to Christ for salvation, he must agree with God that he is indeed lost and not in any way acceptable to God (Lev 26:40-41; Neh 9:33-35). An unsaved adult or child who does not agree that he really is lost rejects what God’s Word says about who he is and cannot truly repent. Every person on earth who has never come to a specific point where he agreed with God about his wickedness and the fact that he is justly on his way to hell has never truly agreed with God, and has thus never truly repented. Every person who has never truly repented is lost and headed for eternal damnation, even if he has received infant baptism, takes the Lord’s Supper, and is a good Lutheran. There is no difference between those who grow up in Lutheran churches or devout Lutheran homes and those who do not. Nobody has always been a Christian (Eph 2:1-3). Lutheran confessions agree with the Bible that at a particular moment in time—the moment of repentance and faith—one is instantly born again (Jn 3:1-21), passes from death to life, from condemnation to justification, from spiritual death to spiritual life, and

from being a child of the devil to being a child of God (Jn 5:24). The new birth and justification are not a process. Have you ever been lost? Have you ever become a Christian?

Furthermore, simple intellectual assent to the facts of the gospel and the way of salvation are not saving faith. Even memorizing every single truth in a catechism is not the same thing as true repentant faith in Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus warned: “Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted . . . ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 18:3). While repentance involves agreeing with God intellectually (Jer 8:6), there is more to it. Repentance also involves your will—it is a wholehearted turning from sin to Christ, a radical change of direction. “Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions” (Eze 18:30). Repentance is also emotional—it is a change of desire. A “godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation” (2 Cor 7:10). Those who repent “lo[at]h themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations” (Eze 6:9). Repentance is a change of mind, direction, and desire. It is more than just professing Christianity, being baptized, and living a moral life. When you repent, you agree with God about who you are and what you deserve. You turn from all known specific sins, as well as sin in general, to surrender unconditionally to Christ as Lord. You turn from the ungodly way of this world, from false religion, and from self-righteousness, to God. You determine to follow Jesus Christ, whatever the cost. Have you ever repented? The Lord Jesus warned: “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Lu 13:3).

Saving faith in Christ is also more than simply knowing and assenting to Bible truths. It is to “trus[t] in Christ” (Eph 1:12), and to “receive Christ” (Jn 1:12). You must, at a particular point in time, decisively repent and “come to” the Savior to eternally save you (Jn 6:37, 44). The devil knows all kinds of Bible truths, but he is not saved (Jam 2:19). While you must know the facts about how to be saved, you do not have saving faith until you come to a point where you actually trust in the Lord Jesus Christ to justify you, change your heart, and give you eternal life. Until you trust Him, you are still lost. Saving faith says: “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Tim 1:12). Saving faith is being “fully persuaded” of the fact that God promises to save anyone who trusts in Christ’s Person and His work on the cross, and then relying on and resting upon Christ to give you deliverance

from sin and eternal life (Rom 4:20-5:1). Furthermore, true faith will always result in a radically changed life, since “if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor 5:17). Everyone who has truly been saved by faith alone is given a new heart that makes him love God, holiness, and purity of life (Heb 8:10-12; Eph 2:8-10). If you believe “any other gospel” than the one Paul “preached” you are “accursed” (Gal 1:8-9)—headed for eternal damnation in the lake of fire. Have you merely mentally assented to the way of salvation, or have you fully placed your trust in Christ alone? If you think that baptism or communion or any other religious ritual will save or help save you, you are rejecting God’s grace (Gal 5:4-5; 2:21) by trusting partially in these rituals, instead of trusting in Jesus Christ alone, and so are lost. Salvation is by repentant faith alone (Rom 5:1). True faith also always results in a supernatural and radical change of life. Have you ever trusted in Christ? “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (Jn 3:36).

Summing up what God’s Word teaches, dear Lutheran friend, even if you have Bible-believing parents and believe the Bible yourself, attend church faithfully, confess your sins, mentally assent to the doctrine of justification by faith alone and every other doctrine taught in the Bible, and try to live a moral and upright life, IF YOU HAVE NEVER COME TO A SPECIFIC POINT IN YOUR LIFE WHERE YOU HAVE AGREED WITH GOD THAT YOU WERE A LOST, ABOMINABLE, AND WRETCHED SINNER, UNDER THE WRATH OF GOD AND ON YOUR WAY TO HELL, AND AS A LOST SINNER YOU CONSCIOUSLY, FOR THE FIRST TIME, FORSOOK ALL TRUST IN BAPTISM AND OTHER SACRAMENTS AND CAME TO CHRIST IN TRUE REPENTANCE AND FAITH, AND AS A RESULT JESUS CHRIST SUPERNATURALLY AND DRAMATICALLY CHANGED YOU, YOU ARE NOT SAVED. There is not the slightest doubt that you will be eternally damned. Turn to Christ immediately! Tomorrow may be too late. “Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth” (Prov 27:1) “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out” (Ac 3:19) “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Ac 16:31).

Tragically, despite the many commendable and Biblical doctrines that were taught by Martin Luther and which are found in Lutheran confessions, a very high percentage of Lutherans have never truly come to Christ and are not saved. In fact, God is highly displeased with various aspects of Lutheranism today. How can this be? There are several major reasons.

First of all, when Luther left Roman Catholicism, he recognized that “the papists . . . teach self-devised traditions and works that are not commanded of God, [but] indeed are contrary to the Word of God” (*COG* 1:7). Luther even said: “The Pope is the Antichrist, because he is against Christ, because he takes liberties with the things of God, because he lords it over the temple of God” (*COG* 3:10; cf. 1 Jn 4:3; 2 Thess 2:3-10). Luther rightly recognized that Roman Catholicism had added many unscriptural traditions to the truth of the Word of God;¹ indeed, he agreed with the Biblical fact that the religious system centered in Rome is described in the Bible as “the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth” (Rev 17:5). Luther commendably sought to reform many of Rome’s errors and abuses. However, he did not eliminate one of Rome’s key false doctrines—infant baptism. Lutheranism undermines and actually contradicts Luther’s Biblical insight into the truth that justification is by faith alone by following Roman Catholicism in connecting infant baptism and the forgiveness of sin. Thus, Lutheranism affirms: “Baptism . . . is necessary to salvation . . . children are to be baptized who, being offered to God through Baptism, are received into God’s grace,” and Lutheranism “condemn[s] the Anabaptists [that is, Baptists] who reject the baptism of children, and say that children are saved without Baptism” (*AC* 9).

Contrary to the Roman Catholic and Lutheran idea of salvation by infant baptism, the Bible teaches that baptism is “the answer of a good conscience toward God” (1 Pet 3:21), and thus it is “he that believeth [that] is baptized” (Mr 16:16; Ac 2:38, 41). The Biblical order is that one is to first “hear” the gospel preached, then “believe” (Rom 10:14-15; Ac 18:8), and only after having “gladly received [the] [W]ord [can one be] baptized” (Ac 2:41; 8:13). The question, “[W]hat doth hinder me to be baptized?” is answered in the Bible, “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest,” and baptism is given only to

¹ For more information, see “Bible Truths for Catholic Friends,” available online for free at <http://faithsaves.net/different-religions/>; contact the church listed at the end of this work for a free printed copy of this composition.

those who can say, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Ac 8:35-38). Scripture records that those who were baptized had first brought forth “fruits meet for [befitting] repentance” (Mt 3:6-8). No infants are baptized anywhere in Scripture. Luther admitted: “It cannot be proved by the Sacred Scriptures that infant baptism was instituted by Christ, or begun by the first Christians after the Apostles.”² Since “to him that worketh not, but believeth on him [Christ] that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Rom 4:5), people are “justified by faith” (Rom 5:1) before they are baptized. They believe and are saved first; then they receive baptism. Christ told people: “Thy faith hath saved thee” (Luke 7:50; 18:42) totally apart from baptism. The Apostles baptized people because they had already received the Holy Spirit and been saved by faith alone (Acts 10:34-48). Baptism never has and never will save anyone. It cannot wash away a single sin.³ People must already have eternal life and be justified by faith alone before they can be baptized.

Some Lutherans have tried to reconcile the truth of justification by faith alone with infant baptism by saying that infants believe and are justified by faith alone at the moment they are baptized. However, Scripture teaches what is also obvious from common sense—infants are too little to understand and believe the gospel. God’s Word says infants “cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand” (Jon 4:11)—how then can they understand and believe the gospel, the good news about salvation through Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection (1 Cor 15:1-4)? Infancy is “before [a] child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good” (Isa 7:16), for infants are “little ones, which . . . ha[ve] no knowledge between good and evil” (Dt 1:39) and “neither hav[e] done any good or evil” (Rom 9:11). How can an infant repent and turn from evil to Jesus Christ if he has not done any good or evil and does not even know what they are? Can infants confess their sins and bring forth fruits of repentance (Mt 3:6)? Nobody, if he just read the Bible, would adopt the absurd notion that infants believe in Christ when they have baptismal water applied to them. The idea is simply a way to try to reconcile the truth of justification by faith alone and the false human tradition of infant baptism.

² See Vol. 1, chapter 10, *History of Baptists*, Thomas Armitage.

³ For a detailed study and refutation of the false doctrine that baptism remits sin, see *Heaven Only for the Baptized? The Gospel of Christ vs. Pardon through Baptism*, by Thomas Ross, available online for free at <http://faithsaves.net>, or available in print from the church listed at the back page of this composition.

Furthermore, when believers are baptized, immersion, not sprinkling or pouring, must be practiced. One who is baptized is “planted together in the likeness of [Christ’s] death” and “shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection” (Rom 6:5). Baptism is a symbol of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Savior, as well as the death of the believer’s old sinful life and his resurrection to new life in union with the Lord Jesus. Only immersion pictures death, burial, and resurrection. Does anyone bury a person in a graveyard by pouring or sprinkling a little dirt on his head? Then how can one be “buried with [Christ] in baptism” (Col 2:12) by pouring or sprinkling a little water on him? Why did people in the Bible enter a river and go “down . . . into the water . . . and . . . come up out of the water . . . [when] baptized” (Ac 8:38-39; Mt 3:16) if baptism involves only little water being poured or sprinkled on the head? In fact, the Greek verb *baptize* means “to dip” or “to immerse,” not “to pour” or “to sprinkle.”⁴ Martin Luther said that “baptism is . . . when we dip anything wholly in water, that it is completely covered over. . . . it should be thus, and would be right . . . [for] any one who is to be baptized, [to] be completely sunk down into the water, and dipped again and drawn out.”⁵ Luther knew that immersion is New Testament baptism. Lutheranism changes immersion in water, which God Himself commanded to picture His Son’s death, burial, and resurrection, and sprinkles or pours water on the heads of infants instead. Such practices are no baptism at all. By corrupting the ordinance of baptism and teaching that infants are saved from their sin at the time of baptism, Lutheranism keeps many people from true salvation, which comes by repentant faith in Jesus Christ alone.

Second, Lutheranism properly recognized that “the Mass in the Papacy must be the greatest and most horrible abomination, as it directly and powerfully conflicts with [the] chief article . . . [that] all have sinned and are justified without merit . . . [and] faith alone justifies us . . . [therefore] above and before all other popish idolatries [the Mass] has been the chief” (*Smalcald Articles*, 2:1-2). The Roman Catholic doctrine that in communion or the Mass the bread and fruit of the vine change into the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and His literal body and blood are eaten to forgive sin, is indeed a horrible abomination

⁴ Thus, the standard classical Greek dictionary defines the Greek verb *baptidzo* as to “dip, plunge” (*Greek-English Lexicon*, Liddell-Scott). No definition such as to “pour” or “sprinkle” is listed.

⁵ *Opera Lutheri*, I. 319; cf. pg. 108, Christian, J. T., *A History of the Baptists*, vol. 1. This book is available online at <http://faithsaves.net>.

that contradicts the truth of justification by faith alone and many plain texts of the Bible. Unfortunately, Lutheranism did not entirely reject this Roman Catholic heresy to adopt the true view that the broken bread and fruit of the vine are simply symbols of Christ's death on the cross. Rather, Lutheranism affirms that in communion "the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under bread and wine [is given] for us Christians to eat and to drink" (*Small Catechism* 6:1) so that at the time of this sacrament "the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation are given" (*Small Catechism* 6:3). To explain the Lutheran position that Christ's human body is literally in, with, and under the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper, Lutheranism affirms that Christ "truly fills all things . . . being everywhere present, not only as God, but also as man . . . [so that] He can be and truly is present with His body and blood in the Holy Supper" (*Formula of Concord* 8:27).

Both the Lutheran doctrine that Jesus Christ's literal human body is in, with, and under the elements in the Lord's Supper and the idea that the Lord's Supper remits sin are entirely absent from the Bible. They are a reaction against the Roman Catholic Mass, but they do not go far enough to reach the Scriptural position. The Bible states: "[T]he Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor 11:23-26). Since, referring to the bread, Christ said "This is my body," Romanism wrongly affirmed that the bread changed into Christ's body, arguing that such a change is required by the word "is." Rome ignored the fact that Christ also said "This cup is the new testament," so that if the bread changed into Christ's literal body because of the word "is," then the cup would have to change into a testament or covenant (whatever that could possibly mean!). It is obvious that "This is my body . . . this cup is the new testament in my blood" means "This bread represents my body . . . this cup represents the new testament in my blood." The broken bread and the fruit of the vine represent the broken body of Christ on the cross and the blood He shed there. They are beautiful symbols, but that is all they are. Luther correctly recognized that, since Scripture specifically calls what people eat and drink in the Supper "bread" (1 Cor 11:26) and "fruit

of the vine” (Mr 14:25), the Roman Catholic position is impossible. Unfortunately, the view Lutheranism invented when it reacted against Rome—that Christ’s literal human body and blood are in, with, and under the elements—has no support at all. It gets no support from the false Romanist view that the verb “is” in the words of Christ about the Supper is “literal.” It gets no support from what is obviously correct in the context of the passage, the fact that the elements in the Supper represent Christ’s body and blood. Nothing in the Bible gives any support whatever for the Lutheran doctrine. Furthermore, since the Apostles already had been saved from their sins when Christ instituted the Lord’s Supper with them (Mr 14:22-25; Mt 19:27-29), communion did not save the Apostles from sin, and no text in the Bible says that communion ever has or ever will save anyone else. On the contrary, salvation is not by eating bread and drinking liquids, but by faith alone (Rom 3:28).

Furthermore, the Lutheran doctrine that Christ’s human body is present everywhere, invented to get His human body in, with, and under the elements in the Lord’s Supper, is an attack upon the true humanity of Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus is one Person with two complete and distinct natures, one Divine (Jn 20:28) and one human (1 Cor 15:21-22). Were Christ not the Son of Man (Mt 8:20), He could not have been a Substitute for mankind on the cross; were He not the Son of God (Mt 14:33), He could not have satisfied the debt we owe because of our sin. The characteristic of being present everywhere in the universe at the same time is unique to God—no one else can say: “Do not I fill heaven and earth?” (Jer 23:24). As God, the Lord Jesus is and always has been everywhere present (Mt 28:20; Jn 3:13; Eph 3:17); as Man, He has a real human body, so that from His childhood to adulthood He “grew” (Lu 2:40) and “increased . . . in stature” (Lu 2:52). His body was buried in one place and raised from that place, so that it could be said, “He is not here [in the tomb], for he is risen” (Mt 28:6). His human body ascended to heaven (Ac 1:11) and is no longer on earth, for He said “I leave the world” (Jn 16:28). In His humanity, Christ has “gone away” to heaven, and will “come again” from thence (Jn 14:28; 16:7). He is still the believer’s truly human representative, mediator, intercessor, and High Priest (1 Tim 2:5; Heb 7:24-28)—in fact, “if he were on earth, he should not be a priest” (Heb 8:4), so claiming Christ’s humanity is present everywhere attacks His High Priestly ministry. Christ’s body had, and still has now, a real “head” with real “hair,” real

“eyes,” real “feet,” and so on (Rev 1:14-15), in one real location. His human body has never been and never will be present everywhere, for then He would cease to have a real human nature, and salvation would be impossible. In fact, denying Christ’s true humanity is the “spirit of Antichrist” (1 Jn 4:3; 2 Jn 7) and the idolatrous service of a different god than the true Triune God (1 Jn 5:7; Jn 1:1-3, 14) of the Bible. Lutheranism’s doctrine that Christ’s human body is everywhere present is serious heresy and idolatry. Lutheran false doctrine on the Lord’s Supper keeps many from coming to true salvation by faith alone in Christ.

Third, Lutheranism’s doctrine that someone who has believed in Christ and has eternal life can lose salvation and go to hell confuses the truth of justification by faith alone with salvation by works. Lutheran confessions “condemn the Anabaptists, who deny that those once justified can lose the Holy Ghost” (*AC* 12). However, the Bible states: “For whom [God] did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. . . . Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us . . . 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 creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 8:28-39). God says that all who are “justified” are going to be “glorified” in heaven—not one is lost. God has “predestinated” and “elected” to eternal life all who come to Christ in faith (Jn 6:37; Ac 13:48), and His all-powerful purpose will not be frustrated. Nothing in heaven or earth, alive or dead, present or to come, nor any created being, including, of course, the individual Christian himself, can separate the elect from God. Christ “maketh intercession” for all of His believing people—He prays for them, “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world” (Jn 17:24; cf. Lu 22:32; 1 Jn 2:1). If even one person who has ever been born again by faith alone were not to enter heaven, Christ’s intercession and prayers would have been rejected by the Father.

Also, since God answers all prayers in His will (1 Jn 5:14-15), the Father's rejecting Christ's prayers would mean that His Son prayed out of the will of God and was therefore a sinner. Such blasphemies are the necessary consequences of Lutheranism's doctrine that true believers can lose salvation and go to hell.

Furthermore, Jesus Christ, comparing the salvation by faith that He gives to the quenching of thirst, promised: "Whosoever drinketh of this [physical] water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (Jn 4:13-14). A person must drink physical water over and over again, or he will get thirsty and eventually die of thirst, but Christ guarantees that everyone who drinks, as a one-time, one-point action, the "living water" (Jn 4:10) of "everlasting life" that He gives to those who "believe on Him" (Jn 7:37-39) "shall never thirst" again (Jn 4:14). If salvation could be lost, Christ's spiritual blessings would be no better than physical water—one who did not continue believing enough and working enough to stay saved would go to hell, nullifying Christ's promise that all who ever drink of Him will absolutely never thirst again. Thus, the truth is: "[T]o him that worketh not, but believeth on him [Christ] that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. . . . God [credits] righteousness without works" (Rom 4:5-6). The idea that a Christian who does not do enough good works loses salvation attacks the truth that "by grace [unmerited favor] are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph 2:8-9). Salvation is an unearned gift that God gives unworthy sinners. God keeps His people saved and does not change His mind about giving them the gift of eternal life, although they continue to be unworthy. Lutheranism's teaching that Christ sends some of His own blood-washed people to hell is a dangerous heresy and an attack on the truth that "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us" (Tit 3:5). It also lends itself to the dangerous error that true faith is simply intellectual assent rather than a complete trust in and committal to Christ, because people who claim to have faith but are living for the devil in perpetual sin are said to have lost salvation and simply need to confess their sins to get salvation back. The truth is that people who claim to believe in Christ but have not had God powerfully transform their lives have never truly believed at all (Jam 2:14-26)—the Lord Jesus prays for all of

His own both that they will be forever with Him in heaven (Jn 17:24) and that they will be “sanctified through . . . [the] Word” (Jn 17:17). The answer to both prayers is certain. People who have not been transformed by Christ do not need to just confess a few sins. They need to admit that they are hypocrites who have never been saved, and then they must turn to Christ in true repentance and faith so that they can be given a new heart and be supernaturally changed (Eze 36:26). Lutheranism’s error on the truth that salvation is not maintained based on works and obedience keeps many from receiving true salvation.

Lutheranism also engages in false worship, dishonoring “the Father” who “seeketh . . . for . . . true worshippers . . . [who] worship . . . in spirit and in truth” (Jn 4:23). In Biblical worship, whatever God commands must be done, and whatever elements of worship He does not command are forbidden simply because He has not commanded them. “What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it” (Dt 12:32; cf. Mt 28:20; Mr 7:13). When exactly what God commands in worship is done, with nothing added or taken away, He is honored and blesses His people (Lev 9:1-24). However, the Lord has burned people up with fire from heaven for offering Him that “which he commanded them not” (Lev 10:1-3). True churches consequently worship God by preaching (2 Tim 4:2) and teaching (Eph 4:11) His Word, singing (Eph 5:19), encouraging one another spiritually (Heb 10:25), following the godly leadership of their pastors (1 Tim 3:1-7; 1 Pet 5:1-4), offering their lives as living sacrifices to God (Rom 12:1-2), immersing in baptism those who have believed in Christ (Ac 8:36-38), celebrating the Lord’s Supper in remembrance of Christ (1 Cor 11:24-25), maintaining a church membership made up only of people who profess to have been justified by faith and are living holy lives (1 Cor 1:2), and sorrowfully removing from church membership those who fall into sin and do not repent (Mt 18:15-20).⁶ True churches do not add to the worship commanded in the Word of God, nor do they take away from it. In contrast, Lutheran assemblies have hierarchies of boards, districts, synods, and all sorts of officials not found in Scripture; the Bible presents all congregations as independent with no hierarchy above the individual assembly (Rev 2-3; Mt 18:20) and only pastors (also called overseers or elders) and deacons as officers (1 Tim 3; Ac 20:17, 28). Lutheran assemblies

⁶ This list is not comprehensive. For more information on the beliefs and practices of true churches, please read “Bible Study #7: The Church of Jesus Christ” at <http://faithsaves.net>, available online for free, or obtain a free copy from the church listed on the back page of this composition.

allow infants who have not repented and believed in Christ to be members, based upon a false “baptism” by sprinkling or pouring that allegedly removes sin. Lutheranism corrupts the Lord’s Supper by claiming that it removes sin and by saying that the human flesh of Christ is literally eaten and His human blood is drunk. Lutheranism corrupts worship with liturgy—there are no liturgies or set forms of prayer repeated in church services (cf. Mt 6:7) in the Bible. Lutheranism does not purely preach the Word of God because it confuses the gospel through its sacramental heresies and by teaching that those who have been saved by faith can become lost and be cast into hell. The false worship in Lutheranism exceedingly displeases God and brings His curse upon Lutheran congregations.

Finally, Lutheran congregations do not match up with the fact that Christ promised, “[T]he gates of hell shall not prevail against . . . my church” (Mt 16:18). God will receive “glory in the church . . . throughout all ages” (Eph 3:21). The Lord Jesus said there would be a succession of churches believing and practicing the truth, including the truth about baptism and the Lord’s Supper, beginning in the first century when Christ started His church and then “always, even unto the end of the world” when He returns (Mt 28:18-20; 1 Cor 11:26). There were no Lutheran congregations until Martin Luther came along some 1,500 years after Jesus Christ started His church. Lutheran congregations cannot be the true churches of Christ since they did not exist for the first 75% of church history. The Roman Catholic assemblies that Luther separated from cannot be Christ’s true churches because they deny His gospel and are filled with all kinds of heresy; furthermore, no churches believed many of the doctrines of modern Roman Catholicism for centuries after the Lord Jesus started His church.⁷ In contrast, Baptist churches have existed from the first century until today. The famous Lutheran historian Mosheim wrote: “The origin of the sect . . . called Anabaptists . . . is hid in the remote depths of antiquity[.] . . . Prior to the age of Luther, there lay concealed in almost every country of Europe, very many persons, in whose minds were deeply rooted th[eir] principle[s] . . . centuries before Luther’s time.”⁸ J. J. Durmont & Dr. Ypeig, historians specifically appointed by the State of Holland to ascertain if the historical claims of the Baptists were valid, affirmed that the Baptists “descended from the tolerably pure evangelical Waldenses [a name for Baptists in the

⁷ See “Bible Truths for Catholic Friends,” <http://faithsaves.net>.

⁸ *Institutes of Ecclesiastical History*, III. 200, cited in *History of Baptists*, J. T. Christian, vol. 1 chap. 7, <http://faithsaves.net>.

Middle Ages]. . . . They were, therefore, in existence long before the Reformed Church. . . . We have seen that the Baptists, who were formerly called Anabaptists . . . were the original Waldenses; and who have long in the history of the Church, received the honor of that origin. On this account the Baptists may be considered the only Christian community which has stood since the Apostles; and as a Christian society which has preserved pure the doctrine of the gospel through all ages.”⁹ Churches that believe in salvation by faith and practice believer’s immersion and other Scriptural truths never needed to separate from or attempt to reform Roman Catholicism because they never were part of that false religion. They are older than Romanism and than all the Protestant denominations. Their Biblical doctrine and practice proves what is confirmed by the testimony of history—they are the churches founded by the Lord Jesus Christ. All other religious groups are guilty of schism and division from the Lord’s true churches. All other groups—including Lutheranism—have no Divine authority to carry on the work of God or even exist.

Dear Lutheran friend, the Bible commands: “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves” (2 Cor 13:5). Have you ever come to a particular point where you saw yourself as lost, forsook all confidence in sacraments and all other religious rituals, and consciously repented and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ? If you have, you will be able to describe when and how you were born again and how God clearly and powerfully changed your life.¹⁰ If not, you are currently on your way to hell, and, no matter what else you believe and do that is good and right, you will certainly be damned unless you repent. You should, right now, submit to the Biblical truth that you have never yet been saved, and immediately come to Christ for salvation. If you reject His Word and insist that you are saved, or that your baptism or previous life is in any way pleasing to God and able to help you be saved, you will certainly suffer in unquenchable fire for all eternity. If you forsake all confidence in your previous religious actions and good works and come to the Savior as a worthless, empty-handed sinner, with nothing but your black heart and your innumerable sins, He will receive you and save you freely by His grace. The Lord Jesus is calling you to come to Him right now (Mat 11:28). He promises, “He that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). He commands you to repent and

⁹ Ypeij en Dermout, *Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Hervormde Kerk*. Breda, 1819, cited in *History of Baptists*, J. T. Christian, vol. 1, chap. 7.

¹⁰ Compare the testimonies in the “Testimonies” section at <http://faithsaves.net>.

believe in Him today: “[B]ehold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor 6:2).

Once you are saved, you must submit to believer’s immersion and join and faithfully serve Christ in one of His true churches (Heb 10:25). The Son of God said, “Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Mr 8:34). Although people are not in any way justified before God by their works, there are no examples in the Bible of true Christians who refused to follow the Lord Jesus and who stubbornly refused and rejected believer’s baptism (cf. Ac 2:41-42; Mr 16:16). Separation from all religions that practice heresy, including salvation by infant sprinkling or pouring and salvation by taking the Lord’s Supper, is the plain command of the King of heaven: “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor 6:17-18). “[M]ark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Rom 16:17). “[H]ave no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph 5:11). The Lord Jesus said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (Jn 14:15). You should immediately separate from Lutheranism, and attend, be baptized, and serve joyfully in a Bible-believing and practicing Baptist church—not in order to be justified before God, but out of love for “the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal 2:20).

For more information on the nature of true repentance and faith, and a careful analysis of the Biblical teaching on baptism, please visit <http://faithsaves.net> and read Bible studies #5-7 (“How Do I Receive the Gospel?” “The Christian: Security in Christ and Assurance of Salvation,” and “The Church of Jesus Christ.”), as well as the work *Heaven Only for the Baptized? The Gospel of Christ vs. Baptismal Regeneration* at the same web address. A true church in your area that you can attend, and that would also be happy to help you spiritually and study the Bible with you personally, is: