

## The Book of Concord

The Book of Concord is a reflection of writings that state very clearly what the Bible teaches... and what we then as Lutherans believe to be true from it. The Book of Concord was compiled in its final form in the year 1580. (63 years after the 95 theses were published)

What is considered to be the *beliefs* of the Lutheran Church?

The three (3) Christians creeds...	
Apostles'	130 AD
Nicene	381 AD
Athanasian	550 AD
The six (6) writings of faith...	
Augsburg Confession	1530 AD
Apology of the Augs. Conf.	1531 AD
Smalcald Articles	1537 AD
Luther's Small Catechism	1529 AD
Luther's Large Catechism	1529 AD
Formula of Concord	1577 AD

These nine (9) items constitute the writings of the Book of Concord. Please note that the central article of disagreement was on how we are saved. (The reason for the 95 Theses) The teaching of Justification... that we are saved by grace through faith in Christ Jesus... was clearly set forth in the first 2 documents. This set the tone for the realization that there was a difference theologically between what the Roman Catholic Church was teaching and what Lutheran believed. Because of this, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Lutherans were allowed to gather together for themselves apart from the Catholic Church.

**Lutheranism is defined by a set of beliefs drawn from scripture.** If you believe what is put forward in scripture and laid out in the BoC then you can rightly call yourself a Lutheran but if you reject what is put forward in the BoC you may still be a Christian but you are no longer a Lutheran.

## The 6 Chief Parts of Luther's Small Catechism

These reflect the MAIN teachings of Scripture concerning the Christian faith. It is not intended to be a complete expression of everything reflected in the Bible but an overview of the basics. Luther felt it was important for people to understand the Law, Gospel, and the expression of faith through Prayer and the Sacraments.

The Law:	<b>(1) The 10 Commandments</b>
The Gospel:	<b>(2) The Apostles' Creed</b>
The Christian Life:	<b>(3) The Lord's Prayer</b>
	<b>(4) The Sacrament of Holy Baptism</b>
	<b>(5) Confession of sins and Absolution</b>
	<b>(6) The Sacrament of the Altar</b>

Your catechism should continue to be a tool for you in your Christian life as you continue to return to it for the basics of the faith.