

LUTHERAN BUZZWORDS REGARDING THE BIBLE

Four phrases that Lutherans often use when talking about the Bible.

- 👉 Law and Gospel: Lutherans say that the Word of God speaks both law and gospel and that both must be held together for God's Word to be fulfilled:
law = that which accuses us and judges us
gospel = that which comforts us and saves us
This message of law and gospel is at the heart of scripture: faithful interpretation discerns this message; faithful proclamation declares this message.
- 👉 Sola Scriptura: Lutherans say that scripture is the "only rule and norm" according to which doctrines are to be established and evaluated. This does not mean that Lutherans do not respect the validity of sound reason or the legitimacy of human experience. Scripture has unique authority as the only record of *revealed* truth and it therefore provides a perspective from which human reason and experience are best understood.
- 👉 The Plain Sense: Lutherans say that scripture is to be interpreted in line with its "plain sense." This means that passages are to be understood in the sense that would have seemed obvious to their original readers (e.g., "metaphorical" or "literal"). Secret systems of "coded meaning" are not to be imposed on scripture to produce interpretations unavailable to the original audience.
- 👉 Public Interpretation: Lutherans say that the interpretation of scripture is a public act rather than a private one. Individuals should not view the Bible as a conduit for receiving private messages from God but should recognize that the Bible presents God's word to the Church as a whole. The meaning of scripture for individuals is to be found by seeking application of its universal message to personal situations.