



10 Commandments



Apostles Creed



Holy Baptism

Lord's Supper



Keys & Confession



Lord's Prayer



CONFIRMATION ESSAYS

St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church
Class of 2023

Is Idolatry Still a Problem?

By McKenna Balson

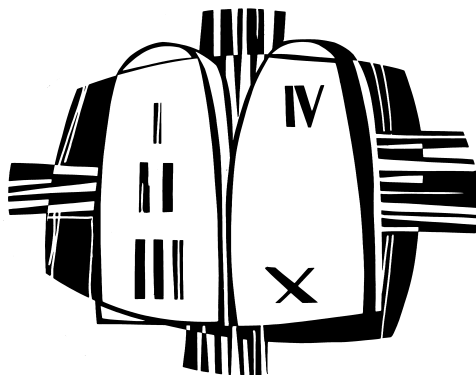
Is Idolatry still a problem? Although it has changed over all these years, it is still a problem. The way the Bible defines idolatry is a little different than the way some people may use it today. The Bible defines idolatry as worshiping someone or something other than God as though it were God or alongside God. Jesus said, *“It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’”* (Luke 4:8).

But idolatry isn’t just worshiping statues of gods or pictures of false gods. Idolatry can also take place in a person’s heart. People may not always realize that they are making items into idols—for example, Mark 10:17 talks about a rich man and the Kingdom of God. A man came to Jesus and asked how he could inherit eternal life. Then Jesus tells him that he must sell all his belongings and give them to the poor after the man said he had followed the Ten Commandments since he was a little boy. The man went away sad because he was wealthy. He had turned money into an idol since he thought it was more important than God.

Even in different forms, idolatry still exists today. One of the main ways people commit idolatry is still with money. The way people treat money as an idol is when they become greedy and make it their priority to earn money, even if it gets in the way of God. For instance, a person can love money before God, refuse to give any money at church, and keep it for themselves. Jesus talks about the danger of money as an idol when he says, *“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”* (Matthew 6:24)

Another way I believe people are still idolizing things over God is when people love the world or items in it more than the LORD. People also worship themselves or their families. One example of someone loving someone or their family more than God would be people skipping church for family or not going to church because of a significant other. John warns us, *“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them.”* (1 John 2:15)

Ultimately, idolatry is still a problem today. All forms of idolatry should be dealt with, putting God above all things. We ask God to help us fight idolatry, and we praise the one true God: *“I will praise you, Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever.”* (Psalm 86:12)



What Does Baptism Mean for the Christian?

By Ema Burkholder

Our Baptism is an event that occurred for many of us when we were young. But Baptism is a Sacrament that is very significant for Christians every day. In this essay, I will explain what baptism is and what it means for every Christian.

First, We must understand what Baptism is. Baptism is a Sacrament that is only needed once and gives the forgiveness of sins. Baptism is water used in connection with God's word and directed by God's command, as Jesus says in Matthew 28:18-20, *"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'"*

Why is baptism so important for us? As one of the sacraments, Baptism forgives sins, rescues sinful people from death and the devil, and gives eternal life to all who believe. Jesus says in Mark 16:16, *"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."*

Baptism is also the power of God to drown the old Adam in us through daily contrition and repentance so that a new person may arise before God to serve him in righteousness and purity forever. Through Baptism, we are united with Christ into his death and resurrection. This is said in Romans 6:4, *"We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."*

Baptism for Christians is not just something for one day; it is a blessing for our whole lives. It means that we have forgiveness of sins and eternal life in heaven. Through the Holy Spirit, it creates faith in Jesus. It unites us with Jesus' death and gives us the power to fight our Old Adam.



How do we Keep the Sabbath Day in Our Time?

By Miles Chambers

The Sabbath day is an interesting topic. In the Old Testament, it comes from the Hebrew word, which means "rest." This refers to when God made the earth in 6 days and rested on the seventh day. On the Sabbath day, he told all his people to rest and not work. But we don't do this anymore, so how do we follow the Sabbath?

Well, first, we must go to the time God commanded this. Exodus 20:8 says: *"Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work"*. Genesis 2:3 says: *"Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done."* In the Old Testament, this was a time that God's people would rest and focus on God and all the things he had done for them.

This was the Old Testament Law. We know that Jesus fulfilled God's Law perfectly, and Old Testament regulations do not bind us. Jesus says in Matthew 12:8, *"For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."* So, how do we keep the Sabbath Day in the modern age? We can look at Luther's Small Catechism for guidance. Luther says in his explanation of the Third Commandment: *"We should fear and love God that we do not despise preaching and his word, but regard it as holy and gladly hear and learn it."*

Hearing this, how do we honor the Sabbath? We should love God and his Word. Going to church, spreading the gospel with others, and taking Communion regularly are all things we can do to follow His command.

After all this, what should we take away? To keep God's command of the Sabbath today, we must love Him and His word. Spending time in His Word in church, prayer, and in devotions are ways that we keep the Sabbath and learn more about the forgiveness we have in Jesus.



Why I am Looking Forward to Communion

By Aubryn Gudex

Why am I looking forward to Communion? Well, let me tell you why. I am looking forward to Communion because of what it is and what it offers me.

First, we need to know what God gives to us in Communion. In Communion, Jesus' body and blood are given to us together in unleavened bread and grape wine for the forgiveness of sins. God's word clearly teaches that the Lord's Supper is a special meal through which we receive Jesus' body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine. I know this to be true from the words of institution where Jesus says in Mark 14:22,24, *"This is my body,"* and *"This is my blood."*

What makes the receiving of this Sacrament so very special? In the Lord's Supper, God gives forgiveness, life, and salvation in a very personal and individual way to each and every one of us who eats and drinks. As it says in Matthew 26:27-28, *"Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."* I am looking forward to Communion for the forgiveness of my sins and the promise of eternal life in heaven with God.

Another reason I am looking forward to Communion is to come together in Christ and to one another because we all have the same faith in Jesus and faith in what we receive. 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 says that in Communion, we participate in the body and blood of Christ and that we, who are many, are one body because we share the one loaf.

In the end, the main reason I am looking forward to Communion is the forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and salvation. I know that I struggle every day against my sinful flesh and need God's forgiveness and help to strengthen my faith. Every time I take Communion, I can be sure that my sins are forgiven and that I will receive the strength to fight my sinful nature.



Why Jesus' Two Natures Are Important

By Joseph Haines

The topic I'll be discussing today is why Jesus' two natures are important. Understanding why Jesus was both true God and true man helps to give us confidence in our salvation and is a fundamental teaching of the Bible.

First off, what proves Jesus is true man? God answers this question in Matthew 4:2: *"after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry."* God also proves this in Mark 15:37: *"With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last."* These passages prove that he had normal attributes as a human would. Jesus ate and drank, slept and got tired, Jesus died, which is something that only humans do. We also know Jesus was true man because the Bible calls him man.

The next thing we need to discuss is how we know Jesus was also true God. I'll also be using several passages to prove this. In John 20:26-28 *"A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'peace be with you!' Then he said to Thomas, 'put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.'" Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"* Here we clearly see that the Bible calls Jesus God. This passage also shows that Jesus has the characteristics of God since he appears in a locked room. Jesus' divine nature is also proved in John 1:1,2: *"In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. He was with God in the beginning."* This shows that Jesus is eternal, which is an attribute only God has.

The third and final thing I will discuss is why Jesus must be both man and God. In Galatians 4:4,5, the Bible says, *"When the set time had fully come God sent his son, born of a woman, under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship."* Jesus had to be a man to be subject to God's law and to die. Jesus had to be God to keep God's Law perfectly and to have his death count for all. Romans 5:19 proves this *"Just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous."*



What Makes the Bible So Special?

By Drew Stettbacher

What makes the Bible special and different from every other book? The Bible is unique because it is a gift from God. The Bible is God's word, written through humans, to tell us about our salvation.

Even though humans physically wrote the Bible, we can be confident that the words are God's. According to 2 Peter 1:21, *"Prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."* We can trust and believe that the Bible is truly God's word because the message of the Bible is given by God himself.

God's word has no errors or unkept promises and is the gift God has given us. As it is said in 2 Timothy 3:16, *"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness."*

God's Word contains all the truth that we need for salvation. This is said in John 20:31: *"These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God and that by believing you may have life in his name."* In the Bible, God shows us that He created and loves us, and we have eternal life in Heaven with Him by Jesus' blood. God wants all people to know about the eternal salvation he provided us by sending Jesus to die on the cross to save us from our sins.



The Bible's Two Main Doctrines

By Adelaide Tonn

What are the Bible's two main doctrines? The Bible's two main doctrines are Law & Gospel. What is the ultimate purpose of giving us these doctrines? The purpose is that they may be the means that lead us to Jesus to show us how we are truly saved.

How does God give His Law and Gospel to us? God has given His Law to us by writing His Law on our hearts, which we call the Natural Law of God. God has also written His Law in the Bible, which is the Written Law. Deuteronomy 3:19 says, *"So Moses wrote down this law and gave it to the Levitical priests."* God has written on our hearts, but sin darkens our hearts. Our conscience, the voice God placed in us that bears witness to His Law, reminds us what God wants, but sin clouds our consciences. How does God give His Gospel to us? God reveals His Gospel only through the Bible. 2 Timothy 3:15 says, *"From infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."* God gives us His Law & Gospel daily by giving us our consciences and the Holy Bible.

What does God teach through His Law? Through His Law, God teaches me what to do and what not to do. It also reveals God's anger against sin. It shows that I deserve to be punished because of my sins. Galatians 3:10 says, *"All who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.'"* What does God teach through His Gospel? He teaches the good news of all God has done and what he continues to do. John 3:16 says, *"God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."* His Gospel is so important because it shows the way to eternal life: the full payment of sins that Jesus gives us.

What is the work of God's Law? The work of God's Law "Shows Our Sins," which fits the acronym (S.O.S). Romans 3:10 states, *"No one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin."* What is the work of God's Gospel? The Gospel "Shows our Savior," which also fits the acronym (S.O.S). God's Gospel is grace and truth. It tells us about Jesus Christ and how we are saved by his death on the cross and have eternal life in heaven. This is all taught in God's Word; as Paul says in Romans 10:17, *"Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ."*

The two main doctrines of the Bible are fundamental subjects that need to be understood. It is important to know the difference between the Law and The Gospel because when we read the Bible, we know who Jesus is and why we need him. It shows us why we need to be saved, how we are saved through Jesus, and what we want to do with our earthly lives until we go to heaven with him.

