

# Study of Concordia - The Lutheran Confession of Faith

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## The Unaltered Augsburg Confession

### Week 3 - Article II



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#### Review/Summary:

The Augsburg Confession is the specific Lutheran confession of the Christian faith which we believe, teach, and confess in our churches according to God's Holy Word. It was presented and read at the Diet at Augsburg, 1530 AD. The aim of the confession was to present as fully as possible the doctrinal articles of the Orthodox Christian faith, as taught in Scripture and the "Church catholic" (universal). Rome had charged Luther and "the Lutherans" of teaching heresy. The Lutherans presented their case before Emperor Charles V, and the confession was accepted making it "legal" to be Lutheran Christians because our teachings did not dissent from the Orthodox Christian teaching of Scripture. It consists of 28 articles of which the first 21 deal with the "chief articles of faith" each following the model of Thesis-Antithesis. That is each states the belief we hold and then states the false beliefs which are condemned (as heresy). The last 7 articles are the abuses which had been corrected by the Lutherans, showing why Rome was actually guilty of heresy and justifying the changes made by the Lutherans with regard to customs and ceremonies.

Article I: Of God— This article proceeds from the creeds (especially the Nicene council) and teaches that there are three persons in the God-head who are of the same essence and power and who are co-eternal.

### Article II Original Sin

<sup>1</sup> Our churches teach that since the fall of Adam [Romans 5:12], all who are naturally born are born with sin [Psalm 51:5], that is, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with the inclination to sin, called concupiscence. <sup>2</sup> Concupiscence is a disease and original vice that is truly sin. It damns and brings eternal death on those who are not born anew through Baptism and the Holy Spirit [John 3:5].

<sup>3</sup> Our churches condemn the Pelagians and others who deny that original depravity is sin, thus obscuring the glory of Christ's merit and benefits. Pelagians argue that a person can be justified before God by his own strength and reason.

Note: Sin is much more than thinking, saying, and doing things that are wrong. It is a terminal disease. We are all conceived and born in sin; we inherit it from our first parents, Adam and Eve. The disease of sin can be overcome, but only by one medicine: the cleansing, healing, and forgiving blood of God's own Son. By rejecting Pelagian errors in Article II, the Augsburg Confession subtly refers to the Roman view of sin. The Roman Church taught and still teaches that concupiscence (the inborn inclination to sin) is not actually sin. By misdiagnosing our fatal illness, Rome leads people to believe they are able to cooperate with God's grace for salvation. Lutheranism rejects all teachings that imply we are responsible for or contribute to our salvation. (See also Ap II; SA III, I; FC Ep I and SD I.)

McCain, P. T. (Ed.). (2005). *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions* (pp. 31–32). St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

## **Outline of the Article:**

### II. Original Sin

- A. All who are born according to the course of nature are born in sin. (1)
- B. Born with lust and lacking righteousness (1)
- C. Original sin is truly sin and condemns. (2)
- D. Need for regeneration by the Spirit through Baptism (2)
- E. Rejected: (3)
  - 1. Pelagians—man is not sinful by nature
  - 2. Others who deny original sin

### **Terms Defined:**

*Concupiscence*— “desire, lust, evil desire” - A word that describes the fallen human tendency or strong desire toward engaging in sin. Concupiscence does not imply that humans will always fall into a specific sin, but simply that the humans will desire sin even if they choose not to engage in it.

*Pelagians*— Those who followed the teachings of British monk Pelagius (c.354-415), who taught that human effort and merit could fight against falling into sin and thus could be righteous/just before God without divine grace. (Pelagius was vigorously opposed by the church father, Augustine)

*Sin*— We know well how sin came into the world (Genesis 3). The devil’s first aim was to create distrust in man with God and His Word. Eve as well as Adam responded readily and began to look upon God with suspicion and distrust. When God called Adam he did not tell what he had done. He blamed his wife and even went a step further in blaming God.

*Here we have the four fundamental characteristics of sin. Sin is unbelief, dishonesty towards God, selfishness, and rebellion.*

### **Good Quote:** “Wrong Ideas about Sin” -Rev. Joel Lehenbauer

Like looking in a mirror, facing up to sin means taking an honest look at ourselves. And wrong understandings of sin almost always involve a foggy picture of “who we are” as human beings.

It is possible, on the one hand, to fall prey to a morbid pessimism about life and humanity that, if left unchecked, can result in sheer cynicism and despair that life is doomed and thus meaningless.

Scripture is diametrically opposed to this destructive, distorted view of self and human behavior. According to the Bible, life is not meaningless. Individuals are not worthless specks in a disinterested universe. A person’s actions and decisions are important—to God, to others and to one’s self.

On the opposite extreme is the naive, overly optimistic view of life and self found in many of today’s most popular “self-help” guidebooks. As one best-selling author gushes, “I practice awe. I mean I’m in awe of the dishes, I’m in awe of my liver, I’m in awe when I play tennis, I’m in awe of it all. I’m just awestruck with the magnificence and miraculousness and the blush that is in this world and that we can achieve if we just set our minds to it.”

There is, of course, something right—even Biblical—about this sense of “awe” at God’s creation. Being in awe of your dishes, however, won’t keep them from breaking. Being in awe of your liver won’t protect it from cancer. Being in awe of all the “bliss” and beauty in the world won’t eliminate—or even explain—all of the ugly and awful realities of life—war, violence, poverty, abuse.

And being in “awe” of one’s self won’t take away the angry thoughts, bitter memories, hurtful feelings and foolish actions that so often make our own lives far from “blissful.”

We need the truth about ourselves and our sin.

**Questions:**

Many people reject the belief of original sin (born sinful). Others want to avoid the sin altogether. Such people may feel comfortable talking about frailty and weakness, but want to avoid talking about sin because they want to believe that people are “basically good.” Even when people hurt and harm others, they are not seen as sinful people whose actions are sins. The behavior is blamed on bad genes, faulty upbringing, or just suffering from a “treatable disease” like alcoholism.

*Why do we believe in original sin? (1 Kings 8:46, Is. 53:6, Rom 3:23, 5:12, Ps. 51:5, 1 John 1:8)*

*The confessors compare original sin to a disease. In what ways is sin like a disease?*

*How does original sin express itself in human life? (Rom 8:7, 20-22; Gal 5:19-21)*

According to Roman Catholicism, a venial sin is a lesser sin that does not result in a complete separation from God and eternal damnation in Hell as an unrepented mortal sin would. (1 Jn 5)  
*What does the Bible say is God’s attitude toward sin and sinfulness? (Gen. 3:19, Rom 6:23)*

*If we have original sin, what does that make people incapable of doing?*

*If we believed the Pelagian error (and subtly what Rome was teaching) that we could abstain from sin, then what would we not need?*

*How does original sin underscore the necessity of the Baptism of children?*

*What is the importance of including this Article of faith—what we believe, teach, and confess about sin—in the Augsburg Confession?*

*Read Romans 7:12-25.*

**Scripture Passages Cited:**

Romans 5:12 (ESV)

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—

Psalms 51:5 (ESV)

<sup>5</sup> Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,  
and in sin did my mother conceive me.

John 3:5 (ESV)

<sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

1 Kings 8:46 (ESV)

<sup>46</sup> “If they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—and you are angry with them and give them to an enemy, so that they are carried away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near,

Isaiah 53:6 (ESV)

<sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Romans 3:22–23 (ESV)

<sup>22</sup> ...For there is no distinction: <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

1 John 1:8 (ESV)

<sup>8</sup> If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Romans 8:7 (ESV)

<sup>7</sup> For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot.

Romans 8:20–23 (ESV)

<sup>20</sup> For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup> that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. <sup>22</sup> For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. <sup>23</sup> And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Galatians 5:19–21 (ESV)

<sup>19</sup> Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, <sup>21</sup> envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Genesis 3:19 (ESV)

<sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

Romans 6:23 (ESV)

<sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.