

Footstep #45 - Selections From *The Augsburg Confession* 1530

Martin Luther and Philipp Melanchthon wrote *The Augsburg Confession* as per the order of January 21, 1530 by Emperor Charles V who summoned a government meeting (the Diet of Augsburg) for April. Charles V was faced with a hostile threat from the Turks and desired unity as he was faced with division and conflict between enthusiastic Catholics and Protestants. *The Augsburg Confession* was written in both Latin and German.

The Augsburg Confession was officially entered as testimony on June 25, 1530, immediately challenged by the Roman Catholic leaders, and then rejected by Emperor Charles V and the secular officials at the Diet. A more detailed "Apology" was written, revised (August 3, September 22) and published in May 1531, and also rejected by the emperor. The term "Apology" is used because it provides additional clarification to the *Roman Confutation* that was accepted by the Diet. *The Augsburg Confession* and *The Apology of the Augsburg Confession* are two of the seven basic teachings of Lutheran doctrine.

Article II. Original Sin –

"It is also taught among us that since the fall of Adam all men who are born according to the course of nature are conceived and born in sin. That is, all men are full of evil lust and inclinations from their mother's wombs and unable by nature to have true fear (respect) of God and true faith in God. Moreover, this inborn sickness and hereditary sin (Erbsunde) is truly sin and condemns to the eternal wrath of God all those who are not born again through baptism and the Holy Spirit.

Rejected in this connection are the Pelagians and others who deny that original sin is sin, for they hold that natural man is made righteous by his own powers, thus disparaging the sufferings and merit of Christ."

Why we have a loving God!

The Pelagians taught that people can save themselves by living morally upright lives and doing acts of good deeds. Luther accused Ulrich Zwingli and the scholastic theologians of teaching this concept of the "elect" who will be saved. A distinctive character of Luther's theology is that people are not able to have true faith in God because it is a gift from God that is freely given to all people through Baptism by water and God's Word and by the Holy Spirit leading a person to repentance of their sins and sinful nature.

Article IX. Baptism -

"Our churches teach that Baptism is necessary for salvation, that the grace of God is offered through Baptism, and that children should be baptized for being offered to God through Baptism, they are received into his grace."

Article X. The Holy Supper of Our Lord -

"It is taught among us that the true body and blood of Christ are really present in the Supper of our Lord under the form of bread and wine and are there distributed and received."

What are the means of grace?

A critical part of Luther's theology is that God uses his Word in the *Holy Bible* and the basic elements of water, bread, and wine to save believers. By remembering daily that one is baptized and by frequently receiving the true body and blood of Christ in worship, one's faith is strengthened by these free actions of God's love and forgiveness.