

There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

Note: The fact that the Bible is written in human language does not imply fallibility or error. Here, the incarnation guides our thinking. Jesus was true man, without sin, and true God. So also, the Bible is truly human, without error, and truly divine, the very Word of God in the words of men (**Hebrews 4:15** and **2 Peter 1:20–21**). For this reason, the Bible's truthfulness should not be questioned or denied (as happens, for example, with historical criticism).

10. What are the two great doctrines of the Bible?

Law and Gospel are the two great doctrines of the Bible. We must sharply distinguish between the Law and the Gospel in order to understand the Bible rightly.

- 33 **2 Timothy 2:15** Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

11. What is the difference between the Law and the Gospel?

The Law teaches what we are to do and not to do; the Gospel teaches what God has done, and still does, in Jesus, for our salvation.

The Law shows us our sin and the wrath of God; the Gospel shows us our Savior and brings God's grace and favor.

The Law must be proclaimed to all people, but especially to sinners who refuse to repent; the Gospel must be proclaimed to sinners who are troubled by their sins.

- 34 **Romans 3:20** For by works of the law no human being will be justified in His sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.
- 35 **John 6:63** It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

- 36 **Romans 1:16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Note: See the Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord, Article V, for a more complete explanation of Law and Gospel.

12. What is the Small Catechism?

For centuries, Christians have used three important texts as a basic summary for teaching the Christian faith and life: the Ten Commandments, Creed, and Lord's Prayer. Martin Luther helpfully included biblical passages on Baptism, Confession, and the Lord's Supper. The Small Catechism, written by Luther in 1529, includes these texts along with brief explanations (see the front of this book). This expanded Explanation section is prepared as a teaching and learning tool.

13. What are the central, or chief, parts of Christian teaching and life?

These six parts of the catechism are the central teachings, or Six Chief Parts of Christian Doctrine:

1. God makes known His will through the **Ten Commandments**, which summarize how God wants us to love Him and love our neighbor and also reveal our sin and inability to keep God's Law.
2. The **Creed** summarizes who God is and what He has done for the world: creating and preserving all things out of fatherly love; redeeming the world in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; and calling and gathering believers into the Church by the Holy Spirit.
3. In the **Lord's Prayer** (or the Our Father), God the Son teaches Christians how to pray as God's own dear children, confident that what we are praying pleases Him and is for our good.