

# Luther, Church Year, and the Divine Service

## 1. Luther's Explanation of the Second Article

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord. Who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

- a. Who is Jesus Christ? (**Person**)
  - i. True God
  - ii. True Man
  - iii. MY LORD
- b. How did Jesus become my LORD? (**Work**)
  - i. He redeemed me (why?)
  - ii. He purchased me (not with gold or silver)
  - iii. He won me (from sin, death and devil)
- c. Why did Jesus do all this? (the **Result**)
  - i. So I could belong to Him (be His own)
  - ii. Live under Him (in His kingdom)
  - iii. Serve Him (in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness)

## 2. The Church Year

- a. Three Times
  - i. Time of Christmas
  - ii. Time of Easter
  - iii. Time of the Church
- b. The Time of Christmas (Focus on the **Person** of Jesus—who He is)
  - i. Preparation (Advent – season of waiting for Christ)
  - ii. Celebration (Christmas – season of celebrating His first coming)
  - iii. Reflection (Epiphany – season of reflecting on “what Child is this?”)
- c. The Time of Easter (Focus on the **Work** of Christ)
  - i. Preparation (Lent – season of self-examination or “why I need a Savior”)
  - ii. Celebration (Holy Week – remembrance of Christ’s passion)
  - iii. Reflection (Easter – season of reflecting on the Resurrection)
- d. The Time of the Church (Focus on the **Result** of Christ’s work in the life of the Believer)
  - i. Ushered in at Pentecost (birth of the Christian Church)
  - ii. Focus on the growing (green paraments) of the Christian life
  - iii. Ending with Christ’s return to gather in His harvest

3. **The Divine Service** (A weekly participation in the Salvation Narrative)
- a. The Service of Preparation (focuses on **our** identity)
    - i. Invocation – our identity is established by God who created, redeemed and sanctified us to be His own. (We are the **Children of God**)
    - ii. Confession – our acknowledgment that we have failed to be the children God wants us to be (We are the **Fallen** Children of God)
    - iii. Absolution – our sins are forgiven and we are restored (the **Forgiven** Children of God)
  - b. The Service of the Word (the **Person** of Christ)
    - i. The *Kyrie*: “Lord have mercy” – the cry of those suffering from the “wages of sin” and in need of deliverance (corresponds to Advent as we wait for the Lord’s deliverance)
    - ii. The *Gloria*: “Glory to God in the highest and peace to His people on earth” – God has heard the cry of His people in distress (like Israel in Egypt) and has sent the Savior (corresponds to Christmas as we join in the song of the angels announcing the birth of Jesus.
    - iii. The Collect, Lessons, Hymn of the day, Sermon and Creed: – we reflect on who Jesus is in prophecy and fulfillment and for our daily lives (corresponds to Epiphany as we learn who this Child born in Bethlehem really is)
  - c. The Service of the Sacrament (the **Work** of Christ)
    - i. The Offering and Offertory: – in thanksgiving we bring our gifts to God and ask Him to create a clean heart within us. (corresponds to season of Lent as we recognize and acknowledge our need for a new and right spirit)
    - ii. Preface and *Sanctus*: -- We begin our celebration of Holy Week on Palm Sunday as we join both the angels (Holy, holy, holy) and the crowd (“Hosanna, blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord”.)
    - iii. The *Verba*: Jesus own words “take, eat, this is my body...take, drink, this is my blood” bring us to Maundy Thursday and the institution of the Lord’s Supper.
    - iv. The *Agnus Dei*: Jesus is the “Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” as He is sacrificed on the cross. (Good Friday in the liturgy)
    - v. The Distribution: Once again, each week, the resurrected Lord Jesus is present with us not only showing us his body, but giving it to us to eat and drink. (It is Easter as we partake of Christ’s body and blood)
    - vi. The *Nunc Dimittis* and Benediction: (the **Results** of Christ’s Word and Sacrament) Lord, now let us depart in peace. We go forth into the world strengthened by God’s Word and Sacrament to accomplish our daily vocations. (corresponds to Pentecost and the sending of the Apostles)