

# The Story of Salvation

## Introduction - The Way of Salvation



### THE PURPOSE OF THIS COURSE

At some point every person asks himself/herself the great questions of life: Who am I? Where do I come from? Where am I going? What is the point of my life? Is there a God? Does He care about me? Why is there so much suffering in the world? Are true peace, love and happiness really attainable in this life? What happens after death?

The stunning order, complexity and beauty of the world around us, as well as the deep longing for truth, beauty, and goodness within our own hearts point to the existence of God. It would be absurd to think that this complex and beautiful universe could have come into existence billions of years ago as the result of some explosion caused by... nothing.

From the order and beauty of creation we can know that there exists an intelligent and good Creator. Yet, that is all we can know by natural knowledge. For, on an earthbound level, there are two fundamental sources of human knowledge: reason and experience. Both are essential to our understanding of the world about us, but they are limited. They leave unanswered the most crucial questions that can be raised.

Unless there is a third source of knowledge, a source that carries us beyond the limits of reason and experience, there is no hope of finding answer to these basic issues of meaning and significance.

The Bible claims to provide this third source of knowledge. It is *revelation*—the belief that God has revealed Himself and His ways to man in Holy Scripture is the underlying axiom and guiding principle of the Christian world view.

In Scripture alone (*sola scriptura*) we have direct access to a revelation from a personal being who created all things and who has revealed His Will for mankind, which the following pages will set out to briefly explain.

### GOD'S WILL CONCERNING OUR SALVATION

*[God] desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.* (1 Timothy 2:4)

The sovereign Lord of history is intimately involved in the affairs of mankind, and the Scriptures record the panoramic story of His plan to bring redemption to the earth and ultimately to make all things new in Christ.

God chose to reveal Himself in a progressive way, and His written Word gradually unfolded more and more truth about His person and work. It has been said that the New is in the Old concealed, and the Old is in the New revealed. The thirty-nine books of the Old Testament provide the foundation upon which the superstructure of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament is built.

The Old Testament anticipates the work of Messiah in many ways, and the New Testament points back to Jesus as the Author and Perfecter of faith (Hebrews 12:2). He is the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End (Revelation 22:13). Indeed, Christ claimed to be the Key to the Scriptures, the One of whom the entire Old Testament spoke (Luke 24:44-46).

The God of the Bible is revealed as both the Creator and the Redeemer, and the cross is portrayed as the central event of history—all for man's salvation.

## THE PURPOSE OF BIBLE

God has given us the Bible in order that we may learn to know Jesus Christ, believe in Him, and have life eternal.

*These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name (John 20:31).*

The Bible was written during a period of about 1600 years, from 1500 B.C. to 100 A.D. It is divided into the Old Testament (containing thirty-nine books) and the New Testament (containing twenty-seven books)—sixty-six books in all.

The Old Testament covers the time from creation to about 400 B.C. It tells how God, through the people of Israel, prepared for the coming of Jesus Christ. The New Testament books begin with the coming of Christ and were completed not later than the year 100 A.D.

For the writing of the Bible, God used prophets in the Old Testament and evangelists and apostles in the New Testament.<sup>1</sup> Through the Holy Spirit, God Himself gave these men the thoughts and words as He guided them to use the right words they recorded. The Bible is, therefore, verbally inspired of God.

*In fact, no prophecy ever came by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were being moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21).*

The Bible was divinely designed to change lives in a radical way, and it is perpetually relevant to all times and cultures. Far from being provincial or culturally bound, “the word of God stands forever” (Isaiah 40:8).

As a revelation of God’s love, the Bible requires a response. We must not only respond intellectually to its message, but it is to seize our whole life.

Therefore, the purpose of this course is to make every disciple familiar with God’s way of salvation so that he/she might live in it, and “remain firm in His Word and faith until they die” (Small Catechism, 3rd Petition).

## SALVATION COMES FROM GOD

When Adam and Eve had sinned, they hid themselves because they were afraid of God. Yet, it was God who came to them. They did not go to God. God, not man, planned our salvation and sent Jesus Christ to be our Savior.

*For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:16).*

## LAW AND GOSPEL AS THE POWER OF GOD

The Bible consists of law and gospel. Both law and gospel are God’s Word, yet in order to understand the Bible rightly we must sharply distinguish between the law and the gospel.

The law tells us what we must do and what we must not do.

The gospel is the good news of salvation from sin through Jesus Christ.

Both law and gospel are found in the Old Testament as well as in the New. It is in Exodus, chapter 20, that we have the law of the Ten Commandments. In the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5-7, Christ explains the law. The first gospel message is in Genesis 3:15. Isaiah 53 is another gospel message in the Old Testament. The New Testament is full of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Savior.

---

<sup>1</sup> By prophets we mean all the men God used to write the Old Testament. We know the names of most of these men. Evangelists and apostles were the men who wrote the New Testament. We call the men who wrote the four Gospels evangelists, though two of them, Matthew and John, were apostles.

Wherever the Bible is used and believed, the Holy Spirit creates a new and better life. Purity, honesty, justice, and love take the place of impurity, dishonesty, injustice, and hatred.

*The gospel, is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes (Romans 1:16).*

*All Scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, and for training in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16).*

Over the years the Bible has, as a whole or in parts, been translated into more than a thousand different languages and dialects. Along with multiple translations in many languages (450 in english).

### THE COMMAND OF CHRIST TO BAPTIZE AND INSTRUCT

*Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned (Mark 16:16).*

In order to be saved from sin we must be made disciples of Christ according to His command:

*“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.*

*And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20)*

In obedience to this command of Christ you have been baptized and instructed in His Word.

### THE CATECHISM

Luther’s Small Catechism has been one of your main books of instruction, and should remain so throughout your life.

The Catechism is a simple and brief summary of the teachings of the Bible. It was written by Martin Luther in 1529 and has been translated into more than 150 languages and dialects. As the Lutheran Church goes into new mission fields, Luther’s Small Catechism is translated into still more languages. As the simple explanation of the Bible truth, it is given to parents at every Baptism in order that they may live in their responsibility to the commission given in Matthew 28:19-20 and from the beginning instruct their children in the faith.

The Catechism is divided into six parts:

The first part: The Ten Commandments or the Law.

The second part: The Creed or the Christian Faith.

The third part: The Lord’s Prayer.

The fourth part: The Sacrament of Baptism.

The fifth part: The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.

The sixth part: Contains the gospel teaching of the Table of Duties and Christian Questions and Answers.

**Prayer:** Blessed Lord, You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning. Grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them that, by patience and comfort of Your holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who has taught us to pray: **Our Father, who art in heaven...**

---

Reading for the Next Bible Class 21 April 2021:

➔ Genesis 1 & 2

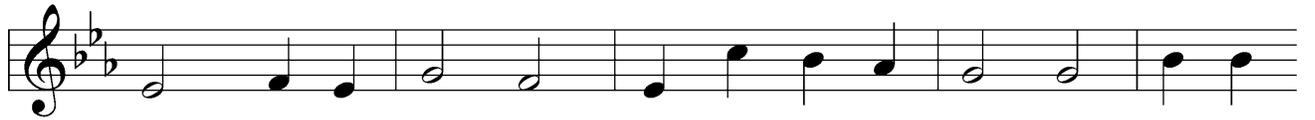
➔ First Article of the Creed

“God’s Word Is Our Great Heritage”

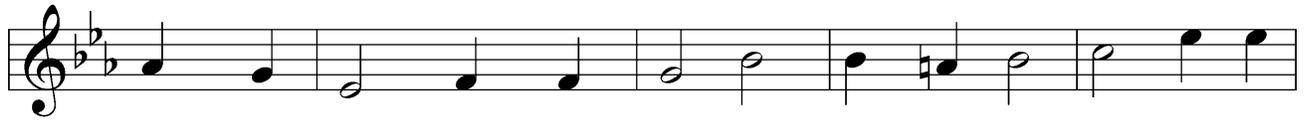
LSB 582



God’s Word is our great her - i - tage And shall be ours for -



ev - er; To spread its light from age to age Shall be our



chief en - deav - or. Through life it guides our way, In death it



is our stay. Lord, grant, while worlds en - dure, We keep its



teach - ings pure Through - out all gen - er - a - tions.

Text and tune: Public domain

**Acknowledgments**

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Created by Lutheran Service Builder © 2021 Concordia Publishing House.