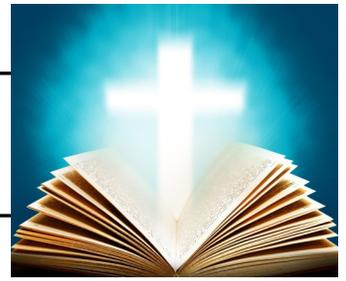


The Bible



Introduction

Most books have a purpose. They were written to tell us about someone or something. We've already learned that the Bible is the only source that can teach us that God has saved us. The Bible teaches us that through two main parts and two main teachings. First the Bible makes it clear that we need to be saved by teaching us God's Law. Then the Bible tells us how God has saved us by teaching us God's Gospel.

Opening Prayer: *Dear God, help me to learn from your Word as the only source of ultimate truth. Amen.*

Lesson Aim: What does God teach us in the Bible?

Part One

Read Romans 6:23.

The message of the Bible can be categorized under two main teachings: law and gospel. The Bible teaches law, which we'll study more later this year as we learn about the Ten Commandments. The law teaches us what to do and what not to do. The law also tells us that we fall short of the perfection God demands. The law tells us that, because we fall short of God's demands, we are cursed to death and the fires of hell, because we deserve eternal damnation for not obeying God perfectly. But that's not the end of the story. The Bible also teaches gospel, which means "good news."

1) This verse can be used to summarize those two main teachings of the Bible. The verse can be divided in half: one half law, one half gospel. Where do you think the division of the two teachings is in this verse that shifts from one half to the other?

2) Is the first half of the verse law or gospel?

3) Is the second half of the verse law or gospel?

Read Romans 3:19-24.

4) In verse 19, what does the apostle Paul say about everyone?

5) In verse 20, what does Paul say about no one?

6) Define "righteousness."

7) Define "justified."

8) Define "grace."

9) Define "redemption."

10) On the top of the following page is a paraphrase of this passage with some thoughts added to fill out, or expound on its meaning. Fill in the blanks in that paraphrase with your own words. You can use elements from the definitions you found for the words above but not the words themselves.

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that _____ and _____. Therefore no one will _____ by _____ rather, through the law _____. But now a status of _____ has been made known to us. This is nothing new. In fact, the law and the prophets spoke about this righteousness already in the Old Testament. This state of being righteous comes to us through _____. This is the only way anyone can be saved because all _____ and do not experience God's _____. In Christ, all are declared to be _____, strictly because of _____. In Jesus Christ God _____.

Read John 20:31.

- 11) Both of the Bible's main teachings of law and gospel serve the same purpose. This verse tells us what that purpose is. Why was the Bible written?
- 12) How does the Bible say we have eternal life?

The message of eternal life as a gift for sinners like us is the message of the gospel. The gospel tells us that Jesus took away the sins of the world. Your sins are removed! The gospel tells us that now we have the gift of eternal life in heaven. The main purpose of the Bible is to lead us to believe in Jesus as our Savior from our sin. The law points out our sin and our need for a Savior, and the law gives us a sure hope that will encourage us in our daily lives until we go to heaven.

KEY POINT 1 - Through law and gospel, the Bible teaches me that I am a sinner who is saved by Jesus.

What I've learned so far:

Part Two

The message of the Bible consists of two main teachings: law and gospel. The Bible also has two main parts or divisions: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament was written before Jesus' life on earth. The New Testament was written after Jesus' life on earth. The Old Testament was written by prophets. The New Testament was written by apostles and evangelists. The Old Testament has 39 books. This is easy to remember: three (3) letters in the word Old, and nine (9) letters in the word Testament. It is written in Hebrew. The New Testament has 27 books. This is also easy to remember: 27 is 3 x 9. It is written in Greek.

Read Acts 2:16-36

The apostle Peter is preaching his sermon on the Day of Pentecost. He quotes passages from the Old Testament (Joel and Psalms) to show that the Old Testament points ahead to Jesus. But Peter also goes on to teach more truth about Jesus that had not been revealed in the Old Testament.

- 1) Where in Peter's quote from Joel do you find sobering warnings for sinners (law)?
- 2) Where in Joel's words do you find certain comfort for sinners (gospel)?

3) After describing the resurrection of Christ, Peter told the crowd, "King David said this very thing would happen." How did Peter demonstrate that the words of David from Psalm 16 (which are quoted here in vs. 25-28—pay special attention to v. 27) referred not to David but to someone else (v.29)?

4) Peter used both words from the Old Testament as well as things we learn in the first four books of the New Testament to teach people about what?

Just as both the law and the gospel lead us to learn about Jesus as our Savior, so also both the Old Testament and the New Testament are primarily about Jesus more than anything else.

Here are some samples of Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament).

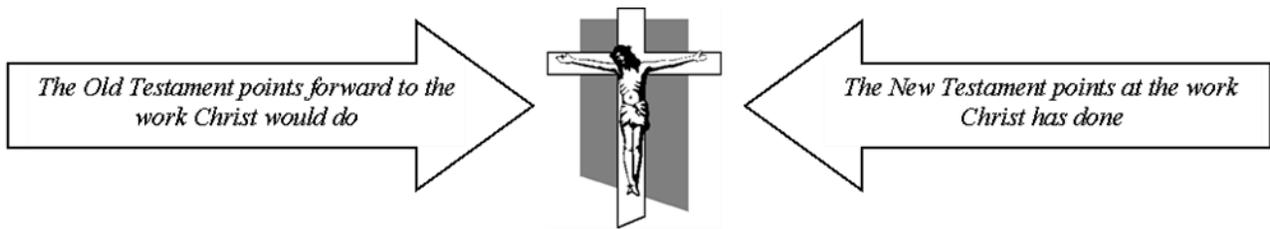
Hebrew: בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ

Greek: Οὕτως γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται ἀλλ' ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

In our church body, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, pastors are required to be able to study the Bible in its original languages. Feel free to ask your pastor to read and translate those verses any time.

KEY POINT 2 - The Bible has two main parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament.

What I've learned so far:



Part Three

Study pages 33-38 in the Catechism and answer the following questions in your own words.

1) Compare and contrast the Old Testament and the New Testament.

2) Compare and contrast the two main teachings of the Bible.

3) What is the main purpose of the Bible?

Helpful Passages

John 3:16

4) Is this verse law or gospel?

Romans 15:4, Ephesians 2:20 and 2 Peter 3:2

5) What do these verses teach you about the teaching of the Bible?

John 1:17

6) Moses wrote much of the Old Testament. According to this verse, what was Moses' message missing?



Main point — Through law and gospel in the Old Testament and the New Testament, God uses the Bible to teach us about Jesus as our Savior from our sins.

Final considerations:

Agree or Disagree?

- 1) ___ Since it is God's Word, the Bible is one of the main sources of our church's teachings.
- 2) ___ The Bible contains the Word of God.
- 3) ___ The Bible is the Word of God.
- 4) ___ Every single verse of the Bible is God's Word.
- 5) ___ The Bible's main purpose is to show us how to live right.
- 6) ___ All people know that God exists.
- 7) ___ The make-up of the human body is enough to convince everyone that God is powerful and wise.
- 8) ___ People in many countries worship idols because their conscience bothers them.
- 9) ___ My conscience tells me that I have always obeyed God.
- 10) ___ My conscience tells me that God is loving and forgiving.
- 11) ___ The natural knowledge of God is enough to get us to heaven.
- 12) ___ Since there are so many translations we must be disturbed and doubtful about the Word of God.
- 13) ___ The Bible is too complicated for a normal non-Greek or non-Hebrew knowing person to understand.



Circle one

- 14) All / Some / Most of the Bible is the Word of God.
- 15) The Old Testament was written before / during / after the life of Christ.
- 16) The central person of the Bible is Adam / Abraham / Jesus / you.

True or False?

- 17) ___ There are many different ways for people to come to God and heaven.
- 18) ___ The Old Testament was written in Greek.
- 19) ___ The Old Testament was written before Jesus was born, the New Testament after he lived.
- 20) ___ The fact that the Bible was given by God word-for-word is called "Verbal Inspiration".
- 21) ___ Although the Bible is true in spiritual matters, it may be false in other areas.
- 22) ___ The main purpose of the Bible is to ensure that we have a good life on this earth.
- 23) ___ The books of the Old and New Testaments are called "Holy Scripture" because they were written by holy men.

- 24) Research some modern criticism of the Bible and its credibility and be ready to discuss it at cat chat.

What I've learned about what the Bible teaches:

Commit to Memory:

- John 20:31
- Hebrews 4:12
- The books of the Bible