

## Unit 1-C

# The Holy Bible

### God Speaks In The Holy Bible

Have you ever wanted God to speak to you? Ultimately, all of us do!

God knows that we desire to have Him talk with us. He could have chosen to spoke to us through dreams and visions. In fact, that is how much of the Holy Bible was originally written (**Hebrews 1:1**).

Since giving us all we need to know to be saved in His 66 books, God no longer speaks to individuals with dreams, voices or visions.

Instead, the only place we get God's Word is in the Holy Bible (see *II Timothy 3:15-17; II Peter 1:21; et al.*).

### The Bible: God's Library

The Bible can be described as a library of sixty-six books written by approximately forty people over sixteen hundred years. These sixty-six books make up what is called the canon, a listing of Bible books approved by the church.

In order to be canonical (that is, considered part of the Bible), Biblical books had to meet very strict criteria:

- they clearly proclaimed God's truth,
- their writings were inspired by the Holy Spirit,
- their teachings were consistent with other portions of the Bible,
- they had been written by the prophets or apostles, and
- they contained no false or untrue teachings.

Books which met all these criteria were considered "Canonical" and were accepted as authoritative by all parts of the Christian Church.

Books that were not widely accepted by Christian Churches are called the Apocrypha or Deuterocanonical Books. Roman Catholics add some of these books to their Bible. Because of their errors and false teachings, most Christians--*including Lutherans*--do not consider the Apocrypha and Deuterocanonical Books to be God's Word. That is why non-Catholics do not use these books in their churches.

## The Bible: The Old Testament

The Bible is divided into two parts, the *Old Testament* and the *New Testament*.

**The Old Testament** begins with the book of Genesis and ends with the Book of Malachi. It contains sixty-six books, all of which were written between 1500 BC and 400 BC. Since all the Books of the Old Testament were written before Jesus' birth, its main message is "*The Savior Will Come.*"

Among the thirty-nine (39) Old Testament books are books of *History* (Genesis-Esther), *Poetry* (Job-Song of Songs), and *Prophecy* (Isaiah-Malachi). Among the authors of these books are kings such as David and Solomon, an Egyptian prince named Moses, a fig-tree grower named Amos, prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah and others, as well as other "unlikely" common--and *uncommon*--people whom God had chosen to bear His inspired Word.

### Categories Of Old Testament Books

The Old Testament	Five Books of Moses	Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy
	Twelve Books of History	Joshua Judges Ruth; I Samuel II Samuel I Kings II Kings I Chronicles II Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther
	Five Books of Poetry	Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon
	Five Major (Longer) Prophets	Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel
	Twelve Minor (Shorter) Prophets	Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi

## The Bible: The New Testament

**The New Testament** begins with the Gospel of Matthew and ends with the Book of Prophecy, Revelation. The first book of the New Testament was written approximately 45 AD. The final book written was the Book of Revelation. Since the New Testament describes Jesus' life and teachings, its main message is "*The Savior Has Come.*"

Among the twenty-seven (27) New Testament books are the Gospels (Matthew-John) which describe Jesus' life, death and resurrection, a book of history (Acts), many letters to churches and individuals from Apostles (including James, Peter and Paul), and a book of prophecy, the Book of Revelation.

Together both the Old and New Testaments have one teaching: how God saves us by grace through His Son, Jesus Christ (cf. John 3:16).

### Categories Of New Testament Books

New Testament	Four Gospels	Three Synoptic ("same-eye") Gospels	Matthew Mark Luke
	John		
	One Book of History		The Acts of the Apostles
	Twenty-One Epistles (or "Letters")	Thirteen Letters from Paul (Written To Specific Churches Or People)	Romans I Corinthians II Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians I Thessalonians II Thessalonians I Timothy II Timothy Titus Philemon
		Eight General Epistles (Written To All Churches)	Hebrews James I Peter II Peter I John II John III John Jude
	One Book of Prophecy		Revelation

## The Bible: In Chapters And Verses

The Bible is divided into chapters and verses. Chapter and verse divisions in the Bible happened long after the Bible was written. Stephen Langton (d.1228), a professor at the University of Paris and later the Archbishop of Canterbury, England, divided the Bible into chapters. Verse designations as we know them were first published in 1509, just a couple of years after the invention of the printing press

It is important to remember that these chapter and verse divisions are merely for convenience. Often, however, chapter and verse divisions do *not* reflect the actual breaks intended by the author.

## Unit 1-D

### Law & Gospel

#### The Bible's Message

The Bible's message is God's message. We know that because the Bible is "inspired."

"Inspired" can mean many things. Some people think it means that it "is interesting" or "fascinating." Certainly, the Bible does "inspire" us and give us joy.

"Inspiration," however, refers to the fact that God caused or "Breathed-in" ("inspired") the Bible. That means that every single word of the Bible is God's Word, not words invented by humans.

St. Peter wrote, "We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about...our Lord Jesus Christ." (II Peter 1:16 NIV)

Many Christians don't believe all the Bible is God's Word. This is because they don't want to listen and obey God in everything. This is exactly where Satan wants them. Whenever we deny God's Word, we disobey God by making our words more important than God's Word.

### Two Teachings Of The Bible

The purpose of the Bible is to show us how to be saved and how to live a Christian life.

The Law tells us how to live our lives. This is the first major teaching. We find the Law of God throughout the Bible. The best example of God's Law is in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 5).

If we could be perfectly holy, we could be saved by keeping the Ten Commandments perfectly. Since we can't keep God's Law perfectly, everytime we hear God's Law, God's Law...

- Shows Our Sin (SOS)
- Makes us feel guilty,
- Condemns us to eternal life in hell,
- Reminds us that God will punish us for our sins, and
- Promises that we will die for our sin.

**The Gospel**, the Bible's second major teaching, teaches us that Jesus has paid the price for our sins. The Gospel is God's remedy for all the punishment promised by the Law. The Gospel is God's undeserved gift of salvation given to us in Jesus Christ. The Gospel...

- Shows Our Savior (SOS)
- Comforts sinners with Jesus' forgiveness,
- Reminds us Jesus paid for all our sins, and
- Promises eternal life.

## Confusing Law And Gospel

The most dangerous mistake any one can make is to confuse Law and Gospel. How can you tell if someone is confusing Law and Gospel? Just ask this simple question: "How are you going to heaven?"

- 1) Some say they will get to heaven because they are good people. Wrong! By completely eliminating Jesus' forgiving work on the cross, they believe they are saved completed by keeping the Ten Commandments. Unfortunately, the Bible says, those who believe this are going to hell.
- 2) Some people believe Jesus died for them, but He didn't completely save them. Since Jesus' sacrifice wasn't enough, they must do good things to be saved. This belief, too, confuses God's plan of salvation. As the Bible says, unless Jesus is our only Savior, we are going to hell. Those who want, by their own good works to "help" Jesus, are not Christians. They deny the Gospel and are in danger of eternal damnation.

The only way we are saved is by the clear--not confused--message of the Bible. St. Paul wrote,

"It is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Ephesians 2:8-10 NIV

Law and Gospel are *not* confused when we affirm the Bible's teaching that

- 1) *Nothing* we can do can save us. Only Jesus can do that.
- 2) The good works we do are simply the way we thank God for salvation in Jesus Christ.

St. Paul wrote that our good works are the way we live out God's calling for us that He planned for us before He even created the world.

- Why did God create you?
- What did God plan for you to do before the world began?
- Are you ready to do what God called and prepared you to do?

## **Unit 1-E Overview**

### **Confirmation**

Though Confirmation is not commanded in the Bible, baptizing and teaching children, youth and adults is commanded.

Confirmation is actually the "confirmation" of one's Baptism. Confirmation also marks one's entrance into being responsible for one's own faith. Confirmands should recognize that they ought to attend Church and Sunday School and be involved in the church as a normal way of living as Jesus' disciple.

Confirmation, then, is not the end of one's growth as a Christian. It's merely the beginning.

### **Luther's Small Catechism**

Written in 1529 by Martin Luther, the Small Catechism is a book of questions and answers about the Bible. Divided into Six Chief Parts, the Small Catechism covers the essential basics of the Christian Faith: Who God is (The Creeds), What He wants (The Ten Commandments), What He Offers (Sacraments & Office Of The Keys), and How To Talk With Him (The Lord's Prayer).

Thus, the Small Catechism simply contains what EVERY Christian ought to know. That is why it is used in confirmation.

### **The Bible**

The Bible is simply a record of God's conversations and interaction with people like you and me throughout history.

Given by "inspiration," God's Holy Spirit caused over 40 people to record God's words. These people, called "prophets" and "apostles", came from every walk of life. What this demonstrates is that God wants everyone--from every nation, race and time--to be His. So great is His love.

The Bible is an eternal record of God's love for us in Jesus Christ. Without the Bible, we would not know God. Neither would we know His plan of salvation.

How much of the Bible did God write? *Every* bit of it.

The Bible contains 66 "Canonical" books. These are books which have met the "canonical" standards of acceptance by the Church. Books which are not part of the Bible are called "Apocrypha" and "Pseudepigrapha." The Catholic Church accepts the Apocrypha as canonical, even though these contain false teachings. These false teachings include praying for dead people, purgatory and other anti-Christian beliefs.

## Law & Gospel

The two main teachings of the Bible are Law and Gospel. Using the "SOS" formula, the Law "**S**hows **O**ur **S**ins" and the Gospel "**S**hows **O**ur **S**avior."

Why are these teachings so essential? If we didn't have the Law, we wouldn't know we were sinners. If we didn't know we were sinners, we wouldn't see the need for the Gospel.

That is the main blessing of the Law: it reminds us that we are sinners in need of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

There are three uses of the Law: curb, mirror and guide. These uses protect us (curb), show us our sin (mirror) and show us how God wants us to live (guide).

It is essential to salvation that we do not confuse Law and Gospel. When we confuse Law and Gospel, we demonstrate it by thinking that Jesus really didn't save us. Instead, when Law and Gospel are confused, we think we save ourselves by keeping the Ten Commandments and other Laws of God.

Nothing could be further from the truth. That is why Christians must always maintain that we are NOT saved by our works. We are only saved because Jesus Christ released us from the guilt of the Law on the cross. By His death and resurrection, we are forgiven for all our sins.

