

## **Lesson 18 – The Bible - Means of Grace: The Word of God Written—Reading, Studying, Preaching, Hearing the Bible**

**Goals:** The students will know:

- God reveals himself.
- God's existence and power is revealed in nature.
- God's Love and Salvation is revealed to us by his Word Jesus Christ.
- The Revelation of Christ is made to Prophets and Apostles.
- The testimony of Prophets and Apostles to the Word of God revealed is written in the Bible, the word of God written.
- God speaks to man through the words of the Bible.

### **Scripture:**

“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” **Psalms 119: 9-11.**

“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

**2 Timothy 3:15-17.**

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” **Hebrews 4:12.**

“Then he opened their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved

Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” **St. Luke 24:45-47.**

**Instruction:**

**Revelation**

*Is it possible for us to know God and our salvation?*

“Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God” (Luke 8:10). **God reveals himself.**

*How do we know God exists?*

Just as a library book implies the existence of a library (even if you can't see the library), the existence of the created world, which is not self-created, implies the existence of a creator. “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead” (Romans 1:20) **God's existence, and power is revealed in nature.**

*How is it that we know the truth of God and of our salvation?*

We know the truth of our salvation, because God himself has revealed it in his Son, Jesus Christ, who is the Word of God made flesh. “At sundry times and in divers manners” he has spoken “unto the fathers by the prophets”; but “in these last days he has spoken unto us by his Son” (Hebrews 1:1, 2). According to Saint John, “the Word of God...was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). **God's Love and Salvation is revealed to us by his Word Jesus Christ.**

*To whom was this revelation made?* To Israel by the prophets, and especially by the apostles who were Christ's chosen witnesses. **The Revelation of Christ is made to Prophets and Apostles.**

*How does their testimony come to us?* It has been handed down faithfully by the Church in the books of Holy Scripture, known collectively as the Bible. Ephes. 2, Rev. 21, 1 Cor. 15 **The testimony of Prophets and Apostles to the Word of God revealed is written in the Bible, the word of God written.**

*How are we to regard the Bible?* We should hear and receive it in faith, as the Word of God written in the words of men, through which God by his prophets and apostles speaks to the Church, declaring his glory and offering to men his grace for eternal life. **God speaks to man through the words of the Bible.**

*What does the Bible speak about?* It speaks of Christ, who is himself the living and eternal Word of God.

*What happens when we read the Word of God in faith?* It increases our faith, our understanding of what we believe; our hope of salvation, and our love for God.

### **Additional Questions.**

*What are the chief divisions of the Bible?*

The Bible is divided into the books of the Old Testament and the books of the New Testament.

*What is the Old Testament?*

The books of the Old Testament bear witness to the promise and preparation for Christ.

*What are the books of the Old Testament?*

Five books of the Law of Moses (Torah or Pentateuch); the books of the Prophets (including the historical books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and the Kings, known as the Former Prophets); and the Writings (Psalms, Proverbs; and other books of wisdom and history).

*What are the Apocrypha?*

The apocrypha are additional books of the Old Testament, which are sometimes left out by Bible publishers. Though not used to establish doctrine, it has many valuable things to teach about the history of God's people in the time between the end of the OT and the NT, and instruction in leading a godly life.

*What are the chief books of the NT?*

**Gospels** – records of the coming, teaching, miracles, death, and resurrection of Christ.

**Acts** – the sequel to Luke's gospel, tells of Christ's Ascension, the gift of the spirit, and the mission of the early Church.

**Epistles** – of Paul and other apostles – letters to churches or to particular Christians which have important instruction on Christian faith and life.

**Revelation** – symbolic visions about the victory of Christ and his saints over the godless world.

*What does the Collect for Advent II tell us about Scripture?*

It tells us that God has “caused all holy scriptures to be written for our learning;” and we learn to pray for grace to “read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of [God's] holy word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life,” given to us in Jesus Christ.

**Prayer: (BCP pg. 92 – Second Sunday in Advent – Collect)**

Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Activity:**

**For Younger Students:**

Take the Bible in hand, and show the children that it is made up of different books, and different sections. Point out to them where different Bible stories may be found. Some examples are:

- Creation & Adam & Eve: Genesis
- Noah and the Ark: Genesis
- Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph: Genesis
- Moses and the Israelites: Exodus
- Moses and the Ten Commandments: Exodus
- The giving of the Law: Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
- Israelites enter promised land: Joshua
- Samson and Delilah: Judges

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- Ruth and Naomi: Ruth
- Israelites are given a king (Saul): 1 Samuel
- David and Goliath: 1 Samuel
- Reign of King David: 2 Samuel
- King Solomon: 1 Kings
- Elijah and Elisha: 2 Kings
- Israel taken captive: 2 Kings
- Line of Kings and tribes of Israel: 1 Chronicles
- Building of the Temple: 2 Chronicles
- Job: Job
- The Lord is My Shepherd: Psalms
- Words of wise Solomon: Proverbs
- Prophet Isaiah: Isaiah
- Beatitudes: St. Matthew 5
- Life and ministry of Jesus: St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke and St. John
- Birth of the Church: Acts of the Apostles
- St. Paul converted: Acts of the Apostles
- St. Paul's letters: Romans-Hebrews
- St. James' letter: James
- St. Peter's letters: 1 Peter, 2 Peter
- St. John's letters: 1 John, 2 John, 3 John
- St. Jude's letter: Jude
- St. John's revelation: Revelation (Note: NOT "Revelations")

### **For Older Students:**

Divide the class into teams. Assign each team a Bible story to find. Have them locate the passage of scripture and mark the place with a bookmark. Then discuss what they have found. First team to find their story correctly wins. You may use the above stories, or you may use favorite Bible verses. The idea is to get the students familiar with where the books are, and to have a "hands on" experience with the Bible.