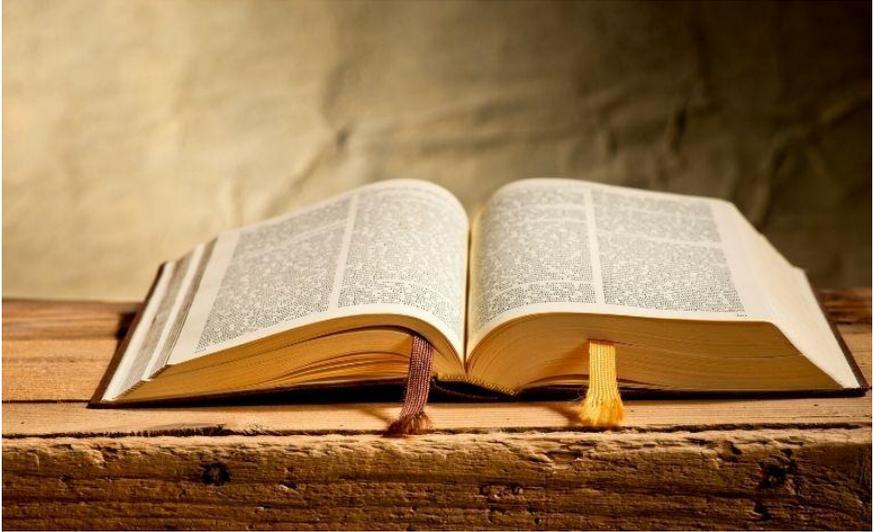


## What is the Bible?



*“So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, ‘If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’” (John 8:31-32)*

- The Bible is a book written by men “as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:21)
- The Bible is our authority.
- The Bible has 66 books (39 Old Testament and 27 New Testament).
- The Bible was written over about 1100 years (with a 400 year gap between the Old Testament and the New Testament). Moses started with the Pentateuch (~1446 BC) and John ended with the Revelation (~ 70 AD).
- The Bible was written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.
- The Bible contains historical narrative (Genesis and the Gospels, e.g.), poetry (Psalms, e.g.), prophecy (Isaiah and Revelation, e.g.), and epistles (Romans, e.g.).

## How do we understand the Bible when we read it?

- The Bible is all about Jesus: “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, [Jesus] interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.” (Luke 24:27)
- The Bible is all about redemption (*perspicuity*): “Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so 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 20:30-31)
- The Bible contains both Law and Gospel: “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.” (2 Timothy 2:15)
  - The Law: **S**hows us **O**ur **S**in, and (Romans 7:7-12)
  - The Gospel: **S**hows us **O**ur **S**avior. (John 3:16-17)
- The Bible is inerrant (without error) in the original language (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek).
- You need to use the regular rules of grammar when reading the Bible.
- Context, context, context!
- The simpler passages help translate the difficult passages (Scripture interprets Scripture).
- You need to understand the sense of the words when they were written.
  - Word usage changes over time, like cloud, e.g.

- Some are specific to the Bible like scapegoat: Lev 16:7-10, 20-22; compare with Jesus' Baptism and fasting in wilderness, Mark 1:9-13.
  - and propitiation: Hebrews 2:17, 1 John 2:2, 4:10. Romans 3:21-26.
- It is meant to be read, prayed, and meditated upon!

## What is the Small Catechism?



*The deplorable, miserable condition that I discovered recently when I, too, was a visitor, has forced and urged me to prepare this catechism, or Christian doctrine, in this small, plain, simple form. Mercy! Dear God, what great misery I beheld! The common person, especially in the villages, has no knowledge whatever of Christian doctrine. And unfortunately, many pastors are completely unable and unqualified to teach. (SC Preface 1-2)*

## A summary of the Christian Faith

The Small Catechism acts as a framework with which to understand the Bible and our Faith (what we believe, teach, and confess). After we know the Small Catechism extremely well, we can “hang” new information on it.

### Six Chief Parts (Section 1)

- I. The Ten Commandments
- II. The Apostle’s Creed
- III. The Lord’s Prayer
- IV. Holy Baptism
- V. Confession & Absolution (The Office of the Keys)
- VI. The Lord’s Supper (Holy Eucharist, Holy Communion)

### Three Additional Parts (Daily Piety of the Christian)

- I. Daily Prayers (Section 2)
- II. Table of Duties (Section 3)
- III. Christian Questions with Their Answers (Section 4)

What’s the difference between “The Small Catechism” and “The Small Catechism with Explanation”?

What’s the Large Catechism?

What else should I be memorizing?

- Scripture
- Liturgy
- Hymns