

THE TWO GREAT TEACHINGS



The reality of our sin - the gift of God's salvation.

THE saddest thing that can happen to a person is to miss the real story of Christ, and the purpose of His coming into the world. The Bible calls this story and purpose *the Gospel, or the Good News*. God's plan was to send His only Son to be born into the world, to live a perfect life for us in our place. Jesus would then offer that perfect and sinless life on the cross to pay for the sins of the whole world. Following this, Jesus would rise again, and return to heaven to prepare a place for all mankind to follow Him into heaven.

However, for those who miss the meaning of Jesus' story, or who reject it on purpose, the Bible remains little more than a set of rules. For them it is simply of book of morals, telling us what good works we should do in order to score points with God. In fact, there are really only two religions in the world - works and grace. All other religions teach that we must earn heaven *ourselves* by doing good works. Only true Christianity teaches that Jesus earned heaven *for* us when He gave up His life on the cross. Some ask: "Isn't that too easy? No person deserves all good in return for nothing!" Nevertheless, God's plan for salvation *is* easy and it *is* simple. True, no one *deserves* such love from God, but that love - and that plan - is there for all whether they want it or not. Jesus Christ is the key to this salvation, however, and all who miss or reject Jesus will inevitably miss the road to heaven!

The religious leaders of Jesus' day were well-versed in the Old Testament of the Bible. It is said that many such leaders knew from memory whole chapters and books of Scripture. Yet Jesus had to say to them, as we read in John 5:37-40, "*And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.*"

The Old Testament, as well as the New, is full of the story of Jesus. Let the Bible speak for itself. The first 4000 years of the world's history foretell the coming of the Savior.

The Gospel

1. Read again the first promise of a Savior in Genesis 3:15. *What promise and hope were Adam and Eve given right after their fall into sin?*

ICON KEY

-  Introduction
-  Important point
-  For further reading

"LEARN FROM ME"

2. Abraham was called to be the father of God's chosen people. Read Genesis 12:1-3. *What promise did God make to Abraham which effects even your own family?*

3. Read Genesis 18:16-18. As the Lord prepared to destroy the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, he debated telling Abraham. *Again - what was so special about Abraham?*

4. Skip to Galatians 3:16, in the New Testament. *Who was the "promised Seed of Abraham"?*

5. Abraham's son, Isaac, was another ancestor of Jesus Christ. Read Genesis 26:1-5. *What words of God's promise, repeated to Isaac, apply even to your and my families?*

6. Jacob was Isaac's son, Abraham's grandson. Read Genesis 28:14, God's repeated promise to Jacob. *Write how this promise applies to you.*

7. Read Job 19:25. Job was a man who endured great suffering and loss. Yet *what was Job's trust, even in the midst of his suffering?*

8. Skim through the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. It tells of the many Old Testament believers who endured great hardships and achieved mighty victories, all because they were looking for inspiration to one person. Read the first two verses of Hebrews chapter 12. *Along with that "great cloud" of Old Testament witnesses, we also look to that same person for salvation. Who is He?*



We see, then, that we share a common faith with all believers of all times. The Old Testament believers were saved by faith in the Savior who was to come. *We* are saved by faith in that same Savior, who *has* come, *has* lived and died for us, and *has* risen again for our justification. The Messiah who was foretold - and has come - is Jesus Christ.

The Law

The other great teaching of the Bible is the Law. Scripture uses the word "Law" both in a wide and narrow sense. You will be able to tell which is meant when you look at the passages immediately surrounding the word. In its wide sense, "Law" means the whole Word of God (including Law and Gospel). In its narrow sense, however, the Law is all that God commands and forbids, and it is what shows God's anger against sin. In this lesson, we will be speaking of the Law in its narrow sense.

The Law of God shows us our sin, and our deep need for a way out from under our sin, but it doesn't show us that way out. The Law keeps on accusing us, and never offers escape.

9. Some people say God grades on a curve -- that is, they think God takes into account how well a person is *able* to do, and He adjusts His demands upon that person accordingly. But read Leviticus 19:2. *Just how holy does God expect us to be?*

10. In Exodus 20:1-17, God presents to us, in a short form, exactly what he expects from us in our life here on this earth. They are the Ten Commandments. In Exodus 22 through 32, you may read in detail how the Old Testament believer was to apply the Ten Commandments in his daily life. In your own words: *What does the doctrine of the Law teach us about how we are to live?*

Comparing the Two Great Teachings

11. Read I John 4:9. *What does the doctrine of the Gospel teach us?*

12. Read John 3:16 *What does the doctrine of the Gospel teach us?*

13. Read Romans 1:16. *What does the Apostle Paul call the Gospel?*

14. Read Romans 5:6-8. *Which people did Jesus die to redeem?*

"LEARN FROM ME"

15. What is the difference between the Law and the Gospel? Read Romans 3:20 and complete this sentence: *The Law tells us...*

16. Read John 1:29. *The Gospel tells us...*

17. Read Matthew 19:16-22. *What did the Law finally demonstrate to the rich young man?*



18. Read the account in Acts 16:16-34. *Write down the Gospel words which saved the jailer at Philippi:*



Additional Bible Readings

For additional Bible readings in the Law of God, please see Exodus chapters 20-32 and Deuteronomy chapters 5-31. Luther's Catechism treats the same subjects as this lesson does, and is a good summary of Law and Gospel. The importance of Law and Gospel, and of correctly differentiating between the two, is wonderfully laid out in a book entitled "The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel," by C.F.W. Walther. Ask your pastor for a copy.