

COVENANTAL CATECHISM

BOOK 1

FOR BEGINNERS

*To You Is the Promise and
To Your Children*

by

Harry Van Dyken

(Revised by Donald Van Dyken, 1991, 2000)

Second Edition

A Progressive Course of Study of God's Covenantal, Redemptive Revelation to His People

This catechism book is one of a series of six and is dedicated to
the glory of Jehovah,
the God of Abraham, the father of all believers; and the God of their children,
the heirs of the promise.

*“And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs
according to the promise.”*

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TO THE PARENTS

This series of lessons is prepared for your children, your little children who are now ready to begin their formal study in school. The Church must also, then, begin her formal instruction.

This beginning of instruction is intended to acquaint your children further with the Word of God, and particularly to give them an understanding of the Word. They must learn to know Bible history, but especially to know the meaning of that history of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ coming to us through the Word covenantally and redemptively.

Your catechism teacher will depend rather heavily on the home to teach the children the content of the Old Testament—the facts that are recorded there—in order that the rather limited time that is at the disposal of the catechism teacher may be spent bringing the children to an understanding of the covenantal and redemptive meaning of these facts.

In that way, in the cooperation of home and church, of parents and minister, the children may come to know the Word of God as it speaks meaningfully to them as children who have received the sign and seal of God's covenant.

In all our teaching, we wish to remember two important facts of covenantal life. The first of these is that these children whom God has entrusted to us are His image. He gives them to us to form and develop as His image. This image at its heart expresses itself in intellect, will, and emotions. In harmony with this, we must teach the child to know, to do, and to sorrow and rejoice.

The second of these facts is that these children are members of the Church of Jesus Christ and all their training is a preparation for mature membership in the Church. This maturity is declared by them at the time that they, by God's grace, make public profession of their faith. So we may say that all their teaching must be directed to the preparation for making that profession and living it.

We will be reminding the children of these facts again and again in our teaching. We will be reminding them that they have been brought before God and His people to receive the sign and seal of God's covenant in baptism. We will remind them that this means that wonderful promises have therefore been spoken over them; that these are God's promises and are sure. We will be reminding them that God, as their covenant Jehovah, places His claim of ownership upon them and thus makes covenantal demands upon their life.

We trust that as parents, you will be reminding them of these same things, that you will encourage them in their study of these truths which prepare them for life and make them live. Feel free to call on your teacher regarding any problem that may arise concerning your child. Together we look to our God for His blessing upon our work.

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BIBLE READING ASSIGNMENTS—BOOK 1

These passages relate to each lesson. We are including these assignments so parents can schedule family reading of these passages. We want your children to become familiar with the way God speaks to us in His Word. Your children then will come to class better prepared to answer questions about the lesson.

Some Bible passages are difficult for our children to understand. There are also lessons in which a great amount of history is covered in a short time. To read, for instance, all the history of David would take more time than you may have.

A very precious way for you as parents to deal with both difficulties is to become so familiar with these sections of Bible history that you can tell them to your children in your own words. Another method is to use a reliable children's Bible. Four that I recommend are: *The Children's Bible*, by Anne De Vries; *Leading Little Ones to God*, by Marian Schooland; *The Bible History Told to Our Children*, 3 Vols., by John Vreugdenhil; and *Promise and Deliverance*, 4 vols., by S. G. De Graaf.

| LESSON | READING |
|---|--|
| 1. God Talks With Us—The Bible | Psalm 119:89-112; Isaiah 40:1-11; 1 Timothy 3 |
| 2. God Talks—In the Beginning | Genesis 1; Psalm 33 |
| 3. God Made Man in His Likeness | Genesis 1, 2; Psalm 8 |
| 4. Adam and Eve Become Friends of Satan | Genesis 3 |
| 5. The Great Battle Begins—Cain, Abel, Seth | Genesis 4; Revelation 12 |
| 6. God's Promise and Satan's Promise—Enoch and Lamech | Genesis 5; Hebrews 6:13-20 |
| 7. Methusaleh—Life and Death | Genesis 5 |
| 8. Noah—The Line of the Seed Saved by Flood and Ark | Genesis 6 – 8 |
| 9. Noah's Sons—The Tower of Babel | Genesis 9 – 11 |
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| 11. Isaac and Jacob Used of God | Genesis 24 – 35 |
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| 14. Joshua—Victory and Defeat in Canaan | Joshua 1 – 8 |
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| 16. Saul & David—Kings for God—A Coming King | 1 Samuel 9, 10, 15 – 17 |
| 17. Solomon and the Divided Kingdom | 1 Kings 3, 9:1 – 9, 11 |
| 18. Ahab and Jezebel | 1 Kings 16 – 19 |
| 19. Elijah and Elisha | 1 Kings 17 – 21; 2 Kings 1 - 9 |
| 20. Athaliah and Joash | 2 Chronicles 22 – 24 |
| 21. Hezekiah and Manasseh | 2 Chronicles 29 – 33 |
| 22. Isaiah and Jeremiah | Isaiah 6; Jeremiah 1 |
| 23. Captivity in Babylon | 2 Chronicles 36; Ezekiel 2, 3; Daniel 1, 4 |
| 24. Return from Captivity | Ezekiel 1; Haggai 1, 2; Malachi 3,4 |
| 25. The Promise Fulfilled—Christ is Born | Matthew 1, 2; Luke 1, 2 |

LESSON 1

GOD TALKS WITH US—THE BIBLE

MEMORY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

1. How can we know God?

God tells us about Himself in the Bible.

2. How did God give us the Bible?

God made holy men write His Word.

3. How do we know that these men did not make mistakes?

God says that the Holy Spirit kept them from making mistakes.

LEARN TO SING:

Psalter Hymnal 237:1. From Psalm 119.

How shall the young di - rect their way? What light shall be their
per-fect guide? Thy Word, O Lord, will safe - ly lead, If in its
wis - dom they con-fide. Sin-cere-ly I have sought Thee, Lord,
O let me not from Thee de-part; To know Thy will and
keep from sin Thy Word I cher - ish in my heart.

MEMORY TEXT:

“Your word *is* a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

Psalm 119:105

FOR FATHER OR MOTHER TO READ TO ME:

You know that the Bible is God’s book. You have heard your father and mother read it. God talks to us in this book. If God did not talk to us we could never be His children. But, because He talks to us, because He shows Himself to us in the Bible through our precious Savior, we are His children.

THE BIBLE IS A TREASURE

We start our lessons learning to know about the Bible. Do you know why we do this? Because the Bible is just like a treasure map. If you were going to hunt for treasure, you would need the treasure map first to tell you where to look. We are learning about a treasure too. This treasure is life—eternal life. To have this treasure we must know God and believe in Him. So we will start now together learning to understand this treasure map better.

THE BIBLE IS TRUE

We know that the Bible is true for it is the book from God. Men wrote it, but God told them what to write. The Holy Spirit

was in them to tell them what to write and to keep them from mistakes.

GOD TALKS TO US

In the Bible God tells us all we need to know to be saved. We must be saved to be His children. We will see why this is so in a later lesson. And the Bible tells us how we must live as God’s children. It is a lamp for our feet and a light for our pathway.

LISTEN!

In this year, children, as God speaks to us, talks with us, let us listen very carefully. This is true when father and mother read the Bible. It is true when we are in church and listen to the minister. It is also true in catechism.

We want God to talk with us. We must listen carefully to Him when He talks. Then you will learn more and more to talk to Him. That is what you do when you pray. You will be learning how wonderful it is that God talks with us and that we can also talk with Him.

When you go to bed tonight and you talk to God, your heavenly Father, do not forget to thank Him for talking to you and making you His child.

POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- ◆ 1. God talks to us in the Bible.
- ◆ 2. The treasure in the Bible is eternal life. To have this treasure we must know God and believe Him.
- ◆ 3. The Bible also tells how we must live as God’s children.
- ◆ 4. The Bible teaches us that we must listen to God and we must talk to Him.

QUESTIONS FOR FATHER OR MOTHER TO ASK ME:

1. If God did not talk to us, what would happen?
2. What treasure does the Bible show us?
3. Who are some different people God uses so that He can talk to us?
4. When we hear what God says, what is the first thing we must do?
5. Why don't we always pay attention when God talks?
6. What should we do if we don't listen to God?
7. Can you talk to God? Do you? What do you say?
8. How can you know if God has made you His child? Do you know a little song about that? (Jesus loves me...?)
9. In the Bible we learn that we must be saved. What does that mean?

LESSON 2

GOD TALKS—IN THE BEGINNING

MEMORY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

4. What is the first thing that God tells us in the Bible?

The first thing that God tells us in the Bible is that He made everything.

5. How did God make the world?

God made the world by speaking. He spoke and it was there.

6. Why did God make the world?

God made the world for His glory and for us to enjoy.

7. Did God make the world and all things good?

“And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good.” (Gen. 1:31)

LEARN TO SING:

Psalter Hymnal 57:4. From Psalm 33.



Let all the earth Jehovah fear, Let all that dwell both far and near



In awe before Him stand; For, lo, He spake and it was done,



And all, with sovereign power begun, Stood fast at His command.

MEMORY TEXT:

“By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.”

Psalm 33:6

FOR FATHER OR MOTHER TO READ TO ME:

Children, have you ever wanted something very, very much? Of course you have. Some of these things that we have wanted so much we could not have because father and mother did not have enough money to buy them for us.

Just think if you could have just told the thing to be there. That if you wanted a real car for your very own, all you would have to do is say, “Car, be there!” And there it would be, just exactly the way you wanted it.

HOW GOD CREATED

Now you will say, “Why do you talk this way. We can't do that.” That is true, children, but do you know that that is the way God made the heaven and the earth? That is the way God made the light and the sky and the mountains and oceans? That is the way that God made the plants and the animals, the sun, moon, and stars? He just said, “Be there!” And they were there.

And when He made the heaven and the earth, the light, and the sun, and moon, and stars, there was nothing there to make them from. But when God spoke, they were there.

CREATION SHOWS GOD'S GREATNESS

That is what we mean when we say that God created. That is how great and wonderful and mighty God is. This is the first thing that He tells us in the Bible.

There are many, many more things that He tells us, but this is the first. It is here that we see how great and wonderful God, who talks to us in the Bible, really is.

GOD CREATED ALL THINGS IN SIX DAYS

God made all of this, and also man, in six days, and He rested the seventh day. You will find, as you become older, that many people do not believe that God made everything the way He said He did. You will even hear some people who say that they are God's children, not really believing that God made the world in the way that He said He did. But you must remember that you must believe what God says rather than what man says.

Last week you learned that God talks to you in the Bible. He doesn't talk to you because you are so smart. No. He talks to you because you are His child. And the most wonderful thing is that you can believe everything that God has said, because He is your Father.

GOD RESTED

After God made everything in six days, He rested on the seventh day. And He made that day holy. He made it holy for us. He didn't need rest, did He? God does not get tired as you and I do.

Now you know a little more what it means that God created. You know what it means that God talks with you and me. You know what it means that God made one day holy for us to rest in.

