

COVENANTAL CATECHISM

BOOK 4

THE GOSPELS

*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

We begin the study of the Gospels with your children of ten and eleven years old. We want to point out that in these Gospels, in the life and death of Jesus Christ, the battle, the conflict which God had made against Satan and all his host, comes to its climax. This is the high point. In this history we see the fulfillment of the promise that the Seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent.

As we bring these lessons, we always want to remember what Paul wrote to the Churches of Galatia, "And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." We will be teaching heirs of the promise. They must know that promise and all that it means. They must know how this promise comes to them.

They are heirs of the promise because they are covenant children. The sign and seal of that covenant has been placed upon them in baptism. They must become more and more conscious of this.

They must also see how God used men and the circumstances of life to fulfill this promise, to work out His great work of redemption. And seeing this, they must learn to ask the question, "How does God want to use me?"

Catechism is part of their training school for a life to be used of God for the continuing fulfillment of His promise to the seed of Abraham. We trust that we may work with you, and you with us, in the preparation of these children for a real life of service to their King.

We trust that we, with you, may hold before them that as members of the Church of Jesus Christ they are now getting ready to confess His name before men and to take their place as mature members of the Church; to take their place in the great battle of the ages which is still being waged.

We trust that we will be able, by God's grace, to make them a little more conscious of the reality of Satan and of his work and power; but also conscious of the power of God in the lives of His people whom He uses to defeat Satan and all his work.

We look to you to encourage your children in their study. Feel free to call on us regarding any problems that may arise in connection with this catechism instruction.

TABLE OF CONTENTS – BOOK 4

LESSON NO.	TITLE	PAGE NO.
1	Looking Back	1
2	The Way-Preparer	5
3	The Birth of Christ	10
4	Call His Name Jesus	15
5	Shepherds and Foreigners	19
6	Herod and the Church's Leaders with Satan	24
	Review and Test Lessons 1 – 6	28
7	Jesus is Baptized—Made Ready for His Work	33
8	Jesus Christ, our Prophet, Priest, and King	38
9	Jesus Fights with Satan—The Temptations	44
10	Jesus Chooses His Helpers	49
11	Jesus Works His First Miracle	53
12	Christ, Our Great High Priest, Cleanses the Temple	57
	Review and Test Lessons 7 – 12	62
13	Christ, Our Great Prophet Shows the Way	67
14	Christ, Our Great Prophet Tells us of Life—I	71
15	Christ, Our Great Prophet Tells us of Life—II	76
16	Christ—Speaks of Curse and Blessing	81
17	Christ, Our Great King Commands Sea & Devils	86
18	Christ Feeds Five Thousand & Thousands	91
	Review and Test Lessons 13 – 18	96
19	Christ Confessed, Tempted, Transfigured	101
20	The Word of Life Gives Lazarus Life	106
21	The King Comes	111
22	Gethsemane and Trial	116
23	Christ Under the Fullness of Wrath	121
24	Christ, Our Prophet, Priest, and King Victorious	126
25	Ascension—Victory and Glory	130
	Review and Test Lessons 19 – 25	134

Appendix A.....	First Lines of Songs of Book 1	140
Appendix B.....	First Lines of Songs of Book 2	141
Appendix C.....	First Lines of Songs of Book 3	142
Appendix D	First Lines of Songs of Book 4	143
Appendix E.....	Time Line	144
Appendix F.....	Line of Promise Chart	145

BIBLE READING ASSIGNMENTS—BOOK 4

This is a listing of the passages assigned for reading in each lesson. The assignments are given in each lesson as well as here. Parents will greatly benefit their children’s spiritual development if they schedule these passages into daily family devotions.

Some Bible passages will be difficult for our children to understand. There are also lessons in which a large portion of history is covered in a short time. Please devote some time to nurturing your children’s spiritual understanding.

LESSON	READING
1. Looking Back	Matthew 1; Luke 3:23-38
2. The Way-Preparer	Malachi 3:1; Matthew 3:1-12; John 1:15-28
3. The Birth of Christ	Luke 1:26-56; Luke 2:1-7; John 1:1-18
4. Call His Name Jesus	Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38
5. Shepherds and Foreigners	Matthew 2:1-12; Luke 2:1-20
6. Herod and the Church’s Leaders with Satan	Matthew 2:1-23; Revelation 12
7. Jesus is Baptized—Made Ready for His Work	Matthew 3:1-17; Luke 3:21-23
8. Jesus Christ, our Prophet, Priest, and King	Deuteronomy 18:15-18; Psalm 2, Psalm 110
9. Jesus Fights with Satan—The Temptations	Matthew 4:1-11
10. Jesus Chooses His Helpers	John 1:35-51; Matthew 4:12-22; Luke 6:12-19
11. Jesus Works His First Miracle	John 2:1-11
12. Christ, Our Great High Priest, Cleanses the Temple	John 2:13-22
13. Christ, Our Great Prophet Shows the Way	John 3:1-21
14. Christ, Our Great Prophet Tells us of Life—I	Matthew 5, 6, and 7

15. Christ, Our Great Prophet Tells us of Life—II	Matthew 5, 6, and 7
16. Christ—Speaks of Curse and Blessing	Matthew 11:20-30
17. Christ, Our Great King Commands Sea & Devils	Matthew 8:23-34; Mark 4:35 – 5:20; Luke 8:22-39
18. Christ Feeds Five Thousand & Thousands	John 6, Revelation 5 and 7
19. Christ Confessed, Tempted, Transfigured	Matthew 16:13-26; Luke 9:28-36
20. The Word of Life Gives Lazarus Life	John 11:1-54
21. The King Comes	Matthew 21:1-11; Luke 19:28-48
22. Gethsemane and Trial	Mark 14:26-42; Luke 22:47-65; John 18:28 – 19:16
23. Christ Under the Fullness of Wrath	Matthew 27:31-54; Luke 23:50-56
24. Christ, Our Prophet, Priest, and King Victorious	Luke 24:1-48
25. Ascension—Victory and Glory	Acts 1:1-14; Revelation 12

LESSON 1

LOOKING BACK

MEMORY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

1. What does Matthew call Jesus in his Gospel?

Matthew calls Jesus “the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.”

2. What line of people does Matthew name in his Gospel?

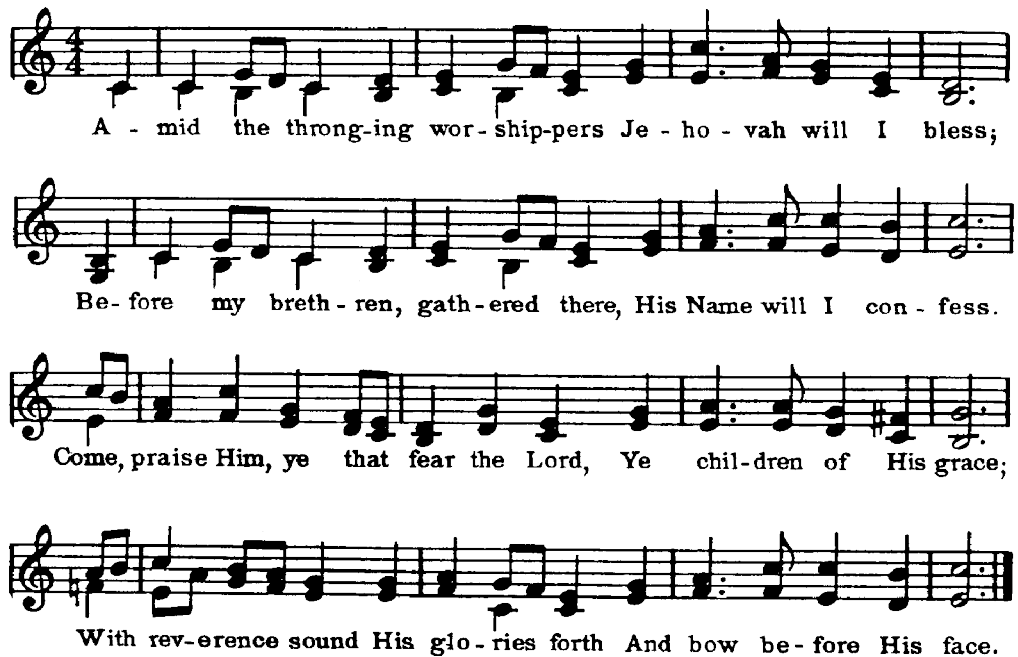
Matthew names the line of promise, which is also called the line of the seed, or the line of the covenant. It goes from Abraham to the birth of Jesus.

3. Does this line tell us anything about God’s faithfulness?

The line in Matthew shows us that though we are unfaithful, He is always faithful and even uses us sinners for His great work.

LEARN TO SING:

Psalter Hymnal 37:1. From Psalm 22.



A - mid the throng-ing wor-ship-pers Je - ho - vah will I bless;

Be- fore my breth - ren, gath-ered there, His Name will I con - fess.

Come, praise Him, ye that fear the Lord, Ye chil-dren of His grace;

With rev-erence sound His glo-ries forth And bow be-fore His face.

MEMORY TEXT:

“For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified *are* all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.”

Hebrews 2:11

READ CAREFULLY:

Matthew 1; Luke 3:23-38

ABOUT THIS LESSON:

We will be studying about the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus. First, we want to look back for a little while to see what this all means.

Sometimes we get tired of all the names that we read in the Bible. This is a rather long list in Matthew 1 also. But it is a list, children, that tells us very much. It tells us of the line of the covenant, the line of the promise.

GOD'S PROMISES

You see, God made a wonderful promise in the Old Testament. He said it when He spoke to the devil right after Adam sinned. He promised that the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent. He said it to Abraham when He told him that He would be his God and the God of his children. He promised that from Abraham's seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed. And Abraham's seed is Christ. Matthew 1 tells us this. It says, “Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”

If you look at this list of people very carefully you see some famous names. But you will also see that they are all sinners. How could sinners be in such a list? This is the list of the ones from whom Christ was born!

COVENANT LIST

This is just what is so wonderful, children. You know that there is a list also now that keeps on going. And your name is on that list, for you are a covenant child. You too, belong to God. We know that we are sinners, but we know that sinners can be on that list, for Christ came to save sinners. The four Old Testament women who are mentioned in this list were not especially good women. In fact they were especially bad women. Why did Jesus come from a line of people who were sinners? Was He not the Son of God?

Yes, indeed He was. But He also had to be one of us. He had to be the one who would take our place—our place in testing, in suffering, dying, and rising again. So the Bible tells us He “was born of a woman.” He was the Seed of the woman, the Son of Mary, of David, of Abraham, our Son—“unto us a Child is born.”

He was like unto His brethren in all things, sin excepted. He became one of us so that He might take our sins on Himself and die for them. So when you read this list of sinners, remember that the list goes right on and we are on it. A list of those whom Christ was willing to call brothers.

This is the wonder that we must look back at as we begin our study of Jesus' birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- 1. The line of the promise, the line of the seed of the woman, the line of covenant, is the line of people we learned about in the Old Testament. It is the line of the people who were used by God to bring Jesus into the world.
- 2. It is maybe surprising that sinners are on the list in Matthew 1. But these sinners were ones who were looking for the coming of Jesus to save them from their sins.
- 3. This list is a wonderful comfort to us, for it tells us that we too are on a list. We are on the list of covenant children.
- 4. Jesus came into the world to be one of us. Our text says, “He is not ashamed to call them brethren.”

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE LESSON:

1. Whom will we be studying about this year?
2. What four things does the lesson say we will be learning about Him?
3. What does “line of covenant” mean?
4. What does the line in Matthew 1 show us about God?
5. What promise did God make to Adam?
6. What promise did God make to Abraham?
7. Why is it important to know the Old Testament before we study the New Testament?

7. Why is it important to know the Old Testament before we study the New Testament?

8. How could sinners be on the line of promise?

9. What kinds of lists of important names can you think of? (history, sports, millionaires, etc.)

10. What list would you like your name on most?

11. Why did Jesus have to be a man, like one of us?

12. In your memory text, you see the words “sanctifies” and “sanctified”. What do they mean?

13. Who is the “he” and who are the “they” and “them” in your text?

14. Now can you tell me what the text means?

LESSON 2

THE WAY-PREPARER

MEMORY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

4. What was the name of the Way-Preparer?

The name of the Way-Preparer was John the Baptist.

5. Whose way did he come to prepare?

John the Baptist came to prepare the way for Jesus Christ.

6. How do we know that John the Baptist was the Way-Preparer?

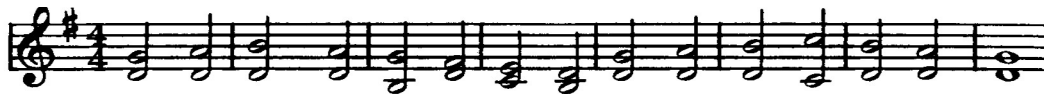
The Holy Spirit said through his father Zacharias, “For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways.” (Luke 1:76)

7. Had God promised that He would send someone to prepare the way for Jesus?

Yes, in Malachi 3:1 God had promised to send a Way-Preparer.

LEARN TO SING:

Psalter Hymnal 406:2. From Isaiah 40:3,4



For the her - ald's voice is cry - ing In the des - ert far and near,



Bid - ding all men to re - pent - ance, Since the king - dom now is here.



O that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way;



Let the val - leys rise to meet Him And the hills bow down to greet Him.

MEMORY TEXT:

MEMORY TEXT:

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness: prepare the way of the LORD; make His paths straight.”

Matthew 3:3

READ CAREFULLY:

Malachi 3:1; Matthew 3:1-12; John 1:15-28

ABOUT THIS LESSON:

As we get ready, children, to study about the great conflict that took place when Jesus came into the world, we must see what God did to get ready for this. In the Old Testament in both Isaiah and Malachi, God had promised that He would send a man to prepare the way for the coming of Christ. In the New Testament God makes clear that John the Baptist is that man. Zacharias says this in poetry in Luke 1:68-79.

JOHN THE BAPTIST IN THE BATTLE

We see much of the conflict in the life of John the Baptist. John had to have a very real part in this battle. But he also had a very short part. One of the first things that John said to the people when they came to him to be baptized was, “Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance.” (Luke 3:7,8)

The devil had been fighting hard to take God’s people from Him. The Jews had listened to him in many ways. They were not ready to receive Jesus. They were looking for a king who would give them power and good things in this earth. They were not looking for someone to save them from their sins.

SATAN’S TEACHING

The devil had taught them this. He had used their leaders, their teachers, to teach them. They had taught them that they did not have to worry because they were children of Abraham. John said to them, “Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as *our* father.’ For I say to you that God is able to

raise up children to Abraham from these stones.” Later on when we see what the Jews did, we will see that they did not listen to John. Later on we hear Jesus say to some of these same people, “You are of *your* father the devil.”

John had to preach in this way. Then when Christ was ready to start His work, John told the people who Jesus was. John also had to baptize Jesus. Not that Jesus had to have His own sins washed away. He did not have sins. But Jesus came in our place and took our sins.

JOHN’S DEATH

Then John also fought against sin in Herod. He told Herod that he was sinning by having his brother’s wife. Herod did not like this and put John in prison. He kept John there until he later had his head cut off to please the wicked woman that John had preached against.

When we read of this we may think that it was terrible that the great prophet John the Baptist had to die in this way when he was still very young. But John’s work was finished. The devil did not win a victory in this way. He only thought that he did.

A MIRACLE BIRTH

Let us now go back a little to see how great this man was. In the first place, children, because he was so great, or the work God wanted him to do was so great, the great angel Gabriel came to tell his father Zacharias, that John was to be born, and what he was to be. God sent a special messenger from heaven for it.

Another wonderful thing is that John's birth was a miracle. This happened often as God prepared the way for Jesus' birth. You will remember that Abraham and Sarah received Isaac from the Lord when they were really too old to have children. John's parents were too old too, to have children. And they had never had any children. There could not be life there and yet there was. This was because God did it.

GOD GIVES LIFE

You see there can be no hope of winning the battle against Satan unless God does it. For there can be no life in this world. God said, "You shall surely die." But He also said, "I come to bring life." He gives us life because of Jesus who came to die for us.

So you see that it is not man but God who gives us the one who prepares the way for Jesus, just as it is also God who gives us Jesus. Children, always in the fight against Satan, God fights in us and through us against the devil. That is why we know that we can win.

FIGHT AGAINST THE DEVIL

Remember that John did not have to work for very long, but he had to do very important work. He did not fight long, but he had to fight hard. God used him for what He called him for.

It is good for you to ask, "What place and what work does God have for me in the great fight against sin and the devil?"

POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- ◆ 1. The Way-Preparer John the Baptist came because God had planned it. He told His people about it in the Old Testament. God always does what He says He will do. You can be sure of it.
- ◆ 2. John the Baptist had to fight against the work of the devil among God's people—he called them to repent from their sins. For you see, the devil had taught the people that they did not need a King who would save them from their sins.
- ◆ 3. John the Baptist was born in a very special way. First, God sent the angel Gabriel to tell about his birth. Second, God gave life to some old, dead people, Zacharias and Elizabeth, so they could have a baby boy. This was to show that life in this world of death can only come because of God's work.
- ◆ 4. Always in the fight against Satan, God fights in us and through us against the devil. That is why we know that we can win.

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. What line of people does Matthew name in his Gospel? (L. 1)

2. What does "the line of the covenant" mean? (L. 1)