

**CREATION & FALL**  
**Genesis 1-14**

**Living God's Word—A Walk Through the Bible**  
**January 12, 2014**  
**Pastor Nathan J. Thompson**

When people think of the Bible they often think that it is just a bunch of ancient stories about God, Jesus and mostly archaic stuff. Some people do think that the Bible has some good and helpful sayings yet they believe these sayings are pretty much on the same level as in other religions. They believe these words are pretty much the same as other great philosophers or prophets; pretty much equal to other world religions.

There are other people, including even some Christians, who think of the Bible as simply a book of affirmation and therapy. This perspective is that the Bible mostly tries to help people feel good about their own beings; it affirms most every moral choice that people make. For them the Bible is simply about love, peace and feeling good about ourselves.

Yet the true message of the Bible is rather about transformation and new life. It is not just some nice sayings and philosophies; rather it is a power, centered in the Holy Spirit, that is alive and actively working in us.

The Bible is not simply some nice sayings that affirm and try to make everyone feel good about their own selves. The truth is that the Bible never centers on wanting people to stay exactly where they are in their lives and beings. Rather it focuses on bringing people to a new place; to new life; to new possibilities.

If you brought your Bible with today (and I encourage you to do so) it would be good if a sticker with this saying would be put on it: **“WARNING: This book contains the powerful and inspirational Word of God! If you read it with an open heart and mind, it will change your life!”**

The Bible is not just any book. Turn to Romans 1:16: *“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.”* This power of God has been known to bring about miracles of new life; healing from problems and illnesses; allowing the Spirit to help change families, churches, communities.

That is what we at Messiah Lutheran Church will be focusing on these next months in what we are calling “Living God's Word—A Walk Through The Bible.” We will be lifting up and encouraging you to read all the way through the Bible, or certain parts of the Bible, and listen carefully to hear its message in all its power and glory.

We will focus most every Sunday on different sections of the Biblical story as we read our way through the Old & New Testaments. It will give me the opportunity to do some teaching about

these Biblical books as well as to show some outlines and maps on our projection system. What a wonderful tool technology is in helping to teach the Biblical message.

We also hope to provide other resources and possible study opportunities for those who would like to go deeper in this Word of God. Bring your own Bible; bring your tablet, I-Pad or Smart Phone; purchase/order a new study Bible at the Welcome Center. We want each person to see what God's revelation really says. This will be a great opportunity for the whole family.

I encourage you to invite your friends, neighbors and relatives to unite with you, and our Messiah congregation, in this "Living God's Word—A Walk Through the Bible." I know there are lots of people who are very hungry today for God's truth. Too many churches have never really dug into this truth like we should. This will be an opportunity to open this Word up to many of us for perhaps the first time.

I also ask you to pray for God's word to work in each of us, especially in those who are seeking for answers. Please put a post-it-note on your bathroom mirror, or in front of your kitchen sink, as a reminder to pray each day for this series.

Turn to Isaiah 55:11: *"So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."* Let our prayer be that God's Word will not return empty; it will work in the hearts of each person.

Also I challenge you to think of one person who is not a Christian; or who has strayed away from their faith; or who is floundering in what to believe; or who is simply seeking. Pray for this one person, for at least one minute each day. Pray that God's power and love may touch their heart; pray that perhaps you may be able to reach out and be a witness.

So today we begin this "Living God's Word" series by focusing on the Creation and Fall as they appear in these first chapters of Genesis. Please turn to Genesis 1, Page 1. The most important phrase or concept to remember in all this is the first line, *"In the beginning God."* As they say, in the beginning God; all the rest is just the details.

God is the center and focus of the Bible, as well as of our faith. God is the center of why we live and exist; he is the center of our church and our mission. It is always important to remember that it is not about me, about you, or about us. It is about him; his Word; his revelation.

In the beginning God *"created."* You know there are many people today who are saying that all religions are equal and essentially the same. They claim that all religions believe in the same God and that all people are "headed to the same place." Some who say these things actually believe they are being very intellectual, very scholarly, very understanding.

Yet only the Judeo-Christian faith believes in and focuses on a God who created everything out of nothing—the earth, the stars, the seas, the heavens—everything. All the other religions of the world have their god (or gods) living in things; as some obscure or philosophical concept. Only

our Christian faith is firmly grounded in the real and everlasting truth that our God is a personal being who was here before the world was created.

Our God created everything out of nothing. He is all powerful; He is Lord; He is God. In the Christmas story that we just went through we hear another important truth. John 1:14 proclaims, "*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.*" Jesus is God incarnate; through Jesus we know that our God loves us, cares about us, and wants us to have a personal relationship with him.

The Genesis story also shows how Adam & Eve fell into sin. They disobeyed God's Word and commands, and as a result sin came into the world. It is because of this fall that sin is also part of our lives and world. Yet again the good news of God is that he showed grace and mercy to Adam & Eve, just as he does to you and me. In fact, God sent his only Son, Jesus, to die on the cross so we might find forgiveness for our sins and failings.

Again, this truth proclaimed in the Bible is totally different from the teachings of other religions. They teach that people need to do things to somehow appease their gods. People have to follow certain rules and rituals; they need to try to earn their place; try to work their way to their god, to nirvana or whatever. It is centered in what people have to do for God.

Only our God, the God who is revealed in the Holy Bible, the almighty God of truth, is a God who came down to us people in his Son, Jesus. Only our God proclaims that none of us can earn or work our way to him; this is because Jesus has already done it all for us. Only our God offers us grace, mercy and love; only he calls us to simply believe and trust in him by faith.

In the beginning God! I heard a talk one time that focused on how God proclaimed that his name was and is, "*I am;*" he is the great **I am**. What this should remind us of is that this world is not centered around me; not centered around my intellect or ideas; not centered around who I am. Rather we need to focus everything on who God is; only he is the source of all life, all meaning and all purpose.

Through these next months we are going to study this truth that God is the center and foundation of all things, everything. This truth will permeate our worship, our teaching, and all that we do. We will center totally on God praying that God's Spirit will fill our hearts with power and praise.

My friends, I invite you to join with us in our "Living God's Word—A Walk Through the Bible." Worship each Sunday and learn together. If you are out of town you can watch or read these messages on Messiah's web page. Pray for this Bible emphasis; pray that God's Spirit will work in miraculous ways. Invite others to worship with you.

In the beginning God! My friends, my prayer is that God will be real to each of us as we focus on his holy Word. Let us entrust God with our hearts and lives, so that God will be Lord of all of us, of everything we say and do. May God bless our learning and growing together in his Word!