Thine Is the Kingdom

Old Testament History

A Lutheran Bible Companion Study

Edward A. Engelbrecht
Contents

About This Series ........................................................................................................... 5
Participant Introduction ................................................................................................. 6
  Creation and All Nations before the Lord......................................................... 7
  The Lord Chose the Patriarchs ......................................................................... 10
  The Exodus and Wilderness Wanderings ......................................................... 12
  The Conquest and the Lord’s Kingdom ............................................................. 17
  The Lord’s Kingdom among the Empires ......................................................... 21
  Judah Survives by God’s Grace ......................................................................... 23
  The Lord Sends Judah into Exile ....................................................................... 27
  The Judeans Survive the Exile ......................................................................... 30
  The Lord Restores Judah .................................................................................... 33
Leader Guide Introduction ......................................................................................... 36
  Answers ................................................................................................................. 37
About This Series

With the release of *Lutheran Bible Companion* (2 vols., St. Louis: Concordia, 2014), Concordia Publishing House provides to the church a wealth of information about the Bible and its application. When readers see the books, however, they may be overwhelmed by the wealth of content within. Almost immediately after the release of *Lutheran Bible Companion*, we received a request for a classroom tool that would allow church workers and laity to explore the new books together.

This series walks readers through different features of *Lutheran Bible Companion*, based on topics, allowing a class to drain the depths of knowledge and devotion from the Scriptures and apply it to their lives. Our prayer is that those who use these studies will receive “life according to [His] Word” (Psalm 119:25).

The Editor
Participant Introduction

This Bible study is intended for those who have a general knowledge of the Bible or for advanced students of the Bible. It may be too difficult for persons new to Bible study, unless aided by another participant.

To begin this study, each participant will need the following materials:

- An edition of the Holy Bible that includes subject headings. Although the study is based on *The Lutheran Study Bible* (ESV; St. Louis: Concordia, 2009), other editions of the Bible might be used.
- Paper and a pen or pencil for taking notes.

Each session is written with an expectation that participants will complete readings before attending class so that they will be prepared to discuss the questions in the guide. Leaders might also ask participants to complete the study sheet before class in order to fully facilitate learning and discussion during class time. (The Leaders Guide includes suggestions for further discussion in case the class would complete discussion of the assigned questions and answers before the class period is over. References to the *Lutheran Bible Companion* (LBC hereafter) will appear as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volume</th>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Start</th>
<th>Stop (Included where necessary.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>(“Upon thorough reflection . . . law or instruction.”)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To prepare for the first session, “Creation and All Nations before the Lord,” read LBC 1:13–16 and explore pp. lxxiv–lxxv at the front of the book.
Creation and All Nations before the Lord

Introduction

Dates, facts, and places. History is always in danger of becoming boring—except when it’s something we really care about, something that clearly touches us personally, like those interesting facts about our families.

There are many theories about how we should record history. For example, should history be the stories of great people or stories of common people? Opinions abound, but good history generally has the following helpful qualities:

- **Facts**: Good history answers basic questions like “Who did it?” “When did he/she do it?” “Where did it happen?” and “What happened?”
- **Causes**: Good history also goes the next step to ask “How did it happen?” and “Why did it happen?”
- **Lessons**: Finally, good history explores questions like “Could it happen again?” and “What does it mean for our lives?”

The Holy Bible is filled with a wealth of historical facts, explanations of causes, and lessons we need to learn from history. Yet, for our purposes, the central fact that causes us to study the Old Testament is that it prophesies and prepares the way for Jesus Christ to be born in history for our salvation—the Word become flesh for our sakes.

In this course, you will explore truths in each of the above categories of history and take away important lessons for your life as well as lessons to share with others. Each lesson will draw upon the *Lutheran Bible Companion*, Vol. 1 to deepen your understanding of biblical history and its relevance for your life today.

1. Turn to LBC 1:193 (“Upon thorough reflection . . . law or instruction.”) and read Martin Luther’s comments about the value of history. According to Luther, what effects does biblical history have upon sinful human beings?

2. Finish reading the Luther quotation on LBC 1:193 (“Thus we read . . . [Ezra 6:2].” According to Luther, how are biblical history and secular history similar to each other?
Origins or Beginnings

3. Based on LBC 1:13 ("The first . . . in eternity.") what facts about Near Eastern literature demonstrate that the accounts in the Bible have broad and enduring value for our lives?

Historians may write with a variety of foci. For example, historians may write personal history, family history, local history, regional history, national history, and world history. They may focus on an institution, a single event, or even a single thing—like Mark Kurlansky’s *Salt: A World History*!

4. Based on the ways that historians write, how does Genesis 1–2 present the story of creation?

5. Skim the subject headings in your Bible for Genesis 1–11. What types of history do you see there?

6. Review LBC 1:14–15 ("In 2:4a . . . a structural unity.") Write below the important Hebrew word in Genesis and a common translation of it.

7. How does this important word organize the history in Genesis?

8. Based on LBC 1:15, describe below the earliest person in the Bible who is likely also mentioned by name in extrabiblical literature.

9. How do the findings at Mari and Nuzi help to confirm the antiquity and reliability of the accounts in Genesis?
Applying the History

10. Read Genesis 3:8–19. How would you answer someone who would argue that an ancient book like the Bible can't possibly apply to his life today?

11. Read Genesis 3:15, 20–21. What do these events and words from the Lord tell you about your Lord? (Read LBC 1:15 [“The story . . . as well.”] for help.)

12. How does Genesis 3:15, 20–21 set the focus for the entire Book of Genesis? (For a clue, read also Genesis 5:1–4; 6:9–10; 9:26–27.)

For a closing devotion, read LBC 1:35 (“Genealogies teach . . . back to Himself.”) Sing or recite the following:

In Adam we have all been one,
    One huge rebellious man;
We all have fled that evening voice
    That sought us as we ran.

But Thy strong love, it sought us still
    And sent Thine only Son
That we might hear His Shepherd’s voice
    And, hearing Him, be one. (LSB 569:1, 3)

Point to Remember

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel. Genesis 3:15

Prepare for Next Time

Before class, each participant should read LBC 1:17, 21, 495–98 and explore LBC timeline pp. lxxvi–lxxviii at the front of the book.
Leader Guide

Leaders, please note the different abilities of your class members, since this is a more challenging study. You may wish to pair up members who can guide each other through the study.

The first three sessions in the leader guide include opener activities, which may help members of the class get to know one another and open up for discussion. The leader guide also includes optional “Explore” activities in case the class moves quickly through the assigned material.
Creation and All Nations

Opener

The following learning activity can serve as an icebreaker for your group by facilitating discussion between participants. Tell members of the group:

Turn to a partner at your table or in your group and do the following:

- Share an interesting fact about your family history.
- Invite your partner to share an interesting fact as well.
- Finally, answer the question, “What makes the fact about my family memorable?”

Introduction

1. History reveals God’s action and judgment, which inspires fear in sinners who do not wish to suffer God’s condemnation but His blessing.
2. All history will “teach, admonish, warn, or deter” through the examples, words, and deeds of those who have gone before us.

Origins or Beginnings

3. Answer may vary but should include observations like the following: Genesis reports real, empirical history rather than myths. These accounts have stood the test of time because they speak to our lives today and not just to persons in the past. They help us understand the greater role of Jesus in history and eternity.
4. Genesis 1 reports a different historical focus than Genesis 2. The first chapter reports on all life globally. The second chapter focuses on human beings in Eden.
5. Family history, genealogy, global history, local history, and history of language would be examples.
6. Toledoth, sometimes translated “generations.”
7. It appears ten times in Genesis and introduces each new section of the book.
8. Eber of Genesis 10:21 appears to be a major king of Ebla (c 2300 BC).
9. Names and customs from these places parallel or illuminate similar names and practices in the records of the patriarchs.

Applying the History

10. Answers may vary yet should point out that Genesis describes facts about human life and our experiences of it. It reveals who we are at heart, how we behave, and why we are the way we are.
11. He prophesied the coming of a Savior who would defeat Satan and provided for His fallen children, Adam and Eve. In other words, these passages reveal the loving, gracious nature of our God.
12. These passages illustrate how the Lord would extend and plan to fulfill His promise of a coming Savior through the family of Adam and Eve, Seth, Noah, and Shem.

**Explore**

Extend the learning by discussing your impressions from the timeline information on pp. lxxiv–lxxv at the front of LBC 1.

Read and/or discuss “The Flood (Gn 6–8)” and the “Magnitude of the Flood (Gn 7)” on LBC 1:47–49.