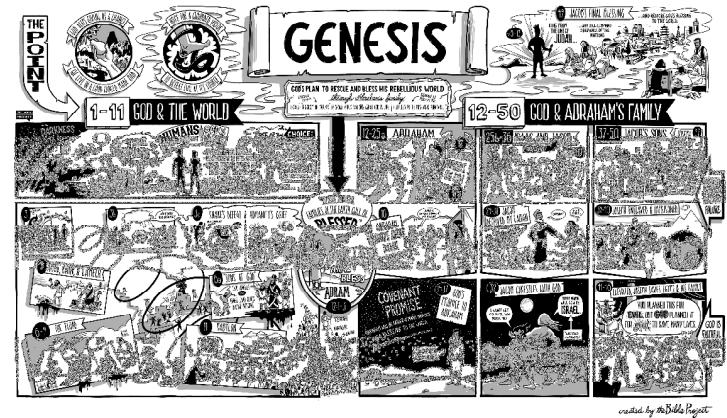


The Congregation at Prayer
The Whole Story
2025
A Daily Devotional
St. Paul LCMS, Ida Grove, IA



Week #3-The Whole Story
2nd Week after Epiphany
January 12-19, 2025

Start Every Day

“In the Name of the Father, and + of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen”

recite **APOSTLE’S CREED**

Read **Catechism**—What do you believe according to these words?

I believe that when the called ministers of Christ deal with us by His divine command, in particular when they exclude openly unrepentant sinners from

the Christian congregation and absolve those who repent of their sins and want to do better, this is just as valid and certain, even in heaven, as if Christ our dear Lord dealt with us Himself.

VERSE: Genesis 1:1 “***In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.***”

PRAYER of the WORD

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, without Your help our labor is useless, and without Your light our search is in vain. Invigorate our study of Your holy Word that, by due diligence and right discernment, we may establish ourselves and others in Your holy faith; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, January 12

- Read ***Psalm 12*** (The faithful have vanished.)
- Read ***The Gospel According to Mark, Chapter 12***

Monday, January 13

- Read ***Psalm 13*** (How Long, O LORD?)
- Read ***The Gospel According to Mark, Chapter 13***
ORIGEN (185-254AD): Just as bodies become sick before their death if they do not suffer violence from without, and in all cases the way of separation of soul from body comes through weakness, so it happens with the whole course of the world creation. When the creation begins to decay, having as it

Prayer Requests



has both beginning and end, it must grow weak before its dissolution. At this point the earth may be frequently shaken with earthquakes. The air having received some diseased contagion may become overrun with pestilence. Moreover the vital energies of the earth itself may suddenly fail and strangle its fruits. These destructive forces may pollute the regenerative capacity of all trees. COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW 34.¹

Tuesday, January 14

- Read ***Psalm 14*** (The fool says in his heart, there is no God.)
- Read ***The Gospel According to Mark, Chapter 14***
IRENAEUS (135-202AD): Giving directions to his disciples to offer to God the first fruits of his creatures—not as if he stood in need of them, but that they might be themselves neither unfruitful nor ungrateful—he took that created thing, bread, and gave thanks, and said, “This is my body.” And the cup likewise, which is part of the creation to which we belong, he confessed to be his blood, and taught the new offering of the

¹ Oden, Thomas C., and Christopher A. Hall, eds. 1998. [Mark \(Revised\)](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

new covenant. This is what the church has received from the apostles and throughout the whole world offers to God, who affords us nourishment as the first fruits of his gifts in the New Testament. AGAINST HERESIES 4.17.5.²

Wednesday, January 15

- Read **Psalm 15** (O LORD, who shall dwell on your holy hill?)
- Read **The Gospel of Mark, Chapter 15-16**
AUGUSTINE (354-430AD): This silence of our Lord Jesus Christ took place more than once. It occurred before the chief priest, and before Herod, and before Pilate himself. So it was not in vain that the prophecy regarding him had preceded: “As the lamb before its shearer was dumb, so he opened not his mouth,”¹⁷ especially on those occasions when he did not answer his questioners. Usually he replied to questions addressed to him, but in this case he declined to make any reply. The metaphor of the lamb is used to indicate that his silence does not imply guilt but innocence. When he did not open his mouth as he

² Oden, Thomas C., and Christopher A. Hall, eds. 1998. *Mark (Revised)*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

801 HOW GREAT THOU ART

1 O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder
Consider all the works Thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
Thy pow’r throughout the universe displayed; Refrain

ref Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee,
How great Thou art! How great Thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee,
How great Thou art! How great Thou art!

2 When through the woods and forest glades I wander,
I hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur
And hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze;
Refrain

3 But when I think that God, His Son not sparing,
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in—
That on the cross my burden gladly bearing
He bled and died to take away my sin; Refrain

4 When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!
Then I shall bow in humble adoration
And there proclaim: “My God, how great Thou art!”
Refrain

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I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Luther's Evening Prayer

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

passed through the process of judgment, it was in the character of a lamb that he did so; that is, not as one with an evil conscience who was convicted of his sins, but as one who in his meekness was sacrificed for the sins of others. TRACTATES ON JOHN 116.4.³

Thursday, January 16

- Read ***Psalm 16*** (You will not abandon my soul.)
- Read ***Genesis, Chapters 1-3***

AMBROSE (333-397AD): The cause of envy was the happiness of man placed in paradise, because the devil could not brook the favors received by man. His envy was aroused because man, though formed in slime, was chosen to be an inhabitant of paradise. The devil began to reflect that man was an inferior creature yet had hopes of an eternal life, whereas he, a creature of superior nature, had fallen and had become part of this mundane existence. PARADISE 12.⁴

³ Oden, Thomas C., and Christopher A. Hall, eds. 1998. [*Mark \(Revised\)*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

⁴ Louth, Andrew, and Marco Conti, eds. 2001. [*Genesis 1–11*](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Friday, January 17

- Read **Psalm 17** (The shadow of your wings.)
- Read **Genesis, Chapters 4-6**

EPHREM THE SYRIAN (306-373AD): But Cain was filled with wrath instead of compunction. To him who knows all, who asked him about his brother in order to win him back, Cain retorted angrily and said, “I do not know, am I my brother’s keeper?” ... What then would you say, Cain? Should Justice take vengeance for the blood that cried out to it? Or not? Did it not delay so that you might repent? Did Justice not distance itself from its own knowledge and ask you as if it did not know, so that you might confess? What it said to you did not please you, so you came to that sin to which it had warned you beforehand not to come. COMMENTARY ON GENESIS 3.6.1; 3.7.1.⁵

Saturday, January 18

- Read **Psalm 18** (The LORD is my rock and fortress.)
- Read **Genesis, Chapters 7-9**

JUSTIN MARTYR (100-165AD): “God closed the ark of Noah from without.” You should not imagine that the unbegotten God himself descended or ascended from any place. For the ineffable Father

⁵ Louth, Andrew, and Marco Conti, eds. 2001. [Genesis 1–11](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

and Lord of all neither comes to any place, nor walks, nor sleeps, nor arises, but always remains in his place, wherever it may be, acutely seeing and hearing, not with eyes or ears but with a power beyond description. DIALOGUE WITH TRYPHO 127.⁶

Sunday, January 19

- Read **Psalm 19** (The heavens declare the glory of God.)
- Read **Genesis, Chapters 10-12**

End Every Day

Pray the *Collect for 1st Sunday after Epiphany*

O Lord, mercifully receive the prayers of Your people who call upon You and grant that they both perceive and know what things they ought to do and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfill the same; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Your Personal Prayers

pray **LORD’S PRAYER**

Luther’s Morning Prayer

⁶ Louth, Andrew, and Marco Conti, eds. 2001. [Genesis 1–11](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.