

THE WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

Preface

This EPC electronic edition of the Westminster Shorter Catechism is the traditional version.

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church adopted The Westminster Shorter Catechism (An Authentic Modern Version) published by Summertown Texts. The EPC Second Edition, including Scripture references in the text, is not available on line, but may be ordered from the Office of the General Assembly.

The EPC has endorsed the curriculum by Children's Ministries International based on the Westminster Shorter Catechism. ([click here for more information](#))

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WSC Q. 1. What is the chief end of man?

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

WSC Q. 2. What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?

A. The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

WSC Q. 3. What do the Scriptures principally teach?

A. The Scriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

WSC Q. 4. What is God?

A. God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

WSC Q. 5. Are there more Gods than one?

A. There is but one only, the living and true God.

WSC Q. 6. How many persons are there in the Godhead?

A. There are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

WSC Q. 7. What are the decrees of God?

A. The decrees of God are, his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

WSC Q. 8. How doth God execute his decrees?

A. God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence.

WSC Q. 9. What is the work of creation.?

A. The work of creation is, God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good.

WSC Q. 10. How did God create man?

A. God created man male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures.

WSC Q. 11. What are God's works of providence.?

A. God's works of providence are, his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.

WSC Q. 12. What special act of providence did God exercise towards man in the estate wherein he was created?

A. When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death.

WSC Q. 13. Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?

A. Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God.

WSC Q. 14. What is sin?

A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.

WSC Q. 15. What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?

A. The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit.

WSC Q. 16. Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression.?

A. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity; all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression.

WSC Q. 17. Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?

A. The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

WSC Q. 18. Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?

A. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.

WSC Q. 19. What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?

A. All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever.

WSC Q. 20. Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?

A. God, having out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.

WSC Q. 21. Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?

A. The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, forever.

WSC Q. 22. How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?

A. Christ, the Son of God, became man, by taking to himself a true body, and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.

WSC Q. 23. What offices doth Christ execute as our Redeemer?

A. Christ, as our Redeemer, executeth the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation.

WSC Q. 24. How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?

A. Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by his Word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation.

WSC Q. 25. How doth Christ execute the office of a priest?

A. Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.

WSC Q. 26. How doth Christ execute the office of a king?

A. Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

WSC Q. 27. Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist?

A. Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.

WSC Q. 28. Wherein consisteth Christ's exaltation?

A. Christ's exaltation consisteth in his rising again from the dead on the third day, in ascending up into heaven, in sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the last day.

WSC Q. 29. How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?

A. We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us by his Holy Spirit.

WSC Q. 30. How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?

A. The Spirit applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.

WSC Q. 31. What is effectual calling?

A. Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.

WSC Q. 32. What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?

A. They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification, adoption, and sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them.

WSC Q. 33. What is justification?

A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

WSC Q. 34. What is adoption?

A. Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges, of the sons of God.

WSC Q. 35. What is sanctification?

A. Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

WSC Q. 36. What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?

A. The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, are, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.

WSC Q. 37. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?

A. The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united in Christ, do rest in their graves, till the resurrection.

WSC Q. 38. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?

A. At the resurrection, believers, being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.

WSC Q. 39. What is the duty which God requireth of man?

A. The duty which God requireth of man, is obedience to his revealed will.

WSC Q. 40. What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?

A. The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience, was the moral law.

WSC Q. 41. Wherein is the moral law summarily comprehended?

A. The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments.

WSC Q. 42. What is the sum of the ten commandments?

A. The sum of the ten commandments is, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbor as ourselves.

WSC Q. 43. What is the preface to the ten commandments?

A. The preface to the ten commandments is in these words, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

WSC Q. 44. What doth the preface to the ten commandments teach us?

A. The preface to the ten commandments teacheth us, that because God is the Lord, and our God, and Redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all his commandments.

WSC Q. 45. Which is the first commandment?

A. The first commandment is, Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

WSC Q. 46. What is required in the first commandment?

A. The first commandment requireth us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify him accordingly.

WSC Q. 47. What is forbidden in the first commandment?

A. The first commandment forbiddeth the denying, or not worshiping and glorifying, the true God as God, and our God; and the giving of that worship and glory to any other, which is due to him alone.

WSC Q. 48. What are we specially taught by these words before me in the first commandment?

A. These words before me in the first commandment teach us, that God, who seeth all things, taketh notice of, and is much displeased with, the sin of having any other god.

WSC Q. 49. Which is the second commandment?

A. The second commandment is, Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and

fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

WSC Q. 50. What is required in the second commandment?

A. The second commandment requireth the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in his Word.

WSC Q. 51. What is forbidden in the second commandment?

A. The second commandment forbiddeth the worshiping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in his Word.

WSC Q. 52. What are the reasons annexed to the second commandment?

A. The reasons annexed to the second commandment are, God's sovereignty over us, his propriety in us, and the zeal he hath to his own worship.

WSC Q. 53. Which is the third commandment?

A. The third commandment is, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

WSC Q. 54. What is required in the third commandment?

A. The third commandment requireth the holy and reverend use of God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, Word, and works.

WSC Q. 55. What is forbidden in the third commandment?

A. The third commandment forbiddeth all profaning or abusing of anything whereby God maketh himself known.

WSC Q. 56. What is the reason annexed to the third commandment?

A. The reason annexed to the third commandment is, that however the breakers of this commandment may escape punishment from men, yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment.

WSC Q. 57. Which is the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment is, Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

WSC Q. 58. What is required in the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment requireth the keeping holy to God such set times as he hath appointed in his Word; expressly one whole day in seven, to be a holy sabbath to himself.

WSC Q. 59. Which day of the seven hath God appointed to be the weekly sabbath?

A. From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly sabbath; and the first day of the week ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian sabbath.

WSC Q. 60. How is the sabbath to be sanctified?

A. The sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days; and spending the whole time in the

public and private exercises of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy.

WSC Q. 61. What is forbidden in the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment forbiddeth the omission, or careless performance, of the duties required, and the profaning the day by idleness, or doing that which is in itself sinful, or by unnecessary thoughts, words, or works, about our worldly employments or recreations.

WSC Q. 62. What are the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment?

A. The reasons annexed to the fourth commandment are, God's allowing us six days of the week for our own employments, his challenging a special propriety in the seventh, his own example, and his blessing the sabbath day.

WSC Q. 63. Which is the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment is, Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

WSC Q. 64. What is required in the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment requireth the preserving the honor, and performing the duties, belonging to everyone in their several places and relations, as superiors, inferiors, or equals.

WSC Q. 65. What is forbidden in the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment forbiddeth the neglecting of, or doing anything against, the honor and duty which belongeth to everyone in their several places and relations.

WSC Q. 66. What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment?

A. The reason annexed to the fifth commandment is, a promise of long life and prosperity (as far as it shall serve for God's glory and their own good) to all such as keep this commandment.

WSC Q. 67. Which is the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment is, Thou shalt not kill.

WSC Q. 68. What is required in the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment requireth all lawful endeavors to preserve our own life, and the life of others.

WSC Q. 69. What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment forbiddeth the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbor, unjustly, or whatsoever tendeth thereunto.

WSC Q. 70. Which is the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment is, Thou shalt not commit adultery.

WSC Q. 71. What is required in the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment requireth the preservation of our own and our neighbor's chastity, in heart, speech, and behavior.

WSC Q. 72. What is forbidden in the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment forbiddeth all unchaste thoughts, words, and actions.

WSC Q. 73. Which is the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment is, Thou shalt not steal.

WSC Q. 74. What is required in the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment requireth the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others.

WSC Q. 75. What is forbidden in the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever doth, or may, unjustly hinder our own, or our neighbor's, wealth or outward estate.

WSC Q. 76. Which is the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment is, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

WSC Q. 77. What is required in the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment requireth the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, and of our own and our neighbor's good name, especially in witness bearing.

WSC Q. 78. What is forbidden in the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own, or our neighbor's, good name.

WSC Q. 79. Which is the tenth commandment?

A. The tenth commandment is, Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

WSC Q. 80. What is required in the tenth commandment?

A. The tenth commandment requireth full contentment with our own condition, with a right and charitable frame of spirit toward our neighbor, and all that is his.

WSC Q. 81. What is forbidden in the tenth commandment?

A. The tenth commandment forbiddeth all discontentment with our own estate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbor, and all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his.

WSC Q. 82. Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?

A. No mere men, since the fall, is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed.

WSC Q. 83. Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous?

A. Some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.

WSC Q. 84. What doth every sin deserve?

A. Every sin deserveth God's wrath and curse, both in this life, and that which is to come.

WSC Q. 85. What doth God require of us, that we may escape his wrath and curse, due to us for sin?

A. To escape the wrath and curse of God, due to us for sin, God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption.

WSC Q. 86. What is faith in Jesus Christ?

A. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel.

WSC Q. 87. What is repentance unto life?

A. Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.

WSC Q. 88. What are the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption?

A. The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption are, his ordinances, especially the Word, sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.

WSC Q. 89. How is the Word made effectual to salvation?

A. The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching, of the Word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith, unto salvation.

WSC Q. 90. How is the Word to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to salvation?

A. That the Word may become effectual to salvation, we must attend thereunto with diligence, preparation, and prayer; receive it with faith and love, lay it up in our hearts, and practice it in our lives.

WSC Q. 91. How do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation?

A. The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them; but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them.

WSC Q. 92. What is a sacrament?

A. A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ; wherein, by sensible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant, are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.

WSC Q. 93. Which are the sacraments of the New Testament?

A. The sacraments of the New Testament are, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

WSC Q. 94. What is Baptism?

A. Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.

WSC Q. 95. To whom is Baptism to be administered?

A. Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him; but the infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized.

WSC Q. 96. What is the Lord's Supper?

A. The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is showed forth; and the worthy receivers are, not

after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace.

WSC Q. 97. What is required for the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper?

A. It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord's Supper, that they examine themselves of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body, of their faith to feed upon him, of their repentance, love, and new obedience; lest, coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves.

WSC Q. 98. What is prayer?

A. Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.

WSC Q. 99. What rule hath God given for our direction in prayer?

A. The whole Word of God is of use to direct us in prayer; but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which Christ taught his disciples, commonly called the Lord's Prayer.

WSC Q. 100. What doth the preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us?

A. The preface of the Lord's Prayer, which is, Our Father which art in heaven, teacheth us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a father, able and ready to help us; and that we should pray with and for others.

WSC Q. 101. What do we pray for in the first petition?

A. In the first petition, which is, Hallowed be thy name, we pray that God would enable us, and others, to glorify him in all that whereby he maketh himself known; and that he would dispose all things to his own glory.

WSC Q. 102. What do we pray for in the second petition?

A. In the second petition, which is, Thy kingdom come, we pray that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed; and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it; and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened.

WSC Q. 103. What do we pray for in the third petition?

A. In the third petition, which is, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven, we pray that God, by his grace, would make us able and willing to know, obey, and submit to his will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.

WSC Q. 104. What do we pray for in the fourth petition?

A. In the fourth petition, which is, Give us this day our daily bread, we pray that of God's free gift we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy his blessing with them.

WSC Q. 105. What do we pray for in the fifth petition?

A. In the fifth petition, which is, And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors, we pray that God, for Christ's sake, would freely pardon all our sins; which we are the rather encouraged to ask, because by his grace we are enabled from the heart to forgive others.

WSC Q. 106. What do we pray for in the sixth petition?

A. In the sixth petition, which is, And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, we pray that God would either keep us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted.

WSC Q. 107. What doth the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer teach us?

A. The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, which is, For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen, teacheth us to take our encouragement in prayer from God only, and in our prayers to praise him, ascribing kingdom, power, and glory to him; and, in testimony of our desire, and assurance to be heard, we say, Amen.

The
Westminster
Larger Catechism

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Q. 1. What is the primary and highest purpose of human beings?

A. The primary and highest purpose of human beings is to glorify God¹ and to enjoy him completely forever.²

1. Rom 11.36, 1 Cor 10.31.
2. Ps 73.24-28, Jn 17.21-24.

Q. 2. What evidence is there for God?

A. Our internal, natural understanding along with the external evidence of God's works plainly indicates that there is a God.¹ However, salvation only comes through God's revelation of himself in his word and Spirit.²

1. Rom 1.19-20, Ps 19.1-4, Acts 17.28.
2. 1 Cor 1.21, 2.9-10, 2 Tm 3.15-17, Is 59.21.

Q. 3. What is the word of God?

A. The holy Bible, made up of the Old and New Testaments, is the word of God.¹ It is the only authority for faith and obedience.²

1. 2 Tm 3.15-17, 2 Pt 1.19-21.
2. Eph 2.20, Rv 22.18-19, Is 8.20, Lk 16.29,31, Gal 1.8-9, 2 Tm 3.15-16.

Q. 4. What evidence is there that the Bible is the word of God?

A. The Bible clearly shows that it is the word of God by its majesty¹ and purity,² by the agreement of all its parts,³ by its unified aim to give all glory to God,⁴ and by its illuminating power to convince and convert sinners and to comfort and build up believers unto salvation.⁵ However, only the Spirit of God, testifying by and with the Bible in our hearts, can completely persuade us that it is truly the word of God.⁶

1. Hos 8.12, 1 Cor 2.6-7,13, Ps 119.18,129.
2. Ps 12.6, 119.40.
3. Acts 10.43, 26.22.
4. Rom 3.19,27.
5. See General Note. Acts 18.28, Heb 4.12, Jas 1.18, Ps 19.7-9, Rom 15.4, Acts 20.32.
6. Jn 16.13-14, 1 Cor 2.6-9, 1 Jn 2.20,27, Jn 20.31.

Q. 5. What does the Bible primarily teach?

A. The Bible primarily teaches what we must believe about God and what God requires of us.¹

1. See General Note. 2 Tm 1.13.

WHAT HUMAN BEINGS OUGHT TO BELIEVE ABOUT GOD

Q. 6. What does the Bible make known about God?

A. The Bible makes known what God is,¹ the persons in the Godhead,² his decrees,³ and how his decrees are carried out.⁴

- 1 Jn 4.24, Ex 34.6-7, Heb 11.6.
- 2 Mt 28.19, 2 Cor 13.14, 1 Jn 5.17.
- 3 Eph 1.11, Acts 15.14-15,18.
- 4 Acts 4.27-28, Is 42.9.

Q. 7. What is God?

A. God is a spirit,¹ who in and of himself is infinite in being,² glory,³ blessedness,⁴ and perfection.⁵ He is all-sufficient,⁶ eternal,⁷ unchangeable,⁸ beyond our full understanding,⁹ present everywhere,¹⁰ almighty,¹¹ knowing everything,¹² completely wise,¹³ completely holy,¹⁴ completely just,¹⁵ completely merciful and gracious, patient, and overflowing with goodness and truth.¹⁶

1. Jn 4.24.
2. 1 Kgs 8.27, Is 40.20, Ex 3.14, Jb 11.7-9.
3. Acts 7.2.
4. 1 Tm 6.15.
5. See General Note. Mt 5.48.
6. Acts 17.24-25, Gn 17.1.
7. Ps 90.2.
8. Mal 3.6, Jas 1.17.
9. 1 Kgs 8.27, Rom 11.33.
10. Jer 23.24, Ps 139.
11. Rv 4.8.
12. Heb 4.13, Ps 147.5.
13. Rom 16.27.
14. Is 6.3, Rv 15.4.
15. Dt 32.4.
16. Ex 34.6.

Q. 8. Is there more than one God?

A. There is only one, the living and true God.¹

1. Dt 6.4, 1 Cor 8.4,6, Jer 10.10.

Q. 9. How many persons are in the one God?

A. Three persons are in the one God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Although they are differentiated by their own individual, personal qualities, these three are one true, eternal God, the same in substance and equal in power and glory.¹

1. 1 Jn 5.7, Mt 3.16-17, 28.19, 2 Cor 13.14, Jn 10.30.

Q. 10. What are the individual, personal qualities that belong to the three persons of the Godhead?

A. From all eternity, the Father begets the Son;¹ the Son is begotten by the Father,² and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.³

1. Heb 1.5-6, 8.
2. Jn 1.14,18.
3. Jn 15.26, Gal 4.6.

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Q. 11. What is the evidence that the Son and the Holy Spirit are equal with the Father?

A. The Bible clearly indicates that the Son and the Holy Spirit are God, equal to the Father, because it assigns to them the same names,¹ attributes,² works,³ and worship⁴ that properly apply only to God.

1. Jer 23.6, Ps 45.6, Is 6.3,5,8, Jn 12.41, Acts 28.25, 1 Jn 5.20, Acts 5.3-4.
2. Jn 1.1, Is 9.6, Jn 2.24-25, 1 Cor 2.10-11, Heb 9.14.
3. Col 1.16, Gn 1.2, Ps 104.30, Jn 1.3.
4. Mt 28.19, 2 Cor 13.14.

Q. 12. What are the decrees of God?

A. God's decrees are the wise, free, and holy decisions from the purposes of his will.¹ By them, from all eternity and for his own glory, he has unchangeably foreordained everything that happens in time,² and particularly those things that involve angels and human beings.

1. Eph 1.4,11, Rom 11.33, Rom 9.14-15,18.
2. Acts 4.27-28, Rom 9.22-23, Ps 33.11.

Q. 13. What in particular has God decreed about angels and human beings?

A. By an eternal and unchangeable decree, which originates merely from his love, exists for the praise of his glorious grace, and is to be revealed at the proper time, God has elected some angels for glory¹ and in Christ has chosen some human beings for eternal life, along with the means by which this choice will be accomplished.² Additionally, in accordance with his sovereign power and the hidden purposes of his own will (by which, as he pleases, he extends or withholds favor), God decided not to include the rest and to foreordain them to be inflicted with dishonor and anger for their sin, to the praise of the glory of his justice.³

1. 1 Tm 5.21.
2. Eph 1.4-6, 2 Thes 2.13-14, 1 Pt 1.2.
3. Rom 9.17-18,21-22, Mt 11.25-26, 2 Tm 2.20, Jude 4, 1 Pt 2.8.

Q. 14. How does God carry out his decrees?

A. God carries out his decrees in creation and providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge and the free and unchangeable purposes of his own will.¹

1. Eph 1.11, 1 Pt 1.1-2.

Q. 15. What is creation?

A. Creation is this: in the beginning, for himself, and out of nothing, God made the world and everything in it in six days by the word of his power—and all very good.¹

1. Gn 1, Heb 11.3, Prv 16.4, Rv 4.11.

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Q. 16. How did God create angels?

A. God created all the angels¹ as immortal² spirits,³ holy,⁴ with superior knowledge⁵ and mighty power,⁶ to carry out his commands and praise his name;⁷ but they could also change.⁸

1. Col 1.16.
2. Mt 22.30, Lk 20.36.
3. Ps 104.4, Col 1.16.
4. Gn 1.31, Mt 25.31.
5. 2 Sm 14.17, Mt 24.36.
6. 2 Thes 1.7.
7. Ps 103.20-21.
8. 2 Pt 2.4.

Q. 17. How did God create human beings?

A. After he had made all the other creatures, God created humans, male and female.¹ He formed the body of man from the dust of the ground² and the woman from the rib of the man.³ He endowed them with living, reasoning, and immortal souls,⁴ made in his own image⁵ with knowledge,⁶ righteousness, and holiness.⁷ God wrote his law on their hearts⁸ and gave them the ability to obey it.⁹ Along with dominion over the other creatures,¹⁰ they also had the potential to fall.¹¹

1. Gn 1.27.
2. Gn 2.7.
3. Gn 2.22.
4. Gn 2.7, Jb 35.11, Mt 10.28, and Lk 23.43.
5. Gn 1.27.
6. Col 3.10, Gn 2.19-20.
7. Eph 4.24.
8. Rom 2.14-15.
9. Eccl 7.29.
10. Gn 1.28.
11. Gn 2.16-17, 3.6, Eccl 7.29.

Q. 18. What is God's providence?

A. God's providence is his completely holy,¹ wise,² and powerful preserving³ and governing⁴ every creature and every action,⁵ ordering them all to his own glory.⁶

1. Ps 145.17.
2. Ps 104.24, Is 28.29.
3. Heb 1.3.
4. Ps 103.19, Jb 38-41.
5. Mt 10.29-31, Gn 45.7, Ps 135.6.
6. Rom 11.36, Is 63.14.

Q. 19. What is God's providence relating to angels?

A. God providentially allowed some of the angels to fall into sin and damnation by their own choice and without any possibility of recovering their original position;¹ he limited and ordered their fall and all their specific sins for his own glory.² God established the rest of the angels in holiness and happiness,³ using them,⁴ according to his pleasure, as administrative agents of his power, mercy, and justice.⁵

1. Jude 6, 2 Pt 2.4, Heb 2.16, Jn 8.44.
2. Jb 1.12, Mt 8.31, Lk 10.17.
3. 1 Tm 5.21, Mk 8.38, Heb 12.22.
4. Ps 104.4.
5. 2 Kgs 19.35, Heb 1.14.

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Q. 20. What was God's providence relating to the humans he created?

A. God providentially put Adam and Eve in paradise and assigned them the job of taking care of it. He gave them permission to eat everything that grew,¹ put them in authority over all the creatures,² and established marriage as a help for Adam.³ God allowed them to have fellowship with him,⁴ instituted the Sabbath,⁵ and made a covenant of life with them on the condition of their personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience.⁶ The tree of life was a sign guaranteeing this covenant.⁷ Finally, God told them not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil or they would die.⁸

1. Gn 2.8,15-16.
2. Gn 1.28.
3. Gn 2.18.
4. Gn 1.26-29, 3.8.
5. Gn 2.3.
6. Gal 3.12, Rom 10.5; compare Gn 2.16-17 with Rom 5.12-14, 10.5, Lk 10.25-28, and with the covenants made with Noah and Abraham.
7. Gn 2.9.
8. Gn 2.17.

Q. 21. Did humans remain the way they were created?

A. Left to the freedom of their own wills, our first parents were tempted by Satan, disobeyed God's command by eating the forbidden fruit, and so fell from their original innocence.¹

1. Gn 3.6-8, 13, Eccl 7.29, 2 Cor 11.3.

Q. 22. Did the whole human race fall in that first disobedience?

A. Since the covenant was made with Adam as a general representative of humanity, not only for himself but also for his natural descendants,¹ the whole human race sinned in him and fell with him in that first disobedience.²

1. Acts 17.26; see under figure 6 in Q. 20 above.
2. Gn 2.16-17, Rom 5.12-20, 1 Cor 15.21-22.

Q. 23. What happened to the human race in the fall?

A. Humans fell into a condition of sin and misery.¹

1. Rom 5.12, 3.23, Gal 3.10.

Q. 24. What is sin?

A. Sin is not conforming to or disobeying any law God has given to direct our lives as reasoning humans.¹

1. Rom 3.23, 1 Jn 3.4, Gal 3.10,12, Jas 4.17.

Q. 25. What is sinful about the fallen condition of humans?

A. The sinfulness of that fallen condition is twofold. First, in what is commonly called original sin, there is the guilt of Adam's first sin¹ with its lack of original righteousness and the corruption of his nature, by which humans are completely indisposed, incapacitated, and opposed to everything that is spiritually good as well as being completely and continually inclined to everything evil.² Second are all the specific acts of disobedience that come from original sin.³

1. Rom 5.12,19, 1 Cor 15.22.
2. Rom 3.10-20, Eph 2.1-3, Rom 5.6, 8.7-8, Gn 6.5, Ps 51.5, 58.3.

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3. Jas 1.14-15, Mt 15.19.

Q. 26. How is original sin passed from Adam and Eve to their descendants?

A. Original sin passes from Adam and Eve to their descendants by natural procreation, so that all subsequent human offspring are conceived and born in sin.¹

1. Ps 51.5, Jb 14.4, 15.14, Jn 3.6.

Q. 27. What misery did the fall bring on the human race?

A. The fall brought on the human race the loss of fellowship with God¹ along with his displeasure and curse. Consequently, we are children of wrath,² bondslaves of Satan,³ and justly subject to every punishment in this world and the next.⁴

1. Gn 3.8,10,24.
2. Eph 2.2-3.
3. 2 Tm 2.26, Lk 11.21-22, Heb 2.14.
4. Gn 2.17, Lam 3.39, Rom 5.14, 6.23, Mt 25.41,46, Jude 7.

Q. 28. What are the punishments for sin in this world?

A. The punishments for sin in this world are either internal or external. Internal punishments include mental blindness,¹ a sense of being condemned,² powerful delusions,³ a stubborn heart,⁴ a terrified conscience,⁵ and shameful desires.⁶ External punishments include God's curse on the whole creation because of us⁷ and all the other evils that happen to our bodies, our reputations, circumstances, relationships, and work,⁸ including death itself.⁹

1. Eph 4.18.
2. Rom 1.28.
3. 2 Thes 2.11.
4. Rom 2.5.
5. Is 33.14, Gn 4.13, Mt 27.4, Heb 10.27.
6. Rom 1.26.
7. Gn 3.17.
8. Dt 28.15-68.
9. Rom 6.21,23.

Q. 29. What are the punishments for sin in the next world?

A. The punishments for sin in the next world include everlasting separation from the comforting presence of God and the horrible torment of soul and body in hell-fire without interruption forever.¹

1. 2 Thes 1.9, Mk 9.43-44,46,48, Lk 16.24,26, Mt 25.41,46, Rv 14.11, Jn 3.36.

Q. 30. Does God leave the whole human race to die in sin and misery?

A. God does not leave the whole human race to die in the sin and misery¹ that resulted from breaking the first covenant, ordinarily called the covenant of works.² Merely from his love and mercy, God delivers his elect from sin and misery and brings them into salvation by means of the second covenant, ordinarily called the covenant of grace.³

1. 1 Thes 5.9.
2. Gal 3.10,12.
3. Ti 3.4-7, 1.2, Gal 3.21, Rom 3.20-22.

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Q. 31. With whom was the covenant of grace made?

A. The covenant of grace was made with Christ as the second Adam and through him with all the elect as his seed.¹

1. 1 Cor 15.22,45, Eph 1.4, 2 Tm 1.9, Heb 2.10-11,14, Gal 3.16, Rom 5.15 to the end, Is 53.10-11.

Q. 32. How is God's grace revealed in the second covenant?

A. His grace is revealed in the second covenant by God freely providing and making available to sinners a mediator¹ and through him life and salvation.² God uses faith as the only way for sinners to become united to him;³ he promises and gives his Holy Spirit⁴ to all his elect in order to bring about this faith in them⁵ along with all the other saving graces⁶ and in order to make it possible for them to be holy and obedient,⁷ as proof of the truth of their faith⁸ and thankfulness to God⁹ and as the way he has established for them to be saved.¹⁰

1. 1 Tm 2.5, Gn 3.15, Is 42.6, Jn 6.27.
2. 1 Jn 5.11-12.
3. Jn 3.16,36, 1.12.
4. Prv 1.23.
5. 2 Cor 4.13.
6. Jn 1.12-13, 3.5-6,8, Gal 5.22-23.
7. Ez 36.27.
8. Jas 2.18,22.
9. 2 Cor 5.14-15.
10. Eph 2.10, Ti 2.14, 3.8.

Q. 33. Was the covenant of grace always administered in one and the same way?

A. The covenant of grace was not always administered in the same way. It was administered differently under the Old Testament and the New Testament.¹

1. 2 Cor 3.6-7,21-22, Heb 1.1-2, 8.7-8 and ff.

Q. 34. How was the covenant of grace administered under the Old Testament?

A. The covenant of grace was administered under the Old Testament by promises,¹ prophecies,² sacrifices,³ circumcision,⁴ the passover,⁵ and other types and ordinances. All of these foreshadowed the coming of Christ and were sufficient for that time to build up the faith of the elect in the promised Messiah,⁶ by whom they had full remission of their sins and eternal salvation.⁷

1. Rom 15.8, Acts 3.20.
2. Acts 3.20,24.
3. Heb 10.1.
4. Rom 4.11.
5. 1 Cor 5.7, Ex 12.14,17,24.
6. Heb 8-10, 11.13.
7. Gal 3.7-9,14, Heb 11.

Q. 35. How is the covenant of grace administered under the New Testament?

A. Under the New Testament, Christ is revealed as the substance of the same covenant of grace, which was and still is to be administered in the preaching of the word¹ and in the sacraments of baptism² and the Lord's supper.³ In these the spiritual power of grace and salvation is more fully and clearly developed for all nations.⁴

1. Mt 28.19-20, Mk 16.15.
2. Mt 28.19-20.

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3. 1 Cor 11.23-26.
4. 2 Cor 3.6-9, Heb 8.6-7,10-11, Mt 28.19.

Q. 36. Who is the mediator of the covenant of grace?

A. The only mediator of the covenant of grace is the Lord Jesus Christ,¹ who is the eternal Son of God, of one substance and equal with the Father.² In the fullness of time he became human,³ and so he was and continues to be God and man, in two complete and distinct natures, but one person, forever.⁴

1. 1 Tm 2.5.
2. Jn 1.1,14, 10.30, Phil 2.6.
3. Gal 4.4.
4. Lk 1.35, Rom 9.5, Col 2.9, Phil 2.5-11, Heb 7.24-25.

Q. 37. How did Christ, the Son of God, become human?

A. Christ the Son of God became human by taking a true body and a reasoning soul.¹ He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary out of her substance and was born of her,² but he was sinless.³

1. Jn 1.14, Mt 26.38.
2. Lk 1.27,31,35,42, Gal 4.4.
3. Heb 4.15, 7.26.

Q. 38. Why did the mediator have to be God?

A. The mediator had to be God so that he might sustain and keep his human nature from sinking under the infinite wrath of God and the power of death;¹ that he might make his suffering, obedience, and intercession of real value and effect;² and that, in order to satisfy God's justice,³ he might gain God's favor,⁴ purchase his very own people,⁵ give his Spirit to them,⁶ conquer all their enemies,⁷ and bring them to everlasting salvation.⁸

1. See General Note. Acts 2.24-25, Rom 1.4, 4.25, Heb 9.14.
2. Acts 20.28, Heb 9.14, 7.25-28.
3. Rom 3.24-26.
4. Eph 1.6, Mt 3.17.
5. Ti 2.13-14.
6. Gal 4.6.
7. Lk 1.68-69,71,74.
8. Heb 5.8-9, 9.11-15.

Q. 39. Why did the mediator have to be human?

A. The mediator had to be human so that he might improve human nature,¹ obey the law,² suffer and make intercession for us in our own nature,³ and know first hand what human infirmities feel like;⁴ and so that we might be adopted as sons⁵ and have comfort and access with boldness to the throne of grace.⁶

1. Heb 2.16.
2. Gal 4.4-5, Rom 5.19.
3. Heb 2.14, 7.24-25.
4. Heb 4.15.
5. Gal 4.5.
6. Heb 4.14-16.

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Q. 40. Why did the mediator have to be God and human in one person?

A. The mediator, who was to reconcile God and humanity, had to be himself both God and human and in one person to make the works appropriate to each nature acceptable to God on our behalf¹ and counted on by us as the works of the whole person.²

1. See General Note. Mt 1.21, 23, 3.17, Heb 9.14.
2. 1 Pt 2.6.

Q. 41. Why was our mediator called Jesus?

A. Our mediator was called Jesus because he saves his people from their sins.¹

1. Mt 1.21.

Q. 42. Why was our mediator called Christ?

A. Our mediator was called Christ, because he was anointed with the Holy Spirit beyond all measure.¹ Consequently, he was set apart and completely equipped with all authority and power² to execute the offices of prophet,³ priest,⁴ and king of his church,⁵ in both his humiliation and his exaltation.

1. Jn 3.34, Ps 45.7, Lk 4.18-21.
2. Lk 4.14, Heb 9.14, Jn 6.27, Mt 28.18-20.
3. Acts 3.21-22, Lk 4.18,21.
4. Heb 5.5-7, 4.14-15.
5. Ps 2.6, Mt 21.5, Is 9.6-7, Phil 2.8-11, Rv 19.16.

Q. 43. How is Christ a prophet?

A. As prophet, Christ reveals the complete will of God¹ to his church² about everything for the church's edification and salvation.³ He does this throughout the ages in different ways⁴ by means of his Spirit and word.⁵

1. Jn 1.1,4, 15.15.
2. Jn 1.18, 2 Pt 1.21, 2 Cor 2.9-10.
3. Acts 20.32, Eph 4.11-13, Jn 20.31.
4. Heb 1.1-2.
5. 1 Pt 1.10-12.

Q. 44. How is Christ a priest?

A. As priest, Christ offered himself once for all as a spotless sacrifice to God¹ to reconcile the sins of his people,² and he continually intercedes for them.³

1. Heb 9.14,28.
2. Heb 2.17.
3. Heb 7.25.

Q. 45. How is Christ a king?

A. As king, Christ calls a people for himself out of the world¹ and gives them officers,² laws,³ and the authority to condemn, by which he visibly governs them.⁴ He bestows saving grace on his elect,⁵ rewards their obedience,⁶ corrects them for their sins,⁷ preserves and supports them in all their temptations and suffering,⁸ restrains and overcomes all their enemies,⁹ and powerfully orders everything for his own glory¹⁰ and their well-being.¹¹ As king, Christ also executes just retribution against all others who neither know God nor obey the gospel.¹²

1. Jn 10. 16,27, Acts 15.14-16, Is 55.4-5, Gn 49.10, Ps 110.3.
2. Eph 4.11-12, 1 Cor 12.28.

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3. Is 33.22, Mt 28.19-20.
4. Mt 18.17-18, 1 Cor 5.4-5, 1 Tm 5.20, Ti 3.10.
5. Acts 5.31.
6. Rv 22.12, 2.10, Mt 25.34-36, Rom 2.7.
7. Rv 3.19, Heb 12.6-7.
8. Is 63.9, 2 Cor 12.9-10, Rom 8.35-39.
9. 1 Cor 15.25, Ps 110, Acts 12.17, 18.9-10.
10. Rom 14.10-11, Col 1.18, Mt 28.19-20.
11. Rom 8.28.
12. 2 Thes 1.8-9, Ps 2.8-9.

Q. 46. How was Christ humiliated?

A. For our sakes, Christ emptied himself of his own glory and took on the form of a servant, and so was humiliated in all the poor circumstances involving his conception and birth, life on earth, death, and after his death until he was resurrected.¹

1. Phil 2.6-8, Lk 1.31, 2 Cor 8.9, Acts 2.24, Gal 4.4.

Q. 47. How did Christ humble himself in his conception and birth?

A. Christ humbled himself in his conception and birth in that being from all eternity the Son of God in the bosom of the Father, it pleased him in the fullness of time to become the son of man, born of a woman from a poor family and into conditions that were even worse than ordinary.¹

1. Jn 1.14,18, Gal 4.4, Lk 2.7, Phil 2.6-8, 2 Cor 8.9.

Q. 48. How did Christ humble himself in his life?

A. Christ humbled himself in his life by subjecting himself to the law,¹ which he perfectly fulfilled,² and by struggling with the indignities of this world,³ the temptations of Satan,⁴ and the frailty of his body, whether common to the natural human condition or particularly associated with his own poor situation.⁵

1. Gal 4.4.
2. Mt 3.15, 5.17, Jn 19.30, Rom 5.19.
3. Ps 22.6, Is 53.2-3, Heb 12.2-3.
4. Mt 4.1-12, Lk 4.1-14.
5. Heb 2.17-18, 4.15, Is 52.13-14.

Q. 49. How did Christ humble himself in his death?

A. Christ humbled himself in his death by being betrayed by Judas,¹ forsaken by his disciples,² scorned and rejected by the world,³ condemned by Pilate, and tormented with physical persecution.⁴ He struggled with the terrors of death and the powers of darkness; he felt and bore the weight of God's anger.⁵ Finally, enduring the painful, shameful, and cursed death on the cross,⁶ he laid down his life as an offering for sin.⁷

1. Mt 27.4.
2. Mt 26.56.
3. Is 53.2-3, Lk 18.32-33.
4. Mt 27.26-50, Jn 19.34, Lk 22.63-64.
5. Lk 22.44, Mt 27.46, Rom 8.32.
6. Phil 2.8, Heb 12.2, Gal 3.13.
7. Rom 4.25, 1 Cor 15.3-4, Is 53.10.

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Q. 50. How was Christ humiliated after his death?

A. Christ's humiliation after death involved his being buried¹ and continuing in a state of being dead and under the power of death until the third day.² This period is referred to in the words, *He descended into hell.*

1. 1 Cor 15.3-4.
2. Ps 16.10, Acts 2.24-27,31, Rom 6.9, Mt 12.40,Lk 18.33.

Q. 51. How was Christ exalted?

A. Christ's exaltation includes his resurrection,¹ ascension,² sitting at the right hand of the Father,³ and coming again to judge the world.⁴

1. 1 Cor 15.4.
2. Mk 16.19, Lk 24.51, Acts 1.9-11.
3. Eph 1.20.
4. Acts 1.11, 17.31.

Q. 52. How was Christ exalted in his resurrection?

A. Christ's exaltation in his resurrection began with his body not decaying, since it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.¹ On the third day, he rose again from the dead by his own power² and in the very same body with all its essential qualities in which he had suffered³ (but it was not subject to death and the other infirmities associated with this life), and it was truly united to his soul.⁴ By his resurrection, he plainly declared himself to be the Son of God,⁵ to have satisfied divine justice,⁶ to have conquered death as well as him who holds the power of death,⁷ and to be Lord of the living and the dead.⁸ He did all this as a general representative of humanity⁹ and as head of his church¹⁰ in order to justify believers,¹¹ make them alive in his grace,¹² support them against their enemies,¹³ and assure them that they too will be resurrected from the dead at the last day.¹⁴

1. Acts 2.24,27, Ps 16.10.
2. Jn 10.18, Rv 1.18.
3. Lk 24.39.
4. Jn 10.18, Rom 6.9, Rv 1.18.
5. Rom 1.4.
6. Rom 4.25, 8.34, 1 Cor 15.17.
7. Heb 2.14, Rv 1.18.
8. Rom 14.9.
9. 1 Cor 15.21-22.
10. Eph 1.20-23, Col 1.18.
11. Rom 4.25.
12. Eph 2.1,5-6, Col 2.12.
13. 1 Cor 15.25-27, Acts 12.17, 18.9-10.
14. 1 Cor 15.20, 1 Thes 4.13-18.

Q. 53. How was Christ exalted in his ascension?

A. Christ's exaltation in his ascension began after his resurrection when he appeared to the apostles a number of times, talked to them about the kingdom of God,¹ and commissioned them to preach the gospel to all nations.² Forty days after his resurrection, in our human nature and as our head,³ he visibly went up into the highest heavens, triumphing over enemies.⁴ There he receives gifts for men,⁵ raises our minds,⁶ and prepares a place for us,⁷ where he himself is and shall continue to be until his second coming at the end of the world.⁸

1. Acts 1.2-3.
2. Mt 28.19-20, Acts 1.8.

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3. Heb 6.20.
4. Eph 4.8, Acts 1.9.
5. Acts 1.9-11, Eph 4.10, Ps 68.18.
6. Col 3.1-2.
7. Jn 14.2-3.
8. Acts 3.21.

Q. 54. How is Christ exalted by sitting at the right hand of God?

A. Sitting at the right hand of God exalts Christ as the God-man; he is advanced to the highest favor with God the Father¹ with all the joy,² glory,³ and power of this position over all things in heaven and earth.⁴ There Christ gathers and defends his church, subdues her enemies, provides his ministers and people with gifts and graces,⁵ and intercedes for them.⁶

1. Phil 2.9.
2. Acts 2.28, Ps 16.11.
3. Jn 17.5.
4. Eph 1.22, 1 Pt 3.22.
5. Eph 4.10-12, Ps 110; see citations under Q. 45.
6. Rom 8.34; see citations under Q. 44.

Q. 55. How does Christ intercede?

A. Christ intercedes by continually appearing in our human nature before the Father in heaven.¹ There he makes his will clear that his own merit of obedience and sacrifice on earth² be applied to all believers;³ he answers all the accusations against believers⁴ and makes sure they have peace of conscience, in spite of their daily failings;⁵ and he welcomes them without hesitation to the throne of grace⁶ and accepts who they are⁷ and what they do for him.⁸

1. Heb 9.12,24.
2. Heb 1.3.
3. Jn 3.16, 17.9,20,24.
4. Rom 8.33-34.
5. Rom 5.1-2, 1 Jn 2.1-2.
6. Heb 4.16.
7. Eph 1.6.
8. 1 Pt 2.5, Rv 8.3-4.

Q. 56. How is Christ exalted by coming again to judge the world?

A. Coming again to judge the world exalts Christ, who was unjustly judged and condemned by wicked men.¹ His coming again at the last day in great power² will fully reveal his own and his Father's glory, and with all his holy angels,³ accompanied by a shout of command, the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God,⁴ he will judge the world in righteousness.⁵

1. Acts 3.14-15.
2. Mt 24.30.
3. Lk 9.26, Mt 25.31.
4. 1 Thes 4.16.
5. Acts 17.31.

Q. 57. What benefits have been gained by Christ's mediation?

A. By his mediation, Christ has gained redemption¹ with all the other benefits of the covenant of grace.²

1. Heb 9.12, 1 Cor 1.30.
2. 2 Cor 1.20, Rom 8.32.

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Q. 58. How do we share in the benefits Christ has gained?

A. We share in the benefits Christ has gained, as a particular work of God the Holy Spirit,¹ when they are put into effect in us.²

1. Ti 3.5-6, Jn 3.5-6.
2. Jn 1.11-13.

Q. 59. Who shares in the redemption through Christ?

A. Redemption is inevitably and effectively imparted to all those for whom Christ purchased it,¹ who in the process of time are enabled by the Holy Spirit to believe in Christ as presented in the gospel.²

1. Eph 1.13-14, Jn 6.37,39, 10.15-16, Rom 8.29-30.
2. Eph 2.8, 2 Cor 4.13, 1 Pt 1.2, 2 Thes 2.13.

Q. 60. Can those who have never heard the gospel and so neither know Jesus Christ nor believe in him be saved by living according to their own natural understanding?

A. Those who have never heard the gospel¹ and do not know Jesus Christ² nor believe in him cannot be saved³ no matter how hard they try to live a moral life according to their own natural understanding⁴ or try to obey the rules of some other religion.⁵ Salvation comes from no other than Christ alone,⁶ who is the savior only of his body, the church.⁷

1. Rom 10.14.
2. 2 Thes 1.8-9, Eph 2.12, Jn 1.10-12.
3. Jn 8.24, Mk 16.16, Acts 4.12, Rom 1.18-32.
4. 1 Cor 1.20-24, Rom 1.18-32, 3.9-19.
5. Jn 4.22, Rom 9.31-32, Phil 3.4-10.
6. Acts 4.12.
7. Eph 5.23, Jn 6.39,44, 17.9.

Q. 61. Is everyone saved who hears the gospel and goes to church?

A. Not everyone who hears the gospel and attends a visible church is saved. The saved are only the true members of the invisible church.¹

1. Jn 12.38-40, Rom 9.6, Mt 22.14, 7.21, 13.41-42, Rom 11.7.

Q. 62. What is the visible church?

A. The visible church is all the people all over the world and their children¹ who gather together throughout the ages and profess the true religion.²

1. 1 Cor 7.14, Acts 2.39, Rom 11.16, Gn 17.7, Gal 3.7,9,14, Rom 4, Acts 2.39, Mk 10.13-16.
2. 1 Cor 1.2, 12.12-13, Rom 15.1-12, Rv 7.9, Ps 2.8, 22.27-31, 45.17, Mt 28.19-20, Is 59.21.

Q. 63. What are the special privileges of the visible church?

A. The visible church has the privilege of being under God's special care and government¹ and of being protected and preserved throughout the ages, in spite of the opposition of all her enemies.² The visible church also provides fellowship for God's people, functions as the ordinary means by which people are saved,³ and extends God's grace through Christ to all her members in the ministry of the gospel, testifying that whosoever believes in him will be saved⁴ and excluding no one from fellowship who desires to come to Christ.⁵

1. Is 4.5-6, 49.14-16, 1 Tm 4.10, 1 Cor 12.28, Eph 4.11-12, Acts 13.1-2.
2. Ps 115, Is 31.4-5, Zec 12.2-4,8-9, Mt 16.18.

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3. Acts 2.39,42, Rom 3.1-2.
4. Ps 147.19-20, Rom 9.4, Eph 4.11-12, Mk 16.15-16, Acts 16.31, Rv 22.17.
5. Jn 6.37.

Q. 64. What is the invisible church?

A. The invisible church consists of all the elect who have been, are, or ever will be gathered into one under Christ, the head.¹

1. Eph 1.10,22-23, Jn 10.16, 11.52.

Q. 65. What are the special benefits for members of the invisible church through Christ?

A. Through Christ, members of the invisible church experience union and communion with him in grace and glory.¹

1. Jn 17.21,24, Eph 2.5-6, 1 Jn 1.3.

Q. 66. What union do the elect have with Christ?

A. By their union with Christ, the elect are effectually called¹ by the work of God's grace² so that they are spiritually and mystically, but truly and inseparably, joined to Christ as their head and husband.³

1. 1 Pt 5.10, 1 Cor 1.9.
2. Eph 1.22, 2.6-8.
3. 1 Cor 6.17, Jn 10.28, 15.1-5, Eph 5.23,30.

Q. 67. What is effectual calling?

A. Effectual calling is the work of God's almighty power and grace,¹ by which he (freely motivated only by his special love for the elect and not from anything inherently in them)² at the right time invites and draws them to Jesus Christ by his word and Spirit.³ God enlightens their minds with a saving understanding,⁴ renews their wills⁵ and by his power makes them (even though they are dead in sin) willing and able to answer his call voluntarily and to accept gladly the grace he offers and actually gives.⁶

1. Jn 5.25, Eph 1.18-20, 2 Tm 1.8-9.
2. Ti 3.4-5, Eph 2.4-10, Rom 9.11.
3. 2 Cor 5.20, 6.1-2, Jn 6.44, 2 Thes 2.13-14.
4. Acts 26.18, 1 Cor 2.10,12.
5. Ez 11.19, 36.26-27, Jn 6.45.
6. Eph 2.5, Phil 2.13, Dt 30.6, Jn 6.45.

Q. 68. Are only the elect effectually called?

A. All the elect, and only they, are effectually called.¹ Although others may be and often are externally called by the ministry of the word,² and although the Spirit may work in them in some of the same ways he works in the elect,³ from their own willful neglect of and contempt for the grace that is offered them, they are justly allowed to remain in their unbelief and never truly come to Christ.⁴

1. Acts 13.48, Jn 6.39,44, 17.9.
2. Mt 22.14.
3. Mt 7.22, 13.20-21, Heb 6.4-6.
4. Jn 12.38-40, 6.64-65 Acts 28.25-27, Ps 81.11-12, 95.9-11, Prv 1.24-32.

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Q. 69. What communion in grace do members of the invisible church have with Christ?

A. By their communion in grace with Christ, the members of the invisible church share the dynamic power of his mediation in their justification,¹ adoption,² sanctification, and in all the other ways that show their union with him in this life.³

1. Rom 8.30.
2. Eph 1.5.
3. 1 Cor 1.30.

Q. 70. What is justification?

A. Justification is the act of God's free grace to sinners,¹ by which he pardons all their sins and accepts and looks on them as if they were righteous,² not because of anything worked in them or done by them³ but because God imputes to them the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ⁴ that can only be appropriated by faith.⁵

1. Rom 3.22, 24-25, 4.5.
2. 2 Cor 5.19,21, Rom 3.22, 24-25,27-28.
3. Ti 3.5,7, Eph 1.6-7, Rom 3.28.
4. Rom 5.17-19, 4.6-8, 3.24-25.
5. Acts 10.43, Gal 2.16, Phil 3.9, Rom 3.25-26, 5.1.

Q. 71. How is justification an act of God's free grace?

A. By his obedience and death Christ made the correct, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice on behalf of those who are justified.¹ Yet, insofar as this satisfaction is accepted by God as a guarantee of performance, which he might have demanded from the justified, and since God himself provided a guarantor in the person of his only Son,² in justification God imputes righteousness to the justified³ and requires nothing from them in return except faith,⁴ which they also have as a gift from him.⁵ Consequently, justification comes to the justified as an act of God's free grace.⁶

1. Rom 5.8-10, 19.
2. 1 Tm 2.5-6, Heb 10.10, Mt 20.28, Dn 9.24,26, Is 53.4-6, 10-12, Heb 7.22, Rom 8.32, 1 Pt 1.18-19.
3. 2 Cor 5.21.
4. Rom 3.24-25.
5. Eph 2.8.
6. Eph 1.17.

Q. 72. What is justifying faith?

A. Justifying faith is a saving grace¹ that works in the hearts of sinners by the Spirit² and the word of God.³ By it sinners are convinced of their sinfulness and miserable condition and realize that neither they nor anyone or anything else can get them out of that lost condition,⁴ and by it they give full assent to the truth of the gospel promise;⁵ they receive and rest on Christ and his righteousness for pardon from sin,⁶ as the gospel tells us, and for being accepted and accounted as righteous in the sight of God for salvation.⁷

1. Heb 10.39.
2. 2 Cor 4.13, Eph 1.17-19.
3. Rom 10.14,17, 2 Thes 2.13.
4. Acts 2.37, 16.30, Jn 16.8-9, Rom 6.6, 7.9, Eph 2.1, Acts 4.12.
5. Eph 1.13, Rom 10.8-10.
6. Jn 1.12, Acts 16.31, 10.43, Gal 2.15-16.
7. Phil 3.9, Acts 15.11.

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Q. 73. How does faith justify a sinner in the sight of God?

A. Faith justifies a sinner in the sight of God only as a tool by which the sinner receives Christ and puts Christ's righteousness into effect,¹ not because of any other grace that accompanies faith and not because of any good works that result from faith.² Nor is it the case that the grace of faith or any action springing from it is imputed to the sinner for his justification.³

1. Jn 1.12, Phil 3.9, Gal 2.16.
2. Gal 3.11, Rom 3.28.
3. Rom 4.5-8, 10.10, Ti 3.5-7.

Q. 74. What is adoption?

A. Adoption is an act of God's free grace¹ in and for his only son, Jesus Christ,² by which all those who are justified become his children,³ have his name put on them,⁴ have the Spirit of his Son given to them,⁵ are provided for under his fatherly care,⁶ are welcomed to all the liberties and privileges of the sons of God, and are made heirs of all the promises and fellow-heirs with Christ in glory.⁷

1. 1 Jn 3.1.
2. Eph 1.5, Gal 4.4-5.
3. Jn 1.12.
4. 2 Cor 6.18, Rv 3.12.
5. Gal 4.6.
6. Ps 103.13, Prv 14.26, Mt 6.32.
7. Heb 6.12, Rom 8.17.

Q. 75. What is sanctification?

A. Sanctification is a work of God's grace for those whom God has chosen to be holy before the beginning of the world and to whom in time the powerful operation of the Spirit¹ applies the death and resurrection of Christ.² They are thus renewed in their whole persons after the image of God,³ have the seeds of repentance unto life and all the other saving graces put into their hearts,⁴ and these graces are so aroused, increased, and strengthened⁵ that they more and more die to sin and rise into newness of life.⁶

1. Eph 1.4, 1 Cor 6.11, 2 Thes 2.13.
2. Rom 6.4-6.
3. Eph 4.23-24.
4. Acts 11.18, 1 Jn 3.9, Rom 6.4-6, Eph 4.23-24, Phil 3.10.
5. Jude 20, Heb 6.11-12, Eph 3.16-19, Col 1.10-11.
6. Rom 6.4,6,14, Gal 5.24.

Q. 76. What is repentance unto life?

A. Repentance unto life is a saving grace¹ worked in the hearts of sinners by the Spirit² and the word of God.³ By it sinners recognize not only how dangerous it is to commit sins⁴ but also how filthy and hateful they are to God.⁵ Understanding that in Christ God is merciful to those who repent,⁶ sinners suffer such deep sorrow for⁷ and hate their sins⁸ so much that they turn away from all of them and turn to God,⁹ attempting to walk continually with him according to this new obedience in every way.¹⁰

1. 2 Tm 2.25, Lk 24.47.
2. Zec 12.10.
3. Acts 11.18,20-21, 2.37.
4. Ez 18.28,30,32, Lk 15.17-18, Hos 2.6-7.
5. Ez 36.31, 16.61,63, Is 30.22.
6. Jl 2.12-13, Lk 22.61-62, Zec 12.10.

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7. Jer 31.18-19.
8. 2 Cor 7.11, Acts 2.37.
9. Acts 26.18, Ez 14.6, 1 Kgs 8.47-48, 1 Sm 7.3.
10. Ps 119.6,59,128, Lk 1.6, 2 Kgs 23.25.

Q. 77. What is the difference between justification and sanctification?

- A. Although sanctification is inseparably joined to justification,¹ the two are distinctly different. In justification God imputes the righteousness of Christ to believers;² in sanctification his Spirit infuses believers with grace and enables them to use it.³ In the former, sin is pardoned;⁴ in the latter, it is subdued.⁵ The one exempts all believers equally and completely from the avenging anger and condemnation of God in this life;⁶ the other does not work equally in all believers,⁷ nor is it completed in any believer in this life,⁸ but only grows toward perfection.⁹

1. 1 Cor 6.11, 1.30, Rom 8.30.
2. Rom 4.6,8, Phil 3.8-9, 2 Cor 5.21.
3. Ez 36.27.
4. Rom 3.24-25.
5. Rom 6.6,14.
6. Rom 8.1,33-34.
7. 1 Jn 2.12-14, Heb 5.12-14, 1 Cor 3.1-2, Mk 4.8,28.
8. 1 Jn 1.8,10.
9. 2 Cor 7.1, Phil 3.12-14, Eph 4.11-15.

Q. 78. Why are believers not completely sanctified?

- A. Believers are not completely or perfectly sanctified because they retain some remnants of sin throughout their whole being and are continually plagued with desires of their old sinful nature that are contrary to the spirit. Consequently believers are frequently defeated by temptation, commit many sins,¹ and are hindered from performing their spiritual obligations,² so that their best works in God's eyes are imperfect and defiled.³

1. Rom 7.18,23, Mk 14.66-72, Gal 2.11-12.
2. Heb 12.1, Gal 5.17.
3. Is 64.6, Ex 28.38, Rom 7.18, 23.

Q. 79. Since true believers are imperfect, are tempted, and commit sin, can they fall out of their state of grace?

- A. Because of God's unchangeable love,¹ he has decreed and made a covenant with believers that they will persevere,² that they are inseparably united to Christ,³ who continually intercedes for them,⁴ and that the Spirit and the seed of God abide in them.⁵ Consequently, they can never completely or finally fall out of their state of grace,⁶ because the power of God preserves their salvation through faith.⁷

1. Jer 31.3, Jn 13.1.
2. 2 Tm 2.19, Heb 6.17, 13.20-21, 2 Sm 23.5, 1 Cor 1.8, Is 54.10.
3. 1 Cor 1.8-9, 12.27, Rom 8.35-39.
4. Heb 7.25, Lk 22.32.
5. 1 Jn 3.9, 2.27.
6. Jer 32.40, Jn 10.28.
7. 1 Pt 1.5, Phil 1.6.

Q. 80. Can true believers be infallibly assured that they are and will remain in a state of grace, persevering to salvation?

- A. Those who truly believe in Christ and try to walk in good conscience before him¹ may be infallibly assured that they are and will remain in a state of grace, persevering to salvation.² This assurance is not the result of any unusual revelation but comes from faith grounded on the truth of

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God's promises and from the Spirit, who gives believers the spiritual insight into their own hearts, to which these promises are directed.³ The Spirit also testifies with their spirits that they are the children of God.⁴

1. 1 Jn 2.3.
2. 1 Jn 5.13.
3. 1 Cor 2.12, 1 Jn 3.14, 18-19,21,24, 4.13,16, Heb 6.11-12.
4. Rom 8.16.

Q. 81. Are all true believers assured all the time that they are saved and are in a state of grace?

A. Since the assurance of grace and salvation is not essential to faith,¹ true believers may have to wait a long time for it,² and once they have it, their assurance may be weakened and interrupted from being afflicted by all kinds of psychological problems, from sinning, from being tempted, and from losing the sense of God's favor.³ However, the Spirit of God keeps believers from complete despair by never allowing them to be without some inner sense of his presence and support.⁴

1. Eph 1.13.
2. Is 50.10, Ps 88.
3. Sg 5.2-3,6, Ps 51.8,12, 31.22, 22.1, 77.1-12, 30.6-7.
4. 1 Jn 3.9, Jb 13.15, Ps 73.13-15,23, Is 54.7-11.

Q. 82. What is the communion in glory that members of the invisible church have with Christ?

A. The communion in glory that members of the invisible church have with Christ occurs in this life¹ as well as immediately after death,² and is finally completed at the resurrection and day of judgment.³

1. 2 Cor 3.18.
2. Lk 23.43.
3. 1 Thes 4.17, 1 Jn 3.2, Rv 22.3-5.

Q. 83. What is the communion in glory with Christ that members of the invisible church enjoy in this life?

A. Since members of the invisible church are part of the body of Christ, who is their head, they have imparted to them in this life the first-fruits of glory with Christ mainly in the form of interest in the glory Christ fully possesses,¹ and, as a down payment on this communion, they enjoy a sense of God's love,² a good conscience, joy in the Holy Spirit, and hope of glory.³ In a similar, negative way, the torments the wicked will endure after death begin here on earth with an awareness in them of God's avenging anger, a terrified conscience, and a fearful expectation of judgment.⁴

1. Eph 2.4-6.
2. Rom 5.5, 2 Cor 1.22.
3. Rom 5.1-2, 14.17.
4. Gn 4.13, Mt 27.3-5, Heb 10.27, Rom 2.9, Mk 9.44.

Q. 84. Is everyone going to die?

A. Since we have been warned that death is the wages of sin,¹ everyone is destined to die once,² because everyone has sinned.³

1. Rom 6.23.
2. Heb 9.27.
3. Rom 5.12.

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Q. 85. Given that death is the wages of sin, why are the righteous not delivered from death, since all their sins are forgiven in Christ?

A. At the last day, the righteous will be delivered from death itself. In the meantime, even when they die, they are delivered from the sting and curse of death,¹ and God's love² completely frees them from sin and misery,³ enabling them to have a deeper communion with Christ when they enter into his glory after death.⁴

1. 1 Cor 15.26,55-57, Heb 2.15.
2. Is 57.1-2, 2 Kgs 22.20.
3. Rv 14.13, Eph 5.27, Lk 16.25, 2 Cor 5.1-8.
4. Lk 23.43, Phil 1.23.

Q. 86. What is the communion in glory with Christ that members of the invisible church enjoy immediately after death?

A. The communion in glory with Christ that members of the invisible church enjoy immediately after death involves their souls being made completely holy¹ and being received into the highest heavens.² There they behold the face of God in light and glory³ as they wait for the full redemption of their bodies,⁴ which even in death continue united to Christ⁵ and rest in the grave as in a bed,⁶ until at the last day body and soul are reunited.⁷ On the other hand, when the wicked die, their souls are thrown into hell. There they remain tormented in complete darkness, while their bodies are kept in the grave as in a prison, until the resurrection and judgment of that great day.⁸

1. Heb 12.23.
2. 2 Cor 5.1,6-8, Phil 1.23, Acts 3.21, Eph 4.10.
3. 1 Jn 3.2, 1 Cor 13.12, Lk 16.23, 23.43, 2 Cor 5.6-8.
4. Rom 8.23, Ps 16.9.
5. 1 Thes 4.14.
6. Is 57.2.
7. Jb 19.26-27, Rom 8.23.
8. Lk 16.23-24, Acts 1.25, Jude 6-7.

Q. 87. What must we believe about the resurrection?

A. We must first of all believe that at the last day there is going to be a resurrection of all the dead, both the righteous and the wicked.¹ When that happens, those who are still alive on earth will be instantly changed, and the very same bodies of the dead that were buried will be reunited with their souls and raised up by the power of Christ.² Through the Spirit of Christ and by virtue of his resurrection, as their head, the bodies of the righteous will be raised in power, spiritual and imperishable, and made in the likeness of Christ's glorious body.³ Christ will raise up in dishonor the bodies of the wicked, who offend him as judge.⁴

1. Acts 24.15.
2. 1 Cor 15.51-53, 1 Thes 4.15-17, Jn 5.28-29.
3. 1 Cor 15.21-23,42-44, Phil 3.21.
4. Jn 5.27-29, Mt 25.33, Dn 12.2.

Q. 88. What is going to happen immediately after the resurrection?

A. Immediately after the resurrection, all created beings, angels and humans, will be finally judged.¹ No one knows the exact time this is going to happen so that everyone can anticipate, pray for, and always be ready for the coming of the Lord.²

1. 2 Pt 2.4,6-7,14-15, Mt 25.46, Rv 20.11-13.
2. Mt 24.36,42,44, Lk 21.35-36.

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Q. 89. What will happen to the wicked on the judgment day?

A. On the judgment day, the wicked will be put on the left of Christ,¹ and with the evidence against them clearly presented and fully recognized by them,² they will be justly and terribly condemned,³ after which they will be expelled from the favorable presence of God and the glorious fellowship with Christ, his people, and his angels, and thrown into hell to be punished forever with unspeakable torments, both of body and soul, along with the devil and his angels.⁴

1. Mt 25.33.
2. Rom 2.15-16.
3. Mt 25.41-43.
4. Lk 16.26, 2 Thes 1.8-9, Mt 25.46, Mk 9.43-44, 14.21.

Q. 90. What will happen to the righteous on the judgment day?

A. On the judgment day, the righteous will be caught up with Christ in the clouds¹ and placed on his right, where they will be publicly acknowledged and acquitted.² They will join Christ in the judgment of reprobate angels and men³ and be received into heaven.⁴ There they will be completely and forever freed from all sin and misery,⁵ filled with unimaginable joy,⁶ and made perfectly holy and happy in body and soul, in the vast company of each other and the holy angels;⁷ they will be particularly blessed in the visual presence and enjoyment of God the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, forever.⁸ Such is the perfect and complete fellowship the members of the invisible church will enjoy with Christ in glory at the resurrection and judgment day.

1. 1 Thes 4.17.
2. Mt 25.33, 10.32.
3. 1 Cor 6.2-3.
4. Mt 25.34,46.
5. Eph 5.27, Rv 7.17, 14.13.
6. Ps 16.11, 1 Cor 2.9.
7. Heb 12.22-23.
8. 1 Jn 3.2, 1 Cor 13.12, 1 Thes 4.17-18, Rv 22.3-5.

HAVING SEEN WHAT THE BIBLE PRIMARILY TEACHES US TO BELIEVE ABOUT GOD, NEXT COMES WHAT GOD REQUIRES OF HUMANS.

Q. 91. What does God require of human beings?

A. God requires human beings to obey his revealed will.¹

1. Rom 12.1-2, Mi 6.8, 1 Sm 15.22, Dt 29.29.

Q. 92. In the beginning what did God reveal for humans to obey?

A. In his innocence, it was revealed to Adam and all humanity in him that he must obey the moral law in addition to a special command not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.¹

1. Gn 1.26-27, 2.17, Rom 2.14-15, 10.5.

Q. 93. What is the moral law?

A. The moral law is the declaration of God's will for humanity, directing and binding every human being to conform to and obey it personally, completely, and perpetually. The moral law applies to the whole human, body and soul,¹ and includes the performance of all those obligations to God

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and our fellow humans to be holy and righteous.² God promised life for keeping it and threatened death for disobeying it.³

1. Dt 5.1-3, 31, 33, Lk 10.26-27, Gal 3.10, 1 Thes 5.23.
2. Jas 2.10, Lk 1.75, Acts 24.16.
3. Rom 10.5, Gal 3.10,12.

Q. 94. Does the moral law apply to human beings after the fall?

A. Although after the fall no one can achieve righteousness and life by means of the moral law,¹ it still applies to all humans generally, whether saved or unsaved.²

1. Rom 8.3, Gal 2.16.
2. 1 Tm 1.8, Gal 3.19,24.

Q. 95. How does the moral law apply to all human beings?

A. The moral law reveals the holy nature and will of God to all humans¹ and obliges them to live by it.² It also reveals to them the sinful pollution of their nature, hearts, and lives, which shows them they are unable to keep it.³ The moral law also humbles human beings with the recognition of their sinfulness and misery⁴ and thereby gives them a better awareness of their need for Christ⁵ and for the perfection of his obedience.⁶

1. Lv 11.44-45, 20.7-8, Rom 7.12.
2. Mi 6.8, Jas 2.10-11, Lk 10.26,28,37.
3. Ps 19.11-12, Rom 3.20, 7.7.
4. Rom 3.9,23, 7.9,13.
5. Gal 3.21-22.
6. Rom 10.4.

Q. 96. How does the moral law apply particularly to the unsaved?

A. The moral law awakens the consciences of the unsaved to flee from the coming wrath¹ and so drives them to Christ.² But, if they continue in their unsaved and sinful condition, the law has left them without excuse³ and under its curse.⁴

1. 1 Tm 1.9-10, Rom 7.9.
2. Gal 3.24.
3. Rom 1.20, 2.15.
4. Gal 3.10.

Q. 97. How does the moral law apply specifically to the saved?

A. Although those who are saved and believe in Christ are freed from the moral law as a covenant of works,¹ so that they are neither justified² nor condemned³ by it, nonetheless, in addition to the general applicability of the moral law to all humans, it specifically shows believers how much they owe to Christ for fulfilling it and for enduring its curse in their place and for their good.⁴ This recognition spurs believers on to a greater thankfulness,⁵ so that they try all the harder to observe the law as their personal standard for living.⁶

1. Rom 6.14, 7.4,6, Gal 4.4-5.
2. Rom 3.20.
3. Gal 5.23, Rom 8.1,34.
4. Rom 7.24-25, Gal 3.13-14, Rom 8.3-4, 2 Cor 5.21.
5. Lk 1.68-69,74-75, Col 1.12-14.
6. Rom 7.22, 12.2, Ti 2.11-14.

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Q. 98. Where is the moral law summarized?

A. The moral law is summarized in the ten commandments, which were delivered by the voice of God on Mount Sinai and written down by him on two stone tablets;¹ they are recorded in Exodus 20. The first four commandments establish our obligations to God and the remaining six our obligations to human beings.²

1. Dt 10.4, Ex 34.1-4, Mt 19.17-19.
2. Mt 22.37-40.

Q. 99. What are the guidelines for the proper understanding of the ten commandments?

A. In order to understand the ten commandments properly, these guidelines should be followed.

1. The law is perfect and binds the whole person to observe it completely and, according to its standard, to be completely righteous, and perfectly obey every one of its obligations forever. On the negative side, the law forbids even the slightest or partial commission of any sin.¹

1. Ps 19.7, Jas 2.10, Mt 5.21-22,28,37,44.

2. Since it is spiritual, the law involves our understanding, our will, our emotions and all the other faculties of the soul, as well as our words, actions, and self-expressions.²

2. Rom 7.14, Dt 6.5, Mt 22.37-39, 5.21-22,27-28,33-34,37-39,43-44, 12.36-37. See also citations under Guidelines above.

3. Different aspects of one and the same thing may be required or forbidden in several different commandments.³

3. Col 3.5, Am 8.5, Prv 1.19, 1 Tm 6.10, Ex 20.3-5.

4. When something is required, the opposite is forbidden,⁴ and where a specific sin is forbidden, its opposite is required.⁵ In the same way, when a requirement of the law adds a promise of some blessing for obeying it, that promise also includes a threat for disobeying it,⁶ and when a threat is added, an opposite promise is included.⁷

4. Is 58.13, Dt 6.13, Mt 4.9-10, 15.4-6.
5. Mt 5.21-25, Eph 4.28.
6. Ex 20.12, Prv 30.17.
7. Jer 18.7-8 Ex 20.7, Ps 15.1,4-5, 24.4-5.

5. What God forbids must never be done at any time or under any circumstances.⁸ What he commands always remains an obligation,⁹ although every particular obligation of the law does not apply in all circumstances or at all times.¹⁰

8. Jb 13.7-8, Rom 3.8, Job 36.21, Heb 11.25.
9. Dt 4.8-9.
10. Mt 12.7, Mk 14.7.

6. The prohibitions against specific sins and the commandments to observe specific obligations are typical and so cover not just those particular sins or obligations but all others of the same kind. They similarly include all the contributory causes, means, opportunities, and appearances related to these sins and obligations.¹¹

11. Mt 5.21-22,27-28, 15.4-6, Heb 10.24-25, 1 Thes 5.22, Jude 23, Gal 5.26, Col 3.21.

7. Since the provisions of the law apply not only to us but to everyone else, we must try to help others keep those provisions, in the context of our own position in life and theirs.¹²

12. Ex 20.10, Lv 19.17, Gn 18.19, Jos 24.15, Dt 6.6-7.

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8. Similarly, we must support others in keeping what the law commands them to do or not to do¹³ and particularly by not joining them in doing what is forbidden to them.¹⁴

13. 2 Cor 1.24, Heb 10.24.

14. 1 Tm 5.22, Eph 5.11.

Q. 100. What will our focus be on the ten commandments?

- A. We will focus on the introduction, the content of the commandments themselves, and the various reasons added to some of the commandments emphasizing how important it is to obey them.

Q. 101. What is the introduction to the ten commandments?

- A. The introduction to the ten commandments is: *I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.*¹ In these words God reveals his sovereign being as LORD, in and of himself,² eternal, unchangeable, and almighty God,³ who gives being to all his words⁴ and works.⁵ God also points here to his covenantal relationship with the Israelites in ancient times and with all his people,⁶ so that just as he brought the Israelites out of their slavery in Egypt, he delivers us from spiritual enslavement.⁷ Consequently we are bound to accept only him as our God and to keep all his commandments.⁸

1. Ex 20.2.

2. Ex 3.14.

3. Is 44.6.

4. Ex 6.3.

5. Acts 17.24,28.

6. Gn 17.7, Rom 3.29.

7. Lk 1.74-75.

8. 1 Pt 1.15-18, Lv 18.30, 19.37.

Q. 102. What is the essence of the first four commandments that cover our obligations to God?

- A. The essence of these four commandments is to love the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our strength and with all our mind.¹

1. Lk 10.27.

Q. 103. What is the first commandment?

- A. The first commandment is: *You shall have no other gods before me.*¹

1. Ex 20.3.

Q. 104. What does the first commandment require?

- A. The first commandment requires us to know and recognize God as the only true God and our God¹ and to worship and glorify him as such² by valuing,³ meditating on,⁴ remembering,⁵ highly regarding,⁶ honoring,⁷ adoring,⁸ preferring,⁹ loving,¹⁰ desiring,¹¹ fearing,¹² believing,¹³ trusting,¹⁴ hoping,¹⁵ delighting,¹⁶ and rejoicing in him.¹⁷ We must also be zealous for¹⁸ and call on him, giving him all praise and thanks,¹⁹ completely obeying and submitting to him in our whole person.²⁰ Finally, we must walk humbly with him,²¹ being careful to please him in everything we say and do²² and being genuinely sorry when we offend him.²³

1. 1 Chr 28.9, Dt 26.17, Is 43.10, Jer 14.22.

2. Ps 95.6-7, Mt 4.10, Ps 29.2.

3. Mal 3.16.

4. Ps 63.6.

5. Eccl 12.1.

6. Ps 71.19, 18.1-2.

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7. Mal 1.6.
8. Ps 45.23, Ps 96.
9. Jos 24.15,22.
10. Dt 6.5.
11. Ps 73.25.
12. Is 8.13.
13. Ex 14.31, Rom 10.11, Acts 10.43.
14. Is 26.4, Ps 40.4.
15. Ps 130.7.
16. Ps 37.4.
17. Ps 32.11.
18. Rom 12.11, Nm 25.11, Rev 3.19.
19. Phil 4.6.
20. Jer 7.23, Jas 4.7, Rom 12.1.
21. Mi 6.8.
22. 1 Jn 3.22.
23. Jer 31.18-19, Ps 119.136, Neh 13.8, Ps 73.21.

Q. 105. What particular sins does the first commandment forbid?

A. The first commandment forbids: atheism, denying or not believing in God;¹ idolatry, believing in or worshiping any other gods along with or other than the one true God;² not having and affirming him as God and our God;³ failing or neglecting to do anything this commandment requires relating to God;⁴ ignorance of him;⁵ forgetting him,⁶ misunderstanding him,⁷ untrue opinions about him,⁸ and evil or unworthy thoughts about him;⁹ irreverent curiosity about and inquiry into his secrets;¹⁰ all godless desecration;¹¹ hating God;¹² self-love;¹³ self-interest;¹⁴ and all other disorderly or excessive attention, mental, willful, or emotional, to things that divert our attention partially or completely from God.¹⁵ Also included are: worthless beliefs,¹⁶ lack of faith;¹⁷ heretical beliefs;¹⁸ wrong belief;¹⁹ not trusting God;²⁰ spiritual despair;²¹ refusing correction²² and resisting God's judgment;²³ hardness of heart;²⁴ pride;²⁵ willfulness;²⁶ worldly complacency;²⁷ putting God to the test;²⁸ using unlawful means to an end;²⁹ trusting even in lawful means of grace rather than God;³⁰ indulging in pleasures of the flesh;³¹ depraved, blind, or improperly directed zeal;³² being lukewarm;³³ spiritual deadness;³⁴ deserting and forsaking God;³⁵ praying to or worshiping saints, angels, or any other created being;³⁶ making an agreement with, consulting,³⁷ or following the suggestions of the devil;³⁸ making men the rulers of our faith and conscience;³⁹ slighting and despising God and his commandments;⁴⁰ resisting and grieving his Spirit;⁴¹ and finally being dissatisfied and offended by the things God provides in our lives, ignorantly blaming him for the evils he inflicts on us,⁴² as well as attributing the credit for any good thing we are, have, or can do to luck,⁴³ idols,⁴⁴ ourselves,⁴⁵ or any other created being.⁴⁶

1. Ps 14.1, Eph 2.12.
2. Jer 2.27-28, 1 Thes 1.9.
3. Ps 81.11.
4. Is 43.22-24.
5. Jer 4.22, Hos 4.1,6.
6. Jer 2.32, Ps 50.22.
7. Acts 17.23,29.
8. Is 40.18.
9. Ps 50.21.
10. Dt 29.29.
11. Ti 1.16, Heb 12.16.
12. Rom 1.30.
13. 2 Tm 3.2.
14. Phil 2.21.
15. 1 Jn 2.15-16, 1 Sm 2.29, Col 3.2,5.
16. 1 Jn 4.1.
17. Heb 3.12.
18. Gal 5.20, Ti 3.10.

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19. Acts 26.9.
20. Ps 78.22.
21. Gn 4.13, Ez 37.11.
22. Jer 5.3.
23. Is 42.25.
24. Rom 2.5.
25. Jer 13.15.
26. Ps 19.13.
27. Zep 1.12.
28. Mt 4.7.
29. Rom 3.8.
30. Jer 17.5.
31. 2 Tm 3.4.
32. Gal 4.17, Jn 16.2, Rom 10.2, Lk 9.54-55.
33. Rv 3.16.
34. Rv 3.1.
35. Ez 14.5, Is 1.4-5.
36. Rom 10.13-14, Hos 4.12, Acts 10.25-26, Rv 19.10, Mt 4.10, Col 2.18, Rom 1.25.
37. Lv 20.6, 1 Sm 28.7-11, 1 Chr 10.13-14.
38. Acts 5.3.
39. 2 Cor 1.24, Mt 23.9.
40. Dt 32.15, 2 Sm 12.9, Prv 13.13.
41. Acts 7.51, Eph 4.30.
42. Ps 73.2-3, 13-15, 22, Jb 1.22.
43. 1 Sm 6.7-9.
44. Dn 5.23.
45. Dt 8.17, Dn 4.30.
46. Hb 1.16.

Q. 106. What do the words, before me, in the first commandment specifically teach?

- A. The words, *before me*, or “before my face,” in the first commandment teach us that God, who sees everything, takes special note of and is very offended by the sin of having any other god. These words emphasize then how important it is to obey this commandment and how disobeying it insolently provokes God;¹ they also urge us to be just as mindful of the fact that God sees everything we do as we are of doing things in his service.²

1. Ez 8.5-18, Ps 44.20-21.
2. 1 Chr 28.9.

Q. 107. What is the second commandment?

- A. The second commandment is: You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments.¹

1. Ex 20.4-6.

Q. 108. What does the second commandment require?

- A. The second commandment requires us to receive, respectfully perform, and preserve completely and purely all the regulations for religion and worship that God has established in his word.¹ These include: prayer and thanksgiving in the name of Christ;² the reading, preaching, and hearing of the word;³ the administration of and receiving the sacraments;⁴ church government and discipline;⁵ the administration and upkeep of the church;⁶ religious fasting;⁷ swearing by the name of God;⁸ and making vows to him.⁹ Also included are disapproving, denouncing, and opposing

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false worship¹⁰ and doing our best, in accordance with our position and calling in life, to eliminate it and all forms of idolatry.¹¹

1. Dt 32.46-47, Mt 28.20, Acts 2.42, 1 Tm 6.13-14.
2. Phil 4.6, Eph 5.20.
3. Dt 17.18-19, Acts 15.21, 2 Tm 4.2, Jas 1.21-22, Acts 10.33.
4. Mt 28.19, 1 Cor 11.23-30.
5. Mt 18.15-17, 16.19, 1 Cor 5, 12.28, Jn 20.23.
6. Eph 4.11-12, 1 Tm 5.17-18, 1 Cor 9.1-15.
7. Jl 2.12,18, 1 Cor 7.5.
8. Dt 6.13.
9. Is 19.21, Ps 76.11, 116.14,18.
10. Acts 17.16-17, Ps 16.4.
11. Dt 7.5, Is 30.22.

Q. 109. What particular sins does the second commandment forbid?

A. The second commandment forbids: imagining,¹ recommending,² demanding,³ practicing,⁴ or in any way approving any religious worship not established by God himself;⁵ creating any likeness of God as the Trinity or as anyone of his three persons, either internally in our minds or externally in the form of any kind of image or representation of a created being;⁶ any worship of such created likenesses⁷ as if God were in them or as if they were a means to worshiping him;⁸ the creation of any likenesses of invented gods,⁹ any worship of them or service relating to them;¹⁰ and all superstitious contrivances.¹¹ Also forbidden are: any departure from the true worship of God¹² by adding to or taking away from it,¹³ whether by our own invention¹⁴ or received from some other tradition,¹⁵ and whether justified by antiquity,¹⁶ custom,¹⁷ devotional practice,¹⁸ good intentions, or any other excuse;¹⁹ simony²⁰ and anything sacrilegious;²¹ and finally any neglect of,²² contempt for,²³ hindering,²⁴ or opposition to the worship and regulations established by God.²⁵

1. Nm 15.39.
2. Dt 13.6-8.
3. Hos 5.11, Mi 6.16.
4. 1 Kgs 11.33, 12.33.
5. Dt 12.30-32.
6. Dt 4.15-19, Acts 17.29, Rom 1.21-25.
7. Dn 3.18 Gal 4.8.
8. Ex 32.5.
9. Ex 32.8.
10. 1 Kgs 18.26,28, Is 65.11.
11. Acts 17.22, 19.19, Col 2.21-23.
12. Mal 1.7-8,14.
13. Dt 4.2.
14. Ps 106.39.
15. Mt 15.9.
16. 1 Pt 1.18.
17. Jer 44.17.
18. Is 65.3-5, Gal 1.13-14.
19. 1 Sm 13.11-12, 15.21.
20. Acts 8.18.
21. Rom 2.22, Mal 3.8.
22. Ex 4.24-26.
23. Mt 22.5, Mal 1.7,12-13.
24. Mt 23.13.
25. Acts 13.44-45, 1 Thes 2.15-16.

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Q. 110. What reason is added to the second commandment emphasizing how important it is to obey it?

A. The reason added to this commandment to emphasize its importance is in these words: *For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments.*¹ In addition to calling attention to the fact that God totally rules over us, so that we belong to him,² these words point to his fervent eagerness to be worshiped correctly,³ and that he is angered and takes vengeance on all false worship, which he sees as spiritual prostitution.⁴ He views breaking this commandment as equivalent to hating him and threatens to punish those who do break it for several generations.⁵ He also equates observing this commandment with loving him and keeping all his commandments, and promises mercy for many generations to those who do it.⁶

1. Ex 20.5-6.
2. Ps 45.11, Rv 15.3-4.
3. Ex 34.13-14.
4. 1 Cor 10.20-22, Jer 7.18-20, Ez 16.26-27, Dt 32.16-20.
5. Hos 2.2-4.
6. Dt 5.29.

Q. 111. What is the third commandment?

A. The third commandment is: *You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.*¹

1. Ex 20.7.

Q. 112. What does the third commandment require?

A. The third commandment requires the holy and reverent use in our thoughts,¹ meditations,² words,³ and writings,⁴ of God's name, titles, qualities,⁵ regulations,⁶ word,⁷ sacraments,⁸ prayer,⁹ oaths,¹⁰ vows,¹¹ casting lots,¹² his works,¹³ and anything else by which he makes himself known. This treatment will be reflected in holy affirmations of our faith¹⁴ and conduct that matches our affirmations,¹⁵ to the glory of God¹⁶ and the good of ourselves¹⁷ and others.¹⁸

1. Mal 3.16.
2. Ps 8.
3. Col 3.17, Ps 105.2,5.
4. Ps 102.18.
5. Mt 6.9. Dt 28.58, Ps 29.2, 68.4, Rv 15.3-4.
6. Mal 1.14, Eccl 5.1.
7. Ps 138.2.
8. 1 Cor 11.24-25,28-29.
9. 1 Tm 2.8.
10. Jer 4.2.
11. Eccl 5.2,4-6, Ps 76.11.
12. Acts 1.24,26.
13. Jb 36.24, Ps 107.21-22.
14. 1 Pt 3.15, Mi 4.5.
15. Phil 1.27.
16. 1 Cor 10.31.
17. Jer 32.39.
18. 1 Pt 2.12.

Q. 113. What particular sins does the third commandment forbid?

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- A. The third commandment forbids: not using God's name as is required;¹ the abuse of it through ignorance,² empty³ or unholy treatment, irreverence,⁴ superstition,⁵ or any wicked reference to his titles, qualities,⁶ regulations,⁷ or works;⁸ blasphemy;⁹ perjury;¹⁰ all sinful cursing,¹¹ oaths,¹² vows,¹³ and casting lots;¹⁴ violating our oaths and vows, if lawful,¹⁵ and keeping them, if aimed at unlawful things;¹⁶ complaining and quarreling about¹⁷ or misapplication of God's decrees¹⁸ and acts of providence¹⁹ as well as unwarranted curiosity about them;²⁰ misinterpreting²¹ or misapplying²² God's word or perverting all or part of its meaning in any way;²³ blasphemous mockery of his word,²⁴ pointless arguing, meaningless talk, or supporting false doctrines;²⁵ abusing God's name, his creatures, or anything included under his name in the practice of magic²⁶ or to promote sinful desires and activities;²⁷ maligning,²⁸ scorning,²⁹ reviling,³⁰ or opposing in any way God's truth, grace, and actions;³¹ pretending to be religious or using religion for evil purposes;³² being ashamed of God's name³³ or a shame to it by stubbornly refusing to obey him³⁴ and by living unwisely,³⁵ unfruitfully,³⁶ or in such a way as to offend him³⁷ or backslide away from him.³⁸

1. Mal 2.2.
2. Acts 17.23.
3. Prv 30.9.
4. Mal 1.6-7, 12, 3.14.
5. 1 Sm 4.3-5, Jer 7.4, 9-10, 14, 31, Col 2.20-22.
6. 2 Kgs 18.30, 35, Ex 5.2, Ps 139.20.
7. Ps 50.16-17.
8. Is 5.12.
9. 2 Kgs 19.22, Lv 24.11.
10. Zec 5.4, 8.17.
11. 1 Sm 17.43, 2 Sm 16.5, Rom 12.14.
12. Jer 5.7, 23.10.
13. Dt 23.18, Acts 23.12, 14.
14. Est 3.7, 9.24, Ps 22.18.
15. Ps 24.4, Ez 17.16, 18-19.
16. Mk 6.26, 1 Sm 25.22, 32-34.
17. Rom 9.14, 19-20.
18. Rom 3.5, 7, 6.1.
19. Eccl 8.11, 9.3, Ps 39, 73.12-13.
20. Dt 29.29.
21. Mt 5.21 to the end.
22. Ez 13.22.
23. 2 Pt 3.16, Mt 22.23-32.
24. Is 22.13, Jer 23.34, 36, 38, Eph 5.4.
25. 1 Tm 1.4, 6-7, 6.4-5, 20, 2 Tm 2.14, Ti 3.9.
26. Dt 18. 10-14, Acts 19.13.
27. 2 Tm 4.3-4, Rom 13.13-14, 1 Kgs 21.9-10, Jude 4.
28. Acts 13.45, 1 Jn 3.12.
29. Ps 1.1, 2 Pt 3.3.
30. 1 Pt 4.4.
31. Acts 13.45-46, 50, Acts 4.18, 19.9, 1 Thes 2.16, Heb 10.29.
32. 2 Tm 3.5, Mt 23.14, 6.1-3, 5, 16.
33. Mk 8.38.
34. Ps 73.14-15.
35. 1 Cor 6.5-6, Eph 5.15-17.
36. Is 5.4, 2 Pt 1.8-9.
37. Rom 2.23-24.
38. Gal 3.1, 3, Heb 6.6.

Q. 114. What reasons are added to the third commandment?

- A. The reasons are in these words: *The LORD thy God and The LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.*¹ Because he is the LORD and our God, his name must never be treated as

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unholy or misused by us in any way,² particularly since he is so opposed to acquitting or sparing those who break this commandment that he will not allow them to escape his righteous

judgment,³ even though many who do break this commandment escape human condemnation and punishment.⁴

1. Ex 20.7.
2. Lv 19.12.
3. Ez 36.21-23, Dt 28.58-59, Zec 5.2-4.
4. 1 Sm 2.12,17,22,24, 3.13.

Q. 115. What is the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment is: *Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days shall you labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.*¹

1. Ex 20.8-11.

Q. 116. What does the fourth commandment require?

A. The fourth commandment requires all men to sanctify or set apart to God the times he has established in his word, and specifically one whole day out of every seven. This was the seventh day from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, and the first day of the week ever since. It will continue that way until the end of the world. This is the Christian Sabbath,¹ in the New Testament called *the Lord's day*.²

1. Dt 5.12-14, Gn 2.2-3, 1 Cor 16.1-2, Acts 20.7, Mt 5.17-18, Is 56.2, 4, 6-7, Lk 23.56, Jn 20.19-27.
2. Rv 1.10.

Q. 117. How do we keep the Sabbath or the Lord's day holy?

A. We keep the Sabbath or the Lord's day holy by resting the whole day,¹ not just from doing things that are inherently sinful at any time, but even from worldly affairs and recreations that are lawful on other days.² Except for necessary works or acts of mercy,³ we should joyfully spend all our time publicly and privately worshiping God.⁴ To that end, we must prepare our hearts and carefully plan ahead so that our worldly business is taken care of beforehand in order that we may more readily spend the day the way God requires.⁵

1. Ex 20.8,10.
2. Ex 16.25-29, Neh 13.15-22, Jer 17.21-22.
3. Mt 11.1-13, 12.1-14.
4. Is 58.13,18, 66.23, Lk 4.16, Acts 20.7, 1 Cor 16.1-2, Ps 92 (title), Lv 23.3.
5. Ex 20.8,56, Lk 23.54,56, Ex 16.22, 25-26, 29, Neh 13.19.

Q. 118. Why is the command to keep the Sabbath specifically directed to heads of families and others in authority?

A. The command to keep the Sabbath is specifically directed to heads of families and others in authority because the command not only obligates them individually and personally but also makes them responsible for everyone under them. The command also recognizes that those in authority may be inclined to work themselves on the Sabbath day and so hinder the observance of it by those under them.¹

1. Ex 20.10, Jos 24.15, Neh 13.15,17, Jer 17.20-22, Ex 23.12.

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Q. 119. What particular sins does the fourth commandment forbid?

- A. The fourth commandment forbids failing to do anything required by the commandment;¹ or doing it carelessly, negligently, or in such a way as not to benefit from it, and being tired of keeping it;² also treating the day as unholy by loafing, by doing anything in itself sinful,³ and by all useless works, words, and thoughts about our worldly affairs and recreations.⁴

1. Ez 22.26.
2. Acts 20.7,9, Ez 33.30-32, Am 8.5, Mal 1.13.
3. Ez 23.38.
4. Jer 17.24,27, Is 58.13-14.

Q. 120. What reasons are added to the fourth commandment emphasizing the importance of obeying it?

- A. The reasons added to the fourth commandment to emphasize its importance are first of all implied by its inherent fairness; God allows us six days out of every seven for our own affairs and reserves only one for himself, in these words: *Six days shall you labor and do all your work.*¹ God also insists that this day belongs to him, *The seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God.*² And there is the example of God himself, who in *six days made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested on the seventh day.* Finally God put a blessing on that day, not just by making it a holy day for serving him but also by establishing that our keeping the Sabbath holy will be a blessing to us as well, *Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.*³

1. Ex 20.9.
2. Ex 20.10.
3. Ex 20.11.

Q. 121. Why does the word Remember begin the fourth commandment?

- A. The word *Remember* begins the fourth commandment¹ in one respect, because it is highly beneficial to remember it: the word helps us prepare ourselves to keep the commandment,² and when we do, it helps us to do a better job keeping all the other commandments;³ and the word also reminds us to remain ever thankful for the two great benefits of creation and redemption, which contain the essence of true religion.⁴ In another respect, the word “remember” reminds us how easy it is to forget to keep the Sabbath,⁵ for several reasons. First, keeping the Sabbath is not obvious to our natural, human understanding,⁶ while it additionally restricts our freedom from doing things that are lawful on other days.⁷ And, coming only every seventh day leaves plenty of time for us to become so engrossed with our own worldly affairs that we forget to prepare for the Sabbath or keep it holy.⁸ Finally, Satan himself with the tools at his disposal is hard at work to blot out the glory and even the memory of the Sabbath and so promote the neglect of religion and irreverence.⁹

1. Ex 20.8.
2. Ex 16.23, Lk 23.54,56, Mk 15.42, Neh 13.19.
3. Ps 92.13-14, Ez 20.12, 19-20.
4. Gn 2.2-3, Ps 118.22,24, Acts 4.10-11, Rv 1.10, Heb 4.9.
5. Ez 22.26, Nm 15.37-38,40.
6. Neh 9.14.
7. Ex 34.21.
8. Dt 5.14-15, Am 8.5, Nm 15.37-38,40.
9. Lam 1.7, Jer 17.21-23, Neh 13.15-23.

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Q. 122. What is the essence of the six commandments that cover our obligations to fellow human beings?

A. The essence of these six commandments is to love your neighbor as yourself¹ and to do to others what you would have them do to you.²

1. Mt 22.39.
2. Mt 7.12.

Q. 123. What is the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment is: *Honor your father and your mother so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.*¹

1. Ex 20.12.

Q. 124. To whom does father and mother refer in the fifth commandment?

A. *Father* and *mother* refer not just to our parents¹ but to everyone who is older² or more talented than we are,³ and specifically to those whom God has ordained to be over us in positions of authority, whether in our family,⁴ the church,⁵ or civil government.⁶

1. Prv 23.22,25, Eph 6.1-2.
2. 1 Tm 5.1-2.
3. Gn 4.20-22, 45.8.
4. 2 Kgs 5.13.
5. 2 Kgs 2.12, 13.14, Gal 4.19.
6. Is 49.23.

Q. 125. Why are those over us referred to as father and mother?

A. The terms *father* and *mother* remind those in authority that, like fathers and mothers, they are responsible for and should act in a loving and tender way, appropriately reflecting their particular relationship, toward those under them;¹ and those under them are also encouraged to accept their authority more willingly and cheerfully, as if they were their parents.²

1. Eph 6.4, 2 Cor 12.14, 1 Thes 2.7-8, 11, Nm 11.11-12,16.
2. 1 Cor 4.14-16, 2 Kgs 5.13.

Q. 126. What is the general scope of the fifth commandment?

A. In general, the fifth commandment outlines our obligations to others, depending upon our particular relationship to them, whether over, under, or equal to them.¹

1. Eph 5.21., 1 Pt 2.17, Rom 12.10.

Q. 127. What kind of honor is owed to those over us?

A. Those over us deserve respect in our hearts,¹ our words,² and our actions.³ We must pray and give thanks for them,⁴ emulate their virtues and gifts,⁵ willingly heed and obey their lawful commands and advice,⁶ submit to their correction,⁷ be faithful to them,⁸ and defend⁹ and support their persons and authority, as is appropriate to their rank and position.¹⁰ We must also tolerate their imperfections and infirmities and cover them with our love,¹¹ so that we will be an honor to them and to their authority.¹²

1. Mal 1.6, Lv 19.3.
2. Prv 31.28, 1 Pt 3.6.
3. Lv 19.32, 1 Kgs 2.19.
4. 1 Tm 2.1-2.

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5. Heb 13.7, Phil 3.17.
6. Eph 6.1-2,5-7, 1 Pt 2.13-14, Rom 13.1-6, Heb 13.17, Prv 4.3-4, 23.22, Ex 18.19,24.
7. Heb 12.9, 1 Pt 2.18-20.
8. Ti 2.9-10.
9. 1 Sm 26.15-16, 2 Sm 18.3, Est 6.2.
10. Mt 22.21, Rom 13.6-7, 1 Tm 5.17-18, Gal 6.6, Gn 45.11, 47.12.
11. 1 Pt 2.18, Prv 23.22, Gn 9.23.
12. Ps 127.3-5, Prv 31.23.

Q. 128. What are the particular sins against those in authority by those under them?

- A. The sins of those under authority against those over them are: any failure to perform what is required by them;¹ being envious of,² holding in contempt,³ or rebelling⁴ against their person⁵ or position⁶ as reflected in their lawful advice,⁷ commands, and correction;⁸ cursing at or making fun of them⁹ or any kind of stubborn resistance and disgraceful display that brings shame and dishonor to their person and authority.¹⁰

1. Mt 15.4-6.
2. Nm 11.28-29, Ps 106.16.
3. 1 Sm 8.7, Is 3.5.
4. 2 Sm 15.1-12.
5. Ex 21.15.
6. 1 Sm 10.27.
7. 1 Sm 2.25.
8. Dt 21.18-21.
9. Prv 30.11,17.
10. Prv 19.26.

Q. 129. What is required of those in authority towards those under them?

- A. As is appropriate to the position of power they have received from God and to the particular relationship involved, those in authority should love,¹ pray for,² and bless those under them.³ They should teach,⁴ advise, and warn them,⁵ approving,⁶ praising,⁷ and rewarding those that do well⁸ while disapproving,⁹ blaming, and punishing those who do wrong.¹⁰ They should also protect those under them¹¹ and provide the things they need for soul¹² and body.¹³ Those in authority should also be examples of serious, wise, and holy behavior so as to bring glory to God¹⁴ and honor to themselves¹⁵ and thereby maintain the authority God has bestowed on them.¹⁶

1. Col 3.19, Ti 2.4.
2. 1 Sm 12.23, Jb 1.5.
3. 1 Kgs 8.55-56, Heb 7.7, Gn 49.28.
4. Dt 6.6-7.
5. Eph 6.4.
6. 1 Pt 3.7.
7. 1 Pt 2.14, Rom 13.3.
8. Est 6.3.
9. Rom 13.3-4.
10. Prv 29.15, 1 Pt 2.14, Rom 13.4.
11. Jb 29.12-16, Is 1.10,17.
12. Eph 6.4.
13. 1 Tm 5.8.
14. 1 Tm 4.12., Ti 2.2-14.
15. 1 Kgs 3.28.
16. Ti 2.15.

Q. 130. What are the particular sins of those in authority?

- A. In addition to failing to do what is required of them¹ and using their position for self-aggrandizement² and for their own glory,³ ease, profit, or pleasure,⁴ the sins of those in authority include: commanding things that are unlawful⁵ or that cannot be accomplished by those under

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them;⁶ persuading,⁷ encouraging,⁸ and rewarding those under them for doing evil;⁹ dissuading, discouraging, and not rewarding them for doing good;¹⁰ excessive punishment;¹¹ carelessly exposing or allowing them to do wrong and to be put in the way of temptation or danger;¹² provoking them to anger;¹³ and anything that dishonors themselves or undermines their authority by being unjust, imprudent, too severe, or lax.¹⁴

1. Ez 34.2-4.
2. Phil 2.21.
3. Jn 5.44, 7.18.
4. Is 56.10-11, Dt 17.17.
5. Dn 3.4-6, Acts 4.17-18.
6. Ex 5.10-19, Mt 23.2,4.
7. Mt 14.8, Mk 6.24.
8. 2 Sm 13.28, Jer 5.30-31.
9. 1 Sm 3.13, Jer 6.13-14, Ez 13.9-10.
10. Jn 7.46-49, 9.28, Col 3.21, Ex 5.17.
11. 1 Pt 2.18-20, Heb 12.10, Dt 25.3.
12. Gn 38.11,26, Acts 18.17, Lv 19.29, Is 58.7.
13. Eph 6.4.
14. Gn 9.21, 1 Kgs 12.13-16, 1.6, 1 Sm 2.29-31, 3.13.

Q. 131. What is required of equals?

A. Equals are required to pay attention to the dignity and worth of each other¹ by honoring each other above themselves² and by rejoicing in each others' gifts and success as if their own.³

1. 1 Pt 2.17.
2. Rom 12.10, Phil 2.3.
3. Rom 12.15-16, Phil 2.3-4.

Q. 132. What are the particular sins of equals?

A. In addition to failing to do what is required of them,¹ the sins of equals include undervaluing the worth of each other,² envying their gifts,³ grieving over their success or prosperity,⁴ and trying to lord it over them.⁵

1. Rom 13.8.
2. 2 Tm 3.3, Prv 14.21, Is 65.5.
3. Acts 7.9, Gal 5.26.
4. Nm 12.2, Est 6.12-13, 1 Jn 3.12, Mt 20.15, Lk 15.28-29.
5. 3 Jn 9, Lk 22.24-26, Mt 20.25-27.

Q. 133. What reason is added to the fifth commandment emphasizing how important it is to obey it?

A. The reason added to the fifth commandment is in these words: *so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.*¹ These words expressly promise long life and prosperity to all who keep this commandment, if these glorify God and are for their good.²

1. Ex 20.12.
2. Dt 5.16, 1 Kgs 8.25, Eph 6.2-3.

Q. 134. What is the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment is: *You shall not murder.*¹

1. Ex 20.13.

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Q. 135. What does the sixth commandment require?

A. The sixth commandment requires us to do our best to make every lawful effort to preserve our own life¹ and the lives of others.² We do this by not thinking about or planning,³ by controlling our emotions,⁴ and by avoiding all opportunities,⁵ temptations,⁶ or actions that would promote or lead to the unjust taking of someone's life.⁷ In the pursuit of that goal, we must defend others from violence,⁸ patiently endure the afflictions from God's hand,⁹ have a quiet mind¹⁰ and a cheerful spirit,¹¹ practice temperance in the way we eat,¹² drink,¹³ take medications,¹⁴ sleep,¹⁵ work,¹⁶ and play.¹⁷ We should also harbor charitable thoughts,¹⁸ love,¹⁹ compassion,²⁰ meekness, gentleness, and kindness.²¹ Our speech and behavior should be peaceful,²² mild, and courteous.²³ We should be tolerant of others, be ready to be reconciled, patiently put up with and forgive injuries against us, and return good for evil.²⁴ Finally, we should provide aid and comfort to those in distress as well as protect and defend the innocent.²⁵

1. Eph 5.28-29, Mt 10.23.
2. 1 Kgs 18.4, Ps 82.4, Dt 22.8.
3. Jer 26.15-16, Acts 23.12,16-17,21,27, Mt 5.22.
4. Eph 4.26-27.
5. 2 Sm 2.22, Dt 22.8, Prv 22.24-25, 1 Sm 25.32-33.
6. Mt 4.6-7, Prv 1.10,11,15-16.
7. 1 Sm 24.12, 26.9-11, Gn 37.21-22, 1 Kgs 21.9-10,19.
8. Ps 82.4, Prv 24.11-12, 1 Sm 14.45.
9. Jas 5.7-11, Heb 12.5,9, Lk 21.19.
10. 1 Thes 4.11, 1 Pt 3.3-4, Ps 37.8,11.
11. Prv 17.22, 1 Thes 5.16.
12. Prv 25.16,27, 23.20.
13. 1 Tm 5.23, Prv 23.29-30.
14. Is 38.21, Mt 9.12.
15. Ps 127.2.
16. Eccl 5.12, 2 Thes 3.10,12, Prv 16.26.
17. Eccl 3.4,11, Mk 6.31, 1 Tm 4.8.
18. 1 Sm 19.4-5, 22.13-14, 1 Cor 13.4-5.
19. Rom 13.10, Prv 10.12.
20. Lk 10.33-34, Zec 7.9.
21. Col 3.12-13.
22. Jas 3.17, Rom 12.18.
23. 1 Pt 3.8-11, Prv 15.1, Jgs 8.1-3, 1 Cor 4.12-13.
24. Mt 5.24, Eph 4.2,32, Rom 12.17,20-21, Col 3.13, Jas 3.17, 1 Pt 2.20.
25. 1 Thes 5.14, Jb 31.19-20, Mt 25.35-36, Prv 31.8-9, Is 58.7.

Q. 136. What particular sins does the sixth commandment forbid?

A. The sixth commandment forbids: taking our own¹ or anyone else's² life, except in the pursuit of public justice,³ lawful war,⁴ or necessary defense;⁵ neglecting or withholding the necessary means for the preservation of life;⁶ sinful anger,⁷ hatred,⁸ envy,⁹ or desire for revenge;¹⁰ all excessive emotions¹¹ and distracting anxieties;¹² intemperate eating, drinking,¹³ working,¹⁴ or playing;¹⁵ speaking in a provocative way,¹⁶ oppressing,¹⁷ quarreling with,¹⁸ hitting, or wounding others,¹⁹ and anything else conducive to the destruction of anyone's life.²⁰

1. Acts 16.28, Prv 1.18.
2. Gn 9.6.
3. Nm 35.31,33, Ex 21.14.
4. Jer 48.10, Dt 20.1, Heb 11.32-34.
5. Ex 22.2-3.
6. Mt 25.42-43, Jas 2.15-16, Eccl 6.1-2.
7. Mt 5.22.
8. 1 Jn 3.15, Lv 19.17, Prv 10.12.
9. Prv 14.30.

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10. Rom 12.19.
11. Eph 4.31, Jas 4.1.
12. Mt 6.31,34.
13. Lk 21.34, Rom 13.13.
14. Eccl 12.12, 2.22-23, Ex 20.9-10.
15. Is 5.12, 1 Pt 4.3-4.
16. Prv 15.1, 12.18.
17. Ez 18.18, Ex 1.14, Is 3.15.
18. Gal 5.15, Prv 23.29.
19. Nm 35.16-18, 21.
20. Ex 21.18-36, Prv 28.17

Q. 137. What is the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment is: *You shall not commit adultery.*¹

1. Ex 20.14.

Q. 138. What does the seventh commandment require?

A. The seventh commandment requires us to be sexually pure in body, mind, inclinations,¹ words,² and actions,³ and to maintain that purity in ourselves and others.⁴ We are to monitor what we look at as well as what we experience with our other senses;⁵ and we are to live temperately,⁶ keeping pure company⁷ and dressing modestly.⁸ Those who cannot control their sexual desires should marry,⁹ loving¹⁰ and living together with their spouses.¹¹ We should also work hard at whatever we are called to do,¹² avoiding all opportunities for indecency, and resisting any temptation to say, think, or do anything indecent or obscene.¹³

1. 1 Thes 4.4-5, Jb 31.1, 1 Cor 7.34.
2. Col 4.6, Eph 4.29.
3. 1 Pt 3.2.
4. 1 Cor 7.2,35-36, Ti 2.4-5.
5. Jb 31.1, Mt 5.28.
6. Acts 24.24-25, Prv 23.31, 33, Jer 5.7.
7. Prv 2.16-20, 1 Cor 5.9.
8. 1 Tm 2.9.
9. 1 Cor 7.2,9.
10. Prv 5.18-20.
11. 1 Pt 3.7, 1 Cor 7.5.
12. Prv 31.11,27-28, 1 Tm 5.13-14.
13. Prv 5.8, Gn 39.8-10.

Q. 139. What particular sins does the seventh commandment forbid?

A. In addition to failing to do what is required,¹ the seventh commandment forbids: adultery, fornication,² rape, incest,³ sodomy, and all unnatural desires;⁴ all impure imaginations, thoughts, purposes, and inclinations;⁵ all corrupt and nasty talk or listening to such,⁶ lewd looks,⁷ shameless or frivolous behavior, and immodest dress;⁸ prohibiting lawful marriages⁹ and allowing unlawful ones;¹⁰ condoning, tolerating, or organizing prostitution and visiting prostitutes;¹¹ restrictive vows of celibacy,¹² unnecessary delays in marrying,¹³ having more than one wife or husband at the same time;¹⁴ unjust divorce¹⁵ or desertion;¹⁶ idleness, gluttony, drunkenness,¹⁷ and keeping impure company;¹⁸ obscene or pornographic songs, books, pictures, dancing, or theatrical presentations;¹⁹ and all other encouragement to or indulgence in impure activities by us or others.²⁰

1. Prv 5.7, 4.23,27.
2. Heb 13.4, Gal 5.19, Eph 5.5.
3. 2 Sm 13.14, 1 Cor 5.1,13, Mk 6.18.
4. Rom 1.24,26-27, Lv 20.15-16.

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5. Mt 5.28, 15.19, Col 3.5.
6. Eph 5.3-4, Prv 7.5,21-22, 19.27.
7. Is 3.16, 2 Pt 2.14.
8. Prv 7.10,13.
9. 1 Tm 4.3.
10. Lv 18.1-21, Mk 6.18, Mal 2.11-12.
11. 1 Kgs 15.12, 2 Kgs 23.7, Dt 23.17-18, Lv 19.29, Jer 5.7, Prv 7.24-27.
12. Mt 19.10-12.
13. 1 Cor 7.7-9, Gn 38.26, 1 Tm 5.14-15.
14. Mal 2.14-15, Mt 19.5, 1 Cor 7.2.
15. Mal 2.16, Mt 5.32.
16. 1 Cor 7.12-13. See citations under Q. 138
17. Ez 16.49, Prv 23.30-33, Jer 5.7.
18. Gn 39.10, Prv 5.8, Eph 5.11.
19. Eph 5.4, Ez 23.14-16, Is 23.15-17, 3.16, Mk 6.22, Rom 13.13, 1 Pt 4.3.
20. 2 Kgs 9.30, Jer 4.30, Ez 23.40, Rom 13.14, 2 Pt 2.17-18.

Q. 140. What is the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment is: *You shall not steal.*¹

1. Ex 20.15.

Q. 141. What does the eighth commandment require?

A. The eighth commandment requires us to act truthfully, faithfully, and justly in our contractual and business relationships with our fellow human beings so that we give to all what they deserve.¹ We are to make restitution for anything we have unlawfully acquired from its rightful owner;² we should give and lend freely, according to our ability and the needs of others;³ we must moderate our judgment, will, and inclinations about worldly goods;⁴ we must exercise prudence in the acquisition,⁵ maintenance, use, and disposition of the things that we need and are appropriate to sustain us humanly and that match our condition in life;⁶ we should find something lawful to do in life⁷ and work hard at it;⁸ we should be frugal;⁹ and we should avoid unnecessary lawsuits¹⁰ and should not become liable by putting up security for others or by similar commitments.¹¹ Finally, we must do our best, by all just and lawful means, to acquire, preserve, and increase our own and others' money and possessions.¹²

1. Ps 15.2,4, Mi 6.8, Zec 7.4,10, 8.16-17, Rom 13.7.
2. Lv 6.2-5, Lk 19.8.
3. Lk 6.30,38, Eph 4.28, Gal 6.10, Dt 15.7-8, 10.
4. 1 Tm 6.6-9, Gal 6.14.
5. 1 Tm 5.8.
6. Prv 27.23-27, Eccl 2.24, 3.12-13, 1 Tm 6.17-18, Is 38.1, Mt 11.8.
7. 1 Cor 7.20, Gn 2.15, 3.19, Eph 4.28, Rom 12.5-8.
8. Eph 4.28, Prv 10.4, Rom 12.11.
9. Jn 6.12, Prv 21.20, 12.27.
10. 1 Cor 6.1-9.
11. Prv 6.1-6, 11.15.
12. Lv 25.35, Dt 22.1-4, Ex23.4-5, Gn 47.14,20, Phil 2.4, Mt 22.39.

Q. 142. What particular sins does the eighth commandment forbid?

A. In addition to failing to do what is required,¹ the eighth commandment forbids: theft,² robbery,³ kidnapping,⁴ and receiving stolen goods;⁵ fraud,⁶ dishonest scales or measures,⁷ removing boundary markers,⁸ injustice or bad faith in our contractual relationships⁹ or trust agreements;¹⁰ oppression,¹¹ extortion,¹² usury,¹³ bribery,¹⁴ harassing lawsuits,¹⁵ and unjust expropriation and dispossession of others' land;¹⁶ hoarding goods to increase their price,¹⁷ illegal work or activities,¹⁸ and all other unjust or sinful ways of taking, withholding, or enriching ourselves from what belongs to others;¹⁹ avarice;²⁰ excessive attachment to or display of our worldly goods;²¹

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allowing ourselves to become distracted from trusting God in the way that we acquire, maintain, and use worldly goods;²² envying the prosperity of others;²³ and also laziness,²⁴ extravagance, wasteful gambling, and all the other ways that needlessly jeopardize our money and possessions²⁵ and defraud ourselves of the use and comfort of the things God has given us.²⁶

1. Jas 2.15-16, 1 Jn 3.17, Prv 23.21.
2. Eph 4.28.
3. Ps 62.10.
4. 1 Tm 1.10, Ex 21.16.
5. Prv 29.24, Ps 50.18.
6. 1 Thes 4.6.
7. Prv 11.1, 20.10.
8. Dt 19.14, Prv 23.10.
9. Am 8.5, Ps 37.21.
10. Lk 16.10-12.
11. Ez 22.29, Lv 25.17.
12. Mt 23.25, Ez 22.12.
13. Ps 15.5.
14. Jb 15.34, Is 33.15.
15. 1 Cor 6.6-8, Prv 3.29-30.
16. Is 5.8, Mi 2.2.
17. Prv 11.26.
18. Acts 19.19,24-25.
19. Jb 20.19, Jas 5.4, Prv 21.6.
20. Lk 12.15, Prv 1.19.
21. 1 Tm 6.5, Col 3.2, Prv 23.5, Ps 62.10, 1 Jn 2.15-16.
22. Mt 6.25,31,34, Eccl 5.12.
23. Ps 73.3, 37.1,7, Jas 5.9.
24. 2 Thes 3.11, Prv 18.9.
25. Prv 21.17, 23.20-21, 28.19.
26. Eccl 4.8, 6.2, 1 Tm 5.8, Dt 12.7, 16.14.

Q. 143. What is the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment is: You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.¹

1. Ex 20.16.

Q. 144. What does the ninth commandment require?

A. The ninth commandment requires that we maintain and promote truthfulness in our dealings with each other¹ and the good reputation of others as well as ourselves.² We must come forward and stand up for the truth,³ speaking the truth and nothing but the truth from our hearts,⁴ sincerely,⁵ freely,⁶ clearly,⁷ and without equivocation,⁸ not only in all matters relating to the law and justice⁹ but in any and every circumstance whatsoever.¹⁰ We must have a charitable regard for others,¹¹ loving, desiring, and rejoicing in their good reputation¹² as well as regretting¹³ and putting the best light on their failings.¹⁴ We must freely acknowledge their talents and gifts,¹⁵ defending their innocence,¹⁶ readily receiving a good report about them¹⁷ and reluctantly admitting a bad one.¹⁸ We should discourage gossips,¹⁹ flatterers,²⁰ and slanderers;²¹ we should love and protect our own good reputation and defend it when necessary;²² we should keep every lawful promise we make no matter what;²³ and finally we should do the best we can to focus our lives and thoughts on things that are true, noble, lovely, and admirable.²⁴

1. Zec 8.16, Eph 4.25.
2. 3 Jn 12.
3. Prv 31.8-9.
4. Ps 15.2.
5. 2 Chr 19.9.
6. 1 Sm 19.4-5, Jer 9.3.

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7. Jos 7.19, Jer 42.4, Acts 20.20.
8. 2 Sm 14.18-20, Acts 20.27.
9. Lv 19.15, Prv 14.5,25.
10. 2 Cor 1.17-18, Eph 4.25, Is 63.8, Col 3.9.
11. Heb 6.9, 1 Cor 13.4-5,7.
12. Rom 1.8, 2 Jn 4, 3 Jn 3-4.
13. 2 Cor 2.4, 12.21, Ps 119.158.
14. Prv 17.9, 1 Pt 4.8.
15. 1 Cor 1.4-5,7, 2 Tm 1.4-5.
16. 1 Sm 22.14, Ps 82.3.
17. 1 Cor 13.4,6-7.
18. Ps 15.3.
19. Prv 25.23.
20. Prv 26.24-25.
21. Ps 101.5.
22. Prv 22.1, Jn 8.49, 2 Cor 11.18,23.
23. Ps 15.4.
24. Phil 4.8.

Q. 145. What particular sins does the ninth commandment forbid?

- A. The ninth commandment forbids everything detrimental to the truth and the good reputation of others as well as our own,¹ with special reference to legal matters in the courts.² We must not give untrue evidence,³ suborn perjury,⁴ knowingly appear and plead on behalf of an evil cause, or engage in overbearing and boastful exaggeration.⁵ We should never participate in passing an unjust sentence,⁶ call evil good or good evil, or reward the wicked in a way appropriate to the righteous or the righteous in a way appropriate to the wicked.⁷ Forgery is forbidden,⁸ as is concealing the truth, remaining silent in a just cause,⁹ and not taking it on ourselves to reprove¹⁰ or complain to others about some wrong.¹¹ We must not speak the truth at an inappropriate time,¹² or maliciously to promote a wrong purpose,¹³ nor pervert it into a wrong meaning,¹⁴ into ambiguous equivocations, or in such ways as to undermine truth and justice.¹⁵ Also forbidden are: saying anything untrue,¹⁶ as well as lying,¹⁷ slandering,¹⁸ backbiting,¹⁹ belittling,²⁰ gossiping,²¹ whispering,²² ridiculing,²³ reviling,²⁴ and expressing any kind of judgmental opinion that is rash,²⁵ harsh,²⁶ or prejudiced;²⁷ misconstruing intentions, words, and actions;²⁸ flattery²⁹ and ostentatious boasting;³⁰ thinking or speaking too highly or too poorly of ourselves or others;³¹ denying the gifts of God or the effects of his grace on us;³² exaggerating the significance of trivial faults;³³ concealing, excusing, or rationalizing our sinful behavior when we are called to confess it voluntarily;³⁴ gratuitously revealing the problems and failings of others;³⁵ spreading false rumors,³⁶ receiving and approving evil reports,³⁷ and refusing to listen to a just defense;³⁸ harboring evil suspicions;³⁹ being envious of or grieved by the deserved honors others receive,⁴⁰ trying to discredit those honors,⁴¹ and rejoicing at someone else's disgrace or evil reputation;⁴² scornful contempt⁴³ and foolish admiration;⁴⁴ breaking our lawful promises;⁴⁵ and, finally, failing to promote everyone's good name,⁴⁶ and doing, not avoiding, or not hindering in others, as we can, those things that give people a bad name.⁴⁷

1. 1 Sm 17.28, 2 Sm 16.3, 1.9,10,15-16, Lk 3.14.
2. Lv 19.15, Hb 1.4.
3. Prv 19.5, 6.16,19.
4. Acts 6.13.
5. Jer 9.3,5, Acts 24.2,5, Ps 12.3-4, 52.1-4.
6. Prv 17.15, 1 Kgs 21.9-14.
7. Is 5.23.
8. Ps 119.69, Lk 19.8, 16.5-7, 1 Kgs 21.8.
9. Lv 5.1, Dt 13.8, Acts 5.3,8-9, 2 Tm 4.6.
10. 1 Kgs 1.6, Lv 19.17, Is 58.1.
11. Is 59.4.
12. Prv 29.11.

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13. 1 Sm 22.9-10, Ps 52.1-5.
14. Ps 56.5, Jn 2.19, Mt 26.60-61.
15. Gn 3.5, 26.7,9.
16. Is 59.13.
17. Lv 19.11, Col 3.9.
18. Ps 50.20.
19. Ps 15.3, Rom 1.30.
20. Jas 4.11, Jer 38.4, Ti 3.2.
21. Lv 19.16.
22. Rom 1.29-30, Prv 16.28.
23. Gn 21.9, Gal 4.29, Is 28.22.
24. 1 Cor 6.10.
25. Mt 7.1.
26. Acts 28.4, Jas 2.13.
27. Gn 38.24, Rom 2.1, Jn 7.24.
28. Neh 6.6-8, Rom 3.8, Ps 69.10, 1 Sm 1.13-15, 2 Sm 10.3.
29. Ps 12.2-3.
30. 2 Tm 3.2.
31. Lk 18.9,11, Rom 12.16, 1 Cor 4.6, Acts 12.22, Ex 4.10-14.
32. Jb 27.5-6, 4.6, Gal 5.26.
33. Mt 7.3-5, Is 29.20-21.
34. Prv 28.13, 30.20, Gn 3.12-13, 4.9, Jer 2.35, 2 Kgs 5.25.
35. Gn 9.22, Prv 25.9-10.
36. Ex 23.1.
37. Prv 29.12, Jer 20.10.
38. Acts 7.56-57, Jb 31.13-14.
39. 1 Cor 13.4-5, 1 Tm 6.4.
40. Nm 11.29, Mt 21.15.
41. Ezr 4.12-13, Dn 6.3-4.
42. Jer 48.27.
43. Ps 35.15-16,21, Mt 27.28-29.
44. Jude 16, Acts 12.22, 1 Cor 3.21.
45. Rom 1.31, 2 Tm 3.3.
46. 1 Sm 2.24, 2 Sm 12.14.
47. 2 Sm 12.13-14, Prv 5.8-9, Phil 3.18-19, 2 Pt 2.2.

Q. 146. What is the tenth commandment?

A. The tenth commandment is: *You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.*¹

1. Ex 20.17.

Q. 147. What does the tenth commandment require?

A. The tenth commandment requires that we be so completely satisfied with our own status in life¹ and have such a proper, loving attitude toward others that we are naturally inclined to wish the best for them and all their possessions.²

1. Heb 13.5, 1 Tm 6.6.
2. Jb 31.29, Rom 12.15, Ps 122.7-9, 1 Tm 1.5, Est 10.3, 1 Cor 13.4-7, Phil 2.4.

Q. 148. What particular sins does the tenth commandment forbid?

A. The tenth commandment forbids any dissatisfaction with what belongs to us,¹ envy² and grief at the success of others,³ and all improper desire for anything that belongs to someone else.⁴

1. Kgs 21.4, Est 5.13, 1 Cor 10.10.
2. Gal 5.26, Jas 3.14,16.
3. Ps 112.9-10, Neh 2.10.
4. Rom 7.7-8, 13.9, Col 3.5, Dt 5.21.

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Q. 149. Can anyone perfectly keep the commandments of God?

A. No one can perfectly keep the commandments of God, either on his own¹ or from any divine gift received in this life,² but breaks them every day in thought,³ word, and action.⁴

1. Jas 3.2, Jn 15.5, Rom 8.3.
2. Eccl 7.20, 1 Jn 1.8-2.6, Gal 5.17, Rom 7.18-19, Ps 17.15, 1 Kgs 8.46.
3. Gn 6.5, 8.21, Jas 1.14, and citations under figure 2 above.
4. Rom 3.9-19, Jas 3.2-13, Ps 19.12.

Q. 150. Are all sins equally evil in themselves and in the eyes of God?

A. All sins are not equally evil; in the eyes of God, some of them are more evil in themselves and others because of the harm that results from them.¹

1. Jn 19.11, Ez 8.6,13,15, 1 Jn 5.16, Ps 78.17,32,56, Ezr 9.14, Heb 2.2-3.

Q. 151. What sins are more evil because of the harm that results from them?

A. Sins become more harmful:

1. From those who commit the sins:¹ if they are older,² have a longer experience of God's grace,³ are well-known for their faith,⁴ clearly know better,⁵ hold a prominent position⁶ or office,⁷ are teachers,⁸ and whose example will influence others.⁹

1. Jer 2.8.
2. Jb 32.7,9, Eccl 4.13.
3. 1 Kgs 11.4,9.
4. 2 Sm 12.14, 1 Cor 5.1.
5. Jas 4.17, Lk 12.47-48.
6. Jer 5.4-5, Jn 3.10.
7. 2 Sm 12.7-9, Ez 8.11-12.
8. Rom 2.17-24.
9. Gal 2.11-14, 2 Pt 2.2.

2. From those sinned against:¹⁰ if directly against God,¹¹ his attributes,¹² and worship;¹³ against Christ and his grace;¹⁴ against the Holy Spirit,¹⁵ his witness¹⁶ and work;¹⁷ against those above us, prominent men¹⁸ and especially those to whom we are related or owe allegiance;¹⁹ and against any fellow believer,²⁰ particularly those who are weaker in the faith,²¹ their souls or anyone else's,²² and the general good of everyone.²³

10. Mt 21.38-39, 1 Jn 5.10.
11. 1 Sm 2.25, Acts 5.4, Ps 51.4.
12. Rom 2.4.
13. Mal 1.8,14, 1 Cor 10.21-22.
14. Heb 2.2-3, 12.25, Jn 3.18,36.
15. Heb 10.29, Mt 12.31-32.
16. Eph 4.30.
17. Heb 6.4-6.
18. Jude 8, Num 12.8-9, Is 3.5.
19. Prv 30.17, 2 Cor 12.15, Ps 41.9, 55.12-15.
20. Zep 2.8,10-11, Mt 18.6, 1 Cor 6.8, Rv 17.6.
21. 1 Cor 8.11-12, Rom 14.13,15,21.
22. Ez 13.19, 1 Cor 8.12, Rev 18.12-13, Mt 23.15.
23. 1 Thes 2.15-16, Jos 22.20, Mt 23.34-38.

3. From the nature and quality of the sin:²⁴ if it is against the exact letter of the law,²⁵ breaks more than one commandment or includes many separate sins;²⁶ if it is not only planned in the heart, but is expressed in words and actions,²⁷ scandalizes others,²⁸ and cannot be made right;²⁹ if it is against the means of God's grace,³⁰ his mercy,³¹ or his judgments,³² against our natural

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understanding,³³ convictions of our conscience,³⁴ public or private warnings,³⁵ condemnation by the church,³⁶ and civil punishment;³⁷ and if it is against our own prayers, purposes, promises,³⁸ vows,³⁹ covenants,⁴⁰ and commitments to God or men⁴¹—if made deliberately,⁴² willfully,⁴³ presumptuously,⁴⁴ immodestly,⁴⁵ boastfully,⁴⁶ maliciously,⁴⁷ repeatedly,⁴⁸ obstinately,⁴⁹ with delight,⁵⁰ continually,⁵¹ or as a result of falling back into it after repenting from it.⁵²

24. Prv 6.30-35, Is 3.9.
25. Ezr 9.10-12, 1 Kgs 11.9-10, Ez 20.12-13.
26. Col 3.5, 1 Tm 6.10, Prv 5.8-12, 6.32-33, Jos 7.21.
27. Jas 1.14-15, Mt 5.22, Mi 2.1-2.
28. Mt 18.7, Rom 2.23-24.
29. Dt. 22.22,28-29, Prv 6.32-35, Mt 16.26.
30. Mt 11.21-24, Jn 15.22.
31. Is 1.2-3, Dt 32.6, Ezr 9.13-14.
32. Am 4.8-11, Jer 5.3.
33. Rom 1.20.
34. Rom 1.32, Dn 5.22, Ti 3.10-11.
35. Prv 29.1.
36. Ti 3.10, Mt 18.17.
37. Prv 27.22, 23.35, Rom 13.1-5.
38. Ps 78.34-37, Jer 2.20, 42.5-6, 20-22.
39. Eccl 5.4-6, Prv 20.25.
40. Lv 26.25, Jer 31.32.
41. Prv 2.17, Ez 17.18-19.
42. Ps 36.4.
43. Jer 6.16.
44. Nm 15.30, Ex 21.14, Jer 6.15.
45. Jer 3.3, Prv 7.13.
46. Ps 52.1.
47. 3 Jn 10, Ez 35.5-6.
48. Nm 14.22.
49. Zec 7.11-12.
50. Prv 2.14.
51. Is 57.17, Jer 9.3,5.
52. Jer 34.8-11, 2 Pt 2.20-22, Heb 6.4,6.

4. From circumstances of time⁵³ and place:⁵⁴ if on the Lord's day⁵⁵ or other times of divine worship,⁵⁶ or immediately before⁵⁷ or after these⁵⁸ or other religious activities that help to prevent or be a remedy for such failures;⁵⁹ and if publicly or in the presence of others, who consequently may very well be aroused to or defiled by the sin.⁶⁰

53. 2 Kgs 5.26, Is 22.12-14.
54. Jer 7.10-11, Is 26.10.
55. Ez 23.37-39.
56. Is 58.3-5, Nm 25.6-7.
57. 1 Cor 11.20-21.
58. Jer 7.8-10, Prv 7.14-15, Jn 13.27,30.
59. Ezr 9.13-14, Neh 9.13-16, 2 Chr 36.15-16.
60. 2 Sm 16.22, 1 Sm 2.22-24, Is 3.9.

Q. 152. What does every sin deserve from God?

- A. Since even the least sin goes against the sovereignty,¹ goodness,² and holiness of God,³ and against his righteous law,⁴ every sin deserves God's wrath and curse,⁵ both in this life⁶ and the life to come,⁷ and cannot be expiated except by the blood of Christ.⁸

1. Jas 2.10-11, Mal 1.14.
2. Ex 20.1-2, Dt 32.6.
3. Hb 1.13, Lv 10.3, 11.44-45, 1 Pt 1.15-16.
4. 1 Jn 3.4, Rom 7.12.
5. Eph 5.6, Gal 3.10.

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6. Lam 3.39, Dt 28.15-29, Prv 13.21.
7. Mt 25.41, Rom 6.21,23.
8. Heb 9.22, 1 Pt 1.18-19, 1 Jn 1.7.

Q. 153. What does God require from us to escape his wrath and curse, which we deserve for our sin?

A. To escape God's wrath and curse, which we deserve for our sin, God requires from us repentance in relationship to God and faith in our relationship to our Lord Jesus Christ,¹ along with diligent involvement in all the external ways Christ uses to bring us the benefits of his mediation.²

1. Acts 20.21, 16.30-31, Mt 3.7-8, Lk 13.3,5, Jn 3.16,18, Mk 1.15.
2. Prv 2.1-5, 8.33-36, Mt 28.19-20, Acts 2.42,46, 1 Tm 4.16, 1 Cor 1.21, Eph 5.19-20, 6.17-18.

Q. 154. What are the external ways Christ uses to bring us the benefits of his mediation?

A. The ordinary external ways Christ uses to bring the benefits of his mediation to his church are his regulations, particularly the word, sacraments, and prayer, all of which are made effective for the salvation of his chosen ones.¹

1. Mt 28.19-20, Acts 2.42,46-47, 1 Tm 4.16, 1 Cor 1.21, Eph 5.19-20, 6.17-18.

Q. 155. What makes the word effective for salvation?

A. The Spirit of God causes the reading and especially the preaching of the word to enlighten,¹ convince, and humble sinners.² The Spirit drives sinners out of themselves and draws them to Christ;³ he conforms them to his image⁴ and subdues them to his will;⁵ he strengthens them against temptations and corrupting influences;⁶ and he builds them up in God's grace⁷ and establishes their hearts in holiness and comfort through faith to salvation.⁸

1. Neh 8.8, Acts 26.18, 17.11-12, Ps 19.8.
2. 1 Cor 14.24-25, 2 Chr 34.18-19, 26-28, Jer 23.28-29, Heb 4.12.
3. Acts 2.37,41, 8.27-39.
4. 2 Cor 3.18, Col 1.27.
5. 2 Cor 10.4-6, Rom 6.17.
6. Mt 4.4,7,10, Eph 6.16-17, Ps 19.11, 1 Cor 10.11, Col 1.28.
7. Acts 20.32, 2 Tm 3.15-17, Eph 4.11-12, 1 Cor 3.9-11.
8. Rom 16.25, 1 Thes 3.2, 10-11, 13, Rom 15.4, 10.13-17, 1.16.

Q. 156. Should everyone read the word of God?

A. Although everyone is not allowed to read the word publicly in church,¹ all people must read it privately on their own² and with their families.³ In order for this to happen, the Bible has to be translated out of the original Hebrew and Greek into contemporary languages.⁴

1. Dt 31.9, 11-13, Neh 8.2-3, 9.3-5.
2. Dt 17.18-19, Rv 1.3, Jn 5.39, Is 34.16.
3. Dt 6.6-9, Gn 18.17,19, Ps 78.5-7.
4. 1 Cor 14.6, 9, 11-12,15-16,18-19,24,27-28.

Q. 157. How should the word of God be read?

A. We must read the Bible with high and reverent esteem,¹ being absolutely convinced that it is truly God's word² and that only he can enable us to understand it.³ We should read with a desire to know, believe, and obey his will as revealed in the Bible.⁴ We should pay careful attention⁵ to its content and the extent of its meaning,⁶ meditate on it,⁷ apply it to our lives,⁸ deny ourselves under its direction,⁹ and use it as a basis for our prayers.¹⁰

1. Ps 19.10, 119.97, Neh 8.3-6, 10, Ex 24.7, 2 Chr 34.27, Is 66.2.
2. 2 Pt 1.16-21, 1 Thes 2.13.

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3. Lk 24.44-48 2 Cor 3.13-16, Ps 119.18.
4. Dt 17.10,20, Jas 1.21-22, 1 Pt 2.2, Mk 4.20.
5. Acts 17.11, Dt 11.13.
6. Acts 8.30,34, Lk 10.26-28, Mt 13.23.
7. Ps 1.2, 119.97.
8. 2 Chr 34.21, Acts 2.38-39, 2 Sm 12.7.
9. Prv 3.5, Dt 33.3, Gal 1.15.
10. Prv 2.1-6, Ps 119.18, Neh 7.6,8, Lk 24.45.

Q. 158. Who should preach the word of God?

- A. The word of God should be preached only by those who are sufficiently gifted¹ and who are properly approved and called to do it.²

1. 1 Tm 3.2,6, 2 Tm 2.2, Eph 4.8-11, Hos 4.6, Mal 2.7, 2 Cor 3.6.
2. Jer 14.15, Rom 10.15, Heb 5.4, 1 Cor 12.28-29, 1 Tm 3.10, 4.14, 5.22.

Q. 159. How should those who are called preach the word of God?

- A. Those who are called to labor in the ministry of the word should preach sound doctrine,¹ accurately,² in season and out of season,³ clearly,⁴ and not with seductive words of human wisdom but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power.⁵ They should faithfully⁶ and fully express the whole counsel of God;⁷ this should be done wisely,⁸ taking into account the needs and capabilities of the audience.⁹ Their preaching should be motivated by a zealous¹⁰ and fervent love for God¹¹ and the souls of his people.¹² Finally, it should be done sincerely,¹³ aiming to glorify God¹⁴ and to convert,¹⁵ edify,¹⁶ and save¹⁷ his people.

1. Ti 2.1,8.
2. Acts 18.25.
3. 2 Tm 4.2.
4. 1 Cor 14.9, 19.
5. 1 Cor 2.4.
6. Jer 23.28, 1 Cor 4.1-2, Mt 24.45-47.
7. Acts 20.27.
8. Col 1.28, 2 Tm 2.15.
9. 1 Cor 3.2, Heb 5.12-14, Lk 12.42, 1 Thes 2.7.
10. Acts 18.25, 2 Tm 4.5.
11. 2 Cor 5.13-14, Phil 1.15-17.
12. Col 4.12, 2 Cor 12.15, 5.13, Phil 1.15-17, 1 Thes 3.12.
13. 2 Cor 2.17, 4.2.
14. 1 Thes 2.4-6, Jn 7.18.
15. 1 Cor 9.19-22.
16. 2 Cor 12.19, Eph 4.12.
17. 1 Tm 4.16, 2 Tm 2.10, Acts 26.16-18.

Q. 160. What is required of those who hear the word preached?

- A. Those who hear the word preached must pay careful attention to it,¹ prepare themselves² and pray for understanding.³ They should review carefully what they hear through the Bible⁴ and accept the truths in it faithfully,⁵ lovingly,⁶ humbly,⁷ and with a ready mind,⁸ treating it as it is, the word of God.⁹ They should meditate on it,¹⁰ talk about it,¹¹ hide it in their hearts,¹² and bring forth the fruit of it in their lives.¹³

1. Prv 8.34, Ps 84.1-2,4, 27.4.
2. 1 Pt 2.1-2, Lk 8.18, Jas 1.21.
3. Ps 119.18, Eph 6.18-19.
4. Acts 17.11.
5. Heb 4.2.
6. 2 Thes 2.10.
7. Jas 1.21, Ps 25.9.

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8. Acts 17.11, 2.41.
9. 1 Thes 2.13.
10. Lk 9.44, Heb 2.1.
11. Lk 24.14, Dt 6.6-7.
12. Prv 2.1-5, Ps 119.11.
13. Lk 8.15, Jas 1.25.

Q. 161. How do the sacraments become effective means of salvation?

A. The sacraments become effective means of salvation, not by any power in them or by any inherent potency coming from the devoutness or the intention of whoever administers them, but rather by the working of the Holy Spirit and the blessing of Christ, who established them.¹

1. 1 Pt 3.21, Acts 8.13,23, 1 Cor 3.6-7, 6.11, 12.13.

Q. 162. What is a sacrament?

A. A sacrament is a holy regulation established by Christ in his church¹ as a sign, seal, and outward display² to those within the covenant of grace³ of the benefits they have from Christ's mediation.⁴ It serves to strengthen and increase their faith and all other graces in them;⁵ it obliges them to obey God⁶ and to witness to and cherish their love and fellowship with each other;⁷ and it distinguishes them from those outside the covenant.⁸

1. Gn 17.7,10, Ex 12, Mt 28.19, 26.26-28.
2. Rom 4.11, 1 Cor 11.24-25.
3. Rom 9.8, 15.8, Ex 12.48, Gal 3.27,29, 5.6, 6.15.
4. Acts 2.38, 22.16, 1 Cor 10.16.
5. Rom 4.11, Gal 3.27, 1 Cor 11.24-26.
6. Rom 6.3-4, 1 Cor 10.21.
7. Eph 4.2-5, 1 Cor 10.17, 12.13.
8. Eph 2.11-12, Gn 34.14, 1 Cor 10.21.

Q. 163. What are the parts of the sacrament?

A. There are two parts of the sacrament. One is the external, physical sign used according to Christ's own directions. The other is the internal, spiritual grace signified by the external use.¹

1. Gn 17.10, Mt 3.11, 26.27-28, 1 Pt 3.21, Rom 2.28-29, Ti 3.5.

Q. 164. How many sacraments has Christ established in his church under the New Testament?

A. Under the New Testament, Christ has established in the church only two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper.¹

1. Mt 28.19, 1 Cor 11.20, 23-26, Mt 26.26-28.

Q. 165. What is baptism?

A. Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament in which Christ has ordained washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit¹ as a sign and seal of our being joined to Christ,² of the remission of our sins through his blood,³ of rebirth by his Spirit,⁴ of adoption,⁵ and resurrection unto everlasting life;⁶ and it is the means of solemnly admitting those baptized into the visible church⁷ and of their making a public commitment that they belong completely and only to the Lord.⁸

1. Mt 28.19.
2. Gal 3.27, Rom 6.3.
3. Mk 1.4, Rv 1.5, Acts 22.16.
4. Ti 3.5, Eph 5.26, Jn 3.5.
5. Gal 3.26-27.

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6. 1 Cor 15.29, Rom 6.5.
7. 1 Cor 12.13, Acts 2.41.
8. Rom 6.4.

Q. 166. Who should be baptized?

- A. Those who are not members of the visible church and so are not included in the covenant of promise should not be baptized until they profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him.¹ However, the infants of one or both parents who do profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him are by that relationship included in the covenant and should be baptized.²

1. Acts 8.36-37, 2.38,41.
2. Gn 17.7-9, Gal 3.9,14,17-18,29, Col 2.11-12, Acts 2.38-39, 1 Cor 2.11-12, 7.14, Mt 28.19, Lk 18.15-16, Rom 4.11-12, 11.16.

Q. 167. How do we continue to use our baptism?

- A. We have a necessary but frequently neglected obligation to use our baptism our whole lives, particularly in times of temptation and when we are present at the baptism of others.¹ We should seriously and thankfully reflect on what is involved in baptism, why Christ established it, the privileges and benefits conferred and sealed by it, and the significance of our own solemn vows when we were baptized.² This reflection humbles us when we recognize how defiled we are by sin and how far short we fall of living up to, and indeed walk so contrary to the standards set by the grace of baptism and by our other spiritual commitments.³ We are also assured of pardon from sin and of all the other blessings sealed in that sacrament.⁴ We draw strength from the death and resurrection of Christ, into whom we were baptized, in order to keep killing our sins and becoming alive by his grace.⁵ We are also spurred on to try to live by faith,⁶ to have our human relationships defined by holiness and righteousness,⁷ as is proper for those who have given up their names to Christ,⁸ and to walk with each other in brotherly love, as is proper for those baptized by the same Spirit into one body.⁹

1. Col 2.11-12, Rom 6.4, 6, 11, Ps 22.10-11.
2. Rom 6.3-5.
3. 1 Cor 1.11-13, Rom 6.2-3.
4. Rom 4.11-12, 1 Pt 3.21.
5. Rom 6.2-5.
6. Gal 3.26-27.
7. Rom 6.22.
8. Acts 2.38.
9. 1 Cor 12.13,25-27.

Q. 168. What is the Lord's supper?

- A. The Lord's supper is a sacrament of the New Testament¹ in which bread and wine are given and received as Christ directed to proclaim his death. Those who receive the Lord's supper in the right way feed on his body and blood and thereby are spiritually nourished and grow in grace.² They have their union and communion with Christ confirmed,³ and they publicly witness to and repeat anew their thankfulness⁴ and commitment to God⁵ and their mutual love and fellowship with each other, as members of the same mystical body.⁶

1. Lk 22.20.
2. Mt 26.26-28, 1 Cor 11.23-27.
3. 1 Cor 10.16.
4. 1 Cor 11.24.
5. 1 Cor 10.14-16, 21.
6. 1 Cor 10.17.

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Q. 169. What are Christ's directions for giving and receiving the bread and wine in the sacrament of the Lord's supper?

A. Christ has directed ministers of his word to administer the sacrament of the Lord's supper. First, they should set apart the bread and wine from their ordinary use by the biblical declaration, thanksgiving, and prayer. Then they take the bread, break it, and give both it and the wine to the communicants, who, according to the same directions, are to eat the bread and drink the wine, thankfully remembering that the body of Christ was broken and given, and his blood shed, for them.¹

1. See General Note; 1 Cor 11.23-24, Mt 26.26-28, Mk 14.22-24, Lk 22.19-20.

Q. 170. How do those who receive the Lord's supper in the right way feed on the body and blood of Christ?

A. The body and blood of Christ are not present in bodily or physical form, either in, with, or under the bread and wine in the Lord's supper.¹ They are, however, spiritually present to the faith of the recipient just as truly as the external elements are obvious to the senses.² And so those who receive the Lord's supper in the right way do truly and actually feed on the body and blood of Christ, not in a bodily or physical way, but spiritually,³ while by faith they receive and apply to themselves Christ crucified, along with all the benefits of his death.⁴

1. Acts 3.21.

2. Mt 26.26,28, Gal 3.1, Heb 11.1.

3. 1 Cor 11.24-29, Jn 6.51,53.

4. 1 Cor 10.16.

Q. 171. How do we prepare to receive the Lord's supper?

A. Preparation for the Lord's supper involves careful examination:¹ of the condition of our life in Christ;² of our sins and failings;³ of whether we truly and to what degree know God,⁴ believe in him,⁵ and have repented,⁶ and of whether we love God and our fellow believers.⁷ We should have a charitable attitude toward everyone,⁸ including forgiveness of those who have wronged us.⁹ We must also assess how much we desire Christ¹⁰ and whether we are living in newness of obedience.¹¹ Finally we must renew the practice of these graces in us¹² by serious meditation¹³ and fervent prayer.¹⁴

1. 1 Cor 11.28.

2. 2 Cor 13.5.

3. 1 Cor 5.7, Ex 12.15.

4. 1 Cor 11.29.

5. 2 Cor 13.5, Mt 26.28.

6. Zec 12.10, 1 Cor 11.31.

7. 1 Cor 10.16-17, Acts 2.46-47.

8. 1 Cor 5.8, 11.18,20.

9. Mt 5.23-24.

10. Is 55.1, Jn 7.37, Lk 1.53.

11. 1 Cor 5.7-8.

12. 1 Cor 11.25-26, 28, Heb 10.21-22,24, Ps 26.6.

13. 1 Cor 11.24-25.

14. 2 Chr 30.18-19, Mt 26.26.

Q. 172. Should those who have doubts about their being in Christ or about whether they are ready to take communion come to the Lord's supper anyway?

A. Those who have doubts about their position in Christ or about their readiness to take communion may nonetheless have a valid interest in Christ, even though they are not yet assured of being in

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him.¹ In God's view, if such people are aware of and grieved by their lack of assurance,² sincerely want to be found in Christ,³ and want to get away from sinning,⁴ and (since promises are involved in the sacrament, and it has been established to aid even weak and doubting Christians⁵) if people in that condition are truly sorry for their lack of faith⁶ and work hard to resolve their doubts,⁷ they may and ought to come to the Lord's supper, so that their faith may be further strengthened.⁸

1. Is 50.10, 1 Jn 5.13, Ps 88, 77.1-12, Jon 2.4,7.
2. Is 54.7-10, Mt 5.3-4, Ps 31.22, 73.13, 22-23.
3. Phil 3.8-9, Ps 10.17, 42.1-2, 5, 11.
4. 2 Tm 2.19, Is 50.10, Ps 66.18-20, Rom 7.24-25.
5. Is 40.11,29,31, Mt 11.28, 12.20, 26.28.
6. Mk 9.24.
7. Acts 2.37, 9.6, 16.30.
8. Rom 4.11, 1 Cor 11.28, Mt 11.28.

Q. 173. Should the Lord's supper be withheld from anyone who professes the faith and wants to come to it?

A. The sacrament should and must be withheld by the authority Christ has left in his church from those whose profession of faith is based on spiritual ignorance or whose lives have scandalized the church,¹ until they are properly instructed and demonstrate by their behavior that they have reformed their lives.²

1. 1 Cor 11.27-31 compared with Mt 7.6, 1 Cor 5, Jude 23, and 1 Tm 5.22.
2. 2 Cor 2.5-8, 1 Cor 5.4-5.

Q. 174. How must we receive the Lord's supper when it is offered?

A. In receiving the Lord's supper when it is offered, we should reverently and attentively wait on God,¹ as we carefully observe the sacramental elements and their administration.² We should take specific notice of the Lord's body³ and meditate feelingly on his death and suffering⁴ and so stir up in us a lively effect of God's spiritual gifts.⁵ We should critically examine ourselves⁶ and be sorry for our sins.⁷ We should earnestly hunger and thirst after Christ,⁸ feeding on him by faith,⁹ drawing from his fullness,¹⁰ trusting in his merit,¹¹ rejoicing in his love,¹² and giving thanks for his grace.¹³ We thereby renew our covenant with God¹⁴ and our love for fellow believers.¹⁵

1. Lv 10.3, Heb 12.28, Ps 5.7, 1 Cor 11.17, 26-27.
2. Ex 24.8, Mt 26.28, Gal 3.1.
3. 1 Cor 11.29.
4. Lk 22.19.
5. 1 Cor 11.26, 10.3-5, 11, 14.
6. 1 Cor 11.31.
7. Zec 12.10.
8. Rv 22.17, Ps 63.1-2.
9. Jn 6.35, Gal 2.20.
10. Jn 1.16, Col 1.19.
11. Phil 1.16, 3.9.
12. Ps 63.4-5, 2 Chr 30.21, 1 Pt 1.8.
13. Ps 22.26.
14. Jer 50.5, Ps 50.5.
15. Acts 2.42, 1 Cor 10.17.

Q. 175. What should we do after we have received the Lord's supper?

A. After receiving the Lord's supper, we should think about our participation in the sacrament and whether we got anything out of it.¹ If we have been spiritually renewed and comforted in that participation, we should bless God for it,² pray for the effect to continue,³ watch out for relapses,⁴ fulfill our vows,⁵ and be encouraged to take communion frequently.⁶ If, on the other hand, we

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have not received any immediate benefit from our participation, we should more carefully go over how we prepared for and participated in the sacrament.⁷ If this review reveals no fault in us before God and our own conscience, then we should wait for the spiritual fruit of participation to come to us in due time.⁸ However, if such a review finds us at fault in either preparing for or participating in the sacrament, we must humbly⁹ resolve to be more careful and diligent in the future.¹⁰

1. Ps 28.7, 85.8, 1 Cor 11.17, 30-31.
2. 2 Chr 30.21-23, 25-26, Acts 2.42, 46-47, 2 Cor 2.14.
3. Ps 36.10, Sg 3.4, 1 Chr 29.18.
4. 1 Cor 10.3-5, 12, Rom 11.20.
5. Ps 50.14.
6. 1 Cor 11.25-26, Acts 2.42,46, Ps 27.4.
7. Sg 5.1-6, Eccl 5.1-6, Ps 77.6, 139.23-24.
8. Ps 123.1-2, 42.5,8, 43.3-5, Is 8.17.
9. 2 Chr 30.18-19, Hos 14.2, 6.1-2.
10. 2 Cor 7.11, 1 Chr 15.12-14.

Q. 176. In what ways do the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper coincide?

- A. The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper coincide in that God is the author of both,¹ and the spiritual part of both is Christ and his benefits.² Both are also seals of the same covenant,³ are ordinarily to be administered by ministers of the gospel,⁴ and are to continue in Christ's church until the second coming.⁵

1. Mt 28.19, 1 Cor 11.23.
2. Rom 6.3-4, 1 Cor 10.16.
3. Rom 4.11, Col 2.11-12, Mt 26.27-28.
4. See General Note; Jn 1.33, Mt 28.19, 1 Cor 11.23, 4.1, Heb 5.4.
5. Mt 28.19-20, 1 Cor 11.26.

Q. 177. In what ways do the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper differ?

- A. The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper differ in that baptism is administered just once, with water, as a sign and seal of our rebirth and engrafting into Christ,¹ even for infants.² The Lord's supper, on the other hand, is to be administered repeatedly with the elements of bread and wine, to represent and display Christ as spiritual food for the soul³ and to confirm our continuing growth in him,⁴ and it is only for those who are old enough and capable of self-examination.⁵

1. Mt 3.11, Ti 3.5, Gal 3.27.
2. Gn 17.7-9, Acts 2.38-39, 1 Cor 7.14, Lk 18.16, Rom 11.16, Col 2.11-12, Gal 3.17-18, 29.
3. 1 Cor 11.23-26, Col 2.19.
4. 1 Cor 10.16, Jn 6.51-53.
5. 1 Cor 11.28-29.

Q. 178. What is prayer?

- A. Prayer is offering our desires to God¹ in the name of Christ² with the help of his Spirit,³ confessing our sins⁴ and thankfully recognizing his mercies.⁵

1. Ps 62.8.
2. Jn 16.23-24.
3. Rom 8.26.
4. Ps 32.5-6, Dn 9.4.
5. Phil 4.6.

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Q. 179. Should we pray only to God?

- A. God is the only one capable of searching human hearts,¹ the only one who hears requests,² pardons sins,³ and fulfills the desires of everyone,⁴ and he is the only one to be believed in⁵ and truly worshiped.⁶ Since prayer is an integral part of religious worship,⁷ it is to be made by everyone only to him⁸ and to no one else.⁹

1. 1 Kgs 8.39, Acts 1.24, Rom 8.27.
2. Ps 65.2.
3. Mi 7.18.
4. Ps 145.16, 18-19.
5. Rom 10.14, 2 Sm 22.32, Jn 14.1.
6. Mt 4.10.
7. 1 Cor 1.2.
8. Ps 50.15, Lk 4.8.
9. Rom 10.14, Is 42.8, Jer 3.23.

Q. 180. What is the significance of praying in Christ's name?

- A. When we pray in Christ's name, we obey his command and confidently rely on his promises as a basis for requesting mercy for his sake.¹ This involves not just mentioning his name² but drawing our encouragement to pray and our boldness, strength, and hope that our prayers will be answered from Christ himself and his mediation.³

1. Jn 14.13-14, 16.24, Dn 9.17.
2. Mt 7.21, Lk 6.46.
3. Heb 4.14-16, 1 Jn 5.13-15.

Q. 181. Why must we pray in Christ's name?

- A. Human sinfulness has so far separated us from God that we cannot gain access to his presence without a mediator to bridge that separation,¹ and since no one in heaven or earth has been appointed to or is fit for that glorious job except Christ alone,² we must pray in his name only and in no other.³

1. Jn 14.6, Is 59.2, Eph 3.12.
2. Jn 6.27, Heb 7.25-27, 1 Tm 2.5.
3. Col 3.17, Heb 13.15.

Q. 182. How does the Spirit help us to pray?

- A. Since we do not know what we ought to pray for, the Spirit helps our weakness by enabling us to understand for whom, for what, and how to pray. He works in and makes our hearts alive (although not in everyone, nor all the time, nor to the same degree) to grasp, feel, and experience the gifts that are needed to pray properly.¹

1. Rom 8.26-27, Ps 10.17, 80.18, Zec 12.10.

Q. 183. For whom should we pray?

- A. We should pray for the entire church of Christ on earth,¹ for civil authorities² and ministers,³ for ourselves⁴ and fellow believers,⁵ and, yes, for our enemies.⁶ We should pray for all humans who are alive,⁷ and those who are going to live in the future.⁸ But we should not pray for the dead⁹ or for those who are known to have sinned the sin that leads to death.¹⁰

1. Eph 6.18, Ps 28.9.
2. 1 Tm 2.1-2.
3. Col 4.3, 2 Thes 3.1.
4. Gn 32.11.

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5. Jas 5.16.
6. Mt 5.44.
7. 1 Tm 2.1-2.
8. Jn 17.20, 2 Sm 7.29.
9. 2 Sm 12.21-23. This statement is [also] based on the absence of any command to pray for the dead, and of any example in the Scriptures of such prayer.
10. 1 Jn 5.16.

Q. 184. For what should we pray?

A. We should pray for things that promote the glory of God,¹ the welfare of the church,² and our own³ or others' good,⁴ but not for anything that is unlawful.⁵

1. Mt 6.9.
2. Ps 51.18, 122.6.
3. Mt 7.11.
4. Ps 125.4, 1 Thes 5.23, 2 Thes 3.16.
5. 1 Jn 5.14, Jas 4.3.

Q. 185. How should we pray?

A. In prayer, we should approach God with a reverent awareness of his majesty¹ and a deep sense of our own unworthiness,² inadequacies,³ and sins.⁴ Our hearts should be filled with repentance,⁵ thanks,⁶ and confidence,⁷ and our prayers should be marked by understanding,⁸ faith,⁹ sincerity,¹⁰ fervor,¹¹ love,¹² and perseverance,¹³ while we wait on him¹⁴ and humbly submit to his will.¹⁵

1. Eccl 5.1, Ps 33.8, 95.6.
2. Gn 18.27, 32.10, Ps 144.3.
3. Lk 15.17-19, Ps 86.1.
4. Lk 18.13-14, Ps 130.3.
5. Ps 51.17, Zec 12.10-14.
6. Phil 4.6, 1 Thes 5.18.
7. 1 Sm 1.15, 2.1, Ps 81.10, Eph 3.20-21.
8. 1 Cor 14.15.
9. Mk 11.24, Jas 1.6, Heb 10.22.
10. Ps 145.18, 17.1, Heb 10.22, Jn 4.24.
11. Jas 5.16.
12. 1 Tm 2.8, Mt 5.23-24.
13. Eph 6.18.
14. Mi 7.7.
15. Mt 26.39.

Q. 186. How does God direct us to pray?

A. The whole word of God,¹ but especially the Lord's prayer, which our Savior Christ taught his disciples,² directs our prayers.

1. 1 Jn 5.14, 2 Tm 3.16-17.
2. Mt 6.9-13, Lk 11.2-4.

Q. 187. How should we use the Lord's prayer?

A. The Lord's prayer not only directs us as a model for our other prayers but may also be used as a prayer itself that will promote our understanding, faith, reverence, and the other gifts of God in us that are necessary for us to pray properly.¹

1. Mt 6.9 compared with Lk 11.2.

Q. 188. How many parts does the Lord's prayer have?

A. The Lord's prayer has three parts: an opening, individual requests, and a conclusion.

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Q. 189. What does the opening of the Lord's prayer teach us?

A. The opening of the Lord's prayer (*Our father in heaven*¹) teaches us that when we pray we should draw near to God, confident of his fatherly goodness and the benefits to us from that goodness,² reverently and in every way like a child,³ and with heavenly feelings⁴ and a proper awareness of his sovereign power, his majesty, and his graciousness in allowing us to approach him.⁵ The opening also teaches us to pray with and for others.⁶

1. Mt 6.9.
2. Lk 11.13, Rom 8.15.
3. Is 64.9, Ps 95.6-7.
4. Ps 123.1, Lam 3.41.
5. Is 63.15-16, Neh 1.4-6, Ps 104.1, 113.4-6.
6. Acts 12.5, Zec 8.21.

Q. 190. For what do we pray in the first request?

A. In the first request (*hallowed be your name*¹), we acknowledge that we and all human beings are completely incapable of honoring God properly and are even disinclined to do so.² We pray then that he would by his grace enable and incline us and others to know, to acknowledge, and to esteem him highly,³ his titles,⁴ attributes,⁵ regulations, word,⁶ works, and everything else by which he is pleased to reveal himself,⁷ and to glorify him in thought, word,⁸ and deed,⁹ to the effect that he would thwart and do away with atheism,¹⁰ spiritual ignorance,¹¹ idolatry¹² or any kind of desecration,¹³ and whatever else dishonors him,¹⁴ and that by his invincible providence, he would direct and regulate everything to his own glory.¹⁵

1. Mt 6.9.
2. 2 Cor 3.5, Ps 51.15.
3. Ps 67.2-3, 72.19, Eph 3.20-21.
4. Ps 83.18.
5. Ps 86.10-15, 145.6-8.
6. 2 Thes 3.1, Ps 107.32, 147.19-20, 138.1-3, 2 Cor 2.14-15.
7. Ps 145 and Ps 8.
8. Ps 103.1, 19.14.
9. Phil 1.9,11.
10. Ps 67.1-4, 79.10.
11. Eph 1.17-18.
12. Ps 97.7.
13. Ps 74.18, 22-23.
14. 2 Kgs 19.15-16, Jer 14.21.
15. 2 Chr 20.6, 10-12, Ps 83, 140.4,8, Is 64.1-2.

Q. 191. For what do we pray in the second request?

A. In the second request (*your kingdom come*¹), we acknowledge that we and all humans are by nature under the dominion of sin and Satan.² We pray then that the kingdom of sin and Satan be destroyed,³ that the gospel be preached throughout the whole world,⁴ that the Jews be converted,⁵ and that the full number of the Gentiles come in.⁶ We pray that the church would be supplied with evangelical officers and regulations,⁷ purged from corruption,⁸ and recognized and supported by the civil authorities.⁹ We pray for the regulations of Christ to be administered fully and that these regulations may effectively convert sinners, while confirming, comforting, and building up those who are already converted.¹⁰ And we pray that Christ would rule over our hearts in the here and now,¹¹ that he would hurry up and come again, when we shall reign with him forever,¹² and that he would be pleased so to rule over everything that goes on in the world as may best bring about all these results.¹³

1. Mt 6.10.

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2. Eph 2.2-3.
3. Ps 68.1,18, Rv 12.9-11.
4. 2 Thes 3.1.
5. Rom 10.1, Ps 67.2.
6. Jn 17.9,20, Rom 11.25-26, Ps 67.
7. Mt 9.38, 2 Thes 3.1.
8. Mal 1.11, Zep 3.9, Eph 5.26-27.
9. 1 Tm 2.1-2.
10. Acts 4.29-30, 26.18, Eph 6.18-20, Rom 15.29-30,32,2 Thes 1.11, 2.16-17, 2 Cor 4.2.
11. Eph 3.14-20.
12. Rv 22.20.
13. Is 64.1-2, Rv 4.8-11, 2 Chr 20.6, 10-12.

Q. 192. For what do we pray in the third request?

A. In the third request (*your will be done on earth as it is in heaven*¹), we acknowledge that we and all humans are by nature not only completely incapable of and unwilling to know and to do the will of God² but are actively prone to rebel against his word,³ to be unhappy with and complain about his providence,⁴ and are naturally inclined to follow our own selfish desires and the directions of Satan.⁵ We pray then that God would by his Spirit remove from us and others all spiritual blindness,⁶ weakness,⁷ indisposition to spiritual activities,⁸ and perverseness of heart,⁹ and that he would by his grace make us willing to know, do, and submit to his will in every circumstance,¹⁰ with the same kind of humility,¹¹ cheerfulness,¹² faithfulness,¹³ steadfastness,¹⁴ zeal,¹⁵ sincerity,¹⁶ and constancy¹⁷ that the angels have in heaven.¹⁸

1. Mt 6.10.
2. Rom 7.18, 8.5,8, Jb 21.14, 1 Cor 2.14.
3. Rom 8.7.
4. Ex 17.7, Nm 14.2, Mt 20.11-12, Ps 73.3.
5. Eph 2.2-3, Ti 3.3.
6. Eph 1.17-18.
7. Eph 3.16.
8. Mt 26.40-41, Rom 7.24-25.
9. Jer 31.18-19, Ez 11.19.
10. Ps 119.1, 8, 35-36, Acts 21.14, 1 Sm 3.18.
11. Mi 6.8, Ps 123.2, 131.2.
12. Ps 100.2, Jb 1.21, 2 Sm 15.25-26.
13. Is 38.3, Eph 6.6.
14. Ps 119.4-5.
15. Rom 12.11.
16. Ps 119.80, 2 Cor 1.12.
17. Ps 119.112, Rom 2.7.
18. Is 6.2-3, Ps 103.20-22, Mt 18.10, Dan 7.10.

Q. 193. For what do we pray in the fourth request?

A. In the fourth request (*Give us today our daily bread*¹), we acknowledge that in Adam and by our own sin we have forfeited any right to all of the outward blessings of this life, that we deserve to be completely deprived of them by God and to have their use by us cursed,² and that the outward blessings of this life are not in and of themselves capable of sustaining us,³ nor do we deserve⁴ or actually obtain them by our own efforts,⁵ but lust after,⁶ acquire,⁷ and use them in unlawful ways.⁸ We pray then for ourselves and others that both they and we may wait daily on God's providential allowance of the outward blessings of this life and that, according to what his fatherly wisdom decides is best, we may lawfully enjoy his free gift of what is sufficient for us.⁹ We also pray that God would continue to bless us with sufficient worldly goods, that they would sustain our needs and be sanctified by us,¹⁰ that we would be satisfied with them,¹¹ and that God would protect us from anything that undermines our support and sustenance in this world.¹²

1. Mt 6.11.

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2. Gn 2.17, 3.17, Rom 8.20-22, Jer 5.25, Dt 28.15-68, Lam 3.22.
3. Dt 8.3.
4. Gn 32.10.
5. Dt 8.17-18, Prv 10.22.
6. Jer 6.13, Mk 7.21-22, Lk 12.15.
7. Hos 12.7.
8. Jas 4.3.
9. Gn 43.12-14, 28.20-21, Eph 4.28, 2 Thes 3.11-12, Phil 4.6, Jas 4.13,15, Ps 90.17, 144.12-15.
10. 1 Tm 4.3-5, Prv 10.22.
11. 1 Tm 6.6-8.
12. Prv 30.8-9.

Q. 194. For what do we pray in the fifth request?

A. In the fifth request (*Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors*¹), we acknowledge that we and everyone else are guilty both of original sin and actual sins and are therefore debtors to God's justice, and that neither we nor any other created being can make the least satisfaction for that debt.² We pray then for ourselves and others that of his free grace and through the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, which is grasped and applied by faith, God would acquit us from the guilt and punishment of sin,³ accept us in the One he loves,⁴ continue his favor and grace to us,⁵ forgive our daily sins,⁶ and fill us with the peace and joy that come from the daily gift of growing assurance of being forgiven.⁷ We may more boldly make this request and be encouraged to expect to be forgiven, when and if we are assured in ourselves that we have genuinely, from the heart, forgiven others who have wronged us.⁸

1. Mt 6.12.
2. Rom 3.9-22, 5.19, Mt 18.24-25, Ps 130.3-4, Mi 6.6-7.
3. Rom 3.24-26, 5.19, Heb 9.22, Acts 13.39.
4. Eph 1.6-7.
5. 2 Pt 1.2.
6. Hos 14.2, Jer 14.7, Ps 143.2, 130.3.
7. Rom 15.13, 5.1-2, Ps 51.7-12.
8. Lk 11.4, Mt 6.14-15, 18.35.

Q. 195. For what do we pray in the sixth request?

A. In the sixth request (*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one*¹), we acknowledge that God, who is completely wise, righteous, and gracious, may, for various holy and just purposes, ordain circumstances by which we become the target of temptations, are defeated, and temporarily taken captive by them;² that Satan,³ the world,⁴ and our own sinful natures have a powerful potential to turn us aside from righteousness and trap us;⁵ and that even after our sins have been forgiven, we are naturally so depraved,⁶ spiritually weak, and inattentive to our spiritual condition⁷ that we are not only prey to temptations and willingly expose ourselves to them⁸ but are completely incapable of and unwilling to resist, get away from, or use them as opportunities for our spiritual growth⁹—and consequently we deserve to be left under their power.¹⁰ We pray then that God would so rule over the world and everyone in it,¹¹ so curb our sinful natures¹² and restrain Satan,¹³ so ordain all things,¹⁴ so endow and bless all the means of grace¹⁵ and sharpen our awareness in the use of them, that we and all his people may be providentially spared from being tempted to sin;¹⁶ or, if tempted, that his Spirit would powerfully support and enable us to resist during the time of our temptation;¹⁷ or, should we fall, that we would be raised again and restored,¹⁸ with the experience being thereby sanctified and used for our spiritual growth;¹⁹ and that our sanctification and salvation may be made complete,²⁰ Satan trampled under our feet,²¹ and we become completely delivered from sin, temptation, and all evil, forever.²²

1. Mt 6.13.
2. 2 Chr 32.31, Job 2.6.

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3. 1 Chr 21.1, 1 Pt 5.8, Job 2.2.
4. Lk 21.34, Mk 4.19.
5. Jas 1.14.
6. Gal 5.17, Rom 7.18.
7. Mt 26.41.
8. Mt 26.69-72, Gal 2.11-14, 2 Chr 18.3, 19.2, 1 Tm 6.9, Prv 7.22.
9. Rom 7.18-19, 23-24, 1 Chr 21.1-4, 2 Chr 16.7-10.
10. Ps 81.11-12.
11. Jn 17.15, Rom 8.28.
12. Ps 51.10, 119.133.
13. 2 Cor 12.7-8, Heb 2.18, 1 Cor 10.13.
14. 1 Cor 10.12-13, Rom 8.28.
15. Heb 13.20-21, Eph 4.11-12.
16. Mt 26.41, Ps 19.13.
17. Eph 3.14-17, 1 Thes 3.13, Jude 24, 1 Cor 10.13.
18. Ps 51.12.
19. 1 Pt 5.8-10, 1.6-7.
20. 2 Cor 13.7,9, 1 Thes 3.13.
21. Rom 16.20, Zec 3.2, Lk 22.31-32.
22. Jn 17.15, 1 Thes 5.23.

Q. 196. What does the conclusion of the Lord's prayer teach us?

A. The conclusion of the Lord's prayer (*for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever*¹) teaches us that there must be substance to our requests,² that they are based not on any intrinsic worth in ourselves or any created being but on God himself,³ and that to our prayers should be added praise,⁴ which recognizes God alone as eternally sovereign, omnipotent, and gloriously excellent.⁵ In that respect, insofar as he is able and willing to help us,⁶ our faith makes us bold to plead with him that he will help us⁷ and calmly to count on him to answer our prayers.⁸ To show that we want to be heard and have confidence that we are heard, we say Amen.⁹

1. Mt 6.13.
2. Rom 15.30, Job 23.3-4, Jer 14.20-21.
3. Dn 9.4,7-9,16-19.
4. Phil 4.6.
5. 1 Chr 29.10-13.
6. Eph 3.20-21, Lk 11.13, Ps 84.11.
7. 2 Chr 20.6,11, Eph 3.12, Heb 10.19-22.
8. 2 Chr 14.11, 1 Jn 5.14, Rom 8.32.
9. 1 Cor 14.16, Rv 22.20-21.

Afterword on the Texts

The major changes made by American Presbyterians to the Westminster Confession in 1788 concerned statements about the relationship between the church and the civil government in Chapters 23 and 31. The original Confession of 1647 allows some secular authority over and interference in church affairs, which the American Presbyterians were unwilling to grant.

After the great division of the church into the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA) and the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) at the conclusion of the Civil War, both PCUSA and PCUS wrote new chapters on marriage. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church has adopted what was the PCUS version of Chapter 24.

The EPC has also adopted the new, American Chapters 34 and 35. These were added by PCUSA in 1903, and subsequently by PCUS and the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. The original wording of these two chapters included deliberately archaic expressions (“doth,” “hath,” etc.), which have been modernized here.

The EPC has amended the Confession at three points. The word “ordinarily” has been added to Chapter 27, Section 4, and to Chapter 28, Section 2. The phrase, “so that the marriage dies at the heart and the union becomes,” has been deleted from the second sentence of Section 5 of Chapter 24. For the Larger Catechism, “only” has been replaced with “ordinarily” in A 176.

The editors are: Dr. Philip Rollinson, Emeritus Professor of English at the University of South Carolina, Columbia, and Dr. Douglas F. Kelly, Jordon Professor of Systematic Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte, NC. They have been joined by Dr. Hugh W. McClure, III, a retired Presbyterian minister, for the Confession, and by Dr. S. Donald Fortson, III, Assistant Professor of Church History and Practical Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte, NC, for the Larger Catechism.

For the Shorter Catechism, Drs. Kelly and Rollinson were joined by a translation team from the Westshor Group of Jackson, Mississippi: Rev. Frederick T. Marsh, Thomas I. Rice, III, A. Jerry Sheldon, Dr. Luder G. Whitlock, Jr., and Rev. William K. Wymond. The Westshor Group was comprised of a group of lay members of First Presbyterian Church in Jackson, Mississippi, who conceived of modernizing the Shorter Catechism in the 1980s after the example of the modern language Confession of Faith and who subsidized the project.

