

A Baptist Catechism

A Catechism?

I. What is a catechism?

In 1 Corinthians 14:19 Paul says, "In the church I would rather speak five words with my mind, in order to *instruct* others, than ten thousand words in a tongue." In Galatians 6:6 he says, "Let *him who is taught* the word share all good things with *him who teaches*." Acts 18:25 says that Apollos "has been *instructed* in the way of the Lord." In each of these verses the Greek word for "instruct" or "teach" is *katecheo*. From this word we get our English word "catechize". It simply means to teach Biblical truth in an orderly way. Generally this is done with questions and answers accompanied by Biblical support and explanation.

II. What is the history of this catechism?

This is a slightly revised version of "The Baptist Catechism" first put forth by Baptists in 1689 in Great Britain. It was adopted by the Philadelphia Baptist Association in 1742. It is patterned on the well-known reformed Westminster Catechism. The few comments in the earlier questions are meant to help parents make things plain to their children.

III. Is there a Biblical pattern of doctrine?

Several texts teach that there is. For example, in Romans 6:17 Paul gives thanks that "you have become obedient from the heart to the *pattern of teaching* to which you were committed." 2 Timothy 1:13 says, "Follow the *pattern of sound words* which you heard from me." Acts 2:42 says, "They devoted themselves to *the apostles' teaching*." 2 Thessalonians 2:15 says, "Stand firm and hold to *the traditions* which you were taught by us." And Acts 20:27 says, "I did not shrink from declaring to you the *whole counsel of God*."

So it appears that there was a body of authoritative instruction and even a way of teaching it in the early church.

IV. Why is it important?

1. We are required to "continue in the faith, stable and steadfast" (Col. 1:23).
2. We are urged to "attain to the unity of the... knowledge of the Son of God...so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine" (Eph. 4:13-14).
3. There are many deceivers (1 John 2:26).
4. There are difficult doctrines "which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction" (2 Peter 3:16).
5. Leaders must be raised up who can "give instruction in sound doctrine and also confute those who contradict it" (Titus 1:9).

V. How shall we begin?

Make them part of your family routine or just use them for yourself. I am excited about being a partner with you in building a "stable and firm" generation who hopes in God.

The Catechism

Sometimes there are other ways to express a true answer to these questions. Feel free to use Scripture to formulate other true answers where possible and helpful. The aim of a catechism is not to be exhaustive but to give a solid base from which to "keep growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:17).

Question 1: Who is the first and best of beings?

Answer: God is the first and best of beings.

Scripture: Isaiah 44:6; Psalm 8:1; 96:4; 97:9, 1 Samuel 2:2

Question 2: What is the chief end of man?

Answer: Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 10:31; Psalm 16:11; 37:4; 73:25-26; Isaiah 43:7.

Comment: "Glorify" does not mean make glorious. It means [to] reflect or display as glorious. Other words you could use for "end" are "goal" or "purpose".

Question 3: How do we know there is a God?

Answer: The light of nature in man, and the works of God, plainly declares that there is a God; but his word and Spirit only, do effectually reveal him unto us for our salvation.

Scripture: Romans 1:18-20; Psalm 19:1-2; 2 Timothy 3:15; 1 Corinthians 1:21-24; 2:9, 10; Matthew 11:27.

Comment: The question distinguishes two kinds of knowledge: one is natural and comes from conscience ("the light of nature in man") and from the works of God in nature; the other is spiritual or saving, and comes from the recognition of the true value of God and the beauty of his character. Natural knowledge is possessed by all people and thus makes all people accountable to honor and thank God. Spiritual knowledge is possessed only by those whose natural blindness has been overcome by the Spirit of God. (1 Cor. 2:14-16). Our children must come to see the difference between these lest they think they are saved by much natural knowledge about God—which the devils also have James 2:19).

Question 4: What is the Word of God?

Answer: The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, being given by divine inspiration, are the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

Scripture: 2 Peter 1:21; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; Isaiah 8:20; Matthew 5:17-18; 1 Corinthians 2:13; Psalm 19:7-8.

Comment: "Scriptures" is a special word for the "writings" of the OT and NT. Perhaps you will want to explain that the OT deals with God's word that came before Jesus was born; and the NT is the word of God that came after Jesus was born. "Infallible" means it will never lead us astray in what it teaches. It is true and does not err. It can be trusted. "Faith" refers to right thinking and feeling; and "practice" refers to right doing. We measure our thoughts and emotions and actions by the rule of the Bible. "Inspiration" means that it is God-breathed: by his Spirit he guided his spokesmen to speak his word in their language.

Question 5: How do we know that the Bible is the Word of God?

Answer: The Bible evidences itself to be God's Word by the heavenliness of its doctrine, the unity of its parts, and its power to convert sinners and to edify saints. But only the Spirit of God can make us willing to agree and submit to the Bible as the Word of God.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 2:6-7, 13-16; Psalm 19:7-9; 119:18, 129; Acts 10:43; 26:22; 18:28; Hebrews 4:12; Romans 15:4; John 16:13, 14; 1 John 2:20-27; 2 Corinthians 3:14-17; 4:4, 6.

Comment: "Heavenliness" refers to the fact [that] the teachings of Scripture are of such a nature that they cannot be explained by mere human resources. They bear the marks of the supernatural. "No man ever spoke like this man" (John 7:46). The "unity of its parts" has to do especially with the way all Scripture points to Christ. "To him all the prophets bear witness" (Acts 10:43). There are detailed and scholarly historical arguments for the reliability of the Bible, but these are generally beyond the acquaintance of ordinary Christians, and so do not serve as widespread support for Scripture. They are needed, however, in the scholarly arena

Question 6: May all men make use of the Scriptures?

Answer: All men are not only permitted, but commanded and exhorted, to read, hear, and understand the Scriptures.

Scripture: John 5:39; Luke 16:29; Acts 8:28-30; 17:11.

Question 7: What do the Scriptures mainly teach?

Answer: The Scriptures mainly teach what man is to believe about God and what duty God requires of man.

Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; John 20:31; Acts 24:14; 1 Corinthians 10:11; Ecclesiastes 12:13.

Question 8: What is God?

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

Scripture: John 4:24; Psalm 89:14; 90:2; 147:5; James 1:17; Revelation 4:8; Exodus 34:6, 7; 1 Timothy 1:17; Numbers 23:19.

Comment: Ask what "infinite" means (there is no limit to how great he is!). What does "eternal" mean? (He never had a beginning and will never have an ending!) Talk about how God can respond to us and yet not be "changeable." (His character never changes; he acts consistently on the same principles always. Even his responses to us are known and planned long before so that his purposes are unchanging.)

Question 9: Are there more Gods than one?

Answer: There is only one living and true God.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:4; Jeremiah 10:10; Psalm 96:4-5.

Comment: There are "gods" which are idols, but they are not "living". And there are "gods" which are angels or demons, but they are not "true" God, that is they are not eternal, infinite and unchanging. Only one God is living and true.

Question 10: How many persons are there in the Godhead?

Answer: There are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one God, the same in essence, equal in power and glory.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 2:11; 8:6; John 1:1; 10:30; 14:9; 20:28; Acts 5:3,4; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:3.

Comment: The word "Godhead" is needed because we shouldn't say that there are three persons in God. No, there are three persons who are God. Nor should we say that there are three Gods. There is one God. They are distinct persons with special roles in creation and redemption. But they are in perfect harmony and are (in ways beyond our comprehension) perfectly One God.

Question 11: What are the decrees of God?

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

Scripture: Ephesians 1:11; Romans 11:36; Daniel 4:35; Isaiah 46:10; Psalm 115:3; Amos 3:6.

Comment: You might shorten it to: "God's decrees are his own plans for history. And they always happen." His purpose for the world is eternal because there never was a time when he didn't know what he was going to do. His purpose accords with the counsel of HIS will--that is he did not consult anyone else. He thought it ALL up. All plans were made in order to maximize the display of his glory. NOTHING falls outside the decrees of God.

Question 12: How does God execute his decrees?

Answer: God executes his decrees in the works of creation and providence.

Scripture: Genesis 1:1; Revelation 4:11; Matthew 5:45; 6:26; Acts 14:17; Proverbs 16:9, 33; 19:21; 20:24; 21:1, 31.

Comment: Instead of "execute" you can say "perform" or "accomplish" or "bring about". The word "providence" will be taken up in a later question. For now it refers to the way God preserves and governs all his creatures and all

their actions (like the fall of a bird or the election of a president). It refers to God's general rule over the world he has created.

Question 13: What is the work of creation?

Answer: The work of creation is God's making all things [out] of nothing, by the word of his power and all very good.

Scripture: Genesis 1:1, 31; Hebrews 11:3; Exodus 20:11; Romans 4:17.

Comment: Before creation there was only God in the holy fellowship of the Trinity. Therefore his creation is always different from ours: we start with something.

Question 14: How did God create man?

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

Scripture: Genesis 1:27-28; Colossians 3:10; Ephesians 4:24.

Comment: In saying that we were created after his image "in knowledge, righteousness and holiness," we do not mean we know all God knows, nor that we are a fountain of righteousness and holiness the way he is. We mean that we were capable of sharing his knowledge and righteousness and holiness in a relationship of trust and love unlike any other creature under the angels.

Question 15: What are God's works of providence?

Answer: God's works of providence are the holy, wise, and powerful acts which he *preserves* and *governs* all his creatures, and all their actions.

Scripture: Nehemiah 9:6; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3; Psalm 103:19; Matthew 10:29-30.

Comment: It would be helpful to discuss this with your child in relation to the common concept of "luck." Is there such a thing as luck in a world ruled by the providence of God? "The lot is cast into the lap, but the decision is wholly from the Lord" (16:33). You will also need to stress that many of God's acts of providence may not look "holy and wise" (like storms that kill thousands of people). But then stress that God has his secret purposes (Deut. 29:29) that we are never great enough to see, and the Judge of all the earth always does right (Genesis 18:25).

Question 16: What special act of providence did God exercise towards man when he was first created?

Answer: When God had created man, he made a covenant with him that he should live and enjoy all the benefits of creation, but that he would die if he forsook the obedience that comes from faith. God commanded him not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and thus forsake his child-like dependence upon God for all things.

Scripture: Genesis 2:15-17; Galatians 3:12; Romans 5:12.

Comment: The "knowledge of good and evil" is the ability to judge independently what is beneficial (good) and harmful (evil) for yourself. What God is forbidding is that man should choose to be independent from God in his evaluation of things. He is commanding man to walk by faith in the wise and loving care of his heavenly Father. (See the use of this phrase in Gen. 3:5, 22; 2 Sam. 14:17; Is. 7:15; 2 Sam 19:35.)

Question 17: Did our first parents continue in the glad obedience for which they were created?

Answer: No, but desiring to be like God, our first parents forsook the obedience of faith, ate of the forbidden tree, sinned against God, and fell from the innocence in which they were created.

Scripture: Genesis 3:1-7; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Romans 5:12.

Question 18: What is sin?

Answer: Sin is transgression of the revealed will of God which teaches that we are to act in perfect holiness from a heart of faith to the glory of God.

Scripture: 1 John 3:4; Romans 5:13; 14:23; 1 Peter 1:16; Matthew 5:48; 1 Corinthians 10:31.

Comment Simplified: Sin is any attitude or desire or action that explicitly breaks a commandment of Scripture, or comes from a heart of unbelief or is not done for the glory of God.

Question 19: What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?

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

Scripture: Genesis 3:6, 12, 13.

Question 20: Did all mankind fall in Adam's first sin?

Answer: All mankind, descending from Adam by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first sin.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:21-22; Romans 5:12, 18-19.

Comment: God considered all mankind as being in Adam so that when Adam went bad we all went bad in him. The nature that we have by virtue of belonging to Adam's race is morally corrupt. We are under the wrath of God "by nature" (Ephesians 2:3) from the time we were conceived in the womb. This is why conversion and salvation must be much more than a "decision" for Christ. It must be a new creation, a rebirth, an exchange of hearts.

Question 21: Into what condition did the fall bring mankind?

Answer: The fall brought mankind into a condition of sin and misery.

Scripture: Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:18-19; 7:18; Isaiah 53:6; 64:6; John 3:67; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 Corinthians 2:14.

Question 22: What is the sinfulness of that condition into which all mankind has fallen?

Answer: The sinfulness of the condition into which all mankind fell is the guilt of Adam's first sin, the lack of original righteousness, and the corruption of our whole nature (which is commonly called original sin), together with all actual transgressions which come from this nature.

Scripture: Romans 5:19; 3:10; Ephesians 2:1; Isaiah 53:6; Psalm 51:5; Matthew 15:19.

Comment: The Bible says that "in Adam all die" (1 Cor. 15:22) and that "one transgression yields condemnation for all men" (Rom. 5:18) and that "one man's disobedience made many sinners" (Rom. 5:19). These statements lead us to conclude that God, in a way beyond our comprehension, established a unity between Adam and his posterity which makes it just for us to receive the imputation of his guilt and corruption. He was in some sense our representative head. We sinned in him and fell with him.

Question 23: What is the misery into which all mankind fell through Adam's first sin?

Answer: 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.

Scripture: Genesis 3:8, 24; Ephesians 2:3; Galatians 3:10; Romans 6:23; Matthew 25:41-46; Psalm 9:17.

Comment: Keep in mind that "liable to" means that these miseries will indeed befall all people unless a special work of God's grace intervenes.

Question 24: Did God leave all mankind to perish in the condition of sin and misery?

Answer: God, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, having chosen a people to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the condition of sin and misery, and to bring them into a condition of salvation, by a Redeemer.

Scripture: Ephesians 1:34; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Romans 5:21; 8:29-30; 9:11-12; 11:5-7; Acts 13:48; Jeremiah 31:33.

Comment: The term "covenant of grace" is filled with sweet and precious hope. It refers to the free decision, commitment and oath of God to employ all his omnipotence and wisdom and love to rescue and glorify his people from sin and misery. It is wholly initiated and carried through by God. It cannot fail.

It is valid for all who believe. WHOSOEVER WILL MAY COME AND ENJOY THIS GRACE! And, since this "believing" and this "willing" is a work of God's sovereign grace, those who believe and come are the elect, "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4). Thus the covenant was sealed in the heart of God before the world was.

This "covenant of grace" is the cry of victory over all the battle strife in missions. THE GRACE OF GOD WILL TRIUMPH! He is covenant-bound, oath-bound to save all those who are foreordained to eternal life (Acts 13:48)!

"Jesus died for the nation (of Jews), and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad" (John 11:52).

The battle cry of missions is, "The Lord has other sheep that are not of this fold: He MUST (covenant-bound!!) bring them also. They WILL (sovereign grace!!) heed his voice!" John 10:16.

Question 25: Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?

Answer: 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 continues to be God and man, in two distinct natures and one person, forever.

Scripture: Galatians 3:13; 1 Timothy 2:5; 3:16; John 1:14; Romans 9:5; Colossians 2:9.

Question 26: How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?

Answer: Christ, the Son of God became man by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and was born of her, yet without sin.

Scripture: Hebrews 2:14; 4:14; 7:26; Matthew 26:38; Luke 2:52; John 1:14; 12:27; Luke 1:31, 35; 2:52; Colossians 2:9.

Comment: I am typing this on a Personal Computer. I have virtually no idea how it works. That it works I am certain: I have typed hundreds of sermons on it. So it is with the "incarnation"--the "how" is (as the old theologians used to say) "ineffable". We believe it because the Scriptures teach it and because it "works" to make sense out of God's whole redemptive plan.

Question 27: What offices does Christ perform as our Redeemer?

Answer: Christ, as our Redeemer, performs the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in his condition of humiliation and exaltation.

Scripture: Acts 3:22; Hebrews 5:6; Psalm 2:6.

Question 28: How does Christ perform the office of a prophet?

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

Scripture: John 1:18; 14:26; 15:15.

Question 29: How does Christ perform the office of a priest?

Answer: Christ performs the office of a priest by once offering himself as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and to reconcile us to God; and by making continual intercession for us before God.

Scripture: 1 Peter 2:24; Hebrews 2: 17; 7:25; 9:28; Ephesians 5:2; Romans 8:34.

Question 30: How does Christ perform the office of a king?

Answer: Christ performs 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.

Scripture: Psalm 110:1-2; Matthew 2:6; Luke 1:32-33; 1 Corinthians 15:25.

Question 31: What do we mean by Christ's humiliation?

Answer: By Christ's humiliation we mean that he was born, and that in a low condition; that he was made under the law, and underwent the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; that he was buried, and continued under the power of death for a time.

Scripture: Luke 2:7; Galatians 4:4; Isaiah 53:3; Luke 22:44; Matthew 12:40; 27:46; Philippians 2:8; Mark 15:45-6.

Question 32: What do we mean by Christ's exaltation?

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

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:4; Acts 1:11; Mark 16:19; Acts 17:31.

Question 33: How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?

Answer: We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effective application of it to us, by his Holy Spirit.

Scripture: John 3:5, 6; Titus 3:5, 6.

Question 34: How does the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?

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

Scripture: 1 John 5:1; Philippians 1:29; Ephesians 2:8; Acts 16:14; 18:27; John 3:8; 6:64f.

Question 35: What is effectual calling?

Answer: Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, to convince us of our sin and misery, to enlighten our minds in the knowledge of Christ, to renew our wills, and thus persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.

Scripture: 2 Timothy 1:9; John 6:44, 45; 16:8-11; Acts 2:37; 26:18; Ezekiel 36:26; Romans 8:30; 1 Corinthians 1:24; 12:3.

Question 36: What benefits do those who are effectually called receive in this life?

Answer: Those who are effectually called receive in this life justification, adoption, sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life accompany or flow from them.

Scripture: Romans 8:30-32; Galatians 3:26; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 6:11; Ephesians 1:5.

Comment: We must distinguish effectual calling from the general call of the gospel. Not all who hear the gospel believe. But all who are effectually called by God do believe. The call creates what it commands.

Question 37: What is justification?

Answer: Justification is an act of God's free grace, by which he pardons all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

Scripture: Romans 3:24; 5:19; Ephesians 1:7; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:9; Galatians 2:16.

Question 38: What is adoption?

Answer: Adoption is an act of God's free grace, by which we are received into the company of God's children and have a right to all the privileges of his sons.

Scripture: 1 John 3:1; John 1:12; Romans 8:16, 17.

Question 39: What is sanctification?

Answer: Sanctification is the work of God's free grace by which we are renewed in the whole person after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

Scripture: 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Ephesians 4:23, 24; Romans 6:11.

Question 40: What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?

Answer: The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, are, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, fellowship with Christ, joy in the Holy Spirit, increase of grace, the privilege of prayer, and perseverance therein to the end.

Scripture: Romans 5:1-5; 14:17; Proverbs 4:18; 1 Peter 1:5; 1 John 5:13; 1 Corinthians 1:9; John 15:7.

Question 41: What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?

Answer: At death the souls of believers are made perfect in holiness, and immediately pass into glory. Their bodies rest in their graves till the resurrection.

Scripture: Hebrews 12:23; Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Luke 23:43; 1 Thessalonians 4:14; Isaiah 57:2; Job 19:26.

Question 42: What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the Resurrection?

Answer: At the resurrection, believers are raised up in glory; they shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the Day of Judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity.

Scripture: Philippians 3:20, 21; 1 Corinthians 15:42, 43; Matthew 10:32; 1 John 3:2; 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

Question 43: What shall be done to the wicked at death?

Answer: The souls of the wicked shall at death, be cast into the torments of hell, and their bodies lie in their graves till the resurrection and judgment of the great day.

Scripture: Luke 16:22-4; Daniel 12:2; John 5:29; Revelation 20:11- 15.

Question 44: What shall be done to the wicked at the Day of Judgment?

Answer: At the Day of Judgment, the bodies of the wicked, being raised out of their graves shall be sentenced, together with their souls, to unspeakable torments with the devil and his angels forever.

Scripture: Daniel 12:2; John 5:28, 29; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:14-15.

Question 45: What is the duty which God requires of man?

Answer: The duty which God requires of man is the obedience that comes from faith.

Scripture: Galatians 5:6; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:11; Romans 1:5; 16:26; 15:18.

Comment: See questions 16-18.

Question 46: What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?

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

Scripture: Rom. 2:14; 15; 5:13, 14.

Question 47: Where is the obedience of faith given in summary form?

Answer: A summary form of the obedience of faith is given in the Ten Commandments.

Scripture: Hebrews 3:18-19; 4:2; Exodus 34:28; Deuteronomy 10:4; Romans 9:32.

Question 48: What is the sum of the Ten Commandments?

Answer: 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 to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Scripture: Matthew 22:36-40; Mark 12:28-33.

Question 49: What is the preface to the Ten Commandments?

Answer: The preface to the Ten Commandments is, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

Scripture: Exodus 20:2.

Question 50: What does the preface to the Ten Commandments teach us?

Answer: The preface to the Ten Commandments teaches us that because God is the LORD, and our gracious Redeemer, his commandments are for our good and he does not will for us to depend on ourselves in keeping them, but to trust his grace and power.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 10:13, 16; 30:6.

Question 51: Which is the first commandment?

Answer: The first commandment is, "You shall have no other gods before me."

Scripture: Exodus 20:3.

Question 52: What is required in the first commandment?

Answer: The first commandment requires us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God, and to worship and glorify him accordingly.

Scripture: Joshua 24:15; 1 Chronicles 28:9; Deuteronomy 26:17; Psalm 29:2; Matthew 4:10.

Question 53: What is forbidden in the first commandment?

Answer: The first commandment forbids us to deny or not to worship and glorify the true God as God and our God; and to give that worship and glory to any other, which is due unto him alone.

Scripture: Joshua 24:27; Romans 1:20-21, 25; Psalm 14:1.

Question 54: What are we especially taught by these words, "before me," in the first commandment?

Answer: These words "before me," in the first commandment teach us that God, who sees all things, takes notice of, and is much displeased with the sin of having any other God.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 30:17, 18; Psalm 44:20-21; 90:8.

Question 55: Which is the second commandment?

Answer: The second commandment is, "You shall not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord your 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."

Scripture: Exodus 20:4-6.

Question 56: What is required in the second commandment?

Answer: The second commandment requires the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances, as God has appointed in his word.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 12:32; 32:46; Matthew 28:20.

Question 57: What is forbidden in the second commandment?

Answer: The second commandment forbids the worshipping of God by images, or any other way that draws the heart away from his glory rather than toward his glory.

Scripture: Romans 1:22, 23; Deuteronomy 4:15, 16; Colossians 2:18; 3:17; 1 Corinthians 10:31.

Question 58: What are the reasons added to the second commandment?

Answer: The reasons added to the second commandment are God's holy jealousy for his name, and the zeal he has for his own worship.

Scripture: Exodus 20:4-6; Exodus 34:14; 1 Corinthians 10:22.

Question 59: Which is the third commandment?

Answer: The third commandment is, "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that takes his name in vain."

Scripture: Exodus 20:7.

Question 60: What is required in the third commandment?

Answer: The third commandment requires the holy and reverent use of God's name, titles, attributes, ordinances, words, and works.

Scripture: Psalm 29:2; 111:9; 138:2; Deuteronomy 32:1-4; 28:58-59; Matthew 6:9; Ecclesiastes 5:1; Job 36:24; Revelation 4:8; 15:3, 4.

Question 61: What is forbidden in the third commandment?

Answer: The third commandment forbids all profaning and abusing of anything whereby God makes himself known.

Scripture: Exodus 20:7; Malachi 1:6, 7; Leviticus 20:3; 19:12; Matthew 5:34-37; Isaiah 52:5.

Question 62: What is the reason annexed to the third commandment?

Answer: 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.

Scripture: Exodus 20:7; Deuteronomy 28:58, 59; Malachi 2:2.

Question 63: Which is the fourth commandment?

Answer: The fourth commandment is, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shall you labor and do all your work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God; in it You shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger that is within your 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."

Scripture: Exodus 20:8-11.

Question 64: What is required in the fourth commandment?

Answer: The fourth commandment requires the keeping holy to God such set times as he has appointed in his word, expressly one whole day in seven to be a holy Sabbath to himself.

Scripture: Leviticus 19:30; Deuteronomy 5:12.

Question 65: Which day of the seven has God appointed to be the weekly Sabbath?

Answer: From the creation 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.

Scripture: Genesis 2:3; John 20:19; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2; Revelation 1:10.

Question 66: How is the Sabbath to be sanctified?

Answer: One day in seven should be especially devoted to corporate worship and other spiritual exercises that restore the soul's rest in God and zeal for His name. It should provide physical refreshment and fit one for a week of devoted service to Christ.

Scripture: Leviticus 23:3; Isaiah 58:13, 14; Matthew 12:1-14; Mark 2:27; Romans 14:5-6.

Question 67: What is forbidden in the fourth commandment?

Answer: The fourth commandment forbids dishonoring the Lord's Day by actions or thoughts that divert the soul from spiritual refreshment, or deprive the body of renewed energy or distract the mind from its special Sabbath focus on the Lord.

Scripture: Ezekiel 22:26; 23:38; Jeremiah 17:21; Nehemiah 13:15, 17; Acts 20:7; Mark 2:23-28; Romans 14:5-6.

Question 68: What are the reasons attached to the fourth commandment?

Answer: The reasons attached to the fourth commandment are, God's creating the world in six days and resting on the seventh and his blessing the Sabbath day.

Scripture: Exodus 20:9-11; 31:16, 17; Genesis 2:2, 3.

Question 69: Which is the 5th commandment?

Answer: The fifth commandment is, "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God gives you."

Scripture: Exodus 20:12.

Question 70: What is required in the fifth commandment?

Answer: The fifth commandment requires that we preserve the honor and perform the duties which belong to every one in their various roles as authorities, subordinates or equals.

Scripture: Leviticus 19:32; 1 Peter 2:17; Romans 12:10; 13:1; Ephesians 5:21-22; 6:1, 5, 9; Colossians 3:19-22; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; Hebrews 13:7, 17.

Question 71: What is forbidden in the fifth commandment?

Answer: The fifth commandment forbids neglecting or offending the honor and duty which belongs to every one in their various places and relations.

Scripture: Proverbs 30:17; Romans 13:7, 8.

Question 72: What is the reason added to the fifth commandment?

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

Scripture: Exodus 20:20; Ephesians 6:2, 3.

Question 73: What is the sixth commandment?

Answer: The sixth commandment is, "You shall not kill."

Scripture: Exodus 20:13.

Question 74: What is required in the sixth commandment?

Answer: The sixth commandment requires all lawful efforts to preserve our own life and the life of others.

Scripture: Ephesians 5:29, 30; Psalm 82:3, 4; Proverbs 24:11, 12; Acts 16:28.

Question 75: What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?

Answer: The sixth commandment forbids the taking of our own life, or the life of our neighbor unjustly, including whatever acts tend to this loss.

Scripture: Genesis 4:10, 11; 9:6; Matthew 5:21-26.

Question 76: Which is the seventh commandment?

Answer: The seventh commandment is, "You shall not commit adultery."

Scripture: Exodus 20:14.

Question 77: What is required in the seventh commandment?

Answer: The seventh commandment requires that we preserve our own and our neighbor's chastity, in heart, speech, and behavior.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 6:18; 7:2; 2 Timothy 2:22; Matthew 5:28; 1 Peter 3:2.

Question 78: What is forbidden in the seventh commandment?

Answer: The seventh commandment forbids all unchaste thoughts, words and actions.

Scripture: Matthew 5:28-32; Job 31:1; Ephesians 5:3, 4; Romans 13:13; Colossians 4:6.

Question 79: Which is the eighth commandment?

Answer: The eighth commandment is, "You shall not steal."

Scripture: Exodus 20:15.

Question 80: Which is required in the eighth commandment?

Answer: The eighth commandment requires that we pursue lawful and useful work to provide for our needs and for those unable to provide for themselves.

Scripture: Ephesians 4:28; Proverbs 27:23; Leviticus 25:35; Deuteronomy 15:10; 22:1-4.

Question 81: What is forbidden in the eighth commandment?

Answer: The eighth commandment forbids whatever would unjustly withhold or diminish a person's possessions or attainments.

Scripture: Malachi 3:8; Ephesians 4:28; Romans 13:7.

Question 82: Which is the ninth commandment?

Answer: The ninth commandment is, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."

Scripture: Exodus 20:16.

Question 83: What is required in the ninth commandment?

Answer: The ninth commandment requires that we maintain and promote truth between persons and that we preserve the good name of our neighbor and ourselves.

Scripture: Zechariah 8:16; Acts 25:10; Ecclesiastes 7:1; 3 John 12; Proverbs 14:5, 25.

Question 84: What is forbidden in the ninth commandment?

Answer: The ninth commandment forbids whatever dishonors truth, or injures our own, or our neighbor's good name.

Scripture: Ephesians 4:25; Psalm 15:3; 2 Corinthians 8:20, 21.

Question 85: What is the tenth commandment?

Answer: The tenth commandment is, "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his man servant, nor his maid servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is your neighbor's."

Scripture: Exodus 20:17.

Question 86: What is required in the tenth commandment?

Answer: The tenth commandment requires contentment with our own condition, with a right and charitable frame of spirit towards our neighbor, and all that is his.

Scripture: Hebrews 13:5; 1 Timothy 6:6; Romans 12:15; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; Leviticus 19:18.

Question 87: What is forbidden in the tenth commandment?

Answer: The tenth commandment forbids all murmuring over our own condition and all envying or grieving at the good of our neighbor, and all inordinate affections for anything that is his.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 10:10; James 5:9; Galatians 5:26; Colossians 3:5.

Question 88: Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?

Answer: No mere man, since the fall, is able in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but daily falls short of inward and outward perfection.

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 7:20; Genesis 6:5; 8:21; 1 John 1:8; James 3:2, 8; Romans 3:23; 7:15; Philippians 3:12.

Question 89: What then is the purpose of the law since the fall?

Answer: The purpose of the law, since the fall, is to reveal the perfect righteousness of God, that his people may know the path of faith that leads to life, and that the ungodly may be convicted of their sin, restrained from evil, and brought to Christ for salvation.

Scripture: Psalm 19:7-11; Romans 3:20, 31; 7:7; 8:13; 9:32; 12:2; Titus 2:12-14; Galatians 3:22, 24; 1 Timothy 1:8; Luke 10:25-28.

Question 90: Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous?

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

Scripture: Ezekiel 8:13; John 19:11; 1 John 5:16.

Question 91: What does every sin deserve?

Answer: Every sin deserves God's wrath and curse, both in this life, and in that which is to come.

Scripture: Ephesians 5:6; Galatians 3:10; Proverbs 3:33; Psalm 11:6; Revelation 21:8.

Question 92: What does God require of us, that we may escape his wrath and curse, due to us for sin?

Answer: To escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin, God requires of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption.

Scripture: Acts 20:21; 16:30, 31; 17:30.

Question 93: What is faith in Jesus Christ?

Answer: Faith in Jesus Christ is saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, trusting him to forgive our sins, and guide us to eternal joy, on the basis of his divine power and atoning death.

Scripture: Hebrews 10:39; John 1:12; 6:35; Philippians 3:9; Galatians 2:15-16, 20; Matthew 14:31.

Question 94: What is repentance unto life?

Answer: Repentance unto life is a saving grace, by which a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, does, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it to God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.

Scripture: Acts 2:37; Joel 2:13; Jeremiah 31:18, 19; 2 Corinthians 7:10, 11; Romans 6:18.

Question 95: What are the outward and ordinary means by which Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption?

Answer: The outward and ordinary means by which Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption are his ordinances, especially the Word, Baptism, the Lord's Supper and Prayer; all of which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.

Scripture: Romans 10:17; James 1:18; 1 Corinthians 3:5; Acts 14:1; 2:41, 42.

Question 96: How is the Word made effective for salvation?

Answer: The Spirit of God makes 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.

Scripture: Psalm 19:7; 119:11, 18; 1 Thessalonians 1:6; 1 Peter 2:1, 2; Romans 1:16.

Question 97: How is the Word to be read and heard that it may become effective for salvation?

Answer: That the Word may become effective for salvation we must attend to it with diligence, preparation and prayer, receive it in faith and love, lay it up in our hearts and practice it in our lives.

Scripture: Proverbs 8:34; 1 Peter 2:1, 2; 1 Timothy 4:13; Hebrews 2:1, 3; 4:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:10; Psalm 119:11; James 1:21, 25.

Question 98: How do Baptism and the Lord's Supper become effective means of salvation?

Answer: Baptism and the Lord's Supper become effective means of salvation, not from any virtue in them or in him that administers them, but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in those who by faith receive them.

Scripture: 1 Peter 3:21; 1 Corinthians 3:6, 7; 12:13.

Question 99: How do Baptism and the Lord's Supper differ from the other ordinances of God?

Answer: Baptism and the Lord's Supper differ from the other ordinances of God in that they were specially instituted by Christ to represent and apply to believers the benefits of the new covenant by visible and outward signs.

Scripture: Acts 22:16; Matthew 26:26-28; 28:19; Romans 6:4.

Question 100: What is Baptism?

Answer: Baptism is a holy ordinance, in which immersion in the water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, signifies our being joined to Christ and our sharing the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.

Scripture: Matthew 28:19; Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12; Galatians 3:27.

Question 101: To whom is Baptism to be administered?

Answer: Baptism is to be administered to all those who actually profess repentance towards God, faith in, and obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ; and to no other.

Scripture: Acts 2:38; 8:12, 36; 10:47, 48; Matthew 3:6; Mark 16:16.

Question 102: Are the infants of professing believers to be baptized?

Answer: The infants of believers are not to be baptized; because there is neither command nor example in the Holy Scriptures, nor implication from them to baptize such. But baptism is made an expression of faith.

Scripture: Colossians 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21; Galatians 3:26, 27.

Question 103: How is Baptism rightly administered?

Answer: Baptism is rightly administered by immersion, or dipping the whole body of the person in water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Scripture: Matthew 3:16; John 3:23; Acts 8:38, 39.

Question 104: What is the duty of those who are rightly baptized?

Answer: It is the duty of those who are rightly baptized to give themselves to some visible and orderly church of Jesus Christ, that they may walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

Scripture: Acts 2:46, 47; 9:26; 1 Peter 2:5; Hebrews 10:25; Romans 16:5.

Question 105: What is the visible church?

Answer: The visible church is the organized society of professing believers, in all ages and places, wherein the gospel is truly preached and the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper administered in true faith.

Scripture: Acts 2:42; 20:7; 7:38; Ephesians 4:11, 12.

Question 106: What is the invisible church?

Answer. The invisible church is the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one under Christ the head.

Scripture: Ephesians 1:10; 1:22, 23; John 10:16; 11:52.

Question 107: What is the Lord's Supper?

Answer: The Lord's Supper is a holy ordinance of the church. By eating bread and drinking the cup according to Christ's appointment we show forth his death. Those who eat and drink in a worthy manner partake of Christ's body and blood, not physically, but spiritually in that by faith they are nourished with the benefits he purchased, and grow in grace.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; 10:16.

Question 108: What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper?

Answer: It is required of those who would worthily (that is, suitably) partake of the Lord's Supper, that they examine themselves--of their knowledge, that they discern the Lord's body; their faith, that they feed upon him; and their repentance, love, and new obedience; lest, coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 5:8; 11:27-31; 2 Corinthians 13:5.

Question 109: What is Prayer?

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

Scripture: 1 John 5:14; 1:9; Philippians 4:6; Psalm 10:17; 145:19; John 14:13, 14.

Question 110: What rule has God given for our direction in prayer?

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

Scripture: Matthew 6:9-13; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

Question 111: What does the preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us?

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

Scripture: Matthew 6:9; Luke 11:13; Romans 8:15; Acts 12:5; 1 Timothy 2:1-3.

Question 112: What do we pray for in the first petition of the Lord's Prayer?

Answer: In the first petition, which is "Hallowed be your name," we pray that God would enable us and others to glorify him in all of life, and that he would dispose all things to his own glory.

Scripture: Matthew 6:9; Psalm 67:1-3; Romans 11:36; Revelation 4:11; 1 Corinthians 10:31.

Question 113: What do we pray for in the second petition of the Lord's Prayer?

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

Scripture: Matthew 6:10; 9:37,38; Psalm 68:1-18; Romans 10:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:1; Revelation 22:20.

Question 114: What do we pray for in the third petition of the Lord's Prayer?

Answer: In the third petition, which is, "Your will be done on 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.

Scripture: Matthew 6:10; Psalm 103:20, 21; 25:4, 5; 119:26.

Question 115: What do we pray for in the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer?

Answer: 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.

Scripture: Matthew 6:11; Proverbs 30:8, 9; 1 Timothy 6:6-8; 4:4, 5.

Question 116: What do we pray for in the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer?

Answer: 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 rather encouraged to ask, because by his grace we are enabled from the heart to forgive others.

Scripture: Matthew 6:12; 18:35; Psalm 51:1, 3, 7; Mark 11:25.

Question 117: What do we pray for in the sixth petition?

Answer: 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.

Scripture: Matthew 6:13; 26:41; Psalm 19:13; 1 Corinthians 10:13; John 17:15.

Question 118: What does the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer teach us?

Answer: The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, which is, "For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever, Amen," teaches 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.

Scripture: Matthew 6:13; Daniel 9:18, 19; 1 Chronicles 29:11-13; 1 Corinthians 14:16; Philippians 4:6; Revelation 22:20.