

The Heidelberg Catechism

Lord's Day 1

1 Q. What is your only comfort in life and death?

A. That I am not my own,¹
but belong—
body and soul,
in life and in death—²
to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ.³

He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood,⁴
and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil.⁵
He also watches over me in such a way⁶
that not a hair can fall from my head
without the will of my Father in heaven.⁷
in fact, all things must work together for my salvation.⁸

Because I belong to him,
Christ, by his Holy Spirit,
assures me of eternal life
and makes me whole-heartedly willing and ready
from now on to live for him.¹⁰

¹ 1 Cor. 6:19-20

² Rom. 14:7-9

³ 1 Cor. 3:23; Titus 2:14

⁴ 1 Pet. 1:18-19; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:2

⁵ John 8:34-36; Heb. 2:14-15; 1 John 3:1-11

⁶ John 6:39-40; 10:27-30; 2 Thess. 3:3; 1 Pet. 1:5

⁷ Matt. 10:29-31; Luke 21:16-18

⁸ Rom. 8:28

⁹ Rom. 8:15-16; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; 5:5; Eph. 1:13-14

¹⁰ Rom. 8:1-17

2 Q. What must you know to live and die in the joy of this comfort?

A. Three things:

first, how great my sin and misery are;¹
second, how I am set free from all my sins and misery;²
third, how I am to thank God for such deliverance.³

¹ Rom. 3:9-10; 1 John 1:10

² John 17:3; Acts 4:12; 10:43

³ Matt. 5:16; Rom. 6:13; Eph. 5:8-10; 2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Pet. 2:9-10

Lord's Day 2

3 Q. How do you come to know your misery?

A.

The law of God tells me.¹

¹ Rom. 3:20; 7:7-25

4 Q. What does God's law require of us?

A. Christ teaches us this in summary in Matthew 22–

You shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart,
with all your soul,
and with all your mind,
and with all your strength.^{1*}
This is the great and first commandment.

And a second is like it,
You shall love your neighbor
as yourself.²

All the Law and the Prophets hang
on these two commandments.

¹ Deut. 6:5

² Lev. 19:18

*Earlier and better manuscripts of Matthew 22 omit the words, "and with all your strength." They are found in Mark 12:30.

5 Q. Can you live up to all this perfectly?

A. No.¹

I have a natural tendency
to hate God and my neighbor.²

¹ Rom. 3:9-20, 23; 1 John 1:8, 10

² Gen. 6:5; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 7:23-24; 8:7; Eph. 2:1-3; Titus 3:3

Lord's Day 3

6 Q. Did God create people so wicked and perverse?

A. No.

God created them good¹ and in his own image,²
that is, in true righteousness and holiness,³
so that they might
truly know God their creator,⁴
love him with all their heart,
and live with him in eternal happiness
for his praise and glory.⁵

¹ Gen. 1:31

² Gen. 1:26-27

³ Eph. 4:24

⁴ Col. 3:10

⁵ Ps. 8

7 Q. Then where does man's corrupt human nature come from?

A. From the fall and disobedience of our first parents,
Adam and Eve, in Paradise.¹
This fall has so poisoned our nature²
that we are born sinners—
corrupt from conception on.³

¹ Gen. 3

² Rom. 5:12, 18-19

³ Ps. 51:5

**8 Q. But are we so corrupt
that we are totally unable to do any good
and inclined toward all evil?**

A. Yes,¹ unless we are born again,
by the Spirit of God.²

¹ Gen. 6:5; 8:21; Job 14:4; Isa. 53:6

² John 3:3-5

Lord's Day 4

**9 Q. But doesn't God do us an injustice
by requiring in his law
what we are unable to do?**

A. No, God created humans with the ability to keep the law.¹
They, however, tempted by the devil,²
in reckless disobedience,³
robbed themselves and all their descendants of these gifts.⁴

¹ Gen. 1:31; Eph. 4:24

² Gen. 3:13; John 8:44

³ Gen. 3:6

⁴ Rom. 5:12, 18, 19

**10 Q. Will God permit
such disobedience and rebellion
to go unpunished?**

A. Certainly not.
He is terribly angry
about the sin we are born with
as well as the sins we personally commit.

As a just judge
he punishes them now and in eternity.¹

He has declared:
“Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do
Everything written in the book of the Law.”²

¹ Ex. 34:7; Ps. 5:4-6; Nah. 1:2; Rom. 1:18; Eph. 5:6; Heb. 9:27

² Deut. 27:26; Gal. 3:10

11 Q. But isn't God also merciful?

A. God is certainly merciful,¹
but he is also just.²
His justice demands
that sin committed against his supreme majesty

that sin, committed against his supreme majesty,
be punished with the supreme penalty—
eternal punishment of body and soul.³

¹ Ex. 34:6-7; Ps. 103:8-9

² Ex. 34:7; Deut. 7:9-11; Ps. 5:4-6; Heb. 10:30-31

³ Matt. 25:35-46

Part II: Deliverance

Lord's Day 5

**12 Q. According to God's righteous judgment
we deserve punishment
both in this world and forever after:
how then can we escape this punishment
and return to God's favor?**

A. God requires that his justice be satisfied.¹
Therefore the claims of his justice
must be paid in full,
either by ourselves or by another.²

¹ Ex. 23:7; Rom. 2:1-11

² Isa. 53:11; Rom. 8:3-4

13 Q. Can we pay this debt ourselves?

A. Certainly not.
Actually, we increase our guilt every day.¹

¹ Matt. 6:12; Rom. 2:4-5

**14 Q. Can another creature—any at all—
pay this debt for us?**

A. No.
To begin with,
God will not punish another creature
for what a human is guilty of.¹
Besides,
no mere creature can bear the weight
of God's eternal anger against sin
and release others from it.²

¹ Ezek. 18:4, 20; Heb. 2:14-18

² Ps. 49:7-9; 130:3

**15 Q. What kind of mediator and deliverer
should we look for then?**

A. One who is truly human¹ and truly righteous,²
yet more powerful than all creatures,
that is, one who is also true God.³

¹ Rom. 1:3; 1 Cor. 15:21; Heb. 2:17

² Isa. 53:9; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:26

³ Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Jer. 23:6; John 1:1

Lord's Day 6

16 Q. Why must he be truly human and truly righteous?

A. God's justice demands:
that human nature, which has sinned,
must pay for its sin,¹
but a sinner could never pay for others.²

¹ Rom. 5:12, 15; 1 Cor. 15:21; Heb. 2:14-16

² Heb. 7:26-27; 1 Pet. 3:18

17 Q. Why must he also be true God?

A. So that,
by the power of his divinity,
he might bear the weight of God's anger in his humanity
and earn for us
and restore to us
righteousness and life.¹

¹ Isa. 53; John 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:21

18 Q. And who is this mediator—true God and at the same time truly human and truly righteous?

A. Our Lord Jesus Christ,¹
who was given us
to set us completely free
and to make us right with God.²

¹ Matt. 1:21-23; Luke 2:11; 1 Tim. 2:5

² 1 Cor. 1:30

19 Q. How do you come to know this?

A. The holy gospel tells me.
God himself began to reveal the gospel already in Paradise;¹
later, he proclaimed it
by the holy patriarchs² and prophets,³
and portrayed it
by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law;⁴
finally, he fulfilled it
through his own dear Son.⁵

¹ Gen. 3:15

² Gen. 22:18; 49:10

³ Isa. 53; Jer. 23:5-6; Mic. 7:18-20; Acts 10:43; Heb. 1:1-2

⁴ Lev. 1-7; John 5:46; Heb. 10:1-10

⁵ Rom. 10:4; Gal. 4:4-5; Col. 2:17

Lord's Day 7

20 Q. Are all saved through Christ just as all were lost through Adam?

A. No.

A. INO.

Only those are saved
who by true faith
are grafted into Christ
and accept all his blessings.¹

¹ Matt. 7:14; John 3:16, 18, 36; Rom. 11:16-21

21 Q. What is true faith?

A. True faith is
not only a knowledge and conviction
that everything God reveals in his Word is true;¹
it is also a deep-rooted assurance,²
created in me by the Holy Spirit³ through the gospel⁴
that, out of sheer grace earned for us by Christ,⁵
not only others, but I too,⁶
have had my sins forgiven,
have been made forever right with God,
and have been granted salvation.⁷

¹ John 17:3, 17; Heb. 11:1-3; James 2:19

² Rom. 4:18-21; 5:1; 10:10; Heb. 4:14-16

³ Matt. 16:15-17; John 3:5; Acts 16:14

⁴ Rom. 1:16; 10:17; 1 Cor. 1:21

⁵ Rom. 3:21-26; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-10

⁶ Gal. 2:20

⁷ Rom. 1:17; Heb. 10:10

22 Q. What then must a Christian believe?

A. Everything God promises us in the gospel.¹
That gospel is summarized for us
in the articles of our Christian faith—
a creed beyond doubt,
and confessed throughout the world.

¹ Matt. 28:18-20; John 20:30-31

23 Q. What are these articles?

A. I believe in God, the Father, almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the virgin Mary;
suffered under Pontius Pilate;
was crucified, dead, and buried;
he descended into hell;

ne ascended into heu;
the third day he arose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from thence he shall come
to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost;
the holy catholic church, the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body;
and the life everlasting.
Amen

Lord's Day 8

24 Q. How are these articles divided?

A. Into three parts:
God the Father and our creation;
God the Son and our deliverance;
God the Holy Spirit and our sanctification.

**25 Q. Since there is but one God,¹
why do you speak of three:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?**

A. Because that is how
God has revealed himself in his Word:²
these three distinct persons
are one, true, eternal God.

¹ Deut. 6:4; 1 Cor. 8:4, 6

² Matt. 3:16-17; 28:18-19; Luke 4:18 (Isa. 61:1); John 14:26; 15:26; 2 Cor. 13:14; Gal. 4:6; Tit. 3:5-6

God the Father

Lord's Day 9

**26 Q. What do you believe when you say:
“I believe in God the Father, almighty,
maker of heaven and earth”?**

A. That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who out of nothing created heaven and earth
and everything in them,¹
who still upholds and rules them
by his eternal counsel and providence,²
is my God and Father
because of Christ his Son.³

I trust him so much that I do not doubt
he will provide
whatever I need
for body and soul,⁴
and he will turn to my good
whatever adversity he sends me
in this sad world.⁵

He is able to do this because he is almighty God,⁶
he desires to do this because he is a faithful Father.⁷

- ¹ Gen. 1 & 2; Ex. 20:11; Ps. 33:6; Isa. 44:24; Acts 4:24; 14:15
² Ps. 104; Matt. 6:30; 10:29; Eph. 1:11
³ John 1:12-13; Rom. 8:15-16; Gal. 4:4-7; Eph. 1:5
⁴ Ps. 55:22; Matt. 6:25-26; Luke 12:22-31
⁵ Rom. 8:28
⁶ Gen. 18:14; Rom. 8:31-39
⁷ Matt. 7:9-11

Lord's Day 10

27 Q. What do you understand by the providence of God?

A. Providence is

the almighty and ever present power of God¹
 by which he upholds, as with his hand,
 heaven
 and earth
 and all creatures,²
 and so rules them that
 leaf and blade,
 rain and drought,
 fruitful and lean years,
 food and drink,
 health and sickness,
 prosperity and poverty—³
 all things, in fact, come to us
 not by chance⁴
 but from his fatherly hand.⁵

¹ Jer. 23:23-24; Acts 17:24-28

² Heb. 1:3

³ Jer. 5:24; Acts 14:15-17; John 9:3; Prov. 22:2

⁴ Prov. 16:33

⁵ Matt. 10:29

28 Q. How does the knowledge of God's creation and providence help us?

A. We can be patient when things go against us,¹
 thankful when things go well,²
 and for the future we can have
 good confidence in our faithful God and Father
 that nothing will separate us from his love.³
 All creatures are so completely in his hand
 that without his will
 they can neither move nor be moved.⁴

¹ Job 1:21-22; James 1:3

² Deut. 8:10; 1 Thess. 5:18

³ Ps. 55:22; Rom. 5:3-5; 8:38-39

⁴ Job 1:12; 2:6; Prov. 21:1; Acts 17:24-28

God the Son

Lord's Day 11

29 Q. Why is the Son of God called "Jesus" meaning "savior"?

A. Because he saves us from our sins.¹
Salvation cannot be found in anyone else;
it is futile to look for any salvation elsewhere.²

¹ Matt. 1:21; Heb. 7:25

² Isa. 43:11; John 15:5; Acts 4:11-12; 1 Tim. 2:5

**30 Q. Do those who look for
their salvation and security
in saints, in themselves, or elsewhere
really believe in the only savior Jesus?**

A. No.
Although they boast of being his,
by their deeds they deny
the only savior and deliverer, Jesus.¹

Either Jesus is not a perfect savior,
or those who in true faith accept this savior
have in him all they need for their salvation.²

¹ 1 Cor. 1:12-13; Gal. 5:4

² Col. 1:19-20; 2:10; 1 John 1:7

Lord's Day 12

**31 Q. Why is he called "Christ"
meaning "anointed"?**

A. Because he has been ordained by God the Father
and has been anointed with the Holy Spirit¹
to be
our chief prophet and teacher²
who perfectly reveals to us
the secret counsel and will of God for our deliverance;³
our only high priest⁴
who has set us free by the one sacrifice of his body,⁵
and who continually pleads our cause with the Father;⁶
and our eternal king⁷
who governs us by his Word and Spirit,
and who guards us and keeps us
in the freedom he has won for us.⁸

¹ Luke 3:21-22; 4:14-19 (Isa. 61:1); Heb. 1:9 (Ps. 45:7)

² Acts 3:22 (Deut. 18:15)

³ John 1:18; 15:15

⁴ Heb. 7:17 (Ps. 110:4)

⁵ Heb. 9:12; 10:11-14

⁶ Rom. 8:34; Heb. 9:24

⁷ Matt. 21:5 (Zech. 9:9)

⁸ Matt. 28:18-20; John 10:28; Rev. 12:10-11

32 Q. But why are you called a Christian?

A. Because by faith I am a member of Christ¹
and so I share in his anointing.²
I am anointed
to confess his name,³
to present myself to him as a living sacrifice of thanks,⁴
to strive with a good conscience against sin and the devil
in this life,⁵

and afterward to reign with Christ
over all creation
for all eternity.⁶

¹ 1 Cor. 12:12-27

² Acts 2:17 (Joel 2:28); 1 John 2:27

³ Matt. 10:32; Rom. 10:9-10; Heb. 13:15

⁴ Rom. 12:1; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9

⁵ Gal. 5:16-17; Eph. 6:11; 1 Tim. 1:18-19

⁶ Matt. 25:34; 2 Tim. 2:12

Lord's Day 13

**33 Q. Why is he called God's "only Son"
when we also are God's children?**

A. Because Christ alone is the eternal, natural Son of God.¹
We, however, are adopted children of God—
adopted by grace through Christ.²

¹ John 1:1-3, 14, 18; Heb. 1

² John 1:12; Rom. 8:14-17; Eph. 1:5-6

34 Q. Why do you call him "our Lord"?

A. Because—
not with gold or silver,
but with his precious blood—¹
he has set us free
from sin and from the tyranny of the devil,²
and has bought us,
body and soul,
to be his very own.³

¹ 1 Pet. 1:18-19

² Col. 1:13-14; Heb. 2:14-15

³ 1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Tim. 2:5-6

Lord's Day 14

**35 Q. What does it mean that he
"was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the virgin Mary"?**

A.
That the eternal Son of God,
who is and remains
true and eternal God,¹
took to himself,
through the working of the Holy Spirit,²
from the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary,³
a truly human nature
so that he might become David's true descendant,⁴
like his brothers in every way⁵
except for sin.⁶

¹ John 1:1; 10:30-36; Acts 13:33 (Ps. 2:7); Col. 1:15-17; 1 John 5:20

² Luke 1:35

³ Matt. 1:18-23; John 1:14; Gal. 4:4; Heb. 2:14

⁴ 2 Sam. 7:12-16; Ps. 132:11; Matt. 1:1; Rom. 1:3

⁵ Phil. 2:7; Heb. 2:17

⁶ Heb. 4:15; 7:26-27

36 Q. How does the holy conception and birth of Christ benefit you?

A. He is our mediator,¹
and with his innocence and perfect holiness
he removes from God's sight
my sin—mine since I was conceived.²

¹ 1 Tim. 2:5-6; Heb. 9:13-15

² Rom. 8:3-4; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 4:4-5; 1 Pet. 1:18-19

Lord's Day 15

37 Q. What do you understand by the word "suffered"?

A. That during his whole life on earth,
but especially at the end,
Christ sustained
in body and soul
the anger of God against the sin of the whole human race.¹

This he did in order that,
by his suffering as the only atoning sacrifice,²
he might set us free, body and soul,
from eternal condemnation,³
and gain for us
God's grace,
righteousness,
and eternal life.⁴

¹ Isa. 53; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18

² Rom. 3:25; Heb. 10:14; 1 John 2:2; 4:10

³ Rom. 8:1-4; Gal. 3:13

⁴ John 3:16; Rom. 3:24-26

38 Q. Why did he suffer "under Pontius Pilate" as judge?

A. So that he,
though innocent,
might be condemned by a civil judge,¹
and so free us from the severe judgment of God
that was to fall on us.²

¹ Luke 23:13-24; John 19:4, 12-16

² Isa. 53:4-5; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13

39 Q. Is it significant that he was "crucified" instead of dying some other way?

A. Yes.
This death convinces me
that he shouldered the curse
which lay on me,
since death by crucifixion was accursed by God.¹

¹ Gal. 3:10-13 (Deut. 21:23)

Lord's Day 16

40 Q. Why did Christ have to go all the way to death?

A. Because God's justice and truth demand it:¹
only the death of God's Son could pay for our sin.²

¹ Gen. 2:17

² Rom. 8:3-4; Phil. 2:8; Heb. 2:9

41 Q. Why was he "buried"?

A. His burial testifies
that he really died.¹

¹ Isa. 53:9; John 19:38-42; Acts 13:29; 1 Cor. 15:3-4

42 Q. Since Christ has died for us, why do we still have to die?

A. Our death does not pay the debt of our sins.¹
Rather, it puts an end to our sinning
and is our entrance into eternal life.²

¹ Ps. 49:7

² John 5:24; Phil. 1:21-23; 1 Thess. 5:9-10

43 Q. What further advantage do we receive from Christ's sacrifice and death on the cross?

A. Through Christ's death
our old selves are crucified, put to death, and buried with him,¹
so that the evil desires of the flesh
may no longer rule us,²
but that instead we may dedicate ourselves
as an offering of gratitude to him.³

¹ Rom. 6:5-11; Col. 2:11-12

² Rom. 6:12-14

³ Rom. 12:1; Eph. 5:1-2

44 Q. Why does the creed add: "he descended into hell"?

A. To assure me in times of personal crisis and temptation
that Christ my Lord,
by suffering unspeakable anguish, pain, and terror of soul,
especially on the cross but also earlier,
has delivered me from the anguish and torment of hell.¹

¹ Isa. 53; Matt. 26:36-46; 27:45-46; Luke 22:44; Heb. 5:7-10

Lord's Day 17

45 Q. How does Christ's resurrection benefit us?

A. First, by his resurrection he has overcome death,
so that he might make us share in the righteousness
he won for us by his death.¹

Second, by his power we too
are already now resurrected to a new life.²

Third, Christ's resurrection
is a guarantee of our glorious resurrection.³

¹ Rom. 4:25; 1 Cor. 15:16-20; 1 Pet. 1:3-5

² Rom. 6:5-11; Eph. 2:4-6; Col. 3:1-4

³ Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:12-23; Phil. 3:20-21

Lord's Day 18

**46 Q. What do you mean by saying,
"he ascended into heaven"?**

A. That Christ,
while his disciples watched,
was lifted up from the earth into heaven¹
and will be there for our good²
until he comes again
to judge the living and the dead.³

¹ Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:9-11

² Rom. 8:34; Eph. 4:8-10; Heb. 7:23-25; 9:24

³ Acts 1:11

**47 Q. But isn't Christ with us
until the end of the world
as he promised us?¹**

A. Christ is truly human and truly God.
In his human nature Christ is not now on earth;²
but in his divinity, majesty, grace, and Spirit
he is not absent from us for a moment.³

¹ Matt. 28:20

² Acts 1:9-11; 3:19-21

³ Matt. 28:18-20; John 14:16-19

**48 Q. If his humanity is not present
wherever his divinity is,
then aren't the two natures of Christ
separated from each other?**

A. Certainly not.
Since divinity
is not limited
and is present everywhere,¹
it is evident that
Christ's divinity is surely beyond the bounds of
the humanity he has taken on,
but at the same time his divinity is in
and remains personally united to
his humanity.²

¹ Jer. 23:23-24; Acts 7:48-49 (Isa. 66:1)

² John 1:14; 3:13; Col. 2:9

49 Q. How does Christ's ascension into heaven benefit us?

A. First, he pleads our cause
in heaven
in the presence of his Father.¹

Second, we have our own flesh in heaven—
a guarantee that Christ our head
will take us, his members,
to himself in heaven.²

Third, he sends his Spirit to us on earth
as a further guarantee.³
By the Spirit's power
we make the goal of our lives,
not earthly things,
but the things above where Christ is,
sitting at God's right hand.⁴

¹ Rom. 8:34; 1 John 2:1

² John 14:2; 17:24; Eph. 2:4-6

³ John 14:16; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; 5:5

⁴ Col. 3:1-4

Lord's Day 19

**50 Q. Why the next words:
“and sitteth on the right hand of God”?**

A. Christ ascended to heaven,
there to show that he is head of his church,¹
and that the Father rules all things through him.²

¹ Eph. 1:20-23; Col. 1:18

² Matt. 28:18; John 5:22-23

51 Q. How does this glory of Christ our head benefit us?

A. First, through his Holy Spirit
he pours out his gifts from heaven
upon us his members.¹

Second, by his power
he defends us and keeps us safe
from all enemies.²

¹ Acts 2:33; Eph. 4:7-12

² Ps. 110:1-2; John 10:27-30; Rev. 19:11-16

**52 Q. How does Christ's return
“to judge the living and the dead”
comfort you?**

A. In all my distress and persecution

I turn my eyes to the heavens
and confidently await as judge the very One
who has already stood trial in my place before God
and so has removed the whole curse from me.¹
All his enemies and mine
he will condemn to everlasting punishment:
but me and all his chosen ones
he will take along with him
into the joy and the glory of heaven.²

¹ Luke 21:28; Rom. 8:22-25; Phil. 3:20-21; Tit. 2:13-14

² Matt. 25:31-46; 2 Thess. 1:6-10

God the Holy Spirit

Lord's Day 20

53 Q. What do you believe concerning “the Holy Spirit”?

A. First, he, as well as the Father and the Son,
is eternal God.¹

Second, he has been given to me personally,²
so that, by true faith,
he makes me share in Christ and all his blessings,³
comforts me,⁴
and remains with me forever.⁵

¹ Gen. 1:1-2; Matt. 28:19; Acts 5:3-4

² 1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; Gal. 4:6

³ Gal. 3:14

⁴ John 15:26; Acts 9:31

⁵ John 14:16-17; 1 Pet. 4:14

Lord's Day 21

54 Q. What do you believe concerning “the holy catholic church”?

A. I believe that the Son of God,
through his Spirit and Word,¹
out of the entire human race,²
from the beginning of the world to its end,³
gathers, protects, and preserves for himself
a community chosen for eternal life⁴
and united in true faith.⁵

And of this community I am⁶ and always will be⁷
a living member.

¹ John 10:14-16; Acts 20:28; Rom. 10:14-17; Col. 1:18

² Gen. 26:3b-4; Rev. 5:9

³ Isa. 59:21; 1 Cor. 11:26

⁴ Matt. 16:18; John 10:28-30; Rom. 8:28-30; Eph. 1:3-14

⁵ Acts 2:42-47; Eph. 4:1-6

⁶ 1 John 3:14, 19-21

⁷ John 10:27-28; 1 Cor. 1:4-9; 1 Pet. 1:3-5

55 Q. What do you understand by “the communion of saints”?

A. First, that believers one and all.

as members of this community,
share in Christ
and in all his treasures and gifts.¹

Second, that each member
should consider it his duty
to use his gifts
readily and cheerfully
for the service and enrichment
of the other members.²

¹ Rom. 8:32; 1 Cor. 6:17; 12:4-7, 12-13; 1 John 1:3

² Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:20-27; 13:1-7; Phil. 2:4-8

**56 Q. What do you believe
concerning “the forgiveness of sins”?**

A. I believe that God,
because of Christ’s atonement,
will never hold against me
any of my sins¹
nor my sinful nature
which I need to struggle against all my life.²

Rather, in his grace
God grants me the righteousness of Christ
to free me forever from judgment.³

¹ Ps. 103:3-4,10,12; Mic. 7:18-19; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; 1 John 1:7; 2:2

² Rom. 7:21-25

³ John 3:17-18; Rom. 8:1-2

Lord’s Day 22

**57 Q. How does “the resurrection of the body”
comfort you?**

A. Not only my soul
will be taken immediately after this life
to Christ its head,¹
but even my very flesh, raised by the power of Christ,
will be reunited with my soul
and made like Christ’s glorious* body.²

¹ Luke 23:43; Phil. 1:21-23

² 1 Cor. 15:20, 42-46, 54; Phil. 3:21; 1 John 3:2

*The first edition had here the word for “holy.” This was later corrected to “glorious.”

**58 Q. How does the article
concerning “life everlasting”
comfort you?**

A. Even as I already now
experience in my heart
the beginning of eternal joy,¹
so after this life I will have
perfect blessedness such as
no eye has seen,
no ear has heard,
no man has ever imagined:
a blessedness in which to praise God eternally.²

¹ Rom. 14:17

² John 17:3; 1 Cor. 2:9

Lord's Day 23

**59 Q. What good does it do you, however,
to believe all this?**

A. In Christ I am right with God
and heir to life everlasting.¹

¹ John 3:36; Rom. 1:17 (Hab. 2:4); Rom. 5:1-2

60 Q. How are you right with God?

A. Only by true faith in Jesus Christ.¹

Even though my conscience accuses me
of having grievously sinned against all God's
commandments
and of never having kept any of them,²
and even though I am still inclined toward all evil,³
nevertheless,
without my deserving it at all,⁴
out of sheer grace,⁵
God grants and credits to me
the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ,⁶
as if I had never sinned nor been a sinner,
as if I had been as perfectly obedient
as Christ was obedient for me.⁷

All I need to do
is to accept this gift of God with a believing heart.⁸

¹ Rom. 3:21-28; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-9; Phil 3:8-11

² Rom. 3:9-10

³ Rom. 7:23

⁴ Tit. 3:4-5

⁵ Rom. 3:24; Eph. 2:8

⁶ Rom. 4:3-5 (Gen. 15:6); 2 Cor. 5:17-19; 1 John 2:1-2

⁷ Rom. 4:24-25; 2 Cor. 5:21

⁸ John 3:18; Acts 16:30-31

**61 Q. Why do you say that
by faith alone
you are right with God?**

A. It is not because of any value my faith has
that God is pleased with me.
Only Christ's satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness
make me right with God.¹
And I can receive this righteousness and make it mine
in no other way than
by faith alone.²

¹ 1 Cor. 1:30-31

² Rom. 10:10; 1 John 5:10-12

Lord's Day 24

**62 Q. Why can't the good we do
make us right with God,
or at least help make us right with him?**

A. Because the righteousness
which can pass God's scrutiny
must be entirely perfect
and must in every way measure up to the divine law.¹
Even the very best we do in this life
is imperfect
and stained with sin.²

¹ Rom. 3:20; Gal. 3:10 (Deut. 27:26)

² Isa. 64:6

**63 Q. How can you say that the good we do
doesn't earn anything
when God promises to reward it
in this life and the next?¹**

A. This reward is not earned;
it is a gift of grace.²

¹ Matt. 5:12; Heb. 11:6

² Luke 17:10; 2 Tim. 4:7-8

**64 Q. But doesn't this teaching
make people indifferent and wicked?**

A. No.
It is impossible
for those grafted into Christ by true faith
not to produce fruits of gratitude.¹

¹ Luke 6:43-45; John 15:5

The Sacraments

Lord's Day 25

**65 Q. It is by faith alone
that we share in Christ and all his blessings:
where then does that faith come from?**

A. The Holy Spirit produces it in our hearts¹
by the preaching of the holy gospel,²
and confirms it
through our use of the holy sacraments.³

¹ John 3:5; 1 Cor. 2:10-14; Eph. 2:8

² Rom. 10:17; 1 Pet. 1:23-25

³ Matt. 28:19-20; 1 Cor. 10:16

66 Q. What are sacraments?

A. Sacraments are holy signs and seals for us to see.
They were instituted by God so that
by our use of them
he might make us understand more clearly
the promise of the gospel,
and might put his seal on that promise.¹

And this is God's special promise:

And this is God's gospel promise:
to forgive our sins and give us eternal life
by grace alone
because of Christ's one sacrifice
finished on the cross.²

¹ Gen. 17:11; Deut. 30:6; Rom. 4:11

² Matt. 26:27-28; Acts 2:38; Heb. 10:10

67 Q. Are both the word and the sacraments then intended to focus our faith on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross as the only ground of our salvation?

A. Right!
In the gospel the Holy Spirit teaches us
and through the holy sacraments he assures us
that our entire salvation
rests on Christ's one sacrifice for us on the cross.¹

¹ Rom. 6:3; 1 Cor. 11:26; Gal. 3:27

68 Q. How many sacraments did Christ institute in the New Testament?

A. Two: baptism and the Lord's supper.¹

¹ Matt. 28:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26

Baptism

Lord's Day 26

69 Q. How does baptism remind you and assure you that Christ's one sacrifice on the cross is for you personally?

A. In this way:
Christ instituted this outward washing¹
and with it gave the promise that,
as surely as water washes away the dirt from the body,
so certainly his blood and his Spirit
wash away my soul's impurity,
in other words, all my sins.²

¹ Acts 2:38

² Matt. 3:11; Rom. 6:3-10; 1 Pet. 3:21

70 Q. What does it mean to be washed with Christ's blood and Spirit?

A. To be washed with Christ's blood means that God, by grace, has forgiven my sins because of Christ's blood poured out for me in his sacrifice on the cross.¹

To be washed with Christ's Spirit means that the Holy Spirit has renewed me and set me apart to be a member of Christ so that more and more I become dead to sin and increasingly live a holy and blameless life.²

¹ Zech. 13:1; Eph. 1:7-8; Heb. 12:24; 1 Pet. 1:2; Rev. 1:5

² Ezek. 36:25-27; John 3:5-8; Rom. 6:4; 1 Cor. 6:11; Col. 2:11-12

**71 Q. Where does Christ promise
that we are washed with his blood and Spirit
as surely as we are washed
with the water of baptism?**

A. In the institution of baptism where he says:
“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father
and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit.”¹

“He who believes and is baptized will be saved,
but he who does not believe will be condemned.”^{2*}

This promise is repeated when Scripture calls baptism
the washing of regeneration³ and
the washing away of sins.⁴

¹ Matt. 28:19

² Mark 16:16

³ Tit. 3:5

⁴ Acts 22:16

*Earlier and better manuscripts of Mark 16 omit the words, “He who believes and is baptized . . . condemned.”

Lord's Day 27

**72 Q. Does this outward washing with water
itself wash away sins?**

A. No, only Jesus Christ's blood and the Holy Spirit
cleans us from all sins.¹

¹ Matt. 3:11; 1 Pet. 3:21; 1 John 1:7

**73 Q. Why then does the Holy Spirit call baptism
the washing of rebirth and**

the washing away of sins?

A. God has good reason for these words.
He wants to teach us that
the blood and Spirit of Christ wash away our sins
just as water washes away dirt from our bodies.¹

But more important,
he wants to assure us, by this divine pledge and sign,
that the washing away of our sins spiritually
is as real as physical washing with water.²

¹ 1 Cor. 6:11; Rev. 1:5; 7:14

² Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27

74 Q. Should infants, too, be baptized?

A. Yes.
Infants as well as adults
are in God's covenant and are his people.¹
They, no less than adults, are promised
the forgiveness of sin through Christ's blood
and the Holy Spirit who produces faith.²

Therefore, by baptism, the mark of the covenant,
infants should be received into the Christian church
and should be distinguished from the children of unbelievers.³
This was done in the Old Testament by circumcision,⁴
which was replaced in the New Testament by baptism.⁵

¹ Gen. 17:7; Matt. 19:14

² Isa. 44:1-3; Acts 2:38-39; 16:31

³ Acts 10:47; 1 Cor. 7:14

⁴ Gen. 17:9-14

⁵ Col. 2:11-13

The Lord's Supper

Lord's Day 28

**75 Q. How does the Lord's Supper
remind you and assure you
that you share in
Christ's one sacrifice on the cross
and in all his gifts?**

A. In this way:
Christ has commanded me and all believers
to eat this broken bread and to drink this cup.
With this command he gave this promise:¹

First,
as surely as I see with my eyes
the bread of the Lord broken for me
and the cup given to me,
so surely
his body was offered and broken for me
and his blood poured out for me
on the cross.

Second,
as surely as
I receive from the hand of him who serves,
and taste with my mouth

and taste with my mouth
the bread and cup of the Lord,
given me as sure signs of Christ's body and blood,
so surely
he nourishes and refreshes my soul for eternal life
with his crucified body and poured-out blood.

¹Matt. 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-25

**76 Q. What does it mean
to eat the crucified body of Christ
and to drink his poured-out blood?**

A. It means
to accept with a believing heart
the entire suffering and death of Christ
and by believing
to receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life.¹

But it means more.

Through the Holy Spirit, who lives both in Christ and in us,
we are united more and more to Christ's blessed body.²
And so, although he is in heaven³ and we are on earth,
we are flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone.⁴
And we forever live on and are governed by one Spirit,
as members of our body are by one soul.⁵

¹ John 6:35, 40, 50-54

² John 6:55-56; 1 Cor. 12:13

³ Acts 1:9-11; 1 Cor. 11:26; Col. 3:1

⁴ 1 Cor. 6:15-17; Eph. 5:29-30; 1 John 4:13

⁵ John 6:56-58; 15:1-6; Eph. 4:15-16; 1 John 3:24

**77 Q. Where does Christ promise
to nourish and refresh believers
with his body and blood
as surely as
they eat this broken bread
and drink this cup?**

A. In the institution of the Lord's Supper:

"The Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed
took bread, and when he had given thanks,
he broke it, and said,
'Take, eat, this is my body which is for you.*
Do this in remembrance of me.'
In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying,
'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.
Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me.'
For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup,
you proclaim the Lord's death
until he comes."¹

This promise is repeated by Paul in these words:

"The cup of blessing which we bless,
is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?
The bread which we break,
is it not a participation in the body of Christ?
Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body,
for we all partake of the one bread."²

¹ 1 Cor. 11:23-26

² 1 Cor. 10:16-17

*Earlier and better manuscripts of I Corinthians 11 omit the words, "Take, eat."

Lord's Day 29

78 Q. Are the bread and wine changed into the real body and blood of Christ?

A. No.

Just as the water of baptism
is not changed into Christ's blood
and does not itself wash away sins
but is simply God's sign and assurance,¹
so too the bread of the Lord's supper
is not changed into the actual body of Christ²
even though it is called the body of Christ³
in keeping with the nature and language of sacraments.⁴

¹ Eph. 5:26; Tit. 3:5

² Matt. 26:26-29

³ 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:26-28

⁴ Gen. 17:10-11; Ex. 12:11, 13; 1 Cor. 10:1-4

79 Q. Why then does Christ call the bread his body and the cup his blood, or the new covenant in his blood? (Paul uses the words, a participation in Christ's body and blood.)

A. Christ has good reason for these words.
He wants to teach us that
as bread and wine nourish our temporal life,
so too his crucified body and poured-out blood
truly nourish our souls for eternal life.¹

But more important,
he wants to assure us, by this visible sign and pledge,
that we, through the Holy Spirit's work,
share in his true body and blood
as surely as our mouths
receive these holy signs in his remembrance,²
and that all of his suffering and obedience
are as definitely ours
as if we personally
had suffered and paid for our sins.³

¹ John 6:51, 55

² 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:26

³ Rom. 6:5-11

Lord's Day 30

***80 Q. How does the Lord's supper differ from the Roman Catholic mass?**

A. The Lord's supper declares to us
that our sins have been completely forgiven
through the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ

which he himself finished on the cross once for all.¹

It also declares to us
that the Holy Spirit grafts us into Christ,²
who with his very body
is now in heaven at the right hand of the Father³
where he wants us to worship him.⁴

[But the Mass teaches
that the living and the dead
do not have their sins forgiven
through the suffering of Christ
unless Christ is still offered for them daily by the priests.

It also teaches
that Christ is bodily present
in the form of bread and wine
where Christ is therefore to be worshiped.

Thus the Mass is basically
nothing but a denial
of the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ
and a condemnable idolatry.]

¹ John 19:30; Heb. 7:27; 9:12, 25-26; 10:10-18

² 1 Cor. 6:17; 10:16-17

³ Acts 7:55-56; Heb. 1:3; 8:1

⁴ Matt. 6:20-21; John 4:21-24; Phil. 3:20; Col. 3:1-3

*Question and answer 80 were altogether absent from the first German edition of the Heidelber Catechism (January 1563) but appeared in a shorter form in the second German edition (March 1563). The translation above is of the expanded text of the third German edition (ca. April 1563). Its strong tone reflects the setting in which the catechism was written.

**81 Q. Who are to come
to the Lord's table?**

A. Those who are displeased with themselves
because of their sins,
but who nevertheless trust
that their sins are pardoned
and that their continuing weakness is covered
by the suffering and death of Christ,
and who also desire more and more
to strengthen their faith
and to lead a better life.

Hypocrites and those who are unrepentant, however,
eat and drink judgment on themselves.¹

¹ 1 Cor. 10:19-22; 11:26-32

**82 Q. Are those to be admitted
to the Lord's supper
who show by what they say and do
that they are unbelieving and ungodly?**

A. No, that would dishonor God's covenant
and bring down God's anger upon the entire congregation.¹
Therefore, according to the instruction of Christ and his apostles,
the Christian church is duty-bound to exclude such people,
by the official use of the keys of the kingdom,
until they reform their lives.

¹ 1 Cor. 11:17-32; Ps. 50:14-16; Isa. 1:11-17

Lord's Day 31

83 Q. What are the keys of the kingdom?

A. The preaching of the holy gospel
and Christian discipline toward repentance.
Both preaching and discipline
open the kingdom of heaven to believers
and close it to unbelievers.¹

¹ Matt. 16:19; John 20:22-23

84 Q. How does preaching the gospel open and close the kingdom of heaven?

A. According to the command of Christ:

The kingdom of heaven is opened
by proclaiming and publicly declaring
to all believers, each and every one, that,
as often as they accept the gospel promise in true faith,
God, because of what Christ has done,
truly forgives all their sins.

The kingdom of heaven is closed, however,
by proclaiming and publicly declaring
to unbelievers and hypocrites that,
as long as they do not repent,
the anger of God and eternal condemnation
rest on them.

God's judgment, both in this life and in the life to come,
is based on this gospel testimony.¹

¹ Matt. 16:19; John 3:31-36; 20:21-23

85 Q. How is the kingdom of heaven closed and opened by Christian discipline?

A. According to the command of Christ:

Those who, though called Christians,
professes unchristian teachings or live unchristian lives,
and after repeated and loving counsel,
refuse to abandon their errors and wickedness,
and after being reported to the church, that is, to its officers,
fail to respond also to their admonition—
such persons the officers exclude from the Christian fellowship
by withholding the sacraments from them,
and God himself excludes him from the kingdom of Christ.¹

Such a person,
when promising and demonstrating genuine reform,
are received again
as members of Christ
and of his church.²

¹ Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5:3-5, 11-13; 2 Thess. 3:14-15

² Luke 15:20-24; 2 Cor. 2:6-11

Part III: Gratitude

Lord's Day 32

**86 Q. We have been delivered
from our misery
by God's grace alone through Christ
and not because we have earned it:
why then must we still do good?**

A. To be sure, Christ has redeemed us by his blood.
But we do good because
Christ by his Spirit is also renewing us to be like himself,
so that in all our living
we may show that we are thankful to God
for all he has done for us,¹
and so that he may be praised through us.²

And we do good
so that we may be assured of our faith by its fruits,³
and so that by our godly living
our neighbors may be won over to Christ.⁴

¹ Rom. 6:13; 12:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:5-10

² Matt. 5:16; 1 Cor. 6:19-20

³ Matt. 7:17-18; Gal. 5:22-24; 2 Pet. 1:10-11

⁴ Matt. 5:14-16; Rom. 14:17-19; 1 Pet. 2:12; 3:1-2

**87 Q. Can those be saved
who do not turn to God
from their ungrateful
and impenitent ways?**

A. By no means.
Scripture tells us that
no unchaste person,
no idolater, adulterer, thief,
no covetous person,
no drunkard, slanderer, robber,
or the like
is going to inherit the kingdom of God.¹

¹ 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:1-20; 1 John 3:14

Lord's Day 33

**88 Q. What is involved
in genuine repentance or conversion?**

A. Two things:
the dying-away of the old self,
and the coming-to-life of the new.¹

¹ Rom. 6:1-11; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:5-10

89 Q. What is the dying-away of the old self?

A. It is to be genuinely sorry for sin,
to hate it more and more,
and to run away from it.¹

¹ Ps. 51:3-4, 17; Joel 2:12-13; Rom. 8:12-13; 2 Cor. 7:10

90 Q. What is the coming-to-life of the new self?

A. It is wholehearted joy in God through Christ¹
and a delight to do every kind of good
as God wants us to.²

¹ Ps. 51:8, 12; Isa. 57:15; Rom. 5:1; 14:17

² Rom. 6:10-11; Gal. 2:20

91 Q. What do we do that is good?

A. Only that which
arises out of true faith,¹
conforms to God's law,²
and is done for his glory;³
and not that which is based
on what we think is right
or on established human tradition.⁴

¹ John 15:5; Heb. 11:6

² Lev. 18:4; 1 Sam. 15:22; Eph. 2:10

³ 1 Cor. 10:31

⁴ Deut. 12:32; Isa. 29:13; Ezek. 20:18-19; Matt. 15:7-9

Lord's Day 34

92 Q. What does the Lord say in his law?

A. God spoke all these words:

The First Commandment

I am the Lord your God,
who brought you out of the land of Egypt,
out of the house of bondage.
You shall have no other gods before me.

The Second Commandment

You shall not make for yourself a graven image,
or any likeness of anything in heaven above,
or that is in the earth beneath,
or that is in the water under the earth;

you shall not bow down to them or serve them;
for I the Lord your God am a jealous God,
visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children
to the third and the fourth generation
of those who hate me,
but showing steadfast love to thousands of those
who love me and keep my commandments.

The Third Commandment

You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain;
for the Lord will not hold him guiltless
who takes his name in vain.

The Fourth Commandment

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
Six days you shall labor, and do all your work;
but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God;
in it you shall not do any work,
you, or your son, or your daughter,
your manservant, or your maidservant,
or your cattle,
or the sojourner who is within your gates;
for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea,
and all that is in them,
and rested the seventh day;
therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day
and hallowed it.

The Fifth Commandment

Honor your father and your mother,
that your days may be long
in the land which the Lord your God gives you.

The Sixth Commandment

You shall not kill.

The Seventh Commandment

You shall not commit adultery.

The Eighth Commandment

You shall not steal.

The Ninth Commandment

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

The Tenth Commandment

You shall not covet your neighbor's house;
you shall not covet your neighbor's wife,
or his manservant, or his maidservant,
or his ox, or his ass,
or anything that is your neighbor's.¹

¹ Ex. 20:1-17; Deut. 5:6-21

93 Q. How are these commandments divided?

A. Into two tables.

The first has four commandments,
teaching us what our relation to God should be.

The second has six commandments,
teaching us what we owe our neighbor.¹

¹ Matt. 22:37-39

**94 Q. What does the Lord require
in the first commandment?**

A. That I, not wanting to endanger my very salvation,
avoid and shun
all idolatry,¹ magic, superstitious rites,²
and prayer to saints or to other creatures.³

That I sincerely acknowledge the only true God,⁴
trust him alone,⁵
look to him for every good thing⁶
humbly⁷ and patiently,⁸
love him,⁹ fear him,¹⁰ and honor him¹¹
with all my heart.

In short,
that I give up anything
rather than go against his will in any way.¹²

¹ 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 10:5-14; 1 John 5:21

² Lev. 19:31; Deut. 18:9-12

³ Matt. 4:10; Rev. 19:10; 22:8-9

⁴ John 17:3

⁵ Jer. 17:5, 7

⁶ Ps. 104:27-28; James 1:17

⁷ 1 Pet. 5:5-6

⁸ Col. 1:11; Heb. 10:36

⁹ Matt. 22:37 (Deut. 6:5)

¹⁰ Prov. 9:10; 1 Pet. 1:17

¹¹ Matt. 4:10 (Deut. 6:13)

¹² Matt. 5:29-30; 10:37-39

95 Q. What is idolatry?

A. Idolatry is
having or inventing something in which one trusts
in place of or alongside of the only true God,
who has revealed himself in his Word.¹

¹ 1 Chron. 16:26; Gal. 4:8-9; Eph. 5:5; Phil. 3:19

Lord's Day 35

**96 Q. What is God's will for us
in the second commandment?**

A. That we in no way make any image of God¹
nor worship him in any other way
than he has commanded in his Word.²

¹ Deut. 4:15-19; Isa. 40:18-25; Acts 17:29; Rom. 1:23

² Lev. 10:1-7; 1 Sam. 15:22-23; John 4:23-24

**97 Q. May we then not make
any image at all?**

A. God can not and may not
be visibly portrayed in any way.

Although creatures may be portrayed,
yet God forbids making or having such images
if one's intention is to worship them

or to serve God through them.¹

¹ Ex. 34:13-14, 17; 2 Kings 18:4-5

**98 Q. But may not images be permitted in the churches
as teaching aids for the unlearned?**

A. No, we shouldn't try to be wiser than God.
He wants his people instructed
by the living preaching of his Word—¹
not by idols that cannot even talk.²

¹ Rom. 10:14-15, 17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:19

² Jer. 10:8; Hab. 2:18-20

Lord's Day 36

**99 Q. What is God's will for us
in the third commandment?**

A. That we neither blaspheme nor misuse the name of God
by cursing,¹ perjury,² or unnecessary oaths,³
nor share in such horrible sins
by being silent bystanders.⁴

In a word, it requires
that we use the holy name of God
only with reverence and awe,⁵
so that we may properly
confess him,⁶
pray to him,⁷
and praise him in everything we do and say.⁸

¹ Lev. 24:10-17

² Lev. 19:12

³ Matt. 5:37; James 5:12

⁴ Lev. 5:1; Prov. 29:24

⁵ Ps. 99:1-5; Jer. 4:2

⁶ Matt. 10:32-33; Rom. 10:9-10

⁷ Ps. 50:14-15; 1 Tim. 2:8

⁸ Col. 3:17

**100 Q. Is blasphemy of God's name by swearing and cursing
really such serious sin
that God is angry also with those
who do not do all they can
to help prevent it and forbid it?**

A. Yes, indeed.¹
No sin is greater,
no sin makes God more angry
than blaspheming his name.
That is why he commanded the death penalty for it.²

¹ Lev. 5:1

² Lev. 24:10-17

Lord's Day 37

101 Q. But may we swear an oath in God's name

if we do it reverently:

A. Yes, when the government demands it,
or when necessity requires it,
in order to maintain and promote truth and trustworthiness
for God's glory and our neighbor's good.

Such oaths are approved in God's Word¹
and were rightly used by Old and New Testament believers.²

¹ Deut. 6:13; 10:20; Jer. 4:1-2; Heb. 6:16

² Gen. 21:24; Josh. 9:15; 1 Kings 1:29-30; Rom. 1:9; 2 Cor. 1:23

102 Q. May we swear by saints or other creatures?

A. No.
A legitimate oath means calling upon God
as the one who knows my heart
to witness to my truthfulness
and to punish me if I swear falsely.¹
No creature is worthy of such honor.²

¹ Rom. 9:1; 2 Cor. 1:23

² Matt. 5:34-37; 23:16-22; James 5:12

Lord's Day 38

103 Q. What is God's will for you in the fourth commandment?

A. First,
that the gospel ministry and education for it be maintained,¹
and that, especially on the festive day of rest,
I regularly attend the assembly of God's people²
to learn what God's Word teaches,³
to participate in the sacraments,⁴
to pray to God publicly,⁵
and to bring Christian offerings for the poor.⁶

Second,
that every day of my life
I rest from my evil ways,
let the Lord work in me through his Spirit,
and so begin already in this life
the eternal Sabbath.⁷

¹ Deut. 6:4-9, 20-25; 1 Cor. 9:13-14; 2 Tim. 2:2; 3:13-17; Tit. 1:5

² Deut. 12:5-12; Ps. 40:9-10; 68:26; Acts 2:42-47; Heb. 10:23-25

³ Rom. 10:14-17; 1 Cor. 14:31-32; 1 Tim. 4:13

⁴ 1 Cor. 11:23-24

⁵ Col. 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:1

⁶ Ps. 50:14; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 8 & 9

⁷ Isa. 66:23; Heb. 4:9-11

Lord's Day 39

104 Q. What is God's will for you in the fifth commandment?

A. That I honor, love, and be loyal to
my father and mother

and all those in authority over me;
that I obey and submit to them, as is proper,
when they correct and punish me;¹
and also that I be patient with their failings—²
for through them God chooses to rule us.³

¹ Ex. 21:17; Prov. 1:8; 4:1; Rom. 13:1-2; Eph. 5:21-22; 6:1-9; Col. 3:18-4:1

² Prov. 20:20; 23:22; 1 Pet. 2:18

³ Matt. 22:21; Rom. 13:1-8; Eph. 6:1-9; Col. 3:18-21

Lord's Day 40

105 Q. What is God's will for you in the sixth commandment?

A. I am not to belittle, insult, hate, or kill my neighbor—
not by my thoughts, my words, my look or gesture,
and certainly not by actual deeds—
and I am not to be party to this in others;¹
rather, I am to put away all desire for revenge.²

I am not to harm or recklessly endanger myself either.³

Prevention of murder is also why
government is armed with the sword.⁴

¹ Gen. 9:6; Lev. 19:17-18; Matt. 5:21-22; 26:52

² Prov. 25:21-22; Matt. 18:35; Rom. 12:19; Eph. 4:26

³ Matt. 4:7; 26:52; Rom. 13:11-14

⁴ Gen. 9:6; Ex. 21:14; Rom. 13:4

106 Q. Does this commandment refer only to killing?

A. By forbidding murder God teaches us
that he hates the root of murder:
envy, hatred, anger, vindictiveness.¹

In God's sight all such are murder.²

¹ Prov. 14:30; Rom. 1:29; 12:19; Gal. 5:19-21; 1 John 2:9-11

² 1 John 3:15

107 Q. Is it enough then that we do not kill our neighbor in any such way?

A. No.

By condemning envy, hatred, and anger
God tells us

to love our neighbor as ourselves,¹
to be patient, peace-loving, gentle,
merciful, and friendly to him,²
to protect him from harm as much as we can,
and to do good even to our enemies.³

¹ Matt. 7:12; 22:39; Rom. 12:10

² Matt. 5:3-12; Luke 6:36; Rom. 12:10, 18; Gal. 6:1-2; Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:12; 1 Pet. 3:8

³ Ex. 23:4-5; Matt. 5:44-45; Rom. 12:20-21 (Prov. 25:21-22)

Lord's Day 41

108 Q. What is God's will for us in the seventh commandment?

A. God condemns all unchastity.¹
We should therefore thoroughly detest it²
and, married or single,
live decent and chaste lives.³

¹ Lev. 18:30; Eph. 5:3-5

² Jude 22-23

³ 1 Cor. 7:1-9; 1 Thess. 4:3-8; Heb. 13:4

109 Q. Does God, in this commandment, forbid only such scandalous sins as adultery?

A. We are temples of the Holy Spirit, body and soul,
and God wants both to be kept clean and holy.
That is why he forbids
everything which incites unchastity,¹
whether it be actions, looks, talk, thoughts, or desires.²

¹ 1 Cor. 15:33; Eph. 5:18

² Matt. 5:27-29; 1 Cor. 6:18-20; Eph. 5:3-4

Lord's Day 42

110 Q. What does God forbid in the eighth commandment?

A. He forbids not only outright theft and robbery,
punishable by law.¹

But in God's sight theft also includes
cheating and swindling our neighbor
by schemes made to appear legitimate,²
such as:
inaccurate measurements of weight, size, or volume;
fraudulent merchandising;
counterfeit money;
excessive interest;
or any other means forbidden by God.³

In addition he forbids all greed⁴
and pointless squandering of his gifts.⁵

¹ Ex. 22:1; 1 Cor. 5:9-10; 6:9-10

² Mic. 6:9-11; Luke 3:14; James 5:1-6

³ Deut. 25:13-16; Ps. 15:5; Prov. 11:1; 12:22; Ezek. 45:9-12; Luke 6:35

⁴ Luke 12:15; Eph. 5:5

⁵ Prov. 21:20; 23:20-21; Luke 16:10-13

111 Q. What does God require of you in this commandment?

A. That I do whatever I can
for my neighbor's good,
that I treat him
as I would like others to treat me,
and that I work faithfully
so that I may share with those in need.¹

¹ Lev. 19:11-13; 19:34; 23:6-8; 25:14-17; 25:35-36

Lord's Day 43

112 Q. What is God's will for you in the ninth commandment?

A. God's will is that I
never give false testimony against anyone,
twist no one's words,
not gossip or slander,
nor join in condemning anyone
without a hearing or without a just cause.¹

Rather, in court and everywhere else,
I should avoid lying and deceit of every kind;
these are devices the devil himself uses,
and they would call down on me God's intense anger.²
I should love the truth,
speak it candidly,
and openly acknowledge it.³
And I should do what I can
to guard and advance my neighbor's good name.⁴

¹ Ps. 15; Prov. 19:5; Matt. 7:1; Luke 6:37; Rom. 1:28-32

² Lev. 19:11-12; Prov. 12:22; 13:5; John 8:44; Rev. 21:8

³ 1 Cor. 13:6; Eph. 4:25

⁴ 1 Pet. 3:8-9; 4:8

Lord's Day 44

113 Q. What is God's will for you in the tenth commandment?

A. That not even the slightest thought or desire
contrary to any one of God's commandments
should ever arise in my heart.

Rather, with all my heart
I should always hate sin
and take pleasure in whatever is right.¹

¹ Ps. 19:7-14; 139:23-24; Rom. 7:7-8

114 Q. But can those converted to God obey these commandments perfectly?

A. No.
In this life even the holiest
have only a small beginning of this obedience.¹

Nevertheless, with all seriousness of purpose,
they do begin to live
according to all, not only some,
of God's commandments.²

¹ Eccles. 7:20; Rom. 7:14-15; 1 Cor. 13:9; 1 John 1:8-10

² Ps. 1:1-2; Rom. 7:22-25; Phil. 3:12-16

115 Q. No one in this life can obey the Ten Commandments perfectly:

**why then does God want them
preached so pointedly?**

A. First, so that the longer we live
the more we may come to know our sinfulness
and the more eagerly look to Christ
for forgiveness of sins and righteousness.¹

Second, so that,
while praying to God for the grace of the Holy Spirit,
we may never stop striving
to be renewed more and more after God's image,
until after this life we reach our goal:
perfection.²

¹ Ps. 32:5; Rom. 3:19-26; 7:7, 24-25; 1 John 1:9

² 1 Cor. 9:24; Phil. 3:12-14; 1 John 3:1-3

Prayer

Lord's Day 45

116 Q. Why do Christians need to pray?

A. Because prayer is the most important part
of the thankfulness God requires of us.¹
And also because God gives his grace and Holy Spirit
only to those who pray continually and groan inwardly,
asking God for these gifts
and thanking him for them.²

¹ Ps. 50:14-15; 116:12-19; 1 Thess. 5:16-18

² Matt. 7:7-8; Luke 11:9-13

**117 Q. How does God want us to pray
so that he will listen to us?**

A. First, we must pray from the heart
to no other than the one true God,
who has revealed himself in his Word,
asking for everything he has commanded us to ask for.¹

Second, we must acknowledge our need and misery,
hiding nothing,
and humble ourselves in his majestic presence.²

Third, we must rest on this unshakable foundation:
even though we do not deserve it,
God will surely listen to our prayer
because of Christ our Lord.
That is what he promised us in his Word.³

¹ Ps. 145:18-20; John 4:22-24; Rom. 8:26-27; James 1:5; 1 John 5:14-15

² 2 Chron. 7:14; Ps. 2:11; 34:18; 62:8; Isa. 66:2; Rev. 4

³ Dan. 9:17-19; Matt. 7:8; John 14:13-14; 16:23; Rom. 10:13; James 1:6

118 Q. What did God command us to pray for?

A. Everything we need, spiritually and physically,¹
as embraced in the prayer
Christ our Lord himself taught us.

¹ James 1:17; Matt. 6:33

119 Q. What is this prayer?

A. Our Father who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
 On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our debts,
 As we also have forgiven our debtors;
And lead us not into temptation,
 But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
 and the power,
 and the glory, forever.
Amen.^{1*}

¹ Matt. 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4

*Earlier and better manuscripts of Matt. 6 omit the words, “For thine is . . . Amen.”

Lord’s Day 46

**120 Q. Why did Christ command us
to call God, “our Father”?**

A. At the very beginning of our prayer
Christ wants to kindle in us
what is basic to our prayer—
 the childlike awe and trust
 that God through Christ has become
our Father.

Our fathers do not refuse us
 the things of this life;
God our Father will even less refuse to give us
 what we ask in faith.¹

¹ Matt. 7:9-11; Luke 11:11-13

**121 Q. Why the words,
“who art in heaven”?**

A. These words teach us
not to think of God’s heavenly majesty
 as something earthly,¹
and to expect everything
 for body and soul
 from his almighty power.²

¹ Jer. 23:23-24; Acts 17:24-25

² Matt. 6:25-34; Rom. 8:31-32

Lord's Day 47

122 Q. What does the first request mean?

A. *Hallowed be thy name* means,

Help us to really know you,¹
to bless, worship, and praise you
for all your works
and for all that shines forth from them:
your almighty power, wisdom, kindness,
justice, mercy, and truth.²

And it means,

Help us to direct all our living—
what we think, say, and do—
so that your name will never be blasphemed because of us
but always honored and praised.³

¹ Jer. 9:23-24; 31:33-34; Matt. 16:17; John 17:3

² Ex. 34:5-8; Ps. 145; Jer. 32:16-20; Luke 1:46-55, 68-75; Rom. 11:33-36

³ Ps. 115:1; Matt. 5:16

Lord's Day 48

123 Q. What does the second request mean?

A. *Thy kingdom come* means,

Rule us by your Word and Spirit in such a way
that more and more we submit to you.¹

Keep your church strong, and add to it.²

Destroy the devil's work;
destroy every force which revolts against you
and every conspiracy against your Word.³

Do this until your kingdom is so complete and perfect
that in it you are
all in all.⁴

¹ Ps. 119:5, 105; 143:10; Matt. 6:33

² Ps. 122:6-9; Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:42-47

³ Rom. 16:20; 1 John 3:8

⁴ Rom. 8:22-23; 1 Cor. 15:28; Rev. 22:17, 20

Lord's Day 49

124 Q. What does the third request mean?

A. *Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven* means,

Help us and all people
to reject our own wills
and to obey your will without any back talk.
Your will alone is good.¹

Help us one and all to carry out the work we are called to²
as willingly and faithfully as the angels in heaven.

¹ Matt. 7:21; 16:24-26; Luke 22:42; Rom. 12:1-2; Tit. 2:11-12

² 1 Cor. 7:17-24; Eph. 6:5-9

³ Ps. 103:20-21

Lord's Day 50

125 Q. What does the fourth request mean?

A. *Give us this day our daily bread* means,

Do take care of all our physical needs¹
so that we come to know
that you are the only source of everything good,²
and that neither our work and worry
nor your gifts
can do us any good without your blessing.³

And so help us to give up our trust in creatures
and to put trust in you alone.⁴

¹ Ps. 104:27-30; 145:15-16; Matt. 6:25-34

² Acts 14:17; 17:25; James 1:17

³ Deut. 8:3; Ps. 37:16; 127:1-2; 1 Cor. 15:58

⁴ Ps. 55:22; 62; 146; Jer. 17:5-8; Heb. 13:5-6

Lord's Day 51

126 Q. What does the fifth request mean?

A. *And forgive us our debts,*
as we also have forgiven our debtors means,

Because of Christ's blood,
do not hold against us, poor sinners that we are,
any of the sins we do
or the evil that constantly clings to us.¹

Forgive us just as we are fully determined,
as evidence of your grace in us,
to forgive our neighbors.²

¹ Ps. 51:1-7; 143:2; Rom. 8:1; 1 John 2:1-2

² Matt. 6:14-15; 18:21-35

Lord's Day 52

127 Q. What does the sixth request mean?

A. *And lead us not into temptation,*
but deliver us from evil means,

By ourselves we are too weak
to hold our own even for a moment.¹

And our sworn enemies—
the devil,² the world,³ and our own flesh—⁴
never stop attacking us.

And so, Lord,
uphold us and make us strong
with the strength of your Holy Spirit,
so that we may not go down to defeat
in this spiritual struggle,⁵
but may firmly resist our enemies
until we finally win the complete victory.⁶

¹ Ps. 103:14-16; John 15:1-5

² 2 Cor. 11:14; Eph. 6:10-13; 1 Pet. 5:8

³ John 15:18-21

⁴ Rom. 7:23; Gal. 5:17

⁵ Matt. 10:19-20; 26:41; Mark 13:33; Rom. 5:3-5

⁶ 1 Cor. 10:13; 1 Thess. 3:13; 5:23

128 Q. What does your conclusion to this prayer mean?

*A. For thine is the kingdom,
and the power,
and the glory, forever means,*

We have made all these requests of you
because, as our all-powerful king,
you not only want to,
but are able to give us all that is good;¹
and because your holy name,
and not we ourselves,
should receive all the praise, forever.²

¹ Rom. 10:11-13; 2 Pet. 2:9

² Ps. 115:1; John 14:13

129 Q. What does that little word “Amen” express?

A. Amen means,

This is sure to be!

It is even more sure
that God listens to my prayer,
than that I really desire
what I pray for.¹

¹ Isa. 65:24; 2 Cor. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:13

