

LUTHER'S
SMALL
CATECHISM

with Explanation



ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION



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LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM

with Explanation



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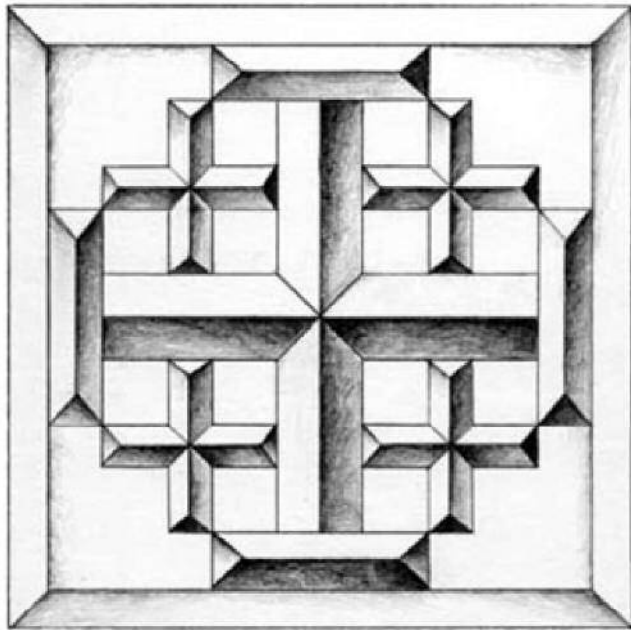
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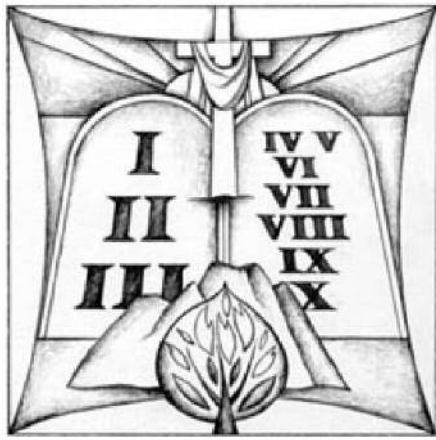
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LUTHER'S
SMALL
CATECHISM



Section 1

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

As the head of the family should teach them in a simple way to his household

The First Commandment

You shall have no other gods.

What does this mean? We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

The Second Commandment

You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

The Third Commandment

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

The Fourth Commandment

Honor your father and your mother.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.

The Fifth Commandment

You shall not murder.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and support him in every physical need.

The Sixth Commandment

You shall not commit adultery.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we lead a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do, and husband and wife love and honor each other.

The Seventh Commandment

You shall not steal.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not take our neighbor's money or possessions, or get them in any dishonest way, but help him to improve and protect his possessions and income.

The Eighth Commandment

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way.

The Ninth Commandment

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not scheme to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, or get it in a way which only appears right, but help and be of service to him in keeping it.

The Tenth Commandment

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox

**or donkey, or anything that belongs to
your neighbor.**

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not entice or force away our neighbor's wife, workers, or animals, or turn them against him, but urge them to stay and do their duty.

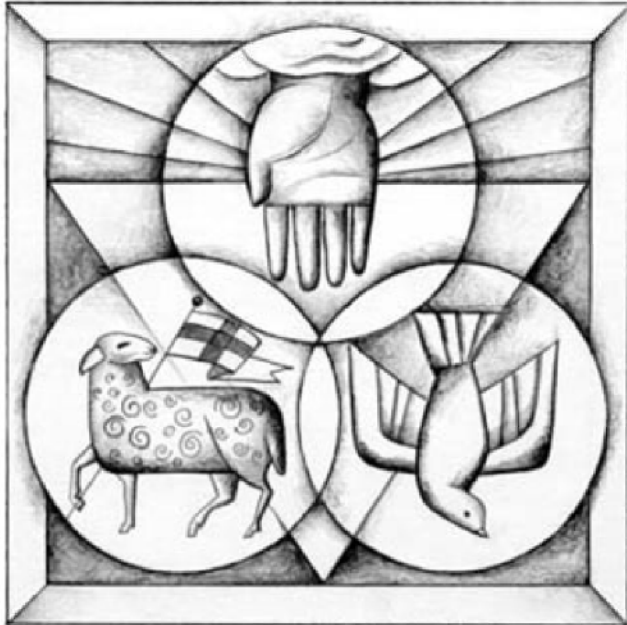
[The text of the commandments is from Ex. 20:3, 7, 8, 12–17.]

The Close of the Commandments

What does God say about all these commandments?

He says, “I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My commandments.” (Ex. 20: 5–6)

What does this mean? God threatens to punish all who break these commandments. Therefore, we should fear His wrath and not do anything against them. But He promises grace and every blessing to all who keep these commandments. Therefore, we should also love and trust in Him and gladly do what He commands.



THE CREED

As the head of the family should teach it in a simple way to his household

The First Article Creation

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

What does this mean? I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them.

He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.

He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil.

All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him.

This is most certainly true.

The Second Article Redemption

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

What does this mean? I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord,

who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death,

that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness,

just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.

This is most certainly true.

The Third Article Sanctification

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

What does this mean? I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith.

In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

In this Christian church He daily and richly
forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers.

On the Last Day He will raise me and all the
dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers
in Christ.

This is most certainly true.



THE LORD'S PRAYER

As the head of the family should teach it in a simple way to his household

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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours now and forever. Amen.

The Introduction

Our Father who art in heaven.

Our Father in heaven.

What does this mean? With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear father.

The First Petition

Hallowed be Thy name.

Hallowed be Your name.

What does this mean? God's name is certainly holy in itself, but we pray in this petition that it may be kept holy among us also.

How is God's name kept holy? God's name is kept holy when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we, as the children of God, also lead holy lives according to it. Help us to do this, dear Father in heaven! But anyone who teaches or lives contrary to God's Word profanes the name of God among us. Protect us from this, heavenly Father!

The Second Petition

Thy kingdom come.

Your kingdom come.

What does this mean? The kingdom of God certainly comes by itself without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may come to us also.

How does God's kingdom come? God's kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity.

The Third Petition

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Your will be done on earth as in heaven.

What does this mean? The good and gracious will of God is done even without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also.

How is God's will done? God's will is done

when He breaks and hinders every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature, which do not want us to hallow God's name or let His kingdom come; and when He

strengthens and keeps us firm in His Word and faith until we die.

This is His good and gracious will.

The Fourth Petition

Give us this day our daily bread.

Give us today our daily bread.

What does this mean? God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

What is meant by daily bread? Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

The Fifth Petition

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

What does this mean? We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look at our sins, or deny our prayer because of them. We are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor have we deserved them, but we ask that He would give them all to us by grace, for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment. So we too will sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us.

The Sixth Petition

And lead us not into temptation.

Lead us not into temptation.

What does this mean? God tempts no one. We pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our sinful nature may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice. Although we are attacked by these things, we pray that we may finally overcome them and win the victory.

The Seventh Petition

But deliver us from evil.

But deliver us from evil.

What does this mean? We pray in this petition, in summary, that our Father in heaven would rescue us from every evil of body and soul, possessions and reputation, and finally, when our last hour comes, give us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this valley of sorrow to Himself in heaven.

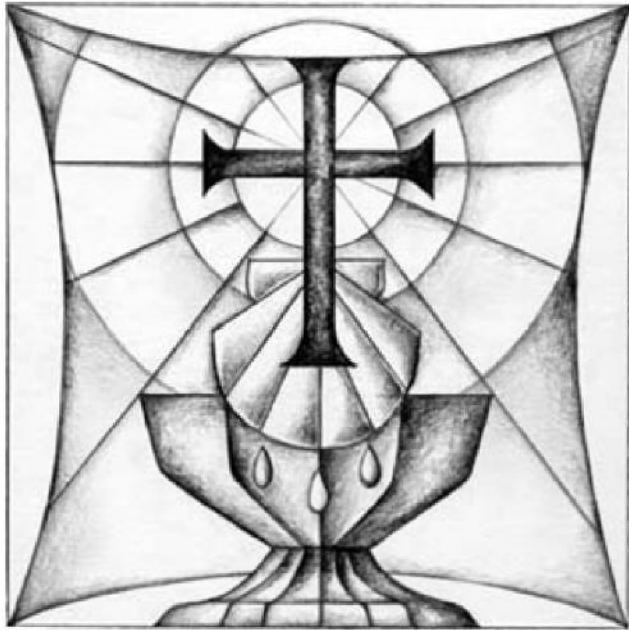
The Conclusion

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever.* Amen.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours now and forever. Amen.*

What does this mean? This means that I should be certain that these petitions are pleasing to our Father in heaven, and are heard by Him; for He Himself has commanded us to pray in this way and has promised to hear us. Amen, amen means “yes, yes, it shall be so.”

* These words were not in Luther's Small Catechism.



THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM

As the head of the family should teach it in a simple way to his household

First

What is Baptism?

Baptism is not just plain water, but it is the water included in God's command and combined with God's word.

Which is that word of God?

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Matthew: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matt. 28:19)

Second

What benefits does Baptism give?

It works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all

who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.

Which are these words and promises of God?

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Mark: "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:16)

Third

How can water do such great things?

Certainly not just water, but the word of God in and with the water does these things, along with the faith which trusts this word of God in the water. For without God's word the water is plain water and no Baptism. But with the word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a life-giving water, rich in grace, and a washing of the new birth in the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul says in Titus, chapter three:

"He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying." (Titus 3:5-8)

Fourth

What does such baptizing with water indicate?

It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

Where is this written?

St. Paul writes in Romans chapter six: "We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." (Rom. 6:4)



CONFESSIO

How Christians should be taught to confess

What is Confession?

Confession has two parts.

First, that we confess our sins, and

second, that we receive absolution, that is, forgiveness, from the pastor as from God Himself, not doubting, but firmly believing that by it our sins are forgiven before God in heaven.

What sins should we confess?

Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even those we are not aware of, as we do in the Lord's Prayer; but before the pastor we should confess only those sins which we know and feel in our hearts.

Which are these?

Consider your place in life according to the Ten Commandments: Are you a father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, or worker? Have you been disobedient, unfaithful, or lazy? Have you been hot-tempered, rude, or quarrelsome? Have

you hurt someone by your words or deeds? Have you stolen, been negligent, wasted anything, or done any harm?

A SHORT FORM OF CONFESSION

[Luther intended the following form to serve only as an example of private confession for Christians of his time. For a contemporary form of individual confession, see *Lutheran Service Book*, pp. 292–93.]

The penitent says:

Dear confessor, I ask you please to hear my confession and to pronounce forgiveness in order to fulfill God's will.

I, a poor sinner, plead guilty before God of all sins. In particular I confess before you that as a servant, maid, etc., I, sad to say, serve my master unfaithfully, for in this and that I have not done what I was told to do. I have made him angry and caused him to curse. I have been negligent and allowed damage to be done. I have also been offensive in words and deeds. I have quarreled with my peers. I have grumbled about the lady of the house and cursed her. I am sorry for all of this and I ask for grace. I want to do better.

A master or lady of the house may say:

In particular I confess before you that I have not faithfully guided my children, servants, and wife to the glory of God. I have cursed. I have set a bad example by indecent words and deeds. I have hurt my neighbor and spoken evil of him. I have overcharged, sold inferior merchandise, and given less than was paid for.

[Let the penitent confess whatever else he has done against God's commandments and his own position.]

If, however, someone does not find himself burdened with these or greater sins, he should not trouble himself or search for or invent other sins, and thereby make confession a torture. Instead, he should mention one or two that he knows: In particular I confess that I have cursed; I have used improper words; I have neglected this or that, etc. Let that be enough.

But if you know of none at all (which hardly seems possible), then mention none in particular,

but receive the forgiveness upon the general confession which you make to God before the confessor.

Then the confessor shall say:

God be merciful to you and strengthen your faith. Amen.

Furthermore:

Do you believe that my forgiveness is God's forgiveness?

Yes, dear confessor.

Then let him say:

Let it be done for you as you believe. And I, by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, forgive you your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Go in peace.

A confessor will know additional passages with which to comfort and to strengthen the faith of those who have great burdens of conscience or are sorrowful and distressed.

This is intended only as a general form of confession.

*What is the Office of the Keys?**

The Office of the Keys is that special authority which Christ has given to His church on earth to forgive the sins of repentant sinners, but to withhold forgiveness from the unrepentant as long as they do not repent.

*Where is this written?**

This is what St. John the Evangelist writes in chapter twenty: The Lord Jesus breathed on His disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." (**John 20:22–23**)

*What do you believe according to these words?**

I believe that when the called ministers of Christ deal with us by His divine command, in particular when they exclude openly unrepentant sinners from the Christian congregation and absolve those who repent of their sins and want to do better, this is just as valid and certain, even in heaven, as if Christ our dear Lord dealt with us Himself.

* This question may not have been composed by Luther himself but reflects his teaching and was

included in editions of the catechism during his lifetime.



THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

As the head of the family should teach it in a simple way to his household

What is the Sacrament of the Altar?

It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ Himself for us Christians to eat and to drink.

Where is this written?

The holy Evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and St. Paul write:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

What is the benefit of this eating and drinking?

These words, "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins," show us that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.

How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things?

Certainly not just eating and drinking do these things, but the words written here: "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins." These words, along with the bodily eating and drinking, are the main thing in the Sacrament. Whoever believes these words has exactly what they say: "forgiveness of sins."

Who receives this sacrament worthily?

Fasting and bodily preparation are certainly fine outward training. But that person is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words: "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins."

But anyone who does not believe these words or doubts them is unworthy and unprepared, for the words "for you" require all hearts to believe.



Section 2

DAILY PRAYERS

How the head of the family should teach his household to pray morning and evening

Morning Prayer

In the morning when you get up, make the sign of the holy cross and say:

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Then, kneeling or standing, repeat the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. If you choose, you may also say this little prayer:

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

Then go joyfully to your work, singing a hymn, like that of the Ten Commandments, or whatever your devotion may suggest.

Evening Prayer

In the evening when you go to bed, make the sign of the holy cross and say:

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Then kneeling or standing, repeat the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. If you choose, you may also say this little prayer:

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

Then go to sleep at once and in good cheer.

How the head of the family should teach his household to ask a blessing and return thanks

Asking a Blessing

The children and members of the household shall go to the table reverently, fold their hands, and say:

The eyes of all look to You, [O LORD,] and You give them their food at the proper time. You open Your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. (Ps. 145: 15–16)

Then shall be said the Lord's Prayer and the following:

Lord God, heavenly Father, bless us and these Your gifts which we receive from Your bountiful goodness, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Returning Thanks

Also, after eating, they shall, in like manner, reverently and with folded hands say:

Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good. His love endures forever. [He] gives food to every creature. He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call. His pleasure is

not in the strength of the horse, nor His delight in the legs of a man; the LORD delights in those who fear Him, who put their hope in His unfailing love. (Ps. 136:1, 25; 147:9–11)

Then shall be said the Lord's Prayer and the following:

We thank You, Lord God, heavenly Father, for all Your benefits, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.



Section 3

TABLE OF DUTIES

Certain passages of Scripture for various holy orders and positions, admonishing them about their duties and responsibilities

To Bishops, Pastors, and Preachers

The overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. **1 Tim. 3:2-4**

He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. **1 Tim. 3:6**

He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. **Titus 1:9**

What the Hearers Owe Their Pastors

The Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel. **1 Cor. 9:14**

Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor. Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. **Gal. 6:6-7**

The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages." **1 Tim. 5:17-18**

We ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. **1 Thess. 5:12-13**

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. **Heb. 13:17**

Of Civil Government

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. **Rom. 13:1-4**

Of Citizens

Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's. **Matt. 22:21**

It is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who

give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. **Rom. 13:5-7**

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior. **1 Tim. 2:1-3**

Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good. **Titus 3:1**

Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. **1 Peter 2:13-14**

To Husbands

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers. **1 Peter 3:7**

Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. **Col. 3:19**

To Wives

Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. **Eph. 5:22**

They were submissive to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear. **1 Peter 3:5-6**

To Parents

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. **Eph. 6:4**

To Children

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and your mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise—"that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." **Eph. 6:1-3**

To Workers of All Kinds

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you

would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free. **Eph. 6:5-8**

To Employers and Supervisors

Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that He who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with Him. **Eph. 6:9**

To Youth

Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time. **1 Peter 5:5-6**

To Widows

The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help. But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. **1 Tim. 5:5-6**

To Everyone

The commandments ... are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." **Rom. 13:9**

I urge ... that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone. **1 Tim. 2:1**

*Let each his lesson learn with care,
and all the household well shall fare.*



Section 4

— CHRISTIAN QUESTIONS WITH THEIR ANSWERS* —

Prepared by Dr. Martin Luther for those who
intend to go to the Sacrament

After confession and instruction in the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the pastor may ask, or Christians may ask themselves these questions:

1. Do you believe that you are a sinner?

Yes, I believe it. I am a sinner.

2. How do you know this?

From the Ten Commandments, which I have not kept.

3. Are you sorry for your sins?

Yes, I am sorry that I have sinned against God.

4. What have you deserved from God because of your sins?

His wrath and displeasure, temporal death, and eternal damnation. See **Rom. 6:21, 23.**

5. Do you hope to be saved?

Yes, that is my hope.

6. In whom then do you trust?

In my dear Lord Jesus Christ.

7. Who is Christ?

The Son of God, true God and man.

8. How many Gods are there?

Only one, but there are three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

9. What has Christ done for you that you trust in Him?

He died for me and shed His blood for me on the cross for the forgiveness of sins.

10. Did the Father also die for you?

He did not. The Father is God only, as is the Holy Spirit; but the Son is both true God and true man. He died for me and shed His blood for me.

11. How do you know this?

From the holy Gospel, from the words instituting the Sacrament, and by His body and blood given me as a pledge in the Sacrament.

12. What are the words of institution?

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

13. Do you believe, then, that the true body and blood of Christ are in the Sacrament?

Yes, I believe it.

14. What convinces you to believe this?

The word of Christ: Take, eat, this is My body; drink of it, all of you, this is My blood.

15. What should we do when we eat His body and drink His blood, and in this way receive His pledge?

We should remember and proclaim His death and the shedding of His blood, as He taught us: This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.

16. Why should we remember and proclaim His death?

First, so that we may learn to believe that no creature could make satisfaction for our sins. Only Christ, true God and man, could do that. Second, so we may learn to be horrified by our sins, and to regard them as very serious. Third, so we may find joy and comfort in Christ alone, and through faith in Him be saved.

17. What motivated Christ to die and make full payment for your sins?

His great love for His Father and for me and other sinners, as it is written in **John 14; Romans 5; Galatians 2; and Ephesians 5.**

18. Finally, why do you wish to go to the Sacrament?

That I may learn to believe that Christ, out of great love, died for my sin, and also learn from Him to love God and my neighbor.

19. What should admonish and encourage a Christian to receive the Sacrament frequently?

First, both the command and the promise of Christ the Lord. Second, his own pressing need, because of which the command, encouragement, and promise are given.

20. But what should you do if you are not aware of this need and have no hunger and thirst for the Sacrament?

To such a person no better advice can be given than this: first, he should touch his body to see if he still has flesh and blood. Then he should believe what the Scriptures say of it in **Galatians 5 and Romans 7.**

Second, he should look around to see whether he is still in the world, and remember that there will be no lack of sin and trouble, as the Scriptures say in **John 15–16** and in **1 John 2 and 5.**

Third, he will certainly have the devil also around him, who with his lying and murdering day and night will let him have no peace, within or without, as the Scriptures picture him in **John 8 and 16; 1 Peter 5; Ephesians 6; and 2 Timothy 2.**

Note: These questions and answers are no child's play, but are drawn up with great earnestness of purpose by the venerable and devout Dr. Luther for both young and old. Let each one pay attention and consider it a serious matter; for St. Paul writes to the Galatians in chapter six: "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked."

* The "Christian Questions with Their Answers," designating Luther as the author, first appeared in an edition of the Small Catechism in 1551.

AN EXPLANATION OF THE SMALL CATECHISM

Designed to help students understand and apply Luther's Small Catechism, the following explanation section, like those found in earlier editions, was not written by Dr. Luther. An explanation section, however, has regularly accompanied editions of Luther's Small Catechism since the early days of Lutheranism. This explanation has been based upon and largely includes the work of Johann Konrad Dietrich (1575–1639), Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther (1811–1887), Heinrich Christian Schwan (1819–1905), and the committee that prepared the synodical catechism of 1943.



INTRODUCTION

1. What is Christianity?

Christianity is the life and salvation God has given in and through Jesus Christ.

- 1 **John 14:6** I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.
- 2 **John 17:3** This is eternal life, that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.
- 3 **Acts 4:12** And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.
- 4 **Acts 11:26** And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.
- 5 **1 John 5:11–12** God gave us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

Note: Christianity was at first called “the Way” (Acts 9:2; 24:14, 22).

2. Where is God’s truth about our Savior Jesus Christ made known?

This truth is made known in the Bible: the Old Testament, which promises the coming Savior, and the New Testament, which tells of the Savior who has come.

- 6 **Heb. 1:1–2** Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son.
- 7 **Luke 24:27** Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.
- 8 **John 20:31** These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.
- 9 **Eph. 2:20** [You are] built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone.
- 10 **1 John 1:1–2a** That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest.

3. Why do we call the Bible the “Holy Scripture”?

The Bible is the “Holy Scripture” because God the Holy Spirit gave to His chosen writers the thoughts that they expressed and the words that they wrote (verbal inspiration). Therefore, the Bible is God’s own Word and truth, without error (inerrancy).

- 11 **John 10:35** And Scripture cannot be broken.
- 12 **Mark 8:38** For whoever is ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.
- 13 **John 14:26** The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.
- 14 **Acts 24:14** But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets.
- 15 **2 Tim. 3:16–17** All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.
- 16 **2 Peter 1:21** No prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Note: God gave the Old Testament in Hebrew and Aramaic and the New Testament in Greek. Errors in copying or translations are not part of the God-breathed (inspired) Scripture.

4. What is the key to the correct understanding of the Bible?

Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, is the heart and center of the Scripture and therefore the key to its true meaning.

- 17 **John 5:39** You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about Me.
- 18 **Acts 10:43** To Him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name.
- 19 **John 1:18** No one has ever seen God, the only God, who is at the Father's side, He has made Him known.
- 20 **2 Tim. 3:15** From childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Bible narrative: Jesus revealed Himself as the center of Scripture (**Luke 24:13–27**).

5. How is human reason to be used in understanding Holy Scripture?

A. Holy Scripture is given in human language. To determine what it says we need to apply the rules of language, such as grammar and logic. It is right to use reason as a servant of the text, but the guidance of the Holy Spirit is essential for its proper understanding.

- 21 **Ps. 119:73** Give me understanding that I may learn Your commandments.
- 22 **Matt. 13:19** When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart.
- 23 **Matt. 22:37** Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.
- 24 **Acts 17:11** They received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

B. Unlike all other books, Holy Scripture is God's Word and truth. It is wrong to question or deny the truthfulness of the sacred text (as happens, for example, with historical criticism).

- 25 **Rom. 3:4** Let God be true though every one were a liar, as it is written, “That you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged.”
- 26 **2 Cor. 10:5** We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God.
- 27 **Col. 2:8** See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit.
- 28 **2 Peter 3:15–16** Our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

Note: See **1 Corinthians 1** and **2**.

6. What basic distinction must we keep in mind in order to understand the Bible?

We must sharply distinguish between the Law and the Gospel in the Bible.

- 29 **John 1:17** The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.
- 30 **2 Cor. 3:6** The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

7. What does God teach and do in the Law?

In the Law God commands good works of thought, word, and deed and condemns and punishes sin.

- 31 **Mark 12:30–31** You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.... You shall love your neighbor as yourself.
- 32 **John 5:45** There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope.
- 33 **Rom. 3:20** Through the law comes knowledge of sin.

8. What does God teach and do in the Gospel?

In the Gospel, the good news of our salvation in Jesus Christ, God gives forgiveness, faith, life, and the power to please Him with good works.

- 34 **John 3:16** God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.
- 35 **John 6:63** The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.
- 36 **Rom. 1:16** I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.
- 37 **Col. 1:6** In the whole world it is bearing fruit and growing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth.

9. How does the Small Catechism sum up Christian doctrine?

The Small Catechism sums up Christian doctrine by dividing it into six chief parts: the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, Confession, and the Sacrament of the Altar.

10. What is a catechism?

A catechism is a book of instruction, usually in the form of questions and answers.

Note: A related word is *catechumen* (learner).

11. Who wrote our Small Catechism?

Martin Luther, the Reformer of the church, wrote the Small Catechism in 1529.

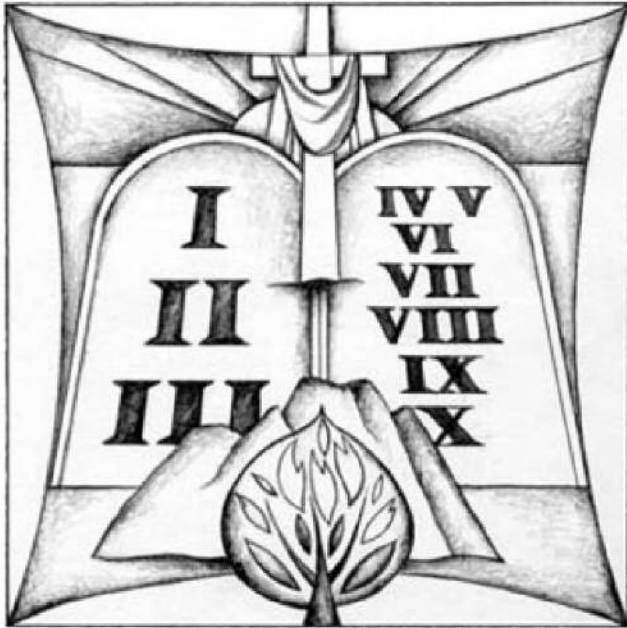
12. Why are all six chief parts of the Small Catechism taken from the Bible alone?

All the chief parts of the Small Catechism are taken from the Bible, because as God’s written Word the Bible is the only final authority for Christian faith and life.

“We receive and embrace with our whole heart... the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the pure, clear fountain of Israel. They are the only true standard or norm by which all teachers and doctrines are to be judged....

“We ... have a unanimously accepted, definite, common form of doctrine ... derived from God’s Word, all ... writings should be judged and adjusted to it to determine the extent to which they are to be approved and accepted.” (Formula of Concord SD Rule and Norm 3, 10).

- 38 **Matt. 15:9** In vain do they worship Me,
teaching as doctrines the commandments
of men.
- 39 **Gal. 1:8** Even if we or an angel from
heaven should preach to you a gospel
contrary to the one we preached to you, let
him be accursed.



THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

13. What are the Ten Commandments?

The Ten Commandments are the Law of God.

Note: God gave them in this order but did not number them (Deut. 5:6–21; Ex. 20:1–17).

14. How did God give His Law?

When God created people, He wrote the Law on their hearts. Later He arranged the Law in Ten Commandments, wrote it on two tables of stone, and made it known through Moses.

- 40 **Rom. 2:14–15** For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them.

Bible narrative: God wrote His commandments directly for the Israelites (Ex. 19–20; 31:18). There are three kinds of laws in the Old Testament: the moral law, which tells all people their duty toward God and other people; the ceremonial law, which regulated the religious practices in the Old Testament; and the political law, which was the state law of the Israelites. Only the moral law was written into the human heart.

15. What is the summary of commandments 1–3 (First Table)?

Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matt. 22:37; see Deut. 6:5).

16. What is the summary of commandments 4–10 (Second Table)?

“And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:39; see Lev. 19:18).

17. What is the summary of all the commandments?

Love is the summary of all the commandments.

- 41 **Rom. 13:10** Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

18. Whom does God mean when in the Ten Commandments He says, “You shall”?

He means me and all other human beings.

- 42 **Matt. 5:19** Whoever relaxes [looses] one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.
- 43 **Rom. 3:19** Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God.

Bible narrative: Jesus explained the meaning of these commandments for all people (**Matthew 5**).

The First Commandment

[**God**]

You shall have no other gods.

What does this mean? We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

19. Who is the only true God?

The only true God is the triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three distinct persons in one divine being (the Holy Trinity).

- 44 **Num. 6:24–26** The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.
- 45 **Deut. 6:4** Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.
- 46 **Matt. 28:19** 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.
- 47 **1 Cor. 8:4** There is no God but one.
- 48 **2 Cor. 13:14** The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Bible narrative: At His Baptism Jesus stood in the Jordan, the Father spoke from heaven, and the Spirit of God descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove (**Matt. 3:16–17**).

20. What does God forbid in the First Commandment?

God forbids us to have other gods (idolatry).

- 49 **Is. 42:8** I am the LORD; that is My name; My glory I give to no other, nor My praise to carved idols.
- 50 **Matt. 4:10** You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve.
- 51 **1 Cor. 8:4** We know that “an idol has no real existence,” and that “there is no God but one.”
- 52 **1 John 5:21** Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

21. When do people have other gods?

They have other gods

A. when they regard and worship any creature or thing as God;

- 53 **Ps. 115:4** Their idols are silver and gold.
- 54 **Phil. 3:19** Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.
- 55 **Rev. 9:20** [They] did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk.

Bible narratives: Israel worshiped the golden calf (**Exodus 32**). The people worshiped Baal (**1 Kings 18:18–29**). The Philistines made Dagon their god (**Judges 16:23–24**).

B. when they believe in a god who is not the triune God (see the Apostles’ Creed);

- 56 **Matt. 28:19** 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.
- 57 **John 5:23** Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

Bible narrative: The Baptism of Jesus (**Matt. 3:13–17**).

C. when they fear, love, or trust in any person or thing as they should fear, love, and trust in God alone;

- 58 **Ps. 14:1** The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none who does good.
- 59 **Prov. 11:28** Whoever trusts in his riches will fall.
- 60 **Prov. 3:5** Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.
- 61 **Matt. 10:28** Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.
- 62 **Matt. 10:37** Whoever loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.
- 63 **Eph. 5:5** Everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Bible narratives: The rich man thought more of costly clothes and good eating than of God (**Luke 16:19–31**). The people building the Tower of Babel considered their achievement more important than God (**Gen. 11:1–9**). Goliath trusted in his size and physical strength (**1 Sam. 17**). Eli honored his sons more than God (**1 Sam. 2: 12–34**). Peter feared punishment more than he loved God (**Matt. 26:69–75**).

D. when they join in the worship of one who is not the triune God.

- 64 **2 Cor. 6:14–15** Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?

22. What does God require of us in the First Commandment?

God requires that we fear, love, and trust in Him above all things.

A. We fear God above all things when we revere Him alone as the highest being, honor Him with our lives, and avoid what displeases Him.

- 65 **Gen. 17:1** I am God almighty; walk before Me, and be blameless.
- 66 **Ps. 33:8** Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.
- 67 **Ps. 96:4** Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods.
- 68 **Prov. 8:13** The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil.
- 69 **Matt. 10:28** Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Bible narrative: The three men in the fiery furnace feared God more than the king (**Daniel 3**).

B. We love God above all things when we cling to Him alone as our God and gladly devote our lives to His service.

- 70 **Ps. 73:25–26** Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides You. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.
- 71 **Matt. 22:37** You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

Bible narrative: Abraham loved God more than his son (**Genesis 22**). Joseph resisted the temptation of Potiphar’s wife (**Genesis 39**).

C. We trust in God above all things when we commit our lives completely to His keeping and rely on Him for help in every need.

- 72 **Ps. 118:8** It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man.
- 73 **Prov. 3:5** Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

Bible narrative: David trusted in the LORD when he fought against Goliath (**1 Sam. 17:37, 46–47**). Abram left his country and relatives to go where the LORD sent him, trusting that the LORD would take care of him (**Gen. 12:1–9**). Daniel committed himself to the LORD’s keeping (**Daniel 6**).

23. Who is able to keep this and the other commandments?

No person can keep any or all commandments perfectly, except Jesus Christ. All those who have faith in Him by the power of His Spirit willingly strive to keep these commandments.

- 74 **Eccl. 7:20** Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins.
- 75 **1 John 1:8** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
- 76 **John 14:15** If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.
- 77 **Phil. 2:13** It is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

The Second Commandment

[God's Name]

You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

24. Why do we say in this and in the following commandments, "We should fear and love God"?

The fulfillment of all commandments must flow from the fear and love of God.

- 78 **Ps. 111:10** The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have good understanding. His praise endures forever!
- 79 **John 14:23** If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word.

Bible narrative: Jesus asked Peter whether he loved Him, then He told Peter to feed His sheep (John 21: 15–17).

25. What is God's name?

God, as He has revealed Himself to us, His essence and His attributes.

- 80 **Ex. 3:14** God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"
- 81 **Is. 9:6** To us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
- 82 **Jer. 23:6** This is the name by which He will be called: "The LORD is Our Righteousness."
- 83 **Matt. 1:21** You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.
- 84 **Matt. 18:20** Where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I among them.
- 85 **Matt. 28:19** 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.
- 86 **John 1:1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Bible narrative: God revealed His name to Moses (Ex. 3:12–15).

26. What does God forbid in the Second Commandment?

In the Second Commandment God forbids us to misuse His name.

- 87 **Ex. 20:7** The LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

27. How is God's name misused?

God's name is misused when people

A. speak God's name uselessly or carelessly (see Ex. 20:7);

B. curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by His name.

28. What is cursing by God's name?

Cursing by God's name is

A. blaspheming God by speaking evil of Him or mocking Him;

- 88 **Lev. 24:15** Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin.

Bible narratives: They mocked Jesus when He was hanging on the cross (**Matt. 27:39–43**). The Assyrian field commander blasphemed the God of Israel (**2 Kings 18:28–35; 19:21–22**). Some Jews accused Jesus of being possessed by a demon (**John 8:48–59**).

B. calling down the anger and punishment of God upon oneself or any other person or thing.

- 89 **James 3:9–10** With it [the tongue] we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.

Bible narratives: The people at Jesus' trial cursed themselves and their children (**Matt. 27:25**). Peter cursed (**Matt. 26:74**). James and John asked Jesus if they should ask God to destroy a Samaritan village (**Luke 9:51–55**).

29. What is swearing by God's name?

Swearing by God's name is taking an oath in which we call on God to witness the truth of what we say or promise and to punish us if we lie or break our promise.

30. When are we permitted, and even required, to swear by God's name?

We are permitted, and even required, to take an oath by God's name when an oath is necessary for the glory of God or the welfare of our neighbor. Examples include the following: testimony in court, oath of office, wedding vows.

- 90 **Rom. 13:1** Let every person be subject to the governing authorities.
- 91 **Num. 30:2** If a man vows a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by a pledge, he shall not break his word. He shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.
- 92 **Deut. 6:13** It is the LORD your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve and by His name you shall swear.
- 93 **Heb. 6:16** People swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation.

Bible narratives: Jesus permitted Himself to be put under oath (**Matt. 26:63–64**). Abraham put his servant under oath (**Gen. 24:3**).

31. When is swearing forbidden?

Swearing is forbidden when it is done falsely, thoughtlessly, or in sinful, uncertain, or unimportant matters.

- 94 **Lev. 19:12** You shall not swear by My name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.
- 95 **Matt. 5:33–37** Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, "You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn." But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is His footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let what you say be simply "Yes" or "No"; anything more than this comes from evil.

Bible narratives: Peter swore falsely and thus committed perjury (**Matt. 26:72**). Certain Jews swore to commit murder (**Acts 23:12**). Herod swore in an unknown and unimportant matter (**Matt. 14:6–9**). Jephthah's thoughtless oath (**Judges 11:30–40**).

32. What is using satanic arts by God's name?

Using satanic arts by God's name is

A. using God's name in order to perform or claim to perform supernatural things with the help of the devil, such as casting spells, calling up a

spirit, fortune-telling, consulting the dead, or other occult practices;

- 96 **Deut. 18:10–12** There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer or a charmer, or a medium or a necromancer or one who inquires of the dead, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD. And because of these abominations the LORD your God is driving them out before you.

Bible narratives: The Egyptian sorcerers performed supernatural things with the help of the devil (**Exodus 7–8**). The sons of Sceva used Jesus' name to cast out spirits, but they did not have faith (**Acts 19:13–29**).

B. joining with or seeking the aid of people who practice these and similar satanic arts or worship Satan;

- 97 **Lev. 19:31** Do not turn to mediums or necromancers; do not seek them out, and so make yourselves unclean by them: I am the LORD your God.

Bible narrative: King Saul sought the help of the witch of Endor (**1 Samuel 28**).

C. depending on horoscopes or similar ways to foretell the future.

- 98 **Eccl. 7:14** In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider: God has made the one as well as the other, so that man may not find out anything that will be after him.

33. What is lying and deceiving by God's name?

Lying and deceiving by God's name is

A. teaching false doctrine and saying that it is God's Word or revelation;

- 99 **Deut. 12:32** Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do. You shall not add to it or take from it.

- 100 **Jer. 23:31** Behold, I am against the prophets, declares the LORD, who use their tongues and declare, "declares the LORD."

- 101 **Matt. 15:9** In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.

Bible narrative: The lie of a false prophet caused a prophet of God to be deceived and killed (**1 Kings 13:11–30**).

B. covering up an unbelieving heart or a sinful life by pretending to be a Christian.

- 102 **Matt. 7:21** Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of My Father who is in heaven.

- 103 **Matt. 15:8** This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.

Bible narratives: Many scribes and Pharisees were hypocrites (**Matt. 23:13–33**). Ananias and Sapphira were hypocrites (**Acts 5:1–11**).

34. What does God require of us in the Second Commandment?

We should call upon His name in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

- 104 **Ps. 50:15** Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.

- 105 **Ps. 103:1** Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name!

- 106 **Ps. 118:1** Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever!

- 107 **John 16:23** Whatever you ask of the Father in my name, He will give it to you.

- 108 **Eph. 5:20** Giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Bible narratives: The 10 lepers called upon Jesus in their trouble (**Luke 17:11–13**). The grateful stranger thanked Jesus and glorified God for the

healing (**Luke 17:15–16**). Hannah petitioned and thanked God for the gift of a son (**1 Samuel 1–2**). Mary's Song (Magnificat, **Luke 1:46–55**). Zechariah's Song (Benedictus, **Luke 1:68–79**).

The Third Commandment

[God's Word]

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

35. What is the Sabbath day?

In the Old Testament God set aside the seventh day (Saturday) as a required day of rest (*Sabbath* means "rest") and worship.

109 **Ex. 35:2** Six days work shall be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the LORD.

110 **Lev. 23:3** Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation.

36. Does God require us to observe the Sabbath and other holy days of the Old Testament?

The Sabbath was a sign pointing to Jesus, who is our rest. Since Jesus has come as our Savior and Lord, God no longer requires us to observe the Sabbath day and other holy days of the Old Testament.

111 **Matt. 11:28** "Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

112 **Matt. 12:8** "The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath."

113 **Col. 2:16–17** Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

114 **Heb. 4:9–10** So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from His.

37. Does God require the church to worship together on any specific days?

A. God requires Christians to worship together.

115 **Acts 2:42, 46** They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.... And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts.

116 **Heb. 10:25** Not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

B. He has not specified any particular day.

117 **Rom. 14:5–6** One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord.

118 **Gal. 4:10–11** You observe days and months and seasons and years! I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.

C. The church worships together especially on Sunday because Christ rose from the dead on Sunday.

- 119 **Luke 24:1–2** On the first day of the week, at early dawn, they [the women] went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb.
- 120 **Acts 20:7** On the first day of the week, when we gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight.

Bible narrative: Jesus appeared to His disciples (**John 20:19–31**).

38. When do we sin against the Third Commandment?

We sin against the Third Commandment when we despise preaching and the Word of God.

39. How is this done?

We despise preaching and the Word of God

- A. when we do not attend public worship;
- B. when we do not use the Word of God and the Sacraments;
- C. when we use the Word of God and the Sacraments negligently or carelessly.

- 121 **John 8:47** Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.
- 122 **Luke 10:16** The one who hears you hears Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me, and the one who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me.

Bible narratives: The scribes and the Pharisees despised Baptism (**Luke 7:30**). Saul rejected the Word of God (**1 Sam. 15:10–23**).

40. What does God require of us in the Third Commandment?

A. We should hold preaching and the Word of God sacred.

- 123 **Is. 66:2** This is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at My word.

- 124 **1 Thess. 2:13** When you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.

B. We should gladly hear it, learn it, and meditate on it.

- 125 **Joshua 1:8** This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it.

- 126 **Ps. 26:8** O LORD, I love the habitation of Your house and the place where Your glory dwells.

- 127 **Luke 11:28** Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!

- 128 **Acts 2:42** They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

- 129 **Col. 3:16** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Bible narratives: Jesus gladly heard and learned the Word of God (**Luke 2:41–52**). Mary sat at the feet of Jesus and learned His Word (**Luke 10:39**). Mary kept and pondered the Word of God in her heart (**Luke 2:19**). The Bereans searched the Scriptures daily (**Acts 17:11**).

C. We should honor and support the preaching and teaching of the Word of God.

- 130 **Gal. 6:6–7** One who is taught the word must share all good things with the one who teaches. Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.

Bible narrative: The poor widow gave money for the upkeep of the temple and for the support of the priests (**Mark 12:41–44**).

Note: See also “What the Hearers Owe Their Pastors” under the Table of Duties.

D. We should diligently spread the Word of God.

- 131 **Mark 16:15** He said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation."

41. What do the first three commandments (the First Table) show us about ourselves?

That we have sinned and deserve God's condemnation.

- 132 **Rom. 3:22–23** There is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

42. Who alone has kept the Law of God perfectly?

Only Jesus Christ, the God-man.

- 133 **John 8:46** Which one of you convicts Me of sin?
- 134 **Heb. 4:15** We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

43. How does Christ's perfect keeping of the Law benefit us?

Since Christ was our substitute before God, our Savior's perfect keeping of the Law is part of His saving work for us, and because of Him we are considered righteous before God.

- 135 **Gal. 4:4–5** When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

44. Besides showing us our sin, what else does God's Law do for us?

In the Ten Commandments God shows us what His will is. Christians, by the power of the Holy Spirit, are eager to do God's will.

- 136 **1 Thess. 4:3** For this is the will of God, your sanctification.

45. What is the summary of commandments 4–10 (Second Table)?

"Love your neighbor as yourself" (**Matt. 22:39**).

46. Who is our neighbor?

All people are our neighbors.

- 137 **Gal. 6:10** As we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

- 138 **Matt. 5:44** Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

Bible narrative: The Good Samaritan showed mercy to his neighbor (**Luke 10:25–37**).

47. How should we love our neighbor?

We should love our neighbor as ourselves and show this love by keeping the commandments of the Second Table.

- 139 **Matt. 7:12** Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

The Fourth Commandment

[God's Representatives]

Honor your father and your mother.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.

48. Who are parents and other authorities?

Parents are fathers, mothers, and guardians; other authorities are all those whom God has placed over us at home, in government, at school, at the place where we work, and in the church.

Note: Regarding spiritual authority, see the Table of Duties, "What the Hearers Owe Their Pastors" and also "The Office of the Keys" under Confession.

49. What does God forbid in the Fourth Commandment?

God forbids us to despise our parents and other authorities by not respecting them or angering them by our disobedience or by any other kind of sin.

140 **Prov. 23:22** Listen to your father who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.

141 **Rom. 13:2** Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

Note: See “To Workers of All Kinds” under the Table of Duties.

Bible narratives: The sons of Eli grieved their father by their wickedness (**1 Sam. 2:12, 23, 25**). Absalom rebelled against his father and king (**2 Samuel 15**).

50. What does God require of us in the Fourth Commandment?

God requires us

A. to honor our parents and other authorities by regarding them as God’s representatives;

142 **Eph. 6:2–3** “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”

Note: See “To Parents” and “To Children” under the Table of Duties.

Bible narratives: Joseph honored his father (**Gen. 46:29**). King Solomon honored his mother (**1 Kings 2:19**). Elisha honored his teacher (**2 Kings 2:12**).

B. to serve our parents and other authorities by gladly providing what they need or require;

143 **1 Tim. 5:4** If a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God.

144 **Rom. 13:7** Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

Bible narratives: Joseph provided for his father (**Gen. 47:11–12**). Jesus provided for His mother (**John 19:26**).

C. to obey our parents and other authorities in everything in which God has placed them over us;

145 **Col. 3:20** Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

146 **Titus 3:1** Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work.

147 **Acts 5:29** We must obey God rather than men.

Note: See “To Workers of All Kinds,” “To Employers and Supervisors,” and “Of Citizens” in the Table of Duties.

Bible narratives: Jesus was subject to Mary and Joseph (**Luke 2:51**). Jonathan disobeyed his father in order to spare David’s life and thus obeyed God rather than men (**1 Sam. 20:31–33**).

D. to love and cherish our parents and other authorities as precious gifts of God;

148 **Prov. 23:22** Listen to your father who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.

Bible narrative: Ruth loved and cherished her mother-in-law, Naomi (**Ruth**).

E. to show respect to the aged.

149 **Lev. 19:32** You shall stand up before the gray head and honor the face of an old man, and you shall fear your God.

51. What promise does God attach to this commandment?

... that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land. **Eph. 6:3**

The Fifth Commandment

[God's Gift of Life]

You shall not murder.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and support him in every physical need.

52. What does God forbid in the Fifth Commandment?

A. God forbids us to take the life of another person (murder, abortion, euthanasia) or our own life (suicide).

150 **Gen. 9:6** Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in His own image.

151 **Matt. 26:52** All who take the sword will perish by the sword.

Bible narratives: Cain murdered his brother Abel (**Gen. 4:8**). David murdered Uriah through others (**2 Sam. 11:15**). Killing through carelessness (**Ex. 21:29** and **Deut. 22:8**). Judas killed himself (**Matt. 27:5**).

ABORTION

The living but unborn are persons in the sight of God from the time of conception. Since abortion takes a human life, it is not a moral option except to prevent the death of another person, the mother.

152 **Jer. 1:5** Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you.

153 **Ps. 139:16** Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in Your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

Bible narrative: John the Baptist leaped for joy while still in his mother's womb. In doing so, John the Baptist and Elizabeth, by the Holy Spirit, acknowledged the unborn Jesus as Lord (**Luke 1:41–44**).

EUTHANASIA

The severely handicapped, infirm, helpless, and aged are persons in the sight of God with life given by Him and to be ended only by Him.

154 **Prov. 6:16–17** There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to Him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood.

155 **Prov. 31:8** Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute.

156 **Acts 17:25** He Himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

SUICIDE

My own life is a gift of God to be ended only by Him.

157 **Jer. 31:3** The LORD appeared to him from far away. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued My faithfulness to you.

158 **Luke 12:22** He said to His disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on."

B. God forbids us to hurt or harm our neighbor physically, that is, to do or say anything that may destroy, shorten, or make his or her life bitter.

159 **Deut. 32:39** See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no God beside Me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of My hand.

160 **Rom. 12:19** Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

Bible narratives: Joseph's brothers harmed Joseph and made the life of their father bitter by their wickedness (**Gen. 37:23–35**). The Egyptians made the lives of the children of Israel bitter by hard labor (**Exodus 1**).

C. God forbids us to keep anger and hatred in our hearts against our neighbor.

- 161 **Matt. 5:22** I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment.
- 162 **1 John 3:15** Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.
- 163 **Matt. 15:19** Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.
- 164 **Eph. 4:26** Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger.

Bible narratives: The Jews showed their anger against Stephen (**Acts 7:54**). God warned Cain against anger (**Gen. 4:5–7**).

53. Does anyone have authority to take another person's life?

Yes, lawful government, as God's servant, may execute criminals and fight just wars.

- 165 **Rom. 13:4** He is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.

54. What does God require of us in the Fifth Commandment?

A. We should help and support our neighbor in every bodily need.

- 166 **Rom. 12:20** If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.

Bible narratives: Abraham rescued Lot from his enemies (**Gen. 14:12–16**). David protected the life of Saul (**1 Sam. 26:1–12**). The Good Samaritan helped the man who had fallen among thieves (**Luke 10:33–35**).

B. We should be merciful, kind, and forgiving towards our neighbor.

- 167 **Matt. 5:5, 7, 9** Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.... Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.... Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.
- 168 **Matt. 6:15** If you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.
- 169 **Eph. 4:32** Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Bible narratives: Jesus showed mercy to the 10 lepers (**Luke 17:11–19**). The centurion was kind to his sick servant (**Matt. 8:5–13**). Joseph was forgiving toward his brothers (**Gen. 45:1–16**).

C. We should avoid and assist our neighbor in avoiding the abuse of drugs and the use of any substance that harms the body and the mind.

- 170 **2 Cor. 7:1** Let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit.

The Sixth Commandment

[God's Gift of Marriage]

You shall not commit adultery.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we lead a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do, and husband and wife love and honor each other.

55. How do we lead a sexually pure and decent life?

We lead a sexually pure and decent life when we

A. consider sexuality to be a good gift of God;

- 171 **Gen. 1:27, 31** God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.... God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good.

B. honor marriage as God's institution, the lifelong union of one man and one woman;

172 **Gen. 2:24–25** Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

173 **Mark 10:6–9** From the beginning of creation, “God made them male and female.” “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.

C. reserve sexual intercourse for the marriage partner alone;

174 **Heb. 13:4** Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.

D. control sexual urges in a God-pleasing way.

175 **Titus 2:11–12** The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age.

Note: See also **1 Thess. 4:1–7**.

56. What does God forbid in the Sixth Commandment?

A. God forbids divorce except for marital unfaithfulness (adultery or desertion).

176 **Matt. 19:6** They are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.

177 **Matt. 19:9** Whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.

178 **1 Cor. 7:15** But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved.

Bible narratives: David committed adultery with the wife of Uriah (**2 Samuel 11**). Herod took his brother's wife (**Mark 6:18**).

B. God forbids sexual intercourse between unmarried persons.

179 **1 Cor. 6:18** Flee from sexual immorality.

180 **1 Cor. 6:9–10** Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality ... will inherit the kingdom of God.

C. God forbids sexual sins such as rape, homosexual activity, incest, sexual child abuse, obscenity, and the use of pornographic materials.

181 **Rom. 1:24, 26–27** Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves.... For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

182 **1 Cor. 6:9–10** Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

D. God forbids sexually impure thoughts and desires.

183 **Matt. 5:28** I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

184 **Matt. 15:19** Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.

57. What does God require of us in the Sixth Commandment?

A. God requires us to avoid all temptations to sexual sin.

185 **Gen. 39:9** How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?

186 **1 Cor. 6:18** Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.

B. God requires us to be clean in what we think and say.

187 **Eph. 5:3–4** But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.

188 **Phil. 4:8** Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if anything is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

C. God requires us to use our sexuality in ways pleasing to Him.

189 **1 Cor. 6:19–20** Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

58. What does God require especially of married people?

God requires married people to love, honor, and respect each other. The wife is the husband's God-given helper, and the husband is the wife's God-given head.

190 **Gen. 2:18** The LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."

191 **1 Cor. 7:4** For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

192 **Eph. 4:32** Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one other, as God in Christ forgave you.

193 **Eph. 5:21–23, 25** Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, His body, and is Himself its Savior.... Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her.

Note: See "To Husbands" and "To Wives" under the Table of Duties.

The Seventh Commandment

[God's Gift of Possessions]

You shall not steal.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not take our neighbor's money or possessions, or get them in any dishonest way, but help him to improve and protect his possessions and income.

59. What does God forbid in the Seventh Commandment?

God forbids every kind of robbery, theft, and dishonest way of getting things.

- 194 **Lev. 19:35** You shall do no wrong in judgment, in measures of length or weight or quantity.
- 195 **Ps. 37:21** The wicked borrows but does not pay back, but the righteous is generous and gives.
- 196 **Eph. 4:28** Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.
- 197 **2 Thess. 3:10** If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.

Bible narratives: Achan stole when he secretly took a garment and silver and gold (**Joshua 7:20–22**). Judas was a thief (**John 12:6**). Gehazi obtained a present by lying and trickery (**2 Kings 5:20–24**).

60. What does God require of us in the Seventh Commandment?

A. We should help our neighbor to improve and protect that person's possessions and income.

- 198 **Matt. 7:12** So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them.
- 199 **Phil. 2:4** Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Bible narratives: Abraham gave Lot the choice of the land (**Gen. 13:9**). Abraham rescued Lot from the enemy and recovered Lot's property (**Gen. 14:12–16**).

B. We should help our neighbor in every need.

- 200 **Matt. 5:42** Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.
- 201 **Heb. 13:16** Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.
- 202 **1 John 3:17** If anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?

Bible narratives: Zacchaeus promised to give back four times what he had taken dishonestly and to give half of his goods to the poor (**Luke 19:8**).

The Good Samaritan helped his neighbor but the priest and Levite did not (**Luke 10:29–37**).

The Eighth Commandment

[God's Gift of a Good Reputation]

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way.

61. What does God forbid in the Eighth Commandment?

A. God forbids us to tell lies about our neighbor in a court of law or elsewhere, that is, to lie about, lie to, or withhold the truth from our neighbor.

- 203 **Prov. 19:5** A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who breathes out lies will not escape.
- 204 **Eph. 4:25** Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

Bible narratives: False witnesses testified against Jesus (**Matt. 26:59–61**). False witnesses testified against Naboth (**1 Kings 21:13**). Gehazi lied about Elisha and then lied to him (**2 Kings 5:22–25**).

B. God forbids us to betray our neighbor, that is, to reveal our neighbor's secrets.

- 205 **Prov. 11:13** Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a thing covered.

Bible narratives: Doeg betrayed Ahimelech (**1 Sam. 22:6–19**). Judas betrayed Jesus (**Matt. 26:14–16**).

C. God forbids us to slander our neighbor or hurt our neighbor's reputation.

- 206 **Matt. 18:15** If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone.
- 207 **Luke 6:37** Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned.
- 208 **James 4:11** Do not speak evil against one another, brothers.

Bible narrative: Absalom slandered his father (2 Sam. 15:1–6).

62. What does God require of us in the Eighth Commandment?

A. We should defend our neighbor, that is, we should speak up for and protect our neighbor from false accusations.

- 209 **Prov. 31:8–9** Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute. Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.

B. We should speak well of our neighbor, that is, we should praise our neighbor's good actions and qualities.

Bible narratives: Jonathan spoke well of David (1 Sam. 19:4). The people of Capernaum spoke well of the centurion (Luke 7:4–5). Jesus spoke well of the woman who anointed Him (Mark 14:3–9).

C. We should put the best meaning on everything, that is, we should explain our neighbor's actions in the best possible way.

- 210 **1 Cor. 13:7** Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
- 211 **1 Peter 4:8** Love covers a multitude of sins.

The Ninth Commandment

[God's Gift of Contentment]

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not scheme to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, or get it in a way which only appears right, but help and be of service to him in keeping it.

63. What is coveting?

Coveting is having a sinful desire for anyone or anything that belongs to our neighbor.

- 212 **Rom. 7:8** Sin ... produced in me all kinds of covetousness.
- 213 **Matt. 15:19** Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.

64. What coveting does God forbid in the Ninth Commandment?

God forbids every sinful desire to get our neighbor's possessions openly or by trickery.

- 214 **Micah 2:1–2** Woe to those who devise wickedness.... They covet fields and seize them, and houses, and take them away; they oppress a man and his house, a man and his inheritance.
- 215 **1 Tim. 6:8–10** If we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

Bible narrative: Ahab coveted Naboth's vineyard and got it in a way that only seemed right (1 Kings 21: 1–16).

65. What does God require of us in the Ninth Commandment?

We should be content with what God has given us and assist our neighbor in keeping what God has given that person.

- 216 **Phil. 4:11** Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content.
- 217 **1 Tim. 6:6** There is great gain in godliness with contentment.
- 218 **Heb. 13:5** Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for He has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

Bible narrative: Paul overcame coveting (Acts 20: 32–35).

The Tenth Commandment

[God's Gift of Contentment]

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not entice or force away our neighbor's wife, workers, or animals, or turn them against him, but urge them to stay and do their duty.

66. What coveting does God forbid in the Tenth Commandment?

God forbids every sinful desire to take from our neighbor that person's spouse or workers.

- 219 **Luke 12:15** He said to them, "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."
- 220 **Col. 3:5** Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

Bible narratives: David coveted Uriah's wife and took her (2 Sam. 11:2–4). Absalom estranged the hearts of the people from David (2 Sam. 15:1–6).

67. What does God require of us in the Tenth Commandment?

We should be content with the helpers God has given us and encourage our neighbor's helpers to be faithful to our neighbor.

- 221 **Phil. 2:4** Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Bible narrative: Paul returned a runaway slave to his master Philemon (**Philemon**).

68. What does God particularly impress upon us in the last two commandments?

A. In God's sight evil desire, coveting, is indeed sin and deserves condemnation.

- 222 **Gen. 3:6** When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate.
- 223 **James 1:14–15** Each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

B. God wants us to love Him and to have holy desires.

- 224 **Ps. 37:4** Delight yourself in the LORD, and He will give you the desires of your heart.
- 225 **Ps. 119:35–36** Lead me in the path of Your commandments, for I delight in it. Incline my heart to Your testimonies, and not to selfish gain!
- 226 **Phil. 4:8** Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

The Close of the Commandments

What does God say about all these commandments? He says: “I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My commandments.” [Ex. 20:5–6]

What does this mean? God threatens to punish all who break these commandments. Therefore, we should fear His wrath and not do anything against them. But He promises grace and every blessing to all who keep these commandments. Therefore, we should also love and trust in Him and gladly do what He commands.

69. Why does God call Himself a jealous God?

Because God is holy

A. He hates sin and insists on strict and perfect obedience;

B. He will not share with idols the love and honor we owe Him;

C. He will punish those who hate Him.

- 227 **Ps. 5:4–5** You are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with You. The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; You hate all evildoers.
- 228 **Is. 42:8** I am the LORD; that is My name; My glory I give to no other, nor My praise to carved idols.
- 229 **Ezek. 6:9** I have been broken over their whoring heart that has departed from Me and over their eyes that go whoring after their idols.
- 230 **James 4:12** There is only one lawgiver and judge, He who is able to save and to destroy.

70. What does God threaten to do to all who hate Him and break His commandments?

God threatens earthly punishment, physical death, and eternal damnation.

- 231 **Lev. 26:18** If in spite of this you will not listen to Me, then I will discipline you again sevenfold for your sins.
- 232 **Rom. 6:23** The wages of sin is death.
- 233 **Gal. 3:10** Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law.

71. What does God mean when He threatens to punish the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Him?

If the children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren also hate God and follow in the evil ways of their parents, then God will during their earthly lives punish them for the sins of their ancestors.

- 234 **Ezek. 18:20** The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

Bible narratives: The family of wicked Ahab and Jezebel were destroyed (2 Kings 9:7–8; 10:11).

Israel was led into captivity for its disobedience and wickedness (2 **Chron.** 36:17–21).

72. Why does God threaten such punishment?

God threatens such punishment to make us fear His anger, so that we do not act against His commandments.

235 **Eccl. 12:13–14** Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

236 **Matt. 10:28** Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

73. How does God bless those who love Him and keep His commandments?

He showers those who believe in Him and their God-fearing descendants with His constant love and good gifts.

237 **1 Tim. 4:8** Godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

Bible narrative: God blessed Job for his faithfulness (**Job** 42:10–17).

The Fulfillment of the Law

74. How carefully does God want us to keep His commandments?

God wants us to keep His commandments perfectly in thoughts, desires, words, and deeds.

238 **Lev. 19:2** Be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.

239 **James 2:10** Whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.

75. What prevents us from keeping God's commandments perfectly?

Our sinful nature makes it impossible.

240 **Ps. 14:3** They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.

241 **Eccl. 7:20** There is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins.

242 **Is. 64:6** We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.

243 **1 John 1:8** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Bible narrative: The apostle Paul grieved over his failure to keep the Law (**Rom.** 7:15–20).

76. Can anyone, then, be saved by the Law?

No; the Law condemns everyone.

244 **Gal. 3:10–11** All who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law.

The Purposes of the Law

77. What purposes does the Law then serve?

A. First, the Law helps to control violent outbursts of sin and keeps order in the world (a curb).

245 **1 Tim. 1:9** Understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just [good people] but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers.

246 **Rom. 2:14–15** For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them.

B. Second, the Law accuses us and shows us our sin (a mirror).

247 **Rom. 3:20** Through the law comes knowledge of sin.

248 **Rom. 7:7** Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet."

C. Third, the Law teaches us Christians what we should and should not do to lead a God-pleasing life (a guide). The power to live according to the Law comes from the Gospel.

249 **Ps. 119:9** How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to Your word.

250 **Ps. 119:105** Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

251 **1 John 4:9, 11** In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him.... Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Note: See **Luke 10:27**.

Sin

78. What is sin?

Sin is every thought, desire, word, and deed that is contrary to God's Law.

252 **1 John 3:4** Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.

Note: Other names for sin are *disobedience* (**Rom. 5:19**); *debts* (**Matt. 6:12**); *iniquity*, *transgression* (**Ex. 34:7**); *fault* (**Matt. 18:15**); *trespass* (**Rom. 5:17**); *unrighteousness* (**Rom. 6:13**); and *wrong* (**Col. 3:25**).

79. Who brought sin into the world?

The devil brought sin into the world by tempting Adam and Eve, who of their own free will yielded to the temptation.

253 **1 John 3:8** Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning.

254 **Rom. 5:12** Sin came into the world through one man.

Bible narrative: The fall of humanity (**Gen. 3:1–7**).

80. How many kinds of sin are there?

There are two kinds of sin: original sin and actual sin.

81. What is original sin?

Original sin is that total corruption of our whole human nature that we have inherited from Adam through our parents.

255 **Ps. 51:5** Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

256 **John 3:6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

257 **Rom. 5:12** Sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.

258 **Eph. 4:22** Put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires.

82. What has original sin done to human nature?

Original sin

A. has brought guilt and condemnation to all people;

259 **Rom. 5:19** By the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners.

260 **Eph. 2:3** [We] were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

B. has left everyone without true fear and love of God, that is, spiritually blind, dead, and enemies of God;

- 261 **Gen. 8:21** The intention of man's heart is evil from his youth.
- 262 **1 Cor. 2:14** The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.
- 263 **Eph. 2:1** You were dead in the trespasses and sins.
- 264 **Rom. 8:7** The mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.

C. causes everyone to commit all kinds of actual sins.

- 265 **Matt. 7:17** Every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit.
- 266 **Gal. 5:19–21** The works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.

83. What is actual sin?

Actual sin is every act against a commandment of God in thoughts, desires, words, or deeds.

- 267 **Matt. 15:19** Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.
- 268 **James 1:15** Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin. (Sins of commission)
- 269 **James 4:17** So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin. (Sins of omission)

Law and Gospel

84. Where alone does God offer the forgiveness of sins?

God offers the forgiveness of sins only in the Gospel, the good news that we are freed from the guilt, the punishment, and the power of sin, and are saved eternally because of Christ's keeping the Law and His suffering and death for us.

- 270 **John 3:16** God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.
- 271 **Rom. 1:16** I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.
- 272 **Rom. 10:4** Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.
- 273 **Gal. 3:13** Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree."
- 274 **Col. 1:13–14** He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

85. What is the difference between the Law and the Gospel?

A. The Law teaches what we are to do and not to do; the Gospel teaches what God has done, and still does, for our salvation.

B. The Law shows us our sin and the wrath of God; the Gospel shows us our Savior and the grace of God.

C. The Law must be proclaimed to all people, but especially to impenitent sinners; the Gospel must be proclaimed to sinners who are troubled in their minds because of their sins.



THE APOSTLES' CREED

86. What is a creed?

A creed is a statement of what we believe, teach, and confess.

- 275 **Rom. 10:10** For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

I Believe

87. What is meant by "I believe in God"?

It means I trust God and His promises and accept as true all He teaches in the Holy Scriptures.

- 276 **Ps. 31:14** I trust in You, O LORD; I say, "You are my God."

- 277 **Ps. 37:5** Commit your way to the LORD; trust in Him.

- 278 **Rom. 10:17** Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

- 279 **Heb. 11:1** Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

88. Why do we say, "I believe," and not, "We believe"?

Everyone must believe for himself or herself, no one can be saved by another's faith.

- 280 **Hab. 2:4** The righteous shall live by his faith.

- 281 **Luke 7:50** Your faith has saved you; go in peace.

Bible narrative: The foolish virgins could not obtain oil from the wise virgins (**Matt. 25:1-13**).

89. What three creeds are used by the church?

The Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian.

90. Which creed is used in Luther's Catechism?

The Apostles' Creed.

91. Why is it called the Apostles' Creed?

It is called the Apostles' Creed, not because it was written by the apostles themselves, but because it states briefly the doctrine (teaching) that God gave through the apostles in the Bible. The Creed is trinitarian because the Scriptures reveal God as triune. Christians are baptized in the name of the triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

282 **Matt. 28:19** 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.

283 **Eph. 4:4–6** There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

92. In what ways does the triune God make Himself known?

A. Through the existence of the world (natural knowledge of God).

284 **Ps. 19:1** The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims His handiwork.

285 **Rom. 1:19–20** What can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For His invisible attributes, namely, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made.

286 **Heb. 3:4** Every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.

B. Through conscience (natural knowledge of God).

287 **Rom. 2:15** They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them.

C. Especially through the Holy Scriptures in which God clearly reveals Himself and His gift of salvation in Christ (revealed knowledge of God).

288 **John 20:31** These [acts of Jesus] are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.

289 **2 Tim. 3:15** From childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

290 **Heb. 1:1–2** Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world.

93. Who is God?

In His Word God has told us that He is

A. spirit (a personal being without a body);

291 **John 4:24** God is spirit.

B. eternal (without beginning and without end);

292 **Ps. 90:1–2** Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting You are God.

293 **1 Tim. 1:17** To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

C. unchangeable (immutable);

294 **Ps. 102:27** You are the same, and Your years have no end.

295 **Mal. 3:6** I the LORD do not change.

296 **James 1:17** Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

D. almighty, all-powerful (omnipotent);

297 **Gen. 17:1** I am God Almighty.

298 **Matt. 19:26** With God all things are possible.

E. all-knowing (omniscient);

299 **Ps. 139:1–4** O LORD, You have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, You know it altogether.

300 **John 21:17** Lord, You know everything.

F. present everywhere (omnipresent);

301 **Jer. 23:24** Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the LORD.

302 **Acts 17:27** He is actually not far from each one of us.

G. holy (sinless and hating sin);

303 **Lev. 19:2** I the LORD your God am holy.

304 **Ps. 5:4–5** You are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with You. The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; You hate all evildoers.

305 **Is. 6:3** Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts.

H. just (fair and impartial);

306 **Deut. 32:4** The Rock, His work is perfect, for all His ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity.

I. faithful (keeping His promises);

307 **2 Tim. 2:13** If we are faithless, He remains faithful—for He cannot deny Himself.

J. good (kind, desiring our welfare);

308 **Ps. 118:1** Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; His steadfast love endures forever!

309 **Ps. 145:9** The LORD is good to all, and His mercy is over all that he has made.

K. merciful (full of pity);

310 **Jer. 3:12** I am merciful, declares the LORD.

311 **Titus 3:5** He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy.

L. gracious (showing undeserved kindness, forgiving);

312 **Ex. 34:6–7** The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.

M. love.

313 **John 3:16** God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

314 **1 John 4:8** God is love.

Note: God's attributes tell us what God is. God is each of these, all of these, and more than these attributes.

94. Who is the only true God?

The only true God is the triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three distinct persons in one divine being (the Holy Trinity).

95. How are the three divine persons distinguished from each other?

The Father has begotten the Son from eternity; the Son is begotten of the Father from eternity; the Holy Spirit from eternity proceeds from the Father and the Son. To the Father especially is ascribed the work of creation; to the Son, the work of redemption; to the Holy Spirit, the work of sanctification.

- 315 **Ps. 2:7** You are My Son; today I have begotten You.
- 316 **John 15:26** When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness about Me.
- 317 **Gal. 4:6** Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

The First Article

Creation

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

What does this mean? I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them.

He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.

He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil.

All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him.

This is most certainly true.

96. Why is the First Person of the Trinity called "the Father"?

A. God is the Father of my Lord Jesus Christ and also my Father through faith in Christ.

- 318 **Matt. 3:17** A voice from heaven said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."
- 319 **John 20:17** I am ascending to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God.
- 320 **Gal. 3:26** For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.

B. He is also the Father of all people because He created them. Strictly speaking, there is only one human race, because all human beings are equally the children of Adam and Eve and are equally redeemed by Christ.

- 321 **Mal. 2:10** Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us?
- 322 **Acts 17:26** He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth.
- 323 **1 Cor. 15:22** As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.
- 324 **Eph. 3:14–15** For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.

Bible narrative: The prodigal son (**Luke 15:11–32**).

God Made Me and All Creatures

97. Why is God, the Father Almighty called "Maker of heaven and earth"?

Because in six days He created all things, out of nothing, simply by His word.

- 325 **Gen. 1:1** In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
- 326 **Ps. 33:6, 9** By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host.... For He spoke, and it came to be; He commanded, and it stood firm.
- 327 **Heb. 11:3** By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

Bible narrative: Creation (**Genesis 1–2**).

98. What is meant by "heaven and earth"?

All things visible and invisible.

- 328 **Col. 1:16** By Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible.

The Angels

99. Which invisible beings created by God are especially important to us?

The angels.

Note: Angel means “messenger.” God frequently used angels to announce important events in the history of salvation: the birth of John the Baptist (**Luke 1:1–20**); the birth of Jesus (**Luke 1:26–38; Matt. 1:18–21**); the resurrection of Jesus (**Luke 24:4–7**); the ascension and second coming of Jesus (**Acts 1:10–11**).

100. What else does the Bible tell us about angels?

A. They are spirit beings who were created holy.

- 329 **Gen. 1:31** God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

B. Some angels rebelled against God. They are the devils or demons.

- 330 **2 Peter 2:4** God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment.

C. The good angels are many and powerful. They serve God and help us.

- 331 **Dan. 7:10** A thousand thousands served Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.
- 332 **Luke 2:13** Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God.
- 333 **Ps. 103:20–21** Bless the LORD, O you His angels, you mighty ones who do His word, obeying the voice of His word! Bless the LORD, all His hosts, His ministers, who do His will.
- 334 **Ps. 91:11–12** He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.

- 335 **Heb. 1:14** Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

Bible narratives: One angel put to death 185,000 of Sennacherib’s army (**2 Kings 19:35**). Elisha and his servant were protected by the heavenly hosts (**2 Kings 6:15–17**). An angel set Peter free (**Acts 12:5–11**).

D. The evil angels are also many and powerful. They hate God and seek to destroy everything that is good, especially faith in Christ.

- 336 **Mark 5:9** Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” He replied, “My name is Legion, for we are many.”

- 337 **Eph. 6:12** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

- 338 **Mark 4:15** And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them.

- 339 **John 8:44** You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

- 340 **1 Peter 5:8–9** Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

Bible narratives: The serpent led Eve into sin (**Gen. 3:1–5**). Satan sought the destruction of Job (**Job 2**). The tempter tried to mislead Jesus (**Matt. 4:1–11**).

Humanity

101. Who are human beings?

Human beings are the most important visible creatures. God created Adam and Eve in His own image, with authority over all the earth.

341 **Gen. 2:7** The LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

342 **Gen. 1:26–28** God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

343 **Mark 10:6** [Jesus said] “From the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ”

102. Why do we say, “God has made me”?

God created the first man and woman, and God has created each one of us.

344 **Gen. 1:28** God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

345 **Ps. 139:13** You formed my inward parts; You knitted me together in my mother’s womb.

346 **Jer. 1:5** Before I formed you in the womb I knew you.

103. How did God first create life?

God created all living things, both plant and animal, by His Word alone, from nothing. He created humanity specially, from dust, then gave us His own breath as life.

347 **Gen. 2:7** The LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

348 **Ps. 139:14** I praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are Your works; my soul knows it very well.

104. What plan does God use for the reproduction of living things?

God created living things to reproduce “according to their kinds.” Animals, plants, and people can reproduce only living things like themselves.

349 **Gen. 1:21** God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

350 **Gen. 1:24** God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.”

105. What is the Christian’s proper response to theories of evolution regarding the beginning of the world?

By faith Christians believe what the Word of God teaches about creation. Evolutionary theories are not scientifically verifiable.

- 351 **Heb. 11:3** By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.
- 352 **2 Peter 3:5–6** They deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.
- 353 **1 Tim. 6:20–21** Guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called “knowledge,” for by professing it some have swerved from the faith.

106. What was the image of God?

The image of God was this:

A. Adam and Eve truly knew God as He wishes to be known and were perfectly happy in Him.

- 354 **Col. 3:10** Put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

B. They were righteous and holy, doing God’s will.

- 355 **Eph. 4:24** Put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

107. Do people still have the image of God?

No, this image was lost when our first parents disobeyed God and fell into sin. Their will and intellect lost the ability to know and please God. In Christians God has begun to rebuild His image, but only in heaven will it be fully restored.

- 356 **Gen. 3:8–10** They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” And he said, “I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.”
- 357 **Gen. 5:3** [Adam] fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image.
- 358 **1 Cor. 2:14** The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.
- 359 **Ps. 17:15** As for me, I shall behold Your face in righteousness; when I awake, I shall be satisfied with Your likeness.

God Still Takes Care of Me and All Creatures

108. How does the universe still depend on God?

God sustains all things by His wisdom and power.

- 360 **Ps. 36:6** Man and beast You save, O LORD.
- 361 **Ps. 147:4** He determines the number of the stars; He gives to all of them their names.
- 362 **Heb. 1:3** He [the Son] is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power.
- 363 **Col. 1:17** [Jesus] is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

109. Why are there evil and suffering in this world?

Evil and suffering are in the world because of sin. But in the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God has demonstrated His power over sin and death. God in His almighty power and love causes all things to work together for good to those who love Him.

364 **Rom. 6:23** The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

365 **Rom. 8:28** And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.

366 **Rom. 8:37** In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

110. What does God do to take care of me?

A. He gives me food and clothing, home and family, work and play, and all that I need from day to day.

367 **Ps. 145:15–16** The eyes of all look to You, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand; You satisfy the desire of every living thing.

368 **1 Peter 5:7** Casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you.

Bible narratives: God took care of Noah and his descendants (**Gen. 9:1–3**). God took care of Israel in the wilderness (**Deut. 8:3–4**). God took care of Elijah, the widow, and her son during the famine (**1 Kings 17**). See **Psalms 37** and **104**.

B. “He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil.”

369 **Gen. 50:20** You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

370 **Ps. 31:15** My times are in Your hand.

371 **Matt. 10:29–30** Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered.

Bible narratives: God directed Lot to flee to the mountains before the destruction of Sodom (**Genesis 19**). God delivered Israel from slavery and guided and protected them on their way (**Ex. 13:14**). See also **Psalms 37** and **73**.

111. Why does God do this for us?

“All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me.”

372 **Gen. 32:10** I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of steadfast love and all the faithfulness that You have shown to Your servant.

373 **Ps. 103:13** As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear Him.

Bible narrative: The centurion of Capernaum confessed that he did not deserve to have the Lord come under his roof (**Luke 7:6–7**).

112. What do we owe our heavenly Father for all His goodness?

It is our duty to

A. “Thank and praise, serve and obey Him”;

374 **Ps. 116:12** What shall I render to the LORD for all His benefits to me?

375 **Ps. 118:1** Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever.

B. be good stewards of His creation.

376 **Gen. 2:15** The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

Note: We are good stewards when we avoid polluting air, land, and water; carefully dispose of waste; use rather than waste natural resources; conserve rather than waste energy; recycle or reuse materials whenever possible; and value and take care of all God’s creation.

113. Why do we close the explanation of the First Article with the words “This is most certainly true”?

Everything I confess in this article is plainly taught in God's Word, Holy Scripture. Therefore, I firmly believe it.

The Second Article

Redemption

[I believe] in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

What does this mean? I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord,

who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death,

that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness,

just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.

This is most certainly true.

The Names *Jesus* and *Christ*

114. Of whom does this article speak?

It speaks about Jesus Christ—His person and His work.

115. Why is He named *Jesus*?

The name *Jesus* means “the Lord saves.” Jesus is His personal name.

377 **Matt. 1:21** She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.

378 **John 4:42** We know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.

379 **Acts 4:12** And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

116. Why is He called *Christ*?

The title *Christ* (Greek) or *Messiah* (Hebrew) means “the Anointed.” Jesus has been anointed with the Holy Spirit without limit to be our Prophet, Priest, and King.

Note: Anointing was the way prophets, priests, and kings were set apart for special work.

380 **Ps. 45:7** God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.

381 **John 3:34** For He whom God has sent utters the words of God, for He gives the Spirit without measure.

382 **Acts 10:38** God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power.

Note: The following are other titles for Jesus: Angel of God (**Ex. 14:19**); Redeemer (**Is. 59:20**); Immanuel (**Matt. 1:23**); Son of the living God (**Matt. 16:16**); Son of Man (**Matt. 25:31**); the Word (**John 1:14**); Lord (**John 20:28**). His names are the Gospel simply stated.

117. What does it mean when you confess, “I believe in Jesus Christ”?

It means that I know and trust in Jesus Christ as my only Savior from sin, death, and the devil and believe that He gives me eternal life.

- 383 **John 17:3** This is eternal life, that they know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.
- 384 **John 3:36** Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.
- 385 **2 Tim. 1:12** I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that He is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me.
- 386 **Rom. 10:10** For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

The Two Natures of Jesus Christ

118. Who is Jesus Christ?

Jesus Christ is “true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary.”

119. How do you know that Jesus Christ is true God?

Because the Scriptures clearly call Him God, teaching the following:

A. Jesus has divine names.

- 387 **John 20:28** Thomas answered Him, “My Lord and my God!”
- 388 **Rom. 9:5** From their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ who is God over all, blessed forever.
- 389 **1 John 5:20** He is the true God and eternal life.

Note: These names are not mere honorary titles but tell exactly who Jesus is, and they can be true only of God.

B. Jesus possesses divine attributes (qualities or characteristics). He is

1. eternal (without beginning and without end);

- 390 **John 1:1–2** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

2. unchangeable;

- 391 **Heb. 13:8** Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

3. almighty (omnipotent);

- 392 **Matt. 28:18** All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.

4. all-knowing (omniscient);

- 393 **John 21:17** Lord, You know everything.

5. present everywhere (omnipresent).

- 394 **Matt. 28:20** Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

Bible narratives: Miraculous catch of fish (**Luke 5:4–6; John 21:6**). Jesus knows the name and character of Nathanael (**John 1:48**). Jesus and the woman at Jacob’s well (**John 4:17–18**).

Note: See also **Matt. 21:1–7; 26:20–25; Luke 18:31–33; 22:8–13**.

C. Jesus does divine works (which only God can do).

1. He forgives.

- 395 **Matt. 9:6** The Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.

2. He created.

- 396 **John 1:3** All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made.

3. He will judge.

- 397 **John 5:27** [The Father] has given Him authority to execute judgment.

4. He preserves.

398 **Heb. 1:3** He upholds the universe by the word of His power.

Bible narratives: At the wedding feast in Cana, Jesus revealed His glory by turning water into wine (**John 2:1–11**). He rebuked the storm (**Luke 8:22–25**). He healed the paralytic (**Matt. 9:1–8**). He called Lazarus back to life (**John 11:38–44**). He rose from the dead (**Matt. 28:6–7**).

D. Jesus receives divine honor and glory.

399 **John 5:22–23** The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

400 **Heb. 1:6** Let all God's angels worship Him.

Note: See **Phil. 2:10**; **Rev. 5:12–13**.

120. How do you know that Jesus Christ is also true man?

Because the Scriptures

A. clearly call Him man;

401 **1 Tim. 2:5** There is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

B. say that He has a human body and soul;

402 **Luke 24:39** See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Touch Me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.

403 **Matt. 26:38** My soul is very sorrowful, even to death.

C. speak of His human, but sinless, feelings and actions.

404 **Matt. 4:2** He was hungry.

405 **John 11:35** Jesus wept.

406 **John 19:28** Jesus ... said, "I thirst."

407 **Heb. 4:14–16** Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Bible narratives: Jesus suffered and died (**Matthew 26–27**). Jesus slept (**Mark 4:38**). Jesus was born (**Luke 2**).

121. What two natures, therefore, are united in the one person of Jesus Christ?

The divine and the human natures are united in Jesus Christ. This personal union began when He became man (incarnation) and continues forever.

408 **John 1:14** The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

409 **1 Tim. 3:16** Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh.

410 **Col. 2:9** For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.

411 **Is. 9:6** To us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

412 **Matt. 28:18** All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.

413 **Matt. 28:20** I am with you always, to the end of the age.

414 **Acts 3:15** You killed the Author of life.

415 **1 John 1:7** The blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

416 **Acts 20:28** The Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for church of God, which He obtained with His own blood.

122. Why was it necessary for our Savior to be true man?

Christ had to be true man in order to

A. act in our place under the Law and fulfill it for us (active obedience);

417 **Gal. 4:4–5** When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

418 **Rom. 5:19** For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

B. be able to suffer and die for our guilt because we failed to keep the Law (passive obedience).

419 **Col. 1:22** He has now reconciled [you] in his body of flesh by His death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before Him.

420 **Heb. 2:14** Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil.

123. Why was it necessary for our Savior to be true God?

Christ had to be true God in order that

A. His fulfilling of the Law, His life, suffering, and death, might be a sufficient ransom for all people;

421 **Ps. 49:7** No man can ransom another, or give to God the price of his life.

422 **Mark 10:45** The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.

423 **Rom. 3:22–24** For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

424 **Gal. 3:13** Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.

425 **Gal. 4:4–5** When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

426 **1 Peter 1:18–19** Knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

B. He might be able to overcome death and the devil for us.

427 **1 Cor. 15:57** Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

428 **2 Tim. 1:10** Our Savior Christ Jesus ... [has] abolished death.

429 **Heb. 2:14** Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil.

124. What do you therefore confess about Jesus Christ, the God-man?

I believe that Jesus Christ is my Lord and my Redeemer, whom I love and serve with my whole life.

430 **1 Cor. 6:20** You were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Bible narrative: Thomas's confession (**John 20:24–29**).

The Office of Christ

125. For what threefold office was Christ anointed?

Christ was anointed to be our Prophet, Priest, and King.

A. As Prophet, Christ

1. preached personally during His life on earth, validating His word with miracles, especially His own resurrection;

431 **Deut. 18:15** The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to Him you shall listen.

432 **Matt. 17:5** “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him.”

433 **Mark 1:38** Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.

434 **John 1:17–18** The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, He has made Him known.

435 **John 6:68** Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”

2. through the preached Gospel today still proclaims Himself to be the Son of God and Redeemer of the world.

436 **Mark 16:15** He said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.”

437 **Luke 10:16** The one who hears you hears Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me, and the one who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me.

438 **2 Cor. 5:20** Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

B. As Priest, Christ

1. fulfilled the Law perfectly in our stead (active obedience);

439 **Gal. 4:4–5** When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

2. sacrificed Himself for our sins (passive obedience);

440 **1 Cor. 15:3** Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures.

441 **Heb. 7:26–27** For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for His own sins and then for those of the people, since He did this once for all when He offered up Himself.

442 **1 John 2:2** He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

3. still pleads for us with His heavenly Father (intercession).

443 **1 John 2:1** We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

C. As King, Christ

1. rules with His almighty power over all creation (the kingdom of power—all creatures);

444 **Matt. 28:18** All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.

2. governs and protects especially His church (the kingdom of grace—the church on earth);

- 445 **John 18:36–37** Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, My servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But My kingdom is not from the world.” Then Pilate said to Him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to My voice.”

3. finally leads His church to glory in heaven (the kingdom of glory—the church in heaven).

- 446 **2 Tim. 4:18** The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into His heavenly kingdom. To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

The Savior in the State of Humiliation

126. What two states do the Scriptures distinguish in Christ’s work of salvation?

- A. The state of humiliation
- B. The state of exaltation

127. What was Christ’s humiliation?

Christ’s humiliation was that as man He did not always or fully use His divine powers.

- 447 **Phil. 2:5–8** Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Bible narratives: Wedding at Cana (**John 2:1–11**). Raising of Lazarus (**John 11:38–44**). Rays of hidden glory (**John 18:1–6**).

128. Which words of the Apostles’ Creed describe the stages of Christ’s humiliation?

“Conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried.”

129. What do the Scriptures teach about Christ’s conception?

They teach that Christ, the Son of God, received a true human body and soul in the Virgin Mary through the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit, not through a human father.

- 448 **Luke 1:35** The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.
- 449 **Matt. 1:20** Joseph son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

130. What do the Scriptures teach of the birth of Christ?

They teach that Jesus Christ, the God-man, was born of the Virgin Mary.

- 450 **Is. 7:14** Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel. (See also **Matt. 1:23**.)
- 451 **Luke 2:7** She gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Bible narrative: The virgin birth (**Matt. 1:18–25**).

131. What do the Scriptures teach about Christ’s life, suffering, and death?

They teach that Christ

- A. endured poverty, contempt, and persecution in His earthly life;

452 **2 Cor. 8:9** Though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you by His poverty might become rich.

453 **Matt. 8:20** Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.

454 **Is. 53:3** He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.

455 **John 8:40** You seek to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God.

Bible narratives: At His birth Jesus had only strips of cloth and a manger (**Luke 2:7**). Herod tried to murder Him, but He escaped to Egypt (**Matt. 2:13**). In Nazareth the people tried to throw Him down from the brow of the hill (**Luke 4:29**). In the temple they picked up stones to stone Him (**John 8:59**).

B. suffered great agony of body and soul under Pontius Pilate;

456 **John 19:1–3** Pilate took Jesus and flogged Him. And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on His head and arrayed Him in a purple robe. They came up to Him, saying, “Hail, king of the Jews!” and struck Him with their hands.

Bible narrative: The suffering of Christ (**Mark 15:1–20**).

C. died in excruciating agony on the cross.

457 **John 19:16–18** So he delivered Him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. There they crucified Him.

458 **Matt. 27:46** About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice ... “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (He suffered the tortures of the damned in hell.)

459 **John 19:30** He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

Bible narrative: The death of Christ (**Mark 15:21–41**).

132. What do the Scriptures teach about Christ’s burial?

They teach that Christ’s body was buried in the tomb and remained there until the third day, without decaying in any way.

460 **Acts 13:37** He whom God raised up did not see corruption.

Bible narrative: The burial of Christ (**Mark 15:42–47**).

Christ’s Work of Redemption, or Atonement

133. Why did Christ humble Himself?

Christ voluntarily humbled Himself in order to “redeem me, a lost and condemned person.”

461 **Is. 53:4–5** Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His stripes we are healed.

462 **John 10:17–18** I lay down My life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord.

134. From what has Christ redeemed you?

He has redeemed me “from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil.”

- 463 **John 1:29** Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!
- 464 **Heb. 2:14–15, 17** Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.... Therefore He had to be made like His brothers in every respect, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

135. How has Christ redeemed you from all sins?

A. He took my guilt and punishment upon Himself.

- 465 **Rom. 5:19** So by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.
- 466 **2 Cor. 5:21** He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.
- 467 **Gal. 3:13** Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree."

B. He freed me from the slavery of sin.

- 468 **John 8:34, 36** Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin.... So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.
- 469 **1 Peter 2:24** He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed.

136. How has Christ rescued you from death?

Through His suffering, death, and resurrection, Christ has triumphed over death. Since He now gives me eternal life I need not fear death.

- 470 **1 Cor. 15:55–57** "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 471 **2 Tim. 1:10** Our Savior Christ Jesus ... who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.
- 472 **1 Peter 1:3** According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

137. How has Christ rescued you from the power of the devil?

Christ has completely conquered the devil. Therefore the devil can no longer accuse me of my sins, and I can resist his temptations.

- 473 **Gen. 3:15** I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.
- 474 **1 John 3:8** The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.
- 475 **James 4:7** Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Note: See also **Rom. 8:31–34**; **Col. 2:15**; **Heb. 2:14–15**; **1 Peter 5:8–9**; **Rev. 12:10**.

138. With what has Christ redeemed you?

Christ has redeemed me, "not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death."

- 476 **Is. 53:5** And with His stripes we are healed.
- 477 **1 Peter 1:18–19** Knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.
- 478 **1 John 1:7** The blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

139. How does this work of redemption benefit you?

Christ was my substitute. He took my place under God's judgment against sin. By paying the penalty of my guilt, Christ atoned, or made satisfaction, for my sins (vicarious atonement).

- 479 **Is. 53:4–5** Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His stripes we are healed.
- 480 **2 Cor. 5:21** For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.
- 481 **Heb. 2:17** Therefore He had to be made like His brothers in every respect, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

140. Has Christ redeemed only you?

No, Christ has redeemed me and all people (universal atonement).

- 482 **2 Cor. 5:15** He died for all.
- 483 **2 Cor. 5:19** In Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them.
- 484 **1 Tim. 1:15** The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.
- 485 **1 John 2:2** He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.
- 486 **2 Peter 2:1** [They] even [deny] the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.

The Savior in the State of Exaltation

141. What is Christ's exaltation?

Christ's exaltation is that as man He now fully and always uses His divine powers.

- 487 **Phil. 2:9–11** God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

142. Which words of the Apostles' Creed describe the stages of Christ's exaltation?

"He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead."

143. Why is Christ's descent into hell part of His exaltation?

The Scriptures teach that Christ, after He was made alive in His grave, descended into hell, not to suffer punishment, but to proclaim His victory over His enemies in hell.

- 488 **1 Peter 3:18–19** [Christ was] put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, in which He went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison.
- 489 **Col. 2:15** He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in Him.

144. What do the Scriptures teach about Christ's resurrection?

They teach that on the third day Christ victoriously rose from the grave and showed Himself alive to His disciples.

- 490 **Acts 10:40–41** God raised Him on the third day and made Him to appear, not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead.
- 491 **1 Cor. 15:4–8** He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and ... He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then He appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared also to me.
- 492 **Acts 1:3** He presented Himself alive to them after His suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

Bible narrative: Christ's resurrection (**Matt. 27:62– 28:20; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20–21**).

145. Why is Christ's resurrection so important and comforting?

Christ's resurrection proves that

A. Christ is the Son of God;

- 493 **Rom. 1:4** [He] was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by His resurrection from the dead.

B. His doctrine is the truth;

- 494 **John 2:19** Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.
- 495 **John 8:28** When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing on My own authority, but speak just as the Father taught Me.

C. God the Father accepted Christ's sacrifice for the reconciliation of the world;

- 496 **Rom. 4:25** [Christ] was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.
- 497 **Rom. 5:10** If while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life.
- 498 **1 Cor. 15:17** If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.

D. all believers in Christ will rise to eternal life.

- 499 **John 11:25–26** I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die.
- 500 **John 14:19** Because I live, you also will live.
- 501 **1 Cor. 15:20** But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

146. What do the Scriptures teach about Christ's ascension?

They teach that 40 days after His resurrection, Christ, in the presence of His disciples, ascended bodily into the glory of His Father, to prepare a place for us in heaven.

502 **Luke 24:51** While He blessed them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven.

503 **Eph. 4:10** He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens.

504 **John 14:2–3** In My Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also.

505 **John 17:24** Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, may be with Me where I am, to see My glory.

Bible narrative: Christ's ascension (**Acts 1:9–11**).

147. What does it mean that Christ sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty?

With this expression Scripture teaches that Christ, as true man, is not only present everywhere, but also now fully exercises His divine power over the whole universe.

506 **Eph. 1:20–23** When He [God] raised Him [Christ] from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things under His feet and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

148. What comfort do we get from Christ's ascension to the right hand of God?

We know that the exalted God-man, Christ

A. as our Prophet sends people to proclaim the saving Gospel by the power of the Holy Spirit;

507 **Eph. 4:10–12** ([He] ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.

508 **Luke 10:16** The one who hears you hears Me.

509 **John 16:7** It is to your advantage that I [Jesus] go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you.

B. as our Priest pleads and prays for us before the Father;

510 **Rom. 8:34** [Christ] is the one ... who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

511 **1 John 2:1** If anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

C. as our King rules and protects His church and governs over all the world especially for the benefit of His church.

512 **Ps. 110:1** The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool."

Note: See **Eph. 1:20–23**.

149. What do the Scriptures teach about Christ's second coming?

A. Christ will return visibly and with great glory on the Last Day.

513 **Matt. 24:27** As the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

514 **Luke 21:27** And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

515 **Acts 1:11** Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven.

516 **2 Peter 3:10** The day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

517 **Rev. 1:7** Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him, and all the tribes of the earth will wail on account of Him. Even so. Amen.

B. Christ will return to judge the world, not to set up an earthly government.

518 **Matt. 25:31–32** When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. Before Him will be gathered all the nations, and He will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

519 **John 12:48** The one who rejects Me and does not receive My words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.

520 **John 18:36** Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world.”

521 **2 Cor. 5:10** We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

Bible narrative: The final judgment (**Matt. 25:31–46**).

Note: Millennialists teach the unscriptural doctrine that either before or after the return of Christ the church will experience a literal period of 1,000 years (a millennium) of peace and

prosperity. **Revelation 20** speaks in picture language of Christ’s spiritual rule on the earth through the Gospel and does not refer to earthly government.

C. Christ will return on a specific day known by God alone.

522 **Matt. 24:44** You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

523 **Mark 13:32** But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

524 **Acts 17:31** He has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom He has appointed.

Bible narrative: The parable of the 10 virgins (**Matt. 25:1–13**).

D. Before Christ returns, there will be increasing turmoil and distress for the church and the world.

525 **Matt. 24:7** Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places.

526 **Matt. 24:22** If those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

527 **1 Tim. 4:1** The Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons.

Bible narrative: Signs preceding Christ’s coming (**Matthew 24**).

E. The return of Christ is a source of hope and joy for the Christian.

- 528 **Luke 21:28** When these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.
- 529 **Heb. 9:28** Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him.
- 530 **Titus 2:13** Waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.
- 531 **Rev. 22:20** He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

Bible narrative: Encouraging words (1 **Thess. 4:13–18**).

150. In conclusion, then, why has Christ redeemed you?

The Scriptures teach that Christ's purpose was

A. "that I may be His own"; that is, I am now righteous and blameless in the sight of God;

- 532 **2 Cor. 5:21** For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.
- 533 **Rev. 5:9** You were slain, and by Your blood You ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

B. that I may "live under Him in His kingdom"; that is, that I am now freed from the slavery of sin and thus freed to serve God;

- 534 **Rom. 6:6** We know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.
- 535 **2 Cor. 5:15** He died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for Him who for their sake died and was raised.
- 536 **Col. 2:6** Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.
- 537 **Titus 2:14** [Jesus Christ] gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession who are zealous for good works.

C. that I may "serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness"; that is, that I honor God with my whole life and rejoice in Him now on earth and forever in heaven.

- 538 **Luke 1:69, 74–75** [He] has raised up a horn of salvation for us ... that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.
- 539 **Gal. 2:20** I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.
- 540 **1 Peter 2:9** You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Bible narrative: The saints in heaven (**Rev. 7:13–17**).

151. What is the basis of our faith and life in Christ?

"He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity."

541 **Col. 3:1–3** If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

152. Why do you close this article with the words, “This is most certainly true”?

Because all that I confess in this article is plainly taught in the Bible, and I, therefore, firmly believe it.

The Third Article

Sanctification

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

What does this mean? I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith.

In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

In this Christian church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers.

On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ.

This is most certainly true.

153. What five points does this article discuss?

- I. *The Holy Spirit*
- II. *The Church, the Communion of Saints*
- III. *The Forgiveness of Sins*
- IV. *The Resurrection of the Body*
- V. *The Life Everlasting*

I. The Holy Spirit

The Person of the Holy Spirit

154. Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is the third person in the Holy Trinity, true God with the Father and the Son—therefore not merely the power or energy of God.

542 **Matt. 28:19** 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.

155. How do you know that the Holy Spirit is God?

Because the Scriptures clearly call Him God, teaching that

A. the Holy Spirit has divine names;

543 **Acts 5:3–4** Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit? ... You have not lied to men but to God.”

544 **1 Cor. 3:16** Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?

B. the Holy Spirit possesses divine attributes (properties or characteristics);

545 **Ps. 139:7–10** Where shall I go from Your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, You are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me. (Omnipresence)

546 **1 Cor. 2:10** The Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. (Omniscience)

547 **Heb. 9:14** Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. (Eternity)

Note: See **Matt. 28:19**. (Holiness)

C. the Holy Spirit does divine works (which only God can do);

548 **Gen. 1:2** The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. (Creation)

549 **Titus 3:5** He saved us ... by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit. (Sanctification)

D. the Holy Spirit receives divine honor and glory.

550 **1 Peter 4:14** The Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

The Work of the Holy Spirit

156. What is the special work of the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit sanctifies me (makes me holy) by bringing me to faith in Christ, so that I might have the blessings of redemption and lead a godly life (sanctification in the wide sense).

Note: The word *sanctification* is used in two ways:

1. The wide sense—the whole work of the Holy Spirit by which He brings us to faith and also enables us to lead a godly life.

2. The narrow sense—that part of the Holy Spirit's work by which He directs and empowers the believer to lead a godly life.

551 **1 Cor. 6:11** You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

157. Why do you need the Holy Spirit to begin and sustain this faith in you?

By nature I am spiritually blind, dead, and an enemy of God, as the Scriptures teach; therefore, "I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him."

552 **1 Cor. 2:14** The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

553 **Eph. 2:1** You were dead in the trespasses and sins.

554 **Rom. 8:7** The mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God.

555 **Eph. 2:8–9** By grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

556 **1 Cor. 12:3** No one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit.

158. What has the Holy Spirit done to bring you to faith?

The Holy Spirit "has called me by the Gospel," that is, He has invited and drawn me by the Gospel to partake of the spiritual blessings that are mine in Christ.

557 **Rom. 1:16** I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

558 **2 Thess. 2:14** To this He called you through our gospel.

559 **Rev. 22:17** The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

Bible narratives: Invitation to the wedding banquet of the king's son (**Matt. 22:1–10**). Invitation to the great banquet (**Luke 14:16–17**).

159. How do the Scriptures describe this gracious work of the Spirit in you?

The Scriptures teach that by the Gospel the Holy Spirit "enlightened me with His gifts," that is, He gave me the saving knowledge of Jesus, my Savior, so that I trust, rejoice, and find comfort in Him.

- 560 **1 Peter 2:9** You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.
- 561 **2 Cor. 4:6** God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
- 562 **1 Peter 1:8** Though you do not now see Him, you believe in Him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory.
- 563 **Rom. 15:13** May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Bible narratives: The Samaritans were filled with great joy when Philip preached Christ to them (**Acts 8:5–8**). The jailer at Philippi and his whole family were filled with joy because they had come to believe (**Acts 16: 25–34**).

160. What is this work of the Holy Spirit called?

It is called conversion (being turned) or regeneration (new birth).

- 564 **Ps. 51:13** I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners will return to You. (Conversion)
- 565 **John 3:5–6** Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” (Regeneration)

161. Why do you say that the Holy Spirit has done this by the Gospel?

The Gospel is the means by which the Holy Spirit offers us all the blessings of Christ and creates faith in us.

Note: The written and spoken Word of the Gospel and the sacraments are the means of grace.

- 566 **John 17:20** I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word.
- 567 **Rom. 10:17** Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.
- 568 **1 Cor. 4:15** I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.
- 569 **1 Peter 1:23** You have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.
- 570 **Titus 3:5** He saved us ... by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit. (Baptism)
- 571 **John 20:22–23** And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.” (Absolution)
- 572 **Matt. 26:27–28** He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, for this is My blood of the covenant [testament], which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” (Lord’s Supper)

162. Besides faith, what else does the Holy Spirit create in you by the Gospel?

The Holy Spirit sanctifies me in the true faith, that is, by faith He works a renewal of my whole life—in spirit, will, attitude, and desires—so that I now strive to overcome sin and do good works (sanctification in the narrow sense).

- 573 **Ps. 51:10** Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
- 574 **Rom. 8:9** You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him.
- 575 **2 Cor. 5:17** If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.
- 576 **Gal. 5:22–23** The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.
- 577 **Eph. 2:10** For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.
- 578 **Eph. 5:18–20** Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

163. What are good works in God's sight?

In God's sight a good work is everything that a child of God does, speaks, or thinks in faith according to the Ten Commandments, for the glory of God, and for the benefit of his or her neighbor.

- 579 **Heb. 11:6** Without faith it is impossible to please [God].
- 580 **John 15:5** Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.
- 581 **Matt. 15:9** In vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.
- 582 **John 14:15** If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.
- 583 **1 Cor. 10:31** Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.
- 584 **Gal. 5:13** Through love serve one another.

Bible narratives: The widow's offering (**Mark 12:41–44**). The expensive perfume poured on Jesus' head (**Mark 14:3–9**). Mary and Martha (**Luke 10:38–42**).

164. What do the Scriptures teach about the gifts of the Holy Spirit?

The Scriptures teach that the Holy Spirit gives gifts to His church. They teach that

A. the Holy Spirit through the Word and sacraments freely gives to all Christians the most precious gifts: faith in Christ, the forgiveness of sins, and eternal life;

B. in apostolic times the Holy Spirit also gave some Christians the gift to perform miraculous signs and wonders (for example, healings, speaking in tongues, raising the dead).

The Scriptures do not teach, however, that God will necessarily give all Christians in every time and place special miraculous gifts. The Holy Spirit bestows His blessings according to His good pleasure.

585 **2 Cor. 12:12** The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works.

586 **Eph. 2:20–22** [You are] built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In Him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Bible narrative: Special signs connected with the apostles personally (**Acts 5:12–16; 8:14–19; 19:11–12, 20; 20:7–12**).

Note: In popular English, the word *charismatic* describes a dynamic person, highly emotional worship, or claims of special miraculous gifts. But the Greek word *charisma* means simply “gift” and refers, for example, to Christ’s whole work of salvation (**Rom. 5:15–16**), to eternal life (**Rom. 6:23**), and to being married or single (**1 Cor. 7:7**).

165. Finally, what also does the Holy Spirit do for you?

The Holy Spirit by the Gospel keeps me in the true faith.

587 **Phil. 1:6** He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

588 **1 Peter 1:5** [You] who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

589 **1 Thess. 2:13** The word of God ... is at work in you believers.

166. Whom else does the Holy Spirit regenerate and renew?

The Holy Spirit “calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.”

590 **Eph. 3:6** The Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

167. Does the Holy Spirit want to do this in the lives of all people?

God the Holy Spirit earnestly wants to convert all people and bring them to salvation through the Gospel.

591 **Ezek. 33:11** I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.

592 **1 Tim. 2:4** [God] desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

593 **2 Peter 3:9** The Lord ... is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

168. Then, why are not all people saved?

Many reject the Word and resist the Holy Spirit; therefore they remain in unbelief and under God’s judgment by their own fault.

594 **Matt. 23:37** O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stone those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!

595 **Acts 7:51** You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you.

Bible narratives: The invited guests refused to come (**Matt. 22:1–10**). The guests refused to accept the invitation (**Luke 14:16–24**).

II. The Church, the Communion of Saints

169. What is the holy Christian church?

The holy Christian church is the communion of saints, the total number of those who believe in Christ. All believers in Christ, but only believers, are members of the church (invisible church).

- 596 **Eph. 2:19–22** You are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In Him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.
- 597 **John 10:16** I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to My voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.
- 598 **Rom. 8:9** Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him.

170. Why do you say, “I believe” in the church?

A. Because faith, which makes people members of the church, is invisible, the church is invisible to human eyes.

- 599 **Luke 17:20–21** The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed, nor will they say, “Look, here it is!” or “There!” for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.
- 600 **2 Tim. 2:19** God’s firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His.”

B. The Scriptures assure us that the Holy Spirit continues to gather and preserve the church.

- 601 **Matt. 16:18** You are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.
- 602 **Acts 2:41, 47** Those who received His word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.... And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Bible narrative: The seven thousand in Israel (1 Kings 19:8–18).

171. Why do you say, I believe in “the” church?

There is only one church, one spiritual body of believers (saints), whose one and only head is Christ.

- 603 **Rom. 12:4–5** For as in one body we have many members ... so we, though many, are one body in Christ.
- 604 **Eph. 4:3–6** [Be] eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.
- 605 **Col. 1:18** [Christ] is the head of the body, the church.

172. Why is the church called “holy”?

It is made up of holy people (saints), believers who have been cleansed by the blood of Christ and who serve God with holy living.

- 606 **Eph. 5:25–27** Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.
- 607 **1 Peter 2:5** You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

173. Why is the church called “Christian”?

It belongs to Christ and is built on Him alone.

- 608 **1 Cor. 3:11** No one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
- 609 **Eph. 2:20** [You are] built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone.

Note: The word *catholic*, sometimes used in creeds, means “universal” or “general.” The

church exists throughout the world, wherever the Gospel is proclaimed.

174. Where is the holy Christian church to be found?

The holy Christian church is to be found where “the Gospel is purely taught and the Sacraments are correctly administered” (Augsburg Confession VII 1). The Gospel and the sacraments are called the “marks of the church.”

- 610 **Is. 55:10–11** For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes out from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

175. In what other senses is the word church used?

The word *church* is also used to indicate

- A. the visible church of God;
- B. a denomination;
- C. a local congregation;
- D. a house of worship.

176. Why does Scripture call local congregations “church”?

Local, visible gatherings around the means of grace are called churches because there believers are gathered around Word and sacrament.

- 611 **Matt. 18:17** If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

- 612 **Matt. 28:19–20** 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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

- 613 **1 Cor. 1:2** To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours.

Note: Paul wrote to the churches in Galatia (**Gal. 1:2**). He wrote to the church of the Thessalonians (**1 Thess. 1:1**). John wrote to the seven churches of Asia Minor (**Revelation 1–3**). A group of congregations is also called “church” (**Acts 9:31**).

177. What is the visible church?

The visible church is the whole number of those who use the Word of God and profess the Christian faith, but among whom, beside the true Christians, there are also unbelievers.

178. Are there then two churches, one visible and the other invisible?

There is only one church—all believers in Christ. The visible gathering is called church because of the believers gathered around the means of grace in an assembly in which there are also hypocrites.

Bible narratives: The net that caught all kinds of fish (**Matt. 13:47–48**). A man without wedding clothes (**Matt. 22:11–12**). Ananias and Sapphira (**Acts 5:1–11**).

179. What do the Scriptures teach about our life in the church?

They teach that

A. we should seek always to be and remain members of the invisible church, Christ’s body, by sincere faith in Christ, our Savior;

614 **John 15:5** I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

615 **2 Cor. 13:5** Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves.

B. we should be faithful to that visible church, or denomination, which professes and teaches all of the Bible's doctrine purely and administers the sacraments according to Christ's institution;

616 **John 8:31–32** If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

617 **Acts 2:42** They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

618 **1 Cor. 1:10** I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.

Note: A religious denomination is a church body or organization with a distinct name and a distinct body of doctrine.

C. we should avoid false teachers, false churches, and all organizations that promote a religion that is contrary to God's Word;

619 **Matt. 7:15–16** Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits.

620 **Rom. 16:17–18** I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.

621 **2 Cor. 6:14** Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. (See also **vv. 15–18.**)

622 **Gal. 1:8** Even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.

623 **2 Tim. 4:3** The time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions.

624 **1 John 4:1** Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.

D. we should maintain and extend God's church by telling others about Jesus Christ, by personal service, and by prayer and financial support.

- 625 **John 20:21** As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you.
- 626 **Acts 1:8** You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.
- 627 **Acts 8:1, 4** And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.... Those who were scattered went about preaching the word.
- 628 **1 Peter 2:9** You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.
- 629 **1 Peter 3:15** Always [be] prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.
- 630 **Luke 10:2** He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."
- 631 **Gal. 6:6** One who is taught the word must share all good things with the one who teaches.

Bible narratives: Peter addressed the crowds (**Acts 2:17–39; 3:12–26**). Philip witnessed to the eunuch (**Acts 8:26–35**). The early Christians prayed for the spreading of the Gospel (**Acts 4:23–30**). They also contributed to the support of the ministry (**Phil. 4:16–19**).

III. The Forgiveness of Sins

180. Why do you say, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins"?

I believe in the forgiveness of sins because through Christ God has declared pardon and forgiveness to all sinful humanity.

- 632 **Ps. 130:3–4** If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But with You there is forgiveness, that You may be feared.
- 633 **2 Cor. 5:19** In Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them.

181. What moves God to forgive sins?

God forgives sins because He is merciful and because of Christ's atoning sacrifice for sinners.

- 634 **Ps. 86:15** You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.
- 635 **John 3:16** God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.
- 636 **Eph. 1:7** In [Christ] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of [God's] grace.
- 637 **1 John 2:2** He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

182. How is it possible for a just and holy God to declare sinners righteous (justification)?

God declares sinners righteous for Christ's sake; that is, our sins have been imputed or charged to Christ, the Savior, and Christ's righteousness has been imputed or credited to us.

- 638 **2 Cor. 5:21** [God] made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.
- 639 **Rom. 3:22–24** There is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.
- 640 **Rom. 4:25** [He] was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

Bible narrative: The king forgave the servant all his debts (**Matt. 18:23–35**).

183. Where does God offer the forgiveness of sins?

God offers the forgiveness of sins in the Gospel.

- 641 **Luke 24:47** Repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nations.
- 642 **Rom. 1:16** I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
- 643 **2 Cor. 5:19** [He has entrusted] to us the message of reconciliation.

184. How do you receive this forgiveness of sins?

I receive this forgiveness through faith, that is, by believing the Gospel.

- 644 **Gen. 15:6** [Abram] believed the LORD, and He counted it to him as righteousness.
- 645 **Rom. 3:28** One is justified by faith apart from works of the law.
- 646 **Rom. 4:5** To the one who does not work but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness.

Bible narrative: The tax collector in the temple (**Luke 18:9–14**).

185. Why can and should I be sure of the forgiveness of my sins?

I can and should be sure of the forgiveness of my sins because God keeps His promises in Christ.

- 647 **Rom. 8:38–39** I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- 648 **2 Tim. 1:12** I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that He is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me.

186. Why must we firmly hold to this teaching of justification by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith?

We must firmly hold to this teaching because

A. it is the most important doctrine of the Christian religion;

- 649 **Acts 4:12** There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

- 650 **Acts 10:43** To Him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name.

B. it distinguishes the Christian religion from false religions, all of which teach salvation by works;

- 651 **Gal. 5:4–5** You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace. For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.

Note: See **Micah 7:18–20**.

C. it gives enduring comfort to the penitent sinner;

- 652 **Acts 16:30–31, 34** “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.”... He rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

- 653 **Matt. 9:2** Take heart, My son; your sins are forgiven.

D. it gives all glory to God for His grace and mercy in Christ.

- 654 **Rev. 1:5–6** To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood and has made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

IV. The Resurrection of the Body

187. What do the Scriptures teach about the resurrection of the body?

They teach that on the Last Day Christ “will raise me and all the dead.” The same bodies that have died shall be made alive.

- 655 **Job 19:25–27** I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.
- 656 **John 5:28–29** An hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear His voice and come out.
- 657 **1 Thess. 4:16** The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

188. Are people reborn in bodies or forms?

Reincarnation, the belief that when people die they are reborn in other bodies or in a series of other bodies, is contrary to Scripture.

- 658 **Heb. 9:27–28** Just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him.

Note: See 1 Corinthians 15.

189. What difference will there be between believers and unbelievers in the resurrection?

A. The believers will rise with glorified bodies and enter everlasting life in heaven with God.

- 659 **Dan. 12:2** And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.
- 660 **John 5:28–29** All who are in the tombs will hear His voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.
- 661 **1 Cor. 15:42–43** So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.
- 662 **Phil. 3:21** [Christ] will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body.

B. The unbelievers will rise to eternal death, that is, to shame and torment in hell forever.

- 663 **Is. 66:24** Their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.
- 664 **Matt. 10:28** Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.
- 665 **Matt. 25:41** He will say to those on His left, “Depart from Me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”
- 666 **Rev. 1:7** Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of Him. Even so. Amen.

Bible narrative: The story of the rich man and Lazarus illustrates that there are only two places (**Luke 16:19–31**).

V. The Life Everlasting

190. To whom does God give eternal life?

God gives eternal life to me and all believers in Christ.

A. Eternal life is a present possession.

- 667 **John 17:3** This is eternal life, that they know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.
- 668 **John 3:16** God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.
- 669 **Rom. 10:9** If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.
- 670 **John 3:36** Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

B. At the time of death, the soul of a believer is immediately with Christ in heaven.

- 671 **Eccl. 12:7** The dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.
- 672 **Luke 23:43** Truly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.
- 673 **John 17:24** Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, may be with Me where I am, to see My glory that You have given Me because You loved Me before the foundation of the world.
- 674 **Phil. 1:23–24** My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.
- 675 **Rev. 14:13** I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Blessed indeed,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!”

C. At the Last Day the believers, in both body and soul, will begin the full enjoyment of being with Christ forever.

- 676 **1 Cor. 15:51–52** Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.
- 677 **Matt. 25:34** Then the King [Jesus] will say to those on His right, “Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”
- 678 **Ps. 16:11** In Your presence there is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.
- 679 **Rom. 8:18** I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.
- 680 **1 John 3:2** Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is.

191. Are you sure that you have eternal life?

Even as I now believe in Christ my Savior, I also know that I have been chosen to eternal life out of pure grace in Christ without any merit of my own and that no one can pluck me out of His hand (eternal election of grace or predestination).

- 681 **John 10:27–28** My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand.
- 682 **Rom. 8:28–30** We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom He predestined He also called, and those whom He called He also justified, and those whom He justified He also glorified.
- 683 **Eph. 1:3–6** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has blessed us in the Beloved.

192. Why do you close this article with the words “This is most certainly true”?

Because all that I confess in this article is plainly taught in the Bible and therefore I firmly believe it.



— THE LORD'S PRAYER —

193. What privilege and command does God give to those who believe in Jesus Christ?

God commands and invites believers in Jesus Christ to pray.

- 684 **Matt. 7:7–8** Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.
- 685 **1 Thess. 5:16–18** Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

194. What is prayer?

Prayer is speaking to God in words and thoughts.

686 **Ps. 19:14** Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

687 **Acts 7:59–60** And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Bible narratives: Abraham prayed for Sodom (**Gen. 18:22–23**). Jesus in Gethsemane (**Matt. 26:36–44**). Thanksgiving for the release of Peter and John from prison (**Acts 4:23–31**).

195. To whom should we pray?

We should pray to the true God only, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, not to idols, saints, or anything God has created.

688 **Ps. 65:2** O You who hear prayer, to You shall all flesh come.

689 **1 John 5:20–21** We are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

690 **Rev. 22:8–9** I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”

Bible narratives: Elijah and the priests of Baal (**1 Kings 18:25–29, 36–39**). Daniel in the lions’ den (**Dan. 6: 1–23**). Paul in Lystra (**Acts 14:8–18**). Jesus’ High Priestly Prayer (**John 17**).

196. Whose prayers are acceptable to God?

Only those who believe in Jesus Christ may pray to God and expect to be heard.

691 **John 14:13–14** Whatever you ask in My name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.

692 **John 15:7** If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

197. What should be the content of our prayers?

In our prayers we should ask for everything that tends to the glory of God and to our own and our neighbor's welfare, both spiritual and bodily blessings. We should also praise and thank God for who He is and what He has done.

693 **Phil. 4:6** Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

694 **Ps. 136:1** Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever.

198. How should we pray?

We should pray

A. in the name of Jesus, that is, with faith in Him as our Redeemer;

695 **John 16:23** Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He will give it to you.

B. with confidence, that is with firm trust that for Jesus' sake our prayers will be answered;

696 **Matt. 21:22** And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.

697 **James 1:6–7** Let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord.

C. according to God's revealed will.

698 **Luke 11:13** If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!

699 **Luke 22:42** Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me. Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done.

700 **Matt. 8:2** Behold, a leper came to Him and knelt before Him, saying, "Lord, if You will, You can make me clean."

701 **1 John 5:14** This is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He hears us.

199. Who helps us pray?

God the Holy Spirit prays with and for us.

702 **Rom. 8:26** Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

200. How does God answer prayer?

God hears the prayers of all Christians and answers in His own way and at His own time.

703 **Is. 65:24** Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear.

704 **2 Cor. 12:8–9** Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Bible narratives: Jesus healed a centurion's servant (**Matt. 8:5–13**). Jesus healed a paralytic (**Matt. 9:1–8**). The LORD planned to rescue Israel from Egypt (**Ex. 3:7–10**). The parable of the persistent widow (**Luke 18:1–8**).

201. For whom should we pray?

We should pray for ourselves and for all other people, even for our enemies, but not for the souls of the dead.

- 705 **1 Tim. 2:1–2** First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.
- 706 **Matt. 5:44** Pray for those who persecute you.
- 707 **Heb. 9:27** It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment.

Bible narratives: The tax collector prayed for himself (**Luke 18:13**). Abraham prayed for Sodom (**Gen. 18:23–32**). The Canaanite woman prayed for her daughter (**Matt. 15:22–28**). Jesus prayed for His enemies (**Luke 23:34**). Stephen prayed for his enemies (**Acts 7:60**).

202. Where should we pray?

We should pray everywhere, especially when we are alone, with our families, and in church.

- 708 **1 Tim. 2:8** I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling.
- 709 **Matt. 6:6** When you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.
- 710 **Luke 5:16** He would withdraw to desolate places and pray.
- 711 **Acts 12:5** Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.

203. When should we pray?

We should pray regularly and frequently, especially in time of trouble.

- 712 **Ps. 65:8** You make the going out of the morning and the evening to shout for joy.
- 713 **Ps. 119:164** Seven times a day I praise You for Your righteous rules.
- 714 **Dan. 6:10** When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.
- 715 **Luke 18:1** [Jesus] told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.
- 716 **1 Thess. 5:17–18** Pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
- 717 **Ps. 50:15** Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.

Bible narrative: The early Christians kept the customary hours of prayer (**Acts 2:46–3:1; 10**).

Note: See Luther's suggestions in this catechism for daily morning, evening, and mealtime prayers.

204. What prayer did Jesus give us to show us how to pray?

Jesus gave us the Lord's Prayer.

Bible narrative: The Lord's Prayer (**Matt. 6:9–13; Luke 11:1–4**).

The Introduction

Our Father who art in heaven.

Our Father in heaven.

What does this mean? With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear father.

205. In what way does the word Father in the Lord's Prayer encourage us to pray?

The word *Father* tells us that God loves us and wants us to pray to Him confidently and without fear.

- 718 **1 John 3:1** See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know Him.
- 719 **Rom. 8:15–16** You have received the Spirit of adoption as sons.... The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.
- 720 **2 Cor. 6:18** I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me, says the Lord Almighty.
- 721 **Heb. 4:16** Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
- 722 **Ps. 103:13** As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear Him.

Bible narrative: The lost son (**Luke 15:11–32**).

206. What does the word our impress upon us when we pray, “Our Father”?

In Jesus all believers are children of the one Father and should pray with and for one another.

- 723 **Eph. 4:6** [There is] one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.
- 724 **Gal. 3:26** For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.
- 725 **James 5:16** Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

207. What do the words who art [are] in heaven say about God?

These words assure us that our heavenly Father, as Lord over all, has the power to grant our prayers.

- 726 **Ps. 124:8** Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth.
- 727 **Luke 1:37** Nothing will be impossible with God.
- 728 **Acts 17:24** The God who made the world and everything in it [is] Lord of heaven and earth.

The First Petition

Hallowed be Thy name.

Hallowed be Your name.

What does this mean? God’s name is certainly holy in itself, but we pray in this petition that it may be kept holy among us also.

How is God’s name kept holy? God’s name is kept holy when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we, as the children of God, also lead holy lives according to it. Help us to do this, dear Father in heaven! But anyone who teaches or lives contrary to God’s Word profanes the name of God among us. Protect us from this, heavenly Father!

208. What is the connection between this petition and the Second Commandment?

Both speak about the name of God. “In this petition we pray for exactly what God demands in the Second Commandment. We pray that His name not be taken in vain ... but be used well for God’s praise and honor” (Large Catechism III 45).

- 729 **Ex. 20:7** 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.

209. What are we asking when we pray that God’s name be made holy?

Since God’s name is God as He has revealed Himself to us, we cannot make His name holy, but we do pray that He would help us keep His name holy in our lives.

- 730 **Ps. 103:1** Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name!

210. How do we keep God's name holy?

We keep God's name holy

A. when God's Word is taught among us in its truth and purity;

731 **Jer. 23:28** Let him who has My word speak My word faithfully.

732 **John 17:17** Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

B. when we live according to the Word of God.

733 **Matt. 5:16** Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

734 **Eph. 4:1** I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.

Bible narrative: Zacchaeus resolved to live the Christian life (**Luke 19:1–9**).

211. How is God's name profaned?

God's name is profaned, that is, dishonored,

A. when anyone teaches contrary to God's Word;

735 **Jer. 23:31** Behold, I am against the prophets, declares the LORD, who use their tongues and declare, "declares the LORD."

B. when anyone lives contrary to God's Word.

736 **Rom. 2:23–24** You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. For, as it is written, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."

The Second Petition

Thy kingdom come.

Your kingdom come.

What does this mean? The kingdom of God certainly comes by itself without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may come to us also.

How does God's kingdom come? God's kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity.

212. What is the kingdom of God?

The kingdom of God is His ruling as king over the whole universe (kingdom of power), the church on earth (kingdom of grace), and the church and angels in heaven (kingdom of glory).

737 **Ps. 103:19** The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom rules over all. (Kingdom of power)

738 **John 3:5** Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (Kingdom of grace)

739 **2 Tim. 4:18** The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into His heavenly kingdom. To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen. (Kingdom of glory)

213. For what do we pray in the Second Petition?

We do not pray that God's kingdom of power would come, because that is already present everywhere, but we ask God to

A. give us His Holy Spirit so that we believe His Word and lead godly lives as members of His kingdom of grace;

740 **Mark 1:15** [Jesus said,] “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

741 **Rom. 14:17** The kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

742 **Col. 1:13–14** He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

B. bring many others into His kingdom of grace;

743 **Matt. 9:38** Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.

744 **2 Thess. 3:1** Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you.

C. use us to extend His kingdom of grace;

745 **Acts 4:29** Now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to Your servants to continue to speak Your word with all boldness.

746 **1 Peter 2:12** Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

D. hasten the coming of His kingdom of glory.

747 **Phil. 3:20** Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

748 **Rev. 22:20** He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

214. How can we be certain that the kingdom of God comes?

The Lord guarantees that His means of grace establish and sustain His kingdom.

749 **Is. 55:11** My word ... shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

Bible narrative: The parable of the growing seed (**Mark 4:26–29**).

The Third Petition

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Your will be done on earth as in heaven.

What does this mean? The good and gracious will of God is done even without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also.

How is God’s will done? God’s will is done when He breaks and hinders every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature, which do not want us to hallow God’s name or let His kingdom come;

and when He strengthens and keeps us firm in His Word and faith until we die.

This is His good and gracious will.

215. What is the good and gracious will of God?

It is God’s will that His name be kept holy and that His kingdom come, that is, that His Word be taught correctly and that sinners be brought to faith in Christ and lead godly lives.

750 **Deut. 4:2** You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you.

751 **John 6:40** For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

752 **1 Tim. 2:4** [God] desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

753 **1 Thess. 4:3** For this is the will of God, your sanctification.

216. Whose will and plans are opposed to the will of God?

The devil, the world, and our own sinful nature oppose the good and gracious will of God.

754 **1 Peter 5:8** Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

755 **1 John 2:15–17** Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

756 **Rom. 7:18** For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.

Bible narratives: The devil misled humanity to sin (**Gen 3:1–7**). The enemies of Jesus brought about the fall of Peter (**Luke 22:54–62**). Achan's sinful nature led him to steal (**Joshua 7:18–22**).

217. Why do we pray that the will of God be done?

We know that the will of God will always be done, but we want God's good and gracious will to be done in our lives.

“As His name must be hallowed and His kingdom come whether we pray or not, so also His will must be done and succeed. This is true even though the devil with all his followers raise a great riot, are angry and rage against it, and try to exterminate the Gospel completely. But for our own sakes we must pray that, even against their fury, His will be done without hindrance among us also. We pray so that they may not be able to accomplish anything and that we may remain firm against all violence and persecution and submit to God's will” (Large Catechism III 68).

757 **Ps. 115:3** Our God is in the heavens; He does all that He pleases.

758 **Ps. 43:3** Send out Your light and Your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to Your holy hill and to Your dwelling!

759 **Phil. 1:21** For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Bible narrative: The helplessness of the enemies of God (**Psalms 2**). The conversion of Paul (**Acts 9:1–19**).

218. How is God's will done in our lives?

God's will is done when

A. He breaks and hinders the plans of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature, which try to destroy our faith in Christ Jesus;

760 **Rom. 16:20** The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

761 **2 Tim. 1:12** I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that He is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me.

B. He strengthens and keeps us firm in His Word and faith and helps us lead God-pleasing lives;

762 **1 Peter 1:5** [You] who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

763 **Ps. 119:35** Lead me in the path of Your commandments, for I delight in it.

C. He supports us in all our troubles until we die.

764 **Rom. 8:28** We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.

765 **2 Cor. 12:9** He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.”

Bible narratives: God hindered the evil will of Joseph's brothers and kept him faithful (**Gen.**

50:15–21). God would not let the devil destroy Job (Job 1:1–2:6).

The Fourth Petition

Give us this day our daily bread.

Give us today our daily bread.

What does this mean? God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

What is meant by daily bread? Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

219. Why do we pray to God for daily bread?

We pray to God for daily bread, which includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, because Christ wants us to

A. realize that our entire life and that of everyone else depends on God;

766 **Ps. 145:15–16** The eyes of all look to You, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand; You satisfy the desire of every living thing.

767 **Matt. 5:45** He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

768 **Acts 17:28** In Him we live and move and have our being.

769 **James 4:15** You ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”

B. receive all our physical blessings with thanksgiving;

770 **Ps. 106:1** Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever!

771 **Eph. 5:19–20** [Address] one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

772 **1 Tim. 4:4–5** For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.

C. look to God for physical as well as spiritual blessings.

773 **Ps. 91:15** When he calls to Me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him.

774 **Matt. 6:33** Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

775 **Luke 7:3** When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent to Him elders of the Jews, asking Him to come and heal his servant.

Bible narratives: Jesus healed blind Bartimaeus (**Mark 10:46–52**). Jesus healed 10 lepers (**Luke 17:11–19**).

220. How does God provide our daily bread?

He makes the earth fruitful and blesses us with the ability to work for the things we need.

776 **Ps. 104:14** You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth.

777 **2 Thess. 3:10–12** Even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.

221. What does God want us to do for those who are unable to work for daily food?

God does not want us to be selfish but to share with those who are unable to work and to include them in our prayers for daily bread.

- 778 **1 Tim. 5:8** If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.
- 779 **Heb. 13:16** Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.
- 780 **1 John 3:17–18** If anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

222. Why does Jesus have us say “this day” and “daily”?

These words teach us not to be greedy or wasteful or to worry about the future but to live contentedly in the confidence that the Lord will give us what we need.

- 781 **Prov. 30:8–9** Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, lest I be full and deny You and say, “Who is the LORD?”
- 782 **Matt. 6:34** Do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.
- 783 **John 6:12** When they had eaten their fill, He told His disciples, “Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost.”
- 784 **1 Tim. 6:8** If we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.
- 785 **1 Peter 5:7** Casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you.

Bible narrative: The parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:15–21).

The Fifth Petition

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

What does this mean? We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look at our sins, or deny our prayer because of them. We are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor have we deserved them, but we ask that He would give them all to us by grace, for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment. So we too will sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us.

223. What do we confess when we pray this petition?

We confess that we sin every day and deserve nothing but punishment.

- 786 **Prov. 28:13** Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.

224. What do we ask for in this petition?

We ask that our Father in heaven would for Christ's sake graciously forgive our sins.

- 787 **Ps. 19:12** Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults.
- 788 **Ps. 51:1–2** Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your steadfast love; according to Your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!
- 789 **Ps. 130:3–4** If You, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But with You there is forgiveness, that You may be feared.
- 790 **Luke 18:13** God, be merciful to me, a sinner!

225. Why do we include a prayer for forgiveness of sins in these petitions to our heavenly Father?

We are not worthy of the things for which we pray and have not deserved them. We therefore need God's forgiveness so that we may pray to Him confidently and in good conscience.

"Where the heart is not in a right relationship with God ... it will not dare to pray.... A confident and joyful heart can spring from nothing else than the certain knowledge of the forgiveness of sin" (Large Catechism III 92).

791 **Gen. 32:10** I am not worthy of the least of all the deed of steadfast love and all the faithfulness that You have shown to Your servant.

792 **Ps. 32:5** I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

226. What does God want us to do for those who sin against us?

Our heavenly Father wants us to forgive and to do good to those who sin against us.

793 **Matt. 6:12** Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

794 **Matt. 18:21–22** Peter came up and said to Him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven."

795 **Eph. 4:32** Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

227. What does it show when we forgive others?

It shows that we truly believe that God has forgiven us.

"Just as we daily sin much against God, and yet He forgives everything through grace, so we, too, must ever forgive our neighbor who does us injury, violence, and wrong, shows malice toward us, and so on. If, therefore, you do not forgive, then do not think that God forgives you" (Large Catechism III 94–95).

796 **Matt. 6:14–15** If you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Bible narratives: Joseph forgave his brothers (**Gen. 50:15–21**). The parable of the unmerciful servant (**Matt. 18:23–35**).

The Sixth Petition

And lead us not into temptation.

Lead us not into temptation.

What does this mean? God tempts no one. We pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our sinful nature may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice. Although we are attacked by these things, we pray that we may finally overcome them and win the victory.

228. What do tempt and temptation mean in the Scriptures?

In the Scriptures these words have two meanings:

A. The testing of our faith, which God uses to bring us closer to Himself.

797 **John 6:5–6** Lifting up His eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward Him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" He said this to test him, for He himself knew what He would do.

798 **James 1:2–3** Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.

Bible narratives: The LORD tested Abraham by commanding him to sacrifice Isaac (**Gen. 22:1–19**). Jesus tested the faith of the Canaanite woman (**Matt. 15: 21–28**).

B. The attempts of our spiritual enemies to lure us away from God and His ways.

799 **Mark 14:38** Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit is indeed willing, but the flesh is weak.

800 **James 1:13–14** Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.

229. Into what kinds of evil do our spiritual enemies try to mislead us?

The devil, the world, and our sinful nature try to mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great sins.

801 **1 Peter 5:8–9** Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

802 **Prov. 1:10** My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent.

803 **Matt. 18:7** Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes!

804 **Gal. 5:17** For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh.

805 **2 Cor. 4:8** We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair.

Bible narratives: The devil tempted Eve to doubt and disobey God (**Genesis 3**). The devil tempted Judas to betray Christ (**John 13:2**) and to despair (**Matt. 27: 4–5**). Among enemies of Christ, Peter denied his Savior (**Luke 22:54–60**). King David’s sinful nature tempted him to commit adultery and murder (**2 Sam. 12:9**).

230. What do we ask God to do for us when we pray this petition?

We ask our Father in heaven to give us strength to resist and overcome temptations.

806 **Luke 22:31–32** Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, But I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail.

807 **Rom. 13:14** Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

808 **1 Cor. 10:12–13** Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

809 **Eph. 6:11, 17** Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.... Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Bible narratives: Joseph withstood the temptation of Potiphar’s wife (**Gen. 39:1–20**). Jesus was tempted by Satan and won the victory for us (**Matt. 4:1–11**).

The Seventh Petition

But deliver us from evil.

But deliver us from evil.

What does this mean? We pray in this petition, in summary, that our Father in heaven would rescue us from every evil of body and soul, possessions and reputation, and finally, when our last hour comes, give us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this valley of sorrow to Himself in heaven.

231. What kind of prayer is the Seventh Petition?

The seventh petition is a summary petition in which we ask our Father in heaven to rescue us from the devil and all evil which has come into the world because of sin.

- 810 **Ps. 121:7–8** The LORD will keep you from all evil; He will keep your life. The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.
- 811 **2 Thess. 3:3** The Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one.

232. How does the Lord rescue us from every evil of body and soul, possessions and reputation?

In a world ruined by sin, the Lord keeps us from harm and helps us to endure the troubles that He allows to come into our lives.

- 812 **Acts 14:22** Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.
- 813 **Ps. 91:9–10** Because you have made the LORD your dwelling place—the Most High, who is my refuge—no evil shall be allowed to befall you, no plague come near your tent.
- 814 **2 Cor. 12:9** My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.
- 815 **Prov. 3:11–12** My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline or be weary of His reproof, for the LORD reproves him whom He loves, as a father the son in whom He delights.

Bible narratives: The three men in the fiery furnace (**Daniel 3**). Daniel in the lions' den (**Daniel 6**).

233. What final deliverance from evil do we ask the Lord to bring to us?

We want our Father in heaven to keep us faithful to Him and when we die to take us from this sorrowful world to Himself in heaven.

- 816 **Luke 2:29–32** Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation that You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to Your people Israel.
- 817 **2 Tim. 4:18** The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into His heavenly kingdom. To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.
- 818 **Rev. 14:13** Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.
- 819 **Rev. 21:4** He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.

The Conclusion

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours now and forever. Amen.

What does this mean? This means that I should be certain that these petitions are pleasing to our Father in heaven, and are heard by Him; for He Himself has commanded us to pray in this way and has promised to hear us. Amen, amen, which means “yes, yes, it shall be so.”

234. Why do we end the Lord's Prayer with the word amen?

The word *amen* means “so shall it be” and emphasizes that God, who has commanded us to pray, will hear our prayers and answer them as He has promised.

- 820 **Ps. 50:15** Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.
- 821 **Prov. 15:8** The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright is acceptable to him.
- 822 **Prov. 15:29** The LORD is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous.

235. How do I know God is able to answer the prayers of His people in Christ Jesus?

A. He alone is the King who has all good gifts in His control.

823 **James 1:17** Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

824 **Ps. 103:2–3** Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases.

B. He alone has the power to grant our petitions.

825 **Ps. 33:6** By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host.

826 **Eph. 3:20–21** To Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

C. He has all glory and is worthy of our praise.

827 **Ps. 113:4–5** The LORD is high above all nations, and His glory above the heavens! Who is like the LORD our God, who is seated on high?

828 **1 Tim. 1:17** To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.



— THE SACRAMENTS —

236. What is a sacrament?

A sacrament is a sacred act

A. instituted by God,

B. in which God Himself has joined His Word of promise to a visible element,

C. and by which He offers, gives, and seals the forgiveness of sins earned by Christ.

Note: The word *sacrament* comes to us from the Latin Bible, where it translates the Greek word *mystery*. At first this word described all the saving truths of the faith, such as the Trinity, the incarnation, the redemption, the church (see for instance **1 Cor. 4:1**; **Eph. 5:32**; and **1 Tim. 3:16**). Later it was narrowed down to our present sense.

237. How many such sacraments are there?

By this definition there are two sacraments: Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Note: Sometimes Holy Absolution is counted as a third sacrament, even though it has no divinely

instituted visible element (Large Catechism IV 74; Apology XIII 4).

829 **Acts 2:38** Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

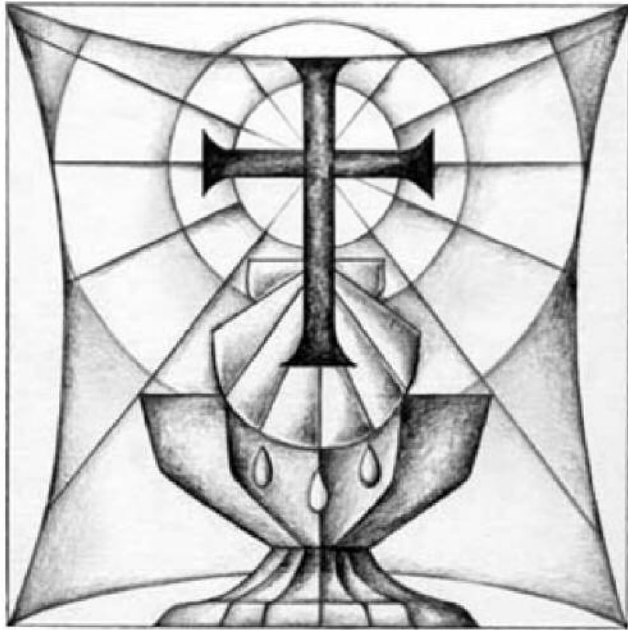
830 **1 Cor. 10:16** The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?

238. Why are we to treasure the sacraments, when water, bread, and wine are such common elements?

"The Sacraments and all outward things that God ordains and institutes should not be considered according to the coarse, outward mask, the way we look at a nutshell. But we respect them because God's Word is included in them" (Large Catechism IV 19).

831 **1 Cor. 1:28** God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are.

Bible narrative: By God's promise the plain Jordan River had the power to cure Naaman's leprosy (**2 Kings 5:1–14**).



—— THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM ——

I. The Nature of Baptism

First

What is Baptism?

Baptism is not just plain water, but it is the water included in God's command and combined with God's word.

Which is that word of God?

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Matthew: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." [Matt. 28:19]

239. What does the word baptize mean?

Baptize means to apply water by immersing, washing, pouring, and the like.

832 **Mark 7:4** When they [the Pharisees] come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing [baptizing] of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.

Note: To baptize with the Holy Spirit (**Matt. 3:11**) means to "pour out" the Spirit (**Acts 1:5** and **Acts 2:17–18**).

240. What is so special about the water of Baptism?

"It is nothing other than a divine water. Not that the water in itself is nobler than other water, but that God's Word and command are added to it" (Large Catechism IV 14).

241. Who instituted Holy Baptism?

God Himself instituted Baptism, for our Lord Jesus Christ commanded His church to baptize all nations.

833 **Matt. 28:19–20** 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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

242. What does it mean to baptize "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"?

It means that in Baptism, God, the Holy Trinity, receives me into communion or fellowship with Himself.

243. Who is to baptize?

Normally the called ministers of Christ are to baptize, but in cases of emergency and when no pastor is available, any Christian should baptize.

834 **1 Cor. 4:1** This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

Note: For a short form of Baptism in cases of emergency, see the end of this section.

244. Who is to be baptized?

"All nations" are to be baptized, that is, all people, young and old.

245. What distinction is to be made in baptizing?

A. Those who can receive instruction are to be baptized after they have been instructed in the main articles of the Christian faith.

835 **Acts 2:38–39** Peter said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself."

836 **Acts 2:41** Those who received His word were baptized.

Bible narratives: The Ethiopian was instructed before he was baptized (**Acts 8:26–39**). The jailer was instructed before he was baptized (**Acts 16:25–33**).

B. Little children should be baptized when they are brought to Baptism by those who have authority over them.

837 **Mark 10:13–15** And they were bringing children to Him that He might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, He was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to Me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."

246. Why are babies to be baptized?

Babies are to be baptized because

A. they are included in the words "all nations";

838 **Matt. 28:19** 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.

839 **Acts 2:38–39** Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children.

B. Jesus especially invites little children to come to Him;

840 **Luke 18:15–17** Now they were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them. And when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to him, saying, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."

C. as sinners, babies need what Baptism offers;

841 **John 3:5–6** Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

842 **Eph. 2:3** [We] were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

D. babies also are able to have faith.

843 **Matt. 18:6** Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

Bible narrative: John the Baptist was "filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth" (**Luke 1:15**), and even before birth (**1:41–44**).

247. Why does the church encourage the use of sponsors at Baptisms?

Sponsors witness that those who receive this sacrament have been properly baptized. They also pray for them and in the case of children, help with their Christian upbringing, especially if they

should lose their parents. Only those of the same confession of faith should be sponsors.

- 844 **Matt. 18:16** Every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.
- 845 **Eph. 4:16** [Christ] from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

II. The Blessings of Baptism

Second

What benefits does Baptism give?

It works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.

Which are these words and promises of God?

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Mark: "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." [Mark 16:16]

248. What great and precious things are given in Baptism?

Baptism

A. works forgiveness of sins;

- 846 **Acts 2:38** Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.
- 847 **Acts 22:16** Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins.

B. rescues from death and the devil;

- 848 **Rom. 6:3, 5** Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? ... If we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His.

- 849 **Gal. 3:27** For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

- 850 **Col. 1:13–14** He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Compare **Col. 2:11–12.**)

C. gives eternal salvation.

- 851 **Mark 16:16** Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.

- 852 **1 Peter 3:21** Baptism, which corresponds to this [waters of Noah's flood], now saves you ... through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

- 853 **Titus 3:5** He saved us ... by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.

249. If Christ has already won forgiveness and salvation for us and gives us all this by grace alone, why do we still need Baptism?

Christ has indeed won full forgiveness and salvation for the whole human race with His perfect life, suffering, death, and resurrection. He distributes this same forgiveness in Baptism. (Baptism is a means of grace.)

- 854 **1 Cor. 6:11** You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

- 855 **Titus 3:5–7** He saved us ... by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

250. To whom does Baptism give all these blessings?

Baptism gives these blessings to all who believe God's saving promises.

- 856 **Mark 16:16** Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

251. Is it possible for an unbaptized person to be saved?

It is only unbelief that condemns. Faith cannot exist in the heart of a person who despises and rejects Baptism against better knowledge. But those who believe the Gospel, yet die before they have opportunity to be baptized, are not condemned.

- 857 **Mark 16:16** Whoever does not believe will be condemned.

Bible narratives: The Pharisees and experts in the Law in unbelief rejected John's baptism (**Luke 7:30**). The thief on the cross was saved without Baptism (**Luke 23:39–43**).

252. Why are we not to seek a "baptism with the Holy Spirit" in addition to the Sacrament of Holy Baptism?

Beyond sacramental Baptism we are to seek no other "baptism" because

A. there is no other God-given Baptism today beside the Sacrament of Holy Baptism;

- 858 **Eph. 4:5** One Lord, one faith, one baptism.

Note: The "instruction about washings" (**Heb. 6:2**) does not mean that there are several Christian baptisms, but that the one true Baptism must be clearly distinguished from the many religious washings which were common in the ancient world (see for instance **Mark 7:4**).

B. the sacrament is not a water-only or a Spirit-only baptism, but a water-and-Spirit Baptism;

- 859 **John 3:5** Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.
- 860 **Titus 3:5** He saved us ... by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.

Note: **Matt. 3:11** speaks of baptizing "with water" and "with the Holy Spirit and with fire." The difference here is not between sacramental Baptism and some sort of "Spirit baptism," but between the preparatory mission and baptism of John the Baptist and the full, permanent mission and Baptism of Jesus Christ. While John's baptism also gave the forgiveness of sins, it was different in that it pointed forward to the redemptive work of the Savior.

C. the special signs granted by the Holy Spirit were not another "baptism," but they proved the truth and power of the apostles' preaching.

- 861 **Acts 19:6** When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying.
- 862 **2 Cor. 12:12** The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works.

Note: See question 164.

III. The Power of Baptism

Third

How can water do such great things?

Certainly not just water, but the word of God in and with the water does these things, along with the faith which trusts this word of God in the water. For without God's word the water is plain water and no Baptism. But with the word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a life-giving water, rich in grace, and a washing of the new birth in the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul says in Titus chapter three:

"He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying." [**Titus 3:5–8**]

253. How does baptismal water work forgiveness of sins, rescue from death and the devil, and give eternal salvation?

God's words of institution put these great blessings into Baptism. Faith, which trusts this

word of God in the water, takes the blessings out and makes them our own.

863 **Eph. 5:25b–26** Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word.

864 **Gal. 3:26–27** You are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

254. Why do the Scriptures call Baptism the washing of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit?

In Baptism, the Holy Spirit works faith and so creates in us new spiritual life with the power to overcome sin.

865 **Rom. 6:6** Our old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

866 **Titus 3:5–8** He saved us ... by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. The saying is trustworthy.

IV. What Baptism Indicates

Fourth

What does such baptizing with water indicate?

It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

Where is this written?

St. Paul writes in Romans chapter six: “We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” [Rom. 6:4]

255. What is the Old Adam?

The Old Adam is the corrupt and evil nature that we inherit because of Adam’s fall into sin.

867 **Eph. 4:22** Put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires.

256. How is this Old Adam to be drowned in us?

The Old Adam is to be drowned by daily contrition (sorrow for sins) and repentance (faith), by which we resist and overcome evil desires.

868 **Luke 9:23** If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

869 **Gal. 5:24** Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

257. What is the new man?

The new man is the new spiritual life and nature, created in us by the washing of rebirth.

870 **2 Cor. 5:17** If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

258. How is this new man to emerge and arise?

The new man emerges and arises as we daily live and grow before God in true faith and good works.

871 **Eph. 4:24** Put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

259. How does Baptism indicate the daily drowning of the Old Adam and the emergence of the new man?

By Baptism we have been made to share in Christ’s death and resurrection. As He has buried our sin, so we too can and must daily overcome and bury it. And as He is risen from the dead and lives, so we too can and must daily live a new life in Him.

872 **Rom. 6:3–4** Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

260. With which words do we regularly remember our Baptism?

The words “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” come from the baptismal command (**Matt. 28:19**) and are known as the Trinitarian Invocation. By repeating these words, in church or by ourselves, we recall, claim, and confess before heaven, earth, and hell all that God the Holy Trinity has given us in our Baptism.

873 **Rom. 8:38–39** I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Bible narrative: The three persons of the blessed Trinity revealed themselves at the Baptism of our Lord (**Luke 3:21–22**).

Note: The Trinitarian Invocation may be accompanied by the sign of the cross, made at our Baptism upon our foreheads and hearts to mark us as “redeemed by Christ the crucified.”

A Short Form for Holy Baptism in Cases of Emergency

In urgent cases, in the absence of a pastor, any Christian may administer Holy Baptism. Take water, call the person by name, and apply the water, saying: “I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

If there is time, Baptism may be preceded by the Apostles’ Creed and the Lord’s Prayer.



— CONFESSION —

“When I urge you to go to Confession, I am doing nothing else than urging you to be a Christian.”

(Appendix B, Brief Exhortation 32)

What is confession?

Confession has two parts.

First that we confess our sins, and

second, that we receive absolution, that is, forgiveness, from the pastor as from God Himself, not doubting, but firmly believing that by it our sins are forgiven before God in heaven.

What sins should we confess?

Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even those we are not aware of, as we do in the Lord's Prayer; but before the pastor we should confess only those sins which we know and feel in our hearts.

Which are these?

Consider your place in life according to the Ten Commandments: Are you a father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, or worker? Have you been disobedient, unfaithful, or lazy? Have you been hot-tempered, rude, or quarrelsome? Have you hurt someone by your words or deeds? Have you stolen, been negligent, wasted anything, or done any harm?

261. What is the first part of confession?

The first part of confession is that we confess, or acknowledge, our sins.

874 **Ps. 32:3, 5** When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.... I acknowledged my sin to You, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,” and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

875 **Ps. 51:1–4** Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your steadfast love; according to Your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You may be justified in Your words.

262. What sins should we confess before God?

Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even those we are not aware of, as we do in the Lord's Prayer.

876 **Ps. 19:12** Who can discern his errors?
Declare me innocent from hidden faults.

877 **Prov. 28:13** Whoever conceals his
transgressions will not prosper, but he
who confesses and forsakes them will
obtain mercy.

878 **1 John 1:8–9** If we say we have no sin,
we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not
in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful
and just to forgive us our sins and to
cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

263. What sins should we confess before our neighbor?

Before our neighbor we should confess all sins
we have committed against him or her.

879 **James 5:16** Confess your sins to one
another.

880 **Matt. 5:23–24** If you are offering your
gift at the altar and there remember that
your brother has something against you,
leave your gift there before the altar and
go. First be reconciled to your brother,
and then come and offer your gift.

264. What sins are we encouraged to confess privately before our pastor or confessor?

Before the pastor or confessor we confess those
sins which we know and feel in our hearts,
especially those that trouble us.

881 **2 Sam. 12:13** David said to Nathan, “I
have sinned against the LORD.” And
Nathan said to David, “The LORD also has
put away your sin.”

882 **James 5:16** Confess your sins to one
another and pray for one another, that
you may be healed.

Note: No one may be forced to make private
confession.

265. What is the second part of confession?

The second part of confession is that we
receive absolution, that is, forgiveness of sins.

883 **Is. 1:18** “Come now, let us reason
together, says the LORD: though your sins
are like scarlet, they shall be as white as
snow; though they are red like crimson,
they shall become like wool.”

266. How should we regard the absolution (forgiveness) spoken by the pastor?

We should receive the pastor’s absolution as
from God Himself, not doubting, but firmly
believing that by it our sins are forgiven before
God in heaven.

“Our people are taught that they should highly
prize the Absolution as being God’s voice and
pronounced by God’s command” (Augsburg
Confession XXV 3).

884 **Matt. 18:18** Whatever you loose on earth
shall be loosed in heaven.

885 **Luke 10:16** The one who hears you hears
Me.

886 **John 20:23** If you forgive the sins of any,
they are forgiven.

267. What assurance do I have that my private confession to the pastor will remain confidential?

The pastor is pledged not to tell anyone else of
sins told him in private confession, for those sins
have been removed.

887 **Ps. 103:12** As far as the east is from the
west, so far does He remove our
transgressions from us.

888 **Prov. 11:13** Whoever goes about
slandering reveals secrets, but he who is
trustworthy in spirit keeps a thing
covered.

889 **1 Tim. 3:1–2** The saying is trustworthy: If
anyone aspires to the office of overseer
[pastor], he desires a noble task.
Therefore an overseer must be above
reproach.

268. What is the benefit of private confession and absolution?

In private confession and absolution, God Himself through the pastor forgives each individual the sins that are confessed.

“So any heart that feels its sinfulness and desires consolation has here a sure refuge when he hears God’s Word and makes the discovery that God through a human being looses and absolves him from his sins” (Appendix B, Brief Exhortation 14).

890 **Ps. 32:2** Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity.

891 **2 Sam. 12:13** And Nathan said to David, “The LORD also has put away your sin.”

892 **Matt. 9:2** Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven.

A Short Form of Confession

[Luther intended the following form to serve only as an example of private confession for Christians of his time. For a contemporary form of individual confession, see *Lutheran Service Book*, pp. 292–93.]

The penitent says:

Dear confessor, I ask you please to hear my confession and to pronounce forgiveness in order to fulfill God’s will.

I, a poor sinner, plead guilty before God of all sins. In particular I confess before you that as a servant, maid, etc., I, sad to say, serve my master unfaithfully, for in this and that I have not done what I was told to do. I have made him angry and caused him to curse. I have been negligent and allowed damage to be done. I have also been offensive in words and deeds. I have quarreled with my peers. I have grumbled about the lady of the house and cursed her. I am sorry for all of this and I ask for grace. I want to do better.

A master or lady of the house may say:

In particular I confess before you that I have not faithfully guided my children, servants, and wife to the glory of God. I have cursed. I have set a bad example by indecent words and deeds. I have hurt my neighbor and spoken evil of him. I have overcharged, sold inferior merchandise, and given less than was paid for.

[Let the penitent confess whatever else he has done against God’s commandments and his own position.]

If, however, someone does not find himself burdened with these or greater sins, he should not trouble himself or search for or invent other sins, and thereby make confession a torture. Instead, he should mention one or two that he knows: In particular I confess that I have cursed; I have used improper words; I have neglected this or that, etc. Let that be enough.

But if you know of none at all (which hardly seems possible), then mention none in particular, but receive the forgiveness upon the general confession which you make to God before the confessor.

Then the confessor shall say:

God be merciful to you and strengthen your faith. Amen.

Furthermore:

Do you believe that my forgiveness is God’s forgiveness?

Yes, dear confessor.

Then let him say:

Let it be done for you as you believe. And I, by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, forgive you your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Go in peace.

A confessor will know additional passages with which to comfort and to strengthen the faith of those who have great burdens of conscience or are sorrowful and distressed.

This is intended only as a general form of confession.

The Office of the Keys

What is the Office of the Keys?

The Office of the Keys is that special authority which Christ has given to His church on earth to forgive the sins of repentant sinners, but to withhold forgiveness from the unrepentant as long as they do not repent.

Where is this written?

This is what St. John the Evangelist writes in chapter twenty: The Lord Jesus breathed on His disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." [John 20:22–23]

What do you believe according to these words?

I believe that when the called ministers of Christ deal with us by His divine command, in particular when they exclude openly unrepentant sinners from the Christian congregation and absolve those who repent of their sins and want to do better, this is just as valid and certain, even in heaven, as if Christ our dear Lord dealt with us Himself.

269. What special authority has Christ given to His church on earth?

Christ has given to His church the authority to forgive sins or to withhold forgiveness.

893 **Matt. 18:18** Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

894 **John 20:22–23** [Jesus] breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

270. Why is this authority called the Office of the Keys?

This authority works like a key to open heaven by forgiving sins, or to close heaven by not forgiving them.

895 **Matt. 16:19** I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

271. How is the Office of the Keys related to the proclamation of the Gospel?

The Office of the Keys is a special God-given way of applying the Gospel to the individual. "God is superabundantly generous in His grace: First, through the spoken Word, by which the forgiveness of sins is preached in the whole world.

This is the particular office of the Gospel. Second, through Baptism. Third, through the holy Sacrament of the Altar. Fourth, through the Power of the Keys. Also through the mutual conversation and consolation of brethren" (Smalcald Articles III IV).

896 **Matt. 18:20** Where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I among them.

897 **Matt. 28:18–20** Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. 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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

898 **1 Peter 2:9** You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

272. Who are to be forgiven (absolved)?

Those who repent and ask for forgiveness are to be forgiven.

899 **Acts 3:19–20a** Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.

273. Who receives the forgiveness given in absolution?

Only repentant believers receive the forgiveness.

900 **Ps. 32:5** I acknowledged my sin to You, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

274. Who are repentant believers?

Repentant believers are those who are sorry for their sins (contrition) and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior (faith).

901 **Ps. 51:17** The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

902 **Acts 16:31** Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.

Note: Secretly unrepentant sinners (hypocrites) reject the forgiveness which the absolution truly offers them.

275. Who are not to be forgiven?

Unrepentant sinners, that is, those who are not sorry for their sins and do not believe in Jesus Christ, are not to be forgiven as long as they do not repent.

903 **Matt. 18:17** If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

276. What is the necessary result of repentance?

“Then good works are bound to follow, which are the fruit of repentance” (Augsburg Confession XII 6).

904 **Matt. 3:8** Bear fruit in keeping with repentance.

905 **John 8:11** Go, and from now on sin no more.

Bible narrative: Zacchaeus the tax collector (Luke 19:1–10).

277. How does the church publicly exercise the Office of the Keys?

The Christian congregation by the command of Christ calls pastors to carry out the Office of the Keys publicly in His name and on behalf of the congregation. The pastoral office is a divine institution.

906 **Eph. 4:11** And He [Christ] gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers.

907 **Acts 20:28** Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers.

908 **1 Cor. 4:1** This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

909 **2 Cor. 2:10** What I have forgiven ... has been for your sake in the presence of Christ.

278. Who should be considered for the office of pastor?

Congregations are to call men who are well qualified personally and spiritually to be their pastors.

“Our churches teach that no one should publicly teach in the Church, or administer the Sacraments, without a rightly ordered call” (Augsburg Confession XIV).

910 **1 Tim. 3:1–2** If anyone aspires to the office of overseer [pastor], he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach.

911 **2 Tim. 2:2** What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

912 **2 Tim. 2:15** Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightfully handling the word of truth.

913 **1 Cor. 14:33–34** As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says.

Note: See also **1 Tim. 2:11–14**.

Church Discipline and Excommunication

279. What great care must be taken in dealing with an openly unrepentant sinner?

The Christian congregation must carry out church discipline in love and patience. "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector" (**Matt. 18:15–17**).

914 **Gal. 6:1–2** Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

915 **Eph. 4:2–3** With all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

280. What must the congregation finally do with openly unrepentant sinners?

The Christian congregation must exclude openly unrepentant sinners (excommunication).

916 **1 Cor. 5:13** God judges those outside. "Purge the evil person from among you."

281. By what authority does the congregation excommunicate openly unrepentant sinners?

Excommunication is authorized by Christ and is just as valid and certain, even in heaven, as if Christ our dear Lord dealt with us Himself.

917 **Matt. 18:18** Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.

282. What is the duty of the called minister of Christ when the congregation has excommunicated a sinner?

The called minister of Christ must carry out the resolution of the congregation, that is, he must exclude the excommunicated person from the rights and privileges of a Christian.

283. What is the purpose of excommunication?

Excommunication is not intended to punish the sinner, but to

A. lead him or her to repentance and faith;

918 **Matt. 12:20** A bruised reed He will not break, and a smoldering wick He will not quench.

919 **Acts 3:19** Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out.

B. prevent him or her from leading others into sin.

920 **Matt. 18:6** Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

921 **1 Cor. 5:6** Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?

284. What is the duty of a congregation toward an excommunicated sinner who repents?

The congregation must forgive any excommunicated person who repents and receive him or her back into full fellowship.

922 **2 Cor. 2:7–8** You should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him.



THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

I. The Nature of the Sacrament of the Altar

What is the Sacrament of the Altar?

It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ Himself for us Christians to eat and to drink.

Where is this written?

The holy Evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and St. Paul write:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

285. What are some other names for the Sacrament of the Altar?

This sacrament is also called the Lord's Supper, the Lord's Table, Holy Communion, the Breaking of Bread, and the Eucharist.

- 923 **1 Cor. 11:20** When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper that you eat.
- 924 **1 Cor. 10:21** You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons.
- 925 **1 Cor. 10:16** The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?
- 926 **Acts 2:42** They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.
- 927 **Matt. 26:26** Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."

Note: Eucharist comes from the Greek word for "giving thanks."

286. Who instituted the Sacrament of the Altar?

Jesus Christ, who is true God and true man, instituted this sacrament.

- 928 **1 Cor. 11:23-24** I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is My body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of Me."

287. What does Christ give us in this sacrament?

In this sacrament Christ gives us His own true body and blood for the forgiveness of sins.

- 929 **Matt. 26:26, 28** “This is My body.... This is My blood.”

288. How does the Bible make it clear that these words of Christ are not picture language?

Christ’s words in the Sacrament must be taken at face value especially because

A. these words are the words of a testament, and even an ordinary person’s last will and testament may not be changed once that person has died;

- 930 **1 Cor. 11:25** “This cup is the new covenant [testament] in My blood.”

- 931 **Gal. 3:15** Even with a man-made covenant [will], no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified.

Note: Compare also **Heb. 9:15–22**.

B. God’s Word clearly teaches that in the Sacrament the bread and wine are a communion or participation in the body and blood of Christ;

- 932 **1 Cor. 10:16** The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?

C. God’s Word clearly teaches that those who misuse the Sacrament sin not against bread and wine but against Christ’s body and blood.

- 933 **1 Cor. 11:27, 29** Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord.... For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.

289. What are the visible elements in the Sacrament?

The visible elements are bread and wine.

- 934 **Matt. 26:26–27** Jesus took bread.... And He took a cup.

Note: “The fruit of the vine” (**Luke 22:18**) in the Bible means wine, not grape juice. See also **1 Cor. 11:21**.

290. Do Christ’s body and blood in the Sacrament replace the bread and wine, so that the bread and wine are no longer there?

No, bread and wine remain in the Sacrament.

- 935 **1 Cor. 11:26** For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.

291. How then are the bread and wine in the Sacrament the body and blood of Christ?

The bread and wine in the Sacrament are Christ’s body and blood by sacramental union. By the power of His word, Christ gives His body and blood in, with, and under the consecrated (blessed) bread and wine.

- 936 **1 Cor. 10:16** The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation of the body of Christ?

292. Do all communicants receive the body and blood in the Sacrament, whether or not they believe?

Yes, because the Sacrament depends on Christ’s word, not on our faith.

- 937 **1 Cor. 11:27** Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord.

Note: All communicants should receive both parts of the Sacrament, since Christ said, “Take, eat; this is my body.... Drink of it, all of you” (**Matt. 26:26–27**).

293. Are the body and blood of Christ in the Sacrament sacrificed again to God for the sins of the living and the dead?

No, the body and blood of Christ in the Sacrament are the one perfect sacrifice offered to God once and for all on the cross and are now distributed to us in the Sacrament together with all the blessings and benefits which this sacrifice has won for us.

938 **1 Cor. 5:7** Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

939 **Heb. 10:14** By a single offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

940 **Heb. 10:18** Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

Note: We speak of the “Sacrament of the Altar” because an altar is a place of sacrifice. Jesus sacrificed His body and blood on the cross for the sins of the world once and for all. In the Sacrament of the Altar, He distributes this same body and blood until the end of time.

294. What does Christ command when He says, “This do in remembrance of Me”?

Christ commands in these words that His Sacrament be celebrated in the church till the end of time as a living proclamation and distribution of His saving death and all its blessings.

941 **1 Cor. 11:26** For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.

295. Why are we to receive the Sacrament often?

We are to receive the Sacrament often because

A. Christ commands, or urgently invites, us, saying, “This do in remembrance of Me”;

B. His words, “Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins” promise and offer us great blessings;

942 **Matt. 11:28** Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

C. we need the forgiveness of our sins and the strength for a new and holy life.

943 **John 15:5** I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

Note: In the New Testament, the Sacrament was a regular and major feature of congregational worship, not an occasional extra (**Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:20, 33**). In Reformation times our churches celebrated the Sacrament “every Lord’s Day and on the other festivals” (Apology XXIV 1).

II. The Benefit of the Sacrament of the Altar

What is the benefit of this eating and drinking?

These words, “Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins,” show us that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.

296. What is the benefit offered in the sacrament?

A. The chief blessing of the Sacrament is the forgiveness of sins which Christ’s body and blood have won for us on the cross. (The Lord’s Supper is a means of grace.)

944 **Matt. 26:28** This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

945 **1 Peter 1:18–19** Knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

946 **Col. 1:22** He has now reconciled in His body of flesh by His death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before Him.

947 **1 John 1:7** The blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

B. Together with forgiveness, God gives all other blessings as well, that is, “life and salvation.”

“We must never think of the Sacrament as something harmful from which we had better flee, but as a pure, wholesome, comforting remedy that

grants salvation and comfort. It will cure you and give you life both in soul and body. For where the soul has recovered, the body also is relieved" (Large Catechism V 68).

"We speak of the presence of the living Christ, for we know that 'death no longer has dominion over Him' " [Rom. 6:9] (Apology X 57).

948 **Rom. 6:8–9** If we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over Him.

949 **Rom. 8:31–32** If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?

C. In the Sacrament Christ gives victory over sin and hell and strength for the new life in Him.

950 **Rom. 8:10** If Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

951 **1 Peter 2:24** He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed.

D. As Christians partake of this sacrament together, they make a solemn public confession of Christ and of unity in the truth of His Gospel.

952 **1 Cor. 10:17** Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

953 **1 Cor. 11:26** For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

Note: See also **Heb. 12:22–24**.

III. The Power of the Sacrament of the Altar

How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things?

Certainly not just eating and drinking do these things, but the words written here: "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins." These words, along with the bodily eating and drinking, are the main thing in the Sacrament.

Whoever believes these words has exactly what they say: "forgiveness of sins."

297. How can forgiveness, life, and salvation be obtained through bodily eating and drinking?

"But here our wise spirits twist themselves about with their great art and wisdom. They cry out and bawl, How can bread and wine forgive sins or strengthen faith? They hear and know that we do not say this about bread and wine. Because, in itself, bread is bread. But we speak about the bread and wine that is Christ's body and blood and has the words attached to it. That, we say, is truly the treasure—and nothing else—through which such forgiveness is gained." (Large Catechism V 28). Christ's words of promise have put these gifts into the Sacrament, and the believer receives them there through faith.

298. Does everyone who eats and drinks the Sacrament also receive forgiveness, life, and salvation?

Forgiveness, life, and salvation are truly offered to all who eat the Lord's body and blood in the Sacrament, but only through faith can we receive the blessings offered there.

954 **Luke 1:45** Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.

955 **Luke 11:27–28** "Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts at which You nursed!" But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

Note: To "keep" or "obey" God's Word of promise is to believe or trust it. "For in [the Gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written: 'The righteous shall live by faith' " (**Rom. 1:17**).

956 **1 Cor. 10:3–5** All ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

Bible narrative: There was a blessing in touching Jesus or being touched by Him, and faith received it (**Matt. 9:20–22, 27–29**).

IV. How to Receive This Sacrament Worthily

Who receives this sacrament worthily?

Fasting and bodily preparation are certainly fine outward training. But that person is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words: "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins."

But anyone who does not believe these words or doubts them is unworthy and unprepared, for the words "for you" require all hearts to believe.

299. Why is it important to receive the Sacrament worthily?

It is very important because St. Paul clearly teaches: "Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself" (1 Cor. 11:27-29).

300. Is it necessary to fast before receiving the Sacrament?

Fasting can be good training for the will, but God does not command particular times, places, and forms for this.

- 957 **1 Tim. 4:8** Bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way.

Note: See also 1 Cor. 9:24-27.

301. When do we receive the Sacrament worthily?

We receive it worthily when we have faith in Christ and His words, "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins."

302. When is a person unworthy and unprepared?

A person is unworthy and unprepared when he or she does not believe or doubts Christ's words, since the words "for you" require all hearts to believe.

303. How are we to examine ourselves before receiving the Sacrament?

We are to examine ourselves to see whether

A. we are sorry for our sins;

- 958 **Ps. 38:18** I confess my iniquity; I am sorry for my sin.

- 959 **2 Cor. 7:10-11** Godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you.

B. we believe in our Savior Jesus Christ and in His words in the Sacrament;

- 960 **Luke 22:19-20** This is My body, which is given for you.... This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.

- 961 **2 Cor. 13:5** Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves.

C. we plan, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to change our sinful lives.

- 962 **Eph. 4:22-24** To put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

As a preparation for the Sacrament, use "Christian Questions with Their Answers."

304. May those who are weak in faith come to the Lord's Table?

Yes, for Christ instituted the Sacrament for the very purpose of strengthening and increasing our faith.

- 963 **Mark 9:24** I believe; help my unbelief!

- 964 **John 6:37** Whoever comes to Me I will never cast out.

305. Who must not be given the Sacrament?

The Sacrament must not be given to the following:

A. Those who are openly ungodly and unrepentant, including those who take part in non-Christian religious worship.

965 **1 Cor. 5:11, 13** [You must not] associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one.... “Purge the evil person from among you.”

966 **1 Cor. 10:20–21** What pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

B. Those who are unforgiving, refusing to be reconciled. They show thereby that they do not really believe that God forgives them either.

967 **Matt. 6:15** If you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Bible narrative: The unmerciful servant (**Matt. 18: 21–35**).

C. Those of a different confession of faith, since the Lord's Supper is a testimony of the unity of faith.

968 **Acts 2:42** They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

969 **1 Cor. 10:17** Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

970 **1 Cor. 11:26** For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

971 **Rom. 16:17** Watch out for those who cause divisions and and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them.

D. Those who are unable to examine themselves, such as infants, people who have not received proper instruction, or the unconscious.

972 **1 Cor. 11:28** Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

Note: Pastors as stewards of the mysteries of God (**1 Cor. 4:1**) have the greatest responsibility as to who should be admitted to the Sacrament. Some of the responsibility also rests with the congregation and the communicant.

306. What is confirmation?

Confirmation is a public rite of the church preceded by a period of instruction designed to help baptized Christians identify with the life and mission of the Christian community.

Note: Prior to admission to the Lord's Supper, it is necessary to be instructed in the Christian faith (**1 Cor. 11:28**). The rite of confirmation provides an opportunity for the individual Christian, relying on God's promise given in Holy Baptism, to make a personal public confession of the faith and a lifelong pledge of fidelity to Christ.

973 **Matt. 10:32–33** So everyone who acknowledges Me before men, I also will acknowledge before My Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies Me before men, I also will deny before My Father who is in heaven.

974 **Rev. 2:10** Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.



APPENDIX

Luther's Preface

[Luther included this preface to the Small Catechism which addresses particular issues of his day.]

Martin Luther to all faithful and godly pastors and preachers: grace, mercy, and peace in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

The deplorable, miserable condition that I discovered recently when I, too, was a visitor, has forced and urged me to prepare this catechism, or Christian doctrine, in this small, plain, simple form. Mercy! Dear God, what great misery I beheld! The common person, especially in the villages, has no knowledge whatever of Christian doctrine. And unfortunately, many pastors are completely unable and unqualified to teach. «This is so much so, that one is ashamed to speak of it.» Yet, everyone says that they are Christians, have been baptized, and receive the holy Sacraments, even though they cannot even recite the Lord's Prayer or the Creed or the Ten Commandments. They live like dumb brutes and irrational hogs.

Now that the Gospel has come, they have nicely learned to abuse all freedom like experts.

O bishops! What answer will you ever give to Christ for having so shamefully neglected the people and never for a moment fulfilled your office [James 3:1]? May all misfortune run from you! «I do not wish at this place to call down evil on your heads.» You command the Sacrament in one form and insist on your human laws, and yet at the same time you do not care at all whether the people know the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, or any part of God's Word. Woe, woe to you forever! [See Matthew 23.]

Therefore, I beg you all for God's sake, my dear sirs and brethren, who are pastors or preachers, to devote yourselves heartily to your office [1 Timothy 4:13]. Have pity on the people who are entrusted to you [Acts 20:28] and help us teach the catechism to the people, and especially to the young. And let those of you who cannot do better take these tables and forms and impress them, word for word, on the people [Deuteronomy 6:7], as follows:

In the first place, let the preacher above all be careful to avoid many versions or various texts and forms of the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Sacraments, and such. He should choose one form to which he holds and teaches all the time, year after year. For young and simple people must be taught by uniform, settled texts and forms. Otherwise they become confused easily when the teacher today teaches them one way, and in a year some other way, as if he wished to make improvements. For then all effort and labor «that has been spent in teaching» is lost.

Our blessed fathers understand this well also. They all used the same form of the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments. Therefore, we too, should «be at pains to» teach the young and simple people these parts in such a way that we do not change a syllable or set them forth and repeat them one year differently than in another.

Therefore, choose whatever form you please, and hold to it forever. But when you preach in the presence of learned and intelligent people, you may show your skill. You may present these parts in varied and intricate ways and give them as masterly turns as you are able. But with the young

people stick to one fixed, permanent form and manner. Teach them, first of all, these parts: the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and so on, according to the text, word for word, so that they, too, can repeat it in the same way after you and commit it to memory.

But those who are unwilling to learn the catechism should be told that they deny Christ and are not Christians. They should not be admitted to the Sacrament, accepted as sponsors at Baptism, or practice any part of Christian freedom. They should simply be turned back to the pope and his officials, indeed, to the devil himself [1 Corinthians 5:5]. Furthermore, their parents and employers should refuse them food and drink, and notify them that the prince will drive such rude people from the country.

Although we cannot and should not force anyone to believe, we should insist and encourage the people. That way they will know what is right and wrong for those among whom they dwell and wish to make their living. For whoever desires to live in a town must know and observe the town laws, because he wishes to enjoy the protection offered by the laws whether he is a believer or at heart and in private a rascal or rogue.

In the second place, after they have learned the text well, teach them the meaning also, so that they know what it means. Again, choose the form of these tables or some other brief uniform method, whichever you like, and hold to it. Do not change a single syllable, as was just said about the text. Take your time in doing this. For it is not necessary for you to explain all the parts at once, but one after the other. After they understand the First Commandment well, then explain the Second, and so on. Otherwise they will be overwhelmed, so that they will not be able to remember anything well.

In the third place, after you have taught them this short catechism, then take up the Large Catechism and give them also a richer and fuller knowledge. Here enlarge upon every commandment, article, petition, and part with its various works, uses, benefits, dangers, and injuries, as you find these abundantly stated in many books written about these matters. In particular, urge the commandment or part that most suffers the greatest neglect among your people. For example, the Seventh Commandment, about stealing, must be strongly urged among mechanics and merchants, and even farmers and servants. For among these people many kinds of dishonesty and stealing prevail. So, too, you must drive home the Fourth Commandment among the children and the common people, so that they may

be quiet and faithful, obedient and peaceable. You must always offer many examples from the Scriptures to show how God has punished or blessed such persons [Deuteronomy 28].

In this matter you should especially urge magistrates and parents to rule well and to send their children to school. Show them why it is their duty to do this and what a damnable sin they are committing if they do not do it. For by such neglect they overthrow and destroy both God's kingdom and that of the world. They act as the worst enemies both of God and of people. Make it very plain to them what an awful harm they are doing if they will not help to train children to be pastors, preachers, clerks, and to fill other offices that we cannot do without in this life. God will punish them terribly for this failure. There is great need to preach this. In this matter parents and rulers are now sinning in unspeakable ways. The devil, too, hopes to accomplish something cruel because of these things.

Last, since the tyranny of the people has been abolished, people are no longer willing to go to the Sacrament, and thus they despise it. Here again encouragement is necessary, yet with this understanding: We are to force no one to believe or to receive the Sacrament. Nor should we set up any law, time, or place for it. Instead, preach in such a way that by their own will, without our law, they will urge themselves and, as it were, compel us pastors to administer the Sacrament. This is done by telling them, "When someone does not seek or desire the Sacrament at least four times a year, it is to be feared that he despises the Sacrament and is not a Christian, just as a person is not a Christian who does not believe or hear the Gospel." For Christ did not say, "Leave this out, or, despise this," but, "Do this, as often as you drink it" [1 Corinthians 11:25], and other such words. Truly, He wants it done, and not entirely neglected and despised. "Do this," He says.

Now, whoever does not highly value the Sacrament shows that he has no sin, no flesh, no devil, no world, no death, no danger, no hell. In other words, he does not believe any such things, although he is in them up over his head and his ears and is doubly the devil's own. On the other hand, he needs no grace, no life, no paradise, no heaven, no Christ, no God, nor anything good. For if he believed that he had so much evil around him, and needed so much that is good, he would not neglect the Sacrament, by which such evil is remedied and so much good is bestowed. Nor would it be necessary to force him to go to the Sacrament by any law. He would come running and racing of his own will, would force himself, and beg that you must give him the Sacrament.

Therefore, you must not make any law about this, as the pope does. Only set forth clearly the benefit and harm, the need and use, the danger and the blessing, connected with this Sacrament. Then the people will come on their own without you forcing them. But if they do not come, let them go their way and tell them that such people belong to the devil who do not regard nor feel their great need and God's gracious help. But if you do not urge this, or make a law or make it bitter, it is your fault if they despise the Sacrament. What else could they be than lazy if you sleep and are silent? Therefore, look to it, pastors and preachers. Our office has now become a different thing from what it was under the pope. It has now become a serious and saving office. So it now involves much more trouble and labor, danger and trials. In addition, it gains little reward and thanks in the world. But Christ Himself will be our reward if we labor faithfully [see Genesis 15:1]. To this end may the Father of all grace help us, to whom be praise and thanks forever through Christ, our Lord! Amen.

Books of the Bible

The Bible is divided into two parts, the Old Testament and the New Testament. There are 66 books in the Bible: 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament.

Books of the Old Testament

Historical Books

The Pen´ta-teuch

(Five Books of Moses)

Gen´e-sis

Ex´o-dus

Le-vit´i-cus

Num´bers

Deu-ter-on´o-my

Other Historical Books

Josh´u-a

Judg´es

Ruth

1 Sam´u-el

2 Sam´u-el

1 Kings

2 Kings

1 Chron´i-cles

2 Chron´i-cles

Ez´ra

Ne-he-mi´ah

Esther

Poetic Books

Job

Psalms

Proverbs

Ec-cle-si-as´tes

Song of Solomon

Prophetic Books

Major Prophets

I-sa´iah

Jer-e-mi´ah

Lam-en-ta´tions

E-ze´kiel

Dan´iel

Minor Prophets

Ho-se´a

Jo´el

A´mos

O-ba-di´ah

Jo´nah

Mi´cah

Na´hum

Hab-ak´kuk

Zeph-a-ni´ah

Hag´gai

Zech-a-ri´ah

Mal´a-chi

Books of the New Testament

Historical Books

Mat´thew

Mark

Luke

John

Acts

Epistles

Ro´mans

1 Co-rin´thi-ans

2 Co-rin´thi-ans

Ga-la´tians

E-phe´sians

Phi-lip´pi-ans

Co-los´sians

1 Thes-sa-lo´nians

2 Thes-sa-lo´nians

1 Tim´o-thy

2 Tim´o-thy

Ti´tus

Phi-le´mon

He´brews

James

1 Pe´ter

2 Pe´ter

1 John

2 John

3 John

Jude

Prophetic Book

Rev-e-la´tion

Creeds and Confessions

In addition to the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, which is confessed at celebrations of the Lord's Supper, and the Athanasian Creed, often read on Holy Trinity Sunday, are universal statements of faith held by the Lutheran Church. Both concentrate especially on the person and work of Jesus Christ.

The Lutheran Church also accepts without reservation all the documents contained in the Book of Concord of 1580 as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God. The best known and most widely used of these is Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism.

Born Nov. 10, 1483, in Eisleben, Germany, Luther attended the University of Erfurt, regarded as the best of schools particularly in law and liberal arts. Soon after, however, he requested to be admitted to the Augustinian order. In 1507 he was consecrated a priest and later obtained a doctorate in theology. His break with the Roman Catholic Church in 1521 occurred after he was told to recant what he believed to be scriptural teachings contrary to those of the Roman Church.

Luther's Small Catechism and his Large Catechism, completed in 1529, were originally intended to be helpful manuals for pastors and family heads in teaching God's Word to children and adults. The Large Catechism is not made up of questions and answers but presents basic Christian teachings in a form often used in sermons.

Another well-known statement of faith, the Augsburg Confession, was written by Philip Melanchthon and read before Emperor Charles V at Augsburg, Germany, in 1530. While friendly in tone, it was adopted as a testimony against abuses prevalent in the church and against the errors of certain reformers regarding such crucial doctrines as original sin and the Sacraments.

In 1531 Melanchthon wrote the Apology (Defense) of the Augsburg Confession. It too became an official confession of faith among Lutherans by its adoption at Smalcald, Germany, in 1537. In great detail it answers criticisms of the Augsburg Confession. Virtually half of the Apology

is devoted to the biblical doctrine of justification by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

The Smalcald Articles were written by Luther in 1536 and signed by many clergy present at Smalcald in 1537. The Articles are a summary of Luther's main disagreements with the Roman Church. Melanchthon's Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope was also officially adopted at Smalcald.

The Formula of Concord, completed in 1577, served to resolve doctrinal differences among Lutherans and was approved by over 8,000 theologians, pastors, and teachers by 1580. It was not a new confession but an exposition and defense of the previously adopted writings.

Quotations from these writings are included in this explanation of the Small Catechism.

Explanation of Luther's Seal

Martin Luther designed the following seal to summarize his Christian faith.



The black cross in the center reminds us that Jesus died to take the punishment for our sins. The red heart reminds us of the love God has for us in sending Jesus to be our Savior. The red of the heart is the color of the blood of Christ, shed for us and for our salvation. The white rose helps us remember the work of the Holy Spirit, who makes us pure and holy in God's sight by bringing us to faith in Jesus and by helping us to live our lives for Him. The sky blue background pictures the joy of the new life God gives to all who believe and trust in Him. Finally, the golden ring outlining the seal reminds us of our eternal inheritance—a home in heaven where we will enjoy complete joy and happiness in our Savior's presence.

Salvation Outline

The following seven points summarize basic information about the human condition and God's saving grace. You may want to memorize these points so that you may share them with someone who does not yet believe in Jesus as his or her Savior.

1. *God loves you!* "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (**John 3:16**).
2. *You are a sinner.* "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (**Rom. 3:23**).
3. *God punishes sin.* "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (**Rom. 6:23**).
4. *Jesus took our punishment.* "But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (**Rom. 5:8**).
5. *Jesus rose from the dead.* "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures" (**1 Cor. 15:3-4**).
6. *Jesus offers forgiveness of sins and eternal life to those who believe in Him.* "Then he brought them out and said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' And they said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household' " (**Acts 16:30-31**).
7. *Salvation is free—a gift from God.* "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast" (**Eph. 2:8-9**).

The Church Year

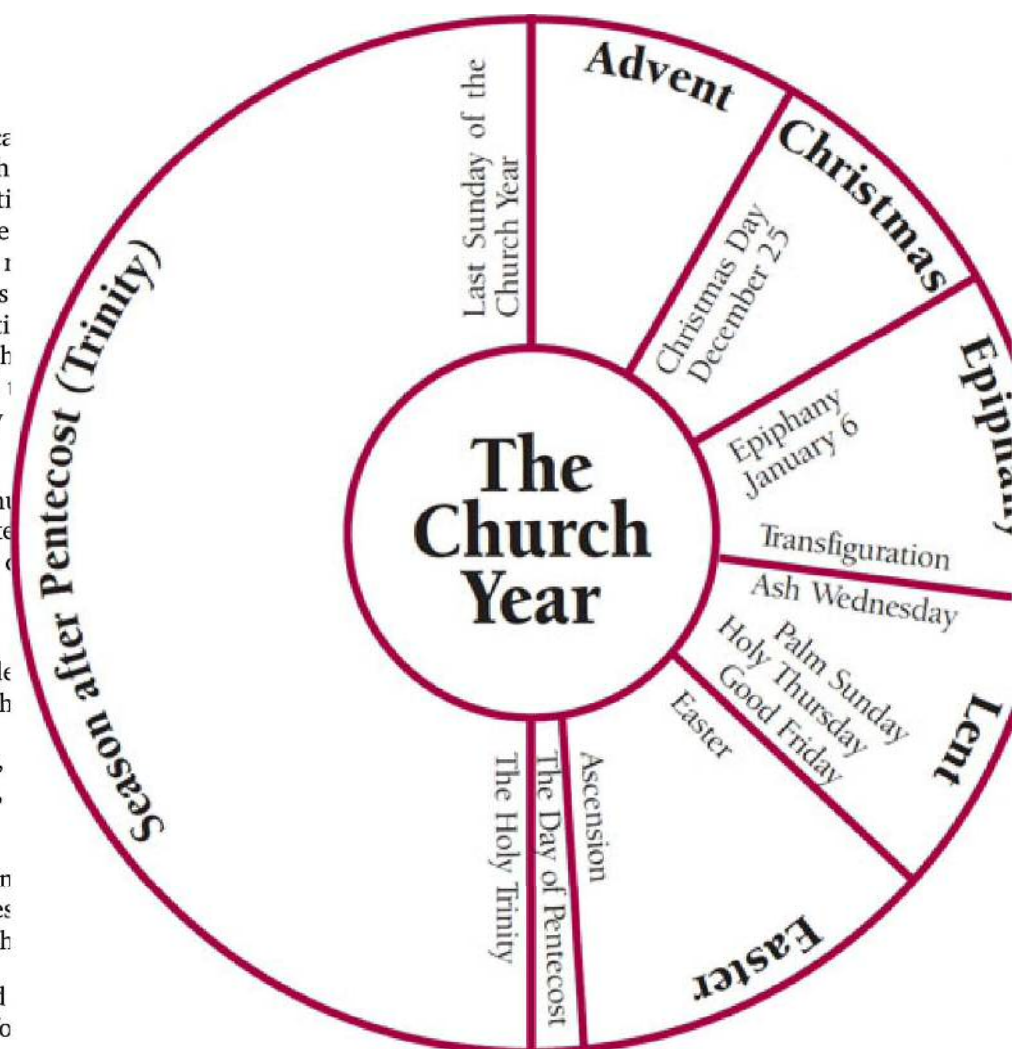
God's people use the church year calendar to help them in their worship life. The church calendar has two halves. The festive half, extending from Advent through the Pentecost, centers on the life of Christ, reminding us of what God has done and continues to do for us through His Son. The non-festive half, extending from Trinity Sunday through the Last Sunday of the Church Year, focuses on the church as it is strengthened daily by the Word.

In all, there are six seasons of the church year: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, and the Season after Pentecost. The following are the colors associated with these seasons.

- Blue: (Advent) reminds us of the blue of the sky and the eternal hope that is ours in Christ.
- White: (Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, and Trinity) is the color of purity, glory, and joy.
- Green: (Epiphany Season and the Season after Pentecost/Trinity) represents Christian life and growth in the world.
- Purple: (Lent) reminds us of our need for repentance and preparation for the celebration of Easter.
- Red: (Pentecost) the color of fire, representing the coming of the Holy Spirit; also used on certain saints' days to represent the blood of martyrs.

Contained within the Church Year are the feast days of Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost. These days celebrate important events in the life of Christ and what they mean for us today. Other festivals are included on the Church Year chart.

The Church Year and Its Festivals



The Church Year

Sundays and Seasons

The Time of Christmas

Advent Season

First Sunday in Advent

Second Sunday in Advent

Third Sunday in Advent

Fourth Sunday in Advent

Christmas Season

The Nativity of Our Lord

Christmas Eve

Christmas Midnight

Christmas Dawn

Christmas Day

First Sunday after Christmas

Second Sunday after Christmas

Epiphany Season

The Epiphany of Our Lord

First Sunday after the Epiphany

The Baptism of Our Lord

Second Sunday after the Epiphany

Third Sunday after the Epiphany

Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

Sixth Sunday after the

Epiphany

Seventh Sunday after the

Epiphany

Eighth Sunday after the

Epiphany

*Three-Year
Lectionary*

Last Sunday after the Epiphany

The Transfiguration of Our Lord

The Time of Easter

Pre-Lent Season

Septuagesima

Sexagesima

Quinquagesima

*One-Year
Lectionary*

Lenten Season

Ash Wednesday

First Sunday in Lent

Second Sunday in Lent

Third Sunday in Lent

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Holy Week

Palm Sunday

Sunday of the Passion

Monday in Holy Week

Tuesday in Holy Week

Wednesday in Holy Week

Holy Thursday

Good Friday

Easter Season

The Resurrection of Our Lord

Easter Vigil *Easter Evening/Monday*

Easter Sunrise *Easter Tuesday*

Easter Day *Easter Wednesday*

Second Sunday of Easter

Third Sunday of Easter

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Sixth Sunday of Easter

The Ascension of Our Lord

Seventh Sunday of Easter

Pentecost

Pentecost Eve *Pentecost
Evening/Monday*

Day of *Pentecost Tuesday*
Pentecost

The Time of the Church

The Season after Pentecost

The Holy Trinity

Second through Twenty-seventh Sunday
after Pentecost (*Three-Year Lectionary*)

First through Twenty-sixth Sunday after
Trinity (*One-Year Lectionary*)

Last Sunday of the Church Year

Feasts and Festivals

November

30 St. Andrew, Apostle

December

21 St. Thomas, Apostle
26 St. Stephen, Martyr
27 St. John, Apostle and Evangelist
28 The Holy Innocents, Martyrs
31 Eve of the Circumcision and Name of Jesus

January

1 Circumcision and Name of Jesus
18 The Confession of St. Peter
24 St. Timothy, Pastor and Confessor
25 The Conversion of St. Paul
26 St. Titus, Pastor and Confessor

February

2 The Purification of Mary and the Presentation of Our Lord
24 St. Matthias, Apostle

March

19 St. Joseph, Guardian of Jesus
25 The Annunciation of Our Lord

April

25 St. Mark, Evangelist

May

1 St. Philip and St. James, Apostles
31 The Visitation (*Three-Year Lectionary*)

June

11 St. Barnabas, Apostle
24 The Nativity of St. John the Baptist
29 St. Peter and St. Paul, Apostles

July

2 The Visitation (*One-Year Lectionary*)
22 St. Mary Magdalene
25 St. James the Elder, Apostle

August

15 St. Mary, Mother of Our Lord

24 St. Bartholomew, Apostle
29 The Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist

September

14 Holy Cross Day
21 St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist
29 St. Michael and All Angels

October

18 St. Luke, Evangelist
23 St. James of Jerusalem, Brother of Jesus and Martyr
28 St. Simon and St. Jude, Apostles
31 Reformation Day

November

1 All Saints' Day

Terms Relating to Worship and God's House

Acolyte. The person who lights and extinguishes the candles at church services.

Agnus Dei. Latin for "Lamb of God." See **John 1:29**.

Alleluia. A Hebrew word meaning "praise the Lord."

Altar. A stone or wooden structure at the center of the chancel from which the Lord's Supper is celebrated. Altars remind us of Christ's sacrifice on the cross for us.

Antiphon. A verse of Scripture repeated at the beginning and ending of a psalm or Introit.

Benediction. A blessing from the Lord, spoken by the pastor at the conclusion of the service.

Benedictus. Latin for "blessed." Song of Zechariah (**Luke 1:68–79**) sung as the canticle in Matins.

Canticle. A sung liturgical text, usually drawn from the Bible (for example, the Magnificat and Benedictus).

Celebrant. The pastor presiding at the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Chancel. The front of the church containing the altar and pulpit. The area of the church from which the service is led.

Collect. A brief, structured prayer.

Compline. A service of prayer at the close of the day.

Crucifix. A cross bearing the image of the crucified Savior. The crucifix reminds us of Christ's sacrifice for us.

Divine Service. The name for the regular, weekly service that includes the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Doxology. Words of praise addressed to the triune God.

Epistle. From the Greek word for "letter." In the Divine Service, the Epistle is the second reading, usually drawn from an Epistle in the New Testament (see p. 254).

Gloria in Excelsis. Latin, meaning "glory in the highest." A Hymn of Praise in the Divine Service.

Gloria Patri. Latin for "glory to the Father." A liturgical text used to conclude a psalm or Introit.

Gradual. A liturgical response, drawn from the Bible, that follows the Old Testament Reading.

Holy Thursday. Also called Maundy Thursday, the day when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. *Maundy* is from the Latin for "command," referring to the new commandment Jesus gave to "love one another" (**John 13:34**).

Holy Week. The week before Easter; it includes Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday.

Hosanna. Hebrew word of praise meaning "Save us now." It is included in the Sanctus.

Hymn. A song of prayer or praise in stanza form.

Introit. From the Latin for "enter." Psalm verses sung or spoken at the beginning of the Divine Service.

Invocation. From the Latin "to call upon." The words "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" spoken at the beginning of the service.

Kyrie eleison. Greek for "Lord, have mercy."

Lectern. A stand with a bookrest from which Scripture is read.

Lectionary. A book or list of appointed Scripture readings for the Sundays and festivals of the Church Year.

Litany. A structured form of prayer consisting of a series of petitions and responses.

Liturgy. Greek word meaning “public service.” See also Divine Service.

Magnificat. Latin for “magnify, praise.” From the Song of Mary (**Luke 1:46–55**).

Matins. Morning service of psalms, readings, and prayers.

Narthex. Hall or room at the entrance to the church.

Nave. From the Latin word for “ship.” The main part of the church where the congregation assembles for worship.

Nunc Dimittis. Latin for “now [let Your servant] depart.” From the Song of Simeon (**Luke 2:29–32**).

Offertory. Biblical text usually sung as the offering is received at the altar.

Ordinary. Parts of the service that remain the same from week to week, for example, the Kyrie and Sanctus.

Funeral Pall. Large white cloth that covers the casket, reminding us that we are clothed in Christ’s righteousness through Baptism (**Gal. 3:27**).

Paraments. Cloths placed on the altar, pulpit, and lectern in the color of the season of the Church Year.

Pax Domini. Latin for “peace of the Lord.”

Pericope. Greek word meaning “a section.” Portions of Holy Scripture read on a given Sunday.

Propers. Parts of the service that change from week to week, for example, the Introit and Scripture readings.

Preface. Responses at the beginning of the Service of the Sacrament, followed by the Proper Preface, which changes seasonally.

Pulpit. A raised platform or stand from which the pastor preaches the sermon.

Responsory. Scripture verses sung or spoken after the reading of Scripture in Matins, Vespers, and Compline.

Salutation. “The Lord be with you,” followed by the response “And also with you” or “And with thy Spirit.”

Sanctus. Latin for “holy.” Follows the Preface in the Service of the Sacrament. Based on **Is. 6:3** and **Matt. 21:9**.

Stanza. A numbered division within a hymn.

Te Deum. Latin for “[We praise] You, O God.” Ancient Hymn of Praise sung in Matins.

Venite. Latin for “O come.” Initial words of Psalm 95, sung as the first psalm in Matins.

Verse. Portions of Scripture sung or spoken immediately before the Holy Gospel in the Divine Service.

Vespers. Evening service of psalms, readings, and prayers.

Vestments. Liturgical garments worn by the pastor, acolytes, choir, and others assisting in worship.

Words of Our Lord. The words of Jesus spoken by the pastor over the bread and wine in the Service of the Sacrament. Also known as the Words of Institution.

The Time between the Testaments (432–5 BC)

During the years between the end of the events of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament, God was preparing the world, and His people in particular, for the coming of the Savior. And then, “when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons (Gal. 4:4–5).

What political forces bridged the testaments as God set the world’s stage for the coming of Jesus?

- *The Diaspora* (Dispersion) Jewish people scattered throughout the world as the result of the Babylonian captivity. The Jews that assembled in Jerusalem to hear Peter’s Pentecost sermon had come there from all over the world. Early Christians began their mission efforts among these transplanted Jews who were familiar with the Greek translation of the Old Testament.
- *Persian Period* (430–332 BC) Beginning with King Cyrus’s decree in 538 BC, many of God’s people began returning to the Promised Land. But their homeland remained a minor entity held under the control of a number of significant political powers, beginning with Persians. Life under the Persians was for the most part tolerant. (Esther had been a queen of Persia.)
- *Greek Period* (332–167 BC) The conquest of Palestine by young Alexander the Great in 332 BC began a period of Greek cultural influence. Greek could be heard spoken throughout the world. During this period the Old Testament was translated into Greek (called the Septuagint). Following Alexander’s death, the empire was divided among his generals. Palestine was passed back and forth from the governance of the Seleucids and the Ptolemies. The Jews enjoyed good treatment under the Ptolemies, but things were different under Seleucid Antiochus IV, Epiphanes, who ruled from 175–164 BC. He hated the Jews and sought to wipe out them and their religion. He attacked Jerusalem, defiled the

temple, placed a sow on the Jewish altar, erected a statue of Jupiter, prohibited worship and circumcision, sold Jewish families into slavery, and destroyed every copy of Scripture he could find.

- *Hasmonean Period* (167–63 BC) In opposition to the atrocities of Antiochus, the head of a priestly family, Mattathias, and his five sons led a successful revolt and founded a dynasty that, unfortunately, all too soon resembled that of the Seleucids.
- *Roman Period* (63 BC to the time of Christ) In 63 BC, Romans conquered Jerusalem. They killed the priest serving at the temple and defiled the Most Holy Place. Antipater (a descendent of Esau) was appointed the ruler of Judea. His son, Herod the Great, rebuilt the temple in an attempt to earn favor with the Jews. But Herod was cruel and insecure. He was the ruler when Jesus was born, and he ordered the killing of the children of Bethlehem.

What Holy Scriptures and other writings were God’s people reading during this period?

- The Septuagint—according to tradition, this translation of the books of the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek was made in Alexandria, Egypt, at the request of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285–247 BC). *Septuagint* comes from the Latin word for seventy. According to Jewish tradition, seventy-two scholars did the work in seventy-two days, translating the entirety of the Old Testament canon. The Septuagint was commonly used during the time of Christ and in the Early Christian Church as it was written in Greek, a language understood by Jews and Gentiles alike. The Septuagint is frequently quoted in the New Testament by Jesus and the apostles.
- The Apocrypha—identifies fourteen books positioned between the Old and New Testaments of some Bibles. Written between the first and third centuries BC, these books are not found in the Hebrew Old Testament and were never quoted by Jesus. The Apocrypha, a name derived from a Greek word meaning “hidden,” includes 1 Esdras, 2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Rest of Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, Song of the Three Holy Children, History of

Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, Prayer of Manasses, 1 Maccabees, and 2 Maccabees.

What language did people speak in the Holy Land when Jesus was born?

After the return of God's people from Babylonian Captivity, Aramaic gradually replaced Hebrew as the language commonly spoken by the people of Palestine. Aramaic was the ancient language of Syria and it is similar to Hebrew. Jesus spoke and taught in Aramaic, but He was undoubtedly also familiar with Hebrew, Greek, and perhaps Latin.

Who were the religious groups that figure prominently in the New Testament?

- Sanhedrin (Council)—thought to have originated in the third century BC, this group of seventy members led the Jewish people in the days of Christ. Among the seventy members were priests, Sadducees, Pharisees, scribes, and elders. The high priest presided over the group.
- Pharisees—a sect that rose as a reaction to those among God's people desiring to adopt Greek culture with its pagan religions. The Pharisees interpreted God's Law so the people could live righteously before God according to it. They wielded powerful influence among the people and were the only Jewish religious group to survive the destruction of the temple in AD 70. Modern Judaism can be traced to them.
- Sadducees—an aristocratic sect heavily influenced by secular thought and Greek customs, they were liberals and freethinkers. Though they controlled the Council, they were appropriately characterized as irreligious in nature. Unlike the Pharisees, the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection (**Mark 12:18**).
- Scribes—copied, studied, and interpreted Scripture. Because of their vast knowledge they were considered experts in the Law and sometimes served as lawyers. The role of scribes was especially important before the days of printing.

Where did the people worship in the New Testament world?

- The temple—the physical structure built as God's dwelling place among His people. Located in Jerusalem, the temple remained the center of Jewish worship. Here people came to offer blood sacrifices for the sins of the people and to pray. Jesus, the ultimate indwelling of God among His people,

referred to Himself as a temple (**John 2:19–21**). He came to take away the sins of all people once and for all (**Heb. 9:24–26**).

- Synagogues—houses for religious teaching and worship, synagogues were begun during the days of exile when the people were cut off from the temple. Early Christians modeled their church life and elements of worship after that of the synagogue.
- Homes—the Passover meal was a family event from the time of its first observance (**Ex. 12**). In Jewish tradition, the head of the household was responsible for the faith nurture and devotional life of the family. Similarly, this responsibility exists among Christian families (**Eph. 6:4**). Luther noted this frequently in the catechism, summarizing Christian doctrine “as the head of the family should teach it in a simple way to his household.” Early Christians, especially during times of persecution, met in small groups in people's homes to worship, support, and encourage one another, and to enjoy a time of fellowship.

What features made the world in which Christ was born ready to receive the world's Savior?

- Greek language gave the world a common voice. The Old Testament and eventually the New Testament languages were available in the universal language of the day.
- Roman transportation and communication facilitated the efficient spreading of the Gospel.
- The dispersion of God's people throughout the world provided strategic mission contacts so the message of salvation might be transmitted first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles.
- The promises of the Old Testament were ripe for fulfillment so that at just the right time and place Jesus, the stone the builders rejected, might give His life to save all people and in so doing construct a new religion of the old, “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone” (**Eph. 2:20**).

Symbols and Their Meanings



Alpha and Omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, remind us of Jesus' words, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, ... who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty" (**Rev. 1:8**).



Like an anchor keeps a ship safely in position, hope in Christ keeps believers safe and secure (**Heb. 6:19**).



Through the Sacrament of Baptism the Holy Spirit gives us God's gifts of faith, forgiveness, and salvation.



Through God's Word the Holy Spirit works faith, and through faith eternal life (**John 20:31**).



A caterpillar emerges from a cocoon as a beautiful and changed creature. This is a symbol of the resurrection from the dead (**1 Cor. 15:51–54**).



Jesus is the Light of the world (**John 8:12**).



Our God is eternal, without beginning or end (**1 Tim. 1:17**).



Our triune God is eternal, without a beginning or an ending (**Gen. 21:33; Acts 7:55**).



Chi-Rho. This symbol is made up of the first two letters of the Greek word *Christ*, which means "Messiah" or "the Anointed." (**John 17:3**).



Our God is triune, three persons in one Godhead—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (**Matt. 3:16–17**).



Jesus has won for us victory over death and an eternal home in heaven (**Rev. 2:10**).



The Lord's Supper. Those participating in this Sacrament receive bread and wine together with the body and blood of Christ Jesus for the forgiveness of sins, new life, and eternal salvation (**Matt. 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:17–20; 1 Cor. 11:23–25**).



God sees and knows all things (**Heb. 4:13**).



Matthew—a winged man. His Gospel begins with a list of the ancestors of Jesus.



Mark—a winged lion. Mark's Gospel begins by describing the voice of one crying in the wilderness.



Luke—a winged ox. Luke provides the most detail of the sacrificial suffering and death of Christ.



John—an eagle. John's Gospel soars with Christ's love and power.



The seven-fold gifts of the Holy Spirit (**Is. 11:2–3**). The Holy Spirit gives us His gifts through the means of grace—God's Word and the Sacraments.



Symbol of the Holy Trinity (**Matt. 28:19**).



The Greek cross. Five Greek crosses, for the five wounds of Christ (**John 20:19–20**), are sometimes seen on altar cloths.



God the Father. The hand of creation and blessing (**Ps. 145:13–16**).



Latin cross. This favorite and most widely recognized of the crosses represents that upon which Jesus gave His life for the sins of the world (**Acts 2:23**).



Maltese cross. Each point on this cross represents one of the eight Beatitudes from Christ's Sermon on the Mount (**Matt. 5:3–10**).



Tau cross. This cross (also called the Old Testament cross or the cross of prophecy, shaped for the cross Moses raised in the wilderness) connects Old Testament prophecy with the fulfillment of the promise of salvation in Christ Jesus (**John 3:14–15**).



Prayer. Rising smoke reminds us of the prayers of God's people ascending to Him (**Rev. 8:4; Ps. 141:2**).



For us and for our salvation, our Savior suffered under Pontius Pilate (**John 19:1–3**).



The Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God descended like a dove upon Jesus at His Baptism.



The Lord's Supper. Through these commonly harvested elements of the earth, bread and wine are made. In the Lord's Supper participants receive Christ's very body and blood together with bread and wine for the forgiveness of sins, new life, and eternal salvation (**Matt. 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:17–20, 1 Cor. 11:23–25**).



This symbol is the first three letters of the Greek word for Jesus, which means “the Lord saves” (**Matt. 1:21**).



This is the abbreviation of the inscription Pilate had fastened to Jesus' cross reading, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews” (**John 19:19**).



Ichthus is the Greek word for fish. Each letter of this word is also regarded as an acronym for the words “Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior” (**1 John 1:7**). The word for fish and the fish itself became symbols of early Christians.



Our Lord's gift of the keys of the kingdom, the power of the Church to forgive and retain sins (**Matt. 16:18–19**).



Agnus Dei. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (**Is. 53:7; John 1:29; Rev. 5:12**).



The Word of God. God directs and enlightens God's people (**Ps. 119:105**).



God's plan is for husbands and wives to love each other and to live for Him in marriage, just as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for the Church to make it holy (**Eph. 5:25–31**).



Jesus was nailed to the cross to suffer and die for our sins (**John 20:25**).



Like a fisherman who gathers fish in a net and then sorts them, at the end of time the angels will separate believers from unbelievers (**Matt. 13:47–49**). The net represents the Church and the kingdom of heaven.



Palm branches remind us of the victory that is ours in Jesus (**Rev. 7:9–10**).



Prayer. God commands and invites believers in Jesus Christ to pray and promises to hear and answer us (**1 Thess. 5:16–18**).



Christ is our Rock, the foundation upon which we build our lives (**1 Cor. 10:4**).



Christmas rose. Symbol of the fulfillment of the messianic prophecy (**Song of Sol. 2:1**).



Baptism. Three drops of water remind us of the triune God in whose name we are baptized (**Matt. 28:19**).



The Church. Just as God saved Noah and his family in the ark, God saves His people through the faith He imparts through the means of grace, His gifts to the Church (**1 Peter 3:18–21**).



Star representing the six days of creation (**Gen. 1:16**). This six-pointed star is known to the Jews as the Star of David.



Spiritus Gladius. The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God (**Eph. 6:17**). *Spiritus Gladius* means “spirit sword” in Latin.



“I am the good shepherd,” said Jesus (**John 10:11**). Jesus cares and provides for us; He laid down His life to save us.



God’s Law tells us what we are to do and not to do and how to act. No one can keep God’s Law. Jesus kept the Law in our place and without sin (**Heb. 4:15**).



Christians let their light shine as they share the Good News of salvation through Jesus (**Matt. 5:16**).



The triangle has three sides. It reminds us of the one true God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (**Matt. 28:19**).



“I am the true vine,” said Jesus (**John 15:1**). Jesus nourishes and sustains His people through the means of grace.

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