

*A Family Catechism**

*This catechism was originally largely an adaptation of the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, which was used throughout the 17th century by the Particular Baptists in London and in other parts of England. Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892), pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, adapted it for use in his congregation in the latter part of the 19th century. The attempt has herein been made to retain the Catechism's theological integrity, while stating it in more contemporary language. May it prove a great means in causing our families to delight in God's glory and declare that glory to the nations!

Question 1: What is our ultimate purpose for existence?

Answer: Our ultimate purpose for existence is to glorify God (1 Cor. 10:31) and enjoy him forever (Ps. 73:25-26).

Question 2: What guide has God given us to glorify him?

Answer: The Word of God as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Eph. 2:20; 2 Tim. 3:16) is the guide God has given us to show us how to glorify God and enjoy him (1 Jn. 1:3).

Question 3: What do the Scriptures mainly teach?

Answer: The Scriptures mainly teach what we're to believe concerning God, and what God requires of us (2 Tim. 1:13; Eccl. 12:13).

Question 4: What is God?

Answer: God is Spirit (Jn. 4:24) – infinite (Job 11:7), eternal (Ps. 90:2; 1 Tim. 1:17), and unchangeable (Jas. 1:17) in his being (Exod. 3:14), wisdom (1 Cor. 1:30), power (Ps. 147:5), holiness (Rev. 4:8), justice, goodness and truth (Exod. 34:6-7).

Question 5: Are there more gods than one?

Answer: There is only one (Deut. 6:4) living and true God (Jer 10:10; 1 Thess. 1:9).

Question 6: How many persons are there in the Godhead?

Answer: There are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – these three are one God; the same in essence; equal in power and glory (1 Jn. 5:7; Matt. 28:19).

Question 7: What are the decrees of God?

Answer: The decrees of God are his eternal purpose according to the counsel of his own will, whereby for his own glory he has ordained beforehand whatever comes to pass (Eph. 1:11-12).

Question 8: How does God carry out his decrees?

Answer: God carries out his decrees in the works of creation (Rev. 4:11) and providence (Dan. 4:35).

Question 9: What is the work of creation?

Answer: The work of creation is God's making of all things (Gen. 1:1) out of nothing by the word of his power (Heb. 11:3).

Question 10: How did God create humanity?

Answer: God created humanity, male and female, in his own image (Gen. 1:27), in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness (Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24) with authority over the rest of creation (Gen. 1:28).

Question 11: What are God's works of providence?

Answer: God's works of providence are his most holy (Ps. 145:17), wise (Isa. 28:29), and powerful (Heb. 1:3) preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions (Ps. 103:19; Matt. 10:29).

Question 12: What special act of providence did God exercise toward man in the state in which he was created?

Answer: When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, the condition of which was perfect obedience (Gal. 3:12), forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon the certainty of death (Gen. 2:17).

Question 13: Did our first parents, Adam and Eve, continue in the condition in which they were originally created?

Answer: Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the condition in which they were created, by sinning against God (Eccl. 7:29) by eating the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:6-8).

Question 14: What is sin?

Answer: Sin is any lack of conformity to, or transgression of, the law of God (1 Jn. 3:4).

Question 15: Did all of humanity fall in Adam's first transgression?

Answer: The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself but for all succeeding future generations, all of humanity sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression (1 Cor. 15:22; Rom. 5:12).

Question 16: Into what condition or state did the fall bring all of humanity?

Answer: The fall brought all of humanity into a state of sin and misery (Rom. 5:18).

Question 17: What is the state of the sinfulness into which all of humanity fell?

Answer: The sinfulness of that state into which all of humanity fell consists of the guilt of Adam's first sin (Rom. 5:19), the lack of original righteousness (Rom. 3:10), and the corruption of every human being's whole nature, which is commonly called original sin (Eph. 2:1; Ps. 51:5), together with all actual transgressions or acts of sin that proceed from it (Matt. 15:19).

Question 18: What is the misery of the state into which all of humanity fell?

Answer: All of humanity, by their fall, lost communion with God (Gen. 3:8, 24), are under his wrath and curse (Eph. 2:3; Gal. 3:10), and so are made liable to all the miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the torments of hell forever (Rom. 6:23; Matt. 25:41).

Question 19: Did God leave all of humanity to perish in the state of sin and misery?

Answer: God, out of his good pleasure from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life (2 Thess. 2:13) and entered into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of the state of sin and misery, and to bring them into a state of salvation by a Redeemer (Rom. 5:21).

Question 20: Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?

Answer: The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:5), who being the eternal Son of God, became man (Jn. 1:14) and so was and continues to be completely God and completely man, in two distinct natures and one person forever (1 Tim. 3:16; Col. 2:9).

Question 21: How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?

Answer: Christ, the Son of God, became man by taking to himself a true body (Heb. 2:14), being conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the Virgin Mary, and born of her (Lk. 1:31, 35), yet without sin (Heb. 7:26).

Question 22: What offices does Christ carry out as our Redeemer?

Answer: Christ, as our Redeemer, carries out the offices of a prophet (Acts 3:22), a priest (Heb. 5:6), and a king (Ps. 2:6), both in his state of humiliation and exaltation.

Question 23: How does Christ carry out the office of a prophet?

Answer: Christ carries out the office of a prophet in that he reveals to us (Jn. 1:18) by his Word (Jn. 20:31) and Spirit (Jn. 14:26), the will of God for our salvation.

Question 24: How does Christ carry out the office of a priest?

Answer: Christ carries out the office of a priest by offering up himself as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice (Heb. 9:28), and to reconcile us to God (Heb. 2:17) and by making continual intercession for us (Heb. 7:25).

Question 25: How does Christ carry out the office of a king?

Answer: Christ carries out the office of a king by subduing us for himself (Ps. 110:3), in ruling and defending us (Matt. 2:6; 1Cor. 15:25) and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

Question 26: In what did Christ's humiliation consist?

Answer: Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition (Lk. 2:7) made subject to the law (Gal. 4:4), undergoing the miseries of this life (Isa. 53:3), the wrath of God (Matt. 27:46), and the cursed death of the cross (Phil. 2:8); in being buried in the likeness of sinful men (Matt. 12:40).

Question 27: In what does Christ's exaltation consist?

Answer: Christ's exaltation consists in his rising again from the dead on the third day (1 Cor. 15:4), in ascending into heaven, sitting at the right hand of God the Father (Mk. 16:19), and in coming to judge the world at the last day (Acts 17:31).

Question 28: How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?

Answer: We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ by the application of it to us (Jn. 1:12) by his Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5-6).

Question 29: How does the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?

Answer: The Spirit applies to us the redemption purchased by Christ by working faith in us (Eph. 2:8), thereby uniting us to Christ (Eph. 3:17).

Question 30: What is effectual calling?

Answer: Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit (2 Tim. 1:9) whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery (Ac 2:37), enlightening our minds concerning the knowledge of Christ (Acts 26:18), and renewing our wills (Ezek. 36:26), he persuades and enables us to embrace Jesus Christ as he is freely offered to us in the gospel (Jn. 6:44-45).

Question 31: What benefits do those who are effectually called partake of in this life?

Answer: Those who are effectually called partake of justification (Rom. 8:30), adoption (Eph. 1:5), sanctification, and the various benefits that either accompany or flow from them in this life (1 Cor. 1:30).

Question 32: What is justification?

Answer: Justification is an act of God's free grace by which he pardons all our sins (Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:7), and accepts us as righteous in his sight (2 Cor. 5:21) only because of the righteousness of Christ imputed to us (Rom. 5:19) and received by faith alone (Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:9).

Question 33: What is adoption?

Answer: Adoption is an act of God's free grace (1 Jn. 3:1) by which we are received into God's family as his children and have a right to all the privileges that such a relationship affords (Jn. 1:12; Rom. 8:17).

Question 34: What is sanctification?

Answer: Sanctification is the work of God's Spirit (2 Thess. 2:13) by which we are increasingly being renewed in the inner man into the image of God (Eph. 4:24) and are enabled more and more to die to sin and live to righteousness (Rom. 6:11).

Question 35: What are the benefits in this life that either accompany or flow from justification, adoption and sanctification?

Answer: The benefits in this life that either accompany or flow from justification, adoption and sanctification (Rom. 5:1-2, 5) are assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17), increase of grace, perseverance in it to the end (Prov. 4:18; 1 Jn. 5:13; 1 Pet. 1:5).

Question 36: What benefits do believers receive from Christ at their death?

Answer: The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness (Heb. 12:23) and do immediately pass into glory (Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:8; Lk. 23:43), and their bodies, being still united to Christ (1 Thess. 4:14) do rest in their graves (Isa. 57:2) till the resurrection (Job 19:26).

Question 37: What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?

Answer: At the resurrection, believers will be raised up in glory (1 Cor. 15:43), openly acknowledged and acquitted on the day of judgment (Matt. 10:32), and made perfectly blessed both in soul and body in the full enjoyment of God (1 Jn. 3:2; Ps. 16:11) throughout all eternity (1Thess. 4:17).

Question 38: What will happen to the wicked at their death?

Answer: The souls of the wicked will be cast into the torments of hell (Lk. 16:22-24), and their bodies will lie in their graves until the resurrection and judgment of the great day of the Lord (Ps. 49:14).

Question 39: What will happen to the wicked at the day of judgment?

Answer: At the day of judgment, the bodies of the wicked will be raised out of their graves, sentenced together with their souls, and sent to bear unspeakable torments with the devil and his angels forever in hell (Dan. 12:2; Jn. 5:28-29; 2Thess. 1:9; Matt. 25:41).

Question 40: What did God reveal to humanity as a rule for his obedience?

Answer: The rule that God first revealed to humanity for his obedience was the moral law (Deut. 10:4; Matt. 19:17), which is summarized in the Ten Commandments.

Question 41: What is the summation of the Ten Commandments?

Answer: The summation of the Ten Commandments is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and to love our neighbor as ourselves (Matt. 22:37-40).

Question 42: What is the first commandment?

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

Question 43: What is required in the first commandment?

Answer: The first commandment requires us to know (1Chron. 28:9) and acknowledge God to be the only true God and our God (Deut. 26:17), and to worship and glorify him accordingly (Matt. 4:10).

Question 44: What is the second commandment?

Answer: The second commandment is, "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments."

Question 45: What is required in the second commandment?

Answer: The second commandment requires the receiving, observing (Deut. 32:46; Matt. 28:20), and keeping pure and entire all the religious worship and ordinances that God has appointed in his Word (Deut. 12:32).

Question 46: What is forbidden in the second commandment?

Answer: The second commandment forbids the worshipping of God by images (Deut. 4:15-16), or any other way not appointed in his Word (Col. 2:18).

Question 47: What is the third commandment?

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

Question 48: What is required in the third commandment?

Answer: The third commandment requires the holy and reverent use of God's names (Ps. 29:2), titles, attributes (Rev. 15:3-4), ordinances (Eccl. 5:1), Word (Ps. 138:2), and works (Job 36:24; Deut. 28:58-59).

Question 49: What is the fourth commandment?

Answer: The fourth commandment is, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."

Question 50: What is required in the fourth commandment?

Answer: The fourth commandment requires keeping holy to God such set times as he has appointed in his Word, expressly one whole day in seven, to be a holy Sabbath to himself (Lev. 19:30; Deut. 5:12).

Question 51: How is the Sabbath to be "kept holy"?

Answer: The Sabbath is to be kept holy by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days (Lev. 23:3), and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of the worship of God (Ps. 92:1-2; Isa. 58:13-14), except what needs to be done of necessity and mercy (Matt. 12:11-12).

Question 52: What is the fifth commandment?

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

Question 53: What is required in the fifth commandment?

Answer: The fifth commandment requires preserving the honor of and performing the duties belonging to everyone in their various positions and relationships, whether as superiors (Eph. 5:21-22; 6:1, 5; Rom. 13:1), inferiors (Eph. 6:9), or equals (Rom. 12:10).

Question 54: What is the reason given for obeying the fifth commandment?

Answer: The reason given for obeying the fifth commandment is a promise of long life and prosperity—to the extent that it serves God's glory, and their own good—to all that keep this commandment (Eph. 6:2-3).

Question 55: What is the sixth commandment?

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

Question 56: What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?

Answer: The sixth commandment forbids the taking of our own life (Acts 16:28), or the life of our neighbor unjustly (Gen. 9:6), or whatever pertains to it (Prov. 24:11-12).

Question 57: What is the seventh commandment?

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

Question 58: What is forbidden in the seventh commandment?

Answer: The seventh commandment forbids all impure thoughts (Matt. 5:28; Col. 4:6), words (Eph. 5:4; 2Tim. 2:22), and actions (Eph. 5:3).

Question 59: What is the eighth commandment?

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

Question 60: What is forbidden in the eighth commandment?

Answer: The eighth commandment forbids unjustly taking another's possessions or properties (Eph. 4:28).

Question 61: What is the ninth commandment?

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

Question 62: What is required in the ninth commandment?

Answer: The ninth commandment requires the maintaining and promoting of truth between one another (Zech. 8:16), and regarding our own name (1 Pet. 3:16; Acts 25:10), as well as our neighbor's name (3 Jn. 1:12), especially as it relates to bearing witness (Prov. 14:5, 25).

Question 63: What is the tenth commandment?

Answer: The tenth commandment is, "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's."

Question 64: What is forbidden in the tenth commandment?

Answer: The tenth commandment forbids all discontentment with our own estate (1 Cor. 10:10), envying or grieving at the good of our neighbor (Gal. 5:26), and all undue emotions and affections to anything that is his (Col. 3:5).

Question 65: Is anyone able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?

Answer: No mere human being, since the fall, is able in his life perfectly to keep the commandments of God (Eccl. 7:20), but daily breaks them in thought (Gen. 8:21), word (Jas. 3:8), and deed (Jas. 3:2).

Question 66: Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous?

Answer: Some sins in themselves, and by reason of various consequences, are more heinous in the sight of God than others (Jn. 19:11; 1 Jn. 5:15).

Question 67: What does every sin deserve?

Answer: Every sin deserves God's wrath and curse, both in this life and that which is to come (Eph. 5:6; Ps. 11:6).

Question 68: How may we escape his wrath and curse due to us for sin?

Answer: To escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin, we must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (Jn. 3:16), trusting alone in his work and righteousness. This faith is accompanied by repentance for the past (Acts 20:21) and leads to holiness in the future.

Question 69: What is faith in Jesus Christ?

Answer: Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace (Heb. 10:39), whereby we receive (Jn. 1:12) and rest in Christ alone for salvation (Phil. 3:9), as he is set forth in the gospel (Isa. 33:22).

Question 70: What is the repentance that leads to life?

Answer: The repentance that leads to life is a saving grace (Acts 11:18), whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sins (Acts 2:37), and realization of the mercy of God in Christ (Joel 2:13), does with grief and hatred of his sin turn from it to God (Jer. 31:18-19), with the new desire to strive after obedience (Ps. 119:59).

Question 71: What are the outward means by which the Holy Spirit applies the benefits of redemption to us?

Answer: The outward and ordinary means by which the Holy Spirit applies the benefits of Christ's redemption to us are the Word of God, by which souls are born again unto spiritual life; Baptism, the Lord's Supper, Prayer, and Meditation, all of which lead believers to be further built up in their faith (Acts 2:41-42; Jas. 1:18).

Question 72: How is the Word made effectual for salvation?

Answer: The Spirit of God makes the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means of convicting and converting sinners (Ps. 19:7), and of building them up in holiness and assurance (1 Thess. 1:6) through faith to salvation (Rom. 1:16).

Question 73: How is the Word to be read and heard so that it may become effectual for salvation?

Answer: The Word must be attended to it with diligence (Prov. 8:34; 1 Pet. 2:1-2) and prayer (Ps. 119:18), received with faith (Heb. 4:2) and love (2 Thess. 2:10), stored up in our hearts (Ps. 119:11) and practiced in our lives (Jas. 1:25).

Question 74: How do baptism and the Lord's Supper become spiritually helpful?

Answer: Baptism and the Lord's Supper become spiritually helpful, not from any virtue in them, or in the one who administers them (1 Cor. 3:7; 1 Pet. 3:21), but only by the blessing of Christ (1 Cor. 3:6) and the working of the Spirit in those who by faith receive them (1 Cor. 12:13).

Question 75: What is baptism?

Answer: Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, instituted by Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:19) to be for the person baptized a sign of his fellowship with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6:3; Col. 2:12), a sign of his being engrafted into Christ (Gal. 3:27), a sign of the forgiveness of sins (Mk. 1:4; Acts 22:16), and a sign of the one being baptized giving himself up to God through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4-5).

Question 76: To whom is baptism to be administered?

Answer: Baptism is to be administered to all those who actually profess repentance towards God (Acts 2:38; Matt. 3:6; Mk. 16:16; Acts 8:12, 36-37; 10:47-48) and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Question 77: Are the infants of those who profess faith in Jesus Christ to be baptized?

Answer: The infants of professing believers are not to be baptized, because there is neither command nor example in the Scriptures for their baptism (Exod. 23:13; Prov. 30:6).

Question 78: How is baptism rightly administered?

Answer: Baptism is rightly administered by immersion, or dipping the whole body of the person in water (Matt. 3:16; Jn. 3:23), in the name of the Father the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, according to Christ's institution and the practice of the apostles (Matt. 28:19-20).

Question 79: What is the responsibility of those who are rightly baptized?

Answer: It is the responsibility of those who are rightly baptized to commit themselves to some particular and orderly Church of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:47; 9:26; 1 Pet. 2:5), so that they may walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly (Lk. 1:6).

Question 80: What is the Lord's Supper?

Answer: The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of the New Testament, instituted by Jesus Christ by which through the giving and receiving of bread and the fruit of the vine, Christ's death is proclaimed (1 Cor. 11:23-26), and true believers are, by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace (1 Cor. 10:16).

Question 81: What is required to receive the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner?

Answer: It is required of those who would partake of the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner that they examine themselves concerning their knowledge of the Lord's body (1 Cor. 11:28-29), of their faith to feed upon him, (2 Cor. 13:5), of their repentance toward Christ and his children (1 Cor. 11:31), love for the same (1 Cor. 11:18-20), and new obedience to their Savior (1 Cor. 5:8), lest they eat and drink judgment upon themselves (1 Cor. 11:27-29).

Question 82: What is meant by the words, "until he comes," which are used by the apostle Paul in reference to the Lord's Supper?

Answer: They plainly teach us that our Lord Jesus Christ will come a second time, which is the joy and hope of all believers (Acts 1:11; 1Thess. 4:16).

Soli Deo Gloria!