

# Heidelberg Catechism



*This Catechism was composed by a commission of theologians at the request of Elector Frederick III of the Palatinate in 1563 at Heidelberg, Germany as a guide (to instruct) and as book of comfort. It soon received widespread consent. Several synods in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and also the National Synod of Dort (1618-1619) adopted it as one of the confessions of the Reformed Church.*

## Lord's Day 1 - Question and Answer 1

Question: What is your only comfort in life and death?

Answer: That I am not my own, but belong with body and soul, both in life and in death, to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with His precious blood, and has set me free from all the power of the devil. He also preserves me in such a way that without the will of my heavenly Father not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, all things must work together for my salvation. Therefore, by His Holy Spirit He also assures me of eternal life and makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live for Him.

## Lord's day 1 - Question and answer 2

Question: What do you need to know in order to live and die in the joy of this comfort?

Answer: Three realities: First, how great my sins and misery are; second, how I am delivered from all my sins and misery; third, how I am to be thankful to God for such deliverance.

## Lord's day: 2 - Question and Answer 3

Question: From where do you know your sins and misery?

Answer: From the law of God.

## Lord's day: 2 - Question and Answer 4

Question: What does God's law require of us?

Answer: Christ teaches us this in a summary in Matthew 22: " Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbour as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

## Lord's day: 2 - Question and Answer 5

Question: Can you keep all this perfectly?

Answer: No, I am inclined by nature to hate God and my neighbour.

## Lord's day: 3 - Question and Answer 6

Question: Did God, then, create man so wicked and perverse?

Answer: No, on the contrary, God created man good and in His image, that is, in true righteousness and holiness, so that he might rightly know God his Creator, heartily love Him, and live with Him in eternal blessedness to praise and glorify Him.

Lord's day: 3 - Question and Answer 7

Question: From where, then, did man's depraved nature come?

Answer: From the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in Paradise, for there our nature became so corrupt that we are all conceived and born in sin.

Lord's day: 3 - Question and Answer 8

Question: But are we so corrupt that we are totally unable to do any good and inclined to all evil?

Answer: Yes, unless we are regenerated by the Spirit of God.

Lord's day: 4 - Question and Answer 9

Question: But does not God do man an injustice by requiring in His law what man cannot do?

Answer: No, for God so created man that he was able to do it. But man, at the instigation of the devil, in deliberate disobedience robbed himself and all his descendants of these gifts.

Lord's day: 4 - Question and Answer 10

Question: Will God allow such disobedience and apostasy to go unpunished?

Answer: Certainly not. He is terribly displeased with our original sin as well as our actual sins. Therefore He will punish them by a just judgment both now and eternally, as He has declared: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law."

Lord's day: 4 - Question and Answer 11

Question: But is God not also merciful?

Answer: God is indeed merciful, but He is also just. His justice requires that sin committed against the most high majesty of God also be punished with the most severe, that is, with everlasting, punishment of body and soul.

Lord's day: 5 - Question and Answer 12

Question: Since, according to God's righteous judgment we deserve temporal and eternal punishment, how can we escape this punishment and be again received into favour?

Answer: God demands that His justice be satisfied. Therefore we must make full payment, either by ourselves or through another.

Lord's day: 5 - Question and Answer 13

Question: Can we by ourselves make this payment?

Answer: Certainly not. On the contrary, we daily increase our debt.

Lord's day: 5 - Question and Answer 14

Question: Can any mere creature pay for us?

Answer: No. In the first place, God will not punish another creature for the sin which man has committed. Furthermore, no mere creature can sustain the burden of God's eternal wrath against sin and deliver others from it.

Lord's day: 5 - Question and Answer 15

Question: What kind of mediator and deliverer must we seek?

Answer: One who is a true and righteous man, and yet more powerful than all creatures; that is, one who is at the same time true God.

Lord's day: 5 - Question and Answer 16

Question: Why must He be a true and righteous man?

Answer: He must be a true man because the justice of God requires that the same human nature which has sinned should pay for sin. He must be a righteous man because one who himself is a sinner cannot pay for others.

Lord's day: 6 - Question and Answer 17

Question: Why must He at the same time be true God?

Answer: He must be true God so that by the power of His divine nature He might bear in His human nature the burden of God's wrath, and might obtain for us and restore to us righteousness and life.

Lord's day: 6 - Question and Answer 18

Question: But who is that Mediator who at the same time is true God and a true and righteous man?

Answer: Our Lord Jesus Christ, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

Lord's day: 6 - Question and Answer 19

Question: From where do you know this?

Answer: From the holy gospel, which God Himself first revealed in Paradise. Later, He had it proclaimed by the patriarchs and prophets, and foreshadowed by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law. Finally, He had it fulfilled through His only Son.

Lord's day: 7 - Question and Answer 20

Question: Are all men, then, saved by Christ just as they perished through Adam?

Answer: No. Only those are saved who by a true faith are grafted into Christ and accept all His benefits.

Lord's day: 7 - Question and Answer 21

Question: What is true faith?

Answer: True faith is a sure knowledge whereby I accept as true all that God has revealed to us in His Word. At the same time it is a firm confidence that not only to others, but also to me, God has granted forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness, and salvation, out of mere grace, only for the sake of Christ's merits. This faith the Holy Spirit works in my heart by the gospel.

Lord's day: 7 - Question and Answer 22

Question: What, then, must a Christian believe?

Answer: All that is promised us in the gospel, which the articles of our catholic and undoubted Christian faith teach us in a summary.

Lord's day: 7 - Question and Answer 23

Question: What are these articles?

Answer:

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord;

He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary;  
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. He endured the suffering of hell\*.  
On the third day He arose from the dead;  
He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty;  
from there He will come to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit;  
I believe a holy catholic Christian church, the communion of saints;  
the forgiveness of sins;  
the resurrection of the body;  
and the life everlasting.  
\*Literally: He descended into hell

Lord's day: 8 - Question and Answer 24

Question: How are these articles divided?

Answer: Into three parts: the first is about God the Father and our creation; the second about God the Son and our redemption; the third about God the Holy Spirit and our sanctification.

Lord's day: 8 - Question and Answer 25

Question: Since there is only one God, why do you speak of three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

Answer: Because God has so revealed Himself in His Word that these three distinct persons are the one, true, eternal God.

Lord's day: 9 - Question and Answer 26

Question: What do you believe when you say: I believe in God the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?

Answer: That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who out of nothing created heaven and earth and all that is in them, and who still upholds and governs them by His eternal counsel and providence, is, for the sake of Christ His Son, my God and my Father. In Him I trust so completely as to have no doubt that He will provide me with all things necessary for body and soul, and will also turn to my good whatever adversity He sends me in this life of sorrow. He is able to do so as almighty God, and willing also as a faithful Father.

Lord's day: 10 - Question and Answer 27

Question: What do you understand by the providence of God?

Answer: God's providence is His almighty and ever present power, whereby, as with His hand, He still upholds heaven and earth and all creatures, and so governs them that leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, food and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, indeed, all things, come not by chance but by His fatherly hand.

Lord's day: 10 - Question and Answer 28

Question: What does it benefit us to know that God has created all things and still upholds them by His providence?

Answer: We can be patient in adversity, thankful in prosperity, and with a view to the future we can have a firm confidence in our faithful God and Father that no creature shall separate us from His love; for all creatures are so completely in His hand that without His will they cannot so much as move.

Lord's day: 11 - Question and Answer 29

Question: Why is the Son of God called Jesus, that is, Saviour?

Answer: Because He saves us from all our sins, and because salvation is not to be sought or found in anyone else.

Lord's day: 11 - Question and Answer 30

Question: Do those believe in the only Saviour Jesus who seek their salvation and well-being from saints, in themselves, or anywhere else?

Answer: No. Though they boast of Him in words, they in fact deny the only Saviour Jesus. For one of two things must be true: either Jesus is not a complete Saviour, or those who by true faith accept this Saviour must find in Him all that is necessary for their salvation.

Lord's day: 12 - Question and Answer 31

Question: Why is He called Christ, that is, Anointed?

Answer: Because He has been ordained by God the Father, and anointed with the Holy Spirit, to be our chief Prophet and Teacher, who has fully revealed to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption; our only High Priest, who by the one sacrifice of His body has redeemed us, and who continually intercedes for us before the Father; and our eternal King, who governs us by His Word and Spirit, and who defends and preserves us in the redemption obtained for us.

Lord's day: 12 - Question and Answer 32

Question: Why are you called a Christian?

Answer: Because I am a member of Christ by faith and thus share in His anointing, so that I may as prophet confess His Name, as priest present myself a living sacrifice of thankfulness to Him, and as king fight with a free and good conscience against sin and the devil in this life, and hereafter reign with Him eternally over all creatures.

Lord's day: 13 - Question and Answer 33

Question: Why is He called God's only begotten Son, since we also are children of God?

Answer: Because Christ alone is the eternal, natural Son of God. We, however, are children of God by adoption, through grace, for Christ's sake.

Lord's day: 13 - Question and Answer 34

Question: Why do you call Him our Lord?

Answer: Because He has ransomed us, body and soul, from all our sins, not with silver or gold but with His precious blood, and has freed us from all the power of the devil to make us His own possession.

Lord's day: 14 - Question and Answer 35

Question: What do you confess when you say: He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary?

Answer: The eternal Son of God, who is and remains true and eternal God, took upon Himself true human nature from the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary, through the working of the Holy Spirit. Thus He is also the true seed of David, and like His brothers in every respect, yet without sin.

Lord's day: 14 - Question and Answer 36

Question: What benefit do you receive from the holy conception and birth of Christ?

Answer: He is our Mediator, and with His innocence and perfect holiness covers, in the sight of God, my sin, in which I was conceived and born.

Lord's day: 15 - Question and Answer 37

Question: What do you confess when you say that He suffered?

Answer: During all the time He lived on earth, but especially at the end, Christ bore in body and soul the wrath of God against the sin of the whole human race. Thus, by His suffering, as the only atoning sacrifice, He has redeemed our body and soul from everlasting damnation, and obtained for us the grace of God, righteousness, and eternal life.

Lord's day: 15 - Question and Answer 38

Question: Why did He suffer under Pontius Pilate as judge?

Answer: Though innocent, Christ was condemned by an earthly judge, and so He freed us from the severe judgment of God that was to fall on us.

Lord's day: 15 - Question and Answer 39

Question: Does it have a special meaning that Christ was crucified and did not die in a different way?

Answer: Yes. Thereby I am assured that He took upon Himself the curse which lay on me, for a crucified one was cursed by God.

Lord's day: 16 - Question and Answer 40

Question: Why was it necessary for Christ to humble Himself even unto death?

Answer: Because of the justice and truth of God satisfaction for our sins could be made in no other way than by the death of the Son of God.

Lord's day: 16 - Question and Answer 41

Question: Why was he buried?

Answer: His burial testified that He had really died.

Lord's day: 16 - Question and Answer 42

Question: Since Christ has died for us, why do we still have to die?

Answer: Our death is not a payment for our sins, but it puts an end to sin and is an entrance into eternal life.

Lord's day: 16 - Question and Answer 43

Question: What further benefit do we receive from Christ's sacrifice and death on the cross?

Answer: Through Christ's death our old nature is crucified, put to death, and buried with Him, so that the evil desires of the flesh may no longer reign in us, but that we may offer ourselves to Him as a sacrifice of thankfulness.

Lord's day: 16 - Question and Answer 44

Question: Why is there added: He endured the suffering of hell - literally: He descended into hell?

Answer: In my greatest sorrows and temptations I may be assured and comforted that my Lord Jesus Christ, by His unspeakable anguish, pain, terror, and agony, which He endured throughout all His sufferings but especially on the cross, has delivered me from the anguish and torment of hell.

Lord's day: 17 - Question and Answer 45

Question: How does Christ's resurrection benefit us?

Answer: First, by His resurrection He has overcome death, so that He could make us share in the righteousness which He had obtained for us by His death. Second, by His power we too are raised up to a new life. Third, Christ's resurrection is to us a sure pledge of our glorious resurrection.

Lord's day: 18 - Question and Answer 46

Question: What do you confess when you say, He ascended into heaven?

Answer: That Christ, before the eyes of His disciples, was taken up from the earth into heaven, and that He is there for our benefit until He comes again to judge the living and the dead.

Lord's day: 18 - Question and Answer 47

Question: Is Christ, then, not with us until the end of the world, as He has promised us?

Answer: Christ is true man and true God. With respect to His human nature He is no longer on earth, but with respect to His divinity, majesty, grace, and Spirit He is never absent from us.

Lord's day: 18- Question and Answer 48

Question: But are the two natures in Christ not separated from each other if His human nature is not present wherever His divinity is?

Answer: Not at all, for His divinity has no limits and is present everywhere. So it must follow that His divinity is indeed beyond the human nature which He has taken on and nevertheless is within this human nature and remains personally united with it.

Lord's day: 18 - Question and Answer 49

Question: How does Christ's ascension into heaven benefit us?

Answer: First, He is our Advocate in heaven before His Father. Second, we have our flesh in heaven as a sure pledge that He, our Head, will also take us, His members, up to Himself. Third, He sends us His Spirit as a counter-pledge, by whose power we seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God, and not the things that are on earth.

Lord's day: 19 - Question and Answer 50

Question: Why is it added, And sits at the right hand of God?

Answer: Christ ascended into heaven to manifest Himself there as Head of His Church, through whom the Father governs all things.

Lord's day: 19 - Question and Answer 51

Question: How does the glory of Christ, our Head, benefit us?

Answer: First, by His Holy Spirit He pours out heavenly gifts upon us, His members. Second, by His power He defends and preserves us against all enemies.

Lord's day: 19 - Question and Answer 52

Question: What comfort is it to you that Christ will come to judge the living and the dead?

Answer: In all my sorrow and persecution I lift up my head and eagerly await as judge from heaven the very same person who before has submitted Himself to the judgment of God for my sake, and has removed

all the curse from me. He will cast all His and my enemies into everlasting condemnation, but He will take me and all His chosen ones to Himself into heavenly joy and glory.

Lord's day: 20 - Question and Answer 53

Question: What do you believe concerning the Holy Spirit?

Answer: First, He is, together with the Father and the Son, true and eternal God. Second, He is also given to me, to make me by true faith share in Christ and all His benefits, to comfort me, and to remain with me forever.

Lord's day: 21 - Question and Answer 54

Question: What do you believe concerning the holy catholic Christian church?

Answer: I believe that the Son of God, out of the whole human race, from the beginning of the world to its end, gathers, defends, and preserves for Himself, by His Spirit and Word, in the unity of the true faith, a church chosen to everlasting life. And I believe that I am and forever shall remain a living member of it.

Lord's day: 21 - Question and Answer 55

Question: What do you understand by the communion of saints?

Answer: First, that believers, all and everyone, as members of Christ have communion with Him and share in all His treasures and gifts. Second, that everyone is duty-bound to use his gifts readily and cheerfully for the benefit and well-being of the other members.

Lord's day: 21 - Question and Answer 56

Question: What do you believe concerning the forgiveness of sins?

Answer: I believe that God, because of Christ's satisfaction, will no more remember my sins, nor my sinful nature, against which I have to struggle all my life, but He will graciously grant me the righteousness of Christ, that I may never come into condemnation.

Lord's day: 22 - Question and Answer 57

Question: What comfort does the resurrection of the body offer you?

Answer: Not only shall my soul after this life immediately be taken up to Christ, my Head, but also this my very flesh, raised by the power of Christ, shall be reunited with my soul and made like Christ's glorious body.

Lord's day: 22 - Question and Answer 58

Question: What comfort do you receive from the article about the life everlasting?

Answer: Since I now already feel in my heart the beginning of eternal joy, I shall after this life possess perfect blessedness, such as no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived-- a blessedness in which to praise God forever.

Lord's day: 23 - Question and Answer 59

Question: But what does it help you now that you believe all this?

Answer: In Christ I am righteous before God and heir to life everlasting.

Lord's day: 23 - Question and Answer 60

Question: How are you righteous before God?

Answer: Only by true faith in Jesus Christ. Although my conscience accuses me that I have grievously sinned against all God's commandments, have never kept any of them, and am still inclined to all evil, yet God, without any merit of my own, out of mere grace, imputes to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness,



and holiness of Christ. He grants these to me as if I had never had nor committed any sin, and as if I myself had accomplished all the obedience which Christ has rendered for me, if only I accept this gift with a believing heart.

Lord's day: 23 - Question and Answer 61

Question: Why do you say that you are righteous only by faith?

Answer: Not that I am acceptable to God on account of the worthiness of my faith, for only the satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ is my righteousness before God. I can receive this righteousness and make it mine my own **by faith**-alone

Lord's day: 24 - Question and Answer 62

Question: But why can our good works not be our righteousness before God, or at least a part of it?

Answer: Because the righteousness which can stand before God's judgment must be absolutely perfect and in complete agreement with the law of God, whereas even our best works in this life are all imperfect and defiled with sin.

Lord's day: 24 - Question and Answer 63

Question: But do our good works earn nothing, even though God promises to reward them in this life and the next?

Answer: This reward is not earned; it is a gift of grace.

Lord's day: 24 - Question and Answer 64

Question: Does this teaching not make people careless and wicked?

Answer: No. It is impossible that those grafted into Christ by true faith should not bring forth fruits of GRATITUDE

Lord's day: 25 - Question and Answer 65

Question: Since then faith alone makes us share in Christ and all His benefits, where does this faith come from?

Answer: From the Holy Spirit, who works it in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel, and strengthens it by the use of the sacraments.

Lord's day: 25 - Question and Answer 66

Question: What are the sacraments?

Answer: The sacraments are holy, visible signs and seals. They were instituted by God so that by their use He might the more fully declare and seal to us the promise of the gospel. And this is the promise: that God graciously grants us forgiveness of sins and everlasting life because of the one sacrifice of Christ accomplished on the cross.

Lord's day: 25 - Question and Answer 67

Question: Are both the Word and the sacraments then intended to focus our faith on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross as the only ground of our salvation?

Answer: Yes, indeed. The Holy Spirit teaches us in the gospel and assures us by the sacraments that our entire salvation rests on Christ's **one sacrifice** for us on the cross.

Lord's day: 25 - Question and Answer 68

Question: How many sacraments has Christ instituted in the new covenant?

Answer: Two: holy baptism and the ~~holy~~ Lords supper.

Lord's day: 26 - Question and Answer 69

Question: How does holy baptism signify and seal to you that the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross benefits you?

Answer: In this way: Christ instituted this outward washing and with it gave the promise that, as surely as water washes away the dirt from the body, so certainly His blood and Spirit wash away the impurity of my soul, that is, all my sins.

Lord's day: 26 - Question and Answer 70

Question: What does it mean to be washed with Christ's blood and Spirit?

Answer: To be washed with Christ's blood means to receive forgiveness of sins from God, through grace, because of Christ's blood, poured out for us in His sacrifice on the cross. To be washed with His Spirit means to be renewed by the Holy Spirit and sanctified to be members of Christ, so that more and more we become dead to sin and lead a holy and blameless life.

Lord's day: 26 - Question and Answer 71

Question: Where has Christ promised that He will wash us with His blood and Spirit as surely as we are washed with the water of baptism?

Answer: In the institution of baptism, where He says: Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned. This promise is repeated where Scripture calls baptism the washing of regeneration and the washing away of sins.

Lord's day: 27 - Question and Answer 72

Question: Does this outward washing with water itself wash away sins?

Answer: No, only the blood of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit cleanse us from all sins.

Lord's day: 27 - Question and Answer 73

Question: Why then does the Holy Spirit call baptism the washing of regeneration and the washing away of sins?

Answer: God speaks in this way for a good reason. He wants to teach us that the blood and Spirit of Christ remove our sins just as water takes away dirt from the body. But, even more important, He wants to assure us by this divine pledge and sign that we are as truly cleansed from our sins spiritually as we are bodily washed with water.

Lord's day: 27 - Question and Answer 74

Question: Should infants, too, be baptized?

Answer: Yes. Infants as well as adults belong to God's covenant and congregation. Through Christ's blood the redemption from sin and the Holy Spirit, who works faith, are promised to them no less than to adults. Therefore, by baptism, as sign of the covenant, they must be incorporated into the Christian church and distinguished from the children of unbelievers. This was done in the old covenant by circumcision, in place of which baptism was instituted in the new covenant.

Lord's day: 28 - Question and Answer 75

Question: How does the Lord's Supper signify and seal to you that you share in Christ's one sacrifice on the cross and in all His gifts?

Answer: In this way: Christ has commanded me and all believers to eat of this broken bread and drink of this cup in remembrance of Him. With this command He gave these promises: First, as surely as I see with my eyes the bread of the Lord broken for me and the cup given to me, so surely was His body offered for me and His blood poured out for me on the cross. Second, as surely as I receive from the hand of the minister and taste with my mouth the bread and the cup of the Lord as sure signs of Christ's body and blood, so surely does He Himself nourish and refresh my soul to everlasting life with His crucified body and shed blood.

Lord's day: 28 - Question and Answer 76

Question: What does it mean to eat the crucified body of Christ and to drink His shed blood?

Answer: First, to accept with a believing heart all the suffering and the death of Christ, and so receive forgiveness of sins and life eternal. Second, to be united more and more to His blessed body through the Holy Spirit, who lives both in Christ and in us. Therefore, although Christ is in heaven and we are on earth, yet we are flesh of His flesh and bone of His bones, and we forever live and are governed by one Spirit, as the members of our body are by one soul.

Lord's day: 28 - Question and Answer 77

Question: Where has Christ promised that He will nourish and refresh believers with His body and blood as surely as they eat of this broken bread and drink of this cup?

Answer: In the institution of the Lord's supper: The Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. This promise is repeated by Paul where he says: The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

Lord's day: 29 - Question and Answer 78

Question: Are then the bread and wine changed into the real body and blood of Christ?

Answer: No. Just as the water of baptism is not changed into the blood of Christ and is not the washing away of sins itself but is simply God's sign and pledge, so also the bread in the Lord's supper does not become the body of Christ itself, although it is called Christ's body in keeping with the nature and usage of sacraments.

Lord's day: 29 - Question and Answer 79

Question: Why then does Christ call the bread His body and the cup His blood, or the new covenant in His blood, and why does Paul speak of a participation in the body and blood of Christ?

Answer: Christ speaks in this way for a good reason: He wants to teach us by His supper that as bread and wine sustain us in this temporal life, so His crucified body and shed blood are true food and drink for our souls to eternal life. But, even more important, He wants to assure us by this visible sign and pledge, first, that through the working of the Holy Spirit we share in His true body and blood as surely as we receive with our mouth these holy signs in remembrance of Him, and, second, that all His suffering and obedience are as certainly ours as if we personally had suffered and paid for our sins.

Lord's day: 30 - Question and Answer 80

Question: What difference is there between the Lord's supper and the Roman Catholic Mass?

Answer: The Lord's supper testifies to us, first, that we have complete forgiveness of all our sins through the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which He Himself accomplished on the cross once for all; and, second, that through the Holy Spirit we are grafted into Christ, who with His true body is now in heaven at the right hand of the Father, and this is where He wants to be worshipped. But the mass teaches, first, that the living and the dead do not have forgiveness of sins through the suffering of Christ unless He is still offered for them daily by the priests; and, second, that Christ is bodily present in the form of bread and wine, and there is to be worshipped. Therefore the mass is basically nothing but a denial of the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ, and an accursed idolatry.

Lord's day: 30 - Question and Answer 81

Question: Who are to come to the table of the Lord?

Answer: Those who are truly displeased with themselves because of their sins and yet trust that these are forgiven them and that their remaining weakness is covered by the suffering and death of Christ, and who also desire more and more to strengthen their faith and amend their life. But hypocrites and those who do not repent eat and drink judgment upon themselves.

Lord's day: 30 - Question and Answer 82

Question: Are those also to be admitted to the Lord's supper who by their confession and life show that they are unbelieving and ungodly?

Answer: No, for then the covenant of God would be profaned and His wrath kindled against the whole congregation.

Lord's day: 31 - Question and Answer 83

Question: What are the keys of the kingdom of heaven?

Answer: The preaching of the holy gospel and Christian discipline. By these two the kingdom of heaven is opened to believers and closed to unbelievers.

Lord's day: 31 - Question and Answer 84

Question: How is the kingdom of heaven opened and closed by the preaching of the gospel?

Answer: According to the command of Christ, the kingdom of heaven is opened when it is proclaimed and publicly testified to each and every believer that God has really forgiven all their sins for the sake of Christ's merits, as often as they by true faith accept the promise of the gospel. The kingdom of heaven is closed when it is proclaimed and testified to all unbelievers and hypocrites that the wrath of God and eternal condemnation rest on them as long as they do not repent. According to this testimony of the gospel, God will judge both in this life and in the life to come.

Lord's day: 31 - Question and Answer 85

Question: How is the kingdom of heaven closed and opened by church discipline?

Answer: According to the command of Christ, people who call themselves Christians but show themselves to be unchristian in doctrine or life are first repeatedly admonished in a brotherly manner. If they do not give up their errors or wickedness, they are reported to the church, to those ordained by the church for that purpose. If they do not heed also their admonitions, they are forbidden the use of the sacraments, and they are excluded by the elders from the Christian congregation, and by God Himself from the kingdom of Christ. They are again received as members of Christ and of the church when they promise and show real amendment.

Lord's day: 32 - Question and Answer 86

Question: Since we have been delivered from our misery by grace alone through Christ, without any merit of our own, why must we yet do good works?

Answer: Because Christ, having redeemed us by His blood, also renews us by His Holy Spirit to be His image, so that with our whole life we may show ourselves thankful to God for His benefits, and He may be praised by us. Further, that we ourselves may be assured of our faith by its fruits, and that by our godly walk of life we may win our neighbours for Christ.

Lord's day: 32 - Question and Answer 87

Question: Can those be saved who do not turn to God from their ungrateful and impenitent walk of life?

Answer: By no means. Scripture says that no unchaste person, idolater, adulterer, thief, greedy person, drunkard, slanderer, robber, or the like shall inherit the kingdom of God.

Lord's day: 33 - Question and Answer 88

Question: What is the true repentance or conversion of man?

Answer: It is the dying of the old nature and the coming to life of the new.

Lord's day: 33 - Question and Answer 89

Question: What is the dying of the old nature?

Answer: It is to grieve with heartfelt sorrow that we have offended God by our sin, and more and more to hate it and flee from it.

Lord's day: 33 - Question and Answer 90

Question: What is the coming to life of the new nature?

Answer: It is a heartfelt joy in God through Christ, and a love and delight to live according to the will of God in all good works.

Lord's day: 33 - Question and Answer 91

Question: But what are good works?

Answer: Only those which are done out of true faith, in accordance with the law of God, and to His glory, and not those based on our own opinion or on precepts of men.

Lord's day: 34 - Question and Answer 92

Question: What is the law of the LORD?

Answer: God spoke all these words, saying:

I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

You shall have no other gods before Me.

You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments.

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.

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

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

You shall not kill.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

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

Lord's day: 34 - Question and Answer 93

Question: How are these commandments divided?

Answer: Into two parts. The first teaches us how to live in relation to God; the second, what duties we owe our neighbour.

Lord's day: 34 - Question and Answer 94

Question: What does the LORD require in the first commandment?

Answer: That for the sake of my very salvation I avoid and flee all idolatry, witchcraft, superstition, and prayer to saints or to other creatures. Further, that I rightly come to know the only true God, trust in Him alone, submit to Him with all humility and patience, expect all good from Him only, and love, fear, and honour Him with all my heart. In short, that I forsake all creatures rather than do the least thing against His will.

Lord's day: 34 - Question and Answer 95

Question: What is idolatry?

Answer: Idolatry is having or inventing something in which to put our trust instead of, or in addition to, the only true God who has revealed Himself in His Word.

Lord's day: 35 - Question and Answer 96

Question: What does God require in the second commandment?

Answer: We are not to make an image of God in any way, nor to worship Him in any other manner than He has commanded in His Word.

Lord's day: 35 - Question and Answer 97

Question: May we then not make any image at all?

Answer: God cannot and may not be visibly portrayed in any way. Creatures may be portrayed, but God forbids us to make or have any images of them in order to worship them or to serve God through them.

Lord's day: 35 - Question and Answer 98

Question: But may images not be tolerated in the churches as "books for the laity"?

Answer: No, for we should not be wiser than God. He wants His people to be taught not by means of dumb images but by the living preaching of His Word.

Lord's Day 36

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

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

In summary, we must use the holy name of God only with reverence and awe, so that we may properly confess him, call upon him, and praise him in everything we do and say.

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

A. Yes, indeed.

No sin is greater or provokes God's wrath more than blaspheming his name.

That is why he commanded it to be punished with death.

Lord's Day 37

101 Q. But may we swear an oath in God's name if we do it reverently?

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

Such oath-taking is grounded in God's Word and was rightly used by the saints in the Old and New Testaments.

102 Q. May we also swear by saints or other created things?

A. No.

A legitimate oath is calling upon God as the one who knows my heart to witness to the truth and to punish me if I swear falsely.

No created thing is worthy of such honor.

Lord's Day 38

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

A. First, that the gospel ministry and schools for it be maintained, and that, especially on the festive day of rest, I diligently attend the assembly of God's people to learn what God's Word teaches, to participate in the sacraments, to pray to the Lord publicly, and to bring Christian offerings for the poor.

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

Lord's Day 39

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

A. That I show honor, love, and faithfulness to my father and mother and all those in authority over me; submit myself with proper obedience to all their good teaching and discipline; and also that I be patient with their failings— for by their hand God wills to rule us.

Lord's Day 40

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

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

I am not to harm or recklessly endanger myself either.

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

106 Q. Does this commandment refer only to murder?

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

In God's sight all such are disguised forms of murder.

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

A. No.

By condemning envy, hatred, and anger God wants us to love our neighbors as ourselves, to be patient, peace-loving, gentle, merciful, and friendly toward them, to protect them from harm as much as we can, and to do good even to our enemies.

Lord's Day 41

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

A. That God condemns all unchastity, and that we should therefore detest it wholeheartedly and live decent and chaste lives, within or outside of the holy state of marriage.

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

A. We are temples of the Holy Spirit, body and soul, and God wants both to be kept clean and holy.

That is why God forbids all unchaste actions, looks, talk, thoughts, or desires, and whatever may incite someone to them.

Lord's Day 42

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

A. He forbids not only outright theft and robbery, which governing authorities punish, but in God's sight theft also includes all evil tricks and schemes designed to get our neighbor's goods for ourselves, whether by force or means that appear legitimate, such as inaccurate measurements of weight, size, or volume; fraudulent merchandising; counterfeit money; excessive interest; or any other means forbidden by God.

In addition God forbids all greed and pointless squandering of his gifts.

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

A. That I do whatever I can and may for my neighbor's good, that I treat others as I would like them to treat me, and that I work faithfully so that I may help the needy in their hardship.

Lord's Day 43

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

A. That I never give false testimony against anyone, twist no one's words, not gossip or slander, nor join in condemning anyone rashly or without a hearing.



Rather, I should avoid, under penalty of God's wrath, every kind of lying and deceit as the very works of the devil; and, in court and everywhere else, I should love the truth, speak it candidly, and openly acknowledge it.

And I should do what I can to defend and advance my neighbor's honor and reputation.

Lord's Day 44

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

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

Rather, with all our hearts we should always hate sin and delight in all righteousness.

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

A. No.

In this life even the holiest have only a small beginning of this obedience.

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

115 Q. Since no one in this life can keep the Ten Commandments perfectly, why does God want them preached so pointedly?

A. First, so that all our life long we may more and more come to know our sinful nature and thus more eagerly seek the forgiveness of sins and righteousness in Christ.

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

Lord's Day 45

116 Q. Why do Christians need to pray?

A. Because prayer is the most important part of the thankfulness God requires of us.

And also because God will give his grace and Holy Spirit only to those who continually and with heartfelt longing ask God for these gifts and thank him for them.

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

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

Second, we must fully recognize our need and misery, so that we humble ourselves in God's majestic presence.

Third, we must rest on this unshakable foundation:

even though we do not deserve it, God will surely listen to our prayer because of Christ our Lord, as he has promised us in his Word.

118 Q. What has God commanded us to ask of him?

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

119 Q. What is this prayer?

A. Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

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

For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever.

Amen.

Lord's Day 46

120 Q. Why has Christ commanded us to address God as "our Father"?

A. To awaken in us at the very beginning of our prayer what should be basic to our prayer— a childlike reverence and trust that through Christ God has become our Father, and will much less refuse to give us what we ask in faith than will our parents refuse us the things of this life.

121 Q. Why the words "who is in heaven"?

A. These words teach us not to think of God's heavenly majesty in an earthly way, and to expect from his almighty power everything needed for body and soul.

Lord's Day 47

122 Q. What does the first petition mean?

A. "Hallowed be your name" means:

Help us to truly know you, to honor, glorify, and praise you for all your works and for all that shines forth from them:

your almighty power, wisdom, kindness, justice, mercy, and truth.

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

Lord's Day 48

123 Q. What does the second petition mean?

A. "Your kingdom come" means:

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

Preserve and increase your church.

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

Do all this until your kingdom fully comes, when you will be all in all.

Lord's Day 49

124 Q. What does the third petition mean?

A. "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" means:

Help us and all people to renounce our own wills and without any back talk to obey your will, for it alone is good.

Help everyone carry out his office and calling, as willingly and faithfully as the angels in heaven.

Lord's Day 50

125 Q. What does the fourth petition mean?

A. "Give us this day our daily bread" means:

Provide for all our physical needs so that we may recognize that you are the only source of everything good, and that neither our care and work nor your gifts can do us any good without your blessing.

Therefore may we withdraw our trust from all creatures and place it in you alone.

Lord's Day 51

126 Q. What does the fifth petition mean?

A. "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" means:

Because of Christ's blood, do not impute to us, poor sinners that we are, any of the transgressions we do or the evil that constantly clings to us.

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

Lord's Day 52

127 Q. What does the sixth petition mean?

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

We are so weak that we cannot stand on our own for a moment, and our sworn enemies— the devil, the world, and our own flesh — never stop attacking us.

And so, Lord, uphold us and make us strong by the power of your Holy Spirit, so that we may not be defeated in this spiritual fight, but may firmly resist our enemies until we finally win the complete victory.

128 Q. How do you conclude this prayer?

A. "For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever." This means we have made all these petitions of you because, as our all-powerful king, you are both willing and able to give us all that is good; and because your holy name, and not we ourselves, should receive all the praise, forever.

129 Q. What does that little word "Amen" express?

A. "Amen" means:

This shall truly and surely be! For it is much more certain that God has heard my prayer than I feel in my heart that I desire such things from him.