

The Heidelberg Catechism

LORD'S DAY 1

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

A. That I am not my own,¹
but belong—
body and soul,
in life and in death²—
to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.³

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

Because I belong to him,
Christ, by his Holy Spirit,
also assures me of eternal life⁹
and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready
from now on to live for him.¹⁰

¹ 1 Cor. 6:19–20

² Rom. 14:7–9

³ 1 Cor. 3:23; Titus 2:14

⁴ 1 Pet. 1:18–19; 1 John 1:7–9; 2:2

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

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

⁷ Matt. 10:29–31; Luke 21:16–18

⁸ Rom. 8:28

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

¹⁰ Rom. 8:1–17

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

A. Three:

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

¹ Rom. 3:9–10; 1 John 1:10

² John 17:3; Acts 4:12; 10:43

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

PART I: MISERY

LORD'S DAY 2

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

A. The law of God tells me.¹

¹ Rom. 3:20; 7:7–25

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

A. Christ teaches us this in summary in Matthew 22:37–40:

“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.”¹
This is the greatest and first commandment.

And a second is like it:

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”²

On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

¹ Deut. 6:5

² Lev. 19:18

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

A. No.¹

I am inclined by nature
to hate God and my neighbor.²

¹ Rom. 3:9–20, 23; 1 John 1:8, 10

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

LORD’S DAY 3

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

A. No.

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

¹ Gen. 1:31

² Gen. 1:26–27

³ Eph. 4:24

⁴ Col. 3:10

⁵ Ps. 8

**7 Q. Then where does man’s corrupt nature
come from?**

A. From the fall and disobedience of our first parents,
Adam and Eve, in Paradise.¹

This fall has so poisoned our nature²
that we are all conceived and born in sin.³

¹ Gen. 3

² Rom. 5:12, 18–19

³ Ps. 51:5

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

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

¹ Gen. 6:5; 8:21; Job 14:4; Isa. 53:6

² John 3:3–5

LORD'S DAY 4

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

A. No, God created man with the ability to keep the law.¹
Man, however, at the instigation of the devil,²
in willful disobedience,³
robbed himself and all his descendants of these gifts.⁴

¹ Gen. 1:31; Eph. 4:24

² Gen. 3:13; John 8:44

³ Gen. 3:6

⁴ Rom. 5:12, 18, 19

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

A. Certainly not.
He is terribly angry
with the sin we are born with
as well as our actual sins.

God will punish them by a just judgment
both now and in eternity,¹

having declared:

“Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey
all the things written in the book of the law.”²

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

² Gal. 3:10; Deut. 27:26

11 Q. But isn't God also merciful?

- A.** God is certainly merciful,¹
but he is also just.²
His justice demands
that sin, committed against his supreme majesty,
be punished with the supreme penalty—
eternal punishment of body and soul.³

¹ Ex. 34:6–7; Ps. 103:8–9

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

³ Matt. 25:35–46

PART II: DELIVERANCE

LORD'S DAY 5

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

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

¹ Ex. 23:7; Rom. 2:1–11

² Isa. 53:11; Rom. 8:3–4

13 Q. Can we make this payment ourselves?

- A.** Certainly not.
Actually, we increase our debt every day.¹

¹ Matt. 6:12; Rom. 2:4–5

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

A. No.

To begin with,

God will not punish any other creature for what a human is guilty of.¹

Furthermore,

no mere creature can bear the weight of God's eternal wrath against sin and deliver others from it.²

¹ Ezek. 18:4, 20; Heb. 2:14–18

² Pss. 49:7–9; 130:3

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

A. One who is a true¹ and righteous² man, yet more powerful than all creatures, that is, one who is also true God.³

¹ Rom. 1:3; 1 Cor. 15:21; Heb. 2:17

² Isa. 53:9; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:26

³ Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Jer. 23:6; John 1:1

LORD'S DAY 6

16 Q. Why must the mediator be a true and righteous man?

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

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

² Heb. 7:26–27; 1 Pet. 3:18

17 Q. Why must he also be true God?

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

¹ Isa. 53; John 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:21

**18 Q. Then who is this mediator—
true God and at the same time
a true and righteous man?**

A. Our Lord Jesus Christ,¹
who was given to us
for our complete deliverance
and righteousness.²

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

² 1 Cor. 1:30

19 Q. How do you come to know this?

A. The holy gospel tells me.
God himself began to reveal the gospel already in Paradise;¹
later, he proclaimed it
by the holy patriarchs² and prophets³
and foreshadowed it
by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law;⁴
and finally he fulfilled it
through his own beloved Son.⁵

¹ Gen. 3:15

² Gen. 22:18; 49:10

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

⁴ Lev. 1–7; John 5:46; Heb. 10:1–10

⁵ Rom. 10:4; Gal. 4:4–5; Col. 2:17

LORD'S DAY 7

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

A. No.

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

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

21 Q. What is true faith?

A. True faith is

not only a sure knowledge by which I hold as true
all that God has revealed to us in his Word;¹
it is also a wholehearted trust,²
which the Holy Spirit works in me³ by the gospel,⁴
that God has freely granted, not only to others but to me also,⁵
forgiveness of sins,
eternal righteousness,
and salvation.⁶

These gifts are purely of grace,
only because of Christ's merit.⁷

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

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

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

⁴ Rom. 1:16; 10:17; 1 Cor. 1:21

⁵ Gal. 2:20

⁶ Rom. 1:17; Heb. 10:10

⁷ Rom. 3:21–26; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8–10

22 Q. What then must a Christian believe?

A. All that is promised us in the gospel,¹
a summary of which is taught us
in the articles of our catholic and undoubted Christian faith.

¹ Matt. 28:18–20; John 20:30–31

23 Q. What are these articles?

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary;
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;
he descended into hell;
the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended to 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;
the holy catholic church;
the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body;
and the life everlasting. Amen.

LORD'S DAY 8

24 Q. How are these articles divided?

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

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

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

¹ Deut. 6:4; 1 Cor. 8:4, 6

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

LORD'S DAY 9

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

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

I trust God so much that I do not doubt
he will provide
whatever I need
for body and soul,⁴
and will turn to my good
whatever adversity he sends upon me
in this vale of tears.⁵

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

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¹ Gen. 1–2; Ex. 20:11; Ps. 33:6; Isa. 44:24; Acts 4:24; 14:15

² Ps. 104; Matt. 6:30; 10:29; Eph. 1:11

³ John 1:12 – 13; Rom. 8:15 – 16

⁴ Ps. 55:22; Matt. 6:25–26; Luke 12:22–31

⁵ Rom. 8:28

⁶ Gen. 18:14; Rom. 8:31–39

⁷ Matt. 7:9–11

LORD'S DAY 10

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

A. Providence is

the almighty and ever present power of God¹
by which God upholds, as with his hand,
heaven
and earth
and all creatures,²
and so rules them that
leaf and blade,
rain and drought,
fruitful and lean years,
food and drink,
health and sickness,
prosperity and poverty³—
all things, in fact, come to us
not by chance⁴
but by his fatherly hand.⁵

¹ Jer. 23:23–24; Acts 17:24–28

² Heb. 1:3

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

⁴ Prov. 16:33

⁵ Matt. 10:29

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

- A.** We can be patient in adversity,¹
thankful in prosperity,²
and for the future we can have
good confidence in our faithful God and Father
that no creature will separate us from his love.³
For all creatures are so completely in his hand
that without his will
they can neither move nor be moved.⁴

¹ Job 1:21–22; James 1:3

² Deut. 8:10; 1 Thess. 5:18

³ Ps. 55:22; Rom. 5:3–5; 8:38–39

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

LORD’S DAY 11

**29 Q. Why is the Son of God called “Jesus,”
meaning “savior”?**

- A.** Because he saves us from our sins;¹
and because salvation is not to be sought
or found in anyone else.²

¹ Matt. 1:21; Heb. 7:25

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

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

- A.** No.
Although they boast of being his,
by their actions they deny
the only savior, Jesus.¹

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

¹ 1 Cor. 1:12–13; Gal. 5:4

² Col. 1:19–20; 2:10; 1 John 1:7

LORD'S DAY 12

31 Q. Why is he called “Christ,” meaning “anointed”?

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

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

² Acts 3:22 (Deut. 18:15)

³ John 1:18; 15:15

⁴ Heb. 7:17 (Ps. 110:4)

⁵ Heb. 9:12; 10:11–14

⁶ Rom. 8:34; Heb. 9:24

⁷ Matt. 21:5 (Zech. 9:9)

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

32 Q. But why are you called a Christian?

- A.** Because by faith I am a member of Christ¹
and so I share in his anointing.²
I am anointed
to confess his name,³
to present myself to him as a living sacrifice of thanks,⁴
to strive with a free conscience against sin and the devil
in this life,⁵
and afterward to reign with Christ
over all creation
for eternity.⁶

¹ 1 Cor. 12:12–27

² Acts 2:17 (Joel 2:28); 1 John 2:27

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

⁴ Rom. 12:1; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9

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

⁶ Matt. 25:34; 2 Tim. 2:12

LORD’S DAY 13

**33 Q. Why is he called God’s “only begotten Son”
when we also are God’s children?**

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

¹ John 1:1–3, 14, 18; Heb. 1

² John 1:12; Rom. 8:14–17; Eph. 1:5–6

34 Q. Why do you call him “our Lord”?

- A.** Because—
not with gold or silver,
but with his precious blood¹—
he has delivered and purchased us
body and soul
from sin and from the tyranny of the devil,²
to be his very own.³

¹ 1 Pet. 1:18–19

² Col. 1:13–14; Heb. 2:14–15

³ 1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Tim. 2:5–6

LORD'S DAY 14

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

A. That the eternal Son of God,
who is and remains
true and eternal God,¹
took to himself,
through the working of the Holy Spirit,²
from the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary,³
a true human nature
so that he might also become David's true descendant,⁴
like his brothers in all things⁵
except for sin.⁶

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

² Luke 1:35

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

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

⁵ Phil. 2:7; Heb. 2:17

⁶ Heb. 4:15; 7:26–27

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

A. He is our mediator¹
and, in God's sight,
he covers with his innocence and perfect holiness
my sin, in which I was conceived.²

¹ 1 Tim. 2:5–6; Heb. 9:13–15

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

LORD'S DAY 15

**37 Q. What do you understand
by the word “suffered”?**

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

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

¹ Isa. 53; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18

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

³ Rom. 8:1–4; Gal. 3:13

⁴ John 3:16; Rom. 3:24–26

**38 Q. Why did he suffer
“under Pontius Pilate” as judge?**

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

¹ Luke 23:13–24; John 19:4, 12–16

² Isa. 53:4–5; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13

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

- A.** Yes.
By this death I am convinced
that he shouldered the curse
which lay on me,

since death by crucifixion was cursed by God.¹

¹ Gal. 3:10–13 (Deut. 21:23)

LORD'S DAY 16

40 Q. Why did Christ have to suffer death?

A. Because God's justice and truth require it: ¹
nothing else could pay for our sins
except the death of the Son of God.²

¹ Gen. 2:17

² Rom. 8:3–4; Phil. 2:8; Heb. 2:9

41 Q. Why was he “buried”?

A. His burial testifies
that he really died.¹

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

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

A. Our death is not a payment for our sins,¹
but only a dying to sins
and an entering into eternal life.²

¹ Ps. 49:7

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

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

A. By his power
our old man is crucified, put to death, and buried with him,¹
so that the evil desires of the flesh
may no longer rule us,²
but that instead we may offer ourselves
as a sacrifice of thanksgiving to him.³

¹ Rom. 6:5–11; Col. 2:11–12

² Rom. 6:12–14

³ Rom. 12:1; Eph. 5:1–2

**44 Q. Why does the creed add,
“He descended into hell”?**

- A.** To assure me during attacks of deepest dread and temptation that Christ my Lord,
by suffering unspeakable anguish, pain, and terror of soul,
on the cross but also earlier,
has delivered me from hellish anguish and torment.¹

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

LORD’S DAY 17

**45 Q. How does Christ’s resurrection
benefit us?**

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

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

Third, Christ’s resurrection
is a sure pledge to us of our blessed resurrection.³

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

² Rom. 6:5–11; Eph. 2:4–6; Col. 3:1–4

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

LORD’S DAY 18

**46 Q. What do you mean by saying,
“He ascended to heaven”?**

- A.** That Christ,
while his disciples watched,
was taken up from the earth into heaven¹
and remains there on our behalf²
until he comes again
to judge the living and the dead.³

¹ Luke 24:50–51; Acts 1:9–11

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

³ Acts 1:11

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

A. Christ is true man and true God.

In his human nature Christ is not now on earth;²
but in his divinity, majesty, grace, and Spirit
he is never absent from us.³

¹ Matt. 28:20

² Acts 1:9–11; 3:19–21

³ Matt. 28:18–20; John 14:16–19

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

A. Certainly not.

Since divinity
is not limited
and is present everywhere,¹

it is evident that

Christ's divinity is surely beyond the bounds of
the humanity that has been taken on,
but at the same time his divinity is in
and remains personally united to
his humanity.²

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

² John 1:14; 3:13; Col. 2:9

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

A. First, he is our advocate
in heaven
in the presence of his Father.¹

Second, we have our own flesh in heaven
as a sure pledge that Christ our head
will also take us, his members,
up to himself.²

Third, he sends his Spirit to us on earth
as a corresponding pledge.³
By the Spirit's power
we seek not earthly things
but the things above, where Christ is,
sitting at God's right hand.⁴

¹ Rom. 8:34; 1 John 2:1

² John 14:2; 17:24; Eph. 2:4–6

³ John 14:16; 2 Cor. 1:21–22; 5:5

⁴ Col. 3:1–4

LORD'S DAY 19

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

A. Christ ascended to heaven,
there to show that he is head of his church,¹
the one through whom the Father governs all things.²

¹ Eph. 1:20–23; Col. 1:18

² Matt. 28:18; John 5:22–23

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

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

Second, by his power

he defends us and preserves us
from all enemies.²

¹ Acts 2:33; Eph. 4:7–12

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

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

- A.** In all distress and persecution,
with uplifted head,
I confidently await the very judge
who has already offered himself to the judgment of God
in my place and removed the whole curse from me.¹
Christ will cast all his enemies and mine
into everlasting condemnation,
but will take me and all his chosen ones
to himself
into the joy and glory of heaven.²

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

² Matt. 25:31–46; 2 Thess. 1:6–10

LORD’S DAY 20

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

- A.** First, that the Spirit, with the Father and the Son,
is eternal God.¹
- Second, that he is given also to me,²
so that, through true faith,
he makes me share in Christ and all his benefits,³
comforts me,⁴
and will remain with me forever.⁵

¹ Gen. 1:1–2; Matt. 28:19; Acts 5:3–4

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

³ Gal. 3:14

⁴ John 15:26; Acts 9:31

⁵ John 14:16–17; 1 Pet. 4:14

LORD'S DAY 21

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

A. I believe that the Son of God
through his Spirit and Word,¹
out of the entire human race,²
from the beginning of the world to its end,³
gathers, protects, and preserves for himself
a community chosen for eternal life⁴
and united in true faith.⁵
And of this community I am⁶ and always will be⁷
a living member.

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

² Gen. 26:3b–4; Rev. 5:9

³ Isa. 59:21; 1 Cor. 11:26

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

⁵ Acts 2:42–47; Eph. 4:1–6

⁶ 1 John 3:14, 19–21

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

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

A. First, that believers one and all,
as members of Christ the Lord,
have communion with him
and share in all his treasures and gifts.¹

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

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

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

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

A. I believe that God,
because of Christ’s satisfaction,
will no longer remember
any of my sins¹
or my sinful nature
which I need to struggle against all my life.²

Rather, by his grace
God grants me the righteousness of Christ
that I may never come into judgment.³

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

² Rom. 7:21–25

³ John 3:17–18; Rom. 8:1–2

LORD’S DAY 22

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

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

¹ Luke 23:43; Phil. 1:21–23

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

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

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

¹ Rom. 14:17

² John 17:3; 1 Cor. 2:9

LORD’S DAY 23

59 Q. But how does it help you now that you believe all this?

A. That I am righteous in Christ before God
and an heir to life everlasting.¹

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

60 Q. How are you righteous before God?

A. Only by true faith in Jesus Christ.¹

Even though my conscience accuses me
of having grievously sinned against all God’s commandments,
of never having kept any of them,²
and of still being inclined toward all evil,³

nevertheless,

without any merit of my own,⁴
out of sheer grace,⁵

God grants and credits to me

the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ,⁶

as if I had never sinned nor been a sinner,

and as if I had been as perfectly obedient

as Christ was obedient for me.⁷

—if only I accept this gift with a believing heart.⁸

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

² Rom. 3:9–10

³ Rom. 7:23

⁴ Titus 3:4–5

⁵ Rom. 3:24; Eph. 2:8

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

⁷ Rom. 4:24–25; 2 Cor. 5:21

⁸ John 3:18; Acts 16:30–31

**61 Q. Why do you say that
through faith alone
you are righteous?**

- A.** Not because I please God
by the worthiness of my faith,
for only Christ's satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness
are my righteousness before God,¹
and I can receive this righteousness and make it mine
in no other way
than by faith alone.²

¹ 1 Cor. 1:30–31

² Rom. 10:10; 1 John 5:10–12

LORD'S DAY 24

**62 Q. Why can't our good works
be our righteousness before God,
or at least a part of our righteousness?**

- A.** Because the righteousness
which can pass God's judgment
must be entirely perfect
and must in every way measure up to the divine law.¹
But even our best works in this life
are all imperfect
and stained with sin.²

¹ Rom. 3:20; Gal. 3:10 (Deut. 27:26)

² Isa. 64:6

**63 Q. How can our good works
be said to merit nothing
when God promises to reward them
in this life and the next?¹**

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

¹ Matt. 5:12; Heb. 11:6

² Luke 17:10; 2 Tim. 4:7–8

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

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

¹ Luke 6:43–45; John 15:5

LORD'S DAY 25

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

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

¹ John 3:5; 1 Cor. 2:10–14; Eph. 2:8

² Rom. 10:17; 1 Pet. 1:23–25

³ Matt. 28:19–20; 1 Cor. 10:16

66 Q. What are sacraments?

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

And this is God's gospel promise:
he grants us forgiveness of sins and eternal life
by grace
because of Christ's one sacrifice
accomplished on the cross.²

¹ Gen. 17:11; Deut. 30:6; Rom. 4:11

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

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

A. Yes indeed!
The Holy Spirit teaches us in the gospel
and confirms by the holy sacraments
that our entire salvation
rests on Christ's one sacrifice for us on the cross.¹

¹ Rom. 6:3; 1 Cor. 11:26; Gal. 3:27

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

A. Two: holy baptism and the holy supper.¹

¹ Matt. 28:19–20; 1 Cor. 11:23–26

LORD'S DAY 26

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

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

¹ Acts 2:38

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

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

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

To be washed with Christ's Spirit means
that the Holy Spirit has renewed
and sanctified us to be members of Christ,
so that more and more
we die to sin
and live holy and blameless lives.²

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

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

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

A. In the institution of baptism, where he says:

HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father
and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit.”¹

“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved;
but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”²

This promise is repeated when Scripture calls baptism
“the washing of regeneration”³ and
the washing away of sins.⁴

¹ Matt. 28:19

² Mark 16:16

³ Titus 3:5

⁴ Acts 22:16

LORD’S DAY 27

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

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

¹ Matt. 3:11; 1 Pet. 3:21; 1 John 1:7

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

A. God has good reason for these words.
To begin with, he wants to teach us that
the blood and Spirit of Christ take away our sins
just as water removes dirt from the body.¹

But more importantly,
he wants to assure us, by this divine pledge and sign,
that we are as truly washed of our sins spiritually
as our bodies are washed with water physically.²

¹ 1 Cor. 6:11; Rev. 1:5; 7:14

² Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3–4; Gal. 3:27

74 Q. Should infants also be baptized?

A. Yes.

Infants as well as adults
are included in God's covenant and people,¹
and they, no less than adults, are promised
deliverance from sin through Christ's blood
and the Holy Spirit who works faith.²

Therefore, by baptism, the sign of the covenant,
they too should be incorporated into the Christian church
and distinguished from the children of unbelievers.³

This was done in the Old Testament by circumcision,⁴
which was replaced in the New Testament by baptism.⁵

¹ Gen. 17:7; Matt. 19:14

² Isa. 44:1–3; Acts 2:38–39; 16:31

³ Acts 10:47; 1 Cor. 7:14

⁴ Gen. 17:9–14

⁵ Col. 2:11–13

LORD'S DAY 28

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

A. In this way:

Christ has commanded me and all believers
to eat this broken bread and to drink this cup
in remembrance of him.

With this command come these promises:¹

First,

as surely as I see with my eyes
the bread of the Lord broken for me
and the cup shared with me,

so surely
his body was offered and broken for me
and his blood poured out for me
on the cross.

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

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

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

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

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

¹ John 6:35, 40, 50–54

² John 6:55–56; 1 Cor. 12:13

³ Acts 1:9–11; 1 Cor. 11:26; Col. 3:1

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

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

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

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

“The Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed
took bread, and when he had given thanks,
he broke it, and said,

‘Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.’

In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying,

‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood.
Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me.’

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup,
you proclaim the Lord's death
until he comes.”¹

This promise is repeated by Paul in these words:

“The cup of blessing 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?
Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body,
for we all partake of the one bread.”²

¹ 1 Cor. 11:23-26

² 1 Cor. 10:16-17

LORD'S DAY 29

**78 Q. Do the bread and wine become
the real body and blood of Christ?**

A. No.

Just as the water of baptism
is not changed into Christ's blood

and does not itself wash away sins
but is simply a divine sign and assurance¹ of these things,
so too the holy bread of the Lord's Supper
does not become the body of Christ itself,²
even though it is called the body of Christ³
in keeping with the nature and language of sacraments.⁴

¹ Eph. 5:26; Titus 3:5

² Matt. 26:26–29

³ 1 Cor. 10:16–17; 11:26–28

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

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

A. Christ has good reason for these words.

He wants to teach us that

just as bread and wine nourish the temporal life,
so too his crucified body and poured-out blood
are the true food and drink of our souls for eternal life.¹

But more important,

he wants to assure us, by this visible sign and pledge,

that we, through the Holy Spirit's work,
share in his true body and blood
as surely as our mouths
receive these holy signs in his remembrance,²
and that all of his suffering and obedience
are as definitely ours
as if we personally
had suffered and made satisfaction for our sins.³

¹ John 6:51, 55

² 1 Cor. 10:16–17; 11:26

³ Rom. 6:5–11

LORD'S DAY 30

80 Q. How does the Lord's Supper differ from the Roman Catholic Mass?

A. The Lord's Supper declares to us
that all our sins are completely forgiven
through the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ,
which he himself accomplished on the cross once for all.¹

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

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

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

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

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

² 1 Cor. 6:17; 10:16–17

³ Acts 7:55–56; Heb. 1:3; 8:1

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

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

A. Those who are displeased with themselves
because of their sins,
but who nevertheless trust
that their sins are pardoned

and that their remaining weakness is covered
by the suffering and death of Christ,
and who also desire more and more
to strengthen their faith
and to lead a better life.

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

¹ 1 Cor. 10:19–22; 11:26–32

**82 Q. Should those be admitted
to the Lord's Supper
who show by what they profess and how they live
that they are unbelieving and ungodly?**

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

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

LORD'S DAY 31

83 Q. What are the keys of the kingdom?

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

¹ Matt. 16:19; John 20:22–23

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

A. According to the command of Christ:

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

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

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

¹ Matt. 16:19; John 3:31–36; 20:21–23

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

A. According to the command of Christ:

Those who, though called Christians,
profess unchristian teachings
or live unchristian lives,
and who, after repeated personal and loving admonitions,
refuse to abandon their errors and evil ways,
and who, after being reported to the church,
that is, to those ordained by the church for that purpose,
fail to respond also to the church's admonitions—
such persons the church excludes
from the Christian community
by withholding the sacraments from them,
and God also excludes them
from the kingdom of Christ.¹

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

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

² Luke 15:20–24; 2 Cor. 2:6–11

PART III: GRATITUDE

LORD'S DAY 32

**86 Q. Since we have been delivered
from our misery
by grace through Christ
without any merit of our own,
why then should we do good works?**

A. Because Christ, having redeemed us by his blood,
is also renewing us by his Spirit into his image,
so that with our whole lives
we may show that we are thankful to God
for his benefits,¹
and that he may be praised through us,²
and further,
so that we may be assured of our faith by its fruits,³
and by our godly living
our neighbors may be won over to Christ.⁴

¹ Rom. 6:13; 12:1–2; 1 Pet. 2:5–10

² Matt. 5:16; 1 Cor. 6:19–20

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

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

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

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

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

LORD'S DAY 33

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- A.** Wholehearted joy in God through Christ¹
and a love and delight to live
according to the will of God
by doing every kind of good work.²

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

² Rom. 6:10–11; Gal. 2:20

91 Q. But what are good works?

- A.** Only those which
are done out of true faith,¹
conform to God's law,²
and are done for his glory;³
and not those based
on our own opinion
or human tradition.⁴

¹ John 15:5; Heb. 11:6

² Lev. 18:4; 1 Sam. 15:22; Eph. 2:10

³ 1 Cor. 10:31

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

LORD'S DAY 34

92 Q. What is God's law?

A. God spoke all these words:

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

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

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

You shall not make for yourself an idol,
whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above,
or that is on the earth beneath,
or that is in the water under the earth.
You shall not bow down to them or worship them;
for I the Lord your God am a jealous God,
punishing children for the iniquity of parents,
to the third and fourth generation
of those who reject me,
but showing love to the thousandth generation of those
who love me and keep my commandments.

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God,
for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

Remember the Sabbath day and 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;
you shall not do any work—
you, your son or your daughter,
your male or female servant,
your livestock,
or the alien resident in your towns.

HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

For in six days the Lord made
the heaven and earth, the sea,
and all that is in them,
but rested the seventh day;
therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day
and consecrated it.

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

Honor your father and your mother,
so that your days may be long
in the land that the Lord your God is giving to you.

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not murder.

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not commit adultery.

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not steal.

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not bear false witness
against your neighbor.

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not covet your neighbor's house;
you shall not covet your neighbor's wife,
or male or female servant,
or ox, or donkey,
or anything that belongs to your neighbor.¹

¹ Ex. 20:1–17; Deut. 5:6–21

93 Q. How are these commandments divided?

A. Into two tables.

The first has four commandments,
teaching us how we should live in relation to God.

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

¹ Matt. 22:37–39

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

A. That I, not wanting to endanger my own salvation,
avoid and shun

all idolatry,¹ sorcery,² superstitious rites,
and prayer to saints or to other creatures.³

That I rightly know the only true God,⁴
trust him alone,⁵

and look to God for every good thing⁶
humbly⁷ and patiently,⁸
and love,⁹ fear,¹⁰ and honor¹¹ him
with all my heart.

In short,

that I renounce all created things
rather than go against God's will in any way.¹²

¹ 1 Cor. 6:9–10; 10:5–14; 1 John 5:21

² Lev. 19:31; Deut. 18:9–12

³ Matt. 4:10; Rev. 19:10; 22:8–9

⁴ John 17:3

⁵ Jer. 17:5, 7

⁶ Ps. 104:27–28; James 1:17

⁷ 1 Pet. 5:5–6

⁸ Col. 1:11; Heb. 10:36

⁹ Matt. 22:37 (Deut. 6:5)

¹⁰ Prov. 9:10; 1 Pet. 1:17

¹¹ Matt. 4:10 (Deut. 6:13)

¹² Matt. 5:29–30; 10:37–39

95 Q. What is idolatry?

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

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

LORD'S DAY 35

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

- A.** That we in no way make any image of God¹
nor worship him in any other way
than has been commanded in God's Word.²

¹ Deut. 4:15–19; Isa. 40:18–25; Acts 17:29; Rom. 1:22–23

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

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

- A.** God cannot and may not
be visibly portrayed in any way.

Although creatures may be portrayed,
yet God forbids making or having such images
in order to worship them
or serve God through them.¹

¹ Ex. 34:13–14, 17; 2 Kings 18:4–5

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

- A.** No, we should not try to be wiser than God.
He wants the Christian community instructed
by the living preaching of his Word¹—
not by idols that cannot even talk.²

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

² Jer. 10:8; Hab. 2:18–20

LORD'S DAY 36

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

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

In summary,
we must use the holy name of God
only with reverence and awe,⁵
so that we may properly
confess him,⁶
call upon him,⁷
and praise him in everything we do and say.⁸

¹ Lev. 24:10–17

² Lev. 19:12

³ Matt. 5:37; James 5:12

⁴ Lev. 5:1; Prov. 29:24

⁵ Ps. 99:1–5; Jer. 4:2

⁶ Matt. 10:32–33; Rom. 10:9–10

⁷ Ps. 50:14–15; 1 Tim. 2:8

⁸ Col. 3:17

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

- A.** Yes, indeed.¹
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.²

¹ Lev. 5:1

² Lev. 24:10–17

LORD'S DAY 37

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

A. Yes, when the government demands it, or when necessity requires it, in order to maintain and promote truth and trustworthiness for God's glory and our neighbor's good. Such oath-taking is grounded in God's Word¹ and was rightly used by the saints in the Old and New Testaments.²

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

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

102 Q. May we 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.¹ No created thing is worthy of such honor.²

¹ Rom. 9:1; 2 Cor. 1:23

² Matt. 5:34–37; 23:16–22; James 5:12

LORD'S DAY 38

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁴ 1 Cor. 11:23–25

⁵ Col. 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:1

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

⁷ Isa. 66:23; Heb. 4:9–11

LORD'S DAY 39

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

A. That I 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;¹

and also that I be patient with their failings²—
for by their hand God wills to rule us.³

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

² Prov. 20:20; 23:22; 1 Pet. 2:18

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

LORD'S DAY 40

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

- A. I am not to belittle, 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;¹
rather, I am to put away all desire for revenge.²

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

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

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

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

³ Matt. 4:7; 26:52; Rom. 13:11–14

⁴ Gen. 9:6; Ex. 21:14; Rom. 13:4

106 Q. Does this commandment refer only to murder?

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

In God's sight all such are disguised forms of murder.²

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

² 1 John 3:15

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

A. No.

By condemning envy, hatred, and anger
God wants us

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

¹ Matt. 7:12; 22:39; Rom. 12:10

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

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

LORD'S DAY 41

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

A. That God condemns all unchastity,¹
and that we should therefore detest it wholeheartedly²
and live decent and chaste lives,³
within or outside of the holy state of marriage.

¹ Lev. 18:30; Eph. 5:3–5

² Jude 22–23

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

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

A. We are temples of the Holy Spirit, body and soul,
and God wants both to be kept clean and holy.
That is why God forbids
all unchaste actions, looks, talk, thoughts, or desires,¹
and whatever may incite someone to them.²

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

² 1 Cor. 15:33; Eph. 5:18

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,¹
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,²
such as
inaccurate measurements of weight, size, or volume;
fraudulent merchandising;
counterfeit money;
excessive interest;
or any other means forbidden by God.³

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

¹ Ex. 22:1; 1 Cor. 5:9–10; 6:9–10

² Mic. 6:9–11; Luke 3:14; James 5:1–6

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

⁴ Luke 12:15; Eph. 5:5

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

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

- A.** That I do whatever I can 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.¹

¹ Isa. 58:5–10; Matt. 7:12; Gal. 6:9–10; Eph. 4:28

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.¹

Rather, I should avoid, under penalty of God's wrath,²
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.³
And I should do what I can
to defend and advance my neighbor's honor and reputation.⁴

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

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

³ 1 Cor. 13:6; Eph. 4:25

⁴ 1 Pet. 3:8–9; 4:8

LORD'S DAY 44

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

A. That not even the slightest 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.¹

¹ Ps. 19:7–14; 139:23–24; Rom. 7:7–8

**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.¹

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

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

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

**115 Q. 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.¹

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.²

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

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

LORD'S DAY 45

116 Q. Why do Christians need to pray?

- A.** Because prayer is the most important part
of the thankfulness God requires of us.¹
And also because God 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.²

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

² Matt. 7:7–8; Luke 11:9–13

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

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

Second, we must fully recognize our need and misery,
so that we humble ourselves in God's majestic presence.²

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹ James 1:17; Matt. 6:33

119 Q. What is this prayer?

A. Our Father who 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.¹

¹ Matt. 6:9–13; Luke 11:2–4

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.¹

¹ Matt. 7:9–11; Luke 11:11–13

**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,¹
and to expect from his almighty power
everything needed for body and soul.²

¹ Jer. 23:23–24; Acts 17:24–25

² Matt. 6:25–34; Rom. 8:31–32

LORD’S DAY 47

122 Q. What does the first petition mean?

A. “Hallowed be your name” means:
Help us to truly know you,¹
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.²

And it means,

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

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

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

³ Ps. 115:1; Matt. 5:16

LORD'S DAY 48

123 Q. What does the second 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.¹

Preserve and increase your church.²

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

Do all this until your kingdom fully comes,
when you will be
all in all.⁴

¹ Ps. 119:5, 105; 143:10; Matt. 6:33

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

³ Rom. 16:20; 1 John 3:8

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

LORD'S DAY 49

124 Q. What does the third 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.¹

Help everyone carry out his office and calling,²
as willingly and faithfully as the angels in heaven.³

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

² 1 Cor. 7:17–24; Eph. 6:5–9

³ Ps. 103:20–21

LORD'S DAY 50

125 Q. What does the fourth petition mean?

A. “Give us this day our daily bread” means:

Provide for all our physical needs¹
so that we may recognize
that you are the only source of everything good,²
and that neither our care and work
nor your gifts
can do us any good without your blessing.³

Therefore may we withdraw our trust from all creatures
and place it in you alone.⁴

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

² Acts 14:17; 17:25; James 1:17

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

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

LORD'S DAY 51

126 Q. What does the fifth 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.¹

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

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

² Matt. 6:14–15; 18:21–35

LORD'S DAY 52

127 Q. What does the sixth 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,¹
and our sworn enemies—
the devil,² the world,³ and our own flesh ⁴—
never stop attacking us.

And so, Lord,
uphold us and make us strong
by the power of your Holy Spirit,
so that we may not be defeated
in this spiritual fight,⁵
but may firmly resist our enemies
until we finally win the complete victory.⁶

¹ Ps. 103:14–16; John 15:1–5

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

³ John 15:18–21

⁴ Rom. 7:23; Gal. 5:17

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

⁶ 1 Cor. 10:13; 1 Thess. 3:13; 5:23

128 Q. 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;¹
and because your holy name,
and not we ourselves,
should receive all the praise, forever.²

¹ Rom. 10:11–13; 2 Pet. 2:9

² Ps. 115:1; John 14:13

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

A. “Amen” means:

This 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.¹

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