

1.What is the primary and highest purpose of human beings?

The primary and highest purpose of human beings is to glorify God¹ and to enjoy him completely forever.²

2.What evidence is there for God?

Our internal, natural understanding along with the external evidence of God's works plainly indicates that there is a God.³ However, salvation only comes through God's revelation of himself in his word and Spirit.⁴

3.What is the word of God?

The holy Bible, made up of the Old and New Testaments, is the word of God.⁵ It is the only authority for faith and obedience.⁶

4.What evidence is there that the Bible is the word of God?

The Bible clearly shows that it is the word of God by its majesty⁷ and purity,⁸ by the agreement of all its parts,⁹ by its unified aim to give all glory to God,¹⁰ and by its illuminating power to convince and convert sinners and to comfort and built up believers unto salvation.¹¹ However, only the Spirit of God, testifying by and with the Bible in our hearts, can completely persuade us that it is truly the word of God.¹²

5.What does the Bible primarily teach?

The Bible primarily teaches what we must believe about God¹³ and what God requires of us.¹⁴

[WHAT HUMAN BEINGS OUGHT TO BELIEVE ABOUT GOD]

6.What does the Bible make known about God?

The Bible makes known what God is,¹⁵ the persons in the Godhead,¹ his decrees,² and how his decrees are carried out.³

¹ Romans 11:36; 1 Corinthians 6:20; 10:31; Psalm 86:9, 12.

² Psalm 73:24-28; John 17:21-23; Psalm 16:5-11; 144:15; Isaiah 12:2; Luke 2:10; Philippians 4:4; Revelation 21:3-4.

³ Romans 1:19-20; Acts 17:28; Psalm 19:1-3.

⁴ 1 Corinthians 2:9-10; 1:20-21; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Isaiah 59:21.

⁵ 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19-21; 3:2, 15-16; Matthew 19:4-5..with Genesis 2:24.

⁶ Deuteronomy 4:2; Ephesians 2:20; Revelation 22:18-19; Isaiah 8:20; Luke 16:29, 31; Galatians 1:8-9; 2 Timothy 3:15-16.

⁷ Hosea 8:12; 1 Corinthians 2:6-7, 13; Psalm 119:18, 129.

⁸ Psalm 12:6; 119:140.

⁹ Luke 24:27; Acts 10:43; 26:22.

¹⁰ Romans 3:19, 27; 16:25-27; See 2 Corinthians 3:6-11.

¹¹ Acts 18:28; Hebrews 4:12; James 1:18; Psalm 119:7-9; Romans 15:4; Acts 20:32.

¹² John 16:13-14; See 1 John 2:20, 27; John 20:31.

¹³ Genesis 1:1; Exodus 34:5-7; Psalm 48:1; John 20:31; See 2 Timothy 3:15.

¹⁴ Deuteronomy 10:12-13; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Acts 16:30-31.

¹⁵ John 4:24; Exodus 34:6-7; Isaiah 40:18, 21-23, 25, 28; Hebrews 11:6.

7. What is God?

God is a spirit,⁴ who in and of himself is infinite in being,⁵ glory,⁶ blessedness,⁷ and perfection.⁸ He is all-sufficient,⁹ eternal,¹⁰ unchangeable,¹¹ beyond our full understanding,¹² present everywhere,¹³ almighty,¹⁴ knowing everything,¹⁵ completely wise,¹⁶ completely holy,¹⁷ completely just,¹⁸ completely merciful and gracious, patient, and overflowing with goodness and truth.¹⁹

8. Is there more than one God?

There is only one,²⁰ the living and true God.²¹

9. How many persons are in the one true God?

Three persons are in the one God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.²² Although they are differentiated by their own individual, personal qualities, these three are one true, eternal God, the same in substance and equal in power and glory.²³

10. What are the individual, qualities that belong to the three persons of the Godhead?

From all eternity, the Father begets the Son,²⁴ the Son is begotten by the Father,²⁵ and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.²⁶

¹ Matthew 3:16-17; Deuteronomy 6:4-6; Compared with 1 Corinthians 8:4, 6; See Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Corinthians 13:14.

² Acts 15:14-15, 18; Isaiah 46:9-10.

³ Acts 4:27-28.

⁴ John 4:24.

⁵ Exodus 3:14; Job 11:7-9; Psalm 145:3; 147:5.

⁶ Acts 7:2.

⁷ 1 Timothy 6:15.

⁸ Matthew 5:48.

⁹ Exodus 3:14; Genesis 17:1; Romans 11:35-36.

¹⁰ Psalm 90:2; Deuteronomy 33:27.

¹¹ Malachi 3:6.

¹² 1 Kings 8:27; Psalm 145:3; See Romans 11:34.

¹³ Psalm 139:1-13.

¹⁴ Revelation 4:8; Genesis 17:1; Matthew 19:26.

¹⁵ Hebrews 4:13; See Psalm 147:5.

¹⁶ Romans 11:33-34; 16:27.

¹⁷ 1 Peter 1:15-16; Revelation 15:4; Isaiah 6:3.

¹⁸ Deuteronomy 32:4; Romans 3:5, 26.

¹⁹ Exodus 34:6; Psalm 117:2; Deuteronomy 32:4.

²⁰ Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Corinthians 8:4, 6; Isaiah 45:21-22; 44:6.

²¹ Jeremiah 10:10; John 17:3; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; 1 John 5:20.

²² Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14.

²³ John 1:1; See also Genesis 1:1-3; John 17:5; John 10:30; Psalm 45:6; See also Hebrews 1:8-9; Acts 5:3-4; Romans 9:5; Colossians 2:9.

²⁴ Hebrews 1:5-6, 8.

²⁵ John 1:14, 18.

²⁶ John 15:26; Galatians 4:6.

11. What is the evidence that the Son and the Holy Spirit are equal with the Father?

The Bible clearly indicates that the Son and the Holy Spirit are God, equal to the Father, because it assigns to them the same names,¹ attributes,² works,³ and worship⁴ that properly apply only to God.

12. What are the decrees of God?

God's decrees are the wise, free, and holy decisions from the purposes of his will.⁵ By them, from all eternity and for his own glory, glory, he has unchangeably foreordained everything that happens in time,⁶ and particularly those things that involve angels and human beings.

13. What in particular has God decreed about angels and human beings?

By an eternal and unchangeable decree, which originates merely from his love, exists for the praise of his glorious grace, and is to be revealed at the proper time, God has elected some angels for glory⁷ and in Christ has chosen some human beings for eternal life, along with the means by which this choice will be accomplished.⁸ Additionally, in accordance with his sovereign power and the hidden purposes of his own will (by which, as he pleases, he extends or withholds favor), God decided not to include the rest and to foreordain them to be inflicted with dishonor and anger for their sin, to the praise of the glory of his justice.⁹

14. How does God carry out his decrees?

God carries out his decrees in creation and providence,¹⁰ according to his infallible foreknowledge and the free and unchangeable purposes of his own will.¹¹

15. What is creation?

Creation is this: in the beginning, for himself, and out of nothing, God made the world and everything in it in six days by the word of his power—and all very good.¹

¹ Isaiah 6:3, 5, 8; John 12:41; Acts 28:25; 1 John 5:20; Acts 5:3-4.

² John 1:1; Isaiah 9:6; John 2:24-25; 1 Corinthians 2:10-11.

³ Colossians 1:16; Genesis 1:2.

⁴ Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14.

⁵ Isaiah 45:6-7; Ephesians 1:11; Romans 11:33; 9:14-15, 18.

⁶ Psalm 33:11; Isaiah 14:24; Acts 2:23; 4:27-28; Romans 9:22-23; Ephesians 1:4, 11.

⁷ 1 Timothy 5:21.

⁸ Ephesians 1:4-6; 2:10; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 1 Peter 1:2.

⁹ Romans 9:17-18, 21-22; Matthew 11:25-26; 2 Timothy 2:20; Jude 4; 1 Peter 2:8.

¹⁰ Revelation 4:11; see Isaiah 40:12-31.

¹¹ Ephesians 1:11; Psalm 148:8; Daniel 4:35; Acts 4:24-28.

16. How did God create angels?

God created all the angels² as immortal³ spirits,⁴ holy,⁵ with superior knowledge⁶ and mighty power,⁷ to carry out his commands and praise his name;⁸ but they could also change.⁹

17. How did God create human beings?

After he had made all the other creatures, God created humans, male and female.¹⁰ He formed the body of man from the dust of the ground¹¹ and the woman from the rib of the man.¹² He endowed them with living, reasoning, and immortal souls,¹³ made in his own image¹⁴ with knowledge,¹⁵ righteousness, and holiness.¹⁶ God wrote his law on their hearts¹⁷ and gave them the ability to obey it.¹⁸ Along with dominion over the other creatures,¹⁹ they also had the potential to fall.²⁰

18. What is God's providence?

God's providence is his completely holy,²¹ wise,²² and powerful preserving²³ and governing²⁴ every creature and every action,²⁵ ordering them all to his own glory.²⁶

19. What is God's providence relating to angels?

God providentially allowed some of the angels to fall into sin and damnation by their own choice and without any possibility of

¹ Genesis 1:1 (see entire chapter); Psalm 33:6,9; Hebrews 11:3; Revelation 4:11; see Romans 11:36.

² Colossians 1:16.

³ Matthew 22:30; Luke 20:36.

⁴ Psalm 104:4.

⁵ Matthew 25:31.

⁶ 2 Samuel 14:17; Matthew 24:36.

⁷ 2 Thessalonians 1:7.

⁸ Psalm 91:11-12; Psalm 103:20-21.

⁹ 2 Peter 2:4.

¹⁰ Genesis 1:27; Matthew 19:4.

¹¹ Genesis 2:7.

¹² Genesis 2:22.

¹³ Genesis 2:7; Job 35:11; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Matthew 10:28; Luke 23:43.

¹⁴ Genesis 1:26-27.

¹⁵ Colossians 3:10.

¹⁶ Ephesians 4:24.

¹⁷ Romans 2:14-15.

¹⁸ Ecclesiastes 7:29.

¹⁹ Genesis 1:28; Psalm 8:6-8.

²⁰ Genesis 2:16-17; Genesis 3:6; Ecclesiastes 7:29.

²¹ Psalm 145:17; Leviticus 21:8.

²² Psalm 104:24; Isaiah 28:29.

²³ Hebrews 1:3; Psalm 36:6; Nehemiah 9:6.

²⁴ Psalm 103:19; see Job 38-41 and Psalm 145:14-16.

²⁵ Matthew 10:29-31; Genesis 45:7; Psalm 135:6.

²⁶ Romans 11:36; Isaiah 63:14.

recovering their original position;¹ he limited and ordered their fall in all their specific sins for his own glory.² God established the rest of the angels in holiness and happiness,³ using them,⁴ according to his his pleasure, as administrative agents of his power, mercy, and justice.⁵

20. What was God's providence relating to the humans he created?

God providentially put Adam and Eve in Paradise and assigned them the job of taking care of it. He gave them permission to eat what grew,⁶ put them in authority over all the creatures,⁷ and established marriage as a help for Adam.⁸ God allowed them to have fellowship with him,⁹ instituted the Sabbath,¹⁰ and made a covenant of life with them on the condition of their personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience.¹¹ The tree of life was a sign guaranteeing this covenant.¹² Finally, God told them not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil or they would die.¹³

21. Did humans remain the way they were created?

Left to the freedom of their own wills, our first parents were tempted by Satan, disobeyed God's command by eating the forbidden fruit, and so fell from their original innocence.¹⁴

22. Did the whole human race fall in that first disobedience?

Since the covenant was made with Adam as a general representative of humanity, not only for himself but also for his natural descendants,¹⁵ the whole human race sinned in him and fell with him in that first disobedience.¹⁶

23. What happened to the human race in the fall?

Humans fell into a condition of sin and misery.¹⁷

¹ Jude 6; see 2 Peter 2:4 and Hebrews 2:16 and John 8:44.

² Job 1:12; Matthew 8:31; Luke 10:17.

³ 1 Timothy 5:21; Mark 8:38; Hebrews 12:22.

⁴ Psalm 103:20; 104:4.

⁵ Hebrews 1:14; see 2 Kings 19:35.

⁶ Genesis 2:8,15-16.

⁷ Genesis 1:28.

⁸ Genesis 2:18; see Matthew 19:3-9 and Ephesians 5:31.

⁹ Genesis 1:26-29; 3:8.

¹⁰ Genesis 2:3 compared with Exodus 20:11.

¹¹ Genesis 2:16-17; Galatians 3:12; Romans 10:5.

¹² Genesis 2:9; 3:22-24.

¹³ Genesis 2:17 compared with James 2:10.

¹⁴ Genesis 3:6-8,13; Ecclesiastes 7:29; 2 Corinthians 11:3.

¹⁵ Acts 17:26; Romans 3:23.

¹⁶ Genesis 2:16-17; James 2:10 compared with Romans 5:12-20; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22.

¹⁷ Genesis 3:16-19; Romans 5:12; Ephesians 2:1; Romans 3:16,23.

24. What is sin?

Sin is not conforming to or disobeying any law God has given to direct our lives as reasoning humans.¹

25. What is sinful about the fallen condition of humans?

The sinfulness of that fallen condition is twofold. First, in what is commonly called original sin, there is the guilt of Adam's first sin² with its lack of original righteousness and the corruption of his nature, by which humans are completely indisposed, incapacitated, and opposed to everything that is spiritually good as well as being completely and continually inclined to everything evil.³ Second are all the specific acts of disobedience that come from original sin.⁴

26. How is original sin passed from Adam and Eve to their descendants?

Original sin passes from Adam and Eve to their descendants by natural procreation, so that all subsequent human offspring are conceived and born in sin.⁵

27. What misery did the fall bring on the human race?

The fall brought on the human race the loss of fellowship with God⁶ along with his displeasure and curse.⁷ Consequently, we are children of wrath,⁸ bondslaves of Satan,⁹ and justly subject to every punishment in this world and the next.¹⁰

28. What are the punishments for sin in this world?

The punishments for sin in this world are either internal or external. Internal punishments include mental blindness,¹¹ a sense of being condemned,¹² powerful delusions,¹³ a stubborn heart,¹⁴ a terrified conscience,¹⁵ and shameful desires.¹⁶ External punishments include

¹ Leviticus 5:17; James 4:17; 1 John 3:4; see Galatians 3:10,12.

² Romans 5:12,19; see 1 Corinthians 15:22.

³ Romans 3:10-12,13-19; Ephesians 2:1-3; Romans 5:6; 8:7-8; Genesis 6:5; see Colossians 3:10 and Ephesians 4:24.

⁴ James 1:14-15; Psalm 53:1-3; Matthew 15:19; see Romans 3:10-18,23 and Galatians 5:19-21.

⁵ Psalm 51:5; Job 14:4; John 3:6.

⁶ Genesis 3:8,10,24; John 8:34,42,44; Ephesians 2:12.

⁷ Genesis 3:16-19; Job 5:7; Ecclesiastes 2:22-23; Romans 8:18-23.

⁸ Ephesians 2:2-3; John 3:36; Romans 1:18; Ephesians 5:6.

⁹ 2 Timothy 2:26.

¹⁰ Genesis 2:17; Lamentations 3:39; Romans 6:23; Matthew 25:41,46; Jude 7.

¹¹ Ephesians 4:18.

¹² Romans 1:28.

¹³ 2 Thessalonians 2:11.

¹⁴ Romans 2:5.

¹⁵ Isaiah 33:14; Genesis 4:13; Matthew 27:4.

¹⁶ Romans 1:26.

God's curse on the whole creation because of us¹ and all the other evils that happen to our bodies, our reputations, circumstances, relationships, and work,² including death itself.³

29. What are the punishments for sin in the next world?

The punishments for sin in the next world include everlasting separation from the comforting presence of God and the horrible torment of soul and body in hellfire without interruption forever.⁴

30. Does God leave the whole human race to die in sin and misery?

God does not leave the whole human race to die in the sin and misery⁵ that resulted from breaking the first covenant, ordinarily called the covenant of works.⁶ Merely from his love and mercy, God delivers his elect from sin and misery and brings them into salvation by means of the second covenant, ordinarily called the covenant of grace.⁷

31. With whom was the covenant of grace made?

The covenant of grace was made with Christ as the second Adam and through him with all the elect as his seed.⁸

32. How is God's grace revealed in the second covenant?

His grace is revealed in the second covenant by God freely providing and making available to sinners a Mediator⁹ and through him life and salvation.¹⁰ God uses faith as the only way for sinners to become united to him;¹¹ he promises and gives his Holy Spirit¹² to all his elect in order to bring about this faith in them¹³ along with all the other saving graces¹⁴ and in order to make it possible for them to be holy

¹ Genesis 3:17.

² Deuteronomy 28:15, 16-68.

³ Romans 6:21,23.

⁴ 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Mark 9:43-44,46,48; Luke 16:24,26; see Matthew 25:41,46 and Revelation 14:11 and John 3:36.

⁵ 1 Thessalonians 5:9.

⁶ Genesis 3:17; Romans 5:12,15; Galatians 3:10,12.

⁷ Titus 3:4-7; Galatians 3:21; Romans 3:20-22; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; see Acts 13:48 and Ephesians 1:4-5.

⁸ Galatians 3:16; Romans 5:15,16-21; Isaiah 53:10-11; 59:20-21.

⁹ Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 42:6; John 3:16; 6:27; 1 Timothy 2:5.

¹⁰ 1 John 5:11-12.

¹¹ John 3:16,36; 1:12.

¹² Isaiah 59:21; Luke 11:13; John 14:16-20; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Romans 8:9; see Romans 8:4,11,14-16.

¹³ 2 Corinthians 4:13; 1 Corinthians 12:3,9; Ephesians 2:8-10; Acts 16:14; 2 Peter 1:1.

¹⁴ Galatians 5:22-23.

and obedient,¹ as proof of the truth of their faith² and thankfulness to to God³ and as the way he has established for them to be saved.⁴

33. Was the covenant of grace always administered in one and the same way?

The covenant of grace was not always administered in the same way. It was administered differently under the Old Testament and the New Testament.⁵

34. How was the covenant of grace administered under the Old Testament?

The covenant of grace was administered under the Old Testament by promises,⁶ prophecies,⁷ sacrifices,⁸ circumcision,⁹ the Passover,¹⁰ and other types and ordinances. All of these foreshadowed the coming of Christ and were sufficient for that time to build up the faith of the elect in the promised Messiah,¹¹ by whom they had full remission of their sins and eternal salvation.¹²

35. How is the covenant of grace administered under the New Testament?

Under the New Testament, Christ is revealed as the substance of the same covenant of grace, which was and still is to be administered in the preaching of the Word¹³ and in the sacraments of baptism¹⁴ and the Lord's Supper.¹⁵ In these the spiritual power of grace and salvation is more fully and clearly developed for all nations.¹⁶

36. Who is the mediator of the covenant of grace?

The only mediator of the covenant of grace is the Lord Jesus Christ,¹⁷ who is the eternal Son of God, of one substance and equal with the Father.¹⁸ In the fullness of time he became human,¹ and so he was

¹ Ezekiel 36:27; Ephesians 2:10.

² James 2:18,22.

³ 2 Corinthians 5:14-15.

⁴ Ephesians 2:10; Titus 2:14.

⁵ 2 Corinthians 3:6-9; see Hebrews 8:7-13.

⁶ Romans 15:8; see for example Genesis 3:15; 12:1-3; 15:5.

⁷ Acts 3:20,24; see for example Isaiah 52:13-53:12.

⁸ Hebrews 10:1; see Leviticus 1-7.

⁹ Romans 4:11; see Genesis 17:1-14.

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 5:7; Exodus 12:14,17,24; see entire chapter Exodus 12.

¹¹ Hebrews 8:1-2; see Hebrews chapters 8-10. Hebrews 11:13.

¹² Galatians 3:7-9,14.

¹³ Luke 24:47-48; see Matthew 28:19-20.

¹⁴ Matthew 28:19-20.

¹⁵ Matthew 26:28; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25.

¹⁶ Romans 1:16; 2 Corinthians 3:6-9; Hebrews 8:6,10-11; Matthew 28:19; see Ephesians 3:1-12.

¹⁷ 1 Timothy 2:5; John 14:6; Acts 4:12.

¹⁸ John 1:1,14,18; 10:30; Philipians 2:6; Psalm 2:7; Matthew 3:17; 17:5.

and continues to be God and man, in two complete and distinct natures, but one person, forever.²

37. How did Christ, the Son of God, become human?

Christ the Son of God became human by taking a true body and a reasoning soul.³ He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary out of her substance and was born of her,⁴ but he was sinless.⁵

38. Why did the mediator have to be God?

The mediator had to be God so that he might sustain and keep his human nature from sinking under the infinite wrath of God and the power of death;⁶ that he might make his suffering, obedience, and intercession of real value and effect;⁷ and that, in order to satisfy God's justice,⁸ he might gain God's favor,⁹ purchase his very own people,¹⁰ give his Spirit to them,¹¹ conquer all their enemies,¹² and bring them to everlasting salvation.¹³

39. Why did the mediator have to be human?

The mediator had to be human so that he might improve human nature,¹⁴ obey the law,¹⁵ suffer and make intercession for us in our own nature,¹⁶ and know firsthand what human infirmities feel like;¹⁷ and so that we might be adopted as sons¹⁸ and have comfort and access with boldness to the throne of grace.¹⁹

40. Why did the mediator have to be God and human in one person?

¹ Galatians 4:4; Matthew 1:23; see John 1:14.

² Luke 1:35; Acts 1:11; Romans 9:5; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 7:24-25; 13:8; see Philippians 2:5-11.

³ John 1:14; Matthew 26:38; Philippians 2:7; Hebrews 2:14-17; see Luke 2:40,52; John 11:33.

⁴ Luke 1:27,31,35; Galatians 4:4.

⁵ Hebrews 4:15; 7:26; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 3:5.

⁶ Acts 2:24-25; Romans 1:4; 4:25; Hebrews 9:14.

⁷ Acts 20:28; Hebrews 9:14; 7:25-28; see John 17.

⁸ Romans 3:24-26.

⁹ Ephesians 1:6; Matthew 3:17.

¹⁰ Titus 2:13-14.

¹¹ Galatians 4:6; John 15:26; see John 16:7 and 14:26.

¹² Luke 1:68-69,71,74.

¹³ Hebrews 5:8-9; 9:11-15.

¹⁴ Hebrews 2:16; 2 Peter 1:4.

¹⁵ Galatians 4:4; Matthew 5:17; Romans 5:19; Philippians 2:8.

¹⁶ Hebrews 2:14; 7:24-25.

¹⁷ Hebrews 4:15.

¹⁸ Galatians 4:5.

¹⁹ Hebrews 4:16.

The mediator, who was to reconcile God and humanity, had to be himself both God and human and in one person to make the works appropriate to each nature acceptable to God on our behalf¹ and counted on by us as the works of the whole person.²

41. Why was our mediator called Jesus?

Our mediator was called Jesus because he saves his people from their sins.³

42. Why was our mediator called Christ?

Our mediator was called Christ, because he was anointed with the Holy Spirit beyond all measure.⁴ Consequently he was set apart and completely equipped with all authority and power⁵ to execute the offices of prophet,⁶ priest,⁷ and king of his church,⁸ in both his humiliation and his exaltation.

43. How is Christ a prophet?

As prophet, Christ reveals the complete will of God⁹ to his church¹⁰ about everything for the church's edification and salvation.¹¹ He does this throughout the ages in different ways¹² by means of his Spirit and Word.¹³

44. How is Christ a priest?

As priest, Christ offered himself once for all as a spotless sacrifice to God¹⁴ to reconcile the sins of his people,¹⁵ and he continually intercedes for them.¹⁶

45. How is Christ a king?

As king, Christ calls a people for himself out of the world¹⁷ and gives them officers,¹⁸ laws,¹⁹ and the authority to condemn, by which he

¹ Matthew 1:21,23; 3:17; Hebrews 9:14.

² 1 Peter 2:6.

³ Matthew 1:21.

⁴ Matthew 3:16 compared with Acts 10:37-38; John 3:34; Psalm 45:7.

⁵ John 6:27; Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 1:3-4.

⁶ Acts 3:21-22; Luke 4:18,21; Hebrews 1:1-2; Deuteronomy 18:18.

⁷ Hebrews 5:5-7; 4:14-15.

⁸ Psalm 2:6; Luke 1:32-34; John 18:37; Matthew 21:5; Isaiah 9:6-7; Philippians 2:8-11.

⁹ John 15:15.

¹⁰ John 1:18.

¹¹ Acts 20:32; Ephesians 4:11-13; John 20:31.

¹² Hebrews 1:1-2.

¹³ 1 Peter 1:10-12.

¹⁴ Hebrews 9:14,28; 10:12; see Isaiah 53.

¹⁵ Hebrews 2:17; 2 Corinthians 5:18; Colossians 1:21-22.

¹⁶ Hebrews 7:25; 9:24.

¹⁷ Acts 15:14-16; Genesis 49:10; Psalm 110:3; John 17:2.

¹⁸ Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Corinthians 12:28.

¹⁹ Isaiah 33:22.

visibly governs them.¹ He bestows saving grace on his elect,² rewards their obedience,³ corrects them for their sins,⁴ preserves and and supports them in all their temptations and suffering,⁵ restrains and overcomes all their enemies,⁶ and powerfully orders everything for his own glory⁷ and their well-being.⁸ As king, Christ also executes just retribution against all others who neither know God nor obey the gospel.⁹

46. How was Christ humiliated?

For our sakes, Christ emptied himself of his own glory and took on the form of a servant,¹⁰ and so was humiliated in all the poor circumstances involving his conception¹¹ and birth,¹² life on earth,¹³ death,¹⁴ and after his death¹⁵ until he was resurrected.¹⁶

47. How did Christ humble himself in his conception and birth?

Christ humbled himself in his conception and birth in that being from all eternity the Son of God in the bosom of the Father, it pleased him in the fullness of time to become the son of man, born of a woman from a poor family and into conditions that were even worse than ordinary.¹⁷

48. How did Christ humble himself in his life?

Christ humbled himself in his life by subjecting himself to the law,¹⁸ which he perfectly fulfilled,¹⁹ and by struggling with the indignities of this world,²⁰ the temptations of Satan,²¹ and the frailty of his body,

¹ Matthew 18:17-18; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5.

² Acts 5:31.

³ Revelation 22:12; 2:10.

⁴ Revelation 3:19.

⁵ Isaiah 63:9.

⁶ 1 Corinthians 15:25; Psalm 110:1-2.

⁷ Romans 14:10-11.

⁸ Romans 8:28.

⁹ 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9; Psalm 2:8-9.

¹⁰ Philippians 2:6-8.

¹¹ Luke 1:31.

¹² Luke 2:7.

¹³ Galatians 4:4; 2 Corinthians 8:9; Luke 9:58; Hebrews 2:18; Isaiah 53:3.

¹⁴ Psalm 22:1 compared with Matthew 27:46; Isaiah 53:10; 1 John 2:2; Philippians 2:8.

¹⁵ Matthew 12:40; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4.

¹⁶ Acts 2:24-27,31.

¹⁷ John 1:14,18; Galatians 4:4; Luke 2:7.

¹⁸ Galatians 4:4.

¹⁹ Matthew 5:17; Romans 5:19

²⁰ Psalm 22:6; Isaiah 53:2-3; Hebrews 12:2-3.

²¹ Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:13.

whether common to the natural human condition or particularly associated with his own poor situation.¹

49. How did Christ humble himself in his death?

Christ humbled himself in his death by being betrayed by Judas,² forsaken by his disciples,³ scorned and rejected by the world,⁴ condemned by Pilate, and tormented with physical persecution.⁵ He struggled with the terrors of death and the powers of darkness; he felt and bore the weight of God's anger.⁶ Finally, enduring the painful, shameful, and cursed death on the cross,⁷ he laid down his life as an offering for sin.⁸

50. How was Christ humiliated after his death?

Christ's humiliation after death involved his being buried⁹ and continuing in a state of being dead and under the power of death until the third day.¹⁰ This period is referred to in the words, *He descended into hell*.

51. How was Christ exalted?

Christ's exaltation includes his resurrection,¹¹ ascension,¹² sitting at the right hand of the Father,¹³ and coming again to judge the world.¹⁴

52. How was Christ exalted in his resurrection?

Christ's exaltation in his resurrection began with his body not decaying, since it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.¹⁵ On the third day, he rose from the dead by his own power¹⁶ and in the very same body with all its essential qualities in which he had suffered¹⁷ (but it was not subject to death and the other infirmities associated with this life), and it was truly united to his soul.¹⁸ By his resurrection, he plainly declared himself to be the Son of God,¹⁹ to

¹ Hebrews 2:17-18; Hebrews 4:15; Isaiah 52:13-14.

² Matthew 27:4.

³ Matthew 26:56.

⁴ Isaiah 53:2-3.

⁵ Matthew 27:26-50; John 19:34; see Luke 22:63-64.

⁶ Luke 22:44; Matthew 27:46.

⁷ Philippians 2:8; Hebrews 12:2; Galatians 3:13.

⁸ Isaiah 53:10; Matthew 20:28; see Mark 10:45.

⁹ 1 Corinthians 15:3-4.

¹⁰ Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:24-27,31; Romans 6:9; Matthew 12:40.

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 15:4.

¹² Psalm 68:18; Acts 1:11; Ephesians 4:8.

¹³ Ephesians 1:20; Psalm 110:1; Acts 2:33-34; Hebrews 1:3.

¹⁴ Acts 1:11; 17:31; see Matthew 16:27.

¹⁵ Acts 2:24,27.

¹⁶ John 10:18.

¹⁷ Luke 24:39.

¹⁸ Romans 6:9; Revelation 1:18.

¹⁹ Romans 1:4.

have satisfied divine justice,¹ to have conquered death as well as him who holds the power of death,² and to be Lord of the living and the dead.³ he did all this as a general representative of humanity⁴ and as head of his church⁵ in order to justify believers,⁶ make them alive in his grace,⁷ support them against their enemies,⁸ and assure them that they too will be resurrected from the dead at the last day.⁹

53. How was Christ exalted in His ascension?

Christ's exaltation in his ascension began after his resurrection when he appeared to the apostles a number of times, talked to them about the kingdom of God,¹⁰ and commissioned them to preach the gospel to all nations.¹¹ Forty days after his resurrection, in our human nature and as our head,¹² he visibly went up into the highest heavens, triumphing over enemies.¹³ There he receives gifts for men,¹⁴ raises our minds,¹⁵ and prepares a place for us,¹⁶ where he himself is and shall continue to be until his second coming at the end of the world.¹⁷

54. How is Christ exalted by sitting at the right hand of God?

Sitting at the right hand of God exalts Christ as the God-man; he is advanced to the highest favor with God the Father¹⁸ with all the joy,¹⁹ glory,²⁰ and power of this position over all things in heaven and earth.²¹ There Christ gathers and defends his church, subdues her enemies, provides his ministers and people with gifts and graces,²² and intercedes for them.²³

55. How does Christ intercede?

¹ Romans 8:34; 3:25-26; Hebrews 9:13-14.

² Hebrews 2:14.

³ Romans 14:9.

⁴ 1 Corinthians 15:21-22; Isaiah 53:10-11.

⁵ Ephesians 1:20-23; Colossians 1:18.

⁶ Romans 4:25.

⁷ Ephesians 2:1,5-6; Colossians 2:12.

⁸ 1 Corinthians 15:25-27; Psalm 2:7-9.

⁹ 1 Corinthians 15:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:14.

¹⁰ Acts 1:2-3.

¹¹ Matthew 28:19-20.

¹² John 20:17; Hebrews 6:20.

¹³ Ephesians 4:8.

¹⁴ Acts 1:9-11; Ephesians 4:7-8; Psalm 68:18; Ephesians 4:10; Acts 2:33.

¹⁵ Colossians 3:1-2.

¹⁶ John 14:3.

¹⁷ Acts 3:21.

¹⁸ Philippians 2:9.

¹⁹ Acts 2:28; Psalm 16:11.

²⁰ John 17:5.

²¹ Daniel 7:13-14; Ephesians 1:22; 1 Peter 3:22.

²² Ephesians 4:10-12; Psalm 110:1; Hebrews 10:12-14; Ezekiel 37:24.

²³ Romans 8:34; 1 John 2:1; Hebrews 7:25.

Christ intercedes by continually appearing in our human nature before the Father in heaven.¹ There he makes his will clear that his own merit of obedience and sacrifice on earth² be applied to all believers;³ he answers all the accusations against believers⁴ and makes sure they have peace of conscience, in spite of their daily failings;⁵ and he welcomes them without hesitation to the throne of grace⁶ and accepts who they are⁷ and what they do for him.⁸

56. How is Christ exalted by coming again to judge the world?

Coming again to judge the world exalts Christ, who was unjustly judged and condemned by wicked men.⁹ His coming again at the last last day in great power¹⁰ will fully reveal his own and his Father's glory, and with all his holy angels,¹¹ accompanied by a shout of command, the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God,¹² he will judge the world in righteousness.¹³

57. What benefits have been gained by Christ's mediation?

By his mediation, Christ gained redemption¹⁴ with all the other benefits of the covenant of grace.¹⁵

58. How do we share in the benefits Christ has gained?

We share in the benefits Christ has gained, as a particular work of God the Holy Spirit,¹⁶ when they are put into effect in us.¹⁷

59. Who shares in the redemption through Christ?

Redemption is inevitably and effectively imparted to all those for whom Christ purchased it,¹⁸ who in the process of time are enabled by the Holy Spirit to believe in Christ as presented in the gospel.¹⁹

¹ Hebrews 9:12,24.

² Isaiah 53:12; Hebrews 1:3.

³ John 3:16; 17:9,20,24.

⁴ Romans 8:33-34.

⁵ Romans 5:1-2; 1 John 2:1-2.

⁶ Hebrews 4:16.

⁷ Ephesians 1:6.

⁸ 1 Peter 2:5.

⁹ Acts 3:14-15.

¹⁰ Matthew 24:30; 2 Thessalonians 1:9-10.

¹¹ Luke 9:26; Matthew 25:31.

¹² 1 Thessalonians 4:16.

¹³ Acts 17:31; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-8.

¹⁴ 1 Timothy 2:5-6; Hebrews 9:12; Ephesians 1:7.

¹⁵ 2 Corinthians 1:20; Ephesians 1:3-6; 2 Peter 1:3-4.

¹⁶ Titus 3:4-7; John 16:14-15; see John 3:3-8.

¹⁷ John 1:11-12.

¹⁸ Ephesians 1:13-14; John 6:37,39; 10:15-16.

¹⁹ Romans 10:17; 1 Corinthians 2:12-16; Ephesians 2:8; Romans 8:9,14.

60. Can those who have never heard the gospel and so neither know Jesus Christ nor believe in him be saved by living according to their own natural understanding?

Those who have never heard the gospel¹ and do not know Jesus Christ² nor believe in him cannot be saved³ no matter how hard they try to live a moral life according to their own natural understanding⁴ or try to obey the rules of some other religion.⁵ Salvation comes from no other than Christ alone,⁶ who is the Savior only of his body, the church.⁷

61. Is everyone saved who hears the gospel and goes to church?

Not everyone who hears the gospel and attends a visible church is saved. The saved are only the true members of the invisible church.⁸

62. What is the visible church?

The visible church is all the people all over the world and their children⁹ who gather together throughout the ages and profess the true religion.¹⁰

63. What are the special privileges of the visible church?

The visible church has the privilege of being under God's special care and government¹¹ and of being protected and preserved throughout the ages, in spite of the opposition of all her enemies.¹² The visible church also provides fellowship for God's people, functions as the ordinary means by which people are saved,¹³ and extends God's grace through Christ to all her members in the ministry of the gospel, testifying that whosoever believes in him will be saved¹⁴ and excluding no one from fellowship who desires to come to Christ.¹⁵

¹ Romans 10:14.

² 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9; Ephesians 2:12; John 1:10-12.

³ John 8:24; 3:18.

⁴ 1 Corinthians 1:20-24.

⁵ John 4:22; Romans 9:31-32; Philippians 3:4-9.

⁶ Acts 4:12.

⁷ Ephesians 5:23.

⁸ John 12:38-40; Romans 9:6; Matthew 22:14; 7:21; Romans 11:7; 1 Corinthians 10:2-5.

⁹ 1 Corinthians 7:14; Acts 2:39; Romans 11:16; Genesis 17:7.

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 1:2; 12:13; Romans 15:9-12; Revelation 7:9; Psalm 2:8; 22:27-31; 45:17; Matthew 28:19-20; Isaiah 59:21.

¹¹ Isaiah 4:5-6; 1 Timothy 4:10; Ephesians 4:11-13.

¹² Psalm 115:1-2,9; Isaiah 31:4-5; Zechariah 12:2-4,8-9; Matthew 16:18.

¹³ Acts 2:39,42; Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13.

¹⁴ Psalm 147:19-20; Romans 9:4; Ephesians 4:11-12; Acts 22:16; 2:21; see Joel 2:32; Romans 10:10-13,17.

¹⁵ Matthew 11:28-29; John 6:37.

64. What is the invisible church?

The invisible church consists of all the elect who have been, are, or ever will be gathered into one under Christ, the head.¹

65. What are the special benefits for members of the invisible church through Christ?

Through Christ, members of the invisible church experience union and communion with him in grace and glory.²

66. What union do the elect have with Christ?

By their union with Christ, the elect are effectually called³ by the work of God's grace⁴ so that they are spiritually and mystically, but truly and inseparably, joined to Christ as their head and husband.⁵

67. What is effectual calling?

Effectual calling is the work of God's almighty power and grace,⁶ by which he (freely motivated only by his special love for the elect and not from anything inherently in them⁷) at the right time invites and draws them to Jesus Christ by his word and Spirit.⁸ God enlightens their minds with a saving understanding,⁹ renews their wills¹⁰ and by his power makes them (even though they are dead in sin) willing and able to answer his call voluntarily and to accept gladly the grace He offers and actually gives.¹¹

68. Are only the elect effectually called?

All the elect, and only they, are effectually called.¹² Although others may be and often are externally called by the ministry of the word,¹³ and although the Spirit may work in them in some of the same ways he works in the elect,¹⁴ from their own willful neglect of and contempt

¹ Ephesians 1:10; 1:22-23; John 10:16; 11:52; Ephesians 5:23,27,32.

² John 17:21; Ephesians 2:5-6; John 17:24; 1 John 1:3; John 1:16; Ephesians 3:16-19; Philippians 3:10; Romans 6:5-6.

³ 1 Peter 5:10; 1 Corinthians 1:9.

⁴ Ephesians 2:6-7.

⁵ Ephesians 1:22; 1 Corinthians 6:17; John 10:28; Ephesians 5:23,30; John 15:5; Ephesians 3:17.

⁶ Ezekiel 37:9,14; John 5:25; Ephesians 1:18-20; 2 Timothy 1:8-9.

⁷ Titus 3:4-5; Ephesians 2:4-5,7-9; Romans 9:11; Deuteronomy 9:5.

⁸ John 3:5; Titus 3:5; 2 Corinthians 5:20; 6:1-2; John 6:44-45; Acts 16:14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14.

⁹ Acts 26:18; 1 Corinthians 2:10,12; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Ephesians 1:17-18.

¹⁰ Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26-27; John 6:45.

¹¹ Ephesians 2:5; Philippians 2:13; Deuteronomy 30:6; Isaiah 45:22; Matthew 11:28-30; Revelation 22:17.

¹² Acts 13:48.

¹³ Matthew 22:14; Acts 8:13,20-21.

¹⁴ Matthew 7:22; 13:20-21; Hebrews 6:4-6.

for the grace that is offered them, they are justly allowed to remain in their unbelief and never truly come to Christ.¹

69. What communion in grace do members of the invisible church have with Christ?

By their communion in grace with Christ, the members of the invisible church share the dynamic power of his mediation in their justification,² adoption,³ sanctification, and in all the other ways that show their union with him in this life⁴

70. What is justification?

Justification is the act of God's free grace to sinners,⁵ by which he pardons all their sins and accepts and looks on them as if they were righteous,⁶ not because of anything worked in them or done by them⁷ them⁷ but because God imputes to them the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ⁸ that can only be appropriated by faith.⁹

71. How is justification an act of God's free grace?

By his obedience and death Christ made the correct, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice on behalf of those who are justified.¹⁰ Yet, insofar as this satisfaction is accepted by God as a guarantee of performance, which he might have demanded from the justified, and since God himself provided a guarantor in the Person of his only Son,¹¹ in justification God imputes righteousness to the justified¹² and requires nothing from them in return except faith,¹³ which they also have as a gift from him.¹⁴ Consequently, justification comes to the justified as an act of God's free grace.¹⁵

72. What is justifying faith?

¹ John 12:38-40; Acts 28:25-27; John 6:64-65; Psalm 81:11-12; Hebrews 10:29;

¹ John 2:19.

² Romans 8:30.

³ Ephesians 1:5.

⁴ 1 Corinthians 1:30; 6:11.

⁵ Romans 3:22,24-25; 4:5.

⁶ Jeremiah 23:6; Romans 4:6-8; 2 Corinthians 5:19,21; Romans 3:22,24-25,27-28.

⁷ Titus 3:5,7; Ephesians 1:7.

⁸ Romans 4:6-8,11; 5:17-19.

⁹ Acts 10:43; Galatians 2:16; Philippians 3:9.

¹⁰ Romans 5:8-10,19.

¹¹ 1 Timothy 2:5-6; Hebrews 10:10; Matthew 20:28; Daniel 9:24,26; Isaiah 53:4-6,10-12; Hebrews 7:22; Romans 8:32; 1 Peter 1:18-19.

¹² 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 4:6,11.

¹³ Romans 3:24-25.

¹⁴ Ephesians 2:8.

¹⁵ Ephesians 1:7; Romans 3:24-25.

Justifying faith is a saving grace¹ that works in the hearts of sinners by the Spirit² and the word³ of neither they nor anyone or anything else can get them out of that lost condition,⁴ and by it they give full assent to the truth of the gospel promise;⁵ they receive and rest on Christ and his righteousness for pardon from sin,⁶ as the gospel tells us, and for being accepted and accounted as righteous in the sight of God for salvation.⁷

73. How does faith justify a sinner in the sight of God?

Faith justifies a sinner in the sight of God only as a tool by which the sinner receives Christ and puts Christ's righteousness into effect,⁸ not not because of any other grace that accompanies faith and not because of any good works that result from faith.⁹ Nor is it the case that the grace of faith or any action springing from it is imputed to the sinner for his justification.¹⁰

74. What is adoption?

Adoption is an act of God's free grace¹¹ in and for his only Son, Jesus Christ,¹² by which all those who are justified become his children,¹³ have his name put on them,¹⁴ have the Spirit of his Son given to them,¹⁵ are provided for under his fatherly care,¹⁶ are welcomed to all the liberties and privileges of the sons of God, and are made heirs of all the promises and fellow-heirs with Christ in glory.¹⁷

75. What is sanctification?

Sanctification is a work of God's grace for those whom God has chosen to be holy before the beginning of the world and to whom in time the powerful operation of the Spirit¹⁸ applies the death and resurrection of Christ.¹⁹ They are thus renewed in their whole

¹ Hebrews 10:39.

² 2 Corinthians 4:13; Ephesians 1:17-19; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 1 Peter 1:2.

³ Romans 10:14-17; 1 Corinthians 1:21.

⁴ Acts 2:37; 16:30; John 16:8-9; Romans 6:6; Ephesians 2:1; Acts 4:12.

⁵ Ephesians 1:13; Hebrews 11:13.

⁶ John 1:12; Acts 16:31; 10:43; Zechariah 3:8-9.

⁷ Philippians 3:9; Acts 15:11.

⁸ John 1:12; Philippians 3:9; Galatians 2:16.

⁹ Galatians 3:11; Romans 3:28.

¹⁰ Romans 4:5; 10:10.

¹¹ 1 John 3:1.

¹² Ephesians 1:5; Galatians 4:4-5.

¹³ John 1:12; Romans 8:15-16.

¹⁴ Numbers 6:24-27; Amos 9:12; 2 Corinthians 6:18; Revelation 3:12.

¹⁵ Galatians 4:6.

¹⁶ Psalm 103:13; Proverbs 14:26; Matthew 6:32; Hebrews 12:5-7, 11.

¹⁷ Hebrews 6:12; Romans 8:17; 1 Peter 1:3-4.

¹⁸ Ezekiel 36:27; Philippians 2:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Ephesians 1:4; 1 Corinthians 6:11.

¹⁹ Romans 6:4-6; Colossians 3:1-3; Philippians 3:10.

persons after the image of God,¹ have the seeds of repentance unto life and all the other saving graces put into their hearts,² and these graces are so aroused, increased, and strengthened³ that they more and more die to sin and rise into newness of life.⁴

76. What is repentance unto life?

Repentance unto life is a saving grace⁵ worked in the hearts of sinners by the Spirit⁶ and the Word of God.⁷ By it sinners recognize not only how dangerous it is to commit sins⁸ but also how filthy and hateful they are to God.⁹ Understanding that in Christ God is merciful merciful to those who repent,¹⁰ sinners suffer such deep sorrow for¹¹ and hate their sins so much¹² that they turn away from all of them and turn to God,¹³ attempting to walk continually with Him according to this new obedience in every way.¹⁴

77. What is the difference between justification and sanctification?

Although sanctification is inseparably joined to justification,¹⁵ the two are distinctly different. In justification God impute the righteousness of Christ to believers;¹⁶ in sanctification his Spirit infuses believers with grace and enables them to use it.¹⁷ In the former, sin is pardoned;¹⁸ in the latter, it is subdued.¹⁹ The one exempts all believers equally and completely from the avenging anger and condemnation of God in this life;²⁰ the other does not work equally in all believers,²¹ nor is it completed in any believer in this life,¹ but only grows toward perfection.²

¹ 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:23-24; 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

² Acts 11:18; 1 John 3:9.

³ Jude 20; Hebrews 6:11-12; Ephesians 3:16-19; Colossians 1:10-11.

⁴ Ezekiel 36:25-27; Romans 6:4,6,12-14; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Peter 2:24; Galatians 5:24.

⁵ 2 Timothy 2:25; Acts 11:18.

⁶ Zechariah 12:10.

⁷ Acts 11:18,20-21.

⁸ Ezekiel 18:28,30,32; Luke 15:17-18; Hosea 2:6-7.

⁹ Ezekiel 36:31; Isaiah 30:22; Philipians 3:7-8.

¹⁰ Joel 2:12-13; Psalm 51:1-4; Luke 15:7,10; Acts 2:37.

¹¹ Jeremiah 31:18-19; Psalm 32:5.

¹² 2 Corinthians 7:11.

¹³ Luke 1:16-17; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; Acts 26:18; Ezekiel 14:6; 1 Kings 8:47-48.

¹⁴ 2 Chronicles 7:14; Psalm 119:57-64; Matthew 3:8; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Luke 1:6.

¹⁵ 1 Corinthians 6:11; 1:30.

¹⁶ Romans 4:6,8.

¹⁷ Ezekiel 36:27; Hebrews 9:13-14.

¹⁸ Romans 3:24-25.

¹⁹ Romans 6:6,14.

²⁰ Romans 8:33-34.

²¹ 1 John 2:12-14; Hebrews 5:12-14.

78. Why are believers not completely sanctified?

Believers are not completely or perfectly sanctified because they retain some remnants of sin throughout their whole being and are continually plagued with desires of their old sinful nature that are contrary to the spirit. Consequently believers are frequently defeated by temptation, commit many sins,³ and are hindered from performing their spiritual obligations,⁴ so that their best works in God's eyes are imperfect and defiled.⁵

79. Since true believers are imperfect, are tempted, and commit sin, can they fall out of their state of grace?

Because of God's unchangeable love,⁶ He has decreed and made a covenant with believers that they will persevere,⁷ that they are inseparably united to Christ,⁸ Who continually intercedes for them,⁹ and that the Spirit and the seed of God abide in them.¹⁰ Consequently, they can never completely or finally fall out of their state of grace,¹¹ because the power of God preserves their salvation through faith.¹²

80. Can true believers be infallibly assured that they are and will remain in a state of grace, persevering to salvation?

Those who truly believe in Christ and try to walk in good conscience before Him¹³ may be infallibly assured that they are and will remain in a state of grace, persevering to salvation.¹⁴ This assurance is not the result of any unusual revelation but comes from faith grounded on the truth of God's promises and from the Spirit, who gives believers the spiritual insight into their own hearts, to which these promises are directed.¹⁵ The Spirit also testifies with their spirits that they are the children of God.¹⁶

¹ 1 John 1:8,10.

² 2 Corinthians 7:1; Philippians 3:12-14.

³ Romans 7:18,23; see Mark 14:66-72. Galatians 2:11-12.

⁴ Hebrews 12:1.

⁵ Isaiah 64:6; Exodus 28:38; Galatians 5:16-18.

⁶ Jeremiah 31:3.

⁷ 2 Timothy 2:19; Hebrews 13:20-21; 1 Samuel 23:5.

⁸ 1 Corinthians 1:8-9.

⁹ Hebrews 7:25; Luke 22:32.

¹⁰ 1 John 3:9; 2:27.

¹¹ Jeremiah 32:40; John 10:28.

¹² 1 Peter 1:5.

¹³ 1 John 2:3; Hebrews 10:19-23.

¹⁴ 1 John 5:13; Hebrews 6:19-20; see 2 Peter 1:5-11.

¹⁵ 1 Corinthians 2:12; 1 John 3:14,18-19,21,24; 1 John 4:13,16; Hebrews 6:11-12.

¹⁶ Romans 8:15-16.

81. Are all true believers assured all the time that they are saved and are in a state of grace?

Since the assurance of grace and salvation is not essential to faith,¹ true believers may have to wait a long time for it,² and once they have have it, their assurance may be weakened and interrupted from being afflicted by all kinds of psychological problems, from sinning, from being tempted, and from losing the sense of God's favor.³ However, the Spirit of God keeps believers from complete despair by never allowing them to be without some inner sense of His presence and support.⁴

82. What is the communion in glory that members of the invisible church have with Christ?

The communion in glory that members of the invisible church have with Christ occurs in this life⁵ as well as immediately after death,⁶ and and is finally completed at the resurrection and day of judgment.⁷

83. What is the communion in glory with Christ that members of the invisible church enjoy in this life?

Since members of the invisible church are part of the body of Christ, who is their head, they have imparted to them in this life the first-fruits of glory with Christ mainly in the form of interest in the glory Christ fully possesses,⁸ and, as a down payment on this communion, they enjoy a sense of God's love,⁹ a good conscience, joy in the Holy Spirit, and hope of glory.¹⁰ In a similar, negative way, the torments the wicked will endure after death begin here on earth with an awareness in them of God's avenging anger, a terrified conscience, and a fearful expectation of judgment.¹¹

84. Is everyone going to die?

Since we have been warned that death is the wages of sin,¹² everyone is destined to die once,¹³ because everyone has sinned.¹⁴

¹ Ephesians 1:13.

² Isaiah 50:10; Psalm 88:1-3,6-7,9-10,13-15.

³ Psalm 77:1-12; 51:8,12; 31:22; 22:1; Ephesians 4:30; Luke 22:31-34.

⁴ 1 John 3:9; Psalm 73:15,23; Isaiah 54:7-10; 1 Peter 4:12-14.

⁵ 2 Corinthians 3:18.

⁶ Luke 23:43.

⁷ 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

⁸ Ephesians 2:5-6.

⁹ Romans 5:5; 2 Corinthians 1:22.

¹⁰ Romans 5:1-2; 14:17; 2 Peter 3:18.

¹¹ Genesis 4:13; Matthew 27:4; Hebrews 10:27; Romans 2:9; Mark 9:44.

¹² Romans 6:23.

¹³ Hebrews 9:27.

¹⁴ Romans 5:12.

85. Given that death is the wages of sin, why are the righteous not delivered from death, since all their sins are forgiven in Christ?

At the last day, the righteous will be delivered from death itself. In the meantime, even when they die, they are delivered from the sting and curse of death,¹ and God's love² completely frees them from sin and and misery,³ enabling them to have a deeper communion with Christ when they enter into his glory after death.⁴

86. What is the communion in glory with Christ that members of the invisible church enjoy immediately after death?

The communion in glory with Christ that members of the invisible church enjoy immediately after death involves their souls being made completely holy⁵ and being received into the highest heavens.⁶ There they behold the face of God in light and glory⁷ as they wait for the full redemption of their bodies,⁸ which even in death continue united to Christ⁹ and rest in the grave as in a bed,¹⁰ until at the last day body and soul are reunited.¹¹ On the other hand, when the wicked die, their souls are thrown into hell. There they remain tormented in complete darkness, while their bodies are kept in the grave as in a prison, until the resurrection and judgment of that great day.¹²

87. What must we believe about the resurrection?

We must first believe that at the last day there is going to be a resurrection of all the dead, both the righteous and the wicked.¹³ When that happens, those who are still alive on earth will be instantly changed, and the very same bodies of the dead that were buried will be reunited with their souls and raised up by the power of Christ.¹⁴ Through the Spirit of Christ and by virtue of his resurrection, as their head, the bodies of the righteous will be raised in power, spiritual and imperishable, and made in the likeness of Christ's glorious body.¹⁵

¹ 1 Corinthians 15:26,55-57; Hebrews 2:15; John 11:25-26.

² Isaiah 57:1-2; 2 Kings 22:20.

³ Revelation 14:13; Ephesians 5:27.

⁴ Luke 23:43; Philippians 1:23.

⁵ Hebrews 12:23; Acts 7:55,59.

⁶ 2 Corinthians 5:1,6,8; Philippians 1:23; Acts 3:21; Ephesians 4:10; Luke 23:43.

⁷ 1 John 3:2; 1 Corinthians 13:12.

⁸ Romans 8:23; Psalm 16:9.

⁹ 1 Thessalonians 4:14,16.

¹⁰ Isaiah 57:2.

¹¹ Job 19:26-27.

¹² Luke 16:23-24; Acts 1:25; Jude 6-7.

¹³ Daniel 12:2; Acts 24:15.

¹⁴ Job 19:26; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; John 5:28-29; Romans 8:11.

¹⁵ 1 Corinthians 15:21-23,42-44; Philippians 3:21.

Christ will raise up in dishonor the bodies of the wicked, who offend him as judge.¹

88. What is going to happen immediately after the resurrection?

Immediately after the resurrection, all created beings, angels and humans, will be finally judged.² No one knows the exact time this is going to happen so that everyone can anticipate, pray for, and always be ready for the coming of the Lord.³

89. What will happen to the wicked on the judgment day?

On the judgment day, the wicked will be put on the left of Christ,⁴ and with the evidence against them clearly presented and fully recognized by them,⁵ they will be justly and terribly condemned,⁶ after after which they will be expelled from the favorable presence of God and the glorious fellowship with Christ, his people, and his angels, and thrown into hell to be punished forever with unspeakable torments, both of body and soul, along with the devil and His angels.⁷

90. What will happen to the righteous on the judgment day?

On the judgment day, the righteous will be caught up with Christ in the clouds⁸ and placed on His right, where they will be publicly acknowledged and acquitted.⁹ They will join Christ in the judgment of of reprobate angels and men¹⁰ and be received into heaven.¹¹ There they will be completely and forever freed from all sin and misery,¹² filled with unimaginable joy,¹³ and made perfectly holy and happy in body and soul, in the vast company of each other and the holy angels;¹⁴ they will be particularly blessed in the visual presence and enjoyment of God the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, forever.¹⁵ Such is the perfect and complete fellowship the members of the invisible church will enjoy with Christ in glory at the resurrection and judgment day.

¹ John 5:27-29; Matthew 25:33.

² Ecclesiastes 12:14; 2 Peter 2:4,6-7,14-15; Matthew 25:46; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10,12.

³ Matthew 24:36,42,44; Mark 13:35-37.

⁴ Matthew 25:33.

⁵ Romans 2:15-16.

⁶ Matthew 25:41-43.

⁷ Luke 16:26; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9.

⁸ 1 Thessalonians 4:17; 1 Corinthians 15:42-43.

⁹ Matthew 25:33; 10:32.

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 6:2-3.

¹¹ Matthew 25:34,46.

¹² Ephesians 5:27; Revelation 14:13.

¹³ Psalm 16:11.

¹⁴ Hebrew 12:22-23.

¹⁵ 1 John 3:2; Romans 8:29; 1 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 4:17-18.

[HAVING SEEN WHAT THE BIBLE PRIMARILY TEACHES US TO BELIEVE ABOUT GOD, NEXT COMES WHAT GOD REQUIRES OF HUMANS.]

91. What does God require of human beings?

God requires human beings to obey his revealed will.¹

92. In the beginning what did God reveal for humans to obey?

In his innocence, it was revealed to Adam and all humanity in him that he must obey the moral law in addition to a special command not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.²

93. What is the moral law?

The moral law is the declaration of God's will for humanity, directing and binding every human being to conform to and obey it personally, completely, and perpetually. The moral law applies to the whole human, body and soul,³ and includes the performance of all those obligations to God and our fellow humans to be holy and righteous.⁴ God promised life for keeping it and threatened death for disobeying it.⁵

94. Does the moral law apply to human beings after the Fall?

Although after the fall no one can achieve righteousness and life by means of the moral law,⁶ it still applies to humans generally, whether saved or unsaved.⁷

95. How does the moral law apply to all human beings?

The moral law reveals the holy nature and will of God to all humans⁸ and obliges them to live by it.⁹ It also reveals to them the sinful pollution of their nature, hearts, and lives, which shows them they are unable to keep it.¹⁰ The moral law also humbles human beings with the recognition of their sinfulness and misery¹¹ and thereby gives them a better awareness of their need for Christ¹² and for the perfection of his obedience.¹³

¹ Deuteronomy 29:29; Micah 6:8; 1 John 5:2-3; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Samuel 15:22.

² Genesis 1:26-27; Romans 2:14-15; 10:5; Genesis 2:17.

³ Deuteronomy 5:1-3,31,33; Luke 10:26-27; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Ephesians 4:24.

⁴ Luke 1:75; Acts 24:16; 1 Peter 1:15-16.

⁵ Romans 10:5; Galatians 3:10,12; Romans 5:12.

⁶ Romans 8:3; Galatians 2:16.

⁷ 1 Timothy 1:8.

⁸ Romans 1:20; Leviticus 11:44-45; 20:7-8; Romans 7:12.

⁹ Micah 6:8; James 2:10-11; Romans 1:32.

¹⁰ Psalm 19:11-12; Romans 3:20; 7:7.

¹¹ Romans 3:9,23.

¹² Galatians 3:21-22,24.

¹³ Romans 10:4.

96. How does the moral law apply particularly to the unsaved?

The moral law awakens the consciences of the unsaved to flee from the coming wrath¹ and so drives them to Christ.² But, if they continue in their unsaved and sinful condition, the law has left them without excuse³ and under its curse.⁴

97. How does the moral law apply specifically to the saved?

Although those who are saved and believe in Christ are freed from the moral law as a covenant of works,⁵ so that they are neither justified⁶ nor condemned by it,⁷ nonetheless, in addition to the general applicability of the moral law to all humans, it specifically shows believers how much they owe to Christ for fulfilling it and for enduring its curse in their place and for their good.⁸ This recognition spurs believers on to a greater thankfulness,⁹ so that they try all the harder to observe the law as their personal standard for living.¹⁰

98. Where is the moral law summarized?

The moral law is summarized in the ten commandments, which were delivered by the voice of God on Mount Sinai and written down by him on two stone tablets;¹¹ they are recorded in Exodus 20. The first four commandments establish our obligations to God and the remaining six our obligations to human beings.¹²

99. What are the guidelines for the proper understanding of the ten commandments?

In order to understand the ten commandments properly, these guidelines should be followed:

1. The law is perfect and binds the whole person to observe it completely and, according to its standard, to be completely righteous, and perfectly obey every one of its obligations forever. On the negative side, the law forbids even the slightest or partial commission of any sin.¹³

¹ Psalm 51:13; 1 Timothy 1:9-11.

² Galatians 3:24.

³ Romans 1:20; 2:15.

⁴ Galatians 3:10.

⁵ Romans 6:14; 7:4,6; Galatians 4:4-5; Colossians 2:13-14.

⁶ Romans 3:20.

⁷ Galatians 5:23; Romans 8:1.

⁸ Romans 7:24-25; Galatians 3:13-14; Romans 8:3-4; Acts 13:38-39.

⁹ Luke 1:68-69,74-75; Colossians 1:12-14; Romans 6:14.

¹⁰ Deuteronomy 30:19-20; Romans 7:22; 12:2; Titus 2:11-14; James 1:25.

¹¹ Deuteronomy 4:13; 10:4; Exodus 34:1-4; Romans 13:8-10; James 2:8,10-12.

¹² Matthew 22:37-40; 19:17-19.

¹³ Psalm 19:7; James 2:10; Matthew 5:21-22.

2. Since it is spiritual, the law involves our understanding, our will, our emotions and all the other faculties of the soul, as well as our words, actions, and self-expressions.¹
3. Different aspects of one and the same thing may be required or forbidden in several different commandments.²
4. When something is required, the opposite is forbidden,³ and where where a specific sin is forbidden, its opposite is required.⁴ In the same way, when a requirement of the law adds a promise of some blessing for obeying it, that promise also includes a threat for disobeying it,⁵ and when a threat is added, an opposite promise is included.⁶
5. What God forbids must never be done at any time or under any circumstances.⁷ What he commands always remains an obligation,⁸ although every particular obligation of the law does not apply in all circumstances or at all times.⁹
6. The prohibitions against specific sins and the commandments to observe specific obligations are typical and so cover not just those particular sins or obligations but all others of the same kind. They similarly include all the contributory causes, means, opportunities, and appearances related to these sins and obligations.¹⁰
7. Since the provisions of the law apply not only to us but to everyone else, we must try to help others keep those provisions, in the context of our own position in life and theirs.¹¹
8. Similarly, we must support others in keeping what the law commands them to do or not to do¹² and particularly by not joining them in doing what is forbidden to them.¹³

100. What will our focus be on the Ten Commandments?

We will focus on the introduction, the content of the commandments themselves, and the various reasons added to some of the commandments emphasizing how important it is to obey them.¹

¹ Romans 7:14; Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:37-39; 5:21-22,27-28,33-34,37-39,43-44.

² Colossians 3:5; Amos 8:5; Proverbs 1:19; 1 Timothy 6:10.

³ Isaiah 58:13; Deuteronomy 6:13; Matthew 4:9-10; 15:4-6.

⁴ Matthew 5:21-25; Ephesians 4:28.

⁵ Exodus 20:12; Proverbs 30:17.

⁶ Jeremiah 18:7-8; Exodus 20:7; Psalm 15:1,4-5; 24:4-5.

⁷ Job 13:7-8; Romans 3:8; Job 36:21; Hebrews 11:25.

⁸ Deuteronomy 4:8-9; Luke 17:10.

⁹ Matthew 12:7.

¹⁰ Matthew 5:21-22,27-28; 15:4-6; 1 Thessalonians 5:22; Jude 23; Galatians 5:26; Colossians 3:21.

¹¹ Exodus 20:10; Leviticus 19:17; Genesis 18:19; Joshua 24:15; Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Hebrews 10:24-25.

¹² 2 Corinthians 1:24.

¹³ 1 Timothy 5:22; Ephesians 5:11.

101. What is the introduction to the Ten Commandments?

The introduction to the Ten Commandments is: *I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.*² In these words God reveals His sovereign being as LORD,³ in and of himself, eternal, unchangeable, and almighty God,⁴ who gives being to all his words⁵ and works.⁶ God also points here to his covenantal relationship with the Israelites in ancient times and with all his people,⁷ so that just as he brought the Israelites out of their slavery in Egypt, he delivers us from spiritual enslavement.⁸ Consequently we are bound to accept only him as our God and to keep all his commandments.⁹

102. What is the essence of the first four commandments that cover our obligation to God?

The essence of these four commandments is to love the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our strength and with all our mind.¹⁰

103. What is the first commandment?

The first commandment is: *You shall have no other gods before me.*¹¹

104. What does the first commandment require?

The first commandment requires us to know and recognize God as the only true God and our God¹² and to worship and glorify Him as such¹³ by valuing,¹⁴ meditating on,¹⁵ remembering,¹⁶ highly regarding,¹⁷ honoring,¹⁸ adoring,¹⁹ preferring,²⁰ loving,²¹ desiring,²²

¹ As an example, Ephesians 6:1-3.

² Exodus 20:2; cf. Deuteronomy 5:6.

³ Exodus 3:14.

⁴ Isaiah 44:6.

⁵ Exodus 6:3.

⁶ Acts 17:24,28.

⁷ Genesis 17:7; Romans 3:29.

⁸ Luke 1:74-75; Galatians 5:1.

⁹ 1 Peter 1:15-19; Leviticus 18:30; 19:37.

¹⁰ Luke 10:27; Matthew 22:37-40; Mark 12:30-31.

¹¹ Exodus 20:3; cf. Deuteronomy 5:7.

¹² 1 Chronicles 28:9; Deuteronomy 26:7; Isaiah 43:10; see Jeremiah 14:22.

¹³ Psalm 95:6-7; Matthew 4:10; Psalm 29:2.

¹⁴ Malachi 3:16.

¹⁵ Psalm 63:6.

¹⁶ Ecclesiastes 12:1.

¹⁷ Psalm 71:19.

¹⁸ Malachi 1:6.

¹⁹ Isaiah 45:23; see Psalm 96.

²⁰ Joshua 24:15,22.

²¹ Deuteronomy 6:5.

²² Psalm 73:25.

fearing,¹ believing,² trusting,³ hoping,⁴ delighting,⁵ and rejoicing in Him.⁶ We must also be zealous for and call on Him,⁷ giving Him all praise and thanks,⁸ completely obeying and submitting to Him in our whole person.⁹ Finally, we must walk humbly with Him,¹⁰ being careful to please Him in everything we say and do¹¹ and being genuinely sorry when we offend Him.¹²

105. What particular sins does the first commandment forbid?

The first commandment forbids: atheism, denying or not believing in God;¹³ idolatry, believing or worshiping any other gods along with or other than the one true God;¹⁴ not having and affirming him as God and our God;¹⁵ failing or neglecting to do anything this commandment requires relating to God;¹⁶ ignorance of him;¹⁷ forgetting him,¹⁸ misunderstanding him,¹⁹ untrue opinions about him,²⁰ and evil or unworthy thoughts about him;²¹ irreverent curiosity about and inquiry into his secrets;²² all godless desecration;²³ hating God;²⁴ self-love;²⁵ self-interest,²⁶ and all other disorderly or excessive attention, mental, willful, or emotional, to things that divert our attention partially or completely from God.²⁷ Also included are: worthless beliefs,²⁸ lack of faith;²⁹ heretical beliefs;¹ wrong belief;² not trusting God;³ spiritual

¹ Isaiah 8:13.

² Exodus 14:31.

³ Isaiah 26:4.

⁴ Psalm 130:7.

⁵ Psalm 37:4.

⁶ Psalm 32:11.

⁷ Romans 12:11; see Numbers 25:11.

⁸ Philippians 4:6.

⁹ Jeremiah 7:23; James 4:7.

¹⁰ Micah 6:8.

¹¹ 1 John 3:22.

¹² Psalm 119:136; Jeremiah 31:18.

¹³ Psalm 14:1; Ephesians 2:12.

¹⁴ Jeremiah 2:27-28; 1 Thessalonians 1:9.

¹⁵ Psalm 81:10-11; see Romans 1:21.

¹⁶ Isaiah 43:22-24.

¹⁷ Jeremiah 4:22; Hosea 4:1,6.

¹⁸ Jeremiah 2:32.

¹⁹ Acts 17:23,29.

²⁰ Isaiah 40:18.

²¹ Psalm 50:21.

²² Deuteronomy 29:29.

²³ Titus 1:16; Hebrews 12:16.

²⁴ Romans 1:30.

²⁵ 2 Timothy 3:2.

²⁶ Philippians 2:21.

²⁷ 1 John 2:15-16; Colossians 3:2,5; see 1 Samuel 2:29.

²⁸ 1 John 4:1.

²⁹ Hebrews 3:12.

despair;⁴ refusing correction⁵ and resisting God's judgment;⁶ hardness of heart;⁷ pride;⁸ willfulness;⁹ worldly complacency;¹⁰ putting God to the test;¹¹ using unlawful means to an end;¹² trusting even in lawful means of grace rather than God;¹³ indulging in pleasures of the flesh;¹⁴ depraved, blind, or improperly directed zeal;¹⁵ being lukewarm;¹⁶ spiritual deadness;¹⁷ deserting and forsaking God;¹⁸ praying to or worshiping saints, angels, or any other created being;¹⁹ making an agreement with, consulting,²⁰ or following the suggestions of the devil;²¹ making men the rulers of our faith and conscience;²² slighting and despising God and his commandments;²³ resisting and grieving His Spirit;²⁴ and finally being dissatisfied and offended by the things God provides in our lives, ignorantly blaming him for the evils he inflicts on us,²⁵ as well as attributing the credit for any good thing we are, have, or can do to luck,²⁶ idols,²⁷ ourselves,²⁸ or any other created being.²⁹

106. What do the words, *before me*, in the first commandment specifically teach?

¹ Galatians 5:20; Titus 3:10.

² Acts 26:9.

³ Psalm 78:22.

⁴ Genesis 4:13.

⁵ Jeremiah 5:3.

⁶ Isaiah 42:25.

⁷ Romans 2:5.

⁸ Jeremiah 13:15.

⁹ Psalm 19:13.

¹⁰ Zephaniah 1:12.

¹¹ Matthew 4:7.

¹² Romans 3:8.

¹³ Jeremiah 17:5.

¹⁴ 2 Timothy 3:4.

¹⁵ Galatians 4:17; Romans 10:2; see John 16:2 and Luke 9:54-55.

¹⁶ Revelation 3:16.

¹⁷ Revelation 3:1.

¹⁸ Ezekiel 14:5; Isaiah 1:4-5.

¹⁹ Hosea 4:12; Acts 10:25-26; Revelation 19:10; Matthew 4:10; Colossians 2:18;

Romans 1:25.

²⁰ Leviticus 20:6; see 1 Samuel 28:7,11 and 1 Chronicles 10:13-14.

²¹ Acts 5:3.

²² 2 Corinthians 1:24; see Matthew 23:9.

²³ Deuteronomy 32:15; Proverbs 13:13; see 2 Samuel 12:9.

²⁴ Acts 7:51; Ephesians 4:30.

²⁵ Job 1:22; Psalm 73:2-3; see Psalm 73:13-15,22.

²⁶ 1 Samuel 6:7-9; Luke 12:19.

²⁷ Daniel 5:23.

²⁸ Deuteronomy 8:17; see Daniel 4:30.

²⁹ Habakkuk 1:16.

The words, *before me*, or “before my face,” in the first commandment teach us that God, who sees everything, takes special note of and is very offended by the sin of having any other god. These words emphasize then how important it is to obey this commandment and how disobeying it insolently provokes God;¹ they also urge us to be just as mindful of the fact that God sees everything we do as we are of doing things in his service.²

107. What is the second commandment?

The second commandment is: *You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.*³

108. What does the second commandment require?

The second commandment requires us to receive, respectfully perform, and preserve completely and purely all the regulations for religion and worship that God has established in His Word.⁴ These include: prayer and thanksgiving in the name of Christ;⁵ the reading, preaching, and hearing of the Word;⁶ the administration of and receiving the sacraments;⁷ church government and discipline;⁸ the administration and upkeep of the church;⁹ religious fasting;¹⁰ swearing by the name of God;¹¹ and making vows to Him.¹² Also included are disapproving, denouncing, and opposing false worship¹³ and doing our best, in accordance with our position and calling in life, to eliminate it and all forms of idolatry.¹⁴

109. What particular sins does the second commandment forbid?

¹ Psalm 44:20-21; see Deuteronomy 30:17-18 and Ezekiel 8:5-6,12.

² 1 Chronicles 28:9.

³ Exodus 20:4-6; cf. Deuteronomy 5:8-10.

⁴ Deuteronomy 12:32; 32:46-47; Matthew 28:20; 1 Timothy 6:13-14; see Acts 2:42.

⁵ Philippians 4:6; Ephesians 5:20.

⁶ Deuteronomy 17:18-19; Acts 15:21; 2 Timothy 4:2; James 1:21-22; Acts 10:33.

⁷ Matthew 28:19; see 1 Corinthians 11:23-30.

⁸ Matthew 18:15-17; 16:19; 1 Corinthians 12:28; see 1 Corinthians 5.

⁹ Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Timothy 5:17-18; see 1 Corinthians 9:7-15.

¹⁰ Joel 2:12-13; 1 Corinthians 7:5.

¹¹ Deuteronomy 6:13.

¹² Psalm 76:11; Isaiah 19:21; see Psalm 116:14,18.

¹³ Acts 17:16-17; Psalm 16:4.

¹⁴ Deuteronomy 7:5; Isaiah 30:22.

The second commandment forbids: imagining,¹ recommending,² demanding,³ practicing,⁴ or in any way approving any religious worship not established by God Himself;⁵ creating any likeness of God as the Trinity or as anyone of His three Persons, either internally in our minds or externally in the form of any kind of image or representation of a created being;⁶ any worship of such created likenesses⁷ as if God were in them or as if they were a means to worshipping Him;⁸ the creation of any likenesses of invented gods,⁹ any worship of them or service relating to them;¹⁰ and all superstitious contrivances.¹¹ Also forbidden are: any departure from the true worship of God¹² by adding to or taking away from it,¹³ whether by our own invention¹⁴ or received from some other tradition,¹⁵ and whether justified by antiquity,¹⁶ custom,¹⁷ devotional practice,¹⁸ good intentions, or any other excuse;¹⁹ simony²⁰ and anything sacrilegious;²¹ and finally any neglect of,²² contempt for,²³ hindering,²⁴ or opposition to the worship and regulations established by God.²⁵

110. What reason is added to the second commandment emphasizing how important it is to obey it?

The reason added to this commandment to emphasize its importance is in these words: *for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to*

¹ Numbers 15:39.

² Deuteronomy 13:6-8.

³ Hosea 5:11; Micah 6:16.

⁴ 1 Kings 11:33; 12:33.

⁵ Deuteronomy 12:30-32; Leviticus 10:1-2; Jeremiah 19:5.

⁶ Deuteronomy 4:15-19; Acts 17:29; Romans 1:21-23,25.

⁷ Galatians 4:8; see Daniel 3:18.

⁸ Exodus 32:5.

⁹ Exodus 32:8.

¹⁰ 1 Kings 18:26,28.

¹¹ Acts 17:22; Colossians 2:21-23.

¹² Malachi 1:7-8,14.

¹³ Deuteronomy 4:2.

¹⁴ Psalm 106:39.

¹⁵ Matthew 15:9.

¹⁶ 1 Peter 1:18.

¹⁷ Jeremiah 44:17.

¹⁸ Isaiah 65:3-5; Galatians 1:13-14.

¹⁹ 1 Samuel 13:11-12; 15:21.

²⁰ Acts 8:18-19.

²¹ Romans 2:22; Malachi 3:8.

²² Exodus 4:24-26.

²³ Matthew 22:5; Malachi 1:7,13.

²⁴ Matthew 23:13.

²⁵ Acts 13:44-45; see 1 Thessalonians 2:15-16.

*thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.*¹ In addition to calling attention to the fact that God totally rules over us, so that we belong to Him,² these words point to His fervent eagerness to be worshiped correctly,³ and that He is angered and takes vengeance on all false worship, which He sees as spiritual prostitution.⁴ He views breaking this commandment as equivalent to hating Him and threatens to punish those who do break it for several generations.⁵ He also equates observing this commandment with loving Him and keeping all His commandments, and promises mercy for many generations to those who do it.⁶

111. What is the third commandment?

The third commandment is: *You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.*⁷

112. What does the third commandment require?

The third commandment requires the holy and reverent use in our thoughts,⁸ meditations,⁹ words,¹⁰ and writings,¹¹ of God's name, titles, titles, attributes,¹² regulations,¹³ word,¹⁴ sacraments,¹⁵ prayer,¹⁶ oaths,¹⁷ vows,¹⁸ casting lots,¹⁹ His works,²⁰ and anything else by which He makes Himself known. This treatment will be reflected in holy affirmations of our faith²¹ and conduct that matches our

¹ Exodus 20:5-6.

² Psalm 45:11; Revelation 15:3-4; see Psalm 95:2-3,6-7 and Exodus 19:5 and Isaiah 54:5.

³ Exodus 34:13-14.

⁴ 1 Corinthians 10:20-22; Ezekiel 16:26-27; see Jeremiah 7:18-20 and Deuteronomy 32:16-20.

⁵ Hosea 2:2-4.

⁶ Deuteronomy 5:29.

⁷ Exodus 20:7; cf. Deuteronomy 5:11.

⁸ Malachi 3:16.

⁹ Psalm 8:1,3-4.

¹⁰ Psalm 105:2,5; see Colossians 3:17.

¹¹ Psalm 102:18.

¹² Matthew 6:9; Deuteronomy 28:58; Psalm 68:4; see Psalm 29:2 and 1 Chronicles 29:10-13 and Revelation 15:3-4.

¹³ Ecclesiastes 5:1; Luke 1:6; see Malachi 1:11,14.

¹⁴ Psalm 138:2.

¹⁵ 1 Corinthians 11:24-25,28-29.

¹⁶ 1 Timothy 2:8.

¹⁷ Jeremiah 4:2.

¹⁸ Ecclesiastes 5:2,4-6.

¹⁹ Acts 1:24,26.

²⁰ Job 36:24.

²¹ 1 Peter 3:15; Micah 4:5.

affirmations,¹ to the glory of God² and the good of ourselves³ and others.⁴

113. What particular sins does the third commandment forbid?

The third commandment forbids: not using God's name as is required;⁵ the abuse of it through ignorance,⁶ empty⁷ or unholy⁸ treatment, irreverence, superstition,⁹ or any wicked reference to His titles, attributes,¹⁰ regulations,¹¹ or works;¹² blasphemy;¹³ perjury;¹⁴ all sinful cursing;¹⁵ oaths,¹⁶ vows,¹⁷ and casting lots;¹⁸ violating our oaths and vows, if lawful,¹⁹ and keeping them, if aimed at unlawful things;²⁰ complaining and quarreling about²¹ or misapplication of God's decrees²² and acts of providence²³ as well as unwarranted curiosity about them;²⁴ misinterpreting²⁵ or misapplying²⁶ God's word or perverting all or part of its meaning in any way;²⁷ blasphemous mockery of His word,²⁸ pointless arguing, meaningless talk, or supporting false doctrines;²⁹ abusing God's name, His creatures, or anything included under His name in the practice of magic³⁰ or to promote sinful desires and activities,³¹ maligning,³² scorning,¹

¹ Philippians 1:27.

² 1 Corinthians 10:31.

³ Jeremiah 32:39.

⁴ 1 Peter 2:12.

⁵ Malachi 2:2.

⁶ Acts 17:23.

⁷ Proverbs 30:9.

⁸ Malachi 1:6-7,12; 3:14.

⁹ 1 Samuel 4:3-5; Jeremiah 7:4,9-10,14,31; Colossians 2:20-22.

¹⁰ 2 Kings 18:30,35; Exodus 5:2; Psalm 139:20.

¹¹ Psalm 50:16-17.

¹² Isaiah 5:12.

¹³ 2 Kings 19:22; Leviticus 24:11.

¹⁴ Zechariah 5:4; 8:17.

¹⁵ 1 Samuel 17:43; 2 Samuel 16:5.

¹⁶ Jeremiah 5:7; 23:10.

¹⁷ Deuteronomy 23:18; Acts 23:12,14.

¹⁸ Esther 3:7; 9:24; Psalm 22:18.

¹⁹ Psalm 24:4; Ezekiel 17:16,18-19.

²⁰ Mark 6:26; 1 Samuel 25:22,32-34.

²¹ Romans 9:14,19-20.

²² Deuteronomy 29:29.

²³ Romans 3:5,7; Romans 6:1-2.

²⁴ Ecclesiastes 8:11; 9:3; see Psalm 39.

²⁵ Matthew 5:21-22,27-28,31-35,38-39,43-44.

²⁶ Ezekiel 13:22.

²⁷ 2 Peter 3:16; see Matthew 22:24-31.

²⁸ Isaiah 22:13; Jeremiah 23:34,36,38.

²⁹ 1 Timothy 1:4,6-7; 6:4-5,20; 2 Timothy 2:14; Titus 3:9.

³⁰ Deuteronomy 18:10-14; Acts 19:13.

³¹ 2 Timothy 4:3-4; 1 Kings 21:9-10; Jude 4; see Romans 13:13-14.

³² Acts 13:45; 1 John 3:12.

reviling,² or opposing in any way God's truth, grace, and actions;³ pretending to be religious or using religion for evil purposes;⁴ being ashamed of God's name⁵ or a shame to it by stubbornly refusing to obey Him⁶ and by living unwisely,⁷ unfruitfully,⁸ or in such a way as to offend Him⁹ or backslide away from Him.¹⁰

114. What reasons are added to the third commandment?

The reasons are in these words: *for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.*¹¹ Because He is the LORD and our God, His name must never be treated as unholy or misused by us in any way,¹² particularly since He is so opposed to acquitting or sparing those who break this commandment that He will not allow them to escape His righteous judgment,¹³ even though many who do break this commandment escape human condemnation and punishment.¹⁴

115. What is the fourth commandment?

The fourth commandment is: *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall you labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.*¹⁵

116. What does the fourth commandment require?

The fourth commandment requires all men to sanctify or set apart to God the times He has established in His Word, and specifically one who day out of every seven. This was the seventh day from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, and the first day of the week ever since. It will continue that way until the end of the

¹ Psalm 1:1; 2 Peter 3:3.

² 1 Peter 4:4.

³ Acts 13:45-46,50; 4:18; 1 Thessalonians 2:16; Hebrews 10:29; see Acts 19:9.

⁴ 2 Timothy 3:5; Matthew 23:14; see Matthew 6:1-2,5,16.

⁵ Mark 8:38.

⁶ Psalm 73:14-15.

⁷ Ephesians 5:15-17; see 1 Corinthians 6:5-6.

⁸ Isaiah 5:4; see 2 Peter 1:8-9.

⁹ Romans 2:23-24.

¹⁰ Galatians 3:1,3; see Hebrews 6:6.

¹¹ Exodus 20:7.

¹² Leviticus 19:12.

¹³ Deuteronomy 28:58-59; see Ezekiel 36:21-23.

¹⁴ 1 Samuel 2:29; 3:13; see 1 Samuel 2:12-17, 22-25.

¹⁵ Exodus 20:8-11; cf. Deuteronomy 5:12-15.

world. This is the Christian Sabbath,¹ in the New Testament called the *Lord's Day*.²

117. How do we keep the Sabbath or the Lord's Day holy?

We keep the Sabbath or the Lord's Day holy by resting the whole day,³ not just from doing things that are inherently sinful at any time, but even from worldly affairs and recreations that are lawful on other days.⁴ Except for necessary works or acts of mercy,⁵ we should joyfully spend all our time publicly and privately worshiping God.⁶ To that end, we must prepare our hearts and carefully plan ahead so that our worldly business is taken care of beforehand in order that we may more readily spend the day the way God requires.⁷

118. Why is the command to keep the Sabbath specifically directed to heads of family and others in authority?

The command to keep the Sabbath is specifically directed to heads of families and others in authority because the command not only obligates them individually and personally, but also makes them responsible for everyone under them. The command also recognizes that those in authority may be inclined to work themselves on the Sabbath Day and so hinder the observance of it by those under them.⁸

119. What particular sins does the fourth commandment forbid?

The fourth commandment forbids failing to do anything required by the commandment;⁹ or doing carelessly, negligently, or in such a way way as not to benefit from it, and being tired of keeping it;¹⁰ also treating the day as unholy by loafing, by doing anything in itself sinful,¹¹ and by all useless works, words, and thoughts about our worldly affairs and recreations.¹²

120. What reasons are added to the fourth commandment emphasizing the importance of obeying it?

¹ Deuteronomy 5:12-14; Genesis 2:2-3; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Acts 20:7; John 20:19,26; see Matthew 5:17-18 and Isaiah 56:2,4,6-7.

² Revelation 1:10.

³ Exodus 20:8,10.

⁴ Exodus 16:25-28; Jeremiah 17:21-22; see Nehemiah 13:15-22.

⁵ Matthew 12:1-5,6-13.

⁶ Isaiah 58:13-14; Luke 4:16; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Leviticus 23:3; see Psalm 92 title and Isaiah 66:23.

⁷ Exodus 20:8; 16:22,25-26,29; Nehemiah 13:19.

⁸ Exodus 20:10; 23:12; see Joshua 24:15 and Nehemiah 13:15-17 and Jeremiah 17:20-22.

⁹ Ezekiel 22:26.

¹⁰ Amos 8:5; see Acts 20:7,9; Ezekiel 33:30-32 and Malachi 1:13.

¹¹ Ezekiel 23:38.

¹² Jeremiah 17:24,27; see Isaiah 58:13-14.

The reasons added to the fourth commandment to emphasize its importance are first of all implied by its inherent fairness; God allows us six days out of every seven for our own affairs and reserves only one for Himself, in these words: *Six days shall you labor, and do all your work.*¹ God also insists that this day belong to Him, *the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God.*² And there is the example of God Himself who in *six days made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day.* Finally, God put a blessing on that day, not just by making it a holy day for serving Him, but also by establishing that our keeping the Sabbath holy will be a blessing to us as well, *therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.*³

121. Why does the word *Remember* begin the fourth commandment?

The word *Remember* begins the fourth commandment⁴ in one respect, because it is highly beneficial to remember it: the word helps us prepare ourselves to keep the commandment,⁵ and when we do, it helps us to do a better job keeping all the other commandments;⁶ and the word also reminds us to remain ever thankful for the two great benefits of creation and redemption, which contain the essence of true religion.⁷ In another respect, the word “remember” reminds us us how easy it is to forget to keep the Sabbath, for several reasons.⁸ First, keeping the Sabbath is not obvious to our natural, human understanding,⁹ while it additionally restricts our freedom from doing things that are lawful on other days.¹⁰ And coming only every seven days leaves plenty of time for us to become so engrossed with our worldly affairs that we forget to prepare for the Sabbath or keep it holy.¹¹ Finally, Satan himself with the tools at his disposal is hard at work to blot out the glory and even the memory of the Sabbath and so promote the neglect of religion and irreverence.¹²

122. What is the essence of the six commandments that cover our obligations to fellow human beings?

¹ Exodus 20:9.

² Exodus 20:10.

³ Exodus 20:11.

⁴ Exodus 20:8.

⁵ Exodus 16:23; Luke 23:54,56; see Mark 15:42 and Nehemiah 13:19.

⁶ Ezekiel 20:12,19-20; Psalm 92:13-14; see Psalm 92 title.

⁷ Genesis 2:2-3; Psalm 118:22,24; Revelation 1:10.

⁸ Ezekiel 22:26.

⁹ Nehemiah 9:14.

¹⁰ Exodus 34:21.

¹¹ Deuteronomy 5:14-15; Amos 8:5.

¹² Lamentations 1:7; Jeremiah 17:21-23; see Nehemiah 13:15-22.

The essence of these six commandments is to love your neighbor as yourself¹ and to do to others what you would have them do to you.²

123. What is the fifth commandment?

The fifth commandment is: *Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.*³

124. To whom does father and mother refer in the fifth commandment?

Father and *mother* refer not just to our parents,⁴ but to everyone who is older⁵ or more talented than we are,⁶ and specifically to those whom God has ordained to be over us in positions of authority, whether in our family,⁷ the church,⁸ or civil government.⁹

125. Why are those over us referred to as father and mother?

The terms *father* and *mother* remind those in authority that, like fathers and mothers, they are responsible for and should act in a loving and tender way, appropriately reflecting their particular relationship, toward those under them;¹⁰ and those under them are also encouraged to accept their authority more willingly and cheerfully, as if they were their parents.¹¹

126. What is the general scope of the fifth commandment?

In general, the fifth commandment outlines our obligations to others, depending upon our particular relationship to them, whether over, under, or equal to them.¹²

127. What kind of honor is owed to those over us?

Those over us deserve respect in our hearts,¹³ our words,¹⁴ and our actions.¹⁵ We must pray and give thanks for them,¹⁶ emulate their

¹ Matthew 22:39.

² Matthew 7:12.

³ Exodus 20:12; cf. Deuteronomy 5:16.

⁴ Proverbs 23:22,25; see Ephesians 6:1-2.

⁵ 1 Timothy 5:1-2.

⁶ Genesis 4:20-21; 45:8.

⁷ 2 Kings 5:13.

⁸ 2 Kings 2:12; Galatians 4:19; see 2 Kings 13:14.

⁹ Isaiah 49:23.

¹⁰ Ephesians 6:4; 2 Corinthians 12:14; 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8,11; see Numbers 11:11-12.

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 4:14-16; see 2 Kings 5:13.

¹² Ephesians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:17; Romans 12:10; see Romans 13:1,7 and Ephesians 5:22,24; 6:1,4-5,9.

¹³ Malachi 1:6; Leviticus 19:3.

¹⁴ Proverbs 31:28; 1 Peter 3:6.

¹⁵ Leviticus 19:32; 1 Kings 2:19.

¹⁶ 1 Timothy 2:1-2.

virtues and gifts,¹ willingly heed and obey their lawful commands and advice,² submit to their correction,³ be faithful to them,⁴ and defend⁵ defend⁵ and support their persons and authority, as is appropriate to their rank and position.⁶ We must also tolerate their imperfections and infirmities and cover them with our love,⁷ so that we will be an honor to them and to their authority.⁸

128. What are the particular sins against those in authority by those under them?

The sins of those under authority against those over them are: any failure to perform what is required by them;⁹ being envious of,¹⁰ holding in contempt,¹¹ or rebelling¹² against their person¹³ or position¹⁴ as reflected in their lawful advice,¹⁵ commands, and correction;¹⁶ cursing at or making fun of them¹⁷ or any kind of stubborn resistance and disgraceful display that brings shame or dishonor to their person and authority.¹⁸

129. What is required of those in authority toward those under them?

As is appropriate to the position of power they have received from God and to the particular relationship involved, those in authority should love,¹⁹ pray for,²⁰ and bless those under them.²¹ They should teach,²² advise, and warn them,²³ approving,²⁴ praising,¹ and

¹ Hebrews 13:7; Philippians 3:17.

² Ephesians 6:1-2,5-7; 1 Peter 2:13-14; Hebrews 13:17; see Romans 13:1-5 and Proverbs 4:3-4; 23:22 and Exodus 18:19,24.

³ Hebrews 12:9; 1 Peter 2:18-20.

⁴ Titus 2:9-10.

⁵ 1 Samuel 26:15-16; see 2 Samuel 18:3 and Esther 6:2.

⁶ Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:6-7; 1 Timothy 5:17-18; see Galatians 6:6 and Genesis 45:11; 47:12.

⁷ Genesis 9:23; see 1 Peter 2:18 and Proverbs 23:22.

⁸ Psalm 127:3-5; Proverbs 31:23.

⁹ Matthew 15:4-6; Romans 13:8.

¹⁰ Numbers 11:28-29.

¹¹ 1 Samuel 8:7; Isaiah 3:5.

¹² 2 Samuel 15:10.

¹³ Exodus 21:15.

¹⁴ 1 Samuel 10:27.

¹⁵ 1 Samuel 2:25.

¹⁶ Deuteronomy 21:18-21.

¹⁷ Proverbs 30:11,17.

¹⁸ Proverbs 19:26.

¹⁹ Colossians 3:19; Titus 2:4.

²⁰ 1 Samuel 12:23; Job 1:5.

²¹ 1 Kings 8:55-56; Hebrews 7:7; see Genesis 49:28.

²² Deuteronomy 6:6-7.

²³ Ephesians 6:4.

²⁴ 1 Peter 3:7.

rewarding those that do well² while disproving,³ blaming, and punishing those who do wrong.⁴ They should also protect those under them⁵ and provide the things they need for soul⁶ and body.⁷ Those in authority should also be examples of serious, wise, and holy behavior so as to bring glory to God⁸ and honor to themselves⁹ and thereby maintain the authority God has bestowed on them.¹⁰

130. What are the particular sins of those in authority?

In addition to failing to do what is required of them¹¹ and using their position for self-aggrandizement¹² and for their own glory,¹³ ease, profit, or pleasure,¹⁴ the sins of those in authority include: commanding things that are unlawful¹⁵ or that cannot be accomplished by those under them;¹⁶ persuading,¹⁷ encouraging¹⁸, and rewarding those under them for doing evil,¹⁹ dissuading, discouraging, and not rewarding them for doing good;²⁰ excessive punishment;²¹ carelessly exposing or allowing them to do wrong and to be put in the way of temptation or danger;²² provoking them to anger;²³ and doing anything that dishonors themselves or undermines their authority by being unjust, imprudent, too severe, or lax.²⁴

131. What is required of equals?

¹ 1 Peter 2:14; Romans 13:3.

² Esther 6:3.

³ Romans 13:3-4.

⁴ Proverbs 29:15; 1 Peter 2:14.

⁵ Isaiah 1:10,17; see Job 29:12-17.

⁶ Ephesians 6:4.

⁷ 1 Timothy 5:8.

⁸ 1 Timothy 4:12; see Titus 2:3-5.

⁹ 1 Kings 3:28.

¹⁰ Titus 2:15.

¹¹ Ezekiel 34:2-4.

¹² Philippians 2:21.

¹³ John 5:44; see John 7:18.

¹⁴ Isaiah 56:10-11; see Deuteronomy 17:17.

¹⁵ Acts 4:17-18; see Daniel 3:4-6.

¹⁶ Exodus 5:18; Matthew 23:2,4.

¹⁷ Matthew 14:8; see Mark 6:24.

¹⁸ 2 Samuel 13:28.

¹⁹ Jeremiah 6:13-14; Judges 20:13-14.

²⁰ John 7:46-49; see Colossians 3:21 and Exodus 5:17 and John 9:28.

²¹ 1 Peter 2:18-20; Deuteronomy 25:3.

²² Genesis 38:11,26; Acts 18:17; see 1 Samuel 23:25-27 and Leviticus 19:29 and Isaiah 58:7.

²³ Ephesians 6:4.

²⁴ Genesis 9:21; 1 Kings 12:13-16; 1:6; see 1 Samuel 2:29-31; 3:13.

Equals are required to pay attention to the dignity and worth of each other¹ by honoring each other above themselves² and by rejoicing in in each others' gifts and success as if their own.³

132. What are the particular sins of equals?

In addition to failing to do what is required of them,⁴ the sins of equals include undervaluing the worth of each other,⁵ envying their gifts,⁶ grieving over their success or prosperity,⁷ and trying to lord it over them.⁸

133. What reason is added to the fifth commandment emphasizing how important it is to obey it?

The reason added to the fifth commandment is in these words: *that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.*⁹ These words expressly promise long life and prosperity to all who keep this commandment, if these glorify God and are for their good.¹⁰

134. What is the sixth commandment?

The sixth commandment is: *You shall not murder.*¹¹

135. What does the sixth commandment require?

The sixth commandment requires us to do our best to make every lawful effort to preserve our own life¹² and the lives of others.¹³ We do this by not thinking about or planning,¹⁴ by controlling our emotions,¹⁵ and by avoiding all opportunities,¹⁶ temptations,¹⁷ or actions that would promote or lead to the unjust taking of someone's life.¹⁸ In the pursuit of that goal, we must defend others from violence,¹⁹ patiently endure the afflictions from God's hand,²⁰ have a

¹ 1 Peter 2:17.

² Romans 12:10; Philippians 2:3.

³ Romans 12:15-16; Philippians 2:3.

⁴ Romans 13:8.

⁵ 2 Timothy 3:3; see Proverbs 14:21 and Isaiah 65:5.

⁶ Acts 7:9; Galatians 5:26.

⁷ Numbers 12:2.

⁸ 3 John 9; Luke 22:24.

⁹ Exodus 20:12.

¹⁰ Ephesians 6:2-3; see Deuteronomy 5:16 and 1 Kings 8:25.

¹¹ Exodus 20:13; cf. Deuteronomy 5:17.

¹² Ephesians 5:28-29.

¹³ 1 Kings 18:4.

¹⁴ Jeremiah 26:15-16; see Acts 23:12,16-17,21,27.

¹⁵ Ephesians 4:26-27.

¹⁶ 2 Samuel 2:22-23; Deuteronomy 22:8.

¹⁷ Matthew 4:6-7; Proverbs 1:10-11,15-16.

¹⁸ Genesis 37:21-22; see 1 Samuel 24:12; 26:9-11.

¹⁹ Psalm 82:4; Proverbs 24:11-12; see 1 Samuel 14:45 and Jeremiah 38:7-13.

²⁰ James 5:10-11; Hebrews 12:9; see 2 Samuel 16:10-12.

quiet mind¹ and a cheerful spirit,² practice temperance in the way we we eat,³ drink,⁴ take medications,⁵ sleep,⁶ work,⁷ and play.⁸ We should also harbor charitable thoughts,⁹ love,¹⁰ compassion,¹¹ meekness, gentleness, and kindness.¹² Our speech and behavior should be peaceful, mild, and courteous.¹³ We should be tolerant of others, be ready to be reconciled, patiently put up with and forgive injuries against us, and return good for evil.¹⁴ Finally, we should provide aid and comfort to those in distress as well as protect and defend the innocent.¹⁵

136. What particular sins does the sixth commandment forbid?

The sixth commandment forbids: taking our own¹⁶ or anyone else's life,¹⁷ except in the pursuit of public justice,¹⁸ lawful war,¹⁹ or necessary defense;²⁰ neglecting or withholding the necessary means for the preservation of life;²¹ sinful anger,²² hatred,²³ envy,²⁴ or desire for revenge;²⁵ all excessive emotions²⁶ and distracting anxieties;²⁷ intemperate eating,²⁸ drinking,²⁹ working,³⁰ or playing;³¹ speaking in a

¹ 1 Thessalonians 4:11; 1 Peter 3:3-4; Psalm 37:8,11.

² Proverbs 17:22.

³ Proverbs 23:20; 25:16,27.

⁴ 1 Timothy 5:23.

⁵ Isaiah 38:21.

⁶ Psalm 127:2.

⁷ 2 Thessalonians 3:12; see Ecclesiastes 5:12.

⁸ Ecclesiastes 3:4,11; Mark 6:31.

⁹ 1 Samuel 19:4-5; see 1 Samuel 22:13-14.

¹⁰ Romans 13:10.

¹¹ Luke 10:33-34.

¹² Colossians 3:12-13.

¹³ James 3:17.

¹⁴ 1 Peter 3:8-11; 1 Corinthians 4:12-13; see Proverbs 15:1 and Judges 8:1-3.

¹⁵ Matthew 5:24; Ephesians 4:2,32; Romans 12:17,20-21.

¹⁶ 1 Thessalonians 5:14; Matthew 25:35-36; Proverbs 31:8-9; see Job 31:19-20; Isaiah 58:7.

¹⁷ Acts 16:28.

¹⁸ Genesis 9:6.

¹⁹ Numbers 35:31,33; Romans 13:4.

²⁰ See Deuteronomy 20 compared with Hebrews 11:32-34.

²¹ Exodus 22:2.

²² Matthew 25:42-43; James 2:15-16.

²³ Matthew 5:22.

²⁴ 1 John 3:15; Leviticus 19:17.

²⁵ Proverbs 14:30.

²⁶ Romans 12:19.

²⁷ Ephesians 4:31.

²⁸ Matthew 6:31,34.

²⁹ Luke 21:34; Romans 13:13.

³⁰ Ecclesiastes 12:12; 2:22-23.

³¹ Isaiah 5:12.

provocative way,¹ oppressing,² quarreling with,³ hitting, or wounding wounding others,⁴ and anything else conducive to the destruction of anyone's life.⁵

137. What is the seventh commandment?

The seventh commandment is: *You shall not commit adultery.*⁶

138. What does the seventh commandment require?

The seventh commandment requires us to be sexually pure in body, mind, inclinations,⁷ words,⁸ and actions,⁹ and to maintain that purity in in ourselves and others.¹⁰ We are to monitor what we look at as well as what we experience with our other senses;¹¹ and we are to live temperately,¹² keeping pure company¹³ and dressing modestly.¹⁴ Those who cannot control their sexual desires should marry,¹⁵ loving¹⁶ and living together with their spouses.¹⁷ We should also work hard at whatever we are called to do,¹⁸ avoiding all opportunities for indecency, and resisting any temptation to say, think, or do anything indecent or obscene.¹⁹

139. What particular sins does the seventh commandment forbid?

In addition to failing to do what is required,²⁰ the seventh commandment forbids: adultery, fornication,²¹ rape, incest,²² sodomy, and all unnatural desires;²³ all impure imaginations, thoughts, purposes, and inclinations;²⁴ all corrupt and nasty talk or listening to

¹ Proverbs 15:1; 12:18.

² Exodus 1:14; see Isaiah 3:15.

³ Galatians 5:15; Proverbs 23:29.

⁴ Numbers 35:16-17,18-21.

⁵ Exodus 21:29.

⁶ Exodus 20:14; cf. Deuteronomy 5:18.

⁷ 1 Thessalonians 4:4-5; Job 31:1; 1 Corinthians 7:34.

⁸ Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 4:6.

⁹ 1 Peter 3:2.

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 7:2-5,34-36.

¹¹ Matthew 5:28; Job 31:1.

¹² Acts 24:24-25.

¹³ Proverbs 2:16-20.

¹⁴ 1 Timothy 2:9.

¹⁵ 1 Corinthians 7:2,9.

¹⁶ Proverbs 5:19-20.

¹⁷ 1 Peter 3:7; 1 Corinthians 7:5.

¹⁸ Proverbs 31:11,27-28.

¹⁹ Proverbs 5:8; see Genesis 39:8-10.

²⁰ Proverbs 5:7; see Proverbs 4:23,27.

²¹ Hebrews 13:4; Ephesians 5:5; see Galatians 5:19.

²² 2 Samuel 13:14; 1 Corinthians 5:1; Mark 6:18.

²³ Romans 1:24,26-27; Leviticus 20:15-16.

²⁴ Matthew 5:28; 15:19; Colossians 3:5.

such,¹ lewd looks,² shameless or frivolous behavior, and immodest dress;³ prohibiting lawful marriages⁴ and allowing unlawful ones;⁵ condoning, tolerating, or organizing prostitution and visiting prostitutes;⁶ restrictive vows of celibacy,⁷ unnecessary delays in marrying,⁸ having more than one wife or husband at the same time;⁹ unjust divorce¹⁰ or desertion;¹¹ idleness, gluttony, drunkenness,¹² and keeping impure company;¹³ obscene or pornographic songs, books, pictures, dancing, or theatrical presentations;¹⁴ and all other encouragement to or indulgence in impure activities by us or other.¹⁵

140. What is the eighth commandment?

The eighth commandment is: *You shall not steal.*¹⁶

141. What does the eighth commandment require?

The eighth commandment requires us to act truthfully, faithfully, and justly in our contractual and business relationships with our fellow human beings¹⁷ so that we give to all what they deserve.¹⁸ We are to make restitution for anything we have unlawfully acquired from its rightful owner;¹⁹ we should give and lend freely, according to our ability and the needs of others;²⁰ we must moderate our judgment, will, and inclinations about worldly goods;²¹ we must exercise prudence in the acquisition,²² maintenance, use, and disposition of the things that we need and are appropriate to sustain us humanly

¹ Ephesians 5:3-4; see Proverbs 7:5,21-22.

² Isaiah 3:16; 2 Peter 2:14.

³ Proverbs 7:10,13.

⁴ 1 Timothy 4:3.

⁵ Mark 6:18; Malachi 2:11-12; see Leviticus 18:1-21.

⁶ 1 Kings 15:12; 2 Kings 23:7; Leviticus 19:29; Jeremiah 5:7; see Deuteronomy 23:17-18 and Proverbs 7:24-27.

⁷ Matthew 19:10-11.

⁸ 1 Corinthians 7:7-9; Genesis 38:26.

⁹ Malachi 2:14-15; Matthew 19:5.

¹⁰ Malachi 2:16; Matthew 5:32; 19:8-9.

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 7:12-13.

¹² Ezekiel 16:49; see Proverbs 23:30-33.

¹³ Genesis 39:19; see Proverbs 5:8.

¹⁴ Ephesians 5:4; Romans 13:13; 1 Peter 4:3; see Ezekiel 23:14-16 and Isaiah 3:16; 23:15-17 and Mark 6:22.

¹⁵ 2 Kings 9:30; Jeremiah 4:30; Ezekiel 23:40.

¹⁶ Exodus 20:15; cf. Deuteronomy 5:19.

¹⁷ Psalm 15:2,4; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16-17; see Zechariah 7:4,10.

¹⁸ Romans 13:7.

¹⁹ Leviticus 6:2-5; see Luke 19:8.

²⁰ Luke 6:30,38; 1 John 3:17; Ephesians 4:28; Galatians 6:10.

²¹ 1 Timothy 6:6-9; see Galatians 6:14.

²² 1 Timothy 5:8.

and that match our condition in life;¹ we should find something lawful to do in life² and work hard at it;³ we should be frugal;⁴ and we should should avoid unnecessary lawsuits⁵ and should not become liable by putting up security for others or by similar commitments.⁶ Finally, we must do our best, by all just and lawful means, to acquire,⁷ preserve, and increase our own and others' money and possessions.⁷

142. What particular sins does the eighth commandment forbid?

In addition to failing to do what is required,⁸ the eighth commandment forbids: theft,⁹ robbery,¹⁰ kidnapping,¹¹ and receiving stolen goods;¹² fraud,¹³ dishonest scales or measures,¹⁴ removing boundary markers,¹⁵ injustice or bad faith in our contractual relationships¹⁶ or trust agreements,¹⁷ oppression,¹⁸ extortion,¹⁹ usury,²⁰ bribery,²¹ harassing lawsuits,²² and unjust expropriation and dispossession of others' land,²³ hoarding goods to increase their price,²⁴ illegal work or activities,²⁵ and all other unjust or sinful ways of taking, withholding, or enriching ourselves from what belongs to others;²⁶ avarice;²⁷ excessive attachment to or display of our worldly

¹ Proverbs 27:23,24-27; Ecclesiastes 2:24; 3:12-13; 1 Timothy 6:17-18; see Isaiah 38:1 and Matthew 11:8.

² 1 Corinthians 7:20; see Genesis 2:15; 3:19.

³ Ephesians 4:28; Proverbs 10:4; Romans 12:11.

⁴ John 6:12; Proverbs 21:20.

⁵ 1 Corinthians 6:1,2-9.

⁶ Proverbs 11:15; 6:1-6.

⁷ Leviticus 25:35; Philippians 2:4; see Deuteronomy 22:1-4 and Exodus 23:4-5 and Genesis 47:14,20 and Matthew 22:39.

⁸ James 2:15-16; 1 John 3:17.

⁹ Ephesians 4:28.

¹⁰ Psalm 62:10.

¹¹ 1 Timothy 1:10.

¹² Proverbs 29:24; Psalm 50:18.

¹³ 1 Thessalonians 4:6; Leviticus 19:13.

¹⁴ Proverbs 11:1; 20:10.

¹⁵ Deuteronomy 19:14; see Proverbs 23:10.

¹⁶ Amos 8:5; Psalm 37:21.

¹⁷ Luke 16:10-12.

¹⁸ Ezekiel 22:29; Leviticus 25:17.

¹⁹ Matthew 23:25; Ezekiel 22:12.

²⁰ Psalm 15:5.

²¹ Job 15:34.

²² 1 Corinthians 6:6-8; Proverbs 3:29-30.

²³ Isaiah 5:8; Micah 2:2.

²⁴ Proverbs 11:26.

²⁵ Acts 19:19, 24-25.

²⁶ James 5:4; Proverbs 12:6; see Job 20:19.

²⁷ Luke 12:15.

goods;¹ allowing ourselves to become distracted from trusting God in the way that we acquire, maintain, and use worldly goods;² envying the prosperity of others;³ and also laziness,⁴ extravagance, wasteful gambling, and all the other ways that needlessly jeopardize our money and possessions⁵ and defraud ourselves of the use and comfort of the things God has given us.⁶

143. What is the ninth commandment?

The ninth commandment is: *You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.*⁷

144. What does the ninth commandment require?

The ninth commandment requires that we maintain and promote truthfulness in our dealings with each other⁸ and the good reputation of others as well as ourselves.⁹ We must come forward and stand up for the truth,¹⁰ speaking the truth and nothing but the truth from our hearts,¹¹ sincerely,¹² freely,¹³ clearly,¹⁴ and without equivocation,¹⁵ not only in matters relating to the law and justice¹⁶ but in any and every circumstance whatsoever.¹⁷ We must have a charitable regard for others,¹⁸ loving, desiring, and rejoicing in their good reputation¹⁹ as well as regretting²⁰ and putting the best light on their failings.²¹ We must freely acknowledge their talents and gifts,²² defending their innocence,²³ readily receiving a good report about them²⁴ and reluctantly admitting a bad one.¹ We should discourage

¹ 1 Timothy 6:5; Colossians 3:2; 1 John 2:15-16; see Proverbs 23:5 and Psalm 62:10.

² Matthew 6:25,31,34; Ecclesiastes 5:12.

³ Psalm 73:3; see Psalm 37:1,7.

⁴ 2 Thessalonians 3:10-11; see Proverbs 18:9.

⁵ Proverbs 21:17; 23:20-21; see Proverbs 28:19.

⁶ Ecclesiastes 4:8; 6:2; 1 Timothy 4:3-5; 5:8.

⁷ Exodus 20:16; cf. Deuteronomy 5:20.

⁸ Zechariah 8:16; Ephesians 4:25.

⁹ 3 John 12.

¹⁰ Proverbs 31:8-9.

¹¹ Psalm 15:2.

¹² 2 Chronicles 19:9.

¹³ 1 Samuel 19:4-5.

¹⁴ Joshua 7:19.

¹⁵ 2 Samuel 14:18; Acts 20:27.

¹⁶ Leviticus 19:15; Proverbs 14:5,25.

¹⁷ 2 Corinthians 1:17-18; Ephesians 4:25; see Colossians 3:9.

¹⁸ Hebrews 6:9; 1 Corinthians 13:7.

¹⁹ Romans 1:8; 2 John 4; 3 John 3-4.

²⁰ 2 Corinthians 2:4; 12:21; see Psalm 119:158.

²¹ Proverbs 17:9; 1 Peter 4:8.

²² 1 Corinthians 1:4-5,7; see 2 Timothy 1:4-5.

²³ 1 Samuel 22:14.

²⁴ 1 Corinthians 13:6-7.

gossips,² flatterers,³ and slanderers;⁴ we should love and protect our own good reputation and defend it when necessary;⁵ we should keep every lawful promise we make no matter what;⁶ and finally we should do the best we can to focus our lives and thoughts on things that are true, noble, lovely and admirable.⁷

145. What particular sins does the ninth commandment forbid?

The ninth commandment forbids everything detrimental to the truth and the good reputation of others as well as our own,⁸ with special reference to legal matters in the courts.⁹ We must not give untrue evidence,¹⁰ suborn perjury,¹¹ knowingly appear and plead on behalf of an evil cause, or engage in overbearing and boastful exaggeration.¹² We should never participate in passing an unjust sentence,¹³ call evil good or good evil, or reward the wicked in a way appropriate to the righteous or the righteous in a way appropriate to the wicked.¹⁴ Forgery is forbidden,¹⁵ as is concealing the truth, remaining silent in a just cause,¹⁶ and not taking it on ourselves¹⁷ to reprove or complain to others about some wrong.¹⁸ We must not speak the truth at an inappropriate time,¹⁹ or maliciously to promote a wrong purpose,²⁰ nor pervert it into a wrong meaning,²¹ into ambiguous equivocations, or in such ways as to undermine truth and justice.²² Also forbidden are: saying anything untrue,²³ as well as lying,²⁴ slandering,²⁵ backbiting,²⁶ belittling,¹ gossiping,² whispering,³

¹ Psalm 15:3.

² Proverbs 25:23.

³ Proverbs 26:24-25.

⁴ Psalm 101:5.

⁵ Proverbs 22:1; John 8:49; see 2 Corinthians 11:1-12:13.

⁶ Psalm 15:4.

⁷ Philippians 4:8.

⁸ Luke 3:14; see 1 Samuel 17:28 and 2 Samuel 16:3; 1:9-10,15-16.

⁹ Leviticus 19:15; see Habakkuk 1:4.

¹⁰ Proverbs 19:5; see Proverbs 6:16,19.

¹¹ Acts 6:13.

¹² Jeremiah 9:3,5; Psalm 12:3-4; see Acts 24:2,5 and Psalm 52:1-4.

¹³ Proverbs 17:15; see 1 Kings 21:9-14.

¹⁴ Isaiah 5:23.

¹⁵ 1 Kings 21:8.

¹⁶ Leviticus 5:1; Acts 5:3,8-9; see Deuteronomy 13:8 and 2 Timothy 4:16.

¹⁷ 1 Kings 1:6; Leviticus 19:17.

¹⁸ Isaiah 59:4.

¹⁹ Proverbs 29:11.

²⁰ 1 Samuel 22:9-10; Psalm 52:1-5.

²¹ Psalm 56:5; Matthew 26:60-61; see John 2:19.

²² Genesis 3:5; see Genesis 26:7,9.

²³ Isaiah 59:13.

²⁴ Colossians 3:9; see Leviticus 19:11.

²⁵ Psalm 50:20.

²⁶ Psalm 15:3.

whispering,³ ridiculing,⁴ reviling,⁵ and expressing any kind of judgmental opinion that is rash,⁶ harsh,⁷ or prejudiced;⁸ misconstruing intentions, words, and actions;⁹ flattery¹⁰ and ostentatious boasting;¹¹ thinking or speaking too highly or too poorly of ourselves or others;¹² denying the gifts of God or the effects of his grace on us;¹³ exaggerating the significance of trivial faults;¹⁴ concealing, excusing, or rationalizing our sinful behavior when we are called to confess it voluntarily;¹⁵ gratuitously revealing the problems and failings of others;¹⁶ spreading false rumors,¹⁷ receiving and approving evil reports,¹⁸ and refusing to listen to a just defense;¹⁹ harboring evil suspicions;²⁰ being envious of or grieved by the deserved honors others receive,²¹ trying to discredit those honors,²² and rejoicing at someone else's disgrace or evil reputation,²³ scornful contempt²⁴ and foolish admiration;²⁵ breaking our lawful promises;²⁶ and, finally, failing to promote everyone's good name,²⁷ and doing, not avoiding, or not hindering in others, as we can, those things that give people a bad name.²⁸

146. What is the tenth commandment?

¹ James 4:11; see Jeremiah 38:4.

² Leviticus 19:16.

³ Romans 1:29-30.

⁴ Genesis 21:9; Galatians 4:29.

⁵ 1 Corinthians 6:10.

⁶ Matthew 7:1.

⁷ Acts 28:4; see James 2:13.

⁸ Genesis 38:24; Romans 2:1.

⁹ Romans 3:8; Psalm 69:10; see Nehemiah 6:6-8 and 1 Samuel 1:13-15 and 2 Samuel 10:3.

¹⁰ Psalm 12:2-3.

¹¹ 2 Timothy 3:2.

¹² Luke 18:9,11; Acts 12:22; Exodus 4:10-14; see Romans 12:16 and Galatians 5:26 and 1 Corinthians 4:6.

¹³ Luke 9:49-50; 2 Corinthians 10:10; Acts 2:13; see Job 27:5-6; 4:6.

¹⁴ Matthew 7:3-5.

¹⁵ Proverbs 28:13; Genesis 3:12-13; see Proverbs 30:20 and Jeremiah 2:35 and 2 Kings 5:25 and Genesis 4:9.

¹⁶ Proverbs 25:9-10; see Genesis 9:22.

¹⁷ Exodus 23:1.

¹⁸ Proverbs 29:12; see Psalm 41:7-8.

¹⁹ Acts 7:56-57; Job 31:13-14.

²⁰ 1 Corinthians 13:5; see 1 Timothy 6:4.

²¹ Matthew 21:15; see Numbers 11:29.

²² Ezra 4:12-13; see Daniel 6:3-4.

²³ Jeremiah 48:27.

²⁴ Matthew 27:28-29; see Psalm 35:15-16,21.

²⁵ Jude 16; Acts 12:22.

²⁶ Romans 1:31; 2 Timothy 3:3.

²⁷ 1 Samuel 2:24.

²⁸ 2 Samuel 13:12-13; Proverbs 5:8-9; 6:33.

The tenth commandment is: *You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.*¹

147. What does the tenth commandment require?

The tenth commandment requires that we be so completely satisfied with our own status in life² and have such a proper, loving attitude toward others that we are naturally inclined to wish the best for them and all their possessions.³

148. What particular sins does the tenth commandment forbid?

The tenth commandment forbids any dissatisfaction with what belongs to us,⁴ envy⁵ and grief at the success of others,⁶ and all improper desire for anything that belongs to someone else.⁷

149. Can anyone keep the commandments of God?

No one can perfectly keep the commandments of God,⁸ either on his own or from any divine gift received in this life,⁹ but breaks them every day in thought,¹⁰ word, and action.¹¹

150. Are all sins equally evil in themselves and in the eyes of God?

All sins are not equally evil; in the eyes of God, some of them are more evil in themselves and others because of the harm that results from them.¹²

151. What sins are more evil because of the harm that results from them

Sins become more harmful:

1. From those who commit the sins:¹³ if they are older,¹⁴ have a longer experience of God's grace,¹⁵ are well-known for their faith,¹

¹ Exodus 20:17; cf. Deuteronomy 5:21.

² Hebrews 13:5; 1 Timothy 6:6; see Philippians 4:11.

³ Job 31:29; Romans 12:15; see Psalm 122:7-9 and 1 Timothy 1:5 and Esther 10:3 and 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

⁴ 1 Corinthians 10:10; see 1 Kings 21:4 and Esther 5:13.

⁵ Galatians 5:26; James 3:14,16.

⁶ Psalm 112:9-10; see Nehemiah 2:10.

⁷ Romans 7:7-8; 13:9; Colossians 3:5; Deuteronomy 5:21.

⁸ James 3:2; John 15:5; Romans 8:3.

⁹ Ecclesiastes 7:20; 1 John 1:8,10; Galatians 5:17; Romans 7:18-19.

¹⁰ Genesis 6:5; 8:21; James 1:14.

¹¹ Romans 3:9,10-19; James 3:2-13.

¹² John 19:11; 1 John 5:16; Hebrews 2:2-3; see Psalm 78:17,32,56 and Ezekiel 8:6,13,15.

¹³ Jeremiah 2:8.

¹⁴ Job 32:7,9; Ecclesiastes 4:13.

¹⁵ 1 Kings 11:4,9.

- clearly know better,² hold a prominent position³ or office,⁴ are teachers,⁵ and whose example will influence others.⁶
2. From those sinned against:⁷ if directly against God,⁸ his attributes,⁹ and worship;¹⁰ against Christ and his grace;¹¹ against the Holy Spirit,¹² his witness¹³ and work;¹⁴ against those above us, prominent men¹⁵ and especially those to whom we are related or owe allegiance;¹⁶ and against any fellow believer,¹⁷ particularly those who are weaker in the faith,¹⁸ their souls or anyone else's,¹⁹ and the general good of everyone.²⁰
 3. From the nature and quality of the sin:²¹ if it is against the exact letter of the law,²² breaks more than one commandment or includes many separate sins;²³ if it is not only planned in the heart, but is expressed in words and actions,²⁴ scandalizes others,²⁵ and cannot be made right;²⁶ if it is against the means of God's grace,²⁷ his mercy,²⁸ or his judgments,²⁹ against our natural understanding,³⁰ convictions of our conscience,³¹ public or private warnings,³² condemnation by the church,¹ and civil punishment,²

¹ 2 Samuel 12:14; 1 Corinthians 5:1.

² James 4:17; Luke 12:47-48.

³ Jeremiah 5:4-5.

⁴ 2 Samuel 12:7-9; Ezekiel 8:11-12.

⁵ Romans 2:17-24.

⁶ Galatians 2:11-14.

⁷ Psalm 2:12; Matthew 21:38-39.

⁸ 1 Samuel 2:25; Acts 5:4; Psalm 5:4.

⁹ Romans 2:4.

¹⁰ Malachi 1:8,14.

¹¹ Hebrews 2:2-3; 12:25.

¹² Hebrews 10:28-29; Matthew 12:31-32.

¹³ Ephesians 4:30.

¹⁴ Hebrews 6:4-6.

¹⁵ Jude 8; Numbers 12:8-9; Isaiah 3:5.

¹⁶ Proverbs 30:17; 2 Corinthians 12:15; Psalm 55:12-15.

¹⁷ Zephaniah 2:8,10-11; Matthew 18:6; 1 Corinthians 6:8; Revelation 17:6.

¹⁸ 1 Corinthians 8:11-12; Romans 14:13,15,21.

¹⁹ Ezekiel 13:19; 1 Corinthians 8:12; Revelation 18:12-13; Matthew 23:15.

²⁰ 1 Thessalonians 2:15-16; Joshua 22:20.

²¹ Proverbs 6:30-33.

²² Ezra 9:10-12; 1 Kings 11:9-10.

²³ Colossians 3:5; 1 Timothy 6:10; Proverbs 5:8-12; 6:32-33; Joshua 7:21.

²⁴ James 1:14-15; Matthew 5:22; Micah 2:1.

²⁵ Matthew 18:7; Romans 2:23-24.

²⁶ Deuteronomy 22:22,28-29; Proverbs 6:32-35.

²⁷ Matthew 11:21-24; John 15:22.

²⁸ Isaiah 1:3; Deuteronomy 32:6.

²⁹ Amos 4:8-11; Jeremiah 5:3.

³⁰ Romans 1:26-27.

³¹ Romans 1:32; Daniel 5:22; Titus 3:10-11.

³² Proverbs 29:1.

and if it is against our own prayers, purposes, promises,³ vows,⁴ covenants,⁵ and commitments to God or men⁶—if made deliberately,⁷ willfully,⁸ presumptuously,⁹ immodestly,¹⁰ boastfully,¹¹ maliciously,¹² repeatedly,¹³ obstinately,¹⁴ with delight,¹⁵ continually,¹⁶ or as a result of falling back into it after repenting from it.¹⁷

4. From circumstances of time¹⁸ and place:¹⁹ if on the Lord's Day²⁰ or other times of divine worship,²¹ or immediately before²² or after these²³ or other religious activities that help to prevent or be a remedy for such failures,²⁴ and if publicly or in the presence of others, who consequently may very well be aroused to or defiled by the sin.²⁵

152. What does every sin deserve from God?

Since even the least sin goes against the sovereignty,²⁶ goodness,²⁷ and holiness of God,²⁸ and against his righteous law,²⁹ every sin deserves God's wrath and curse,³⁰ both in this life³¹ and the life to come,³² and cannot be expiated except by the blood of Christ.¹

¹ Titus 3:10; Matthew 18:17.

² Proverbs 27:22; 23:35.

³ Psalm 78:34-37; Jeremiah 2:20; 13:5-6,20-21.

⁴ Ecclesiastes 5:4-6; Proverbs 20:25.

⁵ Leviticus 26:25.

⁶ Proverbs 2:17; Ezekiel 7:18-19.

⁷ Psalm 36:4.

⁸ Jeremiah 6:16.

⁹ Numbers 15:30; Exodus 21:14.

¹⁰ Jeremiah 3:3; Proverbs 7:13.

¹¹ Psalm 52:1.

¹² 3 John 10.

¹³ Numbers 14:22.

¹⁴ Zechariah 7:11-12.

¹⁵ Proverbs 2:14.

¹⁶ Isaiah 57:17.

¹⁷ Jeremiah 34:8-11; 2 Peter 2:20-22.

¹⁸ 2 Kings 5:26.

¹⁹ Jeremiah 7:10; Isaiah 26:10.

²⁰ Ezekiel 23:37-39.

²¹ Isaiah 58:3-5; Numbers 25:6-7.

²² 1 Corinthians 11:20-21; Jeremiah 7:8-10.

²³ Proverbs 7:14-15; John 13:27,30.

²⁴ Ezra 9:13-14.

²⁵ 2 Samuel 16:22; 1 Samuel 2:22-24.

²⁶ James 2:10-11.

²⁷ Exodus 20:1-2.

²⁸ Habakkuk 1:13; Leviticus 10:3; 11:44-45.

²⁹ 1 John 3:4; Romans 7:12.

³⁰ Ephesians 5:6; Galatians 3:10.

³¹ Lamentations 3:39; Deuteronomy 28:15-68.

³² Matthew 25:41.

153. What does God require from us to escape his wrath and curse, which we deserve for our sin?

To escape God's wrath and curse, which we deserve for our sin, God requires from us repentance in relationship to God and faith in our relationship to our Lord Jesus Christ,² along with diligent involvement in all the external ways Christ uses to bring us the benefits of his mediation.³

154. What are the external ways Christ uses to bring us the benefits of his mediation

The ordinary external ways Christ uses to bring the benefits of his mediation to his church are his regulations, particularly the word, sacraments, and prayer, all of which are made effective for the salvation of his chosen ones.⁴

155. What makes the word effective for salvation?

The Spirit of God causes the reading and especially the preaching of the word to enlighten,⁵ convince, and humble sinners.⁶ The Spirit drives sinners out of themselves and draws them to Christ;⁷ he conforms them to his image⁸ and subdues them to his will;⁹ he strengthens them against temptations and corrupting influences;¹⁰ and he builds them up in God's grace¹¹ and establishes their hearts in holiness and comfort through faith to salvation.¹²

156. Should everyone read the word of God

Although everyone is not allowed to read the word publicly in church,¹³ all people must read it privately on their own¹⁴ and with their families.¹⁵ In order for this to happen, the Bible has to be translated out of the original Hebrew and Greek into contemporary languages.¹⁶

157. How should the word of God be read?

¹ Hebrews 9:22; 1 Peter 1:18-19.

² Acts 20:21; Matthew 3:7-8; Luke 13:3,5; Acts 16:30-31; John 3:16,18.

³ Proverbs 2:1-5; 8:33-36.

⁴ Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:42,46-47.

⁵ Nehemiah 8:8; Acts 26:18; Psalm 19:8.

⁶ 1 Corinthians 14:24-25; see 2 Chronicles 34:18-19,26-28.

⁷ Acts 2:37,41; see Acts 8:27-38.

⁸ 2 Corinthians 3:18; see Colossians 1:27.

⁹ 2 Corinthians 10:4-6; see Romans 6:17-18.

¹⁰ Ephesians 6:16-17; Colossians 1:28; Psalm 19:11; see Matthew 4:4,7,10 and 1 Corinthians 10:11.

¹¹ Ephesians 4:11-12; Acts 20:32; see 2 Timothy 3:15-17.

¹² Romans 16:25; 1 Thessalonians 3:2,10-11,13; see Romans 15:4; 10:13-17; 1:16.

¹³ Deuteronomy 31:9,11-13; see Nehemiah 8:2-3; 9:3-5.

¹⁴ Deuteronomy 17:19; Revelation 1:3; John 5:39; Isaiah 34:16.

¹⁵ Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Genesis 18:17,19; Psalm 78:5-7.

¹⁶ 1 Corinthians 14:6,9,11-12,15-16,24,27-28; Nehemiah 8:8.

We must read the Bible with high and reverent esteem,¹ being absolutely convinced that it is truly God's word² and that only he can enable us to understand it.³ We should read with a desire to know, believe, and obey his will as revealed in the Bible.⁴ We should pay careful attention to its content⁵ and the extent of its meaning,⁶ meditate on it,⁷ apply it to our lives,⁸ deny ourselves under its direction,⁹ and use it as a basis for our prayers.¹⁰

158. Who should preach the word of God?

The word of God should be preached only by those who are sufficiently gifted¹¹ and who are properly approved and called to do it.¹²

159. How should those who are called preach the word of God?

Those who are called to labor in the ministry of the word should preach sound doctrine,¹³ accurately,¹⁴ in season and out of season,¹⁵ clearly,¹⁶ and not with seductive words of human wisdom but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power.¹⁷ They should faithfully¹⁸ and fully express the whole counsel of God;¹⁹ this should be done wisely,²⁰ taking into account the needs and capabilities of the audience.²¹ Their preaching should be motivated by a zealous²² and fervent love for God²³ and the souls of his people.²⁴ Finally, it should

¹ Psalm 119:97; 19:10; Exodus 24:7; 2 Chronicles 34:27; Isaiah 66:2; see Nehemiah 8:3-10.

² 2 Peter 1:19-21; Matthew 4:4; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; see Mark 7:13.

³ Luke 24:45; 2 Corinthians 3:13-16.

⁴ Deuteronomy 17:10,20.

⁵ Acts 17:11.

⁶ Acts 8:30,34; Luke 10:26-28.

⁷ Psalm 1:2; 119:97.

⁸ 2 Chronicles 34:21.

⁹ Proverbs 3:5; Deuteronomy 33:3; Matthew 16:24; see Luke 9:23 and Galatians 1:15-16.

¹⁰ Proverbs 2:1-6; Psalm 119:18; Nehemiah 8:6,8.

¹¹ 1 Timothy 3:2,6; Ephesians 4:8-11; Malachi 2:7; 2 Corinthians 3:6; 2 Timothy 2:2.

¹² Jeremiah 14:15; Romans 10:15; Hebrews 5:4; 1 Corinthians 12:28-29; 1 Timothy 3:10; 4:14; 5:22.

¹³ Titus 2:1,8.

¹⁴ Acts 18:25.

¹⁵ 2 Timothy 4:2.

¹⁶ 1 Corinthians 14:9,10-19.

¹⁷ 1 Corinthians 2:4.

¹⁸ Jeremiah 23:28; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2.

¹⁹ Acts 20:27.

²⁰ Colossians 1:28; 2 Timothy 2:15.

²¹ 1 Corinthians 3:2; Hebrews 5:12-14; Luke 12:42.

²² Acts 18:25; Psalm 119:139; 2 Timothy 4:5.

²³ 2 Corinthians 5:13-14; Philippians 1:15-17.

²⁴ Colossians 4:12; 2 Corinthians 12:15.

be done sincerely,¹ aiming to glorify God² and to convert,³ edify,⁴ and and save his people.⁵

160. What is required of those who hear the word preached?

Those who hear the word preached must pay careful attention to it,⁶ prepare themselves⁷ and pray for understanding.⁸ They should review carefully what they hear through the Bible⁹ and accept the truths in it faithfully,¹⁰ lovingly,¹¹ humbly,¹² and with a ready mind,¹³ treating it as it is, the word of God.¹⁴ They should meditate on it,¹⁵ talk about it,¹⁶ hide it in their hearts,¹⁷ and bring forth the fruit of it in their lives.¹⁸

161. How do the sacraments become effective means of salvation?

The sacraments become effective means of salvation, not by any power in them or by any inherent potency coming from the devoutness or the intention of whoever administers them, but rather by the working of the Holy Spirit and the blessing of Christ, who established them.¹⁹

162. What is a sacrament?

A sacrament is a holy regulation established by Christ in His church²⁰ as a sign, seal, and outward display²¹ to those within the covenant of grace²² of the benefits they have from Christ's mediation.²³ It serves

¹ 2 Corinthians 2:17; 4:2.

² 1 Thessalonians 2:4-6; John 7:18.

³ 1 Corinthians 9:19-22.

⁴ 2 Corinthians 12:19; Ephesians 4:12.

⁵ 1 Timothy 4:16; Acts 26:16-18.

⁶ Proverbs 8:34.

⁷ 1 Peter 2:1-2; Luke 8:18.

⁸ Psalm 119:18; Ephesians 6:18-19.

⁹ Acts 17:11.

¹⁰ Hebrews 4:2.

¹¹ 2 Thessalonians 2:10.

¹² James 1:21.

¹³ Acts 17:11.

¹⁴ 1 Thessalonians 2:13.

¹⁵ Luke 9:44; Hebrews 2:1.

¹⁶ Luke 24:14; Deuteronomy 6:6-7.

¹⁷ Proverbs 2:1; Psalm 119:11.

¹⁸ Luke 8:15; James 1:25.

¹⁹ 1 Peter 3:21; Acts 8:13,23; 1 Corinthians 3:5-7 compared with 1 Corinthians 1:12-17; 1 Corinthians 12:13; 6:11.

²⁰ Genesis 17:7,10; Exodus 12; Matthew 28:19; 26:26-28.

²¹ Romans 4:11; 1 Corinthians 11:24-25.

²² Romans 9:8; 15:8; Exodus 12:48; Galatians 3:27,29; 5:6; 6:15.

²³ Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Corinthians 10:16.

to strengthen and increase their faith and all other graces in them;¹ it obliges them to obey God² and to witness to and cherish their love and fellowship with each other;³ and it distinguishes them from those outside the covenant.⁴

163. What are the parts of the sacrament?

There are two parts of the sacrament. One is the external, physical sign used according to Christ's own directions. The other is the internal, spiritual grace signified by the external use.⁵

164. How many sacraments has Christ established in His church under the New Testament?

Under the New Testament, Christ has established in the church only two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper.⁶

165. What is baptism?

Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament in which Christ has ordained washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit⁷ as a sign and seal of our being joined to Christ,⁸ of the remission of our sins through His blood,⁹ of rebirth by His Spirit,¹⁰ of adoption,¹¹ and resurrection unto everlasting life;¹² and it is the means of solemnly admitting those baptized into the visible church¹³ and of their making a public commitment that they belong completely and only to the Lord.¹⁴

166. Who should be baptized?

Those who are not members of the visible church and so are not included in the covenant of promise should not be baptized until they profess their faith in Christ and obedience to Him.¹⁵ However, the infants of one or both parents who do profess their faith in Christ and

¹ Romans 4:11; Galatians 3:27; 1 Corinthians 11:24-26.

² Romans 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 10:21.

³ Ephesians 4:2-5; 1 Corinthians 10:17; 12:13.

⁴ Ephesians 2:11-12; Genesis 34:14; 1 Corinthians 10:21.

⁵ Genesis 17:10; Matthew 3:11; 26:27-28; 1 Peter 3:21; Romans 2:28-29; Titus 3:5.

⁶ Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:20,23-26; Matthew 26:26-28.

⁷ Matthew 28:19.

⁸ Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3.

⁹ Mark 1:4; Revelation 1:5; Acts 22:16.

¹⁰ Titus 3:5; Ephesians 5:26; John 3:5.

¹¹ Galatians 3:26-27.

¹² 1 Corinthians 15:29; Romans 6:5.

¹³ 1 Corinthians 12:13; Acts 2:41.

¹⁴ Romans 6:4.

¹⁵ Acts 8:36-37; 2:38,41.

obedience to Him are by that relationship included in the covenant and should be baptized.¹

167. How do we continue to use our baptism?

We have a necessary but frequently neglected obligation to use our baptism our whole lives, particularly in times of temptation and when we are present at the baptism of others.² We should seriously and thankfully reflect on what is involved in baptism, why Christ established it, the privileges and benefits conferred and sealed by it, and the significance of our own solemn vows when we were baptized.³ This reflection humbles us when we recognize how defiled we are by sin and how far short we fall of living up to, and indeed walk so contrary to the standards set by the grace of baptism and by our other spiritual commitments.⁴ We are also assured of pardon from sin and of all the other blessings sealed in that sacrament.⁵ We draw strength from the death and resurrection of Christ, into who we were baptized, in order to keep killing our sins and becoming alive by His grace.⁶ We are also spurred on to try to live by faith,⁷ to have our human relationships defined by holiness and righteousness,⁸ as is proper for those who have given up their names to Christ,⁹ and to walk with each other in brotherly love, as is proper for those baptized by the same Spirit into one body.¹⁰

168. What is the Lord's supper

The Lord's supper is a sacrament of the New Testament¹¹ in which bread and wine are given and received as Christ directed to proclaim his death. Those who receive the Lord's supper in the right way feed on his body and blood and thereby are spiritually nourished and grow in grace.¹² They have their union and communion with Christ confirmed,¹³ and they publicly witness to and repeat anew their

¹ Genesis 17:7-9; Galatians 3:9,14,17-18,29; Colossians 2:11-12; Acts 2:38-39; 1 Corinthians 2:11-12; 7:14; Matthew 28:19; Luke 18:15-16; Romans 4:11-12; 11:16.

² Colossians 2:11-12; Romans 6:4,6,11; Psalm 22:10-11.

³ Romans 6:3-5; 1 Peter 3:21.

⁴ 1 Corinthians 1:11-13; Romans 6:2-3.

⁵ Romans 6:4-7,22; 1 Peter 3:21; Romans 5:1-2; Jeremiah 33:8.

⁶ Romans 6:3-5.

⁷ Galatians 3:26-27.

⁸ Romans 6:22.

⁹ Acts 2:38 compared with Galatians 2:20; see also Revelation 2:17.

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 12:13,25-27.

¹¹ Luke 22:20.

¹² Matthew 26:26-28; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

¹³ 1 Corinthians 10:16.

thankfulness¹ and commitment to God² and their mutual love and fellowship with each other, as members of the same mystical body.³

169. What are Christ's directions for giving and receiving the bread and wine in the sacrament of the Lord's supper?

Christ has directed ministers of his word to administer the sacrament of the Lord's supper. First, they should set apart the bread and wine from their ordinary use by the biblical declaration, thanksgiving, and prayer. Then they take the bread, break it, and give both it and the wine to the communicants, who, according to the same directions, are to eat the bread and drink the wine, thankfully remembering that the body of Christ was broken and given, and his blood shed, for them.⁴

170. How do those who receive the Lord's Supper in the right way feed on the body and blood of Christ?

The body and blood of Christ are not present in bodily or physical form, either in, with, or under the bread and wine in the Lord's supper.⁵ They are, however, spiritually present to the faith of the recipient just as truly as the external elements are obvious to the senses.⁶ And so those who receive the Lord's supper in the right way do truly and actually feed on the body and blood of Christ, not in a bodily or physical way, but spiritually,⁷ while by faith they receive and apply to themselves Christ crucified, along with all the benefits of his death.⁸

171. How do we prepare to receive the Lord's supper?

Preparation for the Lord's supper involves careful examination:⁹ of the condition of our life in Christ;¹⁰ of our sins and failings;¹¹ of whether we truly and to what degree know God,¹² believe in him,¹³ and have repented,¹⁴ and of whether we love God and our fellow

¹ 1 Corinthians 11:24.

² 1 Corinthians 10:14-16,21 compared with Romans 7:4.

³ 1 Corinthians 10:17.

⁴ 1 Corinthians 11:23-24; See Matthew 26:26-28 and Mark 14:22-24 and Luke 22:19-20.

⁵ Acts 3:21.

⁶ Matthew 26:26,28.

⁷ 1 Corinthians 11:24-29; cf. Westminster Confession of Faith 27.2 and John 6:51,53.

⁸ 1 Corinthians 10:16.

⁹ 1 Corinthians 11:28.

¹⁰ 2 Corinthians 13:5.

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 5:7; Exodus 12:15.

¹² 1 Corinthians 11:29.

¹³ 2 Corinthians 13:5; Matthew 26:28.

¹⁴ Zechariah 12:10; 1 Corinthians 11:31.

believers.¹ We should have a charitable attitude toward everyone,² including forgiveness of those who have wronged us.³ We must also assess how much we desire Christ⁴ and whether we are living in newness of obedience.⁵ Finally we must renew the practice of these graces in us⁶ by serious meditation⁷ and fervent prayer.⁸

172. Should those who have doubts about their being in Christ or about whether they are ready to take communion come to the Lord's supper anyway?

Those who have doubts about their position in Christ or about their readiness to take communion may nonetheless have a valid interest in Christ, even though they are not yet assured of being in him.⁹ In God's view, if such people are aware of and grieved by their lack of assurance,¹⁰ sincerely want to be found in Christ,¹¹ and want to get away from sinning,¹² and (since promises are involved in the sacrament, and it has been established to aid even weak and doubting Christians¹³) if people in that condition are truly sorry for their lack of faith¹⁴ and work hard to resolve their doubts,¹⁵ they may and ought to come to the Lord's supper, so that their faith may be further strengthened.¹⁶

173. Should the Lord's Supper be withheld from anyone who professes the faith and wants to come to it?

The sacrament should and must be withheld by the authority Christ has left in his church from those whose profession of faith is based on spiritual ignorance or whose lives have scandalized the church,¹⁷ until they are properly instructed and demonstrate by their behavior that they have reformed their lives.¹⁸

174. How must we receive the Lord's supper when it is offered?

¹ 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; Acts 2:46-47.

² 1 Corinthians 5:8; 1 Corinthians 11:18,20.

³ Matthew 5:23-24.

⁴ Isaiah 55:1; John 7:37.

⁵ 1 Corinthians 5:7-8.

⁶ 1 Corinthians 11:25-26,28; Hebrews 10:21-22,24; Psalm 26:6.

⁷ 1 Corinthians 11:24-25.

⁸ 2 Chronicles 30:18-19; Matthew 26:26.

⁹ Isaiah 50:10; 1 John 5:13; Psalm 88; Psalm 77:1-4,7-10; Jonah 2:4.

¹⁰ Isaiah 54:7-10; Matthew 5:3-4; Psalm 31:22; 73:13,22-23.

¹¹ Philippians 3:8-9; Psalm 10:17; 42:1-2,5,11.

¹² 2 Timothy 2:19; Isaiah 50:10; Psalm 66:18-20.

¹³ Isaiah 40:11,29,31; Matthew 11:28; 12:20; 26:28.

¹⁴ Mark 9:24.

¹⁵ Acts 2:37; 16:30.

¹⁶ Romans 4:11; 1 Corinthians 11:28.

¹⁷ 1 Corinthians 11:27-34; Matthew 7:6; 1 Corinthians 5; Jude 23; 1 Timothy 5:22.

¹⁸ 2 Corinthians 2:7.

In receiving the Lord's supper when it is offered, we should reverently and attentively wait on God,¹ as we carefully observe the sacramental elements and their administration.² We should take specific notice of the Lord's body³ and meditate feelingly on his death and suffering⁴ and so stir up in us a lively effect of God's spiritual gifts.⁵ We should critically examine ourselves⁶ and be sorry for our sins.⁷ We should earnestly hunger and thirst after Christ,⁸ feeding on him by faith,⁹ drawing from his fullness,¹⁰ trusting in his merit,¹¹ rejoicing in his love,¹² and giving thanks for his grace.¹³ We thereby renew our covenant with God¹⁴ and our love for fellow believers.¹⁵

175. What should we do after we have received the Lord's supper?

After receiving the Lord's Supper, we should think about our participation in the sacrament and whether we got anything out of it.¹⁶ If we have been spiritually renewed and comforted in that participation, we should bless God for it,¹⁷ pray for the effect to continue,¹⁸ watch out for relapses,¹⁹ fulfill our vows,²⁰ and be encouraged to take communion frequently.²¹ If, on the other hand, we have not received any immediate benefit from our participation, we should more carefully go over how we prepare for and participated in the sacrament.²² If this review reveals no fault in us before God and our own conscience, then we should wait for the spiritual fruit of participation to come to us in due time.²³ However, if

¹ Leviticus 10:3; Hebrews 12:28; Psalm 5:7; 1 Corinthians 11:17,26-27.

² Exodus 24:8; Matthew 26:28.

³ 1 Corinthians 11:29.

⁴ Luke 22:19.

⁵ 1 Corinthians 11:26; 10:3-5,11,14.

⁶ 1 Corinthians 11:31.

⁷ Zechariah 12:10.

⁸ Revelation 22:17; see Matthew 5:6.

⁹ John 6:35,47-58.

¹⁰ John 1:16.

¹¹ Philippians 3:9.

¹² Psalm 63:4-5; 2 Chronicles 30:21.

¹³ Psalm 22:26; see 1 Corinthians 10:16.

¹⁴ Jeremiah 50:5; Psalm 50:5.

¹⁵ Acts 2:42.

¹⁶ Psalm 28:7; 85:8; 1 Corinthians 11:17,30-31.

¹⁷ 2 Chronicles 30:21-23,25-26; Acts 2:42,46-47.

¹⁸ Psalm 36:10; Song of Solomon 3:4; 1 Chronicles 29:18.

¹⁹ 1 Corinthians 10:3-5,12.

²⁰ Psalm 50:14.

²¹ 1 Corinthians 11:25-26; Acts 2:42,46.

²² Ecclesiastes 5:1-6; Psalm 139:23-24.

²³ Psalm 123:1-2; 42:5,8; 43:3-5.

such a review finds us at fault in either preparing for or participating in the sacrament, we must humbly¹ resolve to be more careful and diligent in the future.²

176. In what ways do the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper coincide?

The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper coincide in that God is the author of both,³ and the spiritual part of both is Christ and his benefits.⁴ Both are also seals of the same covenant,⁵ are to be administered by ministers of the gospel,⁶ and are to continue in Christ's church until the second coming.⁷

177. In what ways do the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper differ?

The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper differ in that baptism is administered just once, with water, as a sign and seal of our rebirth and engrafting into Christ,⁸ even for infants.⁹ The Lord's Supper, on the other hand, is to be administered repeatedly with the elements of bread and wine, to represent and display Christ as spiritual food for the soul¹⁰ and to confirm our continuing growth in him,¹¹ and it is only for those who are old enough and capable of self-examination.¹²

178. What is prayer?

Prayer is offering our desires to God¹³ in the name of Christ¹⁴ with the help of his Spirit,¹⁵ confessing our sins¹⁶ and thankfully recognizing his mercies.¹⁷

179. Should we pray only to God?

God is the only one capable of searching human hearts,¹⁸ the only one who hears requests,¹ pardons sins,² and fulfills the desires of

¹ 2 Chronicles 30:18-19.

² 2 Chronicles 7:11; 1 Chronicles 15:12-14.

³ Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23.

⁴ Romans 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 10:16.

⁵ Romans 4:11 compared with Colossians 2:12; Matthew 26:27-28.

⁶ John 1:33; Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23; 4:1; Hebrews 5:4.

⁷ Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:26.

⁸ Matthew 3:11; Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:27.

⁹ Genesis 17:7,9; Acts 2:38-39; 1 Corinthians 7:14.

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 10:16.

¹² 1 Corinthians 11:28-29.

¹³ Psalm 10:17; 62:8; Matthew 7:7-8.

¹⁴ John 16:23.

¹⁵ Romans 8:26.

¹⁶ Psalm 32:5-6; 1 John 1:9; see Daniel 9:4-19.

¹⁷ Philippians 4:6; Psalm 103:1-5; see Psalm 136.

¹⁸ 1 Kings 8:39; Acts 1:24; Romans 8:27.

everyone,³ and he is the only one to be believed in⁴ and truly worshiped.⁵ Since prayer is an integral part of religious worship,⁶ it is to be made by everyone only to him⁷ and to no one else.⁸

180. What is the significance of praying in Christ's name?

When we pray in Christ's name, we obey his command and confidently rely on his promises as a basis for requesting mercy for his sake.⁹ This involves not just mentioning his name¹⁰ but drawing our encouragement to pray and our boldness, strength, and hope that our prayers will be answered from Christ himself and his mediation.¹¹

181. What must we pray in Christ's name?

Human sinfulness has so far separated us from God that we cannot gain access to his presence without a mediator to bridge that separation,¹² and since no one in heaven or earth has been appointed to or is fit for that glorious job except Christ alone,¹³ we must pray in his name only and in no other.¹⁴

182. How does the Spirit help us to pray?

Since we do not know what we ought to pray for, the Spirit helps our weakness by enabling us to understand for whom, for what, and how to pray. He works in and makes our hearts alive (although not in everyone, nor all the time, nor to the same degree) to grasp, feel, and experience the gifts that are needed to pray properly.¹⁵

183. For whom should we pray?

We should pray for the entire church of Christ on earth,¹⁶ for civil authorities¹⁷ and ministers,¹⁸ for ourselves¹⁹ and fellow believers,²⁰

¹ Psalm 65:2.

² Micah 7:18.

³ Psalm 145:18.

⁴ Romans 10:14.

⁵ Matthew 4:10.

⁶ 1 Corinthians 1:2.

⁷ Isaiah 45:22; Matthew 6:9; Psalm 50:15.

⁸ Isaiah 43:11; 46:9 and the rest of chapter 46.

⁹ John 14:13-14; 16:24; Daniel 9:17.

¹⁰ Matthew 7:21.

¹¹ Hebrews 4:14-16; 1 John 5:13-15.

¹² John 14:6; Isaiah 59:2; Ephesians 3:12.

¹³ John 6:27; Hebrews 7:25-27; 1 Timothy 2:5..

¹⁴ Colossians 3:17; Hebrews 13:15.

¹⁵ Romans 8:26-27; Psalm 10:17; Zechariah 12:10.

¹⁶ Ephesians 6:18; Psalm 28:9.

¹⁷ 1 Timothy 2:1-2.

¹⁸ Colossians 4:3.

¹⁹ Genesis 32:11.

²⁰ James 5:16.

and, yes, for our enemies.¹ We should pray for all humans who are alive,² and those who are going to live in the future.³ But we should not pray for the dead⁴ or for those who are known to have sinned the sin that leads to death.⁵

184. For what should we pray?

We should pray for things that promote the glory of God,⁶ the welfare of the church,⁷ and our own⁸ or others' good,⁹ but not for anything that is unlawful.¹⁰

185. How should we pray?

In prayer, we should approach God with a reverent awareness of his majesty¹¹ and a deep sense of our own unworthiness,¹² inadequacies,¹³ and sins.¹⁴ Our hearts should be filled with repentance,¹⁵ thanks,¹⁶ and confidence,¹⁷ and our prayers should be marked by understanding,¹⁸ faith,¹⁹ sincerity,²⁰ fervor,²¹ love,²² and perseverance,²³ while we wait on him²⁴ and humbly submit to his will.²⁵

186. How does God direct us to pray?

The whole word of God,²⁶ but especially the Lord's prayer, which our Savior Christ taught his disciples,²⁷ directs our prayers.

¹ Matthew 5:44.

² 1 Timothy 2:1-2.

³ John 17:20; 2 Samuel 7:29.

⁴ 2 Samuel 12:21-23.

⁵ 1 John 5:16.

⁶ Matthew 6:9.

⁷ Psalm 51:18; 122:6.

⁸ Matthew 7:11.

⁹ Psalm 125:4.

¹⁰ 1 John 5:14.

¹¹ Psalm 33:8; 95:6; 145:5.

¹² Genesis 18:27; 32:10.

¹³ Luke 15:17-19.

¹⁴ Luke 18:13-14.

¹⁵ Psalm 51:17.

¹⁶ Philippians 4:6.

¹⁷ 1 Samuel 1:15; 2:1.

¹⁸ 1 Corinthians 14:15.

¹⁹ Mark 11:24; James 1:6.

²⁰ Psalm 145:18; 17:1.

²¹ James 5:16.

²² Psalm 116:1-2; Romans 15:30.

²³ Ephesians 6:18.

²⁴ Micah 7:7.

²⁵ Matthew 26:39.

²⁶ 1 John 5:14.

²⁷ Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4.

187. How should we use the Lord's prayer?

The Lord's prayer not only directs us as a model for our other prayers but may also be used as a prayer itself that will promote our understanding, faith, reverence, and the other gifts of God in us that are necessary for us to pray properly.¹

188. How many parts does the Lord's prayer have?

The Lord's prayer has three parts: an opening, individual aspects, and a conclusion.

189. What does the opening of the Lord's prayer teach us?

The opening of the Lord's prayer (*Our Father in heaven*²) teaches us that when we pray we should draw near to God, confident of his fatherly goodness and the benefits to us from that goodness,³ reverently and in every way like a child,⁴ and with heavenly feelings⁵ feelings⁵ and a proper awareness of his sovereign power, his majesty, and his graciousness in allowing us to approach him.⁶ The opening also teaches us to pray with and for others.⁷

190. For what do we pray in the first request?

In the first request (*hallowed be your name*⁸), we acknowledge that we and all human beings are completely incapable of honoring God properly and are even disinclined to do so.⁹ We pray then that he would by his grace enable and incline us and others to know, to acknowledge, and to esteem him highly,¹⁰ his titles,¹¹ attributes,¹² regulations, word,¹³ works, and everything else by which he is pleased to reveal himself,¹⁴ and to glorify him in thought, word,¹⁵ and deed,¹⁶ to the effect that he would thwart and do away with atheism,¹⁷ spiritual ignorance,¹⁸ idolatry¹⁹ or any kind of desecration,²⁰ and

¹ Matthew 6:9; Luke 11:2.

² Matthew 6:9; cf. Luke 11:2.

³ Psalm 103:13; Luke 11:13; Romans 8:15.

⁴ Isaiah 64:9.

⁵ Colossians 3:1-2; Psalm 123:1; Lamentations 3:41.

⁶ Isaiah 63:15-16; Nehemiah 1:4-6; see Psalm 113:4-6.

⁷ Acts 12:5; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; Ephesians 6:18.

⁸ Matthew 6:9; cf. Luke 11:2.

⁹ 2 Corinthians 3:5; Psalm 51:15.

¹⁰ Psalm 67:2-3; 99:1-3.

¹¹ Psalm 83:18.

¹² Psalm 86:10-13,15.

¹³ 2 Thessalonians 3:1; Psalm 147:19-20; 138:1-3; 2 Corinthians 2:14-15.

¹⁴ Psalm 145; 8.

¹⁵ Psalm 103:1; 19:14.

¹⁶ Philippians 1:9,11; Psalm 100:3-4.

¹⁷ Psalm 67:1-4.

¹⁸ Ephesians 1:17-18.

¹⁹ Psalm 97:7.

²⁰ Psalm 74:18,22-23.

whatever else dishonors him,¹ and that by his invincible providence, he would direct and regulate everything to his own glory.²

191. For what do we pray in the second request?

In the second request (*your kingdom come*³), we acknowledge that we and all humans are by nature under the dominion of sin and Satan.⁴ We pray then that the kingdom of sin and Satan be destroyed,⁵ that the gospel be preached throughout the whole world,⁶ world,⁶ that the Jews be converted,⁷ and that the full number of the Gentiles come in.⁸ We pray that the church would be supplied with evangelical officers and regulations,⁹ purged from corruption,¹⁰ and recognized and supported by the civil authorities.¹¹ We pray for the regulations of Christ to be administered fully and that these regulations may effectively convert sinners, while confirming, comforting, and building up those who are already converted.¹² And we pray that Christ would rule over our hearts in the here and now,¹³ that he would hurry up and come again, when we shall reign with him forever,¹⁴ and that he would be pleased so to rule over everything that goes on in the world as may best bring about all these results.¹⁵

192. For what do we pray in the third request?

In the third request (*your will be done on earth as it is in heaven*¹⁶), we acknowledge that we and all humans are by nature not only completely incapable of and unwilling to know and to do the will of God¹⁷ but are actively prone to rebel against his word,¹⁸ to be unhappy with and complain about his providence,¹⁹ and are naturally inclined to follow our own selfish desires and the directions of

¹ 2 Kings 19:15-16.

² 2 Chronicles 20:6,10-12; Romans 11:33-36; Revelation 4:11; see Psalms 83 and 140:4,8.

³ Matthew 6:10; cf. Luke 11:2.

⁴ Ephesians 2:2-3.

⁵ Psalm 68:1,18; Revelation 12:10-11.

⁶ Psalm 67:1-2; 2 Thessalonians 3:1.

⁷ Romans 10:1.

⁸ John 17:9,20; Romans 11:25-26; see Psalm 67.

⁹ Matthew 9:38; 2 Thessalonians 3:1.

¹⁰ Matthew 1:11; Zephaniah 3:9.

¹¹ 1 Timothy 2:1-2; Isaiah 49:23.

¹² Acts 4:29-30; Ephesians 6:18-20; Romans 15:29-30,32; 2 Thessalonians 1:11; 2:16-17.

¹³ Ephesians 3:14-20; Colossians 3:15.

¹⁴ Revelation 22:20; 2 Timothy 2:12; 2 Peter 3:12.

¹⁵ Isaiah 64:1-2; Revelation 4:8-11.

¹⁶ Matthew 6:10; cf. Luke 11:2.

¹⁷ Romans 7:18; Job 21:14; 1 Corinthians 2:14.

¹⁸ Romans 8:7.

¹⁹ Exodus 17:7; Numbers 14:2.

Satan.¹ We pray then that God would by his Spirit remove from us and others all spiritual blindness,² weakness,³ indisposition to spiritual activities,⁴ and perverseness of heart,⁵ and that he would by his grace make us willing to know, do, and submit to his will in every circumstance,⁶ with the same kind of humility,⁷ cheerfulness,⁸ cheerfulness,⁸ faithfulness,⁹ steadfastness,¹⁰ zeal,¹¹ sincerity,¹² and constancy¹³ that the angels have in heaven.¹⁴

193. For what do we pray in the fourth request?

In the fourth request (*Give us this day our daily bread*¹⁵), we acknowledge that in Adam and by our own sin we have forfeited any right to all of the outward blessings of this life, and that we deserve to be completely deprived of them by God and to have their use by us cursed,¹⁶ and that the outward blessings of this life are not in and of themselves capable of sustaining us,¹⁷ nor do we deserve¹⁸ or actually obtain them by our own efforts,¹⁹ but lust after,²⁰ acquire,²¹ and use them in unlawful ways.²² We pray then for ourselves and others that both they and we may wait daily on God's providential allowance of the outward blessings of this life and that, according to what his fatherly wisdom decides is best, we may lawfully enjoy his free gift of what is sufficient for us.²³ We also pray that God would continue to bless us with sufficient worldly goods, that they would sustain our needs and be sanctified by us,²⁴ that we would be

¹ Ephesians 2:2.

² Ephesians 1:17-18.

³ Ephesians 3:16.

⁴ Matthew 26:40-41.

⁵ Jeremiah 31:18-19.

⁶ Psalm 19:14; Acts 21:14; see Psalm 119 and 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and Hebrews 13:20-21.

⁷ Micah 6:8.

⁸ Psalm 100:2; Job 1:21; 2 Samuel 15:25-26.

⁹ Isaiah 38:3.

¹⁰ Psalm 119:4-5.

¹¹ Psalm 69:9; John 2:17; Romans 12:11.

¹² Joshua 24:14; Psalm 119:80; 1 Corinthians 5:8; see 2 Corinthians 1:12.

¹³ Psalm 119:112.

¹⁴ Isaiah 6:2-3; Psalm 103:20-21; Matthew 18:10.

¹⁵ Matthew 6:11; cf. Luke 11:3.

¹⁶ Genesis 2:17; 3:17; Romans 8:20-22; Jeremiah 5:25; Deuteronomy 28:15-68.

¹⁷ Deuteronomy 8:3.

¹⁸ Genesis 32:10.

¹⁹ Deuteronomy 8:17-18.

²⁰ Jeremiah 6:13; Mark 7:21-22.

²¹ Hosea 12:7.

²² James 4:3.

²³ Genesis 43:12-14; 28:20; Ephesians 4:28; 2 Thessalonians 3:11-12; Philippians 4:6.

²⁴ 1 Timothy 4:3-5.

satisfied with them,¹ and that God would protect us from anything that that undermines our support and sustenance in this world.²

194. For what do we pray in the fifth request?

In the fifth request (*Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors*³), we acknowledge that we and everyone else are guilty both both of original sin and actual sins and are therefore debtors to God's justice, and that neither we nor any other created being can make the least satisfaction for that debt.⁴ We pray then for ourselves and others that of his free grace and through the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, which is grasped and applied by faith, God would acquit us from the guilt and punishment of sin,⁵ accept us in the One he loves,⁶ continue his favor and grace to us,⁷ forgive our daily sins,⁸ and fill us with the peace and joy that come from the daily gift of growing assurance of being forgiven.⁹ We may more boldly make this request and be encouraged to expect to be forgiven, when and if we are assured in ourselves that we have genuinely, from the heart, forgiven others who have wronged us.¹⁰

195. For what do we pray in the sixth request?

In the sixth request (*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*¹¹), we acknowledge that God, who is completely wise, righteous, and gracious may, for various holy and just purposes, ordain circumstances by which we become the target of temptations, are defeated, and temporarily taken captive by them;¹² that Satan,¹³ the world,¹⁴ and our own sinful natures have a powerful potential to turn us aside from righteousness and trap us;¹⁵ and that even after our sins have been forgiven, we are naturally so depraved,¹⁶ spiritually weak, and inattentive to our spiritual condition¹⁷ that we are

¹ 1 Timothy 6:6-8.

² Proverbs 30:8-9.

³ Matthew 6:12; cf. Luke 11:4.

⁴ Romans 3:9-22; Matthew 18:24-25; Psalm 103:3-4.

⁵ Romans 3:24-26; Hebrews 9:22.

⁶ Ephesians 1:6-7.

⁷ 2 Peter 1:2.

⁸ Hosea 14:2; Jeremiah 14:7; 1 John 1:9; see Daniel 9:17-19.

⁹ Romans 15:13; Psalm 51:7-10,12.

¹⁰ Luke 11:4; Matthew 6:14-15; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13; see Matthew 18:21-35.

¹¹ Matthew 6:13; cf. Luke 11:4.

¹² 2 Chronicles 32:31.

¹³ 1 Chronicles 21:1.

¹⁴ Luke 21:34; Mark 4:19.

¹⁵ James 1:14.

¹⁶ Galatians 5:17.

¹⁷ Matthew 26:41.

not only prey to temptations and willingly expose ourselves to them¹ but are completely incapable of and unwilling to resist, get away from, or use them as opportunities for our spiritual growth²—and consequently we deserve to be left under their power.³ We pray then that God would so rule over the world and everyone in it,⁴ so curb our sinful natures,⁵ and restrain Satan,⁶ so ordain all things,⁷ so so endow and bless all the means of grace⁸ and sharpen our awareness in the use of them, that we and all his people may be providentially spared from being tempted to sin;⁹ or, if tempted, that his Spirit would powerfully support and enable us to resist during the time of our temptation;¹⁰ or, should we fall, that we would be raised again and restored,¹¹ with the experience being thereby sanctified and used for our spiritual growth;¹² and that our sanctification and salvation may be made complete,¹³ Satan trampled under our feet,¹⁴ and we become completely delivered from sin, temptation, and all evil, forever.¹⁵

196. What does the conclusion of the Lord's prayer teach us?

The conclusion of the Lord's prayer (*for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever*¹⁶) teaches us that there must be substance to our requests,¹⁷ that they are based not on any intrinsic worth in ourselves or any created being but on God himself,¹⁸ and that to our prayers should be added praise,¹⁹ which recognizes God alone as eternally sovereign, omnipotent, and gloriously excellent.²⁰ In that respect, insofar as he is able and willing to help us,²¹ our faith makes us bold to plead with him that he will help us²² and calmly to

¹ Matthew 26:69-72; Galatians 2:11-14; 2 Chronicles 18:3; 19:2.

² Romans 7:23-24; 1 Chronicles 21:1-4; 2 Chronicles 16:7-10.

³ Psalm 81:11-12.

⁴ John 17:15.

⁵ Psalm 51:10; 119:133.

⁶ 2 Corinthians 12:7-8.

⁷ 1 Corinthians 10:12-13.

⁸ Hebrews 13:20-21.

⁹ Matthew 26:41; Psalm 19:13.

¹⁰ Ephesians 3:14-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; Jude 24.

¹¹ Psalm 51:12.

¹² 1 Peter 5:8-10.

¹³ 2 Corinthians 13:7,9.

¹⁴ Romans 16:20; Luke 22:31-32.

¹⁵ John 17:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

¹⁶ Matthew 6:13.

¹⁷ Romans 15:30.

¹⁸ Daniel 9:4,7-9,16-19.

¹⁹ Philippians 4:6.

²⁰ 1 Chronicles 29:10-13; 1 Timothy 1:17; Revelation 5:11-13.

²¹ Ephesians 3:20-21; Luke 11:13.

²² 2 Chronicles 20:6,11.

count on him to answer our prayers.¹ To show that we want to be heard and have confidence that we are heard, we say Amen.²

¹ 2 Chronicles 14:11.

² 1 Corinthians 14:16; Revelation 22:20-21.