

The Lake Avenue Catechism

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Based on the Heidelberg Catechism, The Second Helvetic Confession, The Scots Confession, The Westminster Confession (Shorter and Longer Catechisms), and the New City Catechism.

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Question 1: (From HBC, 4.001)

What is our only hope in life and death?

Answer:

That my life is not my own, but that I belong—in every part of my being—to God our redeemer in Jesus Christ.

- We are created and defined by God and our bodies are a gift from God.
- God is present to us in every area of life—from birth to death, in joy and grief, and in obedience and disobedience.
- Only God in Christ can redeem our lives.

Eph. 2:10 For we are what God has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

Psa. 139:7-10 Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast.

Rom. 14:7-8 For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

Question 2: (WCLC, q 7)

What is God?

Answer:

God is uncreated Spirit, without beginning or end, supreme above all that exists, everywhere present, unchanging, most loving, most wise, most powerful, most holy, most just, and is the source of all truth, beauty, and goodness.

- We can only grasp a vision of God’s nature, character, and action through what has been revealed to us in Holy scripture.
- Across scripture, we see that the entire creation is a display of God’s power, love, knowledge, and truth.
- The creation itself, however, cannot reveal to us the full understanding of God in Jesus Christ. This knowledge only comes from work of God in the Holy Spirit.

Rom. 1:19-20 Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made.

1Cor. 2:9-10 But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him”—these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

Question 3: (WC ch 1 pt.10, WCLC, q 9; NCC)

How many persons are there in God?

Answer:

There is one God, who has always existed in three persons—the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

- All three persons of the Trinity are equal in substance, power, and glory.
- All three persons are God from God, light from light, and true God from true God. The Son is eternally begotten, not made, and he, together with the Holy Spirit, are both of one being with the Father.
- The Triune God can be seen across scripture as the Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

Gen. 1:1-2 In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.

John 1:1-4 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.

2 Cor. 13:13 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

Question 4: (WC ch 4; WCSC q. 9)

Why did God create the world?

Answer:

God created the world from nothing in order to reveal himself to it, to love it, and to display his glory within it.

- God is the creator, governor, and sustainer of all things in creation. This reveals God's power over us.
- After God created human beings, God called all the works of the creation very good. This reveals God's love and goodness towards the whole creation.
- God is revealed through what he has made. This demonstrates God's presence and work among us.

Gen. 1:31 God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.

Rom. 1:20 Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made.

Col. 1:16-17 For in Christ all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Question 5: (WCLC, q 17)

How did God create human beings?

Answer:

God created the first human beings as male and female in the image and likeness of God.

- We were created in the image of God, and our male and female bodies are a gift from the good creator.
- We were created to seek God's word and truth in order to understand who we are.
- We were originally created by God as righteous beings with a natural capacity to know God and live holy lives.

Gen. 1:26a, 27 Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

1 Cor. 6:19-20 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own?

Eph. 4:24 Clothe yourselves with the new self, [which was] created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness; Col. 3:10: which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator.

Question 6: (WCLC, q 17; HBC 4.006; NCC, 4)

Why did God create human beings?

Answer:

God created human beings to know, love, and worship God in all areas of life.

- To know God is to confess and to believe that the God of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob is the one and only true God, who is revealed to us in the Old and New Testaments as one God in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- To love God is to desire God, to obey God's instructions, and to seek God's presence, will, and truth with the greatest devotion and allegiance.
- To worship God is to praise, serve, and glorify God alone.

Deut. 6:5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.

Eph. 2:10 For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

Question 7: (WCLC, q 1)

What is the highest purpose of human life?

Answer:

To glorify and enjoy God forever by obeying his will, commandments, and laws in all areas of life.

- The glory of God is the showcasing of God's beauty, truth, goodness through everything in creation.
- To glorify God is to worship, praise, and obey God above everything else.
- We glorify God by reflecting God's beauty, truth, and goodness in all activities and relationships.

John 17:22, 24 The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one [...]. Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

Rom. 11:36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen.

Question 8: (WCLC, q. 20)

Did God create human beings for any other purposes?

Answer:

God created human beings to be good stewards and developers of the creation and each other.

- At creation, God gave the first human beings a universal task: “to have dominion,” or to develop everything on earth.
- The call to “have dominion” means at least two general things: 1. God wants human beings to reproduce themselves; and 2. God wants human beings to make stuff with the stuff of the creation (i.e., culture).
- God calls us to seek his truth, guidance, and assistance in these universal activities.

Gen. 1:26, 28 Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” [...] God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”

Question 9: NCC

What is God’s Law?

Answer:

God’s Law are his commandments or instructions to us and for our good. Whatever God forbids, we should resist with the greatest effort; and whatever God commands, we should strive to do with the greatest effort.

- In the ten commandments, God tells us directly we should resist, and indirectly, what we should do.
- The commandment not to worship other Gods is also a commandment to worship only the one true God.
- The laws and commandments of God are not rules, but standards and boundary lines for how we have been created to worship God and relate to others, and what wrong forms of worship and relationship look like in our various walks of life.

Psa. 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the [whole person]; the decrees of the LORD are sure, making wise the simple.

Psa. 40:8 I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.

Psa. 119:1 Happy are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD.

Question 10:

What are the Ten Commandments?

Answer:

The Ten Commandments are the universal laws that God gave to his people after liberating them from bondage.

- Commandments 1-4 concern our relation to God.
- Commandments 5-10 concern our relation to others.
- Jesus' summary of the law: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (**Matt. 22:37-40**)

Ex 20:3-17

1. You shall have no other gods before me
2. You shall not make for yourself an idol
3. You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God
4. Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy
5. Honor your father and your mother
6. You shall not murder
7. You shall not commit adultery
8. You shall not steal
9. You shall not bear false witness
10. You shall not covet

Question 11:

Is it possible to completely obey God's law?

Answer:

No, because of the lingering effects of our first parent's disobedience which we have inherited, we too are consistently prone to error in our love of God and neighbor.

- Before the fall, our first parents were able to obey God completely in righteousness, holiness, and the knowledge of God.
- During the fall our first parents were infected with the condition of Sin, which was handed down to all subsequent generations, and which is the root of all forms of sin.
- All human beings, therefore, have been infected with Sin and, in this present age, we are not able not to sin.

Rom. 7:7-14 What then should we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet, if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." But sin, seizing an opportunity in the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. Apart from the law sin lies dead. I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived. So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good. For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin.

Question 12: WCLC, q. 149

Why did God give us the Law if no one can completely obey it?

Answer:

God gave us the Law to reveal the true nature of righteousness and holiness, to convict us of our Sinful nature, and to help us understand our need for a savior.

- God's Law is a mirror that reveals our brokenness and the patterns of sin that we are prone to commit.
- God's Law teaches us that human sin should be restrained, not only for our own good, but for the flourishing of others.
- God's Law also indirectly tells us what patterns of life are pleasing to God.

Gen 6:5 The LORD saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually.

Psa. 19:12 But who can detect their errors?

1John 1:8-9 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

John 14:15 If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

Question 13:

If God created human beings as good, then what has caused us to become so broken, destructive, and unloving?

Answer:

We have become this way because our first parent's disobeyed God's commandments.

- The first humans were created with the capacity to obey God's commandments in all areas of life.
- The first humans were tempted to determine what was good and true was on their own, apart from God.
- In doing so, they made the creation and themselves more ultimate—in knowing what is good and true—than the God who created them and instructed them.

Gen 2:15-17 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

Gen 3: 4-6 But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Gen. So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate.

Question 14: (WCLC, q 24; NCC,

What is Sin?

Answer:

Sin is any desire, thought, or action that breaks any law of God, which God has given for our good and the flourishing of all things.

- Sin is a condition and behavior that corrupts us and moves us away from the purposes for which God created us.
- Sin is an act of pride by which we seek to define the essence of our created identity and determine for ourselves what is right, good, and true.
- Sin is a disease that continually disorders our humanity towards chaos, suffering, and death.

Gen. 3:1-7 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate.

1John 3:4 Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.

James 4:17 Anyone, then, who knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, commits sin.

Rom. 3:23 all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Christ the Redeemer

The Death and Resurrection of Christ

The Gift of Grace and Faith in Christ

Question 15: (WCSC, q 21)

How does God redeem us from the crisis of Sin?

Answer:

God rescues us by sending his Son, who being fully God, took on the fullness of human flesh and blood, in order to mediate our salvation.

- The Son of God, Jesus Christ, is the Word of God, through whom God created all things, including human beings.
- When the Son of God became a human, he emptied himself by becoming like us—yet without Sin—in order to restore our fallen nature.
- By becoming a human being, Jesus Christ, gave himself as a sacrifice to rescue us from the unending destruction we have brought upon ourselves.

John 1:1-4 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

Phil 2:6-8: [Christ Jesus] who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

Question 16: (WCSC q 21, NCC, q 22)

Why must the redeemer be fully human?

Answer:

Jesus became fully human to live a life of complete obedience and faithfulness to God for our sake, which is a life that we cannot live for ourselves.

- In the full humanity of Jesus Christ, God enters into the full range of human life, suffering, and death.
- In his life, Jesus Christ was tempted like us in every way, and yet remained faithful to God's laws and way of life—obeying them in every respect.
- In his death, Jesus suffered in every possible way that we experience suffering and beyond—as he was forsaken by God.

Rom. 5:17 If, because of the one man's trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

Heb 2: 17-18 Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

Question 17: (NCC q. 22; WCLC q. 38; WCLC q. 40-45)

Why must the redeemer be truly God?

Answer:

Our redeemer must be truly God because only the creator of humanity can save our nature from remaining in bondage to sin and death. As true God from true God, Christ ministers to us as prophet, priest, and King.

- As Prophet, Christ reveals the whole will of God in all ages, through his Word and Spirit, for the salvation of all things.
- As Priest, Christ offered himself to God as our sacrifice for sin and death to reconcile us to God and to make continual intercession for us.
- As King, Christ visibly governs his church and the Kingdom of God by calling people to positions of authority in order to communicate his instructions, judgements, and wisdom, so that we would be transformed for God's glory and our true good.

Heb. 10:12 But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, "he sat down at the right hand of God,"

Luke 1:32-33 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Question 18: (HBC q. 40; NCC q. 24, q. 25)

Why did Christ, our redeemer, have to suffer death?

Answer:

It was necessary for Christ to experience all forms of suffering and death in order to redeem them.

- By dying our death, Christ took all Sin and death upon himself, exchanging his righteousness for our iniquities.
- By dying this sacrificial death, Christ destroyed Sin and death by absorbing all forms of suffering in his body.
- By dying an atoning death, Christ reconciles us to God by bearing the destruction that would have come upon us.

Rom. 5:6-8, 12, 15 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned—But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many.

2Cor. 5:21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Question 19: (NCC q. 26)

What does Christ's death mean for the whole creation?

Answer:

Christ's death was a restorative sacrifice for the whole creation, which has been damaged by Sin.

- At creation, God gave human beings the good gifts of nature and called us to make culture with it.
- After the fall, it became possible to use these good gifts for evil (i.e., turning a tree into a cross).
- In Christ's death, God destroyed our misuses of creation and culture across by reconciling all things to himself through the cross.

John 3:16-17 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

1Pet. 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

Col. 1:20 and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

Question 20: (WCLC q. 52)

What is the resurrection of Christ?

Answer:

After having been dead for three days, God raised Christ from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit, thereby conquering Sin and death for our salvation.

- The resurrection is the completion of Christ's saving work for us in both life and death.
- Having taken on humanity's flesh in the incarnation, and having died our death in the crucifixion, Christ heals and restores our humanity in his bodily resurrection.
- The bodily resurrection of Christ is the means by which God will redeem all forms of suffering and death.

Acts 2:24 But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power.

1 Cor 15: 20-22 But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ.

1 Cor 15-54-55 "Death has been swallowed up in victory." "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

Question:21 (WCLC q. 53; SC, q. ch. 11)

What is the Accession of Christ?

Answer

After Christ was raised from the dead, he appeared to his disciples for 40 days after which he bodily ascended to heaven to occupy his throne of grace at the right hand of the Father.

- The ascension is the completion of Christ's saving work for us in the resurrection.
- In his bodily ascension, Christ takes to heaven restored flesh and blood, thereby applying the redemptive effects of the resurrection to the people of God, past, present, and future.
- The ascension the heaven-izing of our restored nature.

Acts 1:2 "he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen."

Col 3:1 So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.
2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth

Eph. 4:8 Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people

Question 22: (NCC q. 29; WCSC q. 29)

How can we gain this redemptive salvation?

Answer:

Christ gives us the gift of this salvation, and continually applies it to us, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

- Through Christ's sacrifice, the righteousness of God has been given to us for our salvation.
- We cannot earn or purchase Christ's righteousness through good works, virtue, or education.
- We can only receive Christ's righteousness and salvation as a free gift of grace through faith.

John 1:12-13 But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

Titus 3:5-6 he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Eph. 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast.

Question 23: (WCSC q. 86)

What does it mean to have faith in Jesus Christ?

Answer:

To have faith in Jesus Christ is to receive the free gift of God's rescuing grace, by which we are given forgiveness, Salvation, and restoration through Christ alone.

- Faith, belief, or trust, in the saving work of Christ does not begin with us, but with God.
- Through the grace of God, Christ shared his own faith with us, enabling us to trust in him for our salvation.
- The faith that Christ gives us is clearly presented to us in the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

John 1:12 But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God

Phil. 3:9 For his sake I have suffered the loss of all thing, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith.

John 6:40 This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day

Question 24: (NCC q. 31; The Apostles Creed)

What is the content of our true faith?

Answer:

The content of our true faith is what has been revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and specifically the revelation of Jesus Christ, as witnessed in the Gospels.

- The first followers of Jesus Christ, the Apostles, gave us this creed as a summary of the content of our true faith.
- I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

1 Tim 3:16 Without any doubt, the mystery of our religion is great:

He was revealed in flesh, vindicated in spirit,
seen by angels, proclaimed among Gentiles,
believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory.

The Holy Spirit and Restoration

Church and Sacraments

The New Creation

Question 25: (WCSC, q. 30)

How is this true faith applied to us?

Answer:

The Holy Spirit generates true faith in us, which causes us to partake in God's gifts of adoption, justification and sanctification.

- Through his death and resurrection, Christ adopts us as children through the covenant of his blood.
- Christ also justifies us through the Spirit by graciously pardoning us from all sin and by making us righteous before God.
- Christ also continually sanctifies us through the Holy Spirit by transforming us in righteousness and holiness.

Rom 8:14 For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption.

Rom 3:22-24 For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith.

Rom 6:19 For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification.

Question 26: (HBC, q. 53; NCC, q. 36)

What do we believe concerning the Holy Spirit?

Answer:

First, the Holy Spirit is co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father and God the Son; and, second, this same Spirit empowers us in true faith to receive the free of Christ's salvation by causing us to abide in God's presence.

- The Holy Spirit is the power by which God created the world, and it is the same Spirit through which God will complete his redemptive work in our lives.
- The Holy Spirit raised Christ from the dead is the same Spirit that will also raise us to new life at the great resurrection.
- The Holy Spirit convicts, comforts, instructs, and restores us in this life and the life to come.

John 14:16-17 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

Rom 8:11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

Question 27: (NCC q. 37)

How does the Holy Spirit transform us?

Answer:

The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, empowers us in righteousness, and compels us to desire God's presence in all areas of life.

- The Holy Spirit causes us to pray, it lifts our prayers up to Christ—who intercedes to God on our behalf—and it brings God's answer to us.
- The Holy Spirit causes us to hear God's word in Holy scripture, and it allows us to hear God's voice.
- The Holy Spirit convicts us, guides us, comforts us, and equips us with spiritual gifts, so that we can participate in God's redemptive work in the world.

John 16:8 And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment

John 16:13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

Eph 6:17-18 Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints.

Question 28: (WCSC q. 98; NCC q. 38)

What is prayer?

Answer:

Prayer is heart-felt communication with God in praise, requests for assistance, and in confession of sin.

- Prayer is an act of offering to God in which we express our desires and thoughts, regardless of their character.
- Prayer is an act of petitioning God in which we ask God for resources and outcomes that are agreeable to his will.
- Prayer is an act confession to God in which we acknowledge the truth about God's character and the truth about ourselves.

Psa. 62:8 Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. Selah

Phil. 4:6 Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

1John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Question 29: (WCSC, q. 99; NCC, q. 41)

What is the Lord's Prayer?

Answer:

Christ gave us a special form of prayer that shows us how to communicate with God: this is called The Lord's Prayer.

- The whole Word of God can be used to help us pray and discern God's will.
- The Lord's Prayer can be used as general pattern for how we should pray.
- The Lord's Prayer, **Matt. 6:9-13**:
Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And do not bring us to the time of trial,
but rescue us from the evil one.

Question 30: (WCSC, q. 90; NCC, q. 42)

How is the word of God to be read, heard, and how is it useful in our Salvation?

Answer:

The word of God reveals God's character and will to redeem us; therefore, it must be diligently read, loved, and obeyed in all areas of life.

- The Word of God, comprised of the Old and New Testaments, is a witness of God's presence and action in humanity's creation, fall, and redemption.
- The Word of God is a witness to the covenant promises that God made with his people, and it is a record of his faithfulness in fulfilling those promises.
- The word of God was given to the people of God through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and as such, it is our authority and guide in all matters of faith.

Ex 20:22 Then the Lord said to Moses: Thus you shall say to the Israelites" "You have seen for yourselves that I spoke with you from heaven."

2 Tim 3:16-17 All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

Question 31: (WCSC, q. 92, 94, 96; NCC, q. 43)

What is a Sacrament?

Answer:

A sacrament is a visible sign of an invisible grace by which God communicates the promises of his covenant to us.

- There are two sacraments that Christ instituted for the church: Baptism and The Lord's Supper.
- Baptism is a sign of cleansing with water by which we are sealed into Christ's life, death, and resurrection.
- The Lord's Supper is a covenant meal for the people of God which celebrates Christ's atoning work, and which seals us into the new covenant made with his blood.

Rom 6:4 Therefore, we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

1Cor 11:23-26 For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Question 32: (SHC, sec. 5.125; NCC, q. 48)

What is the Church?

Answer:

The Church is the body of people that God has called to be his community in the world.

- The church is the continuation of God's covenant people, which began with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- There is one universal church of which Christ is the head; but there are many different expressions of this church.
- Christ's true Church is comprised of both visible, living members who dwell in the earthly presence of God, and invisible members who dwell in the heavenly presence of God.

Eph 2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God

1Cor 4:1 Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries.

2 Thes 2:13 But we must always give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the first fruits for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and through belief in the truth.

Question 33:

What is the great resurrection?

Answer:

The great resurrection is when Christ will raise us from the dead and grant us everlasting life with God in the New Creation.

- The great resurrection is the bodily life-after-life-after-death, since those who have died are alive in God's heavenly presence.
- At the great resurrection God will reconstitute our physical bodies, which will be the same bodies we had in this life, but will also be new bodies—fully redeemed.
- At the great resurrection, those who denied Christ, will be raised and lost to everlasting death.

1 Thes 4:13-14 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died.

1Cor. 15:51-53 Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality.

Question 34: (NCC, q. 50;
What is the New Creation?

Answer:

At the great resurrection, Christ will also heal and restore the entire creation as the New Heavens and Earth in which we will dwell with God forever.

- On that day, God's Kingdom will be finally and fully established, and all things will be subjected to Christ.
- On that day, the redeemed people of God will enter into the New Jerusalem with fruits of the nations where we will dwell with Christ forever.
- On that day, all will be well, and all will be healed, and every tear will be wiped away.

Rev. 21:2-3 And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them."

Rev. 21:24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.

Rev 21:4 "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more."

References to catechisms uses in the construction of each question

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