

# The Heidelberg Catechism

## As abridged in the Compendium of the Christian Religion

- 1. What is your only comfort in life and death?**
  - a. My only comfort is that I with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own but belong to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.
- 2. What must you know to enjoy this comfort?**
  - a. To enjoy this comfort I must know three things: (1) that my sin and misery are very great, (2) that Jesus Christ redeems me from my sin, (3) that in gratitude I am daily striving to do the perfect will of God.
- 3. Whence do you know your sin and misery?**
  - a. I know my sin and misery from the law of God.
- 4. What does God require of you in His law?**
  - a. Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets" (Matt. 22:37-40)
- 5. Are you able to keep God's law?**
  - a. I am not able to keep God's law, for by nature I am inclined to hate God and my neighbor, and to break God's commandments in thought, word, and deed.
- 6. Did God create man wicked and perverse?**
  - a. God created man good and in His own image, endowed with true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness.
- 7. How did man become wicked and perverse?**
  - a. Man became wicked and perverse through the fall and disobedience of Adam in paradise.
- 8. Why does the disobedience of Adam affect us?**
  - a. The disobedience of Adam affects us because he was the father of us all, and our covenant representative.
- 9. What covenant did Adam break when he sinned?**
  - a. When he sinned Adam broke the Covenant of Works, in which the condition was obedience, the promise was life, and the penalty was death.
- 10. What are the results of Adam's disobedience?**
  - a. The guilt of Adam as our covenant head is imputed to all men, and our nature is now totally corrupt.
- 11. What does it mean that our nature is totally corrupt?**
  - a. We are incapable of doing any spiritual good and are inclined to all manner of wickedness, unless we are regenerated by the Spirit of God.
- 12. Does God punish sin?**
  - a. In His truth and righteousness, God punishes sin both in this life and the life to come.

- 13. Can you save yourself from the punishment and power of sin?**  
a. I cannot save myself; divine redemption is my only hope.
- 14. What is divine redemption?**  
a. Divine redemption is the salvation of God's people through the perfect work of Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.
- 15. What does our mediator do to save us?**  
a. By bearing our punishment and by perfectly obeying God's law, our Mediator delivers us from the wrath of God and endows us with eternal life.
- 16. Will all men be saved by the Mediator, Jesus Christ, as they are all condemned in Adam?**  
a. Not all men will be saved but only those who by true faith are grafted into Christ.
- 17. What is true faith?**  
a. True faith is a sure knowledge of God and His promises, and a firm confidence that all my sins are forgiven for Christ's sake.
- 18. Where do we learn about God and His promises?**  
a. We learn about God and His promises in the Bible, which is God's inspired revelation of Himself.
- 19. What do we mean by the inspiration of the Bible?**  
a. By the inspiration of the Bible we mean that the Holy Spirit moved men to write the Scriptures and guided them in their work so that they wrote the Word of God without error.
- 20. What do you confess as a member of the Church of Christ of all ages?**  
a. I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit. I believe in a holy catholic Church, the communion of saints; The forgiveness of sins; The resurrection of the body; And the life everlasting.
- 21. What is the one great confession of the Apostle's Creed?**  
a. In the Apostle's Creed we confess our faith in the one true God, who exists in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- 22. How may the twelve articles of the Apostle's Creed be divided?**  
a. The articles of the Apostle's Creed may be divided into three parts: first, God the Father and our creation; second, God the Son and our redemption; third, God the Holy Spirit and our sanctification.
- 23. What do you confess when you say, "I believe in God the Father, Almighty"?**  
a. I confess my faith in the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the almighty Maker of heaven and earth, who is my God and Father for Christ's sake.

- 24. What do you believe when you say that God is “Maker of heaven and earth”?**
- I believe that God make all things out of nothing by the Word of His power.
- 25. What is meant by the providence of God?**
- The providence of God means that He upholds all things and governs them according to His wise and gracious plan.
- 26. What are miracles?**
- Miracles are supernatural acts of God’s power for the purpose of revelation and redemption.
- 27. What do you confess when you say, “And in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son”?**
- I confess that Jesus Christ is the eternal and only begotten Son of God, neither made nor created, but Himself fully God.
- 28. Why do you call Jesus Christ “our Lord”?**
- Jesus Christ is our Lord because He has redeemed us from all our sins, delivered us from the power of the devil, and made us His own possession.
- 29. How did the eternal Son of God become our Savior?**
- The Son of God became our Savior by taking human nature upon Himself into personal union with His divine nature.
- 30. Why must our Mediator be truly God?**
- Our Mediator must be truly God because only thus could He truly reveal God, make infinite satisfaction for our sins, and unite us with God.
- 31. Why must our Mediator be truly man?**
- Our Mediator must be truly man because the justice of God requires that the same human nature which has sinned should make satisfaction for sin.
- 32. Why must our Mediator be without sin?**
- Our Mediator must be without sin, for only a sinless human nature could offer a perfect sacrifice for sin.
- 33. How did the Son of God assume His human nature?**
- The Son of God assumed His human nature by being conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.
- 34. Why is the Son of God called Jesus?**
- The Son of God is called Jesus, the Savior, because He alone saves His people from their sins.
- 35. Why is the Son of God called Christ?**
- The Son of God is called Christ, the Anointed One, because He is ordained by God the Father and anointed with the Holy Spirit, to be our chief Prophet, our only High Priest, and our eternal King.
- 36. What is the redemptive work of Christ as Prophet?**
- As Prophet Christ reveals to us the counsel and will of God for our redemption.
- 37. What is the redemptive work of Christ as Priest?**

- a. As Priest Christ sacrificed Himself for us and makes continual intercession for us with the Father.
- 38. What is the redemptive work of Christ as King?**
- a. As King Christ rules by His Word and Spirit and defends and preserves us in our salvation.
- 39. How did Christ bear the curse of our sin?**
- a. Christ suffered for us in both body and soul; He sacrificed Himself in death on the cross; He was buried and He descended into hell.
- 40. What do you confess when you say: "He descended into hell"?**
- a. I confess that Christ, when He was forsaken by God on the Cross, suffered the torments of hell for me.
- 41. For whom did Christ die?**
- a. Christ died for all those whom God in sovereign grace has chosen to be His people.
- 42. What is divine election?**
- a. Divine election is the eternal and unchangeable plan of God by which He chose His people out of the fallen race to redemption in Christ.
- 43. What do we understand by the resurrection of Christ?**
- a. We believe that Christ who was crucified rose from the grave and lives forever.
- 44. How does the resurrection of Christ benefit us?**
- a. Christ arose for our justification, and by His power we are born to a new life and will one day be raised in glory from the grave.
- 45. Where is Christ now as to His human nature?**
- a. Christ ascended into heaven and rules at the right hand of God the Father, exalted in glory.
- 46. Is not Christ with us until the end of the world, as He promised?**
- a. Though Christ ascended bodily into heaven He is always present with us by His grace and Spirit.
- 47. What is the redemptive work of our Lord in heaven?**
- a. In heaven our Lord intercedes for us, gives His grace and Spirit to us, rules His church, and governs the world unto the coming of His kingdom.
- 48. What do you confess when you say that Christ will come to judge the living and the dead?**
- a. I confess that Christ will come as Judge to take His chosen ones to heaven and cast His enemies into hell.
- 49. Who is the Holy Spirit?**
- a. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Holy Trinity, one in essence with the Father and the Son.
- 50. What is the work of the Holy Spirit in your redemption?**
- a. The Holy Spirit regenerates and sanctifies me, comforts me, and guides me in the way of truth and obedience.
- 51. What is regeneration?**
- a. Regeneration is that gracious and irresistible work of the Spirit by which men dead in sin are raised to new life in Christ.

**52. How does this new life reveal itself in the Christian?**

- a. The new life reveals itself in true conversion.

**53. What is true conversion?**

- a. True conversion is a heartfelt sorrow for sin and a sincere turning to Christ as Savior and Lord.

**54. What is the holy catholic Church?**

- a. The holy catholic Church is the body of the redeemed of all ages in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**55. How does the holy catholic Church come into being?**

- a. I believe that the Son of God, by His Word and Spirit, gathers out of the whole human race those chosen to eternal life to be His Church.

**56. How does the Church of Christ manifest itself before men?**

- a. The Church of Christ manifests itself in the communion of the saints and in the offices and functions of the organized church.

**57. What do you confess concerning the communion of saints?**

- a. I confess that all believers as members of the body of Jesus Christ are knit together in the fellowship of Christian love and service.

**58. What is the missionary task of the Church?**

- a. The Church must make disciples of all nations, proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation in Christ.

**59. How is the purity of the Church maintained?**

- a. The purity of the Church is maintained through the pure preaching of God's Word, the proper administration of the sacraments, and the faithful exercise of Christian discipline.

**60. What do you understand by Christian discipline?**

- a. Christian discipline means that the Church lovingly tends its unfaithful members, and excludes from its fellowship those who willfully continue in unchristian doctrine or life.

**61. What do you believe concerning the forgiveness of sins?**

- a. I believe that God, for my Savior's sake, forgives all my sins and no longer condemns me for my sinful nature.

**62. What do you believe concerning the resurrection of the body?**

- a. I believe that at the last day my body will be raised by the power of Christ and be made like His glorious body.

**63. What do you believe when you confess life everlasting?**

- a. I believe that in my fellowship with God I now have the beginning of eternal joy, and that in the life to come I shall live with God and serve Him forever.

**64. What is the blessed state of the believer?**

- a. The believer, though he has kept none of God's commandments, is righteous in Christ before God.

**65. How does the believer become righteous before God?**

- a. The believer is justified by faith alone.

**66. What is justification?**

- a. Justification is that act of God by which He imputes to the believing sinner the perfect satisfaction and righteousness of Christ.

**67. Does faith merit justification?**

- a. Faith does not merit justification; it is the gracious gift of God by which we receive the righteousness of Christ.

**68. Why cannot we be justified by works?**

- a. We cannot be justified by works, for even our best works are imperfect and polluted by sin.

**69. Does not God reward the good works of the Christian?**

- a. God surely rewards our good works but only out of grace and not because of merit.

**70. How do we obtain this faith which justifies us?**

- a. The Holy Spirit works this faith in our hearts by the hearing of the Word.

**71. How does the Holy Spirit strengthen our faith?**

- a. The Holy Spirit strengthens our faith by means of the Word of God and the holy sacraments.

**72. What are the sacraments?**

- a. The sacraments are holy signs and seals of the Covenant of Grace.

**73. What is the Covenant of Grace?**

- a. The Covenant of Grace is the gracious arrangement in which God promises His people complete salvation and calls them to faith and obedience.

**74. What do the sacraments signify and seal?**

- a. The sacraments signify and seal that God graciously grants us forgiveness of sins and life eternal for the sake of Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

**75. How many sacraments has Christ instituted?**

- a. Christ has instituted two sacraments, Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

**76. What does baptism signify and seal?**

- a. Baptism signifies and seals the washing away of our sins by the blood and Spirit of Jesus Christ.

**77. Who should receive the sacrament of Baptism?**

- a. The sacrament of Baptism should be received by all believers and their children.

**78. Why should the children of believers be baptized?**

- a. The children of believers should be baptized because they as well as their parents are in the Covenant of Grace and belong to the people of God.

**79. What does the Lord's Supper signify and seal?**

- a. The Lord's Supper signifies and seals that Christ, with His crucified body and shed blood, once purchased my redemption and now nourishes my spiritual life.

**80. What is it to eat the crucified body and drink the shed blood of Christ at the Lord's table?**

- a. To eat Christ's body and drink His blood is to embrace with a believing heart the sufferings and death of Christ, and thus to become more and more united to Him as our Head.

**81. Are the bread and wine changed into the body and blood of Christ?**

- a. The bread and wine are not changed into the body and blood of Christ, but they are visible signs and pledges of His broken body and shed blood.

**82. Who are called to partake of the Supper of the Lord?**

- a. The call to Holy Communion comes to all Christians who have come to years of understanding.

**83. How must a Christian examine himself before coming to the Lord's Supper?**

- a. Before coming to the Lord's Supper a Christian must know that he abhors himself for his sins, that he believes his sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, and that he resolves to live the new life of Christian gratitude.

**84. What are the keys of the kingdom of heaven?**

- a. The keys of the kingdom of heaven are the preaching of the Word and the exercise of discipline, which are given by Christ to His Church to open and close the doors of the kingdom.

**85. How does the church open the doors of the kingdom?**

- a. The church opens the doors of the kingdom by promising salvation to all who repent and believe, and receiving such into its sacred fellowship.

**86. How does the Church close the doors of the kingdom?**

- a. The Church closes the doors of the kingdom by declaring the wrath of God upon the unbelieving and unrepentant, and by excluding such from its sacred fellowship.

**87. How should a Christian live?**

- a. A Christian, in humble gratitude for his deliverance, should live a new life in the service of his Lord.

**88. What is a new life?**

- a. The new life is a continual dying to sin and a living unto God in all good works.

**89. What are good works?**

- a. Good works are those which proceed from a true faith, conform to the law of God, and glorify Him.

**90. Why are good works necessary in the life of a Christian?**

- a. Good works are necessary to show that our faith is alive and that we are grateful to God.

**91. What are the blessed fruits of a life of good works?**

- a. A life of good works glorifies God, assures me of the sincerity of my faith, edified my fellow believers, and serves to win others to Christ.

**92. What is the law which we must observe to live the life of good works?**

- a. To live the life of good works we must observe the law of the Ten Commandments, which God proclaimed from Mount Sinai. This law is as follows: (*Recite Exodus 20:1-17*).
- 93. What is the significance of the preface to the law?**
- a. In the preface to the law God claims the love and obedience of His children by revealing Himself as their gracious Redeemer and Sovereign Lord.
- 94. What does God require in the first commandment?**
- a. In the first commandment God requires that I acknowledge Him as the only true God, and that I worship and trust Him alone.
- 95. What does God require in the second commandment?**
- a. In the second commandment God requires that I acknowledge Him as Spirit, and that I worship Him, not through images or any mere form, but in spirit and in truth.
- 96. What does God require in the third commandment?**
- a. In the third commandment God requires that I honor His revelation of Himself, that I stand in awe of His majesty, and that I never profane His holy name.
- 97. What does God require in the fourth commandment?**
- a. In the fourth commandment God requires that I keep the Lord's Day holy by rest from my daily work and by engaging in the public worship and service of God.
- 98. What does God require in the fifth commandment?**
- a. In the fifth commandment God requires that I honor and obey my father and mother, and all others whom God has placed in authority over me.
- 99. What does God require in the sixth commandment?**
- a. In the sixth commandment God requires that I respect the sacredness of human life, and that I neither endanger it without cause nor hate my fellow man.
- 100. What does God require in the seventh commandment?**
- a. In the seventh commandment God requires that I honor marriage as ordained by God, and avoid all sexual impurity in thought, word, and deed.
- 101. What does God require in the eighth commandment?**
- a. In the eighth commandment God requires that I respect my neighbor's property rights, avoid all forms of stealing, and be a faithful steward of all that God has given me.
- 102. What does God require in the ninth commandment?**
- a. In the ninth commandment God requires that I speak and defend the truth in love, advance my neighbor's reputation, and avoid all forms of lying and slander.
- 103. What does God require in the tenth commandment?**
- a. In the tenth commandment God requires that I learn true contentment, which includes gratitude for the gifts of His providence, joy in the prosperity of my neighbors, and freedom from sinful desires.

- 104. Can the Christian keep God's commandments perfectly?**
- a. Because of indwelling sin no Christian can attain to perfection in this life; even the holiest of men have only a small beginning of true obedience.
- 105. What is the purpose of the preaching of the law?**
- a. The law must be constantly preached as the teacher of sin and as the rule of Christian gratitude.
- 106. What is sanctification?**
- a. Sanctification is that gracious work of the Holy Spirit by which we are enabled in ever fuller measure to cleanse ourselves from sin and to press on to the goal of Christian perfection.
- 107. Why is prayer necessary in the sanctified life?**
- a. Prayer is necessary because it is the chief part of the thankfulness which God requires of us, and because He grants His sanctifying grace only to those who earnestly pray for it.
- 108. What do we acknowledge in true prayer?**
- a. In true prayer we acknowledge through confession, petition, and praise that the God of our salvation is the supreme fountain of all good.
- 109. In whose name must we pray?**
- a. We must pray in the name of Christ, our Mediator, through whom alone we have access to the throne of grace.
- 110. What prayer has our Lord taught us?**
- a. Our Lord taught us to pray as follows: (recite the Lord's Prayer, Matt. 6:9-13)
- 111. What do the words, "Our Father who art in heaven," teach us about our approach to God in prayer?**
- a. Christ teaches us to approach God with childlike trust and reverence, and to confess His almighty power and heavenly majesty.
- 112. What do we pray in the first petition, "Hallowed by Thy name"?**
- a. In the first petition we pray that we and all men may honor God's revelation of Himself as the Holy One, who is forever to be praised.
- 113. What do we pray in the second petition, "Thy kingdom come"?**
- a. In the second petition we pray that God may by His Word and Spirit rule ever more fully in the hearts and lives of men, until the perfection of His kingdom come in which God shall be all in all.
- 114. What do we pray in the third petition, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"?**
- a. In the third petition we pray that we and all men may renounce our own wills, and obey the will of God as gladly and faithfully as the angels do in heaven.
- 115. What do we pray in the fourth petition, "Give us this day our daily bread"?**
- a. In the fourth petition we pray that our heavenly Father may daily provide for all our bodily needs.
- 116. What do we pray in the fifth petition, "And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors"?**

- a. In the fifth petition we confidently ask our heavenly Father to forgive us our sins for the sake of Christ since He by His grace enable us to forgive on another.

**117. What do we pray in the sixth petition, “And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil”?**

- a. In the sixth petition we pray that God will not permit Satan to tempt us, and that if temptations do come He will give us strength to resist them.

**118. What do we confess in the conclusion of the Lord’s Prayer, “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever”?**

- a. In the conclusion of the Lord’s Prayer we confess that all authority, might, and honor belong to God alone, and that He is both willing and able to answer us.

**119. What does the word “Amen” signify?**

- a. “Amen” signifies that this prayer shall truly and certainly be answered.