

# Heidelberg Catechism

---

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

A. That I, with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Savior Jesus Christ; who with his precious blood has fully satisfied for all my sins, and delivered me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that without the will of my heavenly Father not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must be subservient to my salvation, wherefore by his Holy Spirit he also assures me of eternal life, and makes me heartily willing and ready, henceforth, to live unto him

## 2. Q. How many things are necessary for you to know, that you in this comfort may live and die happily?

A. Three; the first, how great my sins and misery are; the second, how I am delivered from all my sins and misery; the third, how I am to be thankful to God for such deliverance.

---

## PART I—SIN AND MISERY

### 3. Q. Whence do you know your misery?

A. Out of the law of God.

### 4. Q. What does the law of God require of us?

A. Christ teaches that in a summary, Matt. 22:37-40, *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.*

### 5. Q. Can you keep all this perfectly?

A. In no wise; for I am prone by nature to hate God and my neighbor.

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

A. By no means; but God created man good, and after his own image; that is, in true righteousness and holiness, that he might rightly know God his Creator, heartily love him, and live with him in eternal blessedness to praise and glorify him.

### 7. Q. Whence, then, comes this depraved nature of man?

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

# Heidelberg Catechism

---

**8. Q. But are we so corrupt that we are wholly incapable of doing any good, and inclined to all evil?**

A. Yes, indeed; unless we are regenerated by the Spirit of God.

**9. Q. Does not God, then, wrong man by requiring of him in his law that which he cannot perform?**

A. Not at all; for God made man capable of performing it; but man, through the instigation of the devil, by his own willful disobedience, deprived himself and all his posterity of these gifts.

**10. Q. Will God suffer such disobedience and apostasy to go unpunished?**

A. By no means; but he is terribly displeased with our original as well as actual sins; and will punish them by a just judgment temporally and eternally, as he has declared, *Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them.*

**11. Q. Is, then, God not also merciful?**

A. God is indeed merciful, but he is also just; therefore his justice requires that sin which is committed against the most high majesty of God, be also punished with extreme, that is, with everlasting punishment of body and soul.

---

## PART II—DELIVERANCE

**12. Q. Since, then, by the righteous judgment of God we deserve temporal and eternal punishment, is there no way by which we may escape that punishment and be again received into favor?**

A. God will have his justice satisfied; therefore we must make full satisfaction to the same, either by ourselves, or by another.

**13. Q. But can we ourselves make this satisfaction?**

A. By no means; on the contrary, we daily increase our debt.

**14. Q. Can there be found anywhere a mere creature able to satisfy for us?**

A. None; for, first, God will not punish any other creature for the sin which man has committed; and, further, no mere creature can sustain the burden of God's eternal wrath against sin, and deliver others from it.

# Heidelberg Catechism

---

**15. Q. What manner of mediator and deliverer, then, must we seek?**

A. One who is a true and righteous man, and yet more powerful than all creatures; that is, one who is withal true God.

**16. Q. Why must he be a true and righteous man?**

A. Because the justice of God requires that the same human nature which has sinned should make satisfaction for sin, and because one who himself is a sinner cannot satisfy for others.

**17. Q. Why must he withal be true God?**

A. That by the power of his Godhead he might bear in his human nature the burden of God's wrath; and that he might obtain for us, and restore to us, righteousness and life.

**18. Q. But who is that Mediator who is at once true God and a true, righteous man?**

A. Our Lord Jesus Christ, *who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.*

**19. Q. Whence do you know this?**

A. From the holy gospel, which God himself first revealed in Paradise; afterwards published by the holy patriarchs and prophets, and foreshadowed by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law; and lastly fulfilled by his only begotten Son.

**20. Q. Are all men, then, saved by Christ as they perished through Adam?**

A. No; but only those who by a true faith are ingrafted into him and receive all his benefits.

**21. Q. What is true faith?**

A. True faith is not only a sure knowledge, whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in his Word, but also a firm confidence which the Holy Spirit works in my heart by the gospel, that not only to others, but to me also, remission of sins, everlasting righteousness and salvation are freely given by God, merely of grace, only for the sake of Christ's merits.

**22. Q. What, then, is necessary for a Christian to believe?**

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

# Heidelberg Catechism

---

## 23. Q. What are these articles?

- A. I. *I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.*
- II. *And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord;*
- III. *Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary;*
- IV. *Suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell;*
- V. *The third day he rose again from the dead;*
- VI. *He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;*
- VII. *From thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.*
- VIII. *I believe in the Holy Spirit.*
- IX. *I believe a holy catholic Church, the communion of saints;*
- X. *The forgiveness of sins;*
- XI. *The resurrection of the body;*
- XII. *And the life everlasting.*

## 24. Q. How are these articles divided?

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

## 25. Q. Since there is but one divine Being, why do you speak of three, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

A. Because God has so revealed himself in his Word that these three distinct persons are the one, true, and eternal God.

## 26. Q. What do you believe when you say: *I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth?*

A. That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who of nothing made heaven and earth with all that is in them, who likewise upholds and governs the same by his eternal counsel and providence, is for the sake of Christ his Son my God and my Father; in whom I so trust as to have no doubt that he will provide me with all things necessary for body and soul; and further, that whatever evil he sends upon me in this vale of tears, he will turn to my good; for he is able to do it, being almighty God, and willing also, being a faithful Father.

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

A. The almighty and everywhere present power of God, whereby, as it were by his hand, he still upholds heaven, earth, and all creatures, and so governs them that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, food and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, all things, come not by chance but by his fatherly hand.

# Heidelberg Catechism

---

**28. Q. What does it profit us to know that God has created, and by his providence still upholds, all things?**

A. That we may be patient in adversity, thankful in prosperity, and with a view to the future may have good confidence in our faithful God and Father that no creature shall separate us from his love, since all creatures are so in his hand that without his will they cannot so much as move.

**29. Q. Why is the Son of God called *Jesus*, that is, *Savior*?**

A. Because he delivers us from all our sins and saves us; and because no salvation is to be sought or found in any other.

**30. Q. Do such, then, believe in the only Savior Jesus who seek their salvation and welfare of saints, of themselves, or anywhere else?**

A. They do not; for though they boast of him in words, yet in deeds they deny the only Savior Jesus; for one of two things must be true: either Jesus is not a complete Savior, or they who by a true faith receive this Savior must find in him all things necessary to their salvation.

**31. Q. Why is he called *Christ*, that is, *Anointed*?**

A. Because he is ordained of God the Father, and anointed with the Holy Spirit, to be our chief Prophet and Teacher, who has fully revealed to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption; and our only High Priest, who by the one sacrifice of his body has redeemed us, and makes continual intercession for us with the Father; and our eternal King, who governs us by his Word and Spirit, and defends and preserves us in the salvation obtained for us.

**32. Q. But why are you called a Christian?**

A. Because I am a member of Christ by faith, and thus a partaker of his anointing, that I may confess his Name, present myself a living sacrifice of thankfulness to him, and with a free and good conscience fight against sin and the devil in this life, and hereafter reign with him eternally over all creatures.

**33. Q. Why is he called God's *only begotten Son*, since we also are children of God?**

A. Because Christ alone is the eternal, natural Son of God; but we are children of God by adoption, through grace, for Christ's sake.

**34. Q. Why do you call him *our Lord*?**

A. Because he has redeemed us, body and soul, from all our sins, not with gold or silver, but with his precious blood, and has delivered us from all the power of the devil, and has made us his own possession.

# Heidelberg Catechism

---

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

A. That God's eternal Son, who is and continues true and eternal God, took upon himself the very nature of man of the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, that he might also be the true seed of David, like unto his brethren in all things, sin excepted.

**36. Q. What benefit do you receive from the holy conception and birth of Christ?**

A. That he is our mediator, and with his innocence and perfect holiness covers, in the sight of God, my sin wherein I was conceived and brought forth.

**37. Q. What does it mean that he *suffered*?**

A. That all the time he lived on earth, but especially at the end of his life, he bore, in body and soul, the wrath of God against the sin of the whole human race, in order that by his passion, as the only atoning sacrifice, he might redeem our body and soul from everlasting damnation, and obtain for us the grace of God, righteousness, and eternal life.

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

A. That he, though innocent, might be condemned by a temporal judge, and thereby free us from the severe judgment of God to which we were subject.

**39. Q. Is there anything more in his having been *crucified* than if he had died some other death?**

A. Yes, since thereby I am assured that he took on himself the curse which lay upon me; for the death of the cross was accursed of God.

**40. Q. Why was it necessary for Christ to humble himself even unto *death*?**

A. Because, by reason of the justice and truth of God, satisfaction for our sins could be made no otherwise than by the death of the Son of God.

**41. Q. Why was he *buried*?**

A. To prove thereby that he was really dead.

**42. Q. Since, then, Christ died for us, why must we also die?**

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

# Heidelberg Catechism

---

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

A. That by his power our old man is crucified, slain, and buried with him, that so the evil lusts of the flesh may no more reign in us, but that we may offer ourselves unto him a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

**44. Q. Why is there added, *He descended into hell*?**

A. That in my greatest temptations I may be assured, and wholly comfort myself with this, that my Lord Jesus Christ, by his inexpressible anguish, pains, terrors, and hellish agony in which he was plunged during all his sufferings, but especially on the cross, has delivered me from the anguish and torment of hell.

**45. Q. What does the *resurrection* of Christ profit us?**

A. First, by his resurrection he has overcome death, that he might make us partakers of the righteousness which he has obtained for us by his death; second, we also are raised up by his power to a new life; and third, the resurrection of Christ is to us a sure pledge of our blessed resurrection.

**46. Q. How do you understand the words, *He ascended into heaven*?**

A. That Christ, in the sight of his disciples, was taken up from earth into heaven, and there continues for our interest, until he comes again to judge the living and the dead.

**47. Q. Is Christ, then, not with us even to the end of the world, as he has promised?**

A. Christ is true man and true God: with respect to his human nature, he is no more on earth; but with respect to his Godhead, majesty, grace, and Spirit, he is at no time absent from us.

**48. Q. But if his human nature is not present wherever his Godhead is, are not then these two natures in Christ separated from one another?**

A. Not at all; for since the Godhead is illimitable and omnipresent, it must follow that it is beyond the bounds of the human nature it has assumed, and yet none the less is in this human nature and remains personally united to it.

**49. Q. Of what advantage to us is Christ's ascension into heaven?**

A. First, that he is our Advocate in the presence of his Father in heaven; second, that we have our flesh in heaven as a sure pledge that he, as the Head, will also take us, his members, up to himself; third, that he sends us his Spirit as an earnest, by whose power we *seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God, and not the things that are upon the earth.*

# Heidelberg Catechism

---

**50. Q. Why is it added, *And sitteth at the right hand of God?***

A. Because Christ ascended into heaven for this end, that he might there appear as Head of his Church, by whom the Father governs all things.

**51. Q. What profit unto us is this glory of Christ, our Head?**

A. First, that by his Holy Spirit he sheds forth heavenly gifts in us, his members; then, that by his power he defends and preserves us against all enemies.

**52. Q. What comfort is it to you that Christ *shall come to judge the living and the dead?***

A. That in all my sorrows and persecutions, with uplifted head I look for the very same Person who before has offered himself for my sake to the tribunal of God, and has removed all curse from me, to come as Judge from heaven; who shall cast all his and my enemies into everlasting condemnation, but shall take me with all his chosen ones to himself into heavenly joy and glory.

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

A. First, that he is true and co-eternal God with the Father and the Son; second, that he is also given me, to make me by a true faith partaker of Christ and all his benefits, to comfort me, and to abide with me forever.

**54. Q. What do you believe concerning the *holy catholic Church?***

A. That the Son of God, out of the whole human race, from the beginning to the end of the world, gathers, defends, and preserves for himself, by his Spirit and Word, in the unity of the true faith, a Church chosen to everlasting life; and that I am, and forever shall remain, a living member thereof.

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

A. First, that believers, all and every one, as members of Christ, are partakers of him and of all his treasures and gifts; second, that every one must know himself bound to employ his gifts readily and cheerfully for the advantage and salvation of other members.

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

A. That God, for the sake of Christ's satisfaction, will no more remember my sins, neither my sinful nature, against which I have to struggle all my life long; but will graciously grant unto me the righteousness of Christ, that I may never come into condemnation.



# Heidelberg Catechism

---

**57. Q. What comfort does *the resurrection of the body* afford you?**

A. That not only my soul, after this life, shall immediately be taken up to Christ, its Head; but also that this my body, raised by the power of Christ, shall again be united with my soul, and made like unto the glorious body of Christ.

**58. Q. What comfort do you derive from the article of *the life everlasting*?**

A. That, since I now feel in my heart the beginning of eternal joy, after this life I shall possess perfect bliss, such as eye has not seen nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man—therein to praise God forever.

**59. Q. But what does it profit you now that you believe all this?**

A. That I am righteous in Christ before God, and an heir to eternal life.

**60. Q. How are you righteous before God?**

A. Only by a true faith in Jesus Christ; that is, though my conscience accuse me that I have grievously sinned against all the commandments of God and kept none of them, and am still inclined to all evil, yet God, without any merit of mine, of mere grace, grants and imputes to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ, as if I had never had nor committed any sin, and myself had accomplished all the obedience which Christ has rendered for me; if only I accept such benefit with a believing heart.

**61. Q. Why do you say that you are righteous only by faith?**

A. Not that I am acceptable to God on account of the worthiness of my faith, but because only the satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ is my righteousness before God, and I can receive the same and make it my own in no other way than by faith only.

**62. Q. But why cannot our good works be the whole or part of our righteousness before God?**

A. Because the righteousness which can stand before the tribunal of God must be absolutely perfect and wholly conformable to the divine law, while even our best works in this life are all imperfect and defiled with sin.

**63. Q. What? do our good works then merit nothing, while God will yet reward them in this and in the future life?**

A. This reward is not of merit but of grace.

# Heidelberg Catechism

---

**64. Q. But does not this doctrine make men careless and profane?**

A. By no means; for it is impossible that those who are implanted into Christ by a true faith should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness.

**65. Q. Since, then, we are made partakers of Christ and all his benefits by faith only, whence comes this faith?**

A. From the Holy Spirit, who works it in our hearts by the preaching of the holy gospel, and confirms it by the use of the holy sacraments.

**66. Q. What are the sacraments?**

A. The sacraments are holy, visible signs and seals, appointed of God for this end, that by the use thereof he may the more fully declare and seal to us the promise of the gospel; namely, that he of grace grants us the remission of sins and life eternal, for the sake of the one sacrifice of Christ accomplished on the cross.

**67. Q. Are, then, both the Word and the sacraments designed to direct our faith to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross as the only ground of our salvation?**

A. Yes, indeed; for the Holy Spirit teaches us in the gospel and assures us by the sacraments that the whole of our salvation stands in the one sacrifice of Christ made for us on the cross.

**68. Q. How many sacraments has Christ instituted in the new covenant or testament?**

A. Two: holy baptism and the holy supper.

**69. Q. How is it signified and sealed unto you in holy baptism that you have part in the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross?**

A. Thus, that Christ has appointed this outward washing with water and added the promise that I am washed with his blood and Spirit from the pollution of my soul, that is, from all my sins, as certainly as I am washed outwardly with water, by which the filthiness of the body is commonly washed away.

**70. Q. What is it to be washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ?**

A. It is to have the forgiveness of sins from God through grace, for the sake of Christ's blood, which he shed for us in his sacrifice on the cross; and also to be renewed by the Holy Spirit, and sanctified to be members of Christ, that so we may more and more die unto sin and lead holy and unblamable lives.

# Heidelberg Catechism

---

**71. Q. Where has Christ assured us that we are washed with his blood and Spirit as certainly as we are washed with the water of baptism?**

A. In the institution of baptism, which reads thus: *Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*, Matt. 28:19. And: *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned*, Mark 16:16. This promise is also repeated where the Scripture calls baptism *the washing of regeneration and the washing away of sins*, Tit. 3:5; Acts 22:16.

**72. Q. Is, then, the outward washing with water itself the washing away of sin?**

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

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

A. God speaks thus not without great cause: to wit, not only to teach us thereby that as the filthiness of the body is taken away by water, so our sins are removed by the blood and Spirit of Jesus Christ; but especially to assure us by this divine pledge and sign that we are spiritually cleansed from our sins as really as we are outwardly washed with water.

**74. Q. Are infants also to be baptized?**

A. Yes; for since they, as well as adults, are included in the covenant and Church of God, and since both redemption from sin and the Holy Spirit, the Author of faith, are through the blood of Christ promised to them no less than to adults, they must also by baptism, as a sign of the covenant, be ingrafted into the Christian Church, and distinguished from the children of unbelievers, as was done in the old covenant or testament by circumcision, instead of which baptism was instituted in the new covenant.

**75. Q. How is it signified and sealed unto you in the holy supper that you partake of the one sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the cross, and of all his benefits?**

A. Thus, that Christ has commanded me and all believers to eat of this broken bread and to drink of this cup in remembrance of him, and has added these promises: first, that his body was offered and broken on the cross for me, and his blood shed for me, as certainly as I see with my eyes the bread of the Lord broken for me, and the cup communicated to me; and further, that with his crucified body and shed blood he himself feeds and nourishes my soul to everlasting life as assuredly as I receive from the hand of the minister, and taste with my mouth, the bread and cup of the Lord as sure signs of the body and blood of Christ.

**76. Q. What is it to eat the crucified body and drink the shed blood of Christ?**

A. It is not only to embrace with a believing heart all the sufferings and the death of Christ, and thereby to obtain the forgiveness of sins and life eternal, but, further, also to become more and more united to his sacred body, by the Holy Spirit, who dwells both in Christ and in us, so that, though Christ is in heaven and we are on earth, we are nevertheless flesh of his flesh and bone

# Heidelberg Catechism

---

of his bones, and live and are governed by one Spirit, as members of the same body are by one soul.

**77. Q. Where has Christ promised that he will as certainly feed and nourish believers with his body and blood as they eat of this broken bread and drink of this cup?**

A. In the institution of the supper, which reads thus: *The Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, This is my body, which is for you; this do in remembrance of me. In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood; this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come, 1 Cor. 11:23-26.* This promise is repeated by St. Paul, where he says: *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ? seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body; for we all partake of the one bread, 1 Cor. 10:16, 17.*

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

A. No; but as the water in baptism neither is changed into the blood of Christ, nor is the washing away of sins itself, being only the divine token and confirmation thereof, so likewise the bread in the Lord's supper does not become the real body of Christ, though agreeably to the nature and property of sacraments it is called the body of Christ Jesus.

**79. Q. Why, then, does Christ call the bread *His body*, and the cup *His blood or the new covenant in his blood*, and Paul, *a communion of the body and blood of Christ*?**

A. Christ speaks thus not without great cause; namely, not only to teach us thereby that, as bread and wine sustain this temporal life, so also his crucified body and shed blood are the true food and drink of our souls unto eternal life; but much more, by these visible signs and pledges to assure us that we are as really partakers of his true body and blood, through the working of the Holy Spirit, as we receive by the mouth of the body these holy tokens in remembrance of him; and that all his sufferings and obedience are as certainly ours as if we ourselves had in our own persons suffered and made satisfaction to God for our sins.

**80. Q. What difference is there between the Lord's supper and the popish mass?**

A. The Lord's supper testifies to us that we have full pardon of all our sins by the only sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which he himself has once accomplished on the cross; and that by the Holy Spirit we are ingrafted into Christ, who according to his human nature is now not on earth but in heaven, at the right hand of God his Father, and wills there to be worshipped by us; but the mass teaches that the living and the dead have not the forgiveness of sins through the sufferings of Christ unless Christ is still daily offered for them by the priests; and that Christ is bodily present under the form of bread and wine and is therefore to be worshipped in them. And thus the mass, at bottom, is nothing else than a denial of the one sacrifice and passion of Jesus Christ, and an accursed idolatry.

# Heidelberg Catechism

---

**81. Q. For whom is the Lord's supper instituted?**

A. For those who are truly displeased with themselves for their sins and yet trust that these are forgiven them for the sake of Christ, and that their remaining infirmity is covered by his passion and death; who also desire more and more to strengthen their faith and amend their life. But hypocrites and such as turn not to God with sincere hearts eat and drink judgment to themselves.

**82. Q. Are they also to be admitted to this supper who, by their confession and life, show themselves to be unbelieving and ungodly?**

A. No; for in this way the covenant of God would be profaned and his wrath kindled against the whole congregation; wherefore the Christian Church is in duty bound, according to the ordinance of Christ and his apostles, to exclude such persons by the keys of the kingdom of heaven, until they show amendment of life.

**83. Q. What are the keys of the kingdom of heaven?**

A. The preaching of the holy gospel, and church discipline or excommunication out of the Christian Church. By these two the kingdom of heaven is opened to believers and shut against unbelievers.

**84. Q. How is the kingdom of heaven opened and shut by the preaching of the holy gospel?**

A. By proclaiming and openly witnessing, according to the command of Christ, to believers, one and all, that, whenever they receive the promise of the gospel by a true faith, all their sins are really forgiven them of God for the sake of Christ's merits; and on the contrary, by proclaiming and witnessing to all unbelievers and such as do not sincerely repent that the wrath of God and eternal condemnation abide on them so long as they are not converted. According to this witness of the gospel God will judge, both in this life and in that which is to come.

**85. Q. How is the kingdom of heaven shut and opened by church discipline?**

A. By forbidding, according to the command of Christ, the use of the sacraments by those who under the Christian name maintain unchristian doctrines or practices; who will not, after repeated brotherly admonitions, renounce their errors and wicked course of life; and who, having been complained of to the church, or to those who are thereunto appointed by the church, despise their admonitions—by which censure they are excluded from the Christian Church, and by God himself from the kingdom of Christ; and by again receiving such as members of Christ and his Church when they promise and show real amendment.

# Heidelberg Catechism

---

## PART III—GRATITUDE

**86. Q. Since, then, we are delivered from our misery by grace alone, through Christ, without any merit of ours, why must we yet do good works?**

A. Because Christ, having redeemed us by his blood, also renews us by his Holy Spirit after his own image, that with our whole life we may show ourselves thankful to God for his benefits, and that he may be praised by us; then, also, that each of us may be assured in himself of his faith by the fruits thereof, and that by our godly walk our neighbors also may be won for Christ.

**87. Q. Can they, then, not be saved who, continuing in their wicked and ungrateful lives, do not turn to God?**

A. By no means; for the Scripture declares that no unchaste person, idolater, adulterer, thief, covetous man, drunkard, slanderer, robber, or any such like, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

**88. Q. Of how many parts does true conversion, or the turning of man to God, consist?**

A. Two: the mortification of the old man, and the quickening of the new.

**89. Q. What is the mortification of the old man?**

A. It is heartfelt sorrow that we have provoked God by our sins, and more and more to hate them and flee from them.

**90. Q. What is the quickening of the new man?**

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

**91. Q. But what are good works?**

A. Only those which are done from true faith, according to the law of God, and to his glory; and not such as are based on our own opinions or the precepts of men.

**92. Q. What is the law of God?**

A. God spake all these words, saying: *I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*

I. *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

II. *Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them; for I Jehovah thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing lovingkindness unto thousands of them that love me and keep my*

# Heidelberg Catechism

---

*commandments.*

III. *Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain: for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*

IV. *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is a Sabbath unto Jehovah thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six; days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore Jehovah blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.*

V. *Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee.*

VI. *Thou shalt not kill.*

VII. *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

VIII. *Thou shalt not steal.*

IX. *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.*

X. *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.*

## **93. Q. How are these commandments divided?**

A. Into two tables; the first of which teaches what must be our attitude toward God; the second, what duties we owe to our neighbor.

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

A. That, as much as I love my soul's salvation, I avoid and flee all idolatry, sorcery, soothsaying, superstition, invocation of saints or other creatures; and that I rightly acknowledge the only true God, trust in him alone, submit to him with all humility and patience, expect all good from him only, and love, fear, and honor him with my whole heart; so that I leave and forsake all creatures rather than do even the least thing against his will.

## **95. Q. What is idolatry?**

A. It is, instead of the one true God who has revealed himself in his Word, or besides him, to devise or have something else on which to place our trust.

## **96. Q. What does God require in the second commandment?**

A. That we in no wise make any image of God, nor worship him in any other way than he has commanded in his Word.

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

A. God neither can nor may be visibly represented in any way. As for creatures, though they may be visibly represented, yet God forbids us to make or have any likeness of them in order to worship them or serve God by them.

# Heidelberg Catechism

---

**98. Q. But may not images be tolerated in the churches as books for the laity?**

A. No; for we must not be wiser than God, who will not have his people taught by dumb images, but by the living preaching of his Word.

**99. Q. What is required in the third commandment?**

A. That we must not by cursing or perjury, nor by unnecessary swearing, profane or abuse the Name of God, nor by our silence or connivance become partakers of these horrible sins in others; and briefly, that we use the holy Name of God no otherwise than with fear and reverence, to the end that he may be rightly confessed and worshipped by us, and be glorified in all our words and works.

**100. Q. Is, then, the profaning of God's Name by swearing and cursing so heinous a sin that his wrath is kindled even against those who do not, as much as in them lies, help to prevent and to forbid such cursing and swearing?**

A. Certainly; for no sin is greater or more provoking to God than the profaning of his Name; wherefore, also, he has commanded this sin to be punished with death.

**101. Q. But may we not swear by the Name of God in a godly manner?**

A. Yes; when the magistrate demands it of his subjects, or when otherwise necessity requires us thus to confirm fidelity and truth, for the glory of God and the welfare of our neighbor; for such swearing is grounded in God's Word, and therefore was rightly used by the saints in the Old and the New Testament.

**102. Q. May we also swear by saints or any other creatures?**

A. No; for a lawful oath is a calling upon God, as the only Searcher of hearts, to bear witness to the truth, and to punish me if I swear falsely; which honor is due to no creature.

**103. Q. What does God require in the fourth commandment?**

A. First, that the ministry of the gospel and the schools be maintained, and that I, especially on the Sabbath, that is, the day of rest, diligently attend the church of God, to learn God's word, to use the sacraments, to call publicly upon the Lord, and to give Christian alms. Second, that all the days of my life I rest from my evil works, let the Lord work in me by his Holy Spirit, and thus begin in this life the eternal Sabbath.

**104. Q. What does God require in the fifth commandment?**

A. That I show all honor, love, and fidelity to my father and mother, and to all in authority over me; submit myself with due obedience to their good instruction and correction; and also bear patiently with their weaknesses and shortcomings, since it pleases God to govern us by their hand.



# Heidelberg Catechism

---

**105. Q. What does God require in the sixth commandment?**

A. That I, neither in thought, nor in word or gesture, much less in deed, dishonor, hate, wound, or kill my neighbor, whether by myself or by another, but lay aside all desire of revenge; moreover, that I harm not myself nor willfully expose myself to any danger. Therefore, also, the magistrate is armed with the sword to prevent murder.

**106. Q. But this commandment seems to speak only of murder?**

A. In forbidding murder, God teaches us that he abhors the root of murder, as envy, hatred, anger, and desire of revenge; and that he accounts all these as murder.

**107. Q. But is it enough that we do not kill our neighbor in any such way?**

A. No; for when God forbids envy, hatred, and anger, he commands us to love our neighbor as ourselves: to show patience, peace, meekness, mercy, and all kindness towards him, prevent his hurt as much as in us lies, and do good even to our enemies.

**108. Q. What does the seventh commandment teach us?**

A. That all unchastity is accursed of God; and that we must, therefore, detest it from the heart, and live a chaste and continent life both within and outside of holy wedlock.

**109. Q. Does God in this commandment forbid nothing more than adultery and such like gross sins?**

A. Since our body and soul are both temples of the Holy Spirit, it is his will that we keep both pure and holy; wherefore he forbids all unchaste actions, gestures, words, thoughts, desires, and whatever may entice one thereto.

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

A. God forbids not only such theft and robbery as are punished by the magistrate, but he also brands as theft all wicked tricks and devices whereby we aim to appropriate our neighbor's goods, whether by force or with show of right, as unjust weights, ells, measures, and wares, false coins, usury, or any other means forbidden by God; likewise all covetousness and all abuse and waste of his gifts.

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

A. That I further my neighbor's profit wherever I can or may, deal with him as I would have others deal with me, and labor faithfully that I may be able to relieve the needy.

# Heidelberg Catechism

---

**112. Q. What is required in the ninth commandment?**

A. That I bear false witness against no man; wrest no one's words; be no backbiter or slanderer; do not judge, or join in condemning, any man rashly or unheard; but that I avoid all sorts of lies and deceit as the proper works of the devil, unless I would bring down upon myself the heavy wrath of God; likewise, that in judicial and all other dealings I love the truth, speak it up rightly, and confess it; and that, as much as I am able, I defend and promote the honor and reputation of my neighbor.

**113. Q. What does the tenth commandment require of us?**

A. That not even the slightest inclination or thought contrary to any of God's commandments shall ever rise in our heart; but that at all times we shall hate all sin with our whole heart and delight in all righteousness.

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

A. No; but even the holiest men, while in this life, have only a small beginning of this obedience; yet so that with earnest purpose they begin to live, not only according to some but according to all the commandments of God.

**115. Q. Why, then, will God have the ten commandments preached so strictly, since in this life no one can keep them?**

A. First, that all our life long we may learn more and more to know our sinful nature, and so become the more earnest in seeking remission of sins and righteousness in Christ; second, that we may constantly endeavor, and pray to God for the grace of the Holy Spirit, to be renewed more and more after the image of God, till after this life we arrive at the goal of perfection.

**116. Q. Why is prayer necessary for Christians?**

A. Because it is the chief part of the thankfulness which God requires of us, and because God will give his grace and Holy Spirit to those only who with hearty sighing unceasingly beg them of him and thank him for them.

**117. Q. What belongs to such prayer as God is pleased with and will hear?**

A. First, that from the heart we call upon the one true God only, who has revealed himself in his Word, for all he has commanded us to ask of him; second, that we right thoroughly know our need and misery, in order to humble ourselves before the face of his majesty; third, that we be firmly assured that, notwithstanding we are unworthy of it, he will, for the sake of Christ our Lord, certainly hear our prayer as he has promised us in his Word.

# Heidelberg Catechism

---

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

A. All things necessary for soul and body, which Christ our Lord has comprised in the prayer he himself has taught us.

**119. Q. What is the Lord's Prayer?**

*A. Our Father who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name;  
Thy kingdom come;  
Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors;  
And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.*

**120. Q. Why has Christ commanded us to address God thus, *Our Father*?**

A. To awaken in us, at the very beginning of our prayer, that childlike reverence and trust toward God which should be the ground of our prayer; namely, that God has become our Father through Christ, and will much less deny us what we ask of him in true faith than our parents will refuse us earthly things.

**121. Q. Why is there added, *Who art in heaven*?**

A. That we may have no earthly thought of the heavenly majesty of God, and may expect from his almighty power all things necessary for body and soul.

**122. Q. What is the first petition?**

A. *Hallowed by thy name.* That is: grant us, first, rightly to know thee, and to sanctify, glorify, and praise thee in all thy works, in which thy power, wisdom, goodness, justice, mercy, and truth shine forth; further also, that we may so order and direct our whole life, thoughts, words, and actions, that thy Name may not be blasphemed but honored and praised on our account.

**123. Q. What is the second petition?**

A. *Thy kingdom come.* That is: so rule us by thy Word and Spirit that we may submit ourselves more and more to thee; preserve and increase thy church; destroy the works of the devil, every power that exalts itself against thee, and all wicked counsels conceived against thy holy Word, until the perfection of thy kingdom arrived wherein thou shalt be all in all.

**124. Q. What is the third petition?**

A. *Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.* That is: grant that we and all men may renounce our own will, and without any gainsaying obey thy will, which alone is good; that so every one

# Heidelberg Catechism

---

may discharge the duties of his office and calling as willingly and faithfully as the angels in heaven.

**125. Q. What is the fourth petition?**

A. *Give us this day our daily bread.* That is: be pleased to provide for all our bodily need, that we may thereby acknowledge thee to be the only fountain of all good, and that without thy blessing neither our care and labor nor thy gifts can profit us; and, therefore, that we may withdraw our trust from all creatures and place it alone in thee.

**126. Q. What is the fifth petition?**

A. *And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.* That is: be pleased, for the sake of Christ's blood, not to impute to us, miserable sinners, any of our transgressions, nor the evil which always cleaves to us; as we also find this witness of thy grace in us that it is our full purpose heartily to forgive our neighbor.

**127. Q. What is the sixth petition?**

A. *And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.* That is: since we are so weak in ourselves that we cannot stand a moment, and besides, since our sworn enemies, the devil, the world, and our own flesh, cease not to assault us, be pleased to preserve and strengthen us by the power of thy Holy Spirit, that we may not succumb in this spiritual warfare but always offer strong resistance, till at last we obtain a complete victory.

**128. Q. How do you conclude your prayer?**

A. *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever.* That is: all this we ask of thee because thou, as our King who hast power over all things, art both willing and able to give us all good, and that thereby not we but Thy holy Name may be glorified for ever.

**129. Q. What does the word *Amen* signify?**

A. *Amen* signifies: it shall truly and surely be; for my prayer is more certainly heard of God than I feel in my heart that I desire these things of him.