

The Westminster Shorter Catechism Questions 1-34

The original text of 1647, with the Assembly's proof texts.

JUNE 2

Question 1: What is the chief end of man?

Answer 1: Man's chief end is to glorify God,¹ and to enjoy him for ever.²

¹ I Cor. 10:31; Rom. 11:36 ² Ps. 73:25-28

Q2: What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?

A2: The word of God, which is contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments,¹ is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.²

¹ II Tim. 3:16; Eph. 2:20 ² I John 1:3-4

Q3: What do the scriptures principally teach?

A3: The scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.¹

¹ II Tim. 1:13, 3:16

JUNE 9

Q4: What is God?

A4: God is a Spirit,¹ infinite,² eternal,³ and unchangeable,⁴ in his being,⁵ wisdom,⁶ power,⁷ holiness,⁸ justice, goodness, and truth.⁹

¹ John 4:24 ² Job 11:7-9 ³ Ps. 90:2 ⁴ James 1:17 ⁵ Exod. 3:14
⁶ Ps. 147:5 ⁷ Rev. 4:8 ⁸ Rev. 15:4 ⁹ Exod. 34:6-7

Q5: Are there more Gods than one?

A5: There is but One only, the living and true God.¹

¹ Deut. 6:4; Jer. 10:10

Q6: How many persons are there in the Godhead?

A6: There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God the same in substance, equal in power and glory.¹

¹ I John 5:7; Matt. 28:19

JUNE 16

Q7: What are the decrees of God?

A7: The decrees of God are, his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.¹

¹ Eph. 1:4, 11; Rom. 9:22-23

Q8: How doth God execute his decrees?

A8: God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence.

June 23

Q9: What is the work of creation?

A9: The work of creation is, God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good.¹

¹ Gen. 1; Heb. 11:3

Q10: How did God create man?

A10: God created man male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures.¹

¹ Gen. 1:26-28, Col. 3:10, Eph. 4:24

JUNE 30

Q11: What are God's works of providence?

A11: God's works of providence are, his most holy,¹ wise,² and powerful preserving³ and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.⁴

¹ Ps. 145:17 ² Ps. 104:24; Isa. 28:29 ³ Heb. 1:3 ⁴ Ps. 103:19; Matt. 10:29-31

Q12: What special act of providence did God exercise towards man in the estate wherein he was created?

A12: When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death.¹

¹ Gal. 3:12; Gen. 2:17

JULY 7

Q13: Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?

A13: Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God.¹

¹ Gen. 3:6-8; 13; Eccles. 7:29

Q14: What is sin?

A14: Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.¹

¹ I John 3:4

Q15: What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?

A15: The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit.¹

¹ Gen. 3:6, 12

JULY 14

Q16: Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?

A16: The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity; all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression.¹

¹ Gen. 2:16-17, Rom. 5:12, I Cor. 15:21-22

Q17: Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?

A17: The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.¹

¹ Rom. 5:12

Q18: Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?

A18: The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called Original Sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.¹

¹ Rom. 5:12, Rom. 5:10-20, Eph. 2:1-3, James 1:14-15, Matt. 15:19

Q19: What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?

A19: All mankind by their fall lost communion with God,¹ are under his wrath and curse,² and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever.³

¹ Gen. 3:8, 10, 24

² Eph. 2:2-3; Gal. 3:10

³ Lam. 3:39; Rom. 6:23; Matt. 25:41, 46

JULY 28

Q20: Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?

A20: God having, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life,¹ did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.²

¹ Eph. 1:4

² Rom. 3:20-22; Gal. 3:21-22

Q21: Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?

A21: The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ,¹ who, being the eternal Son of God, became man,² and so was, and continueth to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, for ever.³

¹ I Tim. 2:5-6

² John 1:14; Gal. 4:4

³ Rom. 9:5; Luke 1:35; Col. 2:9; Heb. 7:24-25

Q22: How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?

A22: Christ, the Son of God, became man, by taking to himself a true body,¹ and a reasonable soul,² being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her,³ yet without sin.⁴

¹ Heb. 2:14, 16; 10:5

² Matt. 26:38

³ Luke 1:27, 31, 35, 42; Gal. 4:4

⁴ Heb. 4:15; 7:26

AUGUST 4

Q23: What offices doth Christ execute as our Redeemer?

A23: Christ, as our Redeemer, executeth the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation.¹

¹ Acts 3:21-22; Heb. 12:25. Cf. II Cor. 13:3; Heb. 5:5-7; 7:25; Ps. 2:6; Isa. 9:6-7; Matt. 21:5; Ps. 2:8-11

Q24: How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?

A24: Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by his word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation.¹

¹ John 1:18; I Peter 1:10-12; John 15:15; 20:31

Q25: How doth Christ execute the office of a priest?

A25: Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice,¹ and reconcile us to God,² and in making continual intercession for us.³

¹ Heb. 9:14, 28

² Heb. 2:17

³ Heb. 7:24-25

Q26: How doth Christ execute the office of a king?

A26: Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself,¹ in ruling² and defending us,³ and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.⁴

¹ Acts 15:14-16

² Isa. 33:22

³ Isa. 32:1-2

⁴ I Cor. 15:25; Ps. 110

AUGUST 11

Q27: Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist?

A27: Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition,¹ made under the law,² undergoing the miseries of this life,³ the wrath of God,⁴ and the cursed death of the cross;⁵ in being buried,⁶ and continuing under the power of death for a time.⁷

¹ Luke 2:7 ² Gal. 4:4 ³ Heb. 12:2-3; Isa. 53:2-3 ⁴ Luke 22:44; Matt. 27:46
⁵ Phil. 2:8 ⁶ I Cor. 15:3-4 ⁷ Acts 2:24-27, 31

Q28: Wherein consisteth Christ's exaltation?

A28: Christ's exaltation consisteth in his rising again from the dead on the third day,¹ in ascending up into heaven,² in sitting at the right hand of God the Father,³ and in coming to judge the world at the last day.⁴

¹ I Cor. 15:4 ² Mark 16:19 ³ Eph. 1:20 ⁴ Acts 1:11; 17:31

AUGUST 18

Q29: How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?

A29: We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us¹ by his Holy Spirit.²

¹ John 1:11-12 ² Titus 3:5-6

Q30: How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?

A30: The Spirit applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us,¹ and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.²

¹ Eph. 1:13-14; John 6:37, 39; Eph. 2:8 ² Eph. 3:17, I Cor. 1:9

Q31: What is effectual calling?

A31: Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit,¹ whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery,² enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ,³ and renewing our wills,⁴ he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.⁵

¹ II Tim. 1:9; II Thess. 2:13-14 ² Acts 2:37 ³ Acts 26:18
⁴ Ezek. 36:26-27 ⁵ John 6:44-45; Phil. 2:13

AUGUST 25

Q32: What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?

A32: They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification,¹ adoption,² and sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them.³

¹ Rom. 8:30 ² Eph. 1:5 ³ I Cor. 1:26, 30

Q33: What is justification?

A33: Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins,¹ and accepteth us as righteous in his sight,² only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us,³ and received by faith alone.⁴

¹ Rom. 3:24-25; 4:6-8 ² II Cor. 5:19, 21 ³ Rom. 5:17-19 ⁴ Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:9

Q34: What is adoption?

A34: Adoption is an act of God's free grace,¹ whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the Sons of God.²

¹ I John 3:1 ² John 1:12; Rom. 8:17