

## The Apostles' Creed

### 86. What is a creed?

A creed is a statement of what we believe, teach, and confess.

275 **Rom. 10:10** It is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

### 87. What is meant by "I believe in God"?

It means I trust God and His promises and accept as true all He teaches in the Holy Scriptures.

276 **Ps. 31:14** I trust in You, O Lord; I say, "You are my God."

277 **Ps. 37:5** Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him.

278 **Rom. 10:17** Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

279 **Heb. 11:1** Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

### 88. Why do we say, "I believe," and not, "We believe"?

Everyone must believe for himself or herself, no one can be saved by another's faith.

280 **Hab. 2:4** The righteous will live by his faith.

281 **Luke 7:50** Your faith has saved you; go in peace.

Bible narrative: The foolish virgins could not obtain oil from the wise virgins (Matt. 25:1-13).

### 89. What three creeds are used by the church?

The Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian.

### 90. Which creed is used in Luther's Catechism?

The Apostles' Creed.

### 91. Why is it called the Apostles' Creed?

It is called the Apostles' Creed, not because it was written by the apostles themselves, but because it states briefly the doctrine (teaching) which God gave

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through the apostles in the Bible. The Creed is trinitarian because the Scriptures reveal God as triune. Christians are baptized in the name of the triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

282 **Matt. 28:19** Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

283 **Eph. 4:4-6** There is one body and one Spirit-just as you were called to one hope when you were called-one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

### 92. In what ways does the triune God make Himself known?

A. Through the existence of the world (natural knowledge of God).

284 **Ps. 19:1** The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies declare the work of His hands.

285 **Rom. 1:19-20** What may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities-His eternal power and divine nature-have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made so that men are without excuse.

286 **Heb. 3:4** Every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything.

B. Through conscience (natural knowledge of God).

287 **Rom. 2:15** They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.

C. Especially through the Holy Scriptures in which

God clearly reveals Himself and His gift of salvation in Christ (revealed knowledge of God).

288 **John 20:31** These [acts of Jesus] are written that You may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.

289 **2 Tim. 3:15** From infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus

290 **Heb. 1:1-2** In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom He made the universe.

### 93. Who is God?

In His Word God has told us that He is

A. spirit (a personal being without a body);

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291 **John 4:24** God is spirit.

B. eternal (without beginning and without end);

292 **Ps. 90:1-2** Lord, You have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or You brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting You are God.

293 **1 Tim. 1:17** To the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

C. unchangeable (immutable);

294 **Ps. 102:27** You remain the same, and Your years will never end.

295 **Mal. 3:6** I the Lord do not change.

296 **James 1:17** Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

D. almighty, all-powerful (omnipotent);

297 **Gen. 17:1** I am God Almighty.

298 **Matt. 19:26** With God all things are possible.

E. all-knowing (omniscient);

299 **Ps. 139:1-4** O Lord, You have searched me and You know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; You perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; You are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue You know it completely, O Lord.

300 **John 21:17** Lord, You know all things.

F. present everywhere (omnipresent);

301 **Jer. 23:24** "Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?" declares the Lord. "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" declares the Lord.

302 **Acts 17:27** He is not far from each one of us.

G. holy (sinless and hating sin);

303 **Lev. 19:2** I, the Lord your God, am holy.

304 **Ps. 5:4-5** You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil; with You the wicked cannot dwell. The arrogant cannot stand in Your presence; You hate all who do wrong.

305 **Is. 6:3** Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty.

H. just (fair and impartial);

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306 **Deut. 32:4** He is the Rock, His works are perfect, and all His ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is He.

I. faithful (keeping His promises);

307 **2 Tim. 2:13** If we are faithless, He will remain faithful, for He cannot disown Himself.

J. good (kind, desiring our welfare);

308 **Ps. 118:1** Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever.

309 **Ps. 145:9** The Lord is good to all; He has compassion on all He has made.

K. merciful (full of pity);

310 **Jer. 3:12** "I am merciful," declares the Lord.

311 **Titus 3:5** He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy.

L. gracious (showing undeserved kindness, forgiving);

312 **Ex. 34:6-7** The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.

M. love.

313 **John 3:16** God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

314 **1 John 4:8** God is love.

Note: God's attributes tell us what God is. God is each of these, all of these, and more than these attributes.

### 94. Who is the only true God?

The only true God is the triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three distinct persons in one divine being (the Holy Trinity).

### 95. How are the three divine persons distinguished from each other?

The Father has begotten the Son from eternity; the Son is begotten of the Father from eternity; the Holy Spirit from eternity proceeds from the Father and the Son. To the Father especially is ascribed the work of creation; to the Son, the work of redemption; to the Holy Spirit, the work of sanctification.

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- 315 **Ps. 2:7** You are My Son; today I have become Your Father.
- 316 **John 15:26** When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, He will testify about Me.
- 317 **Gal. 4:6** Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."

### The First Article Creation

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

*What does this mean?*

I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them.

He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.

He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil.

All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him.

This is most certainly true.

#### 96. Why is the first person of the Trinity called "the Father"?

A. God is the Father of my Lord Jesus Christ and also my Father through faith in Christ.

318 **Matt. 3:17** A voice from heaven said, "This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased."

319 **John 20:17** I am returning to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God.

320 **Gal. 3:26** You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

B. He is also the Father of all people because He created them. Strictly speaking, there is only one human race, because all human beings are equally the children of Adam and Eve and are equally redeemed by Christ.

321 **Mal. 2:10** Have we not all one Father? Did not one God create us?

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- 322 **Acts 17:26** From one man He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth.
- 323 **1 Cor. 15:22** As in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.
- 324 **Eph. 3:14-15** For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom His whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name.
- Bible narrative: The prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32).

## God Made Me and All Creatures

### 97. Why is God, the Father Almighty called "Maker of heaven and earth"?

Because in six days He created all things, out of nothing, simply by His word.

- 325 **Gen. 1:1** In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
- 326 **Ps. 33:6, 9** By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of His mouth . . . For He spoke, and it came to be; He commanded, and it stood firm.
- 327 **Heb. 11:3** By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

Bible narrative: Creation (Genesis 1-2).

### 98. What is meant by "heaven and earth"? All things visible and invisible.

- 328 **Col. 1:16** By Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible.

## The Angels

### 99. Which invisible beings created by God are especially important to us?

The angels.

Note: Angel means "messenger." God frequently used angels to announce important events in the history of salvation: the birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:1-20); the birth of Jesus (Luke 1:26-38; Matt. 1:18-21); the resurrection of Jesus (Luke 24:4-7); the ascension and second coming of Jesus (Acts 1:10-11).

### 100. What else does the Bible tell us about angels?

A. They are spirit beings who were created holy.

- 329 **Gen. 1:31** God saw all that He had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning-the sixth day.

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B. Some angels rebelled against God. They are the devils or demons.

330 **2 Peter 2:4** God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment.

C. The good angels are many and powerful. They serve God and help us.

331 **Dan. 7:10** Thousands upon thousands attended Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.

332 **Luke 2:13** Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God.

333 **Ps. 103:20-21** Praise the Lord, you His angels, you mighty ones who do His bidding, who obey His word. Praise the Lord, all His heavenly hosts, you His servants who do His will.

334 **Ps. 91:11-12** He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

335 **Heb. 1:14** Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

Bible narratives: One angel put to death 185,000 of Sennacherib's army (2 Kings 19:35). Elisha and his servant were protected by the heavenly hosts (2 Kings 6:15-17). An angel set Peter free (Acts 12:511).

D. The evil angels are also many and powerful. They hate God and seek to destroy everything that is good, especially faith in Christ.

336 **Mark 5:9** Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many."

337 **Eph. 6:12** Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

338 **Mark 4:15** Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes along and takes away the word that was sown in them.

339 **John 8:44** You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

340 **1 Peter 5:8-9** Be self-controlled and alert Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

Bible narratives: The serpent led Eve into sin (Gen. 3:1-5). Satan sought the destruction of Job (Job 2). The tempter tried to mislead Jesus (Matt. 4:1-11).

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### Humanity

#### 101. Who are human beings?

Human beings are the most important visible creatures. God created Adam and Eve in his own image with authority over all the earth.

341 **Gen. 2:7** The Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

342 **Gen. 1:26-28** God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, in Our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

343 **Mark 10:6** [Jesus said] "At the beginning of creation God made them male and female."

#### 102. Why do we say, "God has made me"?

God created the first man and woman, and God has created each one of us.

344 **Gen. 1:28** God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

345 **Ps. 139:13** You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb.

346 **Jer. 1:5** Before I formed you in the womb I knew you.

#### 103. How did God first create life?

God created all living things, both plant and animal, by His Word alone, from nothing. He created humanity specially, from dust, then gave us His own breath as life.

347 **Gen. 2:7** The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

348 **Ps. 139:14** I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

#### 104. What plan does God use for the reproduction of living things?

God created living things to reproduce "according to their kinds." Animals, plants, and people can reproduce only living things like themselves.

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349 **Gen. 1:21** God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

350 **Gen. 1:24** God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind."

### 105. What is the Christian's proper response to theories of evolution regarding the beginning of the world?

By faith Christians believe what the Word of God teaches about creation. Evolutionary theories are not scientifically verifiable.

351 **Heb. 11:3** By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

352 **2 Peter 3:5-6** They deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed.

353 **1 Tim. 6:20-21** Guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith.

### 106. What was the image of God?

The image of God was this:

A. Adam and Eve truly knew God as He wishes to be known and were perfectly happy in Him.

354 **Col. 3:10** Put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him (NKJV).

B. They were righteous and holy, doing God's will.

355 **Eph. 4:24** Put on the new man which was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness (NKJV).

### 107. Do people still have the image of God?

No, this image was lost when our first parents disobeyed God and fell into sin. Their will and intellect lost the ability to know and please God. In Christians God has begun to rebuild His image, but only in heaven will it be fully restored.

356 **Gen. 3:8-10** The man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as He was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

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- 357 **Gen. 5:3** Adam had a son in his own likeness, in his own image.
- 358 **1 Cor. 2:14** The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.
- 359 **Ps. 17:15** In righteousness I will see Your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing Your likeness.

### God Still Takes Care of Me and All Creatures

#### 108. How does the universe still depend on God?

God sustains all things by His wisdom and power.

- 360 **Ps. 36:6** O Lord, You preserve both man and beast.
- 361 **Ps. 147:4** He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name.
- 362 **Heb. 1:3** The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word.
- 363 **Col. 1:17** [Jesus] is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

#### 109. Why are there evil and suffering in this world?

Evil and suffering are in the world because of sin. But in the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God has demonstrated His power over sin and death. God in His almighty power and love causes all things to work together for good to those who love Him.

- 364 **Rom. 6:23** The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- 365 **Rom. 8:28** We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.
- 366 **Rom. 8:37** In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

#### 110. What does God do to take care of me?

- A. He gives me food and clothing, home and family, work and play, and all that I need from day to day.
- 367 **Ps. 145:15-16** The eyes of all look to You, and You give them their food at the proper time. You open Your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.
- 368 **1 Peter 5:7** Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.

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Bible narratives: God took care of Noah and his descendants (Gen. 9:1-3). God took care of Israel in the wilderness (Deut. 8:3-4). God took care of Elijah, the widow, and her son during the famine (1 Kings 17). See Psalms 37 and Quest. 104.

B. "He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil."

369 **Gen. 50:20** You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

370 **Ps. 31:15** My times are in Your hands.

371 **Matt. 10:29-30** Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Bible narratives: God directed Lot to flee to the mountains before the destruction of Sodom (Genesis 19). God delivered Israel from slavery and guided and protected them on their way (Ex. 13:14). See also Psalms 37 and 73.

### 111. Why does God do this for us?

"All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me."

372 **Gen. 32:10** I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness You have shown Your servant.

373 **Ps. 103:13** As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him.

Bible narrative: The centurion of Capernaum confessed that he did not deserve to have the Lord come under his roof (Luke 7:6-7).

### 112. What do we owe our heavenly Father for all His goodness? It is our duty to

A. "Thank and praise, serve and obey Him";

374 **Ps. 116:12** How can I repay the Lord for all His goodness to me?

375 **Ps. 118:1** Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever.

B. be good stewards of His creation.

376 **Gen. 2:15** The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

Note: We are good stewards when we avoid polluting air, land, and water; carefully dispose of waste; use rather than waste natural resources; conserve rather than waste energy; recycle or reuse materials whenever possible; and value and take care of all God's creation.

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### 113. Why do we close the explanation of the First Article with the words, "This is most certainly true"?

Everything I confess in this article is plainly taught in God's Word, Holy Scripture. Therefore, I firmly believe it.

## The Second Article Redemption

[I believe] in Jesus Christ, His-only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

*What does this mean?*

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

### 114. Of whom does this article speak?

It speaks about Jesus Christ-His person and His work.

### 115. Why is He named Jesus?

The name Jesus means "the Lord saves." Jesus is His personal name.

377 **Matt. 1:21** She will give birth to a son ` and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.

378 **John 4:42** We know that this man really is the Savior of the world.

379 **Acts 4:12** Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

### 116. Why is He called Christ?

The title Christ (Greek) or Messiah (Hebrew) means "the Anointed." Jesus has been anointed with the Holy Spirit without limit to be our Prophet, Priest, and King.

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Note: Anointing was the way prophets, priests, and kings were set apart for special work.

- 380 **Ps. 45:7** God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.
- 381 **John 3:34** The one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit.
- 382 **Acts 10:38** God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power.

Note: The following are other titles for Jesus: Angel of God (Ex. 14:19); Redeemer (Is. 59:20); Immanuel (Matt. 1:23); Son of the living God (Matt. 16:16); Son of Man (Matt. 25:31); the Word (John 1:14); Lord (John 20:28). His names are the Gospel simply stated.

### 117. What does it mean when you confess, "I believe in Jesus Christ"?

It means that I know and trust in Jesus Christ as my only Savior from sin, death, and the devil and believe that He gives me eternal life.

- 383 **John 17:3** This is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.
- 384 **John 3:36** Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.
- 385 **2 Tim. 1:12** I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him for that day.
- 386 **Rom. 10:10** It is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

### 118. Who is Jesus Christ?

Jesus Christ is "true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary."

### 119. How do you know that Jesus Christ is true God?

Because the Scriptures clearly call Him God, teaching the following:

A. Jesus has divine names.

- 387 **John 20:28** Thomas said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"
- 388 **Rom. 9:5** From them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised!
- 389 **1 John 5:20** He is the true God and eternal life.

Note: These names are not mere honorary titles but tell exactly who Jesus is, and they can be true only of God.

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- B. Jesus possesses divine attributes (qualities or characteristics). He is
1. eternal (without beginning and without end);  
390 **John 1:1-2.** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.
  2. unchangeable;  
391 **Heb. 13:8** Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to day and forever.
  3. almighty (omnipotent);  
392 **Matt. 28:18** All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.
  4. all-knowing (omniscient);  
393 **John 21:17** Lord, You know all things.
  5. present everywhere (omnipresent).  
394 **Matt. 28:20** Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Bible narratives: Miraculous catch of fish (Luke 5:4-6; John 21:6). Jesus knows the name and character of Nathanael (John 1:48). Jesus and the woman at Jacob's well (John 4:17-18).

Note: See also Matt. 21:1-7; 26:20-25; Luke 18:31-33; 22:8-13.

- C. Jesus does divine works (which only God can do).
1. He forgives.  
395 **Matt. 9:6** The Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.
  2. He created.  
396 **John 1:3** Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made.
  3. He will judge.  
397 **John 5:27** [The Father] has given Him authority to judge.
  4. He preserves.  
398 **Heb. 1:3** [He sustains] all things by His powerful word.

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Bible narratives: At the wedding feast in Cana, Jesus revealed His glory by turning water into wine (John 2:1-11). He rebuked the storm (Luke 8:22-25). He healed the paralytic (Matt. 9:1-8). He called Lazarus back to life (John 11:38-44). He rose from the dead (Matt. 28:6-7).

D. Jesus receives divine honor and glory.

399 **John 5:22-23** The Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent Him.

400 **Heb. 1:6** Let all God's angels worship Him.

Note: See Phil. 2:10; Rev. 5:12-13.

### 120. How do you know that Jesus Christ is also true man?

Because the Scriptures

A. clearly call Him man;

401 **1 Tim. 2:5** There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

B. say that He has a human body and soul;

402 **Luke 24:39** Look at My hands and My feet. It is I Myself. Touch Me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.

403 **Matt. 26:38** My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.

C. speak of His human, but sinless, feelings and actions.

404 **Matt. 4:2** He was hungry.

405 **John 11:35** Jesus wept.

406 **John 19:28** Jesus said, "I am thirsty."

407 **Heb. 4:14-16** Since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are-yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Bible narratives: Jesus suffered and died (Matthew 26-27). Jesus slept (Mark 4:38). Jesus was born (Luke 2).

### 121. What two natures, therefore, are united in the one person of Jesus Christ?

The divine and the human natures are united in Jesus Christ. This personal union began when He became man (incarnation) and continues forever.

## An Explanation of The Small Catechism

- 408 **John 1:14** The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
- 409 **1 Tim. 3:16** Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body.
- 410 **Col. 2:9** In Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.
- 411 **Is. 9:6** To us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
- 412 **Matt. 28:18** All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.
- 413 **Matt. 28:20** Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.
- 414 **Acts 3:15** You killed the author of life.
- 415 **1 John 1:7** The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, purifies us from every sin.
- 416 **Acts 20:28** Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with His own blood.

### 152. Why was it necessary for our Savior to be true man?

Christ had to be true man in order to

A. act in our place under the Law and fulfill it for us (active obedience);

- 417 **Gal. 4:4-5** When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.
- 418 **Rom. 5:19** Just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

B. be able to suffer and die for our guilt because we failed to keep the Law (passive obedience).

- 419 **Col. 1:22** He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation.
- 420 **Heb. 2:14** Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death-that is, the devil.

### 123. Why was it necessary for our Savior to be true God?

Christ had to be true God in order that

A. His fulfilling of the Law, His life, suffering, and death might be a sufficient ransom for all people;

- 421 **Ps. 49:7** No man can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for him.

## An Explanation of The Small Catechism

- 422 **Mark 10:45** The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.
- 423 **Rom. 3:22-24** There is no difference, for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.
- 424 **Gal. 3:13** Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.
- 425 **Gal. 4:4-5** When the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.
- 426 **1 Peter 1:18-19** You know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

B. He might be able to overcome death and the devil for us.

- 427 **1 Cor. 15:57-29** Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 428 **2 Tim. 1:10** Our Savior, Christ Jesus ... has destroyed death.
- 429 **Heb. 2:14** Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death-that is, the devil.

### 124. What do you therefore confess about Jesus Christ, the God-man?

I believe that Jesus Christ is my Lord and my Redeemer, whom I love and serve with my whole life.

- 430 **1 Cor. 6:20** You were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

Bible narrative: Thomas' confession (John 20:24).

### 125. For what threefold office was Christ anointed?

Christ was anointed to be our Prophet, Priest, and King.

A. As Prophet, Christ

1. preached personally during His life on earth, validating His word with miracles, especially His own resurrection;

- 431 **Deut. 18:15** The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to Him.

- 432 **Matt. 17:5** "This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him!"

- 433 **Mark 1:38** Let us go somewhere else-to the nearby villages-so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.

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434 **John 1:17-18** The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made Him known.

435 **John 6:68** Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

2. through the preached Gospel today still proclaims Himself to be the Son of God and Redeemer of the world.

436 **Mark 16:15** He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation."

437 **Luke 10:16** He who listens to you listens to Me; he who rejects you rejects Me; but he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me.

438 **2 Cor. 5:20** We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf. Be reconciled to God.

2. through the preached Gospel today still proclaims Himself to be the Son of God and Redeemer of the world.

B. As Priest, Christ

1. fulfilled the Law perfectly in our stead (active obedience);

439 **Gal. 4:4-5** When the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.

2. sacrificed Himself for our sins (passive obedience);

440 **1 Cor. 15:3** Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

441 **Heb. 7:26-27** Such a high priest meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, He does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when He offered Himself.

442 **1 John 2:2** He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

3. still pleads for us with His heavenly Father (intercession).

443 **1 John 2:1** We have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.

C. As King, Christ

1. rules with His almighty power over all creation (the kingdom of power—all creatures);

444 **Matt. 28:18** All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.

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2. governs and protects especially His church (the kingdom of grace-the church on earth);

445 **John 18:36-37** Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, My servants would fight to prevent My arrest by the Jews. But now My kingdom is from another place." "You are a king, then!" said Pilate - Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to Me."

3. finally leads His church to kingdom of glory-the church in heaven).

446 **2 Tim. 4:18** The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

### **126. What two states do the Scriptures distinguish in Christ's work of salvation?**

A. The state of humiliation

B. The state of exaltation

### **127. What was Christ's humiliation?**

Christ's humiliation was that as man He did not always or fully use His divine powers.

447 **Phil. 2:5-8** Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross (NKJV).

Bible narratives: Wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11). Raising of Lazarus (John 11:38-44). Rays of hidden glory (John 18:1-6).

### **128. Which words of the Apostles' Creed describe the stages of Christ's humiliation?**

"Conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried."

### **129. What do the Scriptures teach about Christ's conception?**

They teach that Christ, the Son of God, received a true human body and soul in the Virgin Mary through the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit, not through a human father.

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448 **Luke 1:35** The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

449 **Matt. 1:20** Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

### 130. What do the Scriptures teach of the birth of Christ?

They teach that Jesus Christ, the God-man, was born of the Virgin Mary.

450 **Is. 7:14** The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call Him Immanuel. (See also Matt. 1:23.)

451 **Luke 2:7** She gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped Him in cloths and placed Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Bible narrative: The virgin birth (Matt. 1:18-25).

### 131. What do the Scriptures teach about Christ's life, suffering, and death?

They teach that Christ

A. endured poverty, contempt, and persecution in His earthly life;

452 **2 Cor. 8:9** Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.

453 **Matt. 8:20** Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head.

454 **Is. 53:3** He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.

455 **John 8:40** You are determined to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God.

Bible narratives: At His birth Jesus had only strips of cloth and a manger (Luke 2:7). Herod tried to murder Him, but He escaped to Egypt (Matt. 2:13). In Nazareth the people tried to throw Him down from the brow of the hill (Luke 4:29). In the temple they picked up stones to stone Him (John 8:59).

B. suffered great agony of body and soul under Pontius Pilate;

456 **John 19:1-3** Pilate took Jesus and had Him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on His head. They clothed Him in a purple robe and went up to Him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they struck Him in the face.

Bible narrative: The suffering of Christ (Mark 15:1-20).

C. died in excruciating agony on the cross.

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- 457 **John 19:16-18** Finally Pilate handed Him over to them to be crucified. So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. Carrying His own cross, He went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). Here they crucified Him.
- 458 **Matt. 27:46** About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice . . . "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (He suffered the tortures of the damned in hell.)
- 459 **John 19:30** He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.
- Bible narrative: The death of Christ (Mark 15:42-47).

### 132. What do the Scriptures teach about Christ's burial?

They teach that Christ's body was buried in the tomb and remained there until the third day, without decaying in any way.

- 460 **Acts 13:37** The one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay.
- Bible narrative: The burial of Christ (Mark 15:42).

## Christ's Work of Redemption, or Atonement

### 133. Why did Christ humble Himself? Christ voluntarily humbled Himself in order to "redeem me, a lost and condemned person."

- 461 **Is. 53:4-5** Surely He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered Him stricken by God, smitten by Him, and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed.
- 462 **John 10:17-18** I lay down My life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord.

### 134. From what has Christ redeemed you?

He has redeemed me "from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil."

- 463 **John 1:29** Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!
- 464 **Heb. 2:14-15, 17** Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.... For this reason He had to be made like His brothers in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that He might make atonement for the sins of the people.

### 135. How has Christ redeemed you from all sins?

- A. He took my guilt and punishment upon Himself

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- 465 **Rom. 5:19** Through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.
- 466 **2 Cor. 5:21** God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.
- 467 **Gal. 3:13** Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."

B. He freed me from the slavery of sin.

- 468 **John 8:34, 36** I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.... So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.
- 469 **1 Peter 2:24** He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed.

### 136. How has Christ rescued you from death?

Through His suffering, death, and resurrection, Christ has triumphed over death. Since He now gives me eternal life I need not fear death.

- 470 **1 Cor. 15:55-57** "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 471 **2 Tim. 1:10** Our Savior, Christ Jesus has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.
- 472 **1 Peter 1:3** In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

### 137. How has Christ rescued you from the power of the devil?

Christ has completely conquered the devil. Therefore the devil can no longer accuse me of my sins, and I can resist his temptations.

- 473 **Gen. 3:15** I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will crush your head, and you will strike His heel.
- 474 **1 John 3:8** The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.
- 475 **James 4:7** Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Note: See also Rom. 8:31-34; Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14-15; 1 Peter 5:8-9; Rev. 12:10.

### 138. With what has Christ redeemed you?

Christ has redeemed me, "not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death."

- 476 **Is. 53:5** By His wounds we are healed.

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477 **1 Peter 1:18-19** You know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

478 **1 John 1:7** The blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin.

### 139. How does this work of redemption benefit you?

Christ was my substitute. He took my place under God's judgment against sin. By paying the penalty of my guilt, Christ atoned, or made satisfaction, for my sins (vicarious atonement).

479 **Is. 53:4-5** Surely He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered Him stricken by God, smitten by Him, and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed.

480 **2 Cor. 5:21** God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

481 **Heb. 2:17** For this reason He had to be made like His brothers in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that He might make atonement for the sins of the people.

### 140. Has Christ redeemed only you?

No, Christ has redeemed me and all people (universal atonement).

482 **2 Cor. 5:15** He died for all.

483 **2 Cor. 5:19** God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them.

484 **1 Tim. 1:15** Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners-of whom I am the worst.

485 **1 John 2:2** He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

486 **2 Peter 2:1** [They deny the] Lord who bought them bringing swift destruction on themselves.

### 141. What is Christ's exaltation?

Christ's exaltation is that as man He now fully and always uses His divine powers.

487 **Phil. 2:9-11** God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

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### 142. Which words of the Apostles' Creed describe the stages of Christ's exaltation?

"He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead."

### 143. Why is Christ's descent into hell part of His exaltation?

The Scriptures teach that Christ, after He was made alive in His grave, descended into hell, not to suffer punishment, but to proclaim His victory over His enemies in hell.

488 **1 Peter 3:18-19** [Christ] was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, through whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison.

489 **Col. 2:15** Having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

### 144. What do the Scriptures teach about Christ's resurrection?

They teach that on the third day Christ victoriously rose from the grave and showed Himself alive to His disciples.

490 **Acts 10:40-41** God raised Him from the dead on the third day and caused Him to be seen. He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen-by us who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead.

491 **1 Cor. 15:4-8** He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and ... He appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, He appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all He appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

492 **Acts 1:3** After His suffering, He showed Himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that He was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

Bible narrative: Christ's resurrection (Matt. 27:62-28:20; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20-21).

### 145. Why is Christ's resurrection so important and comforting?

Christ's resurrection proves that

A. Christ is the Son of God;

493 **Rom. 1:4** [He was] declared with power to be the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead.

B. His doctrine is the truth;

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494 **John 2:19** Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.

495 **John 8:28** When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one I claim to be and that I do nothing on My own but speak just what the Father has taught Me.

C. God the Father accepted Christ's sacrifice for the reconciliation of the world;

496 **Rom. 4:25** [Christ] was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

497 **Rom. 5:10** If, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life!

498 **1 Cor. 15:17** If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

c. all believers in Christ will rise to eternal life

499 **John 11:25-26** I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die.

153. **John 14:19** Because I live, you also will live.

154. **1 Cor. 15:20** Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

### 146. What do the Scriptures teach about Christ's ascension?

They teach that 40 days after His resurrection, Christ, in the presence of His disciples, ascended bodily into the glory of His Father, to prepare a place for us in heaven.

502 **Luke 24:51** While He was blessing them, He left them and was taken up into heaven.

503 **Eph. 4:10** He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens.

504 **John 14:2-3** In My Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me that you also may be where I am.

505 **John 17:24** Father, I want those You have given Me to be with Me where I am, and to see My glory.

Bible narrative: Christ's ascension (Acts 1:9-11).

### 147. What does it mean that Christ sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty?

With this expression Scripture teaches that Christ, as true man, is not only present everywhere, but also now fully exercises His divine power over the whole universe.

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506 **Eph. 1:20-23** [God] seated Him [Christ] at His right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way.

### 148. What comfort do we get from Christ's ascension to the right hand of God?

We know that the exalted God-man, Christ

A. as our Prophet sends people to proclaim the saving Gospel by the power of the Holy Spirit;

507 **Eph. 4:10-12** [He] ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe. It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

508 **Luke 10:16** He who listens to you listens to Me.

509 **John 16:7** It is for your good that I [Jesus] am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

B. as our Priest pleads and prays for us before the Father;

510 **Rom. 8:34** [Christ] is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

511 **1 John 2:1** If anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense-Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.

C. as our King rules and protects His church and governs over all the world especially for the benefit of His church.

512 **Ps. 110:1** The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet. "

Note: See Eph. 1:20-23.

### 149. What do the Scriptures teach about Christ's second coming?

A. Christ will return visibly and with great glory on the Last Day.

513 **Matt. 24:27** As lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

514 **Luke 21:27** At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

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- 515 **Acts 1:11** "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven."
- 516 **2 Peter 3:10** The day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.
- 517 **Rev. 1:7** Look, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of Him. So shall it be! Amen.

### B. Christ will return to judge the world, not to set up an earthly government.

- 518 **Matt. 25:31-32** When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit on His throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.
- 519 **John 12:48** There is a judge for the one who rejects Me and does not accept My words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day.
- 520 **John 18:36** Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world."
- 521 **2 Cor. 5:10** We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

Bible narrative: The final judgment (Matt. 25:31)

Note: Millennialists teach the unscriptural doctrine that either before or after the return of Christ the church will experience a literal period of 1,000 years (a millennium) of peace and prosperity. Revelation 20 speaks in picture language of Christ's spiritual rule on the earth through the Gospel and does not refer to earthly government.

### C. Christ will return on a specific day known by God alone.

- 522 **Matt. 24:44** You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him.
- 523 **Mark 13:32** No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.
- 524 **Acts 17:31** He has set a day when He will judge the world with justice by the man He has appointed.

Bible narrative: The parable of the 10 virgins (Matt. 25:1-13).

### D. Before Christ returns, there will be increasing turmoil and distress for the church and the world.

- 525 **Matt. 24:7** Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places.
- 526 **Matt. 24:22** If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.

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527 **1 Tim. 4:1** The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

Bible narrative: Signs preceding Christ's coming (Matthew 24).

E. The return of Christ is a source of hope and joy for the Christian.

528 **Luke 21:28** When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

529 **Heb. 9:28** Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and He will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him.

530 **Titus 2:13** We wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

531 **Rev. 22:20** He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Bible narrative: Encouraging words (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

### 150. In conclusion, then, why has Christ redeemed you?

The Scriptures teach that Christ's purpose was

A. "that I may be His own"; that is, I am now righteous and blameless in the sight of God;

532 **2 Cor. 5:21** God made Him who had no sins to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

533 **Rev. 5:9** You were slain, and with Your blood You purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

B. that I may "live under Him in His kingdom"; that is, that I am now freed from the slavery of sin and thus freed to serve God;

534 **Rom. 6:6** Our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin (NKJV).

535 **2 Cor. 5:15** He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again.

536 **Col. 2:6** Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him.

537 **Titus 2:14** [Jesus Christ] gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good.

C. that I may "serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness"; that is, that I honor God with my whole life and rejoice in Him now on earth and forever in heaven.

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- 538 **Luke 1:69, 74-75** He has raised up a horn of salvation for us ... to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve Him without fear in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.
- 539 **Gal. 2:20** I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.
- 540 **1 Peter 2:9** You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.

Bible narrative: The saints in heaven (Rev. 7:13).

### 151. What is the basis of our faith and life in Christ?

"He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity."

- 541 **Col. 3:1-3** Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

### 152. Why do you close this article with the words, "This is most certainly true"?

Because all that I confess in this article is plainly taught in the Bible, and I, therefore, firmly believe it.

## The Third Article Sanctification

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

*What does this mean?*

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith.

In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

In this Christian church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers.

On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ.

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This is most certainly true.

### 153. What five points does this article discuss?

1. The Holy Spirit
2. The Church, the Communion of Saints
3. The Forgiveness of Sins
4. The Resurrection of the Body
5. The Life Everlasting

## 1. The Holy Spirit

### The Person of the Holy Spirit

#### 154. Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is the third person in the Holy Trinity, true God with the Father and the Son—therefore not merely the power or energy of God.

542 **Matt. 28:19** Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

#### 155 How do you know that the Holy Spirit is God?

Because the Scriptures clearly call Him God, teaching that

A. the Holy Spirit has divine names;

543 **Acts 5:3-4** Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit? ... You have not lied to men but to God."

544 **1 Cor. 3:16** Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?

B. the Holy Spirit possesses divine attributes (properties or characteristics);

545 **Ps. 139:7-10** Where can I go from Your Spirit? Where can I flee from Your presence? If I go to the heavens, You are there; if I make my bed in the depths, You are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there Your hand will guide me, Your right hand will hold me fast. (Omnipresence)

546 **1 Cor. 2:10** The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. (Omniscience)

547 **Heb. 9:14** Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! (Eternity)

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Note: See Matt. 28:19. (Holiness)

C. the Holy Spirit does divine works (which only God can do);

548 **Gen. 1:2** Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. (Creation)

549 **Titus 3:5** He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. (Sanctification)

D. the Holy Spirit receives divine honor and glory.

550 **1 Peter 4:14** The Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

### The Work of the Holy Spirit

#### 156. What is the special work of the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit sanctifies me (makes me holy) by bringing me to faith in Christ, so that I might have the blessings of redemption and lead a godly life (sanctification in the wide sense).

Note: The word sanctification is used in two ways:

1. The wide sense-the whole work of the Holy spirit by which He brings us to faith and also enables us to lead a godly life.

2. The narrow sense-that part of the Holy Spirit's work by which He directs and empowers the believer to lead a godly life.

551 **1 Cor. 6:11** You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

#### 157. Why do you need the Holy Spirit to begin and sustain this faith in you?

By nature I am spiritually blind, dead, and an enemy of God, as the Scriptures teach; therefore, "I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him."

552 **1 Cor. 2:14** The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

553 **Eph. 2:1** You were dead in your transgressions and sins.

554 **Rom. 8:7** The sinful mind is hostile to God.

555 **Eph. 2:8-9** By grace you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-not by works, so that no one can boast.

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556 **1 Cor. 12:3** No one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

### 158. What has the Holy Spirit done to bring you to faith?

The Holy Spirit "has called me by the Gospel," that is, He has invited and drawn me by the Gospel to partake of the spiritual blessings that are mine in Christ.

557 **Rom. 1:16** I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

558 **2 Thess. 2:14** He called you to this through our gospel.

559 **Rev. 22:17** The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

Bible narratives: Invitation to the wedding banquet of the king's son (Matt. 22:1-10). Invitation to the great banquet (Luke 14:16-17).

### 159. How do the Scriptures describe this gracious work of the Spirit in you?

The Scriptures teach that by the Gospel the Holy Spirit "enlightened me with His gifts," that is, He gave me the saving knowledge of Jesus, my Savior, so that I trust, rejoice, and find comfort in Him.

560 **1 Peter 2:9** You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.

561 **2 Cor. 4:6** God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

562 **1 Peter 1:8** Even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy.

563 **Rom. 15:13** The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Bible narratives: The Samaritans were filled with great joy when Philip preached Christ to them (Acts 8:5-8). The jailer at Philippi and his whole family were filled with joy because they had come to believe (Acts 16:25-34).

### 160. What is this work of the Holy Spirit called?

It is called conversion (being turned) or regeneration (new birth).

564 **Ps. 51:13** I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners will turn back to You. (Conversion)

565 **John 3:5-6** Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit." (Regeneration)

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### 161. Why do you say that the Holy Spirit has done this by the Gospel?

The Gospel is the means by which the Holy Spirit offers us all the blessings of Christ and creates faith in us.

Note: The written and spoken Word of the Gospel and the sacraments are the means of grace.

- 566 **John 17:20** My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message.
- 567 **Rom. 10:17** Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.
- 568 **1 Cor. 4:15** In Christ Jesus I became your father through the Gospel.
- 569 **1 Peter 1:23** You have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.
- 570 **Titus 3:5** He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. (Baptism)
- 571 **John 20:22-23** With that He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."  
(Absolution)
- 572 **Matt. 26:27-28** He took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is My blood of the covenant [testament], which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." (Lord's Supper)

### 162. Besides faith, what else does the Holy Spirit create in you by the Gospel?

The Holy Spirit sanctifies me in the true faith, that is, by faith He works a renewal of my whole life-in spirit, will, attitude, and desires-so that I now strive to overcome sin and do good works (sanctification in the narrow sense).

- 573 **Ps. 51:10** Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
- 574 **Rom. 8:9** You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.
- 575 **2 Cor. 5:17** If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.
- 576 **Gal. 5:22-23** The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.
- 577 **Eph. 2:10** For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.
- 578 **Eph. 5:18-20** Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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### 163. What are good works in God's sight?

In God's sight a good work is everything that a child of God does, speaks, or thinks in faith according to the Ten Commandments, for the glory of God, and for the benefit of his or her neighbor.

579 **Heb.11:6** Without faith it is impossible to please God.

580 **John 15:5** If a man remains in Me and I in him he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing.

581 **Matt. 15:9** They worship Me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.

582 **John 14:15** If you love Me, you will obey what command.

583 **1 Cor. 10:31** Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

584 **Gal. 5:13** Serve one another in love.

Bible narratives: The widow's offering (Mark 12:41-44). The expensive perfume poured on Jesus' head (Mark 14:3-9). Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42).

### 164. What do the Scriptures teach about the gifts of the Holy Spirit?

The Scriptures teach that the Holy Spirit gives gifts to His church. They teach that

- A. the Holy Spirit through the Word and sacraments freely gives to all Christians the most precious gifts: faith in Christ, the forgiveness of sins, and eternal life;
- B. in apostolic times the Holy Spirit also gave some Christians the gift to perform miraculous signs and wonders (for example, healings, speaking in tongues, raising the dead).

The Scriptures do not teach, however, that God will necessarily give all Christians in every time and place special miraculous gifts. The Holy Spirit bestows His blessings according to His good pleasure.

585 **2 Cor. 12:12** The things that-mark an apostle-signs, wonders and miracles-were done among you with great perseverance.

586 **Eph. 2:20-22** [You are] built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone. In Him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit.

Bible narrative: Special signs connected with the apostles personally (Acts 5:12-16; 8:14-19; 19:11-12, 20; 20:7-12).

Note: In popular English, the word charismatic describes a dynamic person, highly emotional worship, or claims of special miraculous gifts. But the Greek word charisma means simply "gift"

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and refers, for example, to Christ's whole work of salvation (Rom. 5:15-16), to eternal life (Rom. 6:23), and to being married or single (II Cor. 7:7).

### 165. Finally, what also does the Holy Spirit do for you?

The Holy Spirit by the Gospel keeps me in the true faith.

587 **Phil. 1:6** He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

588 **1 Peter 1:5** [You] through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation.

589 **1 Thess. 2:13** The word of God ... is at work in you who believe.

### 166. Whom else does the Holy Spirit regenerate and renew?

The Holy Spirit "calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith."

590 **Eph. 3:6** Through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

### 167. Does the Holy Spirit want to do this in the lives of all people?

God the Holy Spirit earnestly wants to convert all people and bring them to salvation through the Gospel.

591 **Ezek. 33:11** I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live.

592 **1 Tim. 2:4** [God] wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

593 **2 Peter 3:9** The Lord ... is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

### 168. Then, why are not all people saved?

Many reject the Word and resist the Holy Spirit; therefore they remain in unbelief and under God's judgment by their own fault.

594 **Matt. 23:37** O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.

595 **Acts 7:51** You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!

Bible narratives: The invited guests refused to come (Matt. 22:1-10). The guests refused to accept the invitation (Luke 14:16-24).

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### 2. The Church, the Communion of Saints

#### 169. What is the holy Christian church?

The holy Christian church is the communion of saints, the total number of those who believe in Christ. All believers in Christ, but only believers, are members of the church (invisible church).

596 **Eph. 2:19-22** You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone. In Him the whole building is joined to gether and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit.

597 **John 10:16** I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to My voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

598 **Rom. 8:9** If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

#### 170. Why do you say, "I believe" in the church?

A. Because faith, which makes people members of the church, is invisible, the church is invisible to human eyes.

599 **Luke 17:20-21** The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, "Here it is," or "There it is," because the kingdom of God is within you.

600 **2 Tim. 2:19** God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are His."

B. The Scriptures assure us that the Holy Spirit continues to gather and preserve the church.

601 **Matt. 16:18** You are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

602 **Acts 2:41, 47** Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.... And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Bible narrative: The seven thousand in Israel (1 Kings 19:8-18).

#### 171. Why do you say, I believe in "the" church?

There is only one church, one spiritual body of believers (saints), whose one and only head is Christ.

603 **Rom. 12:4-5** As each of us has one body with many members ... so in Christ we who are many form one body.

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604 **Eph. 4:3-6** Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit-just as you were called to one hope when you were called-one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

605 **Col. 1:18** [Christ] is the head of the body, the church.

### 172. Why is the church called "holy"?

It is made up of holy people (saints), believers who have been cleansed by the blood of Christ and who serve God with holy living.

606 **Eph. 5:25-27** Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to Himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

607 **1 Peter 2:5** You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

### 173. Why is the church called "Christian"?

It belongs to Christ and is built on Him alone.

608 **1 Cor. 3:11** No one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

609 **Eph. 2:20** [You are] built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone.

Note: The word catholic, sometimes used in creeds, means "universal" or "general." The church exists throughout the world, wherever the Gospel is proclaimed.

### 174. Where is this holy Christian church to be found?

The holy Christian church is to be found where "the Gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the Gospel" (Augsburg Confession VII 1). The Gospel and the sacraments are called the "marks of the church."

610 **Is. 55:10-11** As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is My word that goes out from My mouth: It will not return to Me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

### 175. In what other senses is the word church used?

The word church is also used to indicate

A. the visible church of God

B. a denomination;

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- C. a local congregation;
- D. a house of worship.

### 176. Why does Scripture call local congregations "church"?

Local, visible gatherings around the means of grace are called churches because there believers are gathered around Word and sacrament.

- 611 **Matt. 18:17** If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.
- 612 **Matt. 28:19-20** Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.
- 613 **1 Cor. 1:2** To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ-their Lord and ours.

Note: Paul wrote to the churches in Galatia (Gal. 1:2). He wrote to the church of the Thessalonians (II Thess. 1:1). John wrote to the seven churches of Asia Minor (Revelation 1-3). A group of 'congregations is also called "church" (Acts 9:31).

### 177. What is the visible church?

The visible church is the whole number of those who use the Word of God and profess the Christian faith, but among whom, beside the true Christians, there are also unbelievers.

### 178. Are there then two churches, one visible and the other invisible?

There is only one church--all believers in Christ. The visible gathering is called church because of the believers gathered around the means of grace in an assembly in which there are also hypocrites.

Bible narratives: The net that caught all kinds of fish (Matt. 13:47-48). A man without wedding clothes (Matt. 22:11-12). Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:111).

### 179. What do the Scriptures teach about our life in the church?

They teach that

- A. we should seek always to be and remain members of the invisible church, Christ's body, by sincere faith in Christ, our Savior;

- 614 **John 15:5** I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing.

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615 **2 Cor. 13:5** Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves.

B. we should be faithful to that visible church, or denomination, which professes and teaches all of the Bible's doctrine purely and administers the sacraments according to Christ's institution;

616 **John 8:31-32** If you hold to My teaching, you are really My disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

617 **Acts 2:42** They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

618 **1 Cor. 1:10** I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.

Note: A religious denomination is a church body or organization with a distinct name and a distinct body of doctrine.

C. we should avoid false teachers, false churches, and all organizations that promote a religion that is contrary to God's Word;

619 **Matt. 7:15-16** Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them.

620 **Rom. 16:17-18** I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people.

621 **2 Cor. 6:14** Do not be yoked together with unbelievers.

622 **Gal. 1:8** Even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!

623 **2 Tim. 4:3** The time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.

624 **1 John 4:1** Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

D. we should maintain and extend God's church by telling others about Jesus Christ, by personal service, and by prayer and financial support.

625 **John 20:21** As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you.

626 **Acts 1:8** You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

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- 627 **Acts 8:1, 4** On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.... Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.
- 628 **1 Peter 2:9** You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.
- 629 **1 Peter 3:15** Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.
- 630 **Luke 10:2** He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field."
- 631 **Gal. 6:6** Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.

Bible narratives: Peter addressed the crowds (Acts 2:17-39; 3:12-26). Philip witnessed to the eunuch (Acts 8:26-35). The early Christians prayed for the spreading of the Gospel (Acts 4:23-30). They also contributed to the support of the ministry (Phil. 4:16-19).

### 3. The Forgiveness of Sins

#### 180. Why do you say, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins"?

I believe in the forgiveness of sins because through Christ God has declared pardon and forgiveness to all sinful humanity.

- 632 **Ps. 130:3-4** If you, O Lord, keep a record of my sins, O Lord, who can stand? But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.
- 633 **2 Cor. 5:19** God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them.

#### 181. What moves God to forgive sins?

God forgives sins because He is merciful and because of Christ's atoning sacrifice for sinners.

- 634 **Ps. 86:15** You, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.
- 635 **John 3:16** God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.
- 636 **Eph. 1:7** In [Christ] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.
- 637 **1 John 2:2** He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

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### 182. How is it possible for a just and holy God to declare sinners righteous (justification)?

God declares sinners righteous for Christ's sake; that is, our sins have been imputed or charged to Christ, the Savior, and Christ's righteousness has been imputed or credited to us.

638 **2 Cor. 5:21** God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

639 **Rom. 3:22-24** There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

640 **Rom. 4:25** He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

Bible narrative: The king forgave the servant all his debts (Matt. 18:23-35).

### 183. Where does God offer the forgiveness of sins?

God offers the forgiveness of sins in the Gospel

641 **Luke 24:47** Repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in His name to all nations.

642 **Rom. 1:16** I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

643 **2 Cor. 5:19** He has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

### 184. How do you receive this forgiveness of sins?

I receive this forgiveness through faith, that is, by believing the Gospel.

644 **Gen. 15:6** Abram believed the Lord, and He credited it to him as righteousness.

645 **Rom. 3:28** A man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.

646 **Rom. 4:5** To the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. (Luke 18:9-14).

### 185. Why can and should I be sure of the forgiveness of my sins?

I can and should be sure of the forgiveness of my sins because God keeps His promises in Christ.

647 **Rom. 8:38-39** I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

648 **2 Tim. 1:12** I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him for that day.

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### 186. Why must we firmly hold to this teaching of justification by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith?

We must firmly hold to this teaching because

A. it is the most important doctrine of the Christian religion;

649 **Acts 4:12** Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

650 **Acts 10:43** All the prophets testify about Him that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name.

B. it distinguishes the Christian religion from false religions, all of which teach salvation by works;

651 **Gal. 5:4-5** You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope.

Note: See Micah 7:18-20.

C. it gives enduring comfort to the penitent sinner;

652 **Acts 16:30-31, 34** "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved-you and your household." . . . He was filled with joy, because he had come to believe in God.

653 **Matt. 9:2** Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven.

D. it gives all glory to God for His grace and mercy in Christ.

654 **Rev. 1:5-6** To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve His God and Father-to Him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

## 4. The Resurrection of the Body

### 187. What do the Scriptures teach about the resurrection of the body?

They teach that on the Last Day Christ "will raise me and all the dead." The same bodies that have died shall be made alive.

655 **Job 19:25-27** I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end He will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see Him with my own eyes-I, and not another.

656 **John 5:28-29** A time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear His voice and come out.

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657 **1 Thess. 4:16** The Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

### 188. Are people reborn in bodies or forms?

Reincarnation, the belief that when people die they are reborn in other bodies or in a series of other bodies, is contrary to Scripture.

658 **Heb. 9:27-28** Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and He will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him.

Note: See 1 Corinthians 15.

### 189. What difference will there be between believers and unbelievers in the resurrection?

A. The believers will rise with glorified bodies and enter everlasting life in heaven with God.

659 **Dan. 12:2** Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.

660 **John 5:28-29** All who are in their graves will hear His voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.

661 **1 Cor. 15:42-43** So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.

662 Phil. 3:21 [Christ] will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body.

B. The unbelievers will rise to eternal death, that is, to shame and torment in hell forever.

663 **Is. 66:24** Their worm will not die, nor will their fire be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind.

664 **Matt. 10:28** Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

665 **Matt. 25:41** He will say to those on His left, "Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

666 **Rev. 1:7** Look, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of Him. So shall it be! Amen.

Bible narrative: The story of the rich man and Lazarus illustrates that there are only two places (Luke 16:19-31).

## An Explanation of The Small Catechism

### 5. The Life Everlasting

#### 190. To whom does God give eternal life?

God gives eternal life to me and all believers in Christ.

A. Eternal life is a present possession.

667 **John 17:3** This is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.

668 **John 3:16** God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

669 **Rom. 10:9** If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

670 **John 3:36** Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.

B. At the time of death, the soul of a believer is immediately with Christ in heaven.

671 **Eccl. 12:7** The dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

672 **Luke 23:43** I tell you the truth, today you will be with Me in paradise.

673 **John 17:24** Father, I want those You have given Me to be with Me where I am, and to see My glory, the glory You have given Me because You loved Me before the creation of the world.

674 **Phil. 1:23-24** I desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.

675 **Rev. 14:13** I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."

C. At the Last Day the believers, in both body and soul, will begin the full enjoyment of being with Christ forever.

676 **1 Cor. 15:51-52** Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed-in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

677 **Matt. 25:34** Then the King [Jesus] will say to those on His right, "Come, you who are blessed by My Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world."

678 **Ps. 16:11** You will fill me with joy in Your presence, with eternal pleasures at Your right hand.

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- 679 **Rom. 8:18** I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.
- 680 **1 John 3:2** Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him , for we shall see Him as He is.

### 191. Are you sure that you have eternal life?

Even as I now believe in Christ my Savior, I also know that I have been chosen to eternal life out of pure grace in Christ without any merit of my own and that no one can pluck me out of His hand (eternal election of grace or predestination).

- 681 **John 10:27-28** My sheep listen to My voice; I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of My hand.
- 682 **Rom. 8:28-30** We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those He predestined, He also called; those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified.
- 683 **Eph. 1:3-6** Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ' who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will-to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves.

### 192. Why do you close this article with the words "This is most certainly true"?

Because all that I confess in this article is plainly taught in the Bible and therefore I firmly believe it.