

A FREE WILL BAPTIST CATECHISM

Catechism? What's That?

The most common word translated "teach" in the New Testament is the Greek term *didasko*, from which we derive the word *didactic*. Another Greek word rendered "teach" is *catecheo*. From this word we get the term *catechism* and several other related words.

A *catechism* is simply a question and answer document used as a tool to teach truths about God and the Bible. It has a long history in the church, and many Christian parents have used catechisms to instruct their children in the teachings of the Lord. Even Free Will Baptist forebears have employed this tool. For example, 17th-century theologian Thomas Grantham wrote one, calling it St. Paul's Catechism. Recognizing the useful potential of such a tool, we have created a 60-question catechism for Free Will Baptists. It is designed to take five minutes before bedtime or after dinner. Both children and adults are encouraged to memorize a question and answer each week. Children will learn Bible doctrine, while adults review doctrine they know already. What follows is the Free Will Baptist Catechism. If you think it might fit into your church's ministry, please feel free to use it.

1. Who is God?

Answer: God is a spirit (John 4:24) who is the Creator of everything (Genesis 1:1). He is perfectly good (Psalm 34:8) and has all power (Isaiah 40:10). God is a personal being with the ability to think, feel, speak, and act.

2. Is there any other God?

Answer: No. There is only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4), and He exists as a unity of three persons called the Trinity. These three are the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Mark 1:9-11).

3. When did God begin to exist?

Answer: God has always existed and had no beginning (Genesis 1:1). He is the only self-existent being.

4. What is the relationship among the three persons of the Trinity?

Answer: They love one another (John 14:31; 17:26; Galatians 5:22). They are equal, though they have different roles (Matthew 28:18-20).

5. What is the role of the Father?

Answer: The Father loves the Son (John 3:35). He providentially cares for the world and all who are in it (Matthew 6:26). He reveals Jesus to people (Matthew 16:17) and draws them to Him (John 6:44). He forgives sins (Matthew 6:14). He listens to and answers prayers (Matthew 6:9-13). He sends the Holy Spirit to mankind (John 14:26). He keeps believers from the devil (John 10:29), and He sends them out in His service (John 20:21).

6. What is the role of the Son?

Answer: The Son offers forgiveness and saves people from their sins (Matthew 9:6; 18:11). He serves as judge over mankind (John 5:22).

7. What is the role of the Holy Spirit?

Answer: The Holy Spirit convicts people of sin and convinces them of the truth of Jesus (John 16:8). The Holy Spirit regenerates those who trust Christ (John 3:5-6). When a person becomes a Christian, the Holy Spirit begins to live in him and help him become holy (Romans 8:9). He intercedes for us (Romans 8:26).

8. How do we know about God?

Answer: We know God through the wonders of creation (Psalm 19:1-4), through His image in which we are made (Genesis 1:27), and especially through His Son Jesus (John 1:18). We know about God from the Scriptures, the Bible.

9. What are the Scriptures?

Answer: The Scriptures are God's inspired and inerrant message to mankind (2 Timothy 3:16). Whatever the Bible says is true is true. Whatever it says is false is false (John 17:17). There are 66 different books of Scripture, 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament.

10. What are the books of the Old Testament?

Answer: The books of the Old Testament are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

11. What are the books of the New Testament?

Answer: The books of the New Testament are Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, Revelation.

12. Who wrote the Bible?

Answer: Holy men of God wrote the Bible, being guided in their writing by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21).

13. What is the incarnation?

Answer: The incarnation is the act by which the Son of God became a human being named Jesus, being born of the Virgin Mary (Matthew 1:23).

14. Was Jesus part man and part God?

Answer: No. Jesus was fully man (1 Timothy 2:5) and fully God at the same time (John 1:1), having both a human and a divine nature.

15. What is mankind's relationship with God?

Answer: All human beings are made in the image of God. However, because of Adam's fall into sin, all are born with a sinful nature, are guilty before God, and are spiritually separated from Him (Ephesians 2:1-3).

16. What is sin?

Answer: Sin is a violation of the law of God (1 John 3:4).

17. What does the Bible teach was the reason Jesus died on the cross?

Answer: Jesus died on the cross that mankind may have sins forgiven and be cleansed (1 Peter 1:18-19). In His death, Jesus took our place under the wrath of God. He was punished for our sins in our place (Isaiah 53:5-6).

18. What happened after Jesus died and was buried?

Answer: On the third day Jesus rose from the grave, never to die again (Luke 24:1-8). This is called the resurrection.

19. Where is Jesus now?

Answer: Forty days after His resurrection, Jesus ascended into Heaven (Acts 1:1-3) where He now lives, seated at the right hand of the Father (Colossians 3:1).

20. How can a person experience forgiveness of sins?

Answer: A person's sins are forgiven and he is saved when through faith he commits his life in obedience to Jesus (Ephesians 1:7) and repents of his sin (Luke 13:3).

21. What does it mean to repent?

Answer: To repent of sin is to turn away from it (Ezekiel 18:30).

22. What is justification?

Answer: Justification is the act whereby God declares the sinner forgiven of his sins and in right standing with Him (Romans 5:1). When we place our faith in Christ, His righteous life and His death become ours. He paid to God what we owed and could not pay (Romans 3:21-25; 2 Corinthians 5:21).

23. What is regeneration?

Answer: Regeneration is the act of God by which He gives spiritual life to those who repent of sin and believe in Christ (Ephesians 2:1-5; Titus 3:5).

24. What is sanctification?

Answer: Sanctification is the process a Christian enters at conversion in which he becomes more and more holy throughout his life (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

25. Can a saved person ever return to a state of not being a Christian?

Answer: Yes. Though a believer enjoys the keeping power of God (John 10:28), he can stray into sin and harden his heart against God's convicting power to the point that he could abandon his faith in Jesus. Such a person is lost forever and without hope (Hebrews 6:4-6).

26. What is baptism?

Answer: Baptism is the act of immersing a Christian in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in obedience to the command of Jesus (Matthew 28:19).

27. Why is a person baptized?

Answer: A believer is baptized to obey the command of Jesus and to show others his decision to follow God.

28. What does baptism symbolize?

Answer: Baptism symbolizes the union the believer enjoys in Jesus' death and resurrection (Romans 6:1-4). It also symbolizes having our sins washed away (Acts 22:16).

29. What is the church?

Answer: The church is a local organization of believers joined together to worship God (Acts 13:2), to teach and learn the Scriptures (Romans 16:25), to hold one another accountable (Matthew 18:15-17), and to serve as a witness to unbelievers (1 Thessalonians 1:8).

30. What are the basic offices of the church?

Answer: The pastor is the main preacher and teacher of the church, who exercises oversight over the group (1 Timothy 3:1-7). Deacons are godly men who assist the pastor and people in carrying out the mission of the church (1 Timothy 3:8-10).

31. What is the Lord's Supper?

Answer: The Lord's Supper is a memorial celebration of Jesus' death for sinners in which believers eat bread and drink juice that represent Jesus' body and blood given for us on the cross (1 Corinthians 11:29-30).

32. Who should participate in the Lord's Supper?

Answer: Only those who have been saved should participate in the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:29-30).

33. What is the Washing of the Saints' Feet?

Answer: It is a commemoration of Jesus washing the disciples' feet, which teaches humility and reminds the believer of the necessity of a daily cleansing from sin (John 13:2-17).

34. What is prayer?

Answer: Prayer is speaking to God.

35. What happens to a person when he dies?

Answer: When a person dies, his spirit goes either to Heaven (Philippians 1:23) or to Hell (Luke 16:22-23).

36. What happens to a person's body when he dies?

Answer: At death, the body is left on earth. When Jesus returns, the bodies of the dead will be resurrected and reunited with their spirits (John 5:28-29).

37. What is Heaven?

Answer: Heaven is where God is especially present (Psalm 11:4) and where his people will live throughout eternity (2 Corinthians 5:1-5). It is a place of joy and perfect bliss.

38. What is Hell?

Answer: Hell is a place of separation from God, where those who practice sin and reject Jesus

suffer eternal and terrible punishment (Mark 9:43-48; Revelation 21:8).

39. Will Jesus come to earth again?

Answer: Yes. At a time that God the Father has planned, Jesus will gloriously return to earth (Hebrews 9:28). He will then take all believers to Heaven and condemn all unbelievers to Hell (Matthew 25:31-46).

40. Where are the Ten Commandments found in the Bible?

Answer: The Ten Commandments can be found in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5.

41. What is the First Commandment?

Answer: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

42. What does the First Commandment mean?

Answer: The First Commandment directs us to worship God only and to glorify Him as God.

43. What is the Second Commandment?

Answer: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image."

44. What does the Second Commandment mean?

Answer: The Second Commandment means that in the worship of God we must not use any images.

45. What is the Third Commandment?

Answer: "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain."

46. What does the Third Commandment mean?

Answer: The Third Commandment means that God's name must always be used with respect and reverence.

47. What is the Fourth Commandment?

Answer: "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy."

48. What does the Fourth Commandment mean?

Answer: The Fourth Commandment instructs us to keep one day in seven as a special day of worship, set apart from the other six days. In the Christian era this day is Sunday in celebration of Jesus' resurrection on that day.

49. What is the Fifth Commandment?

Answer: "Honour thy father and thy mother."

50. What does the Fifth Commandment mean?

Answer: The Fifth Commandment directs us to show proper respect and obedience to our parents. By extension, the commandment also instructs us to show proper respect to all those with legitimate authority over us.

51. What is the Sixth Commandment?

Answer: "Thou shalt not kill."

52. What does the Sixth Commandment mean?

Answer: The Sixth Commandment teaches us human life is sacred. We should use all lawful means of preserving human life, both ours and others. It is wrong to commit murder.

53. What is the Seventh Commandment?

Answer: "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

54. What does the Seventh Commandment mean?

Answer: The Seventh Commandment means the marriage covenant is to be guarded from any sexual impurities. Husbands and wives are to be faithful to one another.

55. What is the Eighth Commandment?

Answer: "Thou shalt not steal."

56. What does the Eighth Commandment mean?

Answer: The Eighth Commandment teaches that private ownership must be respected and not violated in any way.

57. What is the Ninth Commandment?

Answer: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

58. What does the Ninth Commandment mean?

Answer: The Ninth Commandment directs us always to tell the truth.

59. What is the Tenth Commandment?

Answer: "Thou shalt not covet."

60. What does the Tenth Commandment mean?

Answer: The Tenth Commandment instructs us to be content with the things we have and not to be longing for other things.

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