

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: BAPTIST CATECHISM 52 & 53

- What is the first commandment?
- Why is the first commandment first?
- Does “before me” mean *above me*, or *before my face*? What is the difference?
- Does the first commandment forbid us from enjoying or loving anything other than God? Be careful. This question is worded very carefully.
- How can a person enjoy the good things of this life (friends, family, health, food, etc.) to the glory of God?
- What does it mean to give “that worship and glory” to God as our God? How do we do this?
- Have you kept this law perfectly? What then must we do to be saved?

CATECHISM MEMORIZATION

Q. 52. What is forbidden in the first commandment?

Q. 53. What are we especially taught by these words, “before me,” in the first commandment?

SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION

Psalm 14:1

TIPS FOR MEMORIZATION

- Write the question and answer by hand multiple times (on a separate paper).
- Divide the answer into smaller sections. Master one small section at a time.
- Reflect on the meaning of the question and answer.
- Once you are close to having the answer memorized, have someone quiz you.
- Lastly, once you are confident you have memorized the text, write it out on this sheet as a keepsake and reminder of what you have learned.

CATECHISM AND PRAYER SERVICE

Lord's Day Afternoon, February 5th, 2023

SCRIPTURE READING

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23 ESV)

OPENING PRAYER

SONG

How Rich A Treasure We Possess

by Matt Boswell & Matt Papa (written 2010)

How rich a treasure we possess, In Jesus Christ our Lord
His blood our ransom and defense, His glory our reward
The sum of all created things, Is worthless in compare
For our inheritance is Him, Whose praise angels declare

How free and costly was the love, Displayed upon the cross
While we were dead in untold sin, The Sovereign purchased us
The will of God the Father, Demonstrated through the Son
The Spirit seals the greatest work, The work which Christ has done

For Yours is the Kingdom and the power, And the glory
Yours is the Kingdom and the power, And the glory Amen

How vast and measureless the flood, Of mercy unrestrained
The penalty was paid in full, The spotless Lamb was slain
Salvation what a priceless gift, Received by grace through faith
We stand in robes of righteousness, We stand in Jesus' Name

CATECHISM LESSON

Baptist Catechism 52 & 53

Q. 52. What is forbidden in the first commandment?

A. The first commandment forbideth the denying, or not worshiping and glorifying the true God, as God and our God; and the giving that worship and glory to any other, which is due unto Him alone. (Joshua 24:27; Rom. 1:20,21; Ps. 14:1; Rom. 1:25)

Q. 53. What are we especially taught by these words, “before me,” in the first commandment?

A. These words, “before me,” in the first commandment, teach us, that God, who seeth all things, taketh notice of, and is much displeased with the sin of having any other god. (Deut.30:17,18; Ps. 44:20,21; Ps. 90:8)

Q. 52. What is forbidden in the first commandment?

- One, the first commandment forbids us from denying God.
 - “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight” (Proverbs 9:10, ESV).
 - “The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God’” (Psalm 14:1, ESV).
- Two, the first commandment forbids us to not worship and glorify God, as God and our God.

- The first commandment does not only forbid worshiping other so-called gods, it also forbids failing to worship and glorify the one true God.
- Thirdly, our catechism rightly teaches that the first commandment forbids us from “giving that worship and glory to any other, which is due unto [God] alone.
 - Brothers and sisters, please consider how prone we are to do this very thing. It is very, very easy for us to love the things of this world in a way that only God should be loved, to labor for the things of this world and not for God, and to trust in the things of this world instead of God. Think of how prone we are to give the “worship and glory... which is due to God alone” to created things rather than the Creator of all things seen and unseen.

Q. 53. What are we especially taught by these words, “before me,” in the first commandment?

- The word “before” can be interpreted in two ways.
- First, it can mean “above” or in a “higher position or place”. If I say that Sally finished the race before Jimmy I mean that Sally finished in a higher place than Jimmy – maybe in first place! And if that were the meaning of the word “before”, then the first commandment would have this sense: you shall not have any gods above me or in a higher position than me. And if this were the meaning of the word “before” then some might think it is OK to have other gods besides the LORD, so long as they are placed under or beneath him somehow.
- But the word “before” can also mean before my face, or, in front of me and within my view. If you go to a restaurant and order a meal, at some point the waiter or waitress will bring out your meal and set it before you. Used in this way, the word “before” does not mean above, or in a higher position, but in front of, or within your sight and presence.
- Clearly, this second sense is the sense in which the word “before” is used in the first commandment. The Hebrew original is more clear than the English. Also, the rest of the scriptures make it quite clear that the LORD is not merely to be honored as the highest of many gods, but rather he is to be honored as the only true God, the Creator of all things seen and unseen. Isaiah 46:9 states the matter clearly. There the LORD says, “remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me...” (Isaiah 46:9, ESV).

Conclusion

- Now for a word of clarification. The first commandment forbids us from having any other gods except the one true God, the LORD, the maker of heaven and earth. We are to love him alone, as God. We are to worship and serve him alone, as God. We are to trust in him alone, as God. We are to delight in him and glorify him alone, as God.
- But let me ask you this. Does the first commandment require us to love God only, to serve God only, to trust God only, and to enjoy God only? Answer: Clearly, no. We are to love one another, are we not? Husbands and wives are to love one another – the Scriptures are very clear about this. And the Scriptures also command us to serve one another. Are we not to trust one another? And are we not also permitted to enjoy the

good things of this life – food and drink, family and friends, along with every other good thing in this world, within its proper bounds? Yes, we are.

- So how then can we love our spouse, our children, and our brothers and sisters in Christ without slipping into idolatry? The answer is twofold: One, we must love them with the right kind of love – we must love them as creatures and not as if they were the Creator. God is to be loved as God. And things of this world are to be loved in an appropriate way, as creatures. Two, when we love the created things – our spouse, children, family, friends or any other things – we must love them to the glory of God. The same can be said about service, trust, and the enjoyment of earthly things. God is to be served, trusted, and enjoyed supremely as God, and the things of this earth are to be served, trusted, and enjoyed as creatures and to the glory of God.
- I say this because I want you to know that loving God and loving other people and things are not in conflict with each other. God alone must be loved, worshiped, and served, and everything else must be loved in its proper way as creatures, and gifts from God, and to the glory of God.

CORPORATE PRAYER

Members of Emmaus are invited to pray aloud in this time of corporate prayer. The prayer time will be conducted according to the petitions of the Lord's Prayer (see Baptist Catechism questions 105-114 for instructions on prayer).

The children of members may pray if they have the permission of their parents and are prepared. Please raise your hand to request the microphone if you wish to pray.

“Pray then like this:

‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us this day our daily bread,
 and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”
 For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever, Amen.
 (Matthew 6:9–13, with traditional conclusion added)

CLOSING SONG

Psalms 23 - The LORD's My Shepherd

The LORD's my Shepherd; I will lack nothing. He makes me lie down in pastures green.
 He leads by calm streams, and he revives me; He guides in right ways for His name's sake.

Although I travel through death's dark valley, No threat or danger there will I fear,
 Since you will always stay close beside me; Your rod and staff give comfort to me.

You've set my table where foes are watching; My head anointed, my cup you've filled.
 Such love and goodness through life pursue me; I'll live forever in the LORD's house.

BENEDICTION

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies--in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 4:10-11 ESV)