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A Letter from Pastor Chris

Dear Friend,

This handbook is a catechism of 40 questions and answers all based upon the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message. It is my hopes that through careful study and repetition you will develop a strong understanding of these key doctrinal truths of the Baptist faith.

In some cases I kept the exact wording of the Baptist Faith & Message in answering questions. There are other questions where the answers were simplified for brevity or clarity. The most important thing to remember is that understanding the doctrine is more important than memorizing something word for word. Make sure that you understand what you are memorizing!

Celebrating your continued growth!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris', with a stylized, flowing script.

Pastor Chris

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"A Baptist Catechism: 40 Questions and Answers from the Baptist Faith & Message" is based upon the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message.

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Introduction:

What Is A Catechism?

"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up"

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

1. What is a catechism?

A catechism is an instructional tool in the form of questions and answers to teach and learn key doctrinal truths of the Christian faith in a systematic way. It comes from the Greek word *katecheo*, which means, "to teach in a systematic manner."

2. What is the history of catechisms and Baptists?

Baptist catechisms have been around for centuries dating back to 1689! Charles Spurgeon, a famous Baptist pastor, published a catechism in 1855. Many catechisms have been developed around the Westminster Confession (1646). This catechism is based on the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message.

3. Why are catechisms important?

Catechisms are a tool to help us understand, remember, and teach key doctrinal truths of the Christian faith. They help us grasp sound doctrine (cf. 2 Tim. 1:13; 2:15). They also help us instruct our children and others in biblical doctrines (cf. Deut. 6:6-7).

4. How do I use a catechism?

A catechism is intended to be studied in repetition. It is best to study with an accountability partner that can ask the questions and check your answers. One person presents the questions and the student provides the answers and Scripture verses. However, the ability to quote every answer word for word is less important than the ability to demonstrate a clear understanding of each question and answer.

A Baptist Catechism:

40 Questions and Answers

from the Baptist Faith & Message.

Have someone ask you each question and respond with both the answer and Scripture verse provided.

Question 1: Who wrote the Bible?

Answer: God is the author and through the Holy Spirit He inspired men to write down the Bible as a revelation of Himself to mankind. Therefore, all of Scripture is true and trustworthy without any errors.

Scripture: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" 2 Peter 1:20-21.

Question 2: What is the Bible?

Answer: The Bible is a testimony to the gospel of Jesus Christ and divine revelation of how to be saved. It is the supreme standard for what we should believe and how we should live.

Scripture: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3:16.

Question 3: Who is God?

Answer: There is one and only one living and true God. He has eternally existed and reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Scripture: "I, even I, am the LORD, and besides Me there is no savior" Isaiah 43:11.

Question 4: What is meant by “God is a trinity”?

Answer: The Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit are distinct in person; yet one and equal in nature, essence, and being.

Scripture: “When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” Matthew 3:16-17.

Question 5: Who is God the Father?

Answer: God the Father is the first Person of the Triune Godhead and reigns with providential care over all of His creation.

Scripture: “You alone are the LORD; You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and everything on it, the seas and all that is in them, and You preserve them all. The host of heaven worships You” Nehemiah 9:6.

Question 6: Who is God the Son?

Answer: God the Son is the second Person of the Triune Godhead. Christ Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He took upon Himself human nature and lived a sinless life in complete obedience to the will of God the Father. His death on the cross and His resurrection from the grave made provision for the redemption of mankind from sin. He now sits at the right hand of the Father as the only Mediator, who brings reconciliation between God and mankind.

Scripture: “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high” Hebrews 1:1-3.

Question 7: Who is God the Holy Spirit?

Answer: God the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Triune Godhead. He helps us understand Scripture, convicts us of sin, and calls us to salvation through Jesus Christ. He continues His work in the believer by helping them conform to the image of Jesus Christ in character. He helps us pray and comforts us in times of need. He provides each Christian with spiritual gifts to serve God through the church.

Scripture: "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you" John 14:26.

Question 8: What does the Bible teach us about mankind?

Answer: Mankind is created in the image of God. By free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. However, through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, mankind can experience redemption and restoration.

Scripture: "And that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness" Ephesians 4:24.

Question 9: What is meant by "sin nature"?

Answer: After Adam and Eve freely chose to sin against God, all of humanity inherited a nature and an environment that is inclined toward sin. Just as the sins of Adam were imputed on humanity, the righteousness of Christ is imputed on those who trust Him as Savior.

Scripture: "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous" Romans 5:19.

Question 10: What is sin?

Answer: Sin is anything a person says, does, or thinks that is contrary to the nature and character of God. Therefore, sin separates mankind from God.

Scripture: "Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin" James 4:17.

Question 11: What is salvation?

Answer: Since sin has separated us from God, there is a need for redemption for the relationship to be restored. Salvation is the redemption of those who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. It is only by the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ that redemption can be obtained.

Scripture: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us" 1 John 1:8-10.

Question 12: What is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit?

Answer: At the moment of salvation the Holy Spirit baptizes believers into the Body of Christ and indwells within them.

Scripture: "But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His" Romans 8:9.

Question 13: What is regeneration?

Answer: Regeneration is the new birth. It is a work of God's grace in which we become a new creation in Christ. This change begins with the conviction of sin by the Holy Spirit, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Scripture: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Question 14: What is repentance?

Answer: Repentance is a sincere change of mind that results in a change of direction from sin and toward God.

Scripture: "Repent therefore and be converted, that you sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" Acts 3:19.

Question 15: What is saving faith?

Answer: Saving faith is understanding and submitting to the belief that Christ alone is sufficient for salvation and nothing can be done to earn salvation.

Scripture: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" Ephesians 2:8-9.

Question 16: What is justification?

Answer: Justification is God's judicial act of pardoning the sin of any sinner who repents and places faith in Christ as their Savior.

Scripture: "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" Romans 5:1.

Question 17: What is sanctification?

Answer: Sanctification is work of the Holy Spirit in which a believer is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity.

Scripture: “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren” Romans 8:29.

Question 18: What is glorification?

Answer: Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final state of the redeemed.

Scripture: “Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified” Romans 8:30.

Question 19: What is meant by “the security of the believer”?

Answer: All true believers endure to the end. Believers may stumble in sin, but their Salvation is maintained by the power of God through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Scripture: “In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise” Ephesians 1:13.

Question 20: What is a Church?

Answer: A New Testament church is a local body of believers who have covenanted together in the faith and fellowship of the gospel to fulfill the Great Commission.

Scripture: “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers” Acts 2:42.

Question 21: What is the Church?

Answer: The Church is the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation.

Scripture: "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another" Romans 12:5.

Question 22: What are the officers of a local church?

Answer: A local church is governed by the Lordship of Jesus Christ in which each member is accountable to Christ as the Head of the Body. Pastors and deacons are the two biblical officers.

Scripture: "Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops (pastors) and deacons" Philippians 1:1.

Question 23: What is Believer's Baptism?

Answer: Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Is the first act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior. It is personal testimony of the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus.

Scripture: "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" Romans 6:4.

Question 24: Is baptism required for a person to be saved?

Answer: Baptism is the public testimony that a person has already been saved. It is an outward expression of an inward change. While baptism is not required to become saved, it is the Christian's first act of obedience.

Scripture: "Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?" Galatians 3:3.

Question 25: Is Baptism required for church membership?

Answer: Belief always precedes baptism and baptism always precedes church membership.

Scripture: "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them" Acts 2:41.

Question 26: What is the Lord's Supper?

Answer: The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby believers, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, remember the death of Christ and anticipate His second coming.

Scripture: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" 1 Corinthians 11:26.

Question 27: What is the Lord's Day?

Answer: The Lord's Day is the first day of the week and commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private.

Scripture: "Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight" Acts 20:7.

Question 28: What is the Kingdom of God?

Answer: The Kingdom of God generally refers to the rule of God over the universe. The Kingdom of God also refers to the unique way in which God rules in the hearts of His people. God's Kingdom will be fully consummated upon the return of Christ at the end of this age.

Scripture: "for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" Romans 14:17.

Question 29: How will the world come to an end?

Answer: God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end.

Scripture: "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only" Matthew 24:36.

Question 30: How will Christ return?

Answer: Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth.

Scripture: “For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works” Matthew 16:27.

Question 31: What is Hell?

Answer: Hell is the eternal abode of the unregenerate. It is a literal place of everlasting punishment. It is the second death, eternal separation from God.

Scripture: “But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” Revelation 21:8.

Question 32: What is Heaven?

Answer: Heaven is the eternal abode of the saved. In their glorified bodies they will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Scripture: “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away” Revelation 21:4

Question 33: What is the responsibility of every Christian?

Answer: It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church to endeavor to make disciples of all nations.

Scripture: "'Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' Amen" Matthew 28:19-20.

Question 34: What is Christian education?

Answer: The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. The maturing Christian should seek to increase their knowledge for the sake of helping the church fulfill its God-given mission.

Scripture: "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" 2 Timothy 2:15.

Question 35: What is Christian stewardship?

Answer: Stewardship is the faithful management of what belongs to another. All that we have belongs to God. Therefore, Christians are to be stewards of all that God has entrusted to us. This includes our time, talents, and material possessions. Above all, we are stewards of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Scripture: "Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful" 1 Corinthians 4:2.

Question 36: How does the Christian financially support the church?

Answer: Tithing (10% of your gross earnings) is the biblical standard for giving. The New Testament teaches that we should exceed the standard by giving cheerfully, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the gospel through the local church.

Scripture: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come" 1 Corinthians 16:1-2.

Question 37: What is Christian cooperation?

Answer: Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the mission of Christ's kingdom. Cooperation is desirable among denominations so long as there is no violation of conscience or compromise to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

Scripture: "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" John 13:35.

Question 38: How should Christians engage society?

Answer: Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love.

Scripture: "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessors, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" 1 Timothy 2:1-4.

Question 39: How should Christians think about war?

Answer: It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ we should do all in our power to put an end to war.

Scripture: "A time to live, and a time to hate; a time of war and a time of peace" Ecclesiastes 3:8.

Question 40: What is a family?

Answer: God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord.

Scripture: "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate" Matthew 19:4-6.

Congratulations!

You did it!

Whether you already mastered these 40 questions or answers or you are just trying to wrap your mind around it before jumping into the task, I want to CONGRATULATE you on your willingness to learn more about your faith. When you are done, you will have accomplished a great spiritual marker in your maturity in the faith. Please know that I'm praying for you as you study. I pray specifically that your studies will better equip you to be a strong partner in the gospel ministry. Way to go!