

## Heidelberg Catechism Spring 2020 Week 6

### God the Spirit

God picks us up where we are and not where we should have been.~Douglas Wilson

Lesson Objective: We will learn about God the Holy Spirit, the church, the resurrection of the body, justification by faith alone, and how our good words are not meritorious.

### Opening/Review

Neil Postman made a prediction in his 1985 book, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*. Postman posited that in the future, we would be oppressed not by an outside force like “Big Brother” in George Orwell’s dystopian novel 1984. Rather, he foretold, “people will come to love their oppression, to adore the technologies that undo their capacities to think,” pointing to Aldous Huxley’s satirical *Brave New World*. He predicted that with the rise of technology and communication, people wouldn’t be deprived of information, but rather they would be given so much that they would become passive and egocentric. He feared that “truth would be lost in a sea of irrelevance.”

### Lesson

53. What do you believe concerning the “Holy Spirit”?

First, that He is co-eternal God with the Father and the Son.<sup>1</sup> Second, that He is also given unto me:<sup>2</sup> by true faith makes me a partaker of Christ and all His benefits,<sup>3</sup> comforts me,<sup>4</sup> and shall abide with me forever.<sup>5</sup>

[1] Gen. 1:2; Isa. 48:16; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; Acts 5:3–4. [2] Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 1:21–22. [3] 1 Pet. 1:2; 1 Cor. 6:17. [4] Acts 9:31. [5] Jn. 14:16; 1 Pet. 4:14; \*1 Jn. 4:13; \*Rom. 15:13.

54. What do you believe concerning the “holy, catholic Church”?

That out of the whole human race,<sup>1</sup> from the beginning to the end of the world,<sup>2</sup> the Son of God,<sup>3</sup> by His Spirit and Word,<sup>4</sup> gathers, defends, and preserves for Himself unto everlasting life a chosen communion<sup>5</sup> in the unity of the true faith;<sup>6</sup> and that I am and forever shall remain a living member of this communion.<sup>7</sup>

[1] Gen. 26:4. [2] Jn. 10:10. [3] Eph. 1:10–13. [4] Rom. 1:16; Isa. 59:21; Rom. 10:14–17; Eph. 5:26. [5] Rom. 8:29–30; Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:3–6. [6] Acts 2:46; Ps. 71:18; 1 Cor. 11:26; Jn. 10:28–30; 1 Cor. 1:8–9. [7] 1 Jn. 3:21; 1 Jn. 2:19; \*Gal. 3:28.

55. What do you understand by the “communion of saints”?

First, that believers, one and all, as members of the Lord Jesus Christ, are partakers with Him in all His treasures and gifts;<sup>1</sup> second, that each one must feel himself bound to use his gifts readily and cheerfully for the advantage and welfare of other members.<sup>2</sup>

[1] 1 Jn. 1:3. [2] 1 Cor. 12:12–13, 21; 13:5–6; Phil. 2:4–6; \*Heb. 3:14.

56. What do you believe concerning the “forgiveness of sins”?

That God, for the sake of Christ’s satisfaction,<sup>1</sup> will no more remember my sins, nor the sinful nature with which I have to struggle all my life long;<sup>2</sup> but graciously imputes to me the righteousness of Christ, that I may nevermore come into condemnation.<sup>3</sup>

[1] 1 Jn. 2:2. [2] 2 Cor. 5:19, 21; Rom. 7:24–25; Ps. 103:3, 10–12; Jer. 31:34; Rom. 8:1–4. [3] Jn. 3:18; \*Eph. 1:7; \*Rom. 4:7–8; 7:18.

57. What comfort do you receive from the “resurrection of the body”?

That not only my soul after this life shall be immediately taken up to Christ its Head,<sup>1</sup> but also that this my body, raised by the power of Christ, shall be reunited with my soul, and made like the glorious body of Christ.<sup>2</sup>

[1] Lk. 23:43; Phil. 1:21–23. [2] 1 Cor. 15:53–54; Job 19:25–27; 1 Jn. 3:2.

58. What comfort do you receive from the article “life everlasting”?

That, inasmuch as I now feel in my heart the beginning of eternal joy,<sup>1</sup> I shall after this life possess complete blessedness, such as eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man,<sup>2</sup> therein to praise God forever.<sup>3</sup>

[1] 2 Cor. 5:2–3. [2] 1 Cor. 2:9. [3] Jn. 17:3; \*Rom. 8:23; \*1 Pet. 1:8.

59. What does it help you now, that you believe all this?

That I am righteous in Christ before God, and an heir of eternal life.<sup>1</sup>

[1] Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:17; Jn. 3:36; \*Tit. 3:7; \*Rom. 5:1; \*Rom. 8:16.

60. How are you righteous before God?

Only by true faith in Jesus Christ:<sup>1</sup> that is, although my conscience accuses me, that I have grievously sinned against all the commandments of God, and have never kept any of them,<sup>2</sup> and am still prone always to all evil;<sup>3</sup> yet God, without any merit of mine,<sup>4</sup> of mere grace,<sup>5</sup> grants and imputes to me the perfect satisfaction,<sup>6</sup> righteousness, and holiness of Christ,<sup>7</sup> as if I had never committed nor had any sins, and had myself accomplished all the obedience which Christ has fulfilled for me;<sup>8</sup> if only I accept such benefit with a believing heart.<sup>9</sup>

[1] Rom. 3:21–25; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8–9; Phil. 3:9. [2] Rom. 3:9–10. [3] Rom. 7:23. [4] Tit. 3:5. [5] Rom. 3:24; Eph. 2:8. [6] 1 Jn. 2:2. [7] 1 Jn. 2:1; Rom. 4:4–5; 2 Cor. 5:19. [8] 2 Cor. 5:21. [9] Jn. 3:18; \*Rom. 3:28; \*Rom. 10:10.

61. Why do you say that you are righteous by faith only?

Not that I am acceptable to God on account of the worthiness of my faith, but because only the satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ is my righteousness before God;<sup>1</sup> and I can receive the same and make it my own in no other way than by faith only.<sup>2</sup>

[1] 1 Cor. 1:30; 2:2. [2] 1 Jn. 5:10. \*Isa. 53:5; \*Gal. 3:22; \*Rom. 4:16.

62. But why cannot our good works be the whole or part of our righteousness before God?

Because the righteousness which can stand before the judgment seat of God must be perfect throughout and entirely conformable to the divine law,<sup>1</sup> but even our best works in this life are all imperfect and defiled with sin.<sup>2</sup>

[1] Gal. 3:10; Deut. 27:26. [2] Isa. 64:6; \*Jas. 2:10; \*Phil. 3:12.

63. Do our good works merit nothing, even though it is God's will to reward them in this life and in that which is to come?

The reward comes not of merit, but of grace.<sup>1</sup>

[1] Lk. 17:10; \*Rom. 11:6.

64. But does not this doctrine make men careless and profane?

No, for it is impossible that those who are implanted into Christ by true faith, should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness.<sup>1</sup>

[1] Matt. 7:18; \*Rom. 6:1–2; \*Jn. 15:5.

### **Application**

Shall I go on sinning so that grace may increase?

Notes:

## **Homework**

Memorize Q & A #60.

How are you righteous before God?

Only by true faith in Jesus Christ: that is, although my conscience accuses me, that I have grievously sinned against all the commandments of God, and have never kept any of them, and am still prone always to all evil; yet God, without any merit of mine, of mere grace, grants and imputes to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ, as if I had never committed nor had any sins, and had myself accomplished all the obedience which Christ has fulfilled for me: if only I accept such benefit with a believing heart.

## **Resources**

Heidelberg Catechism, 2011 Modern English Version

*Valley of Vision* by Arthur Bennett