



A Catechism for

GOSPEL LIGHT CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Introduction

People often ask what kind of church we are and what we believe in. We tell others that we are a Bible-believing church, but what are the biblical doctrines we believe in? Although we have a statement of faith, it is too brief to communicate clearly our beliefs. Historically, churches have answered this need with a confession of faith or a catechism. Therefore, the pastors at Gospel Light have written up this modern version of a catechism for our church.

What is catechism? The word “catechism” comes from the Greek *katecheo*, which simply means to teach or instruct. Traditionally, a question-and-answer format with supporting verses is taken.

We thank God for the churches in history and today who have gone before us. We would like to acknowledge the following documents among others for the references and inspiration for our own catechism:

- Westminster Shorter Catechism (WSC)
- Westminster Larger Catechism (WLC)
- 1646 Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF)
- Heidelberg Catechism (HC)
- Belgic Confession (BC)
- 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith in Modern English (also known as the Second London Baptist Confession) (SLBC)
- Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (CSBI)
- “A Baptist Catechism” adapted by John Piper (ABC)
- “Truths That Make Us Sing” by Redemption Hill Church (TTMUS)

CONTENTS

The Bible

1. What is the Bible?
2. Why do we believe that the Bible is the Word of God?
3. What is the Bible for?
4. Who should read the Bible?
5. How should we understand the Bible?

God

1. Who is God?
2. What is the Trinity?
3. Who is the Father?
4. Who is the Son?
5. Who is the Holy Spirit?

Creation

1. Who created everything?
2. How did God create everything?
3. Why did God create everything?
4. What is unique about the creation of man?
5. Does man know that God is the Creator?
6. Is God still involved in his creation today?

Sin

1. What is sin?
2. What is the Law of God?
3. How did sin enter the world?
4. Did all mankind fall in Adam's first sin?
5. What are the consequences of sin?

The Gospel

1. What is the Gospel?
2. Why did Jesus have to suffer and die?
3. How do we respond to the Gospel to be saved?
4. What is the role of the Law with regards to the Gospel?
5. What are the benefits of believing the Gospel?
6. What are the evidences of a true believer?
7. Can a true believer lose his salvation?
8. What is election?

Sanctification

1. What is sanctification?
2. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in our sanctification?
3. What are the responsibilities of Christians in sanctification?
4. What is the motivation for sanctification?

The Church

1. What is the church?
2. What does joining a local church involve?
3. What are the ordinances of the church?
4. What is Baptism?
5. What is the Lord's Supper?
6. What is church discipline and what is it for?

The Bible

1. What is the Bible?

The Bible is the written Word of God consisting of all the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments.

The Old Testament includes these 39 books:

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

The New Testament includes these 27 books:

Matthew	Ephesians	Hebrews
Mark	Philippians	James
Luke	Colossians	1 Peter
John	1 Thessalonians	2 Peter
Acts	2 Thessalonians	1 John
Romans	1 Timothy	2 John
1 Corinthians	2 Timothy	3 John
2 Corinthians	Titus	Jude
Galatians	Philemon	Revelation

All of these in their original autographs are given by the inspiration of God to be the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

VERSES:

2 TIMOTHY 3:16, 2 PETER 1:19-21

2. Why do we believe that the Bible is the Word of God?

The content of the Bible is clearly of divine origin. The fulfillment of prophecy, the unity of its parts, its power to convert sinners and to edify saints prove it to be the Word of God. Nevertheless, only the Spirit of God can make us willing to agree with and submit to the Bible as the only sufficient, inerrant, infallible, and authoritative Word of God.

VERSES:

LUKE 24:27, ACTS 10:43, 1 CORINTHIANS 2:14-16

3. What is the Bible for?

The Bible is God's revelation of Himself to mankind. It teaches us what to believe about God, and how man is to relate to Him and to one another.

VERSES:

JOHN 20:31, ACTS 24:14, DEUTERONOMY 29:29, DEUTERONOMY 30:16,17

4. Who should read the Bible?

Every person is to read the Bible.

VERSES:

MATTHEW 4:4

5. How should we understand the Bible?

We should understand the Bible by studying the passages in their grammatical, literary and historical contexts in order to discover the original intent of the words. If the meaning of a passage is uncertain, it must be understood in the light of other passages that speak more clearly. Most importantly, we also need to ask for the Holy Spirit's illumination and guidance to understand and apply the Bible to our lives.

VERSES:

LUKE 24:27, 1 CORINTHIANS 2:13,14

God

1. Who is God?

- God is the first and most supreme being, the Creator and Sustainer of everyone and everything.
- God is a spirit.
- He is eternal, unchangeable in His purposes and character, and infinite in His greatness and power.
- He is most holy, most free, most wise to do according to the counsel of His own righteous and glorious will.
- He is most loving, gracious, merciful, and longsuffering, forgiving sin and rewarding those who diligently seek Him.
- He is also most just, and fearsome in His judgments, hating all sin, and will by no means clear the guilty.
- He has revealed Himself to us as one God in three distinct Persons, the Trinity.

VERSES:

PSALM. 97:9, ISAIAH 40:28, ISAIAH 44:6, JOHN 4:24, MALACHI 3:6, ISAIAH 6:3, HEBREWS 11:6, EXODUS 34:6-7

2. What is the Trinity?

- There is only one true and living God, and there are three Persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- The Father is not the Son and the Son is not the Father, and likewise the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son.
- These three, though being distinct persons and having different roles, are neither divided nor fused or mixed together, yet are the same in substance and equal in power and glory.
- These three are in perfect harmony and are, in ways beyond our comprehension, not three beings, nor one being with three personalities, but perfectly at all times for all eternity, one God in three persons.

VERSES:

MATTHEW 3:16-17, MATTHEW 28:19

3. Who is the Father?

- The Father is the first Person of the Godhead.
- He is the cause, origin, and source of all things, visible as well as invisible.
- He has chosen to bless the elect with forgiveness, redemption, and adoption in Christ to the praise of His glory.
- He has sent forth His Son and the Holy Spirit to accomplish His will.
- He also hears the prayers of His people, provides for them, chastises them, and works in their lives to make them more fruitful.

VERSES:

EPHESIANS 1:3-12, GALATIANS 4:4-6, HEBREWS 12:6-11, JOHN 15:2

4. Who is the Son?

- The Lord Jesus Christ is the second Person of the Godhead.
- He is the Word of God made flesh.
- He is the uncreated, eternal Son of God who became a man, lived a sinless life, was crucified, buried, and rose from the dead before returning to heaven.
- He continues to be truly God and truly man in two distinct natures – without confusion, without change, without division, without separation – and one person forever.
- He reveals the Father to us.
- He is the promised Prophet, Priest, and King, the Messiah who saves His people from their sins through His atoning death and resurrection.
- He now sits at the right hand of the throne of the Father, interceding for His people.
- He will return one day to judge the living and the dead and inherit all things.

VERSES:

JOHN 1:1, JOHN 1:14, ROMANS 9:5, HEBREWS 2:14, LUKE 24:39, HEBREWS 1:2, JOHN 1:18, ACTS 3:22, HEBREWS 5:5, PSALM 2:6, ROMANS 14:9, 1 CORINTHIANS 15:3, 1 TIMOTHY 3:16, ROMANS 8:34, 2 THESSALONIANS 1:7-10, EPHESIANS 1:10

5. Who is the Holy Spirit?

- The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Godhead.
- He is not an impersonal force.
- He proceeds from the Father and the Son.
- He is given to believers by the Father as a result of the finished work of Jesus Christ to be a helper and advocate.
- He brings about conviction of sin, the new birth, assurance of salvation, and the unity of the Church.
- He gives spiritual gifts to every believer for the edification of the Church.
- He comforts believers, leads them in life, helps them understand the Word of God, teaches them all things, guides them into all truth, empowers them for ministry, changes them into the image of Christ, and intercedes for them.
- He indwells His people, who are commanded to be filled or controlled by Him and to seek communion with Him.
- He bears witness about Jesus and enables His people to do the same.

VERSES:

MATTHEW 28:19, JOHN 14:16, ACTS 2:33, JOHN 16:8, ROMANS 8:16, 1 CORINTHIANS 12:13, 1 CORINTHIANS 12:4, ACTS 9:31, ROMANS 8:14, JOHN 14:26, JOHN 16:13, ACTS 1:8, 2 CORINTHIANS 3:18, ROMANS 8:26, 1 CORINTHIANS 3:16, EPHESIANS 5:18, 2 CORINTHIANS 13:14, JOHN 15:26

Creation

1. Who created everything?

God created everything. All three Persons of the Godhead were involved in creation.

VERSES:

ACTS 17:24, HEBREWS 1:2, JOHN 1:3, GENESIS 1:1-2

2. How did God create everything?

He formed all things out of nothing by the word of His power.

VERSES:

HEBREWS 11:3

3. Why did God create everything?

God created everything for his glory and to reveal Himself and His attributes to man.

VERSES:

ROMANS 1:20, JEREMIAH 10:12, PSALM 104:24, PSALM 33:5, PSALM 19:1, ISAIAH 43:7, COLOSSIANS 1:16, REVELATION 4:11

4. What is unique about the creation of man?

Of all God's works, only man and woman were created after God's own image, and to have dominion over all creation. He gave them a conscience that understands the demands of the Law of God. The first man and woman – Adam and Eve – were also created with the ability to either obey or disobey the will of God.

VERSES:

GENESIS 1:26-27, ROMANS 2:14-15, GENESIS 2:16-17

5. Does man know that God is the Creator?

Yes. Everybody intuitively knows that God is the Creator. Nevertheless, that knowledge can be suppressed because of man's sinfulness and refusal to acknowledge the truth.

VERSES:

ROMANS 1:18-21

6. Is God still involved in his creation today?

Yes. He sustains all things and orders all things, and does so continually without ceasing. Even evil is allowed by God and turned around to accomplish his holy, good, and wise purposes.

VERSES:

COLOSSIANS 1:17, ACTS 17:24-28, NEHEMIAH 9:6, HEBREWS 1:3, GENESIS 50:20, ACTS 2:23, ROMANS 8:28

Sin

1. What is sin?

Sin is any attitude, desire or action that breaks the Law of God, comes from a heart of unbelief, or is not done for the glory of God.

VERSES:

1 JOHN 3:4, ROM 14:23, 1CORINTHIANS 10:31

2. What is the Law of God?

The Law of God is summarized in the 10 Commandments and in the Great Commandment (to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and to love our neighbour as ourselves). The Law of God reveals His perfect holiness, and that we are unable to obey Him perfectly and meet His perfect standard.

VERSES:

EXODUS 20: 1-17, DEUTERONOMY 5:1-22, MATTHEW 22:35–40, MARK 12:28–34, LUKE 10:25-28, 1 PETER 1:16.

3. How did sin enter the world?

The first man and woman, Adam and Eve, were given life and freedom to enjoy all of God's creation in the Garden of Eden. They were also commanded to not eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. However, being tempted by the Serpent, they desired to be like God and chose to eat of that forbidden fruit. As a result, the first man and woman fell from the sinless state in which they were created and sin entered the world.

VERSES:

GENESIS 2:15-17, GENESIS 3:1-7, ROMANS 5:12

4. Did all mankind fall in Adam's first sin?

All mankind descending from Adam through natural processes, with the exception of Jesus Christ who was conceived through supernatural means, sinned in Adam and fell with him in his first sin. By God's appointment, Adam was the root and representative of the whole human race. Because of this, the guilt of his sin was accounted to all his offspring. Moreover, his offspring are now conceived in sin and are by nature children of wrath, the servants of sin, and partakers of death.

VERSES:

ROMANS 5:12, 1CORINTHIANS 15:21-22, PSALM 51:5, ROMANS 5:18-19, EPHESIANS 2:3

5. What are the consequences of sin?

Because of sin, man is now under the wrath and curse of God, and suffers:

- guilt
- shame
- alienation from God
- corruption of his nature
- all actual transgressions that come from this corrupt nature including the inability to obey the Law of God
- liability to all the miseries of this life
- death
- the pains of Hell forever

The whole earth and its creatures are also cursed and subjected to futility and corruption as a result of man's sin.

VERSES:

GENESIS 3:7-8, GENESIS 3:24, ROMANS 3:10, EPHESIANS 2:1-3, ISAIAH 53:6, ROMANS 6:23, MATTHEW 25:41-46, REVELATION 21:8, ROMANS 8:10, ROMANS 8:20-21

The Gospel

1. What is the Gospel?

The Gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ dying on the cross and rising from the grave to save man from his sins in order to reconcile sinful man to the Holy God.

VERSES:

1 CORINTHIANS 15:3-4, ROMANS 5:10, 2 CORINTHIANS 5:19

2. Why did Jesus have to suffer and die?

Man is separated from God and condemned to eternal punishment in Hell because of his sins. Jesus suffered and died as a propitiary sacrifice to reconcile sinners to God. He fully satisfied the just wrath of God towards our sins and displayed the righteousness of God by paying the debt of our sin on the cross so that God might be both just and the justifier of those who believe in Jesus Christ. God thus demonstrated His unconditional love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

VERSES:

COLOSSIANS 1:21, REVELATION 21:8, 1PETER 2:24, ISAIAH 53:4-6, ROMANS 3:26, ROMANS 5:6-8, 1 JOHN 4:10

3. How are people to respond to the Gospel to be saved?

People need to repent and believe the Gospel. To repent is to recognize and grieve over one's sin, forsake it and turn to God, trusting not in one's own righteousness or good works but in God's grace through Jesus Christ alone for salvation. To believe the Gospel is to receive and rest in the finished work of Jesus Christ alone for forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God.

VERSES:

MARK 1:15, ACTS 2:27, 2CORINTHIANS 7:10, EPHESIANS 2:8-9, JOHN 1:12, ROMANS 10:9,10, GALATIANS 2:15,16

4. What is the role of the Law of God with regards to the Gospel?

The Law of God reveals the perfect holiness of God, and that we are unable to obey Him perfectly and meet His perfect standard. It confirms man's sinfulness, the certainty of judgement, and his need for salvation through Jesus Christ.

VERSES:

ROMANS 7:12, 3:19-20, GALATIANS 3:23-26, 2:16

5. What are the benefits of believing the Gospel?

The benefits of believing the Gospel for the believer are several:

- His sins are forgiven and he is reconciled to God
- He is justified – declared righteous through the free grace of God in the finished work of Jesus Christ
- He is adopted – received into the company of God’s children and having a right to all the honour and privileges that come with being His child
- He is redeemed – freed from sin, death, and Hell to serve the living God
- He is born from above – made a new creation with a new heart that knows and loves God
- He receives the Holy Spirit who indwells him and empowers him to live the Christian life
- He is made a member in the body of Jesus Christ
- He will be raised up in glory at the Resurrection

VERSES:

2CORINTHIANS 5:18, ROMANS 3:24, 5:1, 5:9, 8:15, EPHESIANS 1:5, 1:7, JOHN 3:3-7, 2CORINTHIANS 5:17, EZEKIAL 36:26, ROMANS 8:9, 1CORINTHIANS 12:13, DANIEL 12:2-3, 1CORINTHIANS 15:42-44

6. What are the evidences of a true believer?

The true believer of Jesus Christ is a disciple who perseveres in following Christ and abiding in his word. He will:

- Be a new creation demonstrating progressive life change into Christlikeness
- Profess Jesus Christ as Lord and live in submission to Him
- Love God and His Word, resulting in obedience
- Not live in habitual sin even though he will not attain perfect sinlessness in this lifetime
- Love other believers
- Not love the world
- Endure in his faith to the end in spite of difficulties of life

While no true believer will manifest these evidences perfectly all the time, it is his sincere desire to pursue them, and will attain to some measure of progress by God’s grace over time.

VERSES:

JOHN 8:31, 2CORINTHIANS 3:18, ROMANS 10:9, 1CORINTHIANS 12:3, JOHN 14:21, 1JOHN 2:5, 3:6, 3:8, 3:14, 2:15-16, 2:19, MATTHEW 10:22

7. Can a true believer lose his salvation?

The true believer will not lose his salvation because the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father maintain his salvation, and because eternal life cannot be anything but eternal. Since man is not saved by his works, neither can he lose his salvation by his works. Furthermore, the true believer is sealed with the Holy Spirit, is kept by Christ's continual intercession for him, and cannot be separated from the love of God in Christ Jesus by anything. God also promises to complete the good work that he has begun in the life of the believer. Therefore, the true believer can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but is kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

VERSES:

JOHN 10:28-29, JOHN 3:16, JOHN 3:36, EPHESIANS 2:8-9, EPHESIANS 1:13, HEBREWS 7:25, ROMANS 8:38-39, PHILIPPIANS 1:6

8. What is election?

Election is the act of God whereby in eternity past He chose those who will be saved. Election is unconditional, because it does not depend on anything outside of God, such as a person's good works or foreseen faith. The Bible also affirms that alongside God's sovereign choice in election, man bears the responsibility of his choice to accept or reject God's offer of salvation. The offer of mercy in the Gospel is extended to all alike. True believers who believe in the Gospel and are saved are therefore called "the elect".

VERSES:

ROMANS 9:16, REVELATION 22:17, ACTS 13:48

Sanctification

1. What is sanctification?

Sanctification is the work of God's free grace through the working of the Holy Spirit whereby believers are renewed in the whole person after the image of Christ. This is done through a process in which the believers' transformed hearts are increasingly separated from the corrupting influences of sin to live lives that are holy and righteous before God.

VERSES:

2 CORINTHIANS 3:18, 1 THESSALONIANS 5:23, ROMANS 6:19

2. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the believer's sanctification?

The Holy Spirit lives in the believer to sanctify and empower him to be more like Christ. As he walks in the Spirit, the Spirit enables him to obey Christ and deny the lusts of the flesh by working in him to will and to do what is pleasing to God. The Spirit produces in him the fruit of the Spirit, and transforms him into the image of Christ.

VERSES:

1 CORINTHIANS 6:11, 1 PETER 1:2, GALATIANS 5:16, PHILIPPIANS 2:13, GALATIANS 5:22-23, 2 CORINTHIANS 3:18

3. What are the responsibilities of Christians in sanctification?

Christians are to pursue a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ through God-ordained means of grace, namely, the study of God's word, prayer and gospel community. They are to walk in the Spirit in their everyday lives by surrendering their wills to Him and depending on His power to obey God's will.

VERSES:

2 CORINTHIANS 3:18, PSALM 119:11, ROMANS 12:2, EPHESIANS 3:14-21, HEB 10:24,25, ROMANS 8:13, GALATIANS 5:16,25

4. What is the believer's motivation for sanctification?

The believer pursues sanctification because he is grateful for God's great love as displayed in the gospel. Therefore, he does not pursue sanctification in order to earn favour with God, but to glorify God and enjoy fellowship with Him through holy living – he desires to be holy, for God is holy. Finally, he pursues sanctification as he looks forward to the glorious return of Jesus, who will reward those who have been faithful to Him.

VERSES:

ROMANS 12:1-2, 1 JOHN 4:19, PSALM 24:3-6, 1 PETER 1:16, 1 JOHN 3:2,3, REVELATION 22:12, 2 TIMOTHY 4:8

The Church

1. What is the church?

The church is the body of believers called out of this world by the gospel to be under the headship of Jesus Christ. The universal church is the sum total of true believers of Jesus Christ in all places throughout history – past, present, and future. The local church is the visible expression of the gathered people who profess to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ in every locality and in every age.

VERSES:

EPHESIANS 2:19-22, 1 CORINTHIANS 12:13, ROMANS 16:5, GALATIANS 1:1,2

2. What does joining a local church involve?

Joining a local church involves publicly identifying oneself with the Lord Jesus and his people as a community of disciples of Jesus Christ who believe in the gospel. This community is to display God's glory as it teaches, holds up, and lives out the truths of the gospel. This is done through regular gathering with one another for the following purposes:

- Being taught through the preaching and study of God's Word
- Worshipping God and praying together
- Evangelism and discipleship
- Mutual encouragement, service and edification
- Exercising of spiritual gifts to build up the church
- Giving to those in need
- Supporting, submitting to, and being accountable to the leadership of the church
- The public conduct of the ordinances of church

VERSES:

1 TIMOTHY 3:15, HEBREWS 10:24,25, 1 PETER 4:10, ROMANS 12:13, ACTS 2:41-47, HEBREWS 13:7,17

3. What are the ordinances of the church?

There are only two ordinances commanded in the Bible for the local church, namely Baptism and Lord's Supper. These ordinances are to be administered only to professing believers.

VERSES:

MATTHEW 28:19, ACTS 2:41, ACTS 8:36, MATTHEW 26:26-29, 1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-26

4. What is Baptism?

Baptism is the public declaration of a believer's repentance from sin and faith in Christ by baptising him with water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It symbolises the believer's union with Christ in His death and resurrection. Baptism does not wash away one's sins.

VERSES:

MATTHEW 28:19, ACTS 2:41, ACTS 8:36, 1 PETER 3:21

5. What is the Lord's Supper?

The Lord's supper, also called the Holy Communion, is the partaking of the bread and cup according to Christ's appointment to remember and show forth His death till He returns.

VERSES:

MATTHEW 26:26-29, 1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-26

6. What is church discipline and what is it for?

Church discipline is the process of correcting serious, open and unrepentant sinful behaviour among church members. It involves confronting the individual with his wrongdoing and giving him an opportunity to confess and turn from his sin(s). In serious cases, it may proceed all the way to excommunication, which is a formal removal of the individual from church membership and fellowship. This is so that the individual will be lovingly warned to repent of his ways, that sinful behaviour will not be permitted to spread within the local church, and that the testimony of the church before the world will be protected.

VERSES:

MATTHEW 18:15-20, 1 CORINTHIANS 5:5-13