

WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH SHORTER CATECHISM

LESSON # 6 (Q1LES6) - THE WORD QUESTIONS # 2

1. Prayer
2. Bible reading: Psalm 119: 33 - 48
3. Review: Last week we covered SC question 1, and we learned that God created all things for his glory, and that the chief end of man should be to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever. While man can add nothing to God's glory, his primary purpose for being is to show forth God's glory; and this should be his chief end. Man is a to have secondary ends, in accordance with God's Word. Enjoyment of God comes through faith in him. Enjoyment of God is for ever.
4. Introduction: This weeks lesson covers questions 2 and 3. These questions tell us the source of direction that God has provided us on how he expects us to live our lives, and what this direction teaches us. Later, in questions 89 and 90, we will learn how the Word is made effectual to salvation, and how the Word is to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to salvation.
5. Question 2. **What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?**

Answer: **The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.**
- Question 3. **What do the Scriptures principally teach?**

Answer: **The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.**

6. THE WCF AND THE LARGER CATECHISM

The material covered in SC question 2 is covered in LC q3, and the question and answer to SC q3 are the same as LC q5. In between LC q's 3 and 5, the LC adds an additional question on how we know that the scriptures are the Word of God. The WCF devotes it's first chapter, titled "Of the Holy Scripture" to God's Word.

7. THE WORD OF GOD

- a. Why are the scriptures contained in the Old and New Testament called the Word of God? Because it is the inspired work of God. **(2 Timothy 3:16 “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”)** The WCF, Chapt 1, para 4 states “The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man, or Church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself) the author thereof; and therefore it is to be received because it is the Word of God.”
- b. Who did God provide to deliver the Word to us? The Prophets. **(2 Peter 1:20 - 21. “⁽²⁰⁾Knowing this first, that no prophesy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. ⁽²¹⁾For the prophesy come not in old time by the will of man: but Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”)**
- c. How do we know that the Scripture is the Word of God? **This is very important, because if we do not believe God’s Word is true, we have no basis for our faith.** There are numerous reasons given by many persons regarding the divine nature of scripture. There is a entire section in Mr. Geisler’s book on this one subject. WCF c1p5 deals with this matter, with scripture proofs for each point. Some of the many reasons include (I’ve selected several out of the many lists):
 1. The Bible has withstood the test of time. It (and therefore God) does not change. Scientific and philosophical theory is continually changing, but the word of God remains the same.
 2. Because of the holiness and purity of Scripture. TV says of the scriptures, *“The Scriptures are Holy from the beginning of them unto the end; they do not savor at all of anything that is earthly and impure; especially the laws of the word are holy, commanding everything that is holy, and forbidding everything that is impure or unholy; whence it is evident that the Scriptures are the word of the holy God, and that the holy men which wrote them were acted herein by the Holy Ghost.”*
 3. Because of the consent and harmony of the Scriptures. There is total consent throughout the Word. No contradictions. While extensive (66 books by approximately 40 authors), there are no errors or contradictions.
 4. Because of the high mysteries which are revealed (trinity, the Son of God, the incarnation, beginning of the world, etc.)
 5. Because of the power and efficacy of Scripture. What is efficacy? “power to produce effects or intended results”. Any argument?

6. Because of the historical record/archeology. The more we learn of history, especially through the archeological record, the more the Word is confirmed. The example of Pontius Pilate. – Ask for any other examples.
 7. Because of the prophecies. The mathematical odd of the prophecies which have come to pass happening without divine appointment is impossible.
- d. Is the Word alone all that is required for salvation? No. Salvation is obtained by the work (application) of the Holy Spirit in those who, by faith, accept God. This will be covered in detail in questions 29 and 30. WCF c1p5, which puts forth many of the reasons listed above, ends with *“yet not withstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.”*
 - e. Why is it important that the Scriptures be the Word of God?
 - f. Why did God give us the Word? Chapter 1 of the WCF begins: *“Although the light of nature and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men unexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and of His will, which is necessary unto salvation.”*

Thomas Vincent asks if “Natural Reason” (read “light of nature”) shouldn’t be enough to show us what God is? Answer, No, because:

- It cannot reveal God’s love and mercy to sinners in his Son.
- It cannot reveal how he should be glorified and worshipped.
- it cannot direct us how we should enjoy him either here or hereafter.

So the “light of nature and works of creation” are not sufficient. WCF c1p5 continues, *‘Therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal Himself, and to declare that His will unto His Church; and afterwards, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing: which maketh the Holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God’s revealing His will unto His people now being ceased.’*

1. To preserve. Men’s memories fail. If not written, subject to distortion and forgetting.
2. That it may be better conveyed to men, including all nations.
3. That there might be a standing rule for the Church.

8. “which are contained in the Scripture of the Old and New Testaments’

a. Why is there an Old Testament and a New Testament?

1. Old Testament- TV says, *“Because the testament or covenant of grace which God made with man is therein revealed in the old dispensation of it; in which Christ, the testator of the testament, and mediator of the covenant, is set forth by types and figures; and many burdensome services and carnal ordinances of the ceremonial law are required.”*
2. New Testament- TV says, *“Because the testament of God or covenant of grace is therein revealed, in the new dispensation of it, without types and figures, Christ himself being revealed as come in the flesh, who before was shadowed under them; who, having fulfilled the ceremonial law, hath abolished it, and freed his people from the yoke of bondage, requiring now more spiritual worship in its room.”*

There are a years worth of lessons in these two statements by TV. Note:

- The covenant of grace in the old dispensation in the OT.
- The covenant of grace in the new dispensation in the NT.
- Christ’s presence in both.

3. Norm Geisler, in his book A General Introduction to the Bible says, *“The Bible is a biblos, single book. It has two Testaments, better called covenants or agreements between God and His people. Those two parts of the Bible are inseparably related: the New Testament is in the Old concealed, and the Old is in the New revealed.”*

9. **“are the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.”**

- a. Why are the Scriptures the **ONLY** rule to direct us. Because they are the only inspired word of God, and nothing else is sufficient to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him. **(Gal 1: 8 - 9 ⁽⁸⁾“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.⁽⁹⁾As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”)**

10. **INTERPRETATION:** What can man use to interpret the Word of God? WCF, c1p10 “The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself; and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one) it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.”

12. WHAT THE SCRIPTURES PRINCIPALLY TEACH

- a. What do the scriptures principally teach us?
 - What man is to believe concerning God.
 - What duty God requires of man.
- b. What man is to believe concerning God.
 - Believe- Thomas Vincent defines belief as “to assent to or give credit to truths, because of the authority of another”.
 - Therefore, belief in the Scriptures (VT) “to assent of give credit to the truth thereof (Scriptures), because of the authority of God, whose word the Scriptures are—this is divine faith.”
 - The SC spends the next 36 questions answering this question. It is what we will cover for the next two quarters.
 - The LC actually begins a new section after question 5. The next section is titled “WHAT MAN OUGHT TO BELIEVE CONCERNING GOD”
- c. What is the duty which God requires of man?
 - What is meant by “the duty God requires of man”? That which is God’s due, that which we owe to God, and are bound to do.
 - The SC covers the duty which God requires of man in questions 39 through 81. This is an introduction to the ten commandments, and a detailed discussion of them.

15. PRINCIPALLY TEACH- Vincent Thomas asks: **Why are the Scriptures said principally to teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man?** The answer provided by Thomas Vincent is interesting, yet difficult to understand. “Because though all things taught in the Scriptures are alike true, having the stamp of divine authority upon them, yet all things in the Scriptures are not alike necessary and useful. Those things which man is bound to believe and do, as necessary to salvation, are the things which the Scriptures do principally teach.”

What does he mean “not alike and useful”.