

# WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH SHORTER CATECHISM

## LESSON # 8 (Q1LES8) - GOD QUESTIONS# 4, 5, & 6

1. Prayer
2. Bible reading: Exodus 3:1 - 15
3. Review: In the last 3 weeks we have covered SC questions 1, 2, & 3. In question 1 we learned that mans chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever. Mans primary purpose for being is to glorify God, and this should be his chief end. Man is allowed to have secondary ends. Enjoyment of God comes through faith in him. Enjoyment of God is for ever.

Questions 2 & 3 taught us about God's Word. We learned that the Word is the inspired Word of God, relayed to us through the prophets. We learned that through the Word, God reveals to us his will. We learned that the Word is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him. We learned that the Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

4. Introduction: This weeks we will begin our study of what man is to believe concerning God. We will cover SC questions 4, 5, and 6. These three questions tell us about God, what He is, His attributes, His oneness, yet His existence in the trinity.
5. Questions & Answers.

Question 4. **What is God?**

Answer: **God is a spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.**

Question 5. **Are there more Gods than one?**

Answer: **There is but one only, the living and true God?**

Question 6. **How many persons are there in the Godhead?**

Answer: **There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.**

6. **What is GOD?**

- a. God is a Spirit. The WCF says, in part, in c2p1, “*There is but one only, living, and true God: who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, **What is a spirit?** My Webster’s New Twentieth Century Dictionary say a spirit is “breath, courage, vigor, the soul, life, from *spirare*, to blow, to breath”. Thomas Vincent says “*A spirit is an immaterial substance, without flesh of bones or bodily parts.*”*
- b. Read (**Ps 34: 15 “The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.”**) & (**Heb 10:31 “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”**). Scriptures state that God has bodily parts. How can that be if he is spirit?

These descriptions are used figuratively, so that man can more easily conceive of him. TV says “*God condescends to our weak capacities.*” WCF, c2p1 continues with “*invisible, without body, parts, or passions,*” (**John 4:24 “God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”**) with (**Like 24:39 “Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.”**)

- c. **How does God differ from the angels and souls of men, which are also spiritual?**

God is an uncreated spirit. Men, angels, etc. are created.

- d. **Infinite, eternal and unchangeable.** God says very clearly in his Word that he possesses all of these characteristics. Chapter 2 of the WCF has all the scripture proofs you will ever need on this subject. Let’s look at these characteristics.

- Would someone like to take a crack at infinite? Without limit. I like to think of it, as an example: If you went deep into outer space, and finally reached the end, and there was a brick wall, what would be on the other side. (**Job 11: 7 – 9**)
- How about Eternal. Without beginning or end. What was here before the “big bang”? When you reach the end of the universe, what is after it? (**1 Tim 1:17**)
- Unchangeable: Always the same, without any alteration. God is unchangeable in relation to his nature and essence. (**Ps 102: 25 – 27**)

- e. **‘in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth’** Man can possess these attributes, what makes God different? In God, these attributes are infinite, eternal and unchangeable.

Each of these attributes is supported by Scripture proofs in chapter 2 of the WCF, and TV defines each of them in detail, also supported by Scripture proofs.

- being - Ex 3:14 "I am that I am"
- wisdom - How does God display his wisdom?
- power - Can anyone think of a display of God's power?
- holiness - what is holiness - ,My dictionary 'the quality or state of being holy; purity or integrity of moral character; freedom from sin, sanctity
- justice - How is God's justice shown?  
The punishment he inflicted upon Christ for our sins  
The vengeance he will execute upon unbelievers
- goodness - what does God think of Sin?
- truth - Where is God's truth revealed?

Remember, God is infinite, eternal and unchangeable in all of these attributes.

## 7. Are there more God's than one?

- a. How do we know that there is only one God?

God tells us. In the Old Testament: (**Deut 6:4 "hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord:"**) And in the New Testament (**1 Cor 8: 4 – 6 "(4)As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. (5)For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many.) (6)But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."**)

TV makes a good point "God is infinite, and there cannot be more than one infinite being..." Does this make sense?

- b. Why is God said to be the living and true God. His Word tells us. Other gods are dead or never lived. God gives life to all his creatures. (**Jer 10:10 "But the Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting King: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation."**)

## 8. The trinity

- a. The WCF, c2p3 states "In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; God the Father, God the Son, and God the

Holy Ghost. (**Matt 28:19** *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”*) The Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding: the Son is eternally begotten of the Father: (**John 1:14** *“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we behold his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, ) full of grace and truth.”*) the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.” (**John 15:26** *“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the father, he shall testify of me.”*)

Anyone want to take a shot at the definition of begotten?

My trusty New Webster’s 20<sup>th</sup> Century Dictionary says of begotten: “alternative past participle of beget.”

And of beget:

1. “To procreate, as a father or sire; to generate; as to beget a son.”
- 2 “To produce, as an effect; to cause to exist; to generate; as luxuries beget vice.”

Note: (**1 John 5:7** *“For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.”*) It is noted frequently that this verse is not found in many early transcripts of the Bible. While this is true, there is nothing in this verse which contradicts anything in Scripture, in fact, it compliments Scripture.

- b. The LC devotes 3 questions (9 - 11) to the trinity, adding to what is contained in WCF chapter 2. LC Q11 asks, *“How doth it appear that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father?”*

It answers: *“The scriptures manifest that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father, ascribing unto them such names, attributes, works, and worship as are proper to God only.”*

The trinity is a difficult concept to understand. The inscription at the top of the right hand tablet in the sanctuary shows it as best it can be understood. I like what Hank Hanagraph of the Bible Answer Man said, which is basically, the Word describes God, clearly stating that there is one God only, revealed in three persons. No word can truly describe this, and ‘trinity’ is the best they have come up with.