

Westminster Shorter Catechism

Question 16: Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?

Answer: The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity; all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression.

Comment: The covenant which God made with Adam not only affected Adam, but all of us, all mankind. That's because Adam was the federal head of humanity. So, when he sinned and 'fell', we all 'fell' in him or because of him. As a result, we all suffer the consequences of sin as him - death. The only exception is the Lord Jesus Christ because he was not a descendant of Adam.

Scripture Proofs:

Genesis 2:16-17; James 2:10; Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:22

Psalm of the Week: Psalm 134B. The words are on page 8.

Please pray for:

Mon - Simon Martignago

Tues - Rick McIver

Wed - Don Millar

Thur - Leily Mirzaei and family

Frid - Luke Mo

Bible Questions for the week:

1. What was the name of the tower the people built?
2. What did God do in response?

Answer – Genesis 11:1-9

The notes on 1 Timothy were written by Rev. Daniel Hemken, minister of Hebron RPCNA. (They have been lightly edited.)

Pray for the Holy Spirit's help as you study God's Word.

Monday – 1 Timothy 3:14-16 – The Mystery of Godliness.

Paul says he is writing all these things to Timothy so that, in case he is delayed in his journey to Ephesus, Timothy will know how to teach people to behave "in the household of God". This household is not a building, but the family of God's people, the Church of the Living God. This Church upholds Truth to the world like a strong pillar, buttress, or foundation. The key to upholding Truth is the Mystery of Godliness.

As we noted last Friday, a mystery is something that used to be hidden or unclear, but which is now revealed in Christ Jesus (see, for example, Romans 16:25-26 and Colossians 2:2). By calling this "the mystery of godliness", Paul indicates that certain things revealed in Christ produce godliness in believers – changed lives that glorify God. Particularly, he mentions that:

- 1) Christ was manifested in the flesh – God became human;
- 2) He was vindicated by the Spirit – His miracles and His resurrection proved He was telling the Truth about God;
- 3) He was seen by angels – Angels (both holy and fallen) saw and acknowledged Him as the Son of God;
- 4) He was proclaimed among the nations – The Gospel spread quickly beyond Israel in fulfillment of Jesus' commandments and predictions;
- 5) He was believed on in the world – As the Gospel went forth, the elect heard and believed it; and
- 6) He was taken up in glory – His ascension and seating at the Father's right hand shows His Father's pleasure in Him and that His redemptive work is accomplished.

True godliness rests in knowing who Jesus is, what He has done, that His atoning work is finished, and that He now reigns at the right hand of God the Father.

Questions

1. What is the household of God? 2. What makes it a pillar and buttress of the truth? 3. On what does true godliness rest?

Memory Verse

"Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory." | Timothy 3:16

Tuesday - 1 Timothy 4:1-5 – Teachings of Demons.

In today's reading, Paul warns Timothy that God the Holy Spirit has revealed explicitly that "in the later times some will depart from the faith". In the New Testament, terms like "later times" or "last days" refer to the whole age from Christ's first coming to His return. During this age, many professing Christians will depart from the truth because they are devoted to deceitful spirits and the teachings of demons. When people depart from the basic teachings of Christianity (like the Mystery of Godliness in yesterday's reading), they give themselves to evil spirits' teachings. False religion has its source in Satan and his servants. It is promoted by people who have become so comfortable with defying God's Word that their consciences are like cauterized flesh – scar tissue that cannot feel.

Paul particularly warns Timothy about those who "forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods". He points out that marriage and food are gifts from God. No food can make a man unsuitable for God's presence, if that food is received with thanksgiving to the One who provided it. Throughout the history of the Church, false gospels have focused on human works and earthly conditions. (Consider the modern health, wealth, and prosperity gospel.) Every false religion says we attain our goal (whether "heaven", "oneness with God", or something else) by what we do. God-revealed religion tells us our works contribute nothing to our salvation, but rather, that Jesus has paid it all. Our standing before God depends entirely on Him. While this produces good works in believers, our salvation is wholly accomplished by Jesus alone. Anything that teaches to the contrary, or that otherwise forbids anything God has called "good", is a doctrine of demons.

Questions

1. What is meant by "later times"?
2. From where do false doctrines come?
3. What kind of people promote the doctrines of demons?

Memory Verse

"Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory." I Timothy 3:16

Wednesday - 1 Timothy 4:6-16 – A Good Servant of Christ Jesus.

In today's passage, we see several qualities of a good servant of Christ – particularly of a good pastor.

- First, a good pastor is trained in sound doctrine (v. 6).
- Second, he has nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths (v. 7). That is, while he will be aware of false doctrines and other things which distract his people from God's Word, he will not let himself be distracted by them.
- Third, he trains himself for godliness, as an athlete does for a competition (v. 7-8).
- Fourth, he toils and strives to do his work well, knowing that his hope is set not on the things of this world, but on the Living God (v.10).
- Fifth, he commands and teaches sound doctrine (v.11).
- Sixth, he sets a good example in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity, giving the enemies of the Gospel no excuse to despise his youth (that is, not to take him seriously) (v.12).
- Seventh, he devotes himself to the public reading, preaching and teaching of God's Word (v. 13-14).
- Eighth, his life is dominated by the ministry of the Word (v. 15).
- Lastly, he pays close attention to himself and to what he is teaching (v.16).

Notice that most of these qualities involve a devotion to sound doctrine and being well-prepared to preach and teach. False, weak, and worldly churches have all manner of ideas about how a good pastor spends his time, but preparing to preach and teach should take up the bulk of a faithful pastor's efforts. These are the things Christians should look for in a potential pastor, and/or encourage in their current pastor.

Questions

1. What are some qualities of a good pastor?
2. With what do most of these qualities have to do?

Memory Verse

“Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.” 1 Timothy 3:16

Thursday - 1 Timothy 4:10 – The Savior of Those Who Believe.

Yesterday, we considered the qualities of a good pastor, which Paul sets forth in this chapter. Before we move on, we need to consider a couple of important issues – the first of which is found in verse 10. Paul says God is "the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe." Because the New Testament teaches that there is no eternal salvation for any but those whose faith is in Christ, we know Paul cannot be teaching that, in the end, every human being will be saved from God's wrath, and live forever in glory. So, what does he mean? There are a few ways to understand this Scripture:

1. The Gospel call goes out to all people. In that sense, God is the potential Saviour of every human being, but He is the actual Saviour only of those who, being brought to new life by the Holy Spirit, believe.
2. As we saw in Chapter 2, "all people" can mean "all manner of people". If that is the best understanding, then the word translated "especially" (chiefly, most of all, above all) might be understood as meaning something like "particularly," "namely", or "by which I mean". In other words, God is the Saviour of all manner of people who believe in Jesus Christ.
3. The New Testament uses the verb "to save" in many ways, including rescue from danger, healing of diseases and injuries, and spiritual, eternal salvation. In His common grace, God gives good things to all people, preserving life and withholding His wrath for a time. Everlasting life in glory, however, is given only to those who have faith in Jesus.

Questions

1. Can there be everlasting salvation for those who never have faith in Jesus?
2. What difference might our understanding of the words "all" and "especially" make as we read this verse?
3. How might God be Saviour of all, while being Saviour of believers to a greater degree?

Memory Verse

"Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory." 1 Timothy 3:16

Friday – 1 Timothy 4:11-16 – The Council of Elders.

Another thing to consider, before we move on from chapter 4, is found in verse 14. Paul reminds Timothy of when a "council of elders" laid hands on him. In Titus 1:5, the Apostle left Titus in Crete with an extraordinary authority to appoint elders in every town. (We should note that it was not "an elder" for every town, but multiple elders.) However, even in the early church, we learn that the authority to ordain and commission for ministry rested in elders who came together in a council (this is known as having a "plurality" of elders – see Acts 13:1-3). The word translated here as "council of elders" is the source of our words "presbytery" and "presbyterian".

In the New Testament, local churches are to be governed, overseen, taught, and shepherded by a plurality of elders (see, for example, Acts 20:17-38). Also, elders counsel other elders outside of their own congregation (consider II John 1 and III John 1, in which John does not cite his authority as an Apostle, but calls himself "the elder" and, as such, offers counsel.) Furthermore, elders from various local churches come together in courts with authority over the local churches (see Acts 15). From these Scriptures, we learn that what is known as the Presbyterian Form of Church Government is not merely an option, but the form of Church Government the LORD has set forth for us in His Word, in which Christ governs the church through a plurality of elders. This is known as a Session in a congregation and presbytery, synod, or assembly, when elders gather in regional or national church courts. Whatever the name we assign to these courts of the Church, the Church is to be governed by a plurality of elders who shepherd under the Great Shepherd Jesus Christ, who is the only King and Head of the Church.

Questions

1. Where do the words "presbytery" and "presbyterian" come from?
2. What is meant by "a plurality of elders"?
3. What form of Church Government is presented in Scripture?

Memory Verse

"Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory." | Timothy 3:16

Psalm 134B

1. Bless the LORD, all you His servants,
As you serve with one accord;
Bless the LORD in your night watches
In the dwelling of the LORD.

2. Lift your hands within His temple;
Bless the LORD, and raise them high.
May the LORD bless you from Zion,
He who made both earth and sky.