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A Short Exposition of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism (Form A)

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(Form A)

**A SHORT EXPOSITION
OF
DR. MARTIN LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM**

INTRODUCTION

1. What is a catechism?

A catechism is a book of instruction in the form of questions and answers.

2. Who wrote our Small Catechism?

Doctor Martin Luther wrote our Small Catechism in 1529. See "Life of Luther" in Appendix. Read also Luther's "Preface," pages 3—8.

3. What does Luther's Small Catechism contain?

Luther's Small Catechism contains the chief parts of Christian doctrine revealed to us in the Bible.

4. What are the chief parts of Christian doctrine?

1. The Ten Commandments
2. The Creed
3. The Lord's Prayer
4. The Sacrament of Holy Baptism
5. The Office of the Keys and Confession
6. The Sacrament of the Altar

5. What is the Bible, from which these chief parts are taken?

The Bible, or Holy Scripture, is the Word of God, given by inspiration of God the Holy Ghost, written by the prophets in the Old Testament and by the evangelists and apostles in the New Testament.

2 Pet. 1, 21. Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

2 Tim. 3, 16. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.

John 17, 17. Thy Word is truth.

John 10, 35. The Scripture cannot be broken.

6. What does "inspiration of God" mean?

"Inspiration of God" means that God moved the holy writers to write and that He put into their minds the very thoughts and words they were to write.

2 Pet. 1, 21. Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

1 Cor. 2, 13. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth.

7. For what purpose did God give us His Word?

God gave us His Word "to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" and to train us in holiness of life.

2 Tim. 3, 15—17. From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

John 5, 39. Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of Me.

Luke 11, 28. Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it.

Ps. 119, 105. Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

PART I

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

8. What are the Ten Commandments?

The Ten Commandments are a summary of the Law of God wherein He tells us how we are to be, what we are to do and not to do.

Lev. 19, 2. Ye shall be holy; for I, the Lord, your God, am holy.

Ex. 34, 11. Observe thou that which I command thee.

Deut. 6, 6, 7. These words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children.

9. When and how did God give this Law?

When God created man, He wrote the Law in man's heart. Later he arranged the Law in Ten Commandments, wrote it on two tables of stone, and published it through Moses.

Rom. 2, 14, 15. When the Gentiles, which have not the Law, do by nature the things contained in the Law, these, having not the Law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.

Bible History. Ex. 19, 20. There are three kinds of laws in the Old Testament. The Moral Law tells all men their duty towards God and man. — The Ceremonial Law regulated the religious practises of the Jews in the Old Testament. — The Political Law was the Jewish state law.

10. What is the summary of the First Table of the Law?

"Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind." Matt. 22, 37.

11. What is the summary of the Second Table?

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Matt. 22, 37.

12. What, then, is the summary of all commandments?

The summary of all commandments is love.

Rom. 13, 10. Love is the fulfilment of the Law.

13. Whom does God mean when in the Ten Commandments He says "Thou shalt"?

He means me and all others.

THE FIRST TABLE

The First Commandment

14. Which is the First Commandment?

Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.

15. What does this mean?

We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

16. What does the First Commandment forbid?

The First Commandment forbids us to have any other gods besides the one true God.

Matt. 4, 10. Thou shalt worship the Lord, thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.

Is. 42, 8. I am the Lord; that is My name; and My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images.

17. Who is the only true God?

The only true God is the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; three distinct Persons in one divine Being.

Deut. 6, 4. Hear, O Israel: the Lord, our God, is one Lord.

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.

B. H. Matt. 3, 16. 17. The Son stands in the Jordan and is baptized; the Father speaks from heaven; the Spirit descends like a dove.

18. When do we have other gods?

We have other gods—

1. When we regard and worship a creature as God;

Is. 42, 8. I am the Lord; that is My name; and My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images.

Psa. 115, 3. 4. Our God is in the heavens; He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.

B. H. Ex. 32. Israel worshiped the golden calf. — 1 Kings 18, 18—29. The people worshiped Baal. — 1 Sam. 5. The Philistines made Dagon their god.

2. When we fear, love, or trust in creatures as we should fear, love, and trust in God alone.

Matt. 10, 28. Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.

Matt. 10, 37. He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

Prov. 3, 5. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding.

Jer. 17, 5. Cursed be the man that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm and whose heart departeth from the Lord.

Mark 10, 24. Jesus answereth again and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

Phil. 3, 19. Whose god is their belly and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.

Ps. 14, 1. The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works.

John 5, 23. All men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent Him.

B. H. Luke 16, 19. The rich man.—**Matt. 19, 16.** The rich young man.

19. What does the First Commandment require of us?

The First Commandment requires of us that we fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

20. What does it mean to fear God above all things?

To fear God above all things does not mean to be afraid of Him, but to stand in awe of Him as the highest Being, to honor Him with our pious lives, and to avoid what is displeasing to Him.

Ps. 33, 8. Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.

Gen. 17, 1. I am the almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect.

Gen. 39, 9. How, then, can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?

B. H. Dan. 3. The three men in the fiery furnace.

21. What does it mean to love God above all things?

To love God above all things means to regard Him as our best Friend and gladly devote our lives to His service.

Matt. 22, 37. Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind.

Ps. 73, 25, 26. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. My heart and my flesh falleth; but God is the Strength of my heart and my Portion forever.

B. H. Gen. 22. Abraham loved God more than he loved his son.

22. What does it mean to trust in God above all things?

To trust in God above all things means to rely upon Him for help in every need.

Ps. 118, 8. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.

B. H. Dan. 6. Daniel in the lions' den.