

WEDNESDAY NIGHT PRAYER MEETING:
THE BAPTIST CATECHISM

An Annotated Outline

Taught to

The Congregation of Heritage Baptist Church

by

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I. Intro to The Baptist Catechism

A. What is a catechism?

1. A summary of doctrines and fundamental teachings of the Christian faith expressed in the form of questions and answers.

B. Date Written

1. The Baptist Catechism was likely written in 1693; however, there is no first edition. The earliest edition we have is from 1695.

C. Author

1. The catechism is commonly referred to as Keach's Catechism; however, there is no evidence that Benjamin Keach (1640 – 1704) wrote it. Some propose that William Collins had a hand in writing it as well. No one really knows who wrote it.

D. Resemblances

1. Baptists were slandered and treated very poorly during the 17th century. Some labeled them a cult and claimed that they taught heresy. This was certainly part of the reason why Baptists were the first to write a confession of faith (1644). However, once their Presbyterian brothers wrote the Westminster Confession of Faith (1646), Baptists modeled their second confession after it in order to demonstrate that they were not unorthodox in their doctrine; different, yes, but extremely close and orthodox.
2. Similar to the origins of the 2nd London Confession of Faith (1689), the Baptist Catechism is largely copied from the Westminster Assembly's work. The Baptist Catechism is very similar to the Westminster Shorter Catechism (1646) but with some notable differences.

E. Differences

1. The Westminster Shorter Catechism has 107 questions; the Baptist Catechism has 114 questions. Concerning the ordinances of the church, baptism and the Lord's Supper, you will find different answers in the Baptist Catechism from the Westminster Shorter Catechism.
2. The Heidelberg Catechism (1563) begins by asking, "*What is your only comfort in life and in death?*" and the Westminster Shorter Catechism begins by asking, "*What is the chief end of man?*" Both begin by addressing man. The Baptist Catechism, however, begins by first addressing God (see *Question & Answer 1*).

F. Sections of the Baptist Catechism

1. It is observed that the catechism consists of two main sections.

- a) **Questions 1–43:** *What man ought to believe.*
- b) **Questions 44–114:** *What duty God requireth of man.*

(1) Underneath these two main sections, it is said that it can be further divided (see below and see Jim Scott Orrick, *A Commentary on The Baptist Catechism*, pg 5).

- (a) *Foundations: Questions 1–6*
- (b) *What we are to believe: Questions 7–43*
- (c) *The duty required of us: Questions 44–86*
- (d) *Our need for salvation: Questions 87–89*
- (e) *The means and condition of salvation: Questions 90–114*
 - (i) *Internal means—Faith and Repentance: Questions 90–92*
 - (ii) *Outward means—The Word, the ordinance, and prayer: Questions 93–114.¹*

¹ Jim Scott Orrick, *A Commentary on The Baptist Catechism*, (Founders Press, 2025), 5.