

Question 1. *Who is the first and chiefest being?*

Answer. *God is the first and chiefest being.*

I. A Different Beginning

A. The Baptists decided to take a different approach to starting their catechism. Mainly because the Westminster Shorter Catechism assumes the existence of God. They took for granted that there is a first and chiefest being outside of mankind and creation. The Baptists decide to build the foundations of their catechism, not on assumptions, but on the most fundamental truth of theism – there is a God, and He is the first and chiefest being.

B. This does not mean that Baptists are seeking to prove the existence of God. All of Creation declares that there is a Creator God. We also acknowledge that there is no satisfactory proof that could be presented to a skeptic. Therefore, they are not seeking to prove the existence of God, for that has already been done through Creation.

1. **Romans 1:20–21 (LSB):** *“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, both His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21 For even though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools”*

C. Baptists are not assuming God’s existence (taking it for granted), nor are they seeking to prove it (apologetics); they are simply stating that there is a God, whether you think there is one or not.

II. Scriptural Citations

A. It is common to find citations in religious catechisms. The Baptist Catechism is no different. We find Scriptural citations for each answer in the catechism.

1. **Isaiah 44:6 (LSB):** *“Thus says Yahweh, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, Yahweh of hosts: ‘I am the first, and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me.’”*

2. **Isaiah 48:12 (LSB):** *“Hear Me, O Jacob, even Israel whom I called; I am He, I am the first, I am also the last.”*

III. “First... Being”

A. For there to be any being at all, there must be God. He is the first being. There can be nothing that precedes God’s existence, for then He would no longer be God. An important truth and fundamental reality about God is that He is and must be the first being.

1. **Exodus 3:13-14 (LSB):** *Then Moses said to God, “Behold, I am about to come to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you.’ And they will say to me, ‘What is His name?’ What shall I say to them?” 14 And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM”; and He said, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”*

a) In God’s very name, YAHWEH, we see that God IS. God is not becoming; He ever is. He is life in and of Himself. God is not a contingent being; all other beings are contingent upon Him.

B. Another way theologians speak on this matter is by saying, *“God is a being of necessity.”* Meaning that God is necessary for there to be anything at all. Without God, there would be nothing. This touches on the doctrine of Asiety. The Asiety of God refers to God being

self-existent. God is life in and of Himself. All life, therefore, is contingent upon Him and His existence.

1. **Acts 17:28 (LSB):** *for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His offspring.'*

IV. “Chiefest Being”

A. Logically, if God is the first being, He must therefore be the chiefest being. Chief is not a word that we often use today, but it means “most important,” “highest in rank,” or “foremost.” We are not only to affirm that God is the first being, but that He is the most important being.

1. **Psalm 97:9 (LSB):** *For You are Yahweh Most High over all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods.*

B. For God to be the first being but not the most important being would be to deny God’s godhood (or godness). By common sense, the idea of there being a *first* being (God), that being must be the most *important*, for all other beings find their life in and through Him. Without the first being, there would be no other beings.

1. This means that God’s desires, His will, His plans, His glory, are most important, because He is the most important. To confess that God is the chiefest being is to confess that He is LORD. God is Lord over us. All beings are to orient themselves around God forever to His eternal praise and glory, for He is the chiefest being.
2. **1 Corinthians 8:6 (LSB):** *yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.*

- a) Because God is the first being and the chiefest being, Paul can rightly claim that we exist through Him and for Him. God, therefore, is the most important being; we are not.

V. Application

A. We are not self-existent beings. We depend upon God. Whether a person believes there is a God or denies it is irrelevant. There is a God. It would be compared to denying that oxygen is real. Even though a person may deny that there is oxygen, it doesn't change the fact that they need it to breathe and have life. Because they deny it exists, it doesn't change the fact that it does, nor does it change the fact that it is the very thing giving them life. So it is with God. He is the first and chiefest being. All glory and honor, therefore, is due to Him.

B. Reflection Questions

1. **Question 1:** *“Is God the most important thing in your life?”*
2. **Question 2:** *“Is it evident in your public life that you are a person who puts God first?”*
3. **Question 3:** *“How often do you remember to ask for God’s will to be done when you pray?”*

VI. Repeat / Sing Question & Answer 1

A. **Question 1.** *Who is the first and chiefest being?*

B. **Answer.** *God is the first and chiefest being.*