

As you read today's scripture, you may wonder why we seem to be taking a detour from the tabernacle and its furnishings. We are not. The next furnishing that we will look at is the golden lampstand that provided light for the tabernacle. But before we jump into that, let's think about the importance of light as a theme in the Bible.

The very first thing God created in Genesis 1 was light—light that brought order. Adam and Eve's sin plunged the world back into darkness. The sun still shone in the sky, but spiritually the world was plunged into chaos and darkness because of sin. Because of sin, we were cut off from the light of God. We were people living in darkness, but as we read through the Bible, we see the darkness slowly being rolled back by the light. It starts with a golden lampstand in the tabernacle that we will read about tomorrow and it continues to grow throughout the rest of the Bible. By the time we get to the end of the story in Revelation 22, the light has grown so bright that there is no longer a need for the sun to shine or a lamp to burn. Darkness has been driven away by the light of Christ and the very presence of God, who is light.

1 John 1:5 God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.

We are brought into the presence of God through Christ, and we are brought from darkness to eternal light and life through his blood that was shed on the cross. Because of Christ, we are no longer people who are walking in darkness.

Matthew 4:16 the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.

Because of Christ we have been brought from darkness to eternal light and glory.

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

New City Catechism	Heidelberg Catechism
Question 20. Who is the Redeemer? The only Redeemer is the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, in whom God became man and bore the penalty for sin himself.	Q. 18. Then who is this mediator— true God and at the same time a true and righteous human? A. Our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹ who was given to us to completely deliver us and make us right with God. ² 1 Matt. 1:21-23; Luke 2:11; 1 Tim. 2:5 2 1 Cor. 1:30

Question 1. How do we know if we have been brought from darkness to light? What are some fruits that would be accompanied with living in the light?

Question 2. How can we display the light and life we have to others? Can we show any true light if we are not ourselves walking in the light?

Question 3. According to 1 Peter 2:9, why were we brought out of darkness? How are you declaring the praises of God who called us out of darkness into His light?

God told Moses to make a lampstand out of pure gold to provide light in the tabernacle. But the purpose of this lampstand was more than just to provide light. God told Moses to place the lampstand just outside of the Most Holy Place. It was to be made exactly according to God's instructions—hammered out of one piece of pure gold, with one central branch from which three branches extended from each side, forming a total of seven branches. Seven lamps holding olive oil and wicks stood on top of the branches. Each branch looked like that of an almond tree, containing buds, blossoms, and flowers. In the Book of Leviticus, God would give further instruction concerning these lamps and their operation.

Leviticus 24:1-3 The LORD said to Moses, "Command the Israelites to bring you clear oil of pressed olives for the light so that the lamps may be kept burning continually. Outside the curtain of the Testimony in the Tent of Meeting, Aaron is to tend the lamps before the LORD from evening till morning, continually. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come

As you read more about the tabernacle's construction and layout, it becomes clear that this lampstand was the only source of light for the whole tabernacle. From its position near the Most Holy Place, the lampstand would light the Table of Presence and the Altar of Incense, providing light so the priests could do their work. But this lampstand was more than just functional, it also represented what was to come in Jesus. In the prologue to his gospel, John writes these words about Jesus and his ministry.

John 1:9 The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

Just as the lampstand provided light for the priests to do their work and approach God on behalf of the people, Jesus came as the true light to bring people out of darkness to light the way to the Most Holy Place, to bring us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

John 8:12 "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

First Catechism	Heidelberg Catechism
Question 74. Why do you need Christ as your priest? Because I am guilty of breaking God's law.	Q. 19. How do you come to know this? A. The holy gospel tells me. God began to reveal the gospel already in Paradise; ¹ later God proclaimed it by the holy patriarchs ² and prophets ³ and foreshadowed it by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law; ⁴ and finally God fulfilled it through his own beloved Son. ⁵ 1 Gen. 3:15 2 Gen. 22:18; 49:10 3 Isa. 53; Jer. 23:5-6; Mic. 7:18-20; Acts 10:43; Heb. 1:1-2 4 Lev. 1-7; John 5:46; Heb. 10:1-10 5 Rom. 10:4; Gal. 4:4-5; Col. 2:17

Question 1. Why do you think God was so detailed with the instructions on how to build everything in the Tabernacle? What does it teach us about His character? (See 1 Corinthians 14:33) What does it teach us about how we are to approach God in worship? Can we do anything we want in worship or are we only to do what he has commanded?

As we saw yesterday, Jesus came and brought light to all men,

But in bringing us light, Jesus has also made us light.

2 Corinthians 4:4-6 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.... For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Think about what we just read from Revelation 1. In John's vision, he sees seven golden lampstands, and it is clearly Jesus who is walking among them. We don't have to guess what these lampstands represent, because Jesus tells John, in verse 20, that the seven lampstands represent the seven churches to whom the Book of Revelation was written. Through Christ, the churches become the light to a dark world. This symbolism shouldn't catch us by surprise; didn't Jesus tell us that we also are to be light to point people to God?

Matthew 5:14-16 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

At one time we were living in darkness, but now the light of Christ has illuminated our lives, so Paul tells us we must live as children of the light.

Ephesians 5:8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light

How do we do that? The answer to that question lies in the very way the lampstand was constructed. It was one piece of solid gold that was hammered out to form one central branch with six other branches that extended out from the central branch. As we think about the way this lampstand was constructed, our attention is drawn to Jesus' words in John 15.

John 15:4-5 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

<u>New City Catechism</u>	<u>Heidelberg Catechism</u>
Question 29. How Can We Be Saved? Only by faith in Jesus Christ and in his substitutionary atoning death on the cross; so even though we are guilty of having disobeyed God and are still inclined to all evil, nevertheless, God, without any merit of our own but only by pure grace, imputes to us the perfect righteousness of Christ when we repent and believe in him.	Q. 29. Why is the Son of God called "Jesus," meaning "savior"? A. Because he saves us from our sins, ¹ and because salvation should not be sought and cannot be found in anyone else. ² 1 Matt. 1:21; Heb. 7:25 2 Isa. 43:11; John 15:5; Acts 4:11-12; 1 Tim. 2:5

Question 1. What is the central branch that holds the lampstand together? Who does that branch point to? Can we do anything apart from Him? Can we provide light to a dark world apart from Him?

Question 2. What does it mean to "remain" in Jesus?

The Altar of Burnt Offering was inside the courtyard of the tabernacle between the entrance gate and the tent that housed the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. This altar was the place where sacrifices were offered by the priests on behalf of the people. The purpose of the altar and its sacrifices was to show the Israelites that the first step for sinful man to approach a holy God was to be cleansed by the blood of an innocent victim. The only means to atone for sin and be made clean in God's sight was through acceptable sacrifices.

Hebrews 9:22 In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

This altar in the tabernacle was the place where these sacrifices were offered. The altar was the instrument on which the sacrifice was offered to God. In many ways the altar is symbolic of the cross. Just as an innocent animal was lifted up and placed on the altar as an offering for sin, Christ was lifted up on the cross and offered there as the ultimate sacrifice for our sin.

John 12:31-33 Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.

One of the interesting details of this altar was the horns that were on each of the four corners of the altar. When the sacrifice was made, blood was dabbed on the horns of the altar.

Leviticus 4:27-30 "If a member of the community sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD's commands, he is guilty. When he is made aware of the sin he committed, he must bring as his offering for the sin he committed a female goat without defect. He is to lay his hand on the head of the sin offering and slaughter it at the place of the burnt offering. Then the priest is to take some of the blood with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar.

Why did they do this? In Biblical times horns were a symbol of power and strength. Placing the blood of the sacrifice on these horns indicated the power of the blood to atone for sin. This is clearly a picture of the magnificent power of the blood of Christ. Jesus is the "horn of our salvation."

Psalms 18:2 The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

Luke 1:68-69 "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has redeemed his people. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David

Jesus' blood alone has the power to cleanse us from our sin.

First Catechism	Heidelberg Catechism
Question 66. Before Christ came, how did believers show their faith? By offering the sacrifices God required.	Q. 40. Why did Christ have to suffer death? A. Because God's justice and truth require it: ¹ nothing else could pay for our sins except the death of the Son of God. ² ¹ Gen. 2:17 ² Rom. 8:3-4; Phil. 2:8; Heb. 2:9

Question 1. Jesus' sacrifice was completely accepted by God. What confidence do we have from His sacrifice? How does that change our attitude about how we live our lives?

As you read this description concerning the garments that were made for the priests to wear, there is a temptation to either be so amazed at the details or so bored by the details that we fail to see the significance of these garments. These garments were just as important as anything else in the tabernacle, because without these garments properly in place the priests could not even enter the tabernacle. In order to approach the Most Holy Place, the priest had to be properly clothed.

The same is true for us. We cannot come and stand before a holy God dressed however we feel like being dressed. In order to enter the presence of God we must be properly clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

Galatians 3:27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

Perhaps there is no clearer picture of this than in the book of Revelation.

Revelation 7:9-15 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." ...Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes--who are they, and where did they come from?" I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, "they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them."

The only way we can enter the presence of God and serve him is to be clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

As you read this description of the priest's garments, you will notice that there were two different places on his garments that contained the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. One was on his shoulders (Exodus 28: 9 – 13). By wearing the names of the twelve tribes on his shoulders the priest was symbolically carrying the people of Israel into the presence of God in the tabernacle. In the same way it is Jesus who carries us and brings us home and into the presence of God.

Luke 15:4-7 "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

The other place where the priest carried the names of the twelve tribes was on his breastplate (Exodus 28: 15 – 21). The role of the priest was to intercede with God on behalf of the people. As the priest entered the Most Holy Place to intercede for the people and make atonement for their sins, he wore their names on his breastplate, right over his heart, so they would never be forgotten.

Where does Jesus as our great High Priest wear our names as he intercedes and makes atonement for us? The prophet Isaiah gives us a very powerful picture of where our names are engraved:

Isaiah 49:15-16 "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands;

The same hands that hold the nail prints of the cross have our names forever engraved on them. Because of Christ we will never be forgotten before the throne of heaven.

<u>First Catechism</u>	Westminster Shorter Catechism
Question 71. How is Christ your priest? Christ died for my sins and continues to pray for me.	Q. 25. How does Christ fill the office of a priest? Christ fills the office of a priest in his once offering up of himself to God as a sacrifice, to satisfy divine justice[a] and reconcile us to God;[b] and in making constant intercession for us.[c] [a]. Isa 53:1-12; Acts 8:32-35; Heb 9:26-28; Heb 10:12 [b]. Rom 5:10-11; 2 Cor 5:18; Col 1:21-22 [c]. Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25; Heb 9:24

Question 1. Who appointed Aaron and his sons to be priests? Even though God chose them, they still needed to act and accept the task and carry it out. How does God call us? What responsibility do we have to carry out the tasks He has called us to do? Where do we get the strength and skills necessary to complete the tasks?

Question 2. Who can you intercede for today through prayer?

The golden altar of incense, which is not to be confused with the Altar of Burnt Offering, was in front of the curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. This altar was smaller and was only for the burning of incense as an offering to the Lord.

God commanded the priests to burn incense on the golden altar every morning and evening – the same time that the daily burnt offerings were made. The incense was to be left burning continually throughout the day and night as a pleasing aroma to the Lord. God even gave special instructions for how this incense was to be made, and it was not to be duplicated for use outside of the tabernacle (Exodus 30: 34 – 38). Why would God care so much about this incense? Because the incense was a symbol of the prayers and intercession of the people going up to God as a sweet fragrance. God wanted His dwelling to be a place where people could approach Him and pray to Him.

The picture of prayers going up to heaven like incense is captured in David's psalm and also in John's vision in Revelations:

Psalm 141:2 May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice.

Revelation 8:3-4 Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand.

In this sense the altar of incense represents Christ who is the one who intercedes for us in heaven before the throne of God. As you read about Jesus in the gospel accounts, it becomes clear that he was a man of prayer. He was constantly finding time to be alone with the Father, praying that the will of the Father would be done, but also praying for his disciples. Like the High Priest in the tabernacle, Jesus prayed for those who belonged to him. On the night Jesus was betrayed and sentenced to death, Jesus interceded for His disciples and all believers, asking God to guard them from evil and sanctify them by His Word, so that they may see God's glory and be a witness to the world (John 17:1-26). Today, Jesus still is our high priest at the Father's side, interceding for God's people:

Romans 8:34 Christ Jesus, who died-- more than that, who was raised to life-- is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Since we have been forgiven of our sins through the blood of Christ, we also, in the name of Jesus, come boldly in prayer.

Hebrews 4:15 - 16 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are-- yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

More than that, Jesus told us that when we pray, we should pray in his name.

John 14:13-14 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it

When we pray in the name of Jesus, rather than in our own name, we are praying based on his righteousness—the work He has done and not on our own merit. It is his righteousness and his blood that was shed that makes our prayers acceptable to God.

James 5:16 The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

Our prayers are only powerful and effective when we come in the righteousness of Christ—he is the righteous man. Our prayers are only a pleasing aroma to God when we follow the recipe for prayer and pray as Jesus taught us to pray in his name and for his glory.

First Catechism	Heidelberg Catechism
Question 110. In whose name should we pray? Only in the name of Christ.	<p>Q. 117. What is the kind of prayer that pleases God and that he listens to?</p> <p>A. First, we must pray from the heart to no other than the one true God, revealed to us in his Word, asking for everything God has commanded us to ask for.¹ Second, we must fully recognize our need and misery, so that we humble ourselves in God's majestic presence.² Third, we must rest on this unshakable foundation: even though we do not deserve it, God will surely listen to our prayer because of Christ our Lord. That is what God promised us in his Word.³</p> <p>1 Ps. 145:18-20; John 4:22-24; Rom. 8:26-27; James 1:5; 1 John 5:14-15</p> <p>2 2 Chron. 7:14; Ps. 2:11; 34:18; 62:8; Isa. 66:2; Rev. 4</p> <p>3 Dan. 9:17-19; Matt. 7:8; John 14:13-14; 16:23; Rom. 10:13; James 1:6</p>

Question 1. How is the golden altar a representation of Christ?

Question 2. How does Jesus' priestly intercession encourage us in our prayers to God? How do we know they are heard?

Question 3. How can we follow Jesus' example and pray for others? Who can you pray for today?

The basin for washing was a large bowl filled with water. It was located outside of the Holy Place near the Altar of Burnt Offering. In order to serve in the tabernacle, the priest had to first wash themselves with water to be made clean. As much as anything, this cleansing was a symbolic washing that represented the priest being cleansed from the filth of sin that pollutes our world. This is very similar to when God met Moses at the burning bush and told Moses to take off his sandals because he was standing on holy ground. God's tabernacle was holy, and in order to come into his presence, the priests had to be made ceremonially clean. The basin for washing was a reminder that people need cleansing before approaching God. The priests atoned for their sins through a sacrifice at the Altar of Burnt Offering, but they cleansed themselves at the wash basin before serving in the Holy Place so that they would be pure and not die before a holy God.

Even in this seemingly small detail we see a powerful connection to Christ. We are forgiven through Christ's work on the cross, but we are washed through His Word. We need to be washed daily in His Word to cleanse ourselves, so that we can serve and minister before Him.

Ephesians 5:25-27 Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

The writer of Hebrews does a beautiful job of tying together the practices that took place in the tabernacle, in the Old Testament, with the work that Christ has done for us as our Great High Priest.

Hebrews 10:19-22 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

First Catechism	Heidelberg Catechism
<p>Question 42. How is the Word of God to be Read and Heard?</p> <p>With diligence, preparation, and prayer; so that we may accept it with faith, store it in our hearts, and practice it in our lives.</p>	<p>Q. 70. What does it mean to be washed with Christ's blood and Spirit?</p> <p>A. To be washed with Christ's blood means that God, by grace, has forgiven our sins because of Christ's blood poured out for us in his sacrifice on the cross.¹ To be washed with Christ's Spirit means that the Holy Spirit has renewed and sanctified us to be members of Christ, so that more and more we become dead to sin and live holy and blameless lives.²</p> <p>1 Zech. 13:1; Eph. 1:7-8; Heb. 12:24; 1 Pet. 1:2; Rev. 1:5 2 Ezek. 36:25-27; John 3:5-8; Rom. 6:4; 1 Cor. 6:11; Col. 2:11-12</p>

Question 1. How was the Tabernacle a physical "picture" of spiritual truths? What examples can you give from what you learned about the furnishings in the Tabernacle and how they relate to spiritual truths?

As Moses is up on the mountain receiving the law, his people, the Israelites, are down below making idols to worship. Why would they do such a thing? Verse 1 tells us that it was because Moses was taking too long to come down from the mountain. When Jesus first ascended to heaven the disciples thought that his return to earth would be immanent, but clearly that has not been the case.

2 Peter 3:3-12 First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.

As we await the return of Christ, like the Israelites we have a choice. We can either live holy and godly lives, always ready for the Lord to return at any moment, or we too can fall into idolatry worshipping the same things the world worships. It is an easy thing for us to follow the ways of the world and to be seduced by the same things the world is—comfort, money, success, and approval are all idols that we can worship and put in place of Christ at the center of our lives.

Think how disheartening it must have been for Moses to come down the mountain and see the idolatry and wickedness that was taking place in the camp of Israel. Look what God says to Moses in verse 10. God wants to destroy the Israelites and then make a great nation out of Moses (if God had done this, He would have still been faithful to His promise to Abraham, since Moses was a descendant of Abraham's also). It would have been easy for Moses to write off his people and take God up on his offer, but instead what does Moses do? He pleads with God on behalf of the Israelites. He becomes an intercessor for his people. In doing this, Moses gives us a picture of Jesus' work in heaven on our behalf.

Romans 8:33-34 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died-- more than that, who was raised to life-- is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

New City Catechism	Heidelberg Catechism
Question 17. What is Idolatry? Idolatry is trusting in created things rather than the Creator for our hope and happiness, significance and security.	Q. 95. What is idolatry? A. Idolatry is having or inventing something in which one trusts in place of or alongside of the only true God, who has revealed himself in the Word. ¹ 1 1 Chron. 16:26; Gal. 4:8-9; Eph. 5:5; Phil. 3:19

Question 1. Think how easy it would be for Jesus to be disappointed in us for our behavior and our idolatry. Think how easy it would be for Jesus to write us off. Where would we be if he did? Is there anyone you have written off and given up on? Don't they need you to intercede for them just as Moses did for his people and Jesus does for us?

Question 2. What are the idols in your life? What good things do you have that you are tempted to turn into ultimate things that are more important in your life than Jesus?

"The critical question for our generation—and for every generation—is this: If you could have heaven, with no sickness, and with all the friends you ever had on earth, and all the food you ever liked, and all the leisure activities you ever enjoyed, and all the natural beauties you ever saw, all the physical pleasures you ever tasted, and no human conflict or any natural disasters, could you be satisfied with heaven, if Christ were not there?"

— John Piper (*God Is the Gospel: Meditations on God's Love as the Gift of Himself*)

Now there is a question to make us stop and think, and that is exactly the question the Israelites faced after they fell into idolatry by worshipping the golden calf. Was the Promised Land still the Promised Land if God was not there with them? Was their inheritance worth having if God wasn't part of it? Do you see that is exactly what God is offering to them? In spite of their sin, they could still have the Promised Land, they just wouldn't have God, because God wouldn't go up with them. He would send His angel to give them possession of the land, but God himself would not go. Guessing, based on their behavior, many of the people would have taken God up on his offer and gladly gone to the Promised Land without God's presence, but not Moses. Moses knew the Promised Land was worthless if God was not there with them.

In the same way, heaven is not worth having if Jesus is not there. Heaven without Jesus is just like having a good life here on earth. It's nice, but it is empty because the one thing we need more than anything else is to be in the presence of God. That is in our DNA—it is how we were created. But so often we are content to settle for less than that. We would trade everything just for life to be good. But stop and think about this, if we value a good comfortable life more than Jesus, isn't a good comfortable life really the god that we worship? Moses knew that even though God had promised to give them the Promised Land that promise was meaningless if God was not at the center of everything. Likewise, there is no heaven without Jesus at the center of it.

Revelation 22:3-5 No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

What God was telling the Israelites was that they couldn't have just a partial relationship with Him. He wasn't going to be their "on call God" in a moment's notice when they needed Him, and then out of the way when they didn't. Either God was going to be the center of everything for them, or they weren't going to have him at all. Nothing has changed; the same is true for us. Jesus must be the center of our lives every moment of every day. He won't just be our part-time savior. If we would enter heaven without Jesus, then we really don't know Jesus at all, and we really don't have any relationship with him.

Matthew 7:16-27 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

If we do not want Jesus' presence to fill our lives today, is there any reason we should expect to be in Jesus' presence in eternity?

First Catechism	Heidelberg Catechism
<p>Question 85. What does the first commandment teach you?</p> <p>To worship the true God, and him only.</p>	<p>Q. 94. What does the Lord require in the first commandment?</p> <p>A. That I, not wanting to endanger my own salvation, avoid and shun all idolatry,¹ sorcery, superstitious rites,² and prayer to saints or to other creatures.³ That I rightly know the only true God,⁴ trust him alone,⁵ and look to God for every good thing⁶ humbly⁷ and patiently,⁸ and love,⁹ fear,¹⁰ and honor¹¹ God with all my heart. In short, that I give up anything rather than go against God's will in any way.¹²</p> <p>1 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 10:5-14; 1 John 5:21 2 Lev. 19:31; Deut. 18:9-12 3 Matt. 4:10; Rev. 19:10; 22:8-9 4 John 17:3 5 Jer. 17:5, 7 6 Ps. 104:27-28; James 1:17 7 1 Pet. 5:5-6 8 Col. 1:11; Heb. 10:36 9 Matt. 22:37 (Deut. 6:5) 10 Prov. 9:10; 1 Pet. 1:17 11 Matt. 4:10 (Deut. 6:13) 12 Matt. 5:29-30; 10:37-39</p>

Question 1. What are you tempted to want more than Jesus? When is a time you have acted on that temptation (when have you acted as if Jesus is a part-time savior)?

Question 2. How can we remind and encourage one another to keep Jesus at the center our lives?

Moses is one of the very few people to have a direct encounter with God. He had already had one encounter with God at the burning bush in Exodus 3, but now Moses wanted more. He wanted to know God in a deeper way—Moses wanted to see this glorious God who had called Moses to serve him, so that Moses could enjoy an even deeper relationship with God. We read in 33:20 that God would not allow Moses to see His face, because that would be just too much for Moses to see—it would literally kill him. So, God takes Moses to a cleft in a rock on the side of the mountain where God’s own hand can hide him, and God allows His goodness to pass in front of Moses. Now, let’s focus in on verses 5 - 7 of chapter 34. Look at God’s self-proclamation. God proclaims that He is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, and forgiving of wickedness, rebellion, and sin. That sounds great, doesn’t it? But then, at the end of verse 7, God adds that He does not leave sin unpunished. In fact, God tells Moses that He is so serious about sin that He punishes it to the third and fourth generation. We don’t have to think very hard of examples of how a father’s sin can affect his children, grandchildren, and even great children in the generations that follow.

So, that brings us to the key question that should be on each of our minds as we read this: How can a loving and merciful God still punish sin? How can a faithful God still keep his promises to people who aren’t faithful to Him? The answer to both of these questions is found in the cross. The cross is the expression of God’s faithfulness to an unfaithful people. God was so intent on keeping his promise to make us His own that He allowed His Son to die, so the promise could be kept.

The cross is the place where God’s love and mercy violently collide with God’s justice, and the resulting collision crushed Jesus as he hung there on the cross.

Isaiah 53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Don’t ever make the mistake of sacrificing God’s justice on the altar of God’s love. If we think that, we truly do believe in cheap grace, and the grace that God showed to us was anything but cheap—it cost him everything.

New City Catechism	Heidelberg Catechism
<p>Question 1. What Is Our Only Hope in Life and Death?</p> <p>That we are not our own but belong, body and soul, both in life and death, to God and to our Savior Jesus Christ.</p>	<p>Q. 34. Why do you call him “our Lord”?</p> <p>A. Because— not with gold or silver, but with his precious blood—¹he has set us free from sin and from the tyranny of the devil,² and has bought us, body and soul, to be his very own.³</p> <p>1 1 Pet. 1:18-19 2 Col. 1:13-14; Heb. 2:14-15</p> <p>3 1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Tim. 2:5-6</p>

Question 1. What about God’s continued mercy in spite of man’s sin amazes you from these verses? What about in your life- how have you been amazed at His mercy despite your sin?

Moses' close up encounter with God leaves him visibly changed—so changed that his appearance now scares the Israelites to death. Because he had encountered God, Moses' face glowed, and he had to cover it with a veil. In the Old Testament, encounters with God were rare exceptions, but as you read through the Old Testament, you will never find any place where an encounter with God didn't change the person in profound ways. Those encounters just didn't happen very often. People were separated from God, so separated that even the glow that Moses had after he encountered God scared them to death.

When Moses set up the tabernacle, in accordance with the plans that God had given to Moses, he set it up with a curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. The Most Holy Place was the place where the Spirit of God resided, and where the High Priest could only go behind the curtain once a year on the Day of Atonement. As Jesus died on the cross, Matthew tells us that this curtain was ripped in two.

Matthew 27:50-51 And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

The only thing that changes, when we come to the New Testament, is that because of Jesus our encounters with God become more frequent and more personal. Because of Jesus, the curtain that separated us from God was torn in two, which means that we can now enter the presence of God. In fact, John's Gospel tells us that not only can we enter the presence of God, but because of Jesus, God's presence enters us.

John 14:23 Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

God no longer dwells behind the veil in the tabernacle; encounters with God are no longer the exception. The Christian encounters God on a daily basis, and those encounters change us over time. The more time we spend with God, the more we begin to look like our savior.

2 Corinthians 3:7-18 Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, fading though it was, will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory.... Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away.... But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Through Christ, we experience God, and that experience changes us. More and more, through Christ, we become the glorious image of God that we were originally created to be.

First Catechism	Westminster Shorter Catechism
Question 57. How does God sanctify you? God makes me more and more holy in heart and conduct.	Q. 35. What is sanctification? Sanctification is the work of God's free grace[a] by which we are renewed throughout in the image of God[b] and are enabled more and more to die to sin and live to righteousness.[c] [a]. Eze 36:27; Php 2:13; 2 Thes 2:13 [b]. 2 Cor 5:17; Eph 4:23-24; 1 Thes 5:23 [c]. Eze 36:25-27; Rom 6:4, 6, 12-14; 2 Cor 7:1; 1 Pet 2:24

Question 1. How do we commune with Christ? What has He given us so we may experience more time spent with Him? In what ways will our "face shine" before others?

The book of Leviticus describes all of the different sacrifices that are to be brought before the Lord, and there is one constant in all of these sacrifices. They were to be perfect without defect or blemish—this was a costly sacrifice for the Israelite to make. The value of a sacrifice was in direct proportion to its cost.

David makes this point about the costliness of the sacrifice when he was speaking about buying Araunah's threshing floor as a place to offer a sacrifice to God.

2 Samuel 24: 24 "I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing."

To offer a sacrifice that was worthless meant that the sacrificial act was also worthless.

To offer an animal that was second rate or flawed was an abomination to God. In Malachi, which is written toward the very end of the Old Testament period, we see God condemn Israel for bringing defective, second-rate sacrifices to offer to Him.

Malachi 1: 7 - 14 "You place defiled food on my altar. "But you ask, 'How have we defiled you?' "By saying that the LORD's table is contemptible. When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?" says the LORD Almighty. "Now implore God to be gracious to us. With such offerings from your hands, will he accept you?"-- says the LORD Almighty. "Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am not pleased with you," says the LORD Almighty, "and I will accept no offering from your hands. My name will be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to my name, because my name will be great among the nations," says the LORD Almighty. "But you profane it by saying of the Lord's table, 'It is defiled,' and of its food, 'It is contemptible.' And you say, 'What a burden!' and you sniff at it contemptuously," says the LORD Almighty. "When you bring injured, crippled or diseased animals and offer them as sacrifices, should I accept them from your hands?" says the LORD. "Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord. For I am a great king," says the LORD Almighty, "and my name is to be feared among the nations."

Without defect meant the animal had to be flawless and a flawless animal cost an Israelite dearly. It meant taking a prize specimen from their own flock and devoting it to God. What a wonderful picture of Jesus this gives to us. God's own perfect sacrifice made for us—without defect and of infinite worth. Consider how the writer of Hebrews uses this imagery in referring to Jesus.

Hebrews 9:12-14 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

Notice how the writer of Hebrews refers to Jesus as unblemished, and because of the infinite worth of Jesus' sacrifice, it is the end of all sacrifices. The best has been offered and there is no further need for any other or any more sacrifices.

First Catechism	Westminster Shorter Catechism
<p>Question 54. What is meant by the atonement? Christ satisfied God's justice by his suffering and death as a substitute for sinners.</p>	<p>Q. 25. How does Christ fill the office of a priest? Christ fills the office of a priest in his once offering up of himself to God as a sacrifice, to satisfy divine justice[a] and reconcile us to God;[b] and in making constant intercession for us.[c]</p> <p>[a]. Isa 53:1-12; Acts 8:32-35; Heb 9:26-28; Heb 10:12 [b]. Rom 5:10-11; 2 Cor 5:18; Col 1:21-22 [c]. Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25; Heb 9:24</p>

Question 1. What was the purpose of a sacrifice? What did a sacrifice point to?

Question 2. Do you have a right understanding of why we need a perfect sacrifice? What assurance and joy do you have in the Sacrifice that has been offered for you?

The first seven chapters of the book of Leviticus spell out all of the different sacrifices that were required of the Israelites. There were burnt offerings, grain offerings, fellowship offerings, sin offerings, and guilt offerings that were prescribed by God in the book of Leviticus. These sacrifices had different modes and means, but they had one thing in common, and that is they allowed the Israelite to have a relationship with God.

But the sacrifices of the Old Testament only pointed the Israelites to something better. Notice the sense of hopelessness in what the writer of Hebrews says:

Hebrews 10: 1 – 4 For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins. It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

These sacrifices by themselves could never take away sin. It was impossible for them to do that. All the sacrifices could do was point a person to the hope that God would provide a better, permanent, lasting sacrifice which He would do through Jesus.

In Romans 5:10, Paul tells us that we are reconciled to God through Christ's blood. To be reconciled means that once again we can have a relationship with God. As one considers the entire multitude of sacrifices that were prescribed in Leviticus to have a relationship with God, one can see the wonderful sufficiency of Christ's once and for all sacrifice. The writer of Hebrews makes the comparison for us of the Old Testament priest having to continually offer sacrifices and the one-time efficacy of Christ's sacrifice.

Hebrews 10:11-12 Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.

The only way we can truly understand the value of the sacrifice Christ has made for us is by comparing what Christ did to what the Levitical law required. The sacrifice that Jesus offered for us far outshines any of the sacrifices God told the Israelites to make to Him. It is the perfect sacrifice, once and done, completely sufficient. These sacrifices in Leviticus are pictures of the ultimate sacrifice that was to come in Christ.

First Catechism	Heidelberg Catechism
Question 66. Before Christ came, how did believers show their faith? By offering the sacrifices God required.	Q. 14. Can another creature—any at all— pay this debt for us? A. No. To begin with, God will not punish any other creature for what a human is guilty of. ¹ Furthermore, no mere creature can bear the weight of God's eternal wrath against sin and deliver others from it. ² 1 Ezek. 18:4, 20; Heb. 2:14-18 2 Ps. 49:7-9; 130:3

Question 1. How did a sacrifice restore the Israelite's relationship with God? How does Jesus restore our relationship with God? Was it the act of sacrificing that restored or was it a matter of the heart and where someone's faith was placed? How did that faith manifest with actions? How does our faith manifest with actions?

By understanding the priestly requirements of Leviticus, we can better understand what the writer of Hebrews means when he refers to Jesus as our Great High Priest. It is through the words of Leviticus 8 that we understand Hebrews 9. In Leviticus 8, we see the ritual that Aaron and his sons had to go through during their service in the Tabernacle. In verses 1 – 5, we hear God tell Moses to assemble Aaron and his sons, their special garments, anointing oil, a bull for the sin offering, two rams, and the unleavened bread—all of which had been described in the preceding chapters. Then Moses carries out the elaborate ritual of first washing Aaron and his sons with water, then dressing them in the priestly garments, and then anointing both the tabernacle with its furnishings and Aaron and his sons. Next the bull is offered to make atonement for the sins of Aaron and his sons as well as to consecrate (set apart as holy) the altar. Next, the first ram was slain. Notice with both the bull and this ram, Aaron and his sons lay their hands upon the head of the animal as a symbolic way of transferring their guilt to that which is to be sacrificed. Before they could minister to the people, they first had to make themselves clean. This is a key point that the writer of Hebrews draws out and emphasizes in Hebrews 9:11-15.

Hebrews 9:11-15 When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance-- now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

Here the writer of Hebrews points out that Aaron and his sons had to first be made clean themselves before they could enter the Most Holy Place. However, for Jesus this was not so. He was already clean because he was sinless. How can we begin to understand the significance of this, if we do not first understand how much preparation Aaron and his sons had to go through before they could serve?

As we examine the book of Leviticus and see all that was necessary for Aaron to serve and then compare that with Jesus, we can quickly see the superiority of Jesus as our High Priest. While Aaron was able to sympathize with the people of Israel because he knew what it meant to be a sinner, Aaron was also sinful and first had to atone for his own sins before he could deal with the sins of the people. This is not so with Jesus, for though he was tempted in every way just as we are he was without sin, and being without sin he was able to enter the Most Holy Place to offer a sacrifice on our behalf. He knows our weakness— he knows our struggles because he endured them as well, but he endured them without sin so that he is both the perfect High Priest and the perfect sacrifice.

First Catechism	Heidelberg Catechism
Question 49. Did Jesus ever sin? No. He lived a sinless life.	Q. 15. What kind of mediator and deliverer should we look for then? A. One who is a true ¹ and righteous ² human, yet more powerful than all creatures, that is, one who is also true God. ³ 1 Rom. 1:3; 1 Cor. 15:21; Heb. 2:17 2 Isa. 53:9; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:26 3 Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Jer. 23:6; John 1:1

Question 1. In what ways did the consecration of Aaron and his sons foreshadow Christ's role as our High Priest and Mediator?

Today's reading contains the tragic tale of Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu. Aaron was the brother of Moses, and as you may recall he was chosen by God to be Moses' spokesman before Pharaoh, and then Aaron was chosen by God to be Israel's first High Priest. Aaron's sons served alongside of Aaron in the tabernacle. We have already seen the care that was involved in preparing them to serve and consecrating them for service, which shows us how seriously God took their role of serving in the tabernacle. As you read this passage, it is not clear what it was exactly that Nadab and Abihu did, but what is clear is that whatever they did was out of accord with what God had commanded them to do. Based on what God says to Aaron in verse 8 – 11, it is possible that their sin was brought on by the fact that they were drunk as they came to serve before the Lord in the tabernacle.

Depending on the version of the Bible you read this passage from, you will see the fire described as either unauthorized or strange fire. What this indicates is that the incense and fire that they offered to the Lord was not what God had prescribed. It is possible that the fire itself came from a source outside of the tabernacle and was therefore not holy, or that the incense that they put in the fire was not made according to the formula that God had given to the Israelites in Exodus 30. Whatever the case, what they offered in worship to the Lord was unacceptable to Him.

Sometimes we are tempted to look at stories like this from the Old Testament and think God was just meaner back then, and He is not so uptight today. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Malachi 3:6 "I the LORD do not change."

God is still the same today as He was then. We can't just worship Him and approach Him any way we feel like. If we want to come into the presence of the Lord, it can't be with the unauthorized fire of our own good works. Think about how Paul described his own good works (righteousness):

Philippians 3:7-9 But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ-- the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.

Rubbish smells, and so do our own good works in God's sight. Our good works are not pleasing to God because in spite of our good works we are tainted by sin and that sin fouls everything about us. If we want to be able to approach God, we must come in the name of Jesus and his sinless, untainted righteousness. Jesus is the only name by which we can come into the presence of God. If we think we can offer God our own good works as an offering, the same thing that happened to Nadab and Abihu will happen to us. It is tempting for us to try to add our own good works to the righteousness that Christ has already given to us. Somehow, we think our good works can improve what Christ has done for us, but nothing can be further from the truth. It is in Christ and Christ alone that we enter the presence of God. Christ's sacrifice is the only offering that we have to give that is acceptable to God. If we try to come with anything else, we too will be struck down.

<u>New City Catechism</u>	<u>Heidelberg Catechism</u>
Question 33. Should Those Who Have Faith in Christ Seek Their Salvation Through Their Own Works, or Anywhere Else? No, they should not, as everything necessary to salvation is found in Christ. To seek salvation through good works is a denial that Christ is the only Redeemer and Savior.	Q. 62. Why can't our good works be our righteousness before God, or at least a part of our righteousness? A. Because the righteousness which can pass God's judgment must be entirely perfect and must in every way measure up to the divine law. ¹ But even our best works in this life are imperfect and stained with sin. ² 1 Rom. 3:20; Gal. 3:10 (Deut. 27:26) 2 Isa. 64:6

Question 1. Discuss what it means to obey and worship in a way that pleases God. How do we know what is acceptable and pleasing to Him? Why should we continually make sure our heart is correct in worship?

We don't think too much about leprosy in our culture, and as we come to passages like this in the book of Leviticus, we think that maybe they don't have much to say to us today. But before we jump to that conclusion, let's just step back and think about this in a new way.

In Israel's day, when a person contracted an infectious skin disease, they were considered to be unclean, and because of this, these persons were excluded from the camp of Israel. They were so excluded that they had to move and live outside of the camp or city. So excluded, that when they were walking along the road and a person was coming from the other way, the person with leprosy had to move to the far side of the road and cry out "Unclean! Unclean!" So, to be cleansed from leprosy was a big deal, and there was an elaborate ritual and ceremony to bring the person back into the camp and society. Now with all that in mind, stop and think about the Gospel accounts of Jesus interacting with those with leprosy.

In Matthew 8:1-4, we find Jesus dealing with a man infected with the disease of leprosy. There are several important considerations to be found here. First, notice that Jesus told this man to fulfill the requirements of Leviticus 14:1-20. Jesus directed the healed man to go to the priest and present himself (14:3), and then present the offering described in Leviticus 14:4-20. Notice that Jesus did not put aside the law spelled out in Leviticus, but rather he applied it and practiced it.

In many ways this act with the leper is a picture of how Christ deals with us. His touch makes us clean, but then we are still called to adhere to the provisions of the law. His touch doesn't mean we no longer have to obey, in fact just the opposite, his touch provides the means for us to obey.

Another interesting feature of this account in Matthew 8:1-4 is what would seemingly contradict what was just said. Notice that Jesus touches the leprous man, an act that would normally have been forbidden, because in so doing one would become unclean (Leviticus 13). A similar situation arises in Luke's account of the widow of Nain in Luke 7. Here Jesus touches the coffin of the widow's son, again an act that would have made him unclean. Was Jesus violating the law in these instances? Did Jesus become ceremonially unclean in either of these instances? No, because the very thing that would have made him unclean was dealt with and eradicated by him.

Paul tells us in Galatians 4:4 that Jesus was born under the law. Here, in these two accounts, we see how Jesus operated within the framework of Levitical law, and only by understanding that law can we really begin to understand the significance of how Jesus systematically fulfilled the law in perfect obedience. His touch or his spoken word could make things right, but still in every instance the law was followed to the letter.

What can we learn from this? We live in a broken world, with people who are broken and made unclean by their sin. It is easy for us to run from them shouting "Unclean!" But that is not what Jesus did, is it? He entered into their brokenness and uncleanness. He touched them and brought the cleansing power of God's love and mercy to their lives, but as he healed them, he also exhorted them to follow God's Law in complete obedience. There is the model for our ministry! We must be willing to draw near to those who are unclean and defiled by sin and offer the healing power of the Gospel. We must come to them where they are and bring the healing power of Christ's love to their lives, but as we do that, we must also call them to obedience, because Christ is not just a healing savior, He is Lord of lords.

New City Catechism
Question 34. Since We Are Redeemed by Grace Alone, Through Christ Alone, Must We Still Do Good Works and Obey God's Word?
Yes, because Christ, having redeemed us by his blood, also renews us by his Spirit; so that our lives may show love and gratitude to God; so that we may be assured of our faith by the fruits; and so that by our godly behavior others may be won to Christ.

Question 1. How can we follow Jesus' example by seeking out the "unclean" and offer the Gospel? What are practical suggestions on how? Is there someone in your life right now with whom you should share the Gospel?

Leviticus 16 tells us that the Day of Atonement was to be observed once a year as an everlasting ordinance for the nation of Israel. On this day Aaron was to make atonement for himself and for the nation. This was the day that all the sin of Israel was dealt with. First, everything, including Aaron, had to be cleansed through the sprinkling of blood.

Aaron was the High Priest over Israel, and he represented the people before God, but he was also very much part of the people he represented. He had the same need for cleansing that they did. Look what he had to do before he could offer a sacrifice for the people.

First, before he could even put on the sacred garments, he had to bathe himself. This was both a physical and a ceremonial cleansing. The filth of the world had to be washed from him, it could not just be covered up by sacred garments. The same is true for us, isn't it? In 1 Peter 2: 9, Peter refers to us as a kingdom of priests, but what must happen to us before we can begin to serve as priests? We must put on the sacred garments of Christ's righteousness.

Galatians 3:27 "You who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ".

Isaiah 61:10 "I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God, for he has clothed me with garments of salvation, and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness"

But what has to happen to a person before God can clothe them in the righteousness of Christ, in garments of salvation, in robes of righteousness? They must be washed—made clean by Christ's blood.

1 John 1:6-9 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

Revelation 7: 14 And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

To be clothed in the righteousness of Christ, we must first be washed and cleansed by his blood.

Once Aaron was clean and robed in the sacred garments, he then had to offer a bull for his own sacrifice to atone for his sins. Think about that: before Aaron could make atonement for the people, he first had to make atonement for his own sins. What a difference between Aaron the high priest and Jesus our Great High Priest.

Hebrews 7: 26- 28 For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

Unlike Aaron, Jesus, our Great High Priest, had no need to first offer a sacrifice for his own sin, because though he was made like us in every way, he was without sin.

Hebrews 4: 14 – 16 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

What a Great High Priest we have in Jesus!

First Catechism	Heidelberg Catechism
<p>Question 74. Why do you need Christ as your priest?</p> <p>Because I am guilty of breaking God's law.</p>	<p>Q. 31. Why is he called "Christ," meaning "anointed"?</p> <p>A. Because he has been ordained by God the Father and has been anointed with the Holy Spirit¹ to be our chief prophet and teacher² who fully reveals to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our deliverance;³ our only high priest⁴ who has delivered us by the one sacrifice of his body,⁵ and who continually pleads our cause with the Father;⁶ and our eternal king⁷ who governs us by his Word and Spirit, and who guards us and keeps us in the freedom he has won for us.⁸</p> <p>1 Luke 3:21-22; 4:14-19 (Isa. 61:1); Heb. 1:9 (Ps. 45:7) 2 Acts 3:22 (Deut. 18:15) 3 John 1:18; 15:15 4 Heb. 7:17 (Ps. 110:4) 5 Heb. 9:12; 10:11-14 6 Rom. 8:34; Heb. 9:24 7 Matt. 21:5 (Zech. 9:9) 8 Matt. 28:18-20; John 10:28; Rev. 12:10-11</p>

Question 1. What is the significance of the blood of the sin offering being sprinkled on and before the mercy seat? What do we learn about blood securing forgiveness and reconciliation?

After Aaron, had been bathed, clothed in sacred garments, and made atonement for his own sins, Aaron was then able to begin to make atonement for the sins of Israel. Aaron did this by selecting two goats. Both goats were to be a sacrifice. One was to be slaughtered, and the other sent away as a scapegoat.

The blood of the slaughtered goat was used to cleanse the Tabernacle and its furnishing from the sin and uncleanness of the Israelites. Once this was done, Aaron took the live goat and placed both hands upon it. In doing this Aaron was symbolically placing the sins of the nation on the head of a scapegoat and it was then sent out of the camp into the desert wilderness. In this way, the sin was symbolically carried away into the wilderness, where it would be remembered no more, and the nation was once again made holy, freeing the people from their guilt. Because the sin was carried away, so also was the guilt of that sin carried away.

But how long did being guilt free last? How long before sin once again defiled everything? The writer of Hebrews uses the requirements that God put in place in the book of Leviticus to show us the surpassing greatness of Jesus.

Hebrews 9: 11 – 14 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

Do you see how the writer of Hebrews emphasizes that Jesus' sacrifice was once and for all? It doesn't have to be offered again and again because it is the perfect sacrifice offered by the perfect High Priest.

Hebrews 10:12 But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God

Why did Jesus sit down? Because just as he said on the cross, "It is finished." There is no longer a need for continuing sacrifices. Christ's sacrifice is once and for all.

How quickly and easily we forget that Jesus' death, like the first goat, was the propitiation (payment) for our sins and, as a result of his sacrifice, our sins are carried away (expiated), which is symbolized by the second goat being led out into the wilderness. "Many a person today who suffers from what is called a guilt complex could profit by a study of this ritual for the atonement and removal of sin."

In Christ, through his sacrifice, the debt for our sin is paid once and for all, and our sin and guilt are taken away, as far as the east is from the west, led into the wilderness where they are forgotten and remembered no more.

<u>New City Catechism</u>	<u>Westminster Shorter Catechism</u>
Question 25. Does Christ's Death Mean All Our Sins Can Be Forgiven? Yes, because Christ's death on the cross fully paid the penalty for our sin, God graciously imputes Christ's righteousness to us as if it were our own and will remember our sins no more.	Q. 33. What is justification? Justification is an act of God's free grace[a] in which he pardons all our sins[b] and accepts us as righteous in his sight[c] for the sake of the righteousness of Christ alone, which is credited to us[d] and received by faith alone.[e] [a]. Rom 3:24 [b]. Rom 4:6-8; 2 Cor 5:19 [c]. 2 Cor 5:21 [d]. Rom 4:6, 11; Rom 5:19 [e]. Gal 2:16; Php 3:9

Question 1. What security do we have in the blood of Christ? What assurance of forgiveness do we find at the cross?

Leviticus 16:26-28 deals specifically with the items and people who had a part in the Day of Atonement. Notice that each of these became polluted by sin and had to be either put outside of the camp or washed to be made clean because in their service to God to make atonement for God's people, they became unclean-polluted by sin.

The remains of the bull and goat that were offered as a sacrifice to atone for sin were to be taken outside the camp and burned. The man who took the remains outside the camp had to remain outside the camp until he had washed and bathed himself. The man who took the scapegoat to the wilderness had to remain outside of the camp until his clothes were washed and he had bathed.

The phrase "outside the camp" occurs in fourteen different verses in the book of Leviticus, but it is a key component of New Testament theology. In the book of Leviticus there were a variety of things that were to be taken and placed outside the camp. The spent ashes of a sacrifice, the dead bodies of Nadab and Abihu, those with infectious skin diseases, and blasphemers. The point is this, things that became unclean and polluted by sin had to be taken outside of the camp to be dealt with. When something or someone became "unclean" they were put out of the camp, cut off.

Now think what the writer of Hebrews says about Jesus.

Hebrews 13: 11 - 13 For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured.

Look at the direct connection the writer of Hebrews makes with what happened in the book of Leviticus and Jesus as he compares Jesus and the remains of the sacrificial offerings from the Day of Atonement. He points out how Jesus was crucified outside of the gates of the city, and we are left to draw the conclusion that this is because he became polluted with our sin. Why would he draw that conclusion? From Jesus' last words on the cross:

Matthew 27:46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

What was Jesus experiencing as he uttered those words? Being taken outside the camp, being removed from the presence of the Father because he became polluted with our sin.

Look again at Hebrews 13:13. The writer of Hebrews tells us to join in Jesus' disgrace outside the gates. Why would he say that? Do we become unclean by associating with Jesus? Of course not! But rather it is just as Paul tells us:

Philippians 3: 7 – 11 But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Being willing to join Jesus outside the camp, bearing the shame that he bore, is the means by which we are sanctified—set apart—made holy as he is holy. By joining Jesus outside the camp, we separate ourselves from the camp of this world and are made holy through his blood.

New City Catechism	Heidelberg Catechism
<p>Question 24. Why Was it Necessary for Christ, the Redeemer, to Die?</p> <p>Since death is the punishment for sin, Christ died willingly in our place to deliver us from the power and penalty of sin and bring us back to God. By his substitutionary atoning death, he alone redeems us from hell and gains for us forgiveness of sin, righteousness, and everlasting life.</p>	<p>Q. 43. What further benefit do we receive from Christ's sacrifice and death on the cross?</p> <p>A. By Christ's power our old selves are crucified, put to death, and buried with him,¹ so that the evil desires of the flesh may no longer rule us,² but that instead we may offer ourselves as a sacrifice of gratitude to him.³</p> <p>1 Rom. 6:5-11; Col. 2:11-12 2 Rom. 6:12-14 3 Rom. 12:1; Eph. 5:1-2</p>

Question 1. What does it mean to be separate from this world?

Question 2. How did the sacrifices on the Day of Atonement picture the assurance a believer can have? Where is our assurance found?

In Leviticus 19 there is a commentary on the Decalogue (Ten Commandments) of Exodus 20 by which Leviticus fleshes out what obedience to the commandments means, and it is all developed under the rubric of “Be holy because I am Holy” (Leviticus 11:44; 19:2). The whole premise and reason for properly understanding these laws and applying them to one’s daily life was to be holy, to be set apart, to be different from those who live outside of the community of faith. Jesus understood that and it was the central message of his Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus again reminds his listeners that they are to be holy—set apart. He reminds them that they are the light and salt of the world (Matthew 5: 13-16), that is, they are to stand out from those who live outside the community of faith. And how are they to do this? By living under the law in a deep and meaningful way. Not just with surface obedience but with obedience that comes from the heart. It is not enough to not murder or to not commit adultery, one must also not hate or look lustfully (Matthew 5: 21-30). In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus follows the pattern of Leviticus 19 showing how careful heartfelt observance of the law leads to one being holy and set apart.

Ultimately one could say that Jesus appropriated Leviticus 19:17—to love your neighbor as yourself—as the theme verse for his ministry. Jesus not only used this verse from Leviticus to answer the teachers of the Law when they asked him what the greatest commandment was, but in many ways this verse explained both his ministry and the way he was calling his followers to live. Jesus said in John 15:13 that there was no greater love than to lay down your life for your friends, and throughout his life one can see Jesus do exactly that. He not only laid down his life on the cross, but before that, he laid it down time and time again to serve the needs of others.

What was this life of service based on? Leviticus 19:2. What is our life of service based on? Leviticus 19: 2 “Be holy, because I am holy.”

When the writer of Hebrews tells us in Hebrews 4:15 that Jesus was tempted in every way and yet was without sin, we need to understand the framework of the law that Jesus lived under to appreciate his flawless perfection. If we ignore the message of Leviticus, we lose the perspective of what this means to us. We minimize Jesus’ sinless perfection if we do not understand the rigorous requirements laid out in Leviticus for righteous living. By living this sinless life, the writer of Hebrews tells us that Jesus was able to become both our Great High Priest (Hebrews 4:14), and the perfect sacrifice (Hebrews 7:27).

First Catechism	Heidelberg Catechism
Question 49. Did Jesus ever sin? No. He lived a sinless life.	Q. 114. But can those converted to God obey these commandments perfectly? A. No. In this life even the holiest have only a small beginning of this obedience. ¹ Nevertheless, with all seriousness of purpose, they do begin to live according to all, not only some, of God’s commandments. ² 1 Eccles. 7:20; Rom. 7:14-15; 1 Cor. 13:9; 1 John 1:8-10 2 Ps. 1:1-2; Rom. 7:22-25; Phil. 3:12-16

Question 1. What does it mean to be holy in our day to day lives?

Question 2. How does someone get a heart that wants to obey God’s law? What is the right motive for obedience?

Question 3. Even though we fail to obey God perfectly, why shouldn’t we despair?

Today we read the very familiar words that we often hear at the end of a worship service as a benediction. These were the words that God told Aaron to pronounce as a blessing over the Israelites. As you read these words stop and think about how Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of this blessing.

“The Lord bless you”

Ephesians 1:3-8 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-- to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.

We have been blessed in every way because of Christ. Jesus is God’s ultimate blessing in our lives.

“and keep you”

John 10:11-30 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.... My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

Because of Christ we are kept safe for all of eternity.

“the Lord make his face to shine upon you.”

2 Corinthians 4:6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Through Christ we see God’s face shine (smile) upon us, as the light of Christ shines into our lives.

“and be gracious to you.”

John 1:16-17 From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the ultimate expression of God’s grace to us.

“the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.”

Romans 5:1-2 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

Through Jesus and his death on the cross, we have peace with God.

<u>First Catechism</u>	<u>Westminster Shorter Catechism</u>
Question 56. How does God justify you? God forgives all my sins and accepts me as righteous through Christ.	Q. 36. What benefits in this life accompany or flow from justification, adoption and sanctification? The benefits in this life which accompany or flow from justification, adoption and sanctification are: assurance of God’s love,[a] peace of conscience,[b] joy in the Holy Spirit,[c] progress in holiness,[d] and perseverance in it to this life’s end.[e] [a]. Rom 5:5 [b]. Rom 5:1 [c]. Rom 14:17 [d]. 2 Pet 3:18 [e]. Php 1:6; 1 Pet 1:5

Question 1. We have been blessed in Christ, so what responsibility do we have to share that blessing with others?

Think about the words that Moses spoke as Israel moved each day on their journey to the Promised Land, “Arise, let your enemies be scattered.” Who are God’s enemies? As you read the Bible, it becomes clear that there are only two choices for each of us—there is no neutral ground. We are either on the Lord’s side, the side of righteousness, or on Satan’s side, the side of evil. We can’t straddle between the two sides. It is one or the other.

Whether we realize it, or not, we are in the midst of spiritual warfare. Paul makes this very clear in:

Ephesians 6: 10 – 12 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

This is a battle that is raging on, even though often we don’t realize it, because it is a spiritual battle taking place in the heavenly realms. At the cross, Christ, our warrior king, defeated Satan, sin, and death.

Colossians 2: 13 – 15 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Even though our enemies are defeated, they haven’t given up. But day by day, the Kingdom of Jesus Christ is advancing, slowly but surely rolling back the darkness.

But the scattering of God’s enemies is only half of what Moses’ prayed each day. Look at what he prayed each night as Israel once again settled into their camp: “Return, O Lord, to the countless thousands of Israel.” Moses’ was praying that at the end of each day God would gather His people and make his presence known to them.

Jesus our warrior king not only triumphs over our enemies, but he also gathers his elect to be with him forever.

Matthew 24:31 And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

The Book of Revelations shows the very marked contrast between the elect, the people of God gathered by Christ, and the enemies of God scattered by Christ. While the elect gather around the throne of the Lamb celebrating what Christ has done for them, gathering them, and making them his own:

Revelation 7: 9 – 10 After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”

The enemies of Christ are scattered and flee to the hills hoping that the rocks will cover them and protect them from his coming wrath.

Revelation 6: 15- 17 Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and everyone else, both slave and free, hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can withstand it?”

In the end, there are only two places to stand. Either around the Throne of the Lamb in joyous celebration or hiding from the Lamb in dread and fear.

First Catechism	Heidelberg Catechism
<p>Question 125. What does it mean to pray, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"?</p> <p>We are asking God to keep us from being tempted and to make us strong enough to resist when we are tempted.</p>	<p>Q. 127. What does the sixth petition mean?</p> <p>A. "And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one" means: By ourselves we are too weak to hold our own even for a moment.¹ And our sworn enemies— the devil,² the world,³ and our own flesh—⁴ never stop attacking us. And so, Lord, uphold us and make us strong with the strength of your Holy Spirit, so that we may not go down to defeat in this spiritual struggle,⁵ but may firmly resist our enemies until we finally win the complete victory.⁶</p> <p>1 Ps. 103:14-16; John 15:1-5 2 2 Cor. 11:14; Eph. 6:10-13; 1 Pet. 5:8 3 John 15:18-21 4 Rom. 7:23; Gal. 5:17 5 Matt. 10:19-20; 26:41; Mark 13:33; Rom. 5:3-5 6 1 Cor. 10:13; 1 Thess. 3:13; 5:23</p>

Question 1. How does this passage challenge us to examine our own hearts and repent of any sinful attitudes?

The Israelites had grown increasingly unhappy with Aaron and Moses as their leaders. They began to question why only Aaron and his family could serve as priests, so God told Moses to have each tribe of Israel bring a staff (a piece of dead wood), place the tribe's name on it, and set it in the Tent of Meeting (The Tabernacle). God told Moses that the staff that belonged to the man of God's choosing would miraculously sprout and come to life. Aaron's staff not only came to life overnight, but it also blossomed and produced almonds proving that Aaron was the man of God's choosing.

What does this have to do with Jesus? Through Jesus that which is dead comes to life and produces fruit. Look what Paul writes in:

Ephesians 2:1-5 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-- it is by grace you have been saved.

In a spiritual sense, we were just as dead as Aaron's staff was, but through Christ we have been made alive again, but not just alive, but alive and fruitful.

John 15:5-6 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.

Without Jesus we are just a dead stick waiting to be burned in the fire, but with Jesus we are made alive and fruitful, just like Aaron's staff.

But remember this, it is all a work of God. Aaron didn't make his staff bud, blossom, and produce fruit, God did, and the same is true for us. We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works (Ephesians 2: 10), and God will finish what He has started in our lives because He is faithful.

Philippians 1: 6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

New City Catechism	Heidelberg Catechism
Question 34. Since We Are Redeemed by Grace Alone, Through Christ Alone, Must We Still Do Good Works and Obey God's Word? Yes, so that our lives may show love and gratitude to God; and so that by our godly behavior others may be won to Christ.	Q. 86. Since we have been delivered from our misery by grace through Christ without any merit of our own, why then should we do good works? A. Because Christ, having redeemed us by his blood, is also restoring us by his Spirit into his image, so that with our whole lives we may show that we are thankful to God for his benefits, ¹ so that he may be praised through us, ² so that we may be assured of our faith by its fruits, ³ and so that by our godly living our neighbors may be won over to Christ. ⁴ 1 Rom. 6:13; 12:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:5-10 2 Matt. 5:16; 1 Cor. 6:19-20 3 Matt. 7:17-18; Gal. 5:22-24; 2 Pet. 1:10-11 4 Matt. 5:14-16; Rom. 14:17-19; 1 Pet. 2:12; 3:1-2

Question 1. What assurance of God's completion of our sanctification do we have? How does the knowledge of His completion of our sanctification motivate us to walk in faith and obedience each day?

Question 2. How are Christians "priests"? How do we serve and intercede for one another?

This is the second account where the people of Israel are without water as they wandered in the desert wilderness. Just like the first time, they begin to grumble against Moses, and they wish out loud that Moses would have left them alone and let them stay in Egypt. The first time this happened was early in the journey and Moses was very patient as he dealt with their complaining. But by this time, you can imagine Moses' nerves are frayed, and he has had enough of these people and their complaining. In his frustration, Moses disobeys God, and rather than speaking to the rock, as God had told him to do, Moses strikes the rock with his staff, not once but twice. Because of Moses' disobedience, God tells Moses that he will not be allowed to enter the Promised Land (verse 12). On the surface, this seems to be a very harsh penalty that God gives to Moses. The question is, why? There are several reasons that are quickly evident as we look at the text. First, Moses acted in anger and pride. Look at verse 10. Moses is taking the place of God; first in judging the people calling them rebels, and then in thinking that he is the one with the power to perform the miracle with the words, "Must we bring water out of the rock?" But Moses was excluded from the Promised Land for more than just anger and pride, look at verse 12. The real issue is that Moses did not fully trust God, because Moses, rather than speaking to the rock, struck it with the staff twice.

The bottom line is this—Moses did not take God at His word; he didn't have faith in what God had told him. Moses took it upon himself to strike the rock after God had told him to simply speak to it. When all of this happened, Moses was probably thinking back to the first time this happened in Exodus 17. The first time God had Moses bring water out of the rock, God did tell Moses to strike the rock, but this time God only told Moses to speak to the rock. Why the difference? If we understand the difference, then we can begin to understand why God was so angry with Moses for striking the rock twice. When we came to the first account of Moses bringing water out of the rock in Exodus 17, we looked at Paul's words in:

1 Corinthians 10:2-4 They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.

Now stop and think about this for just a moment. Paul tells us that Jesus was the rock that accompanied the Israelites on their journey out of Egypt. Jesus was the rock from which living water flowed. The first time Israel needed water God allowed Moses to strike the rock (Jesus) so that life giving water could flow from it. But this time God instructed Moses simply to speak to the rock. God would not allow his son to be struck again. Is it any wonder that God became angry with Moses, and would not allow Moses to enter the Promised Land for striking the rock, his son, again and again? Jesus has died once for sin. God allowed his son to be struck once for us. His sacrifice was once and for all. Jesus cannot be struck again. We must accept his sacrifice, and drink from it daily.

Hebrews 6:4-6 It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.

First Catechism	Westminster Shorter Catechism
Question 71. How is Christ your priest? Christ died for my sins and continues to pray for me.	Q. 25. How does Christ fill the office of a priest? Christ fills the office of a priest in his once offering up of himself to God as a sacrifice, to satisfy divine justice[a] and reconcile us to God;[b] and in making constant intercession for us.[c] [a]. Isa 53:1-12; Acts 8:32-35; Heb 9:26-28; Heb 10:12 [b]. Rom 5:10-11; 2 Cor 5:18; Col 1:21-22 [c]. Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25; Heb 9:24

Question 1. Discuss the grace God still showed to the Moses and the Israelites. How is God still gracious to us despite our sin?

The Israelites once again have grown impatient with God, and with their journey, and once again they begin to complain against God. This seems to be just a side note (although, if you think about it, maybe it's more than that), but as you read through the account of the exodus and the wilderness wanderings, it becomes clear that the Israelites wanted the Promised Land more than they wanted God. In other words, they really didn't delight in being in God's presence day in and day out; they just wanted the benefits that God could give to them. How often are we like that? Do we really want to be in the presence of God day in and day out? It seems like if we did, we wouldn't care so much about the circumstances of our lives. We are more like the Israelites than we might like to imagine. We desire the good things that God promises to us more than we desire God. This is a dangerous way for us to think. Look what happens to Israel as a result of this kind of thinking. God brings discipline, in the form of poisonous snakes, to purge the camp of its misplaced desires.

As these snakes begin to bite the people of Israel, people begin to die, and there is nothing they can do to save themselves. Moses cries out to the only one who can save them, and in his grace and mercy, God makes a way for the rebellious who are dying to find mercy and life. God tells Moses to fashion a bronze serpent, place it on a pole and hold it high in the air. God tells Moses that anyone who looks at it will be healed from the venomous bites and live. What is really fascinating in all of this is that God does not do what the people ask him to do. Look what the people prayed for in verse 7—that God would take the snakes away. God did not answer their prayer the way that they desired. Instead of driving the snakes away, God provided a way for healing to come after a poisonous bite had been inflicted. We have no idea how long the snakes continued to remain in the camp, but as long as they did, God provided a way for people live. Often times we wish God would just take away sin and drive it out of our lives and out of our world. But we are sinful people, who live in a sinful world. Like those snakes, sin is everywhere and bites us constantly, but God provides a way for us to live.

John 3:14-17 Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

As we look in faith to Jesus we are healed from the deadly bites of sin. Sin is still all around us, but its power is gone because of Jesus.

1 Corinthians 15:55-57 "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

As we look to Jesus lifted up on the cross for us, we are healed from the deadly bite of sin. Sin is still all around us, but its sting and power is gone.

<u>First Catechism</u>	<u>Westminster Shorter Catechism</u>
Question 58. What must you do to be saved? I must repent of my sin and believe in Christ as my Savior.	Q. 85. What does God require of us, that we may escape his wrath and curse, due to us for sin? To escape the wrath and curse due to us for sin, God requires of us faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and repentance leading to life[a] together with the diligent use of all the outward means by which Christ gives to us the benefits of redemption.[b] [a]. Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21 [b]. Acts 2:38; 1 Cor 11:24-25; Col 3:16

Question 1. When is a recent time you have been more worried about the circumstances of your life than desiring God? How can we continually learn to desire God more and more? What should we fix our minds on and how will that bring us joy to desire God more than earthly things?

In Numbers chapters 22-25, we find the account of Balak, King of Moab, who wants a curse to be placed on Israel. He is afraid of the Israelites, and he summons a soothsayer named Balaam to come and curse Israel. But God has other plans, and through divine intervention, God makes it so that Balaam can only bless the Israelites. A very small part of that blessing is found in today's reading. It is a blessing and a prophecy concerning a future ruler who will rise out of the nation of Israel and lead them by defeating all of their enemies. But notice the wording of the prophecy. This future ruler is a ruler who is far out on the horizon: "I see him, but not now; I behold him but not near." That wording indicates that Balaam's vision concerns something that is far in the future—years away from happening. Now look at the rest of what Balaam says about this ruler in verses 17-19. This future ruler will defeat those who are standing opposed to Moses and Israel today. In 2 Samuel 8: 2 – 14, David rises up out of Jacob, takes the ruler's scepter, and crushes the very people who are trying to call curses down on Moses and Israel—the Moabites, and the Edomites.

2 Samuel 8:2-14 David also defeated the Moabites... So the Moabites became subject to David and brought tribute.... And David became famous after he returned from striking down eighteen thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt. He put garrisons throughout Edom, and all the Edomites became subject to David. The LORD gave David victory wherever he went.

The star that Balaam saw rising out of Jacob in the distant future is clearly King David, but as with many Biblical prophecies there is more to this prophecy than meets the eye. Christ, the bright and shining morning star, the great king, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords will rise from the line of Jacob, and the line of David, and crush all of our enemies.

Colossians 2:15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Revelation 19:11 - 20:14 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS....Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh. And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.... When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth-- Gog and Magog-- to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and

each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death.

Ultimately, the great ruler that Balaam saw that day on the plains of Moab is Jesus, and the great message of all Biblical prophecy is very simply this: Jesus is going to be victorious! Be encouraged and take heart!

<u>New City Catechism</u>
Question 20. Who is the Redeemer? The only Redeemer is the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, in whom God became man and bore the penalty for sin himself.

Question 1. How does Jesus' victory over sin and death encourage you? How does it change how you live day to day? How does it change your mindset when you are going through trials?

The Book of Deuteronomy was written right before the Israelites entered the Promised Land. It was written to call the Israelites to be faithful to the covenant that God had made with them. Much of the Book of Deuteronomy is a restating of the law from the Book of Exodus, but Moses opens the book of Deuteronomy by reminding the Israelites of the lack of faithfulness that their fathers had when it was their time to enter the Promised Land. The original account of their failure takes place in Numbers 13. You may remember what occurred. It had been about one year since Israel had left Egypt, and now they were on the edge of the Promised Land. In fact, they were so close to it that Moses sent men from each of the tribes of Israel to explore the land and report back on what they found. They found that the land was everything that God had promised to them, but they also found that the Canaanites who lived in the land were very powerful. Ten of the spies said that even though the land was good, it would be impossible to take it.

Numbers 13:27-33 They gave Moses this account: "We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large... the men who had gone up with him said, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are." And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, "The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size.... We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them."

Of the twelve spies Moses sent out, only Caleb and Joshua believed that God would give them the land by driving out the powerful people who lived there. In this retelling of the story in the Book of Deuteronomy, Moses reminds the people of what happened as a result of their lack of faith and their failure to trust God and take Him at His word. God barred them from entering the land. For forty years they have been forced by God to wander in the desert wilderness until the whole generation who had refused to trust God had passed away. Only Caleb and Joshua would be permitted by God to enter the Promised Land, the rest of that generation died in the desert and never entered the Promised Land because of their lack of faith. The bottom line is this: to enter the land and take possession of it required faith in God to do what they could not do for themselves. The enemies in the land were too powerful for them to defeat in their own strength, but as we will see in the Book of Joshua, they were no match for God. If they had been willing to act by faith and trust God, they would have been able to enjoy the Promised Land and the rest that it offered to them, but because of their lack of faith God turned them away and refused them entry.

The writer of Hebrews draws a parallel between the people of Israel needing faith to enter the Promised Land and ourselves needing faith to enter the eternal rest that God has promised us through Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 3:7 - 4:2 So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me and for forty years saw what I did. That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'" See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief. Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.

It is easy for us to fall into the trap of thinking our salvation depends on us and become discouraged and want to give up because we know we do not measure up. It is easy for us to believe that our enemies of Satan, sin,

and death can overwhelm us and defeat us, if we take our eyes off of Jesus. We must combine what we know about Jesus with faith to trust him alone for victory and our eternal rest.

New City Catechism	Westminster Shorter Catechism
Question 30. What is Faith in Jesus Christ? Faith in Jesus Christ is acknowledging the truth of everything that God has revealed in his Word, trusting in him, and also receiving and resting on him alone for salvation as he is offered to us in the gospel.	Q. 86. What is faith in Jesus Christ? Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace[a] by which we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation as he is freely offered to us in the gospel.[b] [a]. Eph 2:8-9; cf. Rom 4:16 [b]. John 20:30-31; Gal 2:15-16; Php 3:3-11

Question 1. Discuss God’s grace in providing opportunities for repentance even after times of disobedience. How does it demonstrate His love and patience for His people? How does it demonstrate His justice? How does it demonstrate the blessings of His promises and His steadfastness to carry His promises out? Where are His promises fulfilled?

In today's reading Moses calls the people of Israel to live in absolute faithfulness to God. In verse 5, Moses tells the Israelites that God deserves the totality of their lives—every aspect of their lives should be bound up in loving God, worshipping God, and serving God. Then in verses 6-9, Moses tells the Israelites that they must be faithful to obey completely the commands that God has given to them, and not only that, but they must also be sure to teach those commands to their children. As you read these verses, Moses makes it clear that obeying God, loving God, and serving God isn't a part time, once a week thing, but an everyday thing. God's word was to be part of their everyday lives—sewn into their garments, painted on the doorframe of their house, and talked about throughout the day. That is a really tall order. What right did God have to demand such devotion and obedience? Let's go back to where God first gave the commandments to Israel, and we will find out.

Exodus 20:2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

As God gives Israel the law, He lays the foundation for their obedience by reminding them that He is the one who has brought them out of slavery in Egypt. Here in Deuteronomy 6, God reminds the Israelites that He is the one who is bringing them into the Promised Land. He is the one who will give them the land and defeat all of their enemies. The basis for obedience to the law by the people of Israel is the free grace that God has already shown to them. How could you not love a God who has done all of this for you? How could you not serve a God who has done all of this for you?

It is easy for us to shake our heads at the Israelites and wonder how could they have forgotten God? How could they refuse to serve God? How could they worship idols? Before we judge Israel, let's take a moment and look at our own lives. How are we doing loving God with all of our heart, soul, and strength? How are we doing obeying God? How much is God a part of our daily lives? Why do we worship at the altars of idols of our own lives—money, success, approval, etc.? If Israel should have loved and served God because of what God had done for them, bringing them out slavery in Egypt and into the Promised Land, how much more should we love and obey God for bringing us out of our slavery to sin and bondage to death through Christ's death on the cross?

So often we get things all wrong in our lives. We forget what God has done for us, or we minimize it, and we struggle to try to love God and obey God in our own strength. Is it any wonder that we so often fail? When it comes to God, obedience and love always follow His grace. It was true for Israel, and it is true for us as well.

Ephesians 2:8-10 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Instead of trying to make yourself love God more, or trying harder to obey, take some time to remember and think about the grace he has shown to you. The more you see your sin, the more you will see God's grace, which will make you love Him and want to serve Him more. Seeing what God has done for you through Jesus is the key to loving and serving God with all of your heart, soul, and strength.

<u>First Catechism</u>
Question 77. Why should we obey the Ten Commandments? Because God is our Creator, Savior and King.

Question 1. Is there any aspect in your life that you have not been faithful to glorify God in? Have you repented of it? How can we encourage one another to give the totality of our lives and time to worship and serve God?

Question 2. How does your family prioritize teaching God's commands to one another?

In today's reading, God answers questions before they are asked. Look at verse 17. That is the very question the first generation of Israel asked when they became too afraid to enter the land the first time. God tells them that they will not possess the land in their own strength but by His hand. God reminds them of all he has done for them bringing them out of Egypt. God reminds them of all of the miracles that they have witnessed and tells them that there are more to come. The writer of Hebrews tells us that, "faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see" (Hebrews 11:1). But most of the time God doesn't call us to blind faith. Most of the time God gives us reason to believe. Think of the chain of events that led to Israel coming to the edge of the Promised Land. Moses had faith, but it was God who first showed up in the burning bush (Exodus 3). That was the starting point for Moses' faith, and then as Moses continued to walk in faith, God performed more and more miracles, so that not just Moses believed but the people of Israel believed and put their hope in God.

It does take faith to believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sins, and it does take faith for us to believe that we have an eternal home because of what Jesus has done for us on the cross, but God does not call us to blind faith. There is reason for our faith and reason for our hope in Christ.

1 Peter 3:15 in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

What is the reason for the hope we have in Christ?

1 Corinthians 15:17-23 if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.

The firstfruits are the evidence or proof of what is to come in the harvest. Paul is telling us that Jesus is the firstfruit of the resurrection. The faith and hope that we have is because of what we already know has happened with Jesus. There is ample evidence for us to believe and have faith.

1 Corinthians 15:3-8 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

There were lots of witnesses to the fact that Jesus had indeed been raised from the dead. We are not called to a blind faith. God has already shown up and proven to us that the dead can live again. The question is not whether God can do it, the only question is, will God do it for me? That is where faith comes in—claiming the promises for your own life.

2 Corinthians 1:18-20 But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not "Yes" and "No." For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes." For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ

First Catechism	Westminster Shorter Catechism
Question 58. What must you do to be saved? I must repent of my sin and believe in Christ as my Savior.	Q. 44. What does the preface to the Ten Commandments teach us? The preface to the Ten Commandments teaches us that because God is the LORD and our God and Redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all his commandments.[a] [a]. Luk 1:74-75; 1 Pet 1:14-19

Question 1. How can we be on guard against placing our faith in our faith? Where must our faith be placed in?

Repeatedly in these verses, God reminds the Israelites that He did not choose them because of how wonderful they were. The point God is making is that what He is about to do for Israel doesn't depend on Israel. What God is about to do for Israel is purely a work of His grace and power. Make no mistake about it, God does call Israel to be righteous as they enter the land that He is about to give them, but their righteousness and obedience flows out from God's work on their behalf. God didn't choose them or save them because of who they were, but now that God has chosen them, He calls them to complete obedience.

The same is true for us. God doesn't choose to save us because of how wonderful we are.

1 Corinthians 1:26-31 Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things-- and the things that are not-- to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God-- that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."

As God begins to work in our lives it is easy for us to fall into the trap of thinking that God is saving us and doing what He is doing in our lives because of how wonderful we are. But that is not the case at all. Just like Israel, God chooses to save us in spite of who we are. Think about what Paul writes in Ephesians 2.

Ephesians 2:1-5 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-- it is by grace you have been saved.

Paul compares us to dead people. There is nothing attractive about a corpse. Left to itself a corpse will start to smell, and then rot and then turn to dust. A corpse is absolutely helpless until God steps in. Israel had no right to boast about themselves. Without God they were nothing. The same is true for us. Without God's mercy and grace, without Jesus, we would be nothing.

<u>First Catechism</u>	<u>Heidelberg Catechism</u>
Question 62. Can you repent and believe in Christ by your own power? No. I cannot repent and believe unless the Holy Spirit changes my heart.	Q. 91. What are good works? A. Only those which are done out of true faith, ¹ conform to God's law, ² and are done for God's glory; ³ and not those based on our own opinion or human tradition. ⁴ 1 John 15:5; Heb. 11:6 2 Lev. 18:4; 1 Sam. 15:22; Eph. 2:10 3 1 Cor. 10:31 4 Deut. 12:32; Isa. 29:13; Ezek. 20:18-19; Matt. 15:7-9

Question 1. What about this passage humbles you? How can you use that humility to further serve God?

Question 2. The victory over Canaan would clearly not be because of Israel's righteousness. What is our victory over? Is it based on our own righteousness? What is true righteousness and where is it found?

Question 3. This chapter exhorts the Israelites to not forget. What were they not to forget? What are we to not forget, and what are we to remember? See 2 Timothy 2:8.