

Introduction to The Trinity Catechism

Class 3: *What's in It (Part 2) & How Do I Use It? (Benjamin)*

Introduction

According to the International Orality Network approximately 80% of the people in the world prefer or rely on the spoken and remembered word to learn and maintain knowledge.

- 80% of the world do not understand the message when it is delivered to them by literate means.
- They can be completely illiterate, functional illiterate, visually impaired, or hearing impaired, or simply part of an oral culture.
- Some are highly literate but prefer to learn in an oral manner.
- They do not understand the literate concepts even when they hear them.
- They are simply oral preference learners, there are 5.7 billion of them in the world and of that group over 1/2 of them are children!
- A couple nights ago, I was encouraging a young man in some ways to engage the Bible, especially as someone who doesn't enjoy reading.
- **The Trinity Catechism is an oral discipleship tool in a literary delivery mechanism.**

Today's Class

The goal of today's class is to overview the latter 5 sections (questions 48-104) of the *Trinity Catechism* in more detail with a desire to answer these questions:

- **Why is the *Trinity Catechism* laid out like it is—how does its arrangement serve us?**
- **How do the original TC questions help us use the catechism to its fullest?**
 - **22 questions**¹ unique to *The Trinity Catechism*, capturing our distinctives of being reformed, baptistic, complementarian, continuationist and missional.
 - All original questions: 15–18, 24, 26, 35, 37, 43, 49–53, 79, 81, 86, 88, 101–104
- **How do we Catechise as we go?**

¹ Original Questions: 15–18, 24, 26, 35, 37, 43, 49–53, 79, 81, 86, 88, 101–104

The Intentional Arrangement of the *Trinity Catechism*:

Redemption Accomplished & Applied

- There is a logical flow to the arrangement of the TC.
- The First 6 sections lead the catechist through *who God is, Creation, Fall, the plan Redemption* that is accomplished by Jesus and through the Spirit and our faith.
- Today we cover the last 5 sections: these instruct the catechist of the responsibilities or *duties of mankind* before God, and the benefits that are available to the redeemed through *God's Law, Faith & Repentance, the Church, Prayer & our Mission*.
- These sections provide a path for redemption and instruction to live successful lives which are still affected by the Fall and Sin.
- **They give us direction and courage to take advantage of Redemption that was accomplished for us by applying it to our lives individually.**

*“Still, with this caution about undue preoccupation with experience, noted, the multiple benefits of the redemption accomplished by Christ are not “for Christ’s own private use” (Calvin’s arresting phrase). Rather, those benefits are saving benefits that have been acquired and are secured by him in order to be shared with others. Specifically, as Christ’s death is “for our sins,” these saving benefits are for sinners, to be shared with needy sinners. **In other words, for the accomplished redemption to be effective it must be applied. And that application must take place in the life, the actual life history, of the sinner.”***²

Seventh Section: “Our Duty Towards God” (Q 48–75)

- **This is the longest section in the TC.**
- Of the first 6 questions, 5 are original to Trinity.
- These questions and this arrangement is unique to the *Trinity Catechism* because the original Baptist Catechism (Keach) followed the Westminster Shorter and had the Two Great Commandments as a summary of the 10 commandments rather than the 10 commandments being a more specific explanation of the Greatest Commandments. Let’s look at it.

49. How does Jesus summarize this duty toward God?

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. **On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.**”

[Matthew 22:37–40](#)

² Richard B. Gaffin, Jr.; Forward to the 2024 Edition of *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* by John Murray.

- Question 49 is instructive for how we should understand and “apply” the Law as NT believers.
- The ethics in the Catechism start with the two great commandments of Jesus. Our overall obligation to God is to love him and then to love our neighbors as ourselves. Jesus in Matthew 22:40 makes it clear that this is a summary of the *whole law*: “ On these two commandments depend (**“hang” is a better translation**) all the Law and the Prophets.”
- Jesus says that all the Law and Prophets are bound into the Two Great Commandments—so we are still accountable for them as part of the Moral Law.
- Questions 50-51 apply the combined teaching of Jesus and the other NT authors of how to keep these commandments.

50. How do we fulfill the first commandment to love God?

God calls us to love him by delighting in him, obeying him, and worshiping him with all our thoughts, words, and deeds.

[Psalm 37:4](#); [John 14:15](#); [Romans 12:1-2](#)

51. How do we fulfill the second greatest commandment to love our neighbors?

God calls us to love our neighbors by doing good works, showing compassion, evangelizing, and doing no wrong to them, all for the glory of God.

[Luke 10:29-37](#); [Romans 13:10](#); [1 Corinthians 10:31-33](#)

- **From the two great commandments, we then go to the Decalogue (“Ten Words” or “Ten Commandments” (Exod 34:28). God’s moral law is greater than the Decalogue, but it does include these.**
- Passages like Matthew 5:21-48 and Romans 13:8-10 teach us that the Ten Commandments are still binding for the Christian.
 - New Covenant Theology would teach that any commands from the OT are no longer binding to us, unless they are restated in the NT.
- With the Ten Commandments we tried to incorporate the teaching of Jesus and the apostles where appropriate and to interpret them in light of our new covenant context. **Each commandment means more to us in light of the New Testament teaching, not less.**

52. What other commandments help us to know how to love God and our neighbors?

The Ten Commandments teach us how to love God and our neighbors.

[Exodus 20:1-17](#)

53. Which of these commandments are specifically about loving God and which are about loving our neighbors?

The first four teach us about loving God, and the last six teach us about loving our neighbors.

[Romans 13:8-10](#)

“For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” **and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.**”

- Let’s look at one example from the 10 Commandments before we move away from this section.

62. What is the fourth commandment?

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God.”

[Exodus 20:8-11](#)

63. What does the fourth commandment require?

It requires that we regularly gather with God's people to worship him in ways pleasing to him, live in the good of Christ's Sabbath rest now as we await our glorious rest to come, and perform our labor with diligence in the fear of God.

[Hebrews 10:24-25](#); [Acts 20:7](#); [Hebrews 4:1-11](#); [Colossians 3:23](#)

- The 4th commandment actually sneaks in two commandments: work 6 days and rest on the 7th.
- Under the Law the Sabbath was a strict “stop” command.
- In the NT we see that Jesus reorients the command to be a blessing for us, to rest in blessing of the “Lord of the Sabbath.” (Matt 12:6)
- The NT saints and authors also clearly began to practice sabbath as more than a day of rest, but also a day of corporate gathering, worship, and sacraments—living in the hope of future glory and eternal rest.

Eighth Section: “Conversion and Baptism” (Q 76–83)

- **Section 8 is the Gospel Message Section:** You can summarize all the questions of the section by saying something like: *We can’t keep God’s law, that reveals his will for man, convicts him of sin and restrains him from it, leading him to faith in Christ, repentance from sin and baptism into the church.*
- **Man’s Inability and the Law’s Role (Q76-77)**
 - The logic of the Catechism is that once we work through the Commandments, we are confronted by our inability to obey them. That’s the point of Q 76.
- **Faith (Q 78–79)**

- This points us immediately to Christ for salvation, which is why Q 78 is about faith in Christ.
 - Note that Q79 describes the kind of faith that saves. It is the faith that leads to repentance and good works.
- **Repentance (Q 80)** is the result of the Spirits work (from Q36 and Q38) regenerating our hearts, with that new heart we recognize and understand our sin and the mercy of God and we turn from sin to declare submission and dependance to him.
 - Here we see another example of the logic of the catechism and how it builds upon itself.
- **Baptism (Q 81–83)**
 - After repentance the first act of obedience is Baptism!
 - Baptism is a huge deal! As we've said before the original catechisms were often extremely long teachings that someone must go through prior to being baptized into the church.
 - It was the confirmation of your faith—which is why you were confirmed before baptism (thinking of the early church, not the Roman Catholic one) before you were allowed to be baptized and partake in the Lord's Supper.
 - In the NT though we see the obedience of baptism being practiced often immediately after a confession of faith. (Acts 8:35-39; Ethiopian Eunuch)
 - In Peter's sermon in Acts 2 he instructed those who were "cut to the heart" to "Repent and be baptized every one of you..."
 - This also demonstrates an important distinction in the *Trinity Catechism* expanding on other Baptist catechisms by expounding on baptism as an act of obedience following hearing the message and repenting.
 - What is to follow faith and repentance? Baptism! (Q 81).
 - What is to follow baptism? Membership in a church (Q 84ff.).

Ninth Section: "The Church" (Q 84–91)

- The church is a unique community. It is both a living organism, a body composed of many parts including visible and invisible members, and an organization with structure and hierarchy (Q85, Q87).
- Our definition of the church serves us well, but discreetly wrapped up in the words "organized community", "preaching the word", "administering" and "exercising", is the implication of authority; that authority comes through the office of elder as defined in Question 86.

85. What is the visible or local church?

The visible or local church is the organized community of professing believers in any time and place, which is marked by the preaching of the Word, administering the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and exercising church discipline.

[1 Timothy 3:14–15](#); [Acts 14:23](#); [1 Corinthians 1:2](#); [Acts 2:42](#); [Ephesians 4:11–12](#); [2 Timothy 4:1–2](#); [Matthew 16:19](#); [Matthew 28:19–20](#)

86. Whom does God set apart to lead a local church?

To lead a local church, God sets apart gifted and qualified men to serve as elders, who are also called pastors or overseers.

[Acts 20:28](#); [1 Timothy 3:1–7](#); [Hebrews 13:17](#); [1 Peter 5:1–4](#)

- Corporate Worship (Q 88) - Note that here our Continuationist dimension comes out.
- It's helpful to have a definition of worship that captures such a robust example of activity and purpose.

88. What has God commanded the church to do when it gathers for worship?

A church when it gathers for worship is to read and preach the Word; partake of the sacraments; sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; pray; fellowship; practice the whole array of spiritual gifts; and be equipped for mission.

[Acts 2:42](#); [Acts 20:7](#); [2 Timothy 4:1–2](#); [Ephesians 5:18–19](#); [1 Timothy 2:1–2](#); [1 Peter 5:14](#); [1 Peter 4:10–11](#); [1 Corinthians 12:7](#); [1 Corinthians 14:26](#); [Matthew 28:19–20](#)

- The Lord's Supper is also addressed in Questions 89-91.
- The Lord's Supper has always been understood to be a significant reason for the corporate gathering of the church. (Acts 2:42; 20:7)

90. What is the Lord's Supper?

The Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ himself as a means for us to remember, participate in, and proclaim his death until he comes again. Through the simple act of eating the bread and drinking the cup in faith, we feast on Christ and affirm our union with him and each other.

[1 Corinthians 11:23–26](#); [1 Corinthians 10:16](#)

Tenth Section: “The Lord’s Prayer (Q 92–100)”

- Catechisms are not just about doctrine and duty. They're also about growing in our relationship with God—communion with him. Few things are as important for that communion as prayer. It is common for catechisms to include a presentation of the Lord's Prayer.
- Note that we took the Lord's Prayer from the ESV, which leaves out the ending familiar to many of us from the KJV, “For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory.” This is not original in the Greek of Matthew 9. **(This is given by example in Question 93 on the digital version.)**
- The Lord's Prayer is an excellent framework for prayer, covering the key aspects we want included in our prayer lives.

- Section 10 is similar to Section 7 in the way it approaches each petition of the prayer and how that part of the prayer instructs us and encourages us in our own prayer. **(e.g. Q97)**

97. What do we pray for in the third petition, “Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”?

In this we pray that God by his grace would make us able and willing to know, obey, and submit to his will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.

[Matthew 6:10](#); [Psalm 103:20–21](#); [Psalm 119:36](#); [Matthew 26:39](#); [1 Corinthians 10:31](#); [Hebrews 13:20–21](#)

- **Not only does this organization define and model prayer for us, but each question provides an opportunity for additional biblical instruction from the NT to deepen our understanding and strengthen our conviction to practice this grace.** (A quick observation finds an average of 6 additional NT references per questions.)

Eleventh Section: “Our Mission and Great Longing” (Q 101–104)

- **This section is entirely original to the *Trinity Catechism* and demonstrates our distinctive “Missional” theology and understandings. (Q101)**
- Our work lives, home lives, and evangelistic lives are covered here, though briefly. (Q102)
- But it also captures our commitment to partnership in the Great Commission with the whole Church.

103. How do local churches partner with the whole Church in fulfilling the Great Commission?

Local churches pray and share their resources and people in cooperation with the whole Church to make disciples and plant churches among all the peoples of the earth.

[Matthew 28:18–20](#); [Acts 1:8](#); [Acts 13:1–3](#); [Romans 15:18–21](#); [Ephesians 6:19](#); [Philippians 1:3–7](#); [Revelation 5:9–14](#); [Psalm 67:1–7](#)

- Examples of this at Cornerstone is our partnership with Trinity Fellowship Churches exploring collaborations with one another in Nepal and Armenia as well as our own extra-local commitments to Agua Viva, TWR and Acts 29 Latin America.
- **Again, discipleship is the goal of a catechism and not simply accuracy of doctrine.**
- Note the final question! “What is our great longing as the Church?” (104)

104. What is our great longing as the Church?

Our great longing is for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will usher in a new heaven and a new earth where God will dwell with us forever, all sadness and sin will be banished, and worship will never end. Come, Lord Jesus!

[1 Corinthians 16:22b](#); [Revelation 21:1-4](#); [Revelation 22:3c](#); [Revelation 22:20](#)

Being a catechist, as you go!

“A Catechist is someone who lets the word of God echo through their life.

Catechists do more than simply teaching the faith. A Catechist shares their faith and guides their students to learn how to apply and live their faith, as well.”

“A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. “It is enough for the disciple that he becomes like his teacher, and the slave like his master.” - Matt 10:24-25a

Personal study, growth.

- A place to start if you want a fresh devotional tool. (Advent devotional.)
- Family Worship: Q&A, look up the references.
- A practical launch point for Scripture memorization: Q&A + Scripture.
- Redeeming car rides.
- Replace your screen with a catechism. Redeem downtime with memory work.

Clarity and Confidence in Christian Testimony

- Great tool for engaging skeptics or non-believers.
- Use it to disciple someone new to the faith: the catechism covers theology, obedience, prayer, life in the church.
- Doctrine and so much more: It includes ethics, spiritual disciplines, and mission.
- **Quick and concise definitions of important biblical ideas with their biblical proofs.**
- Great complement to the *The Trinity Confession of Faith*.
- *The Trinity Catechism* is a pocketable and quick access tool to interact with sound doctrine and spiritual growth.

Local Church Worship & Equipping:

- Sunday Mornings in 2025!
 - Corporate worship during our Sunday gathering.
 - 104 questions, 52 weeks, 2 questions per week.
- Sunday school and Youth meetings
- Homegroup liturgy