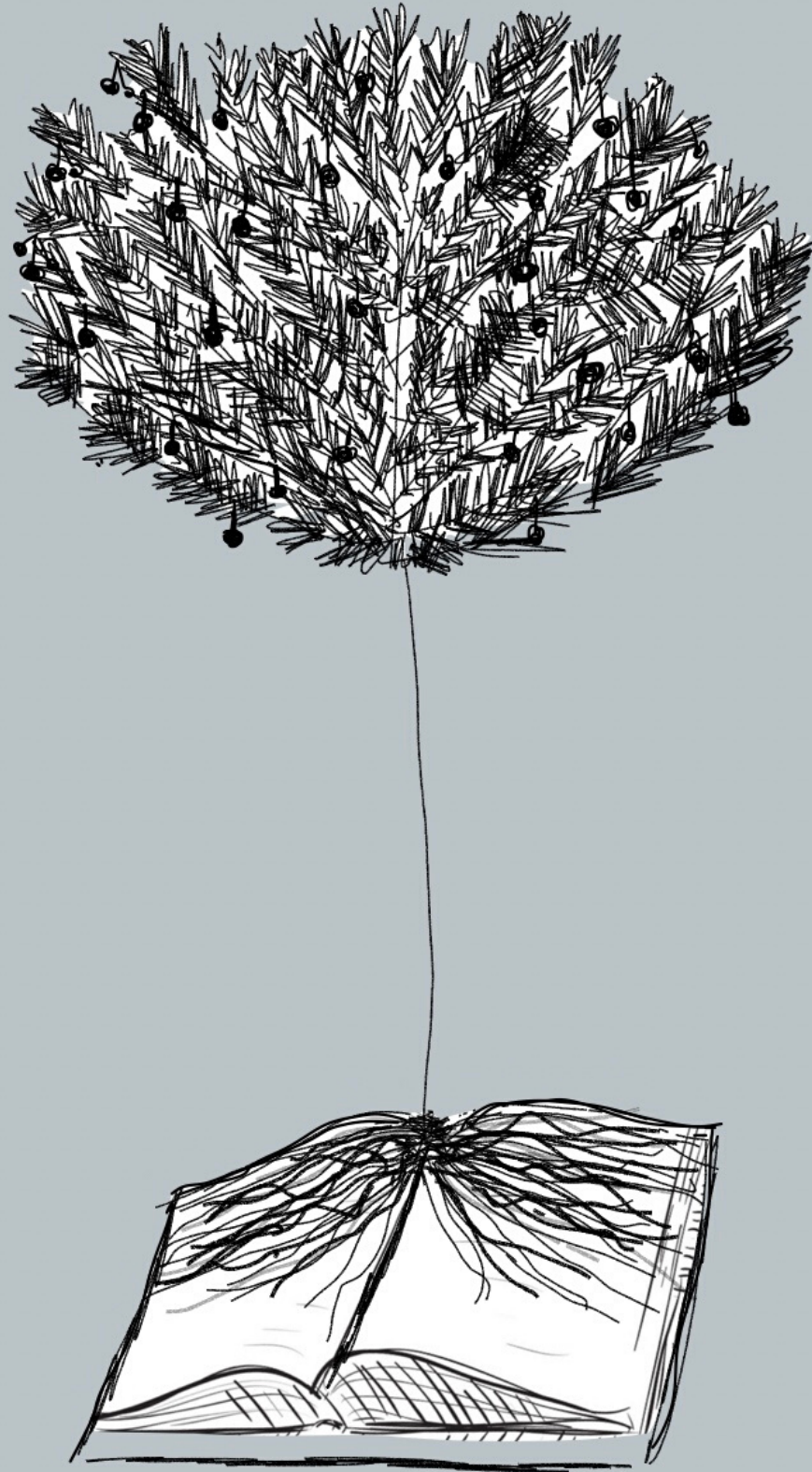


# ROOTS

ESSENTIALS OF A FAITHFUL LIFE



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## Introduction

What is the Roots Catechism, and how do I use it?

The document you are holding is a fresh take on an ancient practice. It is one piece in the process of discipleship. Consider trees. Trees can grow and change with time. Some bear fruit, some grow to incredible sizes, and some live for hundreds of years. But all trees have one thing in common: roots. Any tree is only as strong as its roots. Roots nourish the tree and anchor it into the ground. Without strong roots, the tree will either wither, fall, or have its growth stunted.

What you have before you are like spiritual roots. This document is meant to introduce you to the basic story and teachings of the Bible. A Christian will never outgrow these truths. These are the roots that will nourish and anchor you in this life so that you become a strong, fruit-bearing follower of Jesus.

But what exactly is a catechism? For some, the word is totally foreign. For others, it may bring back bad memories of dull repetition. But there is no need for confusion or dread; the concept is quite simple. The word “catechism” comes from a Greek word in the New Testament meaning to teach. Catechism simply means something that is taught. This document is a catechism—a collection of teachings about Jesus. But another related word is more important for us. That word is “catechesis.” Whereas a catechism is a collection of teaching, catechesis refers to the process of teaching. Here is why that matters.

Catechesis is a biblical practice. In Deuteronomy 6:6-9, God told His people to carefully remember His words and teach them to children. God’s Word was to be carefully passed down from one generation to the next. Children would memorize Scripture and be taught to meditate on it daily. In the New Testament, we also see that there was a body of teaching that circulated throughout the churches and was taught to new believers. In Luke 1:1-4, Luke says that he has written his gospel so that Theophilus can know the certainty of the things he was taught. “The things you have been taught” is from the Greek form of the word “catechism.” Romans 6:17 and 1 Timothy 6:20 also seem to refer to a group of teachings that had been passed on to early believers about Jesus. This makes sense because Jesus had told His disciples to “make disciples of all nations... teaching them to observe all that I had commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20). How were they to make disciples? Presumably, the same way that Jesus had made them disciples. That involved learning a great deal of content, but it also involved practicing a new way of life that Jesus modeled. The goal was not to pass a test, but to learn to love God and serve Him in everyday life!

That is why the distinction between “catechism” and “catechesis” is important. We must be careful not to think that memorizing this document makes us faithful disciples of Jesus. A disciple is not defined by knowledge. Consider the analogy of a tree again. While a tree cannot survive without good roots, it is more than just roots. Roots without anything else are nothing more than a dead stump in the ground. A “Christian” who can accurately describe doctrine but who does not live a transformed life is spiritually dead. Our goal is not to memorize a catechism, but to go through catechesis, or, in other words, discipleship. We want to be disciples of Jesus, meaning that we are learning to live like Jesus. The content is necessary, but it only helps us if it grows our love for God and our neighbor.

Throughout its history, the church has practiced catechesis in a variety of ways. While the form changes, the substance does not. Catechesis is simply the process of more mature believers instructing new believers in the same biblical truths to bring those believers to maturity in Christ. The process of becoming a disciple never ends. We will always be students of Jesus. Catechesis is not meant to be the final step, but rather the first. Think of catechesis as a sort of onboarding process. It is how we give new believers the knowledge they need to continue growing in the Lord.

Here is how you should use this catechism. You will find here 52 questions and answers. That is one question for each week of the year. Attached to each week are five passages of Scripture that complement the main idea of the question and answer. Each week, study the question and answer and try to memorize it. Think about it and how it may shape your everyday life and your understanding of God, yourself, and others. Read one passage of Scripture each day of the week. You will find reading for five days a week. You will have two days a week to read something else or to catch up if you fall behind. The questions and answers quickly and clearly define what we believe and will keep you in the truth. However, the Scriptures are God's Word to us. Do not neglect reading them! They will change you in ways the catechism never could. You will notice that each week ends with a Psalm. The Psalms are prayers and songs that you can adopt as your own. They are included so that as you learn what God says to you, you also learn how to speak to God. To grow, you must pray! Remember to pray daily.

While this catechism may be a benefit for you to study alone, you will find it more beneficial to study with others. After all, Jesus had twelve disciples — not one! Try to find a small group of believers who will commit to studying this catechism with you weekly. Ask a mature believer to join you in this process. In a group, pray for one another, share insights, ask questions, and challenge one another to apply these truths to life. You will find it helpful to keep a journal of things worth mentioning in your meetings. After you read, write down a short note about what you read. This will help you remember to mention it in your group meetings.

If you have children, you may also find this as a helpful guide to family devotions. Teach it on a level that suits your child's level of understanding. Read some of the Scriptures, pray together, and memorize the questions. While small children may not understand everything they memorize, you are filling their minds with truths that they will remember and understand later.

Remember the goal: to know and be like Jesus. Pray that God would change your heart and increase your love for Him and others. May God bless you and keep you, and may you know the riches of His goodness and love.

Elijah Blalock

## **God, Scripture, and Creation**

### **1. What is our only hope in life and death?**

That I am not my own but belong, body and soul, in life and death, to my faithful savior, Jesus Christ. He paid for all my sins with his precious blood and watches over me so that not a hair can fall from my head apart from the will of God, my Father in Heaven, who makes all things work together for my salvation.

1. Isaiah 63:7-19
2. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
3. Romans 14:7-9
4. John 10:1-18
5. Psalm 1

### **2. How can we know who God is and that we belong to Him?**

The Bible is God's perfect word. It is totally true, without error, and tells us who God is, what He has done, and what He wants from us and for us.

1. Deuteronomy 30:11-20
2. Jeremiah 1:4-10
3. 2 Timothy 3:14-17
4. 2 Peter 1:16-2:3
5. Psalm 119:1-16

### **3. Who is God?**

We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible, and one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, through whom all things were made, and the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and Son. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God in three persons.

1. Genesis 1:1-25
2. Exodus 3:13-15
3. Isaiah 42
4. John 1:1-5
5. Psalm 2

### **4. What is God?**

God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

1. Exodus 34:5-7
2. James 1:13-18
3. 1 Timothy 6:11-16
4. 1 John 4:7-21
5. Psalm 19

### **5. How and why did God make people?**

God made us male and female in His image, in true righteousness and holiness, with dominion over the creatures, so that we might truly know God, love him with all our heart, and live with God in eternal happiness, praising and glorifying him.

1. Genesis 1:26-2:3
2. Daniel 7:9-14
3. Mark 12:18-34
4. Acts 17:22-34
5. Psalm 8

### **6. How were people to have eternal life with God?**

God makes himself known and grants eternal life through covenants, which are solemn agreements in which God promises blessings to those who keep the conditions of the covenant. God's covenant with the first man, Adam, was a covenant of works, meaning Adam would have had eternal life had he obeyed God.

1. Genesis 2:4-25
2. Luke 17:5-10
3. Romans 5:12-21
4. Jeremiah 31:31-34
5. Psalm 39

## **Fall**

### **7. Have people obeyed God?**

No. Our first parents, Adam and Eve, were deceived by the devil and rebelled against God's command and became sinners enslaved to death and the devil, along with all their descendants.

1. Genesis 3:1-4:16
2. Genesis 6-7
3. Genesis 8-9
4. Genesis 11:1-9
5. Psalm 81

### **8. What is sin?**

Sin refers to our guilt before God and the corruption of our nature so that we do not love God or obey Him. All people are born sinners condemned to death by God.

1. Romans 1:18-32
2. Romans 3:9-24
3. Romans 7:14-25
4. Jeremiah 17:9-18
5. Psalm 32

## The Law

### 9. Has God abandoned us to sin?

No! God called Abraham so that he could bless all people again. His family is called Israel, or the Hebrews or Jews.

1. Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-21; 21:1-7; 22:1-19
2. Genesis 25:19-26:6; 27; 28:10-22
3. Genesis 37; 41:1-42:26
4. Genesis 43:1-15; 44:1-45:15; 50:15-26
5. Psalm 111

### 10. What happened to Abraham's family?

They went to Egypt and were forced into slavery, but God rescued them through Moses and made a covenant with Israel. This covenant is called the Law, and it restated the covenant of works for Israel while also pointing forward to the New Covenant of grace which was to come with Christ.

1. Exodus 1-2
2. Exodus 3:1-4:20
3. Exodus 12:29-42; 14:1-31
4. Exodus 24; 33:1-34:9
5. Psalm 105

### 11. What are the three kinds of Laws in the Old Covenant?

1) Moral laws, which abide forever and define sin and righteousness, 2) Civil laws, which were to govern the nation of ancient Israel, and 3) Ceremonial laws, which governed worship in the Tabernacle and Temple before Christ. In the New Covenant, we are no longer under the civil and ceremonial law, though we do find wisdom and types of Christ in them.

1. Exodus 40
2. Leviticus 16
3. Leviticus 19
4. Leviticus 25
5. Psalm 25

### 12. What is the moral law?

The moral law is summarized in these two commands: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and love your neighbor as yourself.

1. Numbers 13-14
2. Deuteronomy 6:1-9
3. Romans 13:8-10
4. Joshua 24
5. Psalm 116



### **13. How are we commanded to love God?**

In the Ten Commandments, God said:

- I. Have no other gods besides me.
- II. Do not make or worship an image.
- III. Do not misuse the name of the Lord your God.
- IV. Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy.

1. Exodus 20:1-11
2. Deuteronomy 6:10-25
3. 1 Samuel 16
4. 1 Samuel 17
5. Psalm 135

### **14. How are we commanded to love people?**

In the Ten Commandments, God said:

- V. Honor your father and mother.
- VI. Do not murder.
- VII. Do not commit adultery
- VIII. Do not steal.
- IX. Do not lie.
- X. Do not covet.

1. Exodus 20:12-17
2. Deuteronomy 24:10-22
3. 1 Samuel 22; 24
4. 2 Samuel 1; 7
5. Psalm 37

### **15. Did Israel keep these laws?**

No. God blessed them and brought them to a good land, but they were so stubborn in their disobedience, that God sent them into exile from their land.

1. 2 Samuel 11-12
2. 1 Kings 8
3. 1 Kings 11:1-13; 11:41-12:33
4. 2 Kings 17; 2 Chronicles 36
5. Psalm 51

### **16. Can anyone obey God's law?**

No, because we are enslaved to sin and cannot keep the law. Therefore, the Law accuses us before God.

1. Hosea 11
2. Ezekiel 36:16-38
3. Nehemiah 1-2
4. John 5:37-47
5. Psalm 89

## Jesus

### 17. Is there any hope for us?

Jesus, the Son of God, came to save people from their sins. For us and our salvation, he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man.

1. Isaiah 40
2. Matthew 1
3. Mark 1
4. Mark 2
5. Psalm 72

### 18. Was Jesus God or Man?

The one Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, is at once truly God and truly man. Jesus is one person with two natures: one of the same substance as the Father, and the other of the same substance as ours, with a rational human soul and body.

1. John 1:1-18
2. Philippians 2:5-11
3. Mark 3
4. Mark 4
5. Psalm 46

### 19. What does this mean that Jesus was fully God and man?

It means that Jesus is Immanuel, or “God with us.” He is the one and only mediator between God and man who fulfilled the law on our behalf and established a new covenant with us.

1. Ezekiel 37:15-28
2. Mark 5
3. Mark 6
4. Mark 7
5. Psalm 145

### 20. What did Jesus do?

Jesus preached that the Kingdom of God is near. He worked miracles, and God’s kingdom triumphed over evil everywhere He went.

1. Isaiah 9:1-7
2. Matthew 5
3. Matthew 6
4. Matthew 7
5. Psalm 78

**21. How did Jesus establish a new covenant?**

For our sake, he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father, where he intercedes for us.

1. Exodus 16:1-17:7
2. Mark 8
3. Mark 9
4. Mark 10
5. Psalm 110

**22. Why did Jesus die in this way?**

He died to atone for our sins, which means He suffered the penalty of our sins by dying in our place so that we could be forgiven and freed from sin, death, and the devil.

1. Isaiah 52:13-53:12
2. Mark 11
3. Mark 12
4. Mark 13
5. Psalm 118

**23. What does His resurrection mean for us?**

This means that death and the devil have been defeated by Jesus and cannot hold anyone who trusts in Jesus. Everyone who trusts in Jesus will someday be raised, just as He was raised.

1. John 11
2. Mark 14
3. Mark 15
4. Mark 16
5. Psalm 22

## Trinity

**24. How can God have a Son?**

Jesus, the Son of God, is begotten from the Father before all ages, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, being the same essence as the Father.

1. Colossians 1:9-23
2. Hebrews 1
3. John 3
4. John 5:17-30
5. Psalm 45

**25. Is there more than one god?**

No, because Jesus said, “I and the Father are one.” The Son and Holy Spirit are the same substance as the Father, and the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God.

1. Deuteronomy 4:32-40
2. 1 Corinthians 8:4-6
3. John 8:30-59
4. John 10:22-39
5. Psalm 82

**26. Are the Father, the Son, and the Spirit all one person?**

No, because only the Son is begotten of the Father, only the Spirit proceeds from the Father and Son, and only the Father is unbegotten and proceeds from no one.

1. Genesis 18
2. Luke 3:21-22; 4:1-15
3. John 15:26-16:15
4. Ephesians 1:3-14
5. Psalm 139

**27. How can the Father, Son, and Spirit be one God?**

There are three persons, but only one essence. The Father, Son, and Spirit are all eternal and uncreated, of one and the same will, without any rank or hierarchy, working inseparably.

1. John 17
2. 1 John 5:5-21
3. 1 Timothy 2:1-7
4. Ephesians 4
5. Psalm 97

## **Holy Spirit**

**28. Who is the Holy Spirit?**

The Holy Spirit is the Lord, the giver of life. He proceeds from the Father and Son, and with the Father and Son is worshipped and glorified. He spoke through the prophets.

1. Genesis 1:1-2
2. Matthew 28:19-20
3. John 6:60-71
4. John 7:37-39
5. Psalm 143

**29. How do we know the Spirit?**

God sends the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts. He is God living in us.

1. Ezekiel 37:1-14
2. Acts 2
3. 1 Corinthians 6:12-17
4. 2 Corinthians 3
5. Psalm 73

**30. What does the Spirit do?**

He changes our sinful hearts and brings us to faith in Christ so we can have new life. He unites us to Christ and makes us children of God like Jesus.

1. John 14:15-31
2. Galatians 4:1-7
3. Romans 8
4. Titus 3:4-11
5. Psalm 141

**31. How does He make us like Jesus?**

The Spirit convicts us of sin, compels us to good works, gives us spiritual gifts, comforts us, and helps us pray.

1. Exodus 35:30-35
2. Isaiah 61
3. 1 Corinthians 12
4. Galatians 5:16-26
5. Psalm 23

## Salvation

**32. How can we be saved and receive the Spirit?**

We are saved when we repent of our sins and believe in Christ alone for salvation.

1. Habakkuk 2:2-4
2. Romans 10:9-13
3. Joel 2
4. Acts 10
5. Psalm 86

**33. Do we have to be good to be saved?**

No one can be good enough to be saved. Only Jesus can make us right with God.

1. 2 Chronicles 33:1-17
2. Luke 7:36-50
3. Acts 9:1-31
4. Ephesians 2
5. Psalm 130

**34. Does this mean good works don't matter?**

No, because if we love Jesus, we will keep His commands, and the Holy Spirit produces good works in us. This is how we live as God's children.

1. James 2:14-26
2. 1 John 2:1-17
3. Colossians 3:1-4:6
4. Hebrews 12
5. Psalm 112

**35. What is justification?**

Justification is when God declares us to be righteous. Everyone who trusts in Jesus, even though they are sinners, is given Jesus' righteousness and accepted by God.

1. Isaiah 1
2. Romans 5:1-11
3. Galatians 3:1-14
4. 2 Corinthians 5:14-21
5. Psalm 103

**36. What is sanctification?**

Sanctification is when God makes us holy like He is holy so that we die to sin and live to righteousness. This happens gradually as we learn to trust and obey Christ more fully.

1. Exodus 19
2. Isaiah 6
3. 1 Peter 1:13-2:12
4. 1 Thessalonians 3:11-4:8
5. Psalm 99

## **Church**

**37. What must we do after we begin following Jesus?**

We must be baptized and join a church to worship God, learn the Scriptures, love one another, and proclaim the good news about Jesus.

1. Nehemiah 8:1-12
2. Acts 4:23-35
3. Hebrews 10:19-39
4. John 13:34-35
5. Psalm 68

**38. What is a church?**

The universal church is made up of all people who have entered into the new covenant with God through Christ's blood. Local churches are visible gatherings of believers in a covenant to worship and serve Christ together according to his commands.

1. Isaiah 55:1-56:8
2. Romans 11
3. Ephesians 5-6
4. 1 Corinthians 14:26-40
5. Psalm 133

**39. What marks a true church?**

A true church is made up of baptized believers who have covenanted together to preach the gospel, pray, support their needy, discipline members in sin, and administer the sacraments, which are baptism and the Lord's Supper.

1. Acts 20
2. 2 Thessalonians 2:13-3:15
3. 1 Timothy 5
4. 1 Corinthians 5:1-6:11
5. Psalm 114

**40. Who governs a church?**

Though churches cooperate to spread the gospel, each church governs itself under the authority of Christ. The members of a church admit and remove members, ordain deacons to serve, and pastors (also called elders) to teach and lead the church.

1. 1 Timothy 3
2. 1 Peter 5:1-5
3. Acts 6:1-7; 11:27-30; 13:1-3
4. Acts 15:1-35
5. Psalm 33

## **Baptism**

**41. What is baptism?**

Baptism is how we publicly repent of our sins and declare our faith in Jesus. It is a sign to us that God has forgiven our sins, hidden us in Christ, and called us his beloved children.

1. Matthew 3
2. Acts 8:26-40
3. 1 Peter 3:18-22
4. 1 Corinthians 10:1-13
5. Psalm 77

#### **42. How should we be baptized?**

After professing faith in Christ, we should be dipped in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This signifies that our old sinful self has died and been buried with Christ and that we now live a new life, anticipating our future resurrection with Christ.

1. Colossians 2:8-15
2. Romans 6:1-14
3. 2 Kings 5:1-19a
4. Micah 7:8-20
5. Psalm 66

### **The Lord's Supper**

#### **43. What is the Lord's Supper?**

The Lord's Supper is a meal instituted by Christ that the church takes that proclaims Jesus' death, resurrection, and future return by sharing the bread and cup. It brings God's family around God's table.

1. Exodus 12:1-28
2. Luke 22:1-30
3. Isaiah 25
4. Ruth 1
5. Psalm 146

#### **44. How does the Lord's Supper proclaim the gospel?**

The bread and cup represent the body and blood of Jesus offered freely to sinners. The Supper is a foretaste of the feast we will share with Christ in his kingdom.

1. John 2:1-12
2. Hebrews 9
3. Hebrews 10:1-18
4. Ruth 2
5. Psalm 34

#### **45. How does the Lord's Supper help the church?**

Those who take the Supper in faith share in the body and blood of Christ—not physically, but spiritually. They are nourished by Christ for spiritual growth.

1. Deuteronomy 8
2. John 4:1-38
3. John 6:1-15, 22-59
4. Ruth 3
5. Psalm 63



**46. How should we take the Supper?**

We should only take the Supper after believing in Christ and being baptized. We should examine ourselves, confess our sins, and trust in Christ, lest we bring judgment on ourselves by taking the Supper in an unworthy manner.

1. 1 Corinthians 10:14-22
2. 1 Corinthians 11:17-34
3. Ruth 4
4. Revelation 19:1-10
5. Psalm 50

## Prayer

**47. How should we pray?**

Jesus taught us to pray like this:

Our Father in Heaven,  
Your name be honored as holy,  
Your kingdom come,  
Your will be done,  
On earth as it is in Heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread,  
And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors,  
And do not lead us into temptation,  
but deliver us from the evil one. (Matt. 6:9-13 CSB)

1. Matthew 6:9-13
2. Luke 11:1-13
3. Luke 12:1-34
4. Exodus 32:1-14
5. Psalm 16

**48. What does the first half of the prayer teach us?**

God is our Father, and His will is always for our benefit. We must pray for what God wants so that we are reminded to trust Him and serve Him.

1. Matthew 21:1-22
2. Luke 22:39-46
3. Daniel 3
4. 2 Timothy 2
5. Psalm 42

**49. What does the second half of the prayer teach us?**

We must make our needs and desires known to God, so that we trust God for all things, and we must forgive others as God has forgiven us.

1. James 5:13-18
2. 1 Peter 5:6-11
3. Luke 20:45-47
4. 1 Samuel 1
5. Psalm 13

**50. Why should we pray?**

Prayer is how we talk with God and come to know him. God is our Father, listening closely to our every request and giving us good gifts.

1. Luke 18:1-14
2. Hebrews 4:14-5:10
3. Daniel 6
4. 1 Samuel 2:1-10
5. Psalm 6

## **The Return of Jesus**

**51. What is our ultimate hope?**

Just as Christ rose from the dead, so also will we rise again when He returns. We will know and enjoy God forever in a new and perfect creation, but those who rejected Jesus will face eternal judgment in hell.

1. Isaiah 26
2. Isaiah 66
3. Daniel 12
4. 1 Corinthians 15
5. Psalm 27

**52. What if we die before He returns?**

All who have died in Christ will go to be with Him in spirit until He returns and gives eternal life to our bodies.

1. 2 Corinthians 5:1-10
2. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11
3. Revelation 20:11-21:8
4. Revelation 21:22-22:21
5. Psalm 150