

THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

HAVING SEEN WHAT THE SCRIPTURES PRINCIPALLY TEACH US CONCERNING GOD, IT FOLLOWS TO CONSIDER WHAT THEY REQUIRE AS THE DUTY OF MAN

QUESTIONS # 116 & 58 & 59.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #116. *What is required in the fourth commandment?*

A. The fourth commandment requireth of all men the sanctifying or keeping holy to God such set times as he hath appointed in his word, expressly one whole day in seven; which was the seventh from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, and the first day of the week ever since, and so to continue to the end of the world; which is the Christian sabbath,¹ and in the New Testament called *The Lord's day*.²

(Shorter Catechism)

Q #58. *What is required in the fourth commandment?*

A. The fourth commandment requireth the keeping holy to God such set times as he hath appointed in his Word; expressly one whole day in seven, to be a holy sabbath to himself.³

Q #59. *Which day of the seven hath God appointed to be the weekly sabbath?*

A. From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly sabbath; and the first day of the week ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian sabbath.⁴

Question 1—*What is meant by the set times mentioned?*

Answer—The set times are those appointments, stated feasts and holy convocations for religious worship, instituted under Moses, which were of binding obligation upon the dispensation of the church of the Jews, including, 1.) the Sabbath day, Lev. 23:1-3; 2.) the Passover, Lev. 23:4, 5; 3.) the feast of unleavened bread, Lev. 23:6-8; 4.) the feast of firstfruits, Lev. 23:9-14; 5.) the feast of Pentecost, Lev. 23:15-21; 6.) the feast of Trumpets (*Rosh Hashanah*), Lev. 23:23-25; 7.) the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*), Lev. 23:26-32; 8.) the feast of Tabernacles (*Succoth*), Lev. 23:33-44.

Question 2—*Is there any warrant for anniversary, or stated holidays, now, under the New Testament?*

Answer—Those days, being commanded under the Mosaic dispensation, set forth, using typical and shadowy forms, the truths of the gospel dispensation; thus, 1.) the Passover held forth the passion and crucifixion of Jesus, 1 Cor. 5:7; 2.) the feast of unleavened bread held forth His sinless character, 1 Cor. 5:8; 3.) the feast of firstfruits held forth His resurrection, 1 Cor. 15:20, 23; 4.) the feast of Pentecost held forth the greater effusion of the Holy Spirit upon the New Testament church, Acts 2:1-4; 5.) the feast of Trumpets held forth the sounding forth of the gospel during the New Testament era, Rev. 1:10, 11; 6.) the Day of Atonement held forth the necessity of atonement fulfilled

¹ Deut. 5:12-14; Gen. 2:2, 3; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2; Acts 20:7; Matt. 5:17, 18; Isa. 56:2, 4, 6, 7.

² Rev. 1:10.

³ Deut. 5:12-14.

⁴ Gen. 2:2, 3; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2; Acts 20:7.

in Christ, 2 Cor. 5:21; 7.) the feast of Tabernacles held forth the gathering together in one body of both Jews and Gentiles, Zech. 14:16-19.

These, being abrogated in Christ, there is neither precept, nor example, for the establishing of holy days of men's devising, all such being contrary to the tenor of the New Testament, Gal. 4:9, 10; Col. 2:16, 17. The observance of which usurps the prerogative of God, who alone may set times, Isa. 48:17; and is an encroachment upon the liberty wherewith Christ has set His church and people free, Col. 2:20. The Lord abhors holy days devised out of men's own hearts, 1 Kings 12:33. When men make holidays of their own to be kept holy, the day appointed by God is spoiled of its peculiar honor, and there is no peculiar honor that is left to it, Ezek. 43:8.

Question 3—*Has the Sabbath day been abrogated as well?*

Answer—The Sabbath, being moral in its original institution, Gen. 2:2, 3; contained nothing typical or ceremonial, because Adam, being yet unfallen and under a covenant of works, needed no typical revelation of redemption in Christ, Gal. 3:12. Concerning the moral law, Christ did not come to abolish but to fulfill that which was moral, Matt. 5:17-19.

Though these other set times have been laid aside with the dispensation of types and shadows, the principle of the Sabbath (*i.e.*, its morality) remains under the New Testament, Heb. 4:9. The moral principle applied to both the Israelite and the stranger in the land, Num. 15:30-32. God has set forth the principle of one day to be kept as a holy Sabbath to perpetuity, Deut. 5:12-14. This principle involves the keeping, or sanctifying, of that day wholly to the Lord, Isa. 56:2, 4, 6, 7.

Question 4—*Which day is to be kept holy?*

Answer—The Sabbath, from the beginning of world to Christ, was kept upon the seventh day of the week, Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 20:10. Since the resurrection of Christ, the church under the New Testament dispensation has gathered upon the first day of the week, 1 Cor. 16:1, 2; Acts 20:7.

By "whole day" is meant not simply that period of time which consists of the time of daylight, or the artificial day, from sun-rise to sunset, John 11:9; rather, it means the entire period, consisting of twenty four hours known as a natural day, Gen. 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31. This day begins after midnight and continues until the next midnight, John 20:19. The Christian Sabbath picks up where the Jewish Sabbath ended (*cf.* σαββάτων), Matt. 28:1; as was prophesied under the Old Testament economy, Ezek. 43:27.

Unlike the Jewish Sabbath, this Christian Sabbath is neither instrumentally holy (*i.e.*, typifying Christ), nor is the time itself an instrument and means of conveying spiritual grace, *cf.* Num. 15:32-36. Instead, it is a season of time wherein God is most pleased to bless His people that present themselves unto Him, John 20:19, 24, 26-29.

Question 5—*What are the proper names used to designate this day under the New Testament?*

Answer—The use of the term Sabbath, for the Christian economy, is confirmed by Christ's usage, Matt. 24:20. The Christian Sabbath is a most proper designation for that day which has been made, or set apart, by the resurrection of Christ, Ps. 118:24. Wherefore, He is called the Lord of the Sabbath, Mark 2:28.

Additionally, this day is peculiarly denominated the Lord's day, Rev. 1:10; by reason of His rising again and appearing amidst His people in their gathering on this day, Acts 4:10, 11.