

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 # 153 & 85.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #153. *What doth God require of us, that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us by reason of the transgression of the law?*

A. That we may escape the wrath and curse of God due to us by reason of the transgression of the law, he requireth of us repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ,¹ and the diligent use of the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of his mediation.²

(Shorter Catechism)

Q #85. *What doth God require of us, that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us for sin?*

A. To escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin, God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life,³ with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption.⁴

Question 1—*What is the first thing God requires of us if we are to escape his wrath and curse?*

Answer—The necessity of repentance in order to escape the wrath and curse of God, without which no reasonable adult person can be saved, Acts 20:21.

This is made clear from the following considerations: 1.) Because the Scriptures everywhere enjoin upon men the duty of repentance toward God, Acts 17:30. Without repentance, the end of men is declared to be eternal ruin, Ezek. 33:11. Thus, repentance forms that necessary precursor to the reception of the Gospel, the turning of the heart and mind back to God, Matt. 3:7, 8; Acts 2:38. 2.) Because the Word of God does not only enjoin repentance, but also certifies that whosoever does not repent shall assuredly perish, Luke 13:3, 5. Lack of repentance is intimately tied to the imposition of spiritual blindness, Rev. 2:5; which is a sad precursor of damnation, 2 Thess. 2:10-12. 3.) Because there is no unrepented of guilt in heaven, and, thus, the door of heaven is closed to those who are bowed down with such a burden, Rev. 21:27. You cannot see heaven nor escape hell, without repentance, 2 Thess. 1:7, 8. Thus, the message of the prophets has ever been, repent or perish, Ezek. 18:30. 4.) Because repentance is the great gift which Christ was exalted to bestow upon his people in conjunction with forgiveness of sins, Acts 5:31. So, repentance, as a Gospel duty, has been preached by John the Baptist, Matt. 3:2; Jesus himself, Matt. 4:17; and the apostles, Heb. 6:1. 5.) Because repentance is the necessary concomitant of genuine saving faith, Mark 2:17. For without

¹ Acts 20:21; Matt. 3:7, 8; Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 16:30, 31; John 3:16, 18.

² Prov. 2:1-5; 8:33-36.

³ Acts 20:21.

⁴ Prov. 2:1-5; 8:33-36; Isa. 55:3.

faith, there can be no repentance, and without repentance, there can be no faith, Zech. 12:10. Thus, impenitent sinners have no part in Christ, nor in his salvation, Matt. 1:21.

Question 2—*What is the second thing God requires of us to escape his wrath and curse?*

Answer—The second thing that is required of us in order to escape the wrath and curse of God is faith in Jesus Christ, Acts 20:21.

That this is necessary is made apparent for the following reasons: 1.) Because, until we believe in Jesus, we are dead in our trespasses and sins, Eph. 2:1. It is by grace that we are saved by means of faith in Jesus Christ, apart from whom we remain dead in sins, Eph. 2:4-8. Therefore, the answer to the question of what we must do to be saved terminates upon faith in Jesus, Acts 16:30, 31. 2.) Because there is no pleasing of God without faith in Jesus, Heb. 11:6. God is only pleased with Jesus Christ and those who are, by faith, united unto him, Matt. 17:5; Eph. 1:6, 7. 3.) Because without faith there is no union with Jesus Christ, John 15:4; and, without being in Christ, we remain under the wrath and curse of God, 2 Cor. 5:17. 4.) Because faith is the great duty of the Gospel whereby men are made partakers of the remedy provided and without which neither they nor their works shall find acceptance, John 6:29; 1 John 3:23. It is the hinge upon which turns salvation or misery, John 3:16, 18; Mark 16:16. 5.) Because faith is that by which one enters into the covenant of peace and partakes of eternal life, John 6:35. There is no escaping of the wrath to come apart from being in Christ, united to him by faith, Rom. 8:1. This union is effected in men by faith, Eph. 3:17. It is also by faith that we are justified, Rom. 5:1; as well as sanctified, Acts 15:9. Faith is that hand by which we receive Christ and his righteousness, together with all salvation, John 1:12.

That there is a connection between faith and evangelical repentance, escaping the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin, is most certain, John 5:24.

Question 3—*What is the third thing God requires of us to escape his wrath and curse?*

Answer—The third thing God requires in order to escape his wrath and curse is the making diligent use of all outwards means whereby Christ communicates unto us his benefits of redemption, Prov. 2:1-5.

The necessity of this appears in the following: 1.) God has made strict command that we strive to make use of all appointed means of salvation and grace, Luke 13:24. The way to heaven is a narrow opening for those who exercise this diligence, Matt. 7:13, 14. Furthermore, those who would enter must strive against the violence of the unbelieving world, and so must be taken by force, Matt. 11:12. 2.) Their very appointment shows that there is a necessity to use them diligently, Luke 16:16. If we would be healed, then we should be careful to reside next to the pool wherein men are healed, John 5:2-4. 3.) They are necessary because by rejecting them we ascribe folly to God, and pour contempt on his ordinances, Mal. 1:7, 12; 2 Cor. 10:10. Through the use of them, the people of God justify him in his appointing of means whereby men partake of Christ's benefits, Luke 7:26-29. 4.) They are necessary because we cannot expect salvation without the due use of them, Prov. 8:33-36. It is through them that we discover those terms of the covenant of grace tendered to sinners in Christ, Isa. 55:3.

A great part of the diligent use of those appointed means is a looking earnestly to the Lord that he might bless us in and through them, 1 Cor. 3:6, 7. The use of outward means is not beyond our reach; therefore, we ought to make use of and do what we can in looking for the benefits of Christ understanding that the Lord will supply what we cannot, Acts 8:22.