**1. WHO IS GOD?** September 12, 2018

MIDWEEK GATHERING CATECHISM Disciples Church

**Catechism Q #1***Pastor Joshua Kirstine*

**Q1. Who is God?**

God is the almighty Creator, Sustainer, and Ruler of everything.

He is perfect, and the standard by which all things are measured.

**Isaiah 40:28** Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

**Colossians 1:16-17** For by him [Jesus] all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

**Matthew 5:48** You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

**1 John 1:5** This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

**Psalm 5:5** The boastful shall not stand before your eyes; you hate all evildoers.

Our Goal each week is to teach on that week’s Catechism question or two (if we linked two together for the sake of similarity)

We want to help you understand the answer better and to understand why the scriptures that are linked to it are so important to know. Let me pray as we dig in tonight…

**Why is this the first question?**

Because everything is from him and through him and to him. Romans 11:36

Because if we get God wrong we get everything else all wrong.

**1. God**

**Who is God?**

The Bible’s purpose is not to prove the existence of God; rather, it rightly declares His existence from the very beginning. What the Bible does is reveal the nature, character, and work of God.

**Without good biblical insight many people think of God as unknowable or any of various beings conceived of having special powers.**

If you are God is this a definition that suites you. No WAY!

It is vague and not specific. It says that you are conceived or made up!

This definition of God is, in other words a **something out there god!**

The problem is a vast majority of Americans say they believe in God

- **a something out there God --A cosmic Grandpa --a 911 service in the sky**

This is why we are desperate for God’s Holy Word to rightly reveal to us who he really is..

#### Turn with me to Exodus Ch. 3 (\* bring your bibles- ESV Thinline)

13 Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"

What you need to understand about the religious system in Egypt in that day is a belief in many gods.

These are “Little g” - little pretender gods- a god of soil, of fertility, of the sun, of death

So Moses is asking, **How do I describe you to those who believe in many gods? Which god will they think you are?**

Now listen to God’s answer….

14 God said to Moses, **"I am who I am . "** Now you might be thinking, ‘Well that just clears it up!”

But really pay attention to what he just said. **“ I am who I am”** is taken from a Hebrew word that means, **“to exist”**

🡪What God is telling Moses is…. I exist, I am REAL!

**IN this he is Totally slamming the entire religious system.** And putting to shame all the little g, non-existent, manmade gods.

He makes no excuses, no explanation. He is as straight forward and he can be. **I AM!**

Whether you come to know me or not or whether you acknowledge me or not! **I AM**

Next God says: This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.' "

# So, God calls Himself: I AM.

15 God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The LORD , the God of your fathers-the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob-has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.

The LORD (all CAPS) L O R D !!!!!!!!!!

The LORD = Four Hebrew consonants (YHWH) This was so sacred they Jews wouldn’t even pronounce them

* Our modern word for God’s name is “Yahweh”
* So, anywhere you see the LORD in all caps in the bible this is a sign that it is in reference to the One true God.

This is the Name of God! YAHWEH!

🡪It is not a name to be taken lightly! 🡪**It is full of power and wonder!**

🡪It is a name describing his eternal reality, power, and unchangeable character.

\*In a world where values, morals, and laws change constantly, we can find stability and security in our **unchanging God**.

This name is used 6800 times in the Old Testament!

Now think of the difference between knowing him generically verse knowing him as Yahweh- **“HE IS”!**

#### When God reveals his name He is not only letting us get to know him, He is proclaiming who he is

So when he says, I AM he is saying, **“I am eternal, I am the One, I am beyond and above creation, I am who I am!”**

🡪No matter what you think or have been told. **I AM**

**But, he is also inviting us into know Him. He is making his relationship with us personal. By sharing his name. Revealing his character to us. He is not distant and totally mysterious. He has come near to reveal his name as a way to have relationship with us.**

**God says in,**

**Isaiah 45:5** I am the Lord, and there is no other, besides me there is no God

**Ok, let’s look at the next part of the catechism answer…**

**2. almighty Creator:**

**Isaiah 40:28** Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

Not only is this a great verse for memory to grab hold of this entire answer but it introduces a great truth about who God is in that he is the “Creator of the ends of the earth”.

Ezra says: “You are the Lord, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you **Nehemiah 9:6**

**Romans 11:36** tells us that …For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen

**WHO IS GOD? He is the cause and the reason why everything that exists does.**

And by his unfathomable grace and wisdom.. he decided to write us and our mountains and this universe into His great plan, to be under His reign.

1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

3 And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light **-Genesis 1:1-3**

The 1689 Confession of Faith says it this way: “In the beginning God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit was pleased to create, to make the world and all things in it, both visible and invisible”

*When you and I start to really get our head around the fact that all of this is made by God we begin to get out of our limited very narrow very naive box that we put God in and we begin to see just how massive and mighty and worthy he is.*

**We begin to see that this epic thing called life we find ourselves in is all about HIM…**

**\*Illustration about God’s creation. ( Last time I used the light speed stuff**

**Psalm 33:6 &9** The Lord merely spoke, and the heavens were created.

 He breathed the word, and all the stars were born.

 For when he spoke, the world began! It appeared at his command.

**Who is God?…** **God is the one who makes light fly!**

**Deuteronomy 10:14 say "Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it."**

**Everyting in creation belongs to the Creator!**

**The Apostle Paul asks (rhetorically), "does not the potter have a right over the clay?..." (Romans 9:21) "does not the Creator have a right over His creation?..." Of course He does! God, the Creator, made us and everything else that has been made and therefore owns us. We are His.**

**This has huge implications. Don’t think of creation merely as a true thing to know happened....don’t stop there, God creating has huge implications. All of creation, owe the Creator respect and honor. We owe Him obedience. And we will exist for the ends He has ordained. That is how God being sovereign Creator works!**

**The 1689 Confession of Faith says it this way: “Angels and human beings owe to God all the worship, service, or obedience that creatures owe to the Creator and whatever else he is pleased to require of them.”**

**So, take that home tonight and live form that reality every second here forward. "I was created; therefore, what does my Creator call for me to do with everything and anything?" God as Creator has HUGE implications.**

**It get’s better! Not only did he create all things… but the bible tells us that he sustains all things.**

**3. Sustainer:**

**Colossians 1:16-17** For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things and in him all things hold together

in Him all things hold together!!!

**You know how often we sinfully doubt if God is present and listening and active in our lives?...**

The next time you think that… Just consider this..

**Are you still breathing,**

 **Is your body not floating into space,**

**is the ground below your feet holding together,**

**are your cells holding together?**

He is present and active and closer to you then you can ever fully grasp. WHY because he is actively and precisely holding your and everything around you together.

Turn with me to …

**Isaiah 40:12-14** Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?

13 Who has measured the Spirit of the Lord, or what man shows him his counsel? 14 Whom did he consult, and who made him understand? Who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding

The 1689 Confession of Faith says it this way: “God the good Creator of all things, in his infinite power and wisdom, upholds...all creatures and things”

He is the Great Sustainer.

"In him we live and move and have our being" **(Acts 17:28),**

This is HUGE! “In him we live and move and have our being” … you don’t do, you can’t do, ANYTHING without God’s sovereign sustaining work. All of creation ceases to exist if He ceases to sustain! “In him we live and move and have our being!!”

God continues to give us breath each moment.

Elihu says of God, "If he should take back his spirit to himself, and gather to himself his breath, all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust" **Job 34:14-15**

"In your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them"

**-Psalm 139:16**

And Job says that man's "days are determined, and the number of his months is with you, and you have appointed his bounds that he cannot pass" -**Job 14:5**

God will sustain your life on this first creation for exactly as long has He was predetermined in eternity past. This is a great declaration of His sustaining power and reign over us.

Practical State of constant gratitude…

We just take too much for granted. We also don’t fully grasp how major it is that God sustains all things.

Movie in 2011 called, IN TIME staring Justin Timberlake… the premises was that people were given a set amount of time and when their time ran out they fell over dead. They could barter or work for more time. But in the movie time was life. It was everything. While we could use a larger dose of appreciation for the time God ordains for us this way of looking at it is still too narrow. Because he doesn’t just wind us up and set us adrift. He is actively turning the wheel by his sovereign will to make every part of my being and my reality around me going. He is the one who decides.

If his sovereign will is that I fell over right now, dead. So be it. His will is perfect. My question is: do we acknowledge enough that he is the sustainer of everything! **Does this enlarge your worship of him and understanding of who he is?**

Let’s look at the next part…

**4. Ruler of everything**

All things are under God’s rule and control, and nothing happens without His direction.

Providentially, He is a God who works, not just some things, but all things after the counsel of His own holy will.

God's purpose is all-inclusive and is never thwarted. It is not merely that God has the power and right to govern all things but that He does so always and without exception. God is the Supreme Being who answers to no one and who has the absolute right to do with His creation as He desires.

all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, “What have you done **Daniel 4:35**

Later in our WORD OF TRUTH CATECHISM we will study ….

The **Sovereignty of God** - As the one true Ruler and Owner of creation, God has rightful and complete authority over all things. He has legitimate claim to absolute lordship, and His governing is just.

**Isaiah 55 8** "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD 9 "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways & my thoughts than your thoughts.

* So we think cockroaches are an abomination but God made them for a reason.
* Our view… our thoughts… are not his.. His Thoughts and ways are high above ours. **Do you rest in this or fight it?**

**Colossians 1:16-18** For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent

He has the power over it all. Visible and invisible. He is the ruler of everything

The 1689 Confession of Faith says it this way: “He governs according to his infallible knowledge and the free and unchangeable counsel of his own will. ... He made the world and sustains and governs everything he has made.”

**Matthew 28:18** And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me

In other words, the fact that Christ has all authority in heaven and on earth—the fact that he is the ruler of the kings on earth—means that he can take their citizens to be citizens of his kingdom.

**Hebrews 1:3** tells us that Christ is *"upholding the universe by his word of power."*

We read that God "makes nations great, and he destroys them: he enlarges nations, and leads them away" (Job 12:23).

"Dominion belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations" (Ps. 22:28).

..he removes kings and sets up kings… (Daniel 2:21)

Do you see any power as having influence on God? Do you see anything as on the same level as God?
\*Image of Satan and Jesus

This image is so far from reality. Satan is not a worthy or formidable foe for God. God is the RULER OF EVERYTHING.

Next part…

**5. He is perfect**

**1 John 1:5** This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

God himself is the Most Holy One. He is called the "Holy One of Israel" (Pss. 71:22; 78:41; 89:18; Isa. 1:4; 5:19, 24; et al.).

"The Lord our God is holy!" (Ps. 99:9; cf. 99:3, 5; 22:3).

**How God Is Holy?**

God is holy in that he is set apart from all that is evil and defective and impure.

That's the first half of the definition. **He is absolutely free from any evil or deficiency**

But the other half of the definition is that God's holiness is his set-apartness.

There is nothing common about God! He is high above.

The 1689 Confession of Faith says God is “perfectly pure spirit.”

**Isaiah 40:18** To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him?

**The holiness of God is the most fundamental reality of all. It refers to the reality that God is utterly unique and in a class by himself. Nothing and no one compares with him.**

This is the wonderful Mystery of His Holiness! He is separated unto Himself.

Not unto a higher value. He is the Highest Value. He is one of a kind!

There is no other Creator, no other sustainer, no other final measure of good and evil.

This is the way Hanna talked about God in…

**1 Samuel 2:2** “There is none holy like the LORD: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God.

**He is utterly set apart in a class by himself, unequaled, unrivaled, absolute and perfect in his being and perfection, without beginning or ending.**

**God’s holiness is the supremacy of his infinite perfection and worth among ALL that is.**

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory" -[**Isaiah 6:3**](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isaiah%206.3)

**God is HOLY.. His glory is the radiance of his Holiness!**

I love Kevin Deyoung’s words in his book the Hole in our Holiness when he says,

“the topic of holiness and sanctification occur more then 700 times in the holy scriptures. You can’t make sense of the Bible without understanding that God is holy and that this holy God is intent on making a holy people to live with him forever in holy heaven.”

God is HOLY. For in it is the perfection of God. This will be the attribute that we praise him for, forever and ever.

day and night they never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" (**Revelation 4:8)**

It is an essential understanding of God that He is holy, that His nature is holy, that He is infinitely and perfectly Holy.

He is morally flawless and perfect. He is perfection. Everything in Him and of Him and for Him and from Him and by Him is perfect. And so whatever He says is just… is what true justice is.

The idea that God does what He wants, and that what He does is true and right because He does it, is foundational to the understanding of everything in Scripture.

*“We must not think that God does a thing because it's good and right, but rather the thing is good and right because God does it."  -William Perkins,*

You MUST now apply your own filter to what God’s word teaches but instead understand that if GOD does it, it is good and right because HE IS GOD!

**6. The standard by which all things are measured.**

**Our standing in this life and the next is dependent not how we stack up to one another but how we stack up to a Holy and Perfect God.**

**Matthew 5:48** You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

If life and fellowship with God is our highest aim in life.

The only way we can have true fellowship with him in Glory forever is for him to not compromise himself in anyway. Therefore we must be perfect as he is perfect.

This begins in our salvation by the imputation of Jesus Righteousness on us...here we are “declared” righteous, not made completely righteous. Our functional righteousness grows in our progressive sanctification ( life of obedience and growing in Christliekness) and we are made fully, unchangeably, prefect/righteous after life on this first creation. The 1689 Confession of Faith says upon death of a believer their soul is "then made perfect in holiness and are received into paradise. There they are with Christ and behold the face of God in light and glory while they wait for the full redemption of their bodies." And, "At the last day, the saints who are found alive will not die but will be changed (made righteous, as well)."

He is the standard by which all things must be judged or measured! His glory is the bar!!

**Romans 3:23** all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

**Psalm 5:5** The boastful shall not stand before your eyes; you hate all evildoers.

The 1689 Confession of Faith says "God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, to whom all power and judgment is given by the Father. In that day, the apostate angels will be judged. So also, all people who have lived on the earth will appear before the judgment seat of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds and to receive a reckoning according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil. For at that time the righteous will go into everlasting life and receive fullness of joy and glory with everlasting rewards in the presence of the Lord. But the wicked, who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of Jesus Christ, will be thrown into everlasting torments and punished with everlasting destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power."

God surely is the standard by which all things are measured.

Fallen man needs a savior. And the only true Savior is Jesus! God sent Him! That is what makes his saving Grace so sweet.

Because The perfection of God demands righteousness to be in his Holy Presence. He is the one who has made this possible for us, His bride. So that we can fulfill commands like…

"Be holy, for I am holy." **1 Peter 1:16**

You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect **Matthew 5:48**

**Does that mean be utterly unique in the universe the way God is?**

No, only God can do that.

It is instead a command to conform to God’s Holiness instead of the world’s sinfulness.

Finally,

**Application: How do we know about God and know God?**

**We know about God through his creation and works:**

**Romans 1:19-20** For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse

**We know about God through his word:**

**John 5:39** You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me

The root word of Theology is Theos. Theos - God Ology- the study of..

This is one of my text books on Theology- **Hold it up!**

This is what man has to say about God

Here is what God has to say about God- **Hold up the bible**

Theology is fantastic but here is the issue-

**Can you know and understand everything in this book and still not know Yahweh?**

# Yes you can!

Even the demons have a good theology of who God is-

The bible says, they proclaim, that Jesus is the son of God and came to save the world!

My point is this: **You can know a lot about god and still miss Yahweh!**

Many Believers claim to know the bible and theology, **but this is not enough!**

I am not saying the information is not good! That is why we are studying..

# I am saying that the information without the relationship, without the surrender

**……..is worthless. What we know about WHO GOD IS.. must change our lives.**

**Do you know God? Do you know Yahweh?**

**He is deeper and bigger and better than you think?**

**- He is close! – YES - He is huge!- YES - HE IS!!!!!!!!!!!**

**So what does this do for our understanding?** It rocks it, and flips us upside down!

# It shouts to us He is big & I am not! 🡪HE must increase and we must decrease

**I PRAY that our journey together in word and life together helps you to know our great God and love him and obey him and enjoy him and worship him above all else! Let’s pray**

**You are! Yahweh…..**

Dayspring… Lord of all……I am… Mighty God…Wonderful counselor…

Holy one…King of kings… Righteous judge…Light of the world….Lord God almighty…

Morning star… Sun of righteousness…Lion of the tribe of Judah… Chief shepherd…

Author & finisher of our faith… Governor… The Alpha & Omega… Creator …. Perfect Lord of all

I pray we would not just know about you but that we would know you!

And We would have a holy and righteous awe for you.

A joyful submission and obedience. A Deep desire to share with others who you really are.

So we would know you as YAHWEH!