

Each week of 2019 we will take a brief look at one or two questions from the Westminster Shorter Catechism. Our aim is to help you become familiar with this introduction to Christian doctrine. The psalmist declares, "Great are the works of the Lord, studied by all who delight in them" (111:2). Catechisms were designed to assist the people of God to delight in his works and study them more closely.

Q. 4. What is God?

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

A.W. Tozer opens his book, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, with this profound statement: "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us." If we believe Scripture is without error and sufficient (Q. 2 & 3), then what we learn about God from Scripture ought to shape everything in our lives. God is Creator. We are creatures. God is infinite. We are finite. Truths like these define our existence, our purpose, our needs, and our salvation. That's why Tozer says what we think about God is the most important thing about us.

After establishing our "chief end" and the only authoritative source for truth, the Shorter Catechism now turns our attention to the First Cause of all effects, or the Unmoved Mover. The question, "What is God?", almost feels impersonal. We should recall, however, that when God reveals himself to Moses in the burning bush, he identifies himself as "I am who I am" (Ex. 3:14). What God is *is* Who God is.

This short, classic statement about God addresses three important areas about God:

1. *The Essence of God.* God is Spirit. He is a unity. He is invisible. He has no parts nor a physical body. In light of these, we are humbled by the mysteriousness of God's otherness.

2. *The Incommunicable Attributes of God.* "Incommunicable" means that these qualities are not, cannot be, shared with creatures like us. God is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable. These unique attributes of God set him apart as worthy of all glory, trust, and honor.

3. *The Communicable Attributes of God.* These qualities we share, so that we can be just and good and wise and holy. In this way we see that we are created in the "image of God;" we are like him. Being confronted with his perfection, however, highlights how far short we fall of his glory.