

Question 11: But isn't God also merciful?

God is certainly merciful, but he is also just. His justice demands that sin, committed against his supreme majesty, be punished with the supreme penalty - eternal punishment of body and soul.

Question 12: According to God's righteous judgment we deserve punishment both in this world and forever after: how can we escape this punishment and return to God's favor?

God required that his justice be satisfied. Therefore the claims of his justice must be paid in full, either by ourselves or another.

Question 13: Can we pay this debt ourselves?

Certainly not. Actually, we increase our guilt every day.

Question 14: Can another creature - any at all - pay this debt for us?

No. To begin with, God will not punish another creature for what a human is guilty of.

Besides, no mere creature can bear the weight of God's eternal anger against sin and release others from it.

Question 15: What kind of mediator and deliverer should we look for then?

One who is truly human and truly righteous, yet more powerful than all creatures, that is, one who is also true God.

Question 16: Why must he be truly human and truly righteous?

God's justice demands that human nature, which has sinned, must pay for its sin; but a sinner could never pay for others.

Question 17: Why must he also be true God?

So that, by the power of his divinity, he might bear the weight of God's anger in his humanity and earn for us and restore to us righteousness and life.

Question 18: And who is this mediator - true God and at the same time truly human and truly righteous?

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who was given us to set us completely free and to make us right with God.

Question 19: How do you come to know this?

The holy gospel tells me. God himself began to reveal the gospel already in Paradise; later, he proclaimed it by the holy patriarchs and prophets, and portrayed it by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law; finally, he fulfilled it through his own dear Son.

Question 20: Are all saved through Christ just as we all were lost through Adam?

No. Only those are saved who by true faith are grafted into Christ and accept all his blessings.