

WESTMINSTER CONFSSION OF FAITH SHORTER CATECHISM

LESSON # 17 (Q2LES4) - CHRIST'S HUMILIATION QUESTIONS # 27

1. Prayer

2. Bible reading: Philippians 2: 1 - 11

3. **Review:** We are still working on the subject of redemption. In question 20 we learned that from all eternity God elected some to everlasting life. The elect are saved by grace through a redeemer. Q21 & 22 taught us that the only redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, and that Christ, while remaining God, became man. Last week, in question 23 we learned that Christ, as our redeemer, executes the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, and we discussed the execution of these offices in questions 24 through 26. Question 23 also told us that he executed these offices in both his estate of humiliation and exultation.

4. **Introduction:** This week we will cover question 27. This question deals with Christ's estate of humiliation. Nothing can further demonstrate God's love for us that the humiliation he was voluntarily willing to suffer for us. Today we will look at the extent of that humiliation, just what God was willing to suffer so that we, to whom he owes absolutely nothing, could receive His grace.

5. Questions:

Question 27: **Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist?**

Answer: **Christ's humiliation consisteth in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross, in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.**

6. The WCF, LC and SC

a. The SC deals with Christ's humiliation in one question, q 27. The LC covers Christ's humiliation in much more detail, using five questions, q 46 through q50. The WCF deals only briefly with the subject in chapter 8, noting in p2 that Christ took on man's nature, and in p4, that He was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfil it, and that He suffered, died and was buried.

7. CHRIST'S HUMILIATION

- a. Paragraph 4 of Chapter 8 of the WCF says, concerning Christ's execution of the office of a mediator/redeemer, in part: "This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake; which that He might discharge, He was made under the law and did perfectly fulfill it, endured most grievous torments immediately in His soul, and most painful sufferings in His body; was crucified, and died; was buried, and remained under the power of death; yet saw no corruption."
- b. The SC q27 list the area's in which Christ humbled himself. The LC, q46 spells it out more clearly, stating "*The estate of Christ's humiliation was that low condition, wherein he for our sakes, emptying himself of his glory, took upon him the form of a servant, in his conception and birth, life, death, and after his death, until his resurrection.*" So Christ willingly humiliated himself in four ways:
 - his birth
 - his life
 - his death
 - after his death

The LC then goes on to discuss each of these ways in detail, in question 47, 48, 49, and 50.

8. Christ's Humiliation at Birth

- a. How was Christ humbled in his birth? (**...being born, and that in a low condition,**)
 - First and foremost, being from all eternity, the Son of God, having always been in the bosom of the Father, by becoming man. (**John 1:14 "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."**)
 - Being born of a woman of humble means. (**Luke 1:48 "For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed."**)
 - In a low condition, in a stable. (**Luke 2:7 "And she brought fourth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn."**)
- b. I think of Christ becoming man, under these conditions, with awe. What a statement! What does it mean to us, what does it say of God, that His Son, a part of Him, would become something that is not fit to be in His presence?

9. Christ's Humiliation in this Life.

- a. How was Christ humbled in his life? (...made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life,...)

The items listed below are taken from the answer to LC q48.

- Being under the law. (**Gal 4:4** *“But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.”*)

1. What does it mean that Christ was born “under the Law”?

That Christ was, in essence, born under the covenant of works, which He had to fulfill perfectly.

2. Did Christ fulfill the Law perfectly?

Christ fulfilled the law perfectly (**Rom 5:19** *For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*) This passage refers to Christ’s perfectly fulfilling the law for man.

- By conflicting with the indignities of the world. TV says, *“He endured the contradictions, reproaches, and indignities of wicked men.”* (**Heb 12: 2 – 3** *“(2) Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (3) For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.”*)
- Being tempted of the Devil. (**Matt 4:1** *“Then Jesus was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.”*)

How is Christ’s being tempted by the devil considered a humiliation?

Christ, as God, had never experienced temptation. To be tempted, he had to become man, a condescension.

- Enduring the infirmities of the flesh, such as hunger, weariness, thirst, in regard to his body; and grief, and sorrow in regard to his soul. (**Heb 4:15** *“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”*)

10. Christ’s Humiliation in His Death (...the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross,)

a. How did Christ suffer humiliation in his death? The items listed below are taken from LC q49, and from TV.

b. Events preceding his death:

- Judas betraying him (**Matt 27:4** *“Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us: see thou to that.”*)
- Allowing himself to be taken and betrayed by His disciples (**Matt 26:56** *“But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.”*)
- Condemned by Pilate, tormented by his persecutors; being spit on, mocked, beaten, by man (**Matt 27: 26 – 50**)
- Suffering the terror of death (**Luke 22:44** *“And being in agony he prayed mere earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”*)

c. Christ’s death itself:

- The kind of death was the most painful, lingering and humiliating. Remember, as we discussed above, Christ suffered from man’s infirmities of the flesh. (**Gal 3:13** *“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.”*)
- Enduring God’s wrath due to man for sin (**Matt 27:46** *“And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying Eli, Eli lamasabach thani? That is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”*)
- Experiencing separation from God.

11. Christ’s Humiliation after His death (...in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.)

a. What did Christ’s humiliation after his death consist of?

- He was buried. (**Matt 27: 59 - 60** ⁽⁵⁹⁾*And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,* ⁽⁶⁰⁾*And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.”*)

- He remained under the power of death for three days. (**Matt 12:40** ***“For as Jonas was three days and tree nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”***)

The LC says the remaining in the grave for three days is otherwise expressed as “He descended into Hell”

12. Conclusion

- a. Remember, several lessons ago, we discussed the distance between God and us. We learned that God is so far above us as the distance of infinity, and that he must condescend even to listen to us. Yet so much is his love for us that he sent his Son to suffer the humiliations discussed above, so that we might have a redeemer, a mediator between Him and us, that we might be accepted as righteous in His sight, and have everlasting life with Him.