

Westminster Larger Catechism

Question 57

Halifax, 16 November 2008

Q. 57 What benefits has Christ procured by His mediation?

A. Christ, by His mediation, has procured redemption, with all other benefits of the covenant of grace.

Introduction:

Over the last several months we have been looking at all that the Son of God has done as our Mediator.

- There are many ways we might outline His work—
 - But one way to do this is by looking at the offices He was called to fill as God's anointed Prophet, Priest, and King,
 - and how each office required something of Him in His humiliation as well as in His exaltation...
 - Indeed, He alone who is God eternal and who also became man was able to fulfill this great work—
 - some of which work required Him to be man, and some of which required Him to be divine.

Consider what He did in each office...

- **First, as our prophet,**
 - He is the one who had to leave the glories of heaven, to lay aside His glory, and come to this sinful corrupt world as a man...
 - He came in order that He might personally reveal God and God's will to us in a way that we could understand—
 - He came as one of us to speak to us and to give us an example of what it means—of what it looks like, for a man to obey God...
 - But not only that, but as the Son of God, He also spoke powerful words to us...
 - words that were able to bring about whatever was spoken...
 - He commanded and even death and nature obeyed Him.
 - And not only that, but as He is divine,
 - He also speaks to us in such a way that we hear His voice as the very voice of God that powerfully transforms us.

- You see that His work as prophet included work in His estate of humiliation and in the estate of exaltation.

 - **The same is also true of His second office—the office of a priest.**
 - In order the He might offer a sacrifice for us,
 - He had to be made like us—He had to be like us so that He might represent us.
 - This required His humiliation in that He had to become man...
 - But this was not all...
 - He also had to have something to offer for us that would take away our sins...
 - And the only offering that could do that was the offering of Himself.
 - This demanded His deepest humiliation—
 - that He had to bear the shame and guilt of our sins before the Father.
 - That meant that He had to humble Himself to the point of death, even death by means of a cross...
 - He who was not only without sin, but also repulsed by it, had to become sin for us—He had to become the Lamb of God that was offered to take away our sins.
 - What humiliation!
- Yet, at the same time, His priestly work required exaltation...
 - His offering had to be accepted for us and He had to be raised from the dead and exalted to sit at God’s right hand...
 - And from that seat in glory, He must intercede for us so that His sacrifice might be applied to our particular case—that we might be forgiven...
 - And as our priest, He also had to be divine in order that His offering might be worthy to satisfy the eternal penalty we had incurred...
 - An eternal penalty required an eternal person if it was to be satisfied.
 - So you see that He had to be both God and man to be our priest, and had to do work in both an estate of humiliation and His estate of exaltation.
- **Finally, there is His regal work—His work in the office of a king...**
 - Once again, this required His humiliation.

- In order to lead us in all righteousness as our king and representative, He had to become human flesh...
- He had always obeyed the Father as His Son—from all eternity,
 - but to be our mediator, He had to come as a man—a man after God’s own heart.
 - This He did for us.
- But His kingly office also requires His exaltation...
 - It requires divine power in Him that He might subdue us in order that we might be raised from the dead to serve God—with a heart of submission...
 - And it requires that He destroy all His and our enemies...
 - a feat which could only be done by divine power...
 - our enemies are too strong for a mere man to overcome...
 - There is death, there is sin, and there is Satan, there is the world...
 - None but the Son of God can conquer these...
 - And so He does and will do in His exaltation—

What extensive work our Mediator was called to carry out for us!

- What a gracious and kind Saviour He is to even consider doing such work!
 - How wrong it is for us to have anything but amazement that He should undertake such for even one sinner—much less for all His elect people!
 - How wrong it is for us to suggest that He should have done more—
 - that His salvation should have immediately rescued us from every trial...
 - or that it should have included every human being without exception!
 - What arrogance to suggest the He should have done more when He has done unspeakably more than we might even imagine if we understood His glory and honour!
 - What beastly ingratitude when we ourselves struggle to even make the smallest sacrifices for others!
- Oh I tell you,
 - that the Lord of glory should show such love to mere creatures is like a dream that it is too good to be true—
 - It is completely incomprehensible that He should undertake such extensive, difficult labour for the likes of us!

TRANS> But having looked at all this labour of our Mediator over the past few months,

- the catechism now turns to consider what His labours accomplished for us!
 - Question 57 opens the matter in a summary fashion,
 - and the discussion continues all the way through Question 90 as we examine in detail all that Christ has secured for us!
 - I tell you, the fruit of His work truly abounds to us!
 - There is one blessing after another.
 - When Question 57 asks us what benefits Christ has procured for us by His work, the answer is:
 - **Christ, by His mediation, has procured redemption, with all other benefits of the covenant of grace.**
- As we begin to consider what this is in an introductory way,
 - I want you to take a look at 1 Chron 17 where we have David recounting the benefits that have come to him as king which benefits he refers to as but a piece of the benefits that the Lord secures for His people.
 - READ> 1 Chron 17:1-27

I. Look at how highly David speaks of redemption.

A. First, David speaks of what the Lord has done for him personally...

1. This is summarised in verse 7-8 where the Lord, through the prophet Nathan, says:
 - **1 Chron 17:7-8: Thus says the LORD of hosts: "I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people Israel. And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a name like the name of the great men who are on the earth."**
- a. This shows that David was a very ordinary sort of person in his youth...
 - 1) Saul was Israel's king and David bore no relation to him—he was not even from the same tribe...
 - He was from a very ordinary family...
 - He was the son of Jesse...
 - a man we would have never even heard of if he had not been David's father.
 - We can see how ordinary Jesse was by the way the men in his town acted when they found out that Samuel the prophet was coming.
 - This is recorded in 1 Samuel 16...

- The elders of city went out to ask him if he was coming peaceably...
- They were not accustomed to entertaining such persons!

TRANS> And not only was David from a very ordinary family in an ordinary town,

2) He was also, we are told, the youngest of eight brothers.

- As the youngest of eight, he was considered little more than a servant...
- In fact, when Samuel gathered Jesse's sons that he might anoint the one God's choosing to be king,
 - David was not even present...
 - Being the youngest,
 - he was required to stay out in the fields and keep watch over the sheep while the rest of his brothers met with Samuel.
 - Somebody had to do it!
- When Samuel rejected Jesse's first seven sons and asked if there was another,
 - everyone, including David, was totally surprised!
 - No one had imagined that David would be chosen!

b. And so in 1 Chron 17 when Nathan reminds David how the Lord took him from the sheepfold and has now made him king...

- and then goes on to declare to him what the Lord has purposed to do with his dynasty,
 - David expresses amazement even at what the Lord had already done for him in making him king...

1) Here is what he says in 1 Chron 17:16:

- **1 Chron 17:16: "Who am I, O LORD God? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far?"**

2) David feels quite unworthy to be given such a high status as he has been given...

- The Lord had delivered him from the hand of Saul...
- And now He had given him victory over many of his enemies and had brought all the tribes of Israel together under his leadership!

TRANS> But now Nathan is telling him what great things God is going to do for him...

B. Now David is even more amazed!

1. He comments that God's making him king is but a very small thing in comparison to what has now promised to him!

a. God has promised to establish the throne of David's Son forever!

- You can see how the promise is presented by Nathan in verse 11-14:

- **1 Chron 17:11-14: "And it shall be, when your days are fulfilled, when you must go to be with your fathers, that I will set up your seed after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son; and I will not take My mercy away from him, as I took it from him who was before you. And I will establish him in My house and in My kingdom forever; and his throne shall be established forever."**

- This is clearly a promise concerning the Messiah—

- Not a temporal house for God, as David was purposed to build, but an eternal house!

- The Son of David would come and He would establish this house for God!

- Even though David would be gone, this would be part of God's work for him—for David—to bring him complete blessing...

- As Abraham did, David was not merely looking for a temporal city—

- but by faith he looked for the city whose builder and maker is God.

b. When David hears this promise of an eternal throne for his Son,

- he realises that by comparison, even his being made king is but a small thing...

- in comparison with what God is promising to do for him!

- In verse 17, he says to God:

- **1 Chron 17:17-20: "And yet this [this making of him to be king] was a small thing in Your sight, O God; and You have also spoken of Your servant's house for a great while to come, and have regarded me according to the rank of a man of high degree, O LORD God. What more can David say to You for the honor of Your servant? For You know Your servant. O LORD, for Your servant's sake, and according to Your own heart, You have done all this greatness, in making known all these great things. O LORD, there is none like You, nor is there any God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears."**

- The promise of God that David has now heard brings amazement to him...
 - A kingdom for God forever!
 - A king with absolute dominion and with full communion with God who will bring all of God's people under the blessing of God.
 - The full blessing will come through Christ!
2. You can see from this that David goes on to describe redemption as the very essence of the great things which God has done for His people...
- In verse 21-22, he says,
 - **1 Chron 17:21-22: "And who is like Your people Israel, the one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people—to make for Yourself a name by great and awesome deeds, by driving out nations from before Your people whom You redeemed from Egypt? For You have made Your people Israel Your very own people forever; and You, LORD, have become their God."**
 - David says that there is no nation like Israel—a people redeemed for God!

II. I want you to consider just what this blessing called redemption entails!

- A. By definition, redemption is the process by which the ownership of a person or persons is transferred from one master to another.
1. Redemption should be understood in the context of slavery—
 - a. I said that it is a transfer of ownership...
 - This is not always the first thing we think of in our society when we hear the word redemption because we are not familiar with slavery...
 - but it is easy to understand what a significant thing it would be to have such a change!
 - b. A change of masters for the slave can be a huge change!
 - The more different the masters are, the greater the change...
 - It is a happy change if the new master is kinder than the old one...
 - It is an unhappy change if the new master is harsher.
 2. Redemption can occur in two ways...
 - a. First, it can occur by conquest.
 - 1) Ordinarily, this would be done when there was a skirmish between two nations or cities...
 - The one who was the victor would take all the slaves to be its own...

- along with the free women and children.
- 2) This redemption by conquest is what is spoken of in verse 21 when it says that Israel was redeemed from Egypt.
 - a) The Lord went down to Egypt to take Israel out to be His own.
 - Being the Lord of all the earth, the Lord demanded that Pharaoh release the people to Him at once.
 - b) Pharaoh refused, so the LORD came down upon Him with great power, visiting the whole land of Egypt with plagues and showing them their absolute inability to resist Him...
 - At last, Egypt, who had been so proud as to resist the Creator of Heaven and Earth—Jehovah, the self existing one—surrendered...
 - Pharaoh was forced to let Israel go.
 - That's redemption by conquest.
 - b. The second way redemption can occur is by purchase.
 - 1) This is done when a master goes to another master to purchase slaves from him.
 - There is a little negotiation and then once a price is agreed on, the slave is purchased—he is bought with a price.
 - 2) This aspect of redemption is not expressly spoken of in 1 Chron 17,
 - but it is actually at the foundation of the redemption of God's people as we shall see in a minute.

TRANS> But first I want you to consider...

B. What a radical a change it is for a people to be redeemed by the LORD of glory!

- If it is a radical change for a slave of men, how much more to be made a slave of God!
1. David expresses the wonder of the change in verse 21 and 22...
 - a. First, in verse 21, he says:
 - **v. 21: “Who is like your people, the one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people.”**
 - There is no one else like them.
 - As we saw a couple of weeks ago, the very thing that causes them to differ is that they alone are redeemed by the Lord to be His own people!

- God gave lots of other peoples kingdoms and empires and dynasties and lands...
 - and that was all well and good as far as it went...
 - but it was nothing in comparison to what Israel was given!
 - They were redeemed to be God's people!
 - The land was special, not because of its features,
 - but because it was the place where the LORD God Almighty had appointed to reveal Himself...
 - And not just to reveal Himself, but to reveal Himself as the God of His people!
- b. In verse 22, David emphasises this relationship of God to His people...
- showing that He has taken them to be His very own people and has made Himself to be their God...
 - In verse 22, David says:
 - **v. 22: "For you have made your people Israel your very own people forever, and You, Lord, have become their God."**
 - Notice that they are made His people *forever*!
 - He is not their God for a time, but *forever*...
 - even to coincide with the promise that God made concerning David's Son,
 - that He would have absolute dominion and would reign forever in a kingdom that would never be destroyed!
 - When God becomes your God,
 - It means that you are blessed forever and ever!
 - He is not the God of the dead, but of the living!
 - Those He redeems live forever in His house as His servants under His blessing!
2. Consider what a huge change this is for us!
- a. The deliverance from Egypt is a picture of our being taken out of bondage to the world which is in bondage to Satan.
- 1) Christ will come forth at last when our redemption is completed to crush the Serpent's head...

- Even in our conversion, He comes to redeem us from his power by conquest in order that we might be His own.
- But at the last day, He will completely rescue us from Satan's reach.

2) This involves so much brothers and sisters...

a) The Spirit breaks into our lives to set us free from dominion to sin and Satan so that we can serve God...

- Jesus baptises the church with the Spirit and we are transformed to be lovers of God and lovers of His way...
 - It is such a change for us!
- By the power of the Spirit, He has converted us, and now He is training us up to live as His servants...
 - in the beauty of holiness!
 - to actually love each other as Christ has loved us!
 - to actually love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength...
 - How blessed we are to be brought into God's house!

b) But that is not all—

- Christ will also destroy Satan and all who are his, once and for all, at the last day...
 - And we will behold the glory of our Master in bringing His judgement down upon him even as He brought it down upon Egypt.
 - He will be cast into the Lake of Fire...helpless and miserable.
 - It will not be a fair contest at all...
 - Satan will be powerless to defend himself—as all shall see.

TRANS> But I also mentioned that besides redemption by conquest, there is also redemption by purchase...

- It told you that I would tell you more about this...

b. This redemption by purchase is what scripture so often refers to as redemption by Christ's blood...

1) It is that redemption spoken of in Hebrews 9 where it says that Jesus is the Mediator of the new covenant and that:

- **Heb 9:12: Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.**
 - This is redemption by purchase, and the price was Christ's own blood.
 - That was the payment that had to be made.
 - 1 Peter 1:18 refers to it as payment such when it says:
 - **1 Peter 1:18-19: you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.**
- 2) But the question is, from whom were we purchased?
- To whom was the purchase price paid?
- a) Some have imagined that it was Satan, but we were not taken from him by payment...
- We were redeemed from slavery to Satan by conquest!
 - Jesus came in to his house to bind him in order that He might rescue His people from his dominion.
 - No payment was given to him!
- b) The scriptures are clear that the price of redemption was paid to the Father— as the offended judge of perfect justice.
- All through the Old Testament,
 - the picture is that of priests and before that heads of households offering bloody sacrifices to God.
 - All these priestly offerings to God represent what Christ was going to do when He came.
 - That is why Hebrews 9:12 says, concerning Christ,
 - **Heb 9:12: Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.**
 - The blood of goats and calves has been replaced by the blood of Christ.
 - Jesus did not enter into the presence of Satan to present His blood, but before the throne of God—in the most holy place.
 - It was by this that we were purchased to be God's people.

- The payment was to put right His offended justice occasioned by our transgressions.
 - The price had to be paid, and the whole Bible shows that it had to be paid by blood so that justice could be satisfied.
 - And by this shedding of blood, we are redeemed to become God's very own people.
- Just before His death,
 - Jesus inaugurated the New Covenant when He instituted the Lord's Supper in place of all the OT ceremonies...
 - And He said of the cup which represents His blood...
 - "This cup is the New Covenant in my blood, shed for the remission of the sins of many."
- All whom God has brought to trust in this provision can have absolute confidence that all their sins are pardoned...
 - The blood of Christ obtains eternal redemption so that we who are sinners can live at peace in God's house forever and ever!
 - God's holy justice has been satisfied by Jesus' blood.
 - He has purchased us from every tribe and tongue and people!
 - We have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins!

3) And I say, talk about a great change!

- My brothers and sisters, what could be a greater change than to have this eternal debt for sin paid!
 - To have that judgement which is equal to the shedding of the precious blood of the spotless Lamb of God who is the very Son of God *removed!*
 - And to be brought into everlasting fellowship with God as His very own people!
 - Who is like God's people?
 - A people redeemed by the Lord Himself to be His own people!
- To be released from so great a condemnation and brought into so great a blessing...
 - O the depth of the riches of God's grace!
 - What a happy change!

- What a tremendous change!
- Words utterly fail to describe it.
 - The Lamb has taken all the wrath and you are free to belong to God forever!
 - To see His glory and to live in His house!

TRANS> What a redemption this is!

- This change of masters is everything!
- It is life from the dead forever—
 - It is freedom from sin, freedom from Satan, freedom from judgement—
 - all that we might be God’s people forever and live in joyful communion with Him.
 - The half has not been told!
 - The very honour of God is tied up with how He treats us now that we belong to Him...
 - He has purposed to show His glory by His kindness to us in Jesus Christ.
 - For all eternity, we will be the recipients of His grace—the vessels upon which He displays the glory of His grace.

Conclusion:

Over the next few months, we will have the joy of looking in greater detail at the blessings we have as those who are redeemed by Christ...

- The benefits go on and on and on!
 - Everything about us is changed by it...
 - We are redeemed out of darkness and brought into the light...
 - We are redeemed from guilt and condemnation and brought into peace...
 - We are redeemed from bondage to sin and made the servants of righteousness to God.
 - We are redeemed from bondage to Satan and are made the servants of God.
 - We are redeemed death and brought into the hope of the resurrection.
- What joy we will have in looking at all these benefits...
 - But as we prepare to do this, I want to say something to you all...
 - My dear friends, be sure that you are partakers of all these blessings...

- What a shame it would be for any of you to hear about all these blessings and to come short of them...
- It need not be the case with you...
 - Jesus not only calls, but commands you to come to Him...
 - He has redeemed His people—and He is redeeming them...
 - and if you will come to Him by faith, you can be among His happy redeemed.
 - All you have to do is depend on Him...
 - depend on Him to free you from sin and Satan...
 - and depend on Him to pay the full penalty of your sin.