

THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

WHAT MAN OUGHT TO BELIEVE CONCERNING GOD

QUESTIONS # 46 & 27.

(*Larger Catechism*)

Q #46. *What was the estate of Christ's humiliation?*

A. 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.¹

(*Shorter Catechism*)

Q #27. *Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist?*

A. Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition,² made under the law,³ undergoing the miseries of this life,⁴ the wrath of God,⁵ and the cursed death of the cross;⁶ in being buried,⁷ and continuing under the power of death for a time.⁸

Question 1—*What is the first part of Christ's humiliation?*

Answer—The humiliation of Christ comprehends the totality of his assuming a low condition:

First, we observe that he has condescended to veil that glory which he had with the Father from eternity, John 17:5; whereby this, being the form of God, he shares an equality with him, Phil. 2:6. This emptying himself of his glory, which is what is intended by making himself of no reputation, transpired by taking upon himself the form of a servant, Phil. 2:7. This glory being veiled for a time, by his coming into this lower world, he was made subject to this low estate, Isa. 53:2, 3. This state is described as an estate of humiliation, Acts 8:33. The word "humiliation" is from the Latin root, *humilis*, "from the earth." From this root we also get the words *human* and *homage*. Thus, assuming this humanity involves being humbled, and made subject, Phil. 2:8. Nevertheless, the assumption of the humanity itself is an act of *condescension*, John 3:13; whereas the *humiliation* involved a series of steps of abasement and suffering, Isa. 50:5, 6. For this reason, he retains this assumed humanity even in his exaltation, Acts 7:55.

Second, this humiliation was completely voluntary, for he voluntarily did and suffered whatever he did and suffered, Ps. 40:7; John 4:34. From eternity, he was said to have rejoiced and expressed his delight in men, Prov. 8:31. Even in the deepest points of his humiliation, he offered no opposition to the humbling treatment unto which he was exposed, Isa. 53:7; Acts 8:32, 33. Man fell from God through his own ambition, and Christ was humbled, that man might be recovered again from his misery to the favor of God, Eph. 5:2.

¹ Phil. 2:6-8; Luke 1:31; 2 Cor. 8:9; Acts 2:24.

² Luke 2:7.

³ Gal. 4:4.

⁴ Heb. 12:2, 3; Isa. 53:2, 3.

⁵ Luke 22:44; Matt. 27:46.

⁶ Phil. 2:8.

⁷ 1 Cor. 15:3, 4.

⁸ Acts 2:24-27, 31.

Third, this humiliation arose not from anything but his own and the Father's undeserved love to lost mankind, 1 John 4:10. This love was not initiated or drawn forth by anything in the sinner, Rom. 5:6. The spring and source of his humiliation was a love for us that he demonstrated by undertaking that abasement and suffering for our sakes and assuming, in his humanity, the form of a servant, 2 Cor. 8:9.

Question 2—*Wherein consist the steps of this humiliation?*

Answer—Christ's humiliation consists in several steps:

First, in his conception, there was a laying aside of all the prerogatives which pertained to his essential divinity becoming a servant, Isa. 42:1. Although there is a sense in which he may be said to humble himself in his divine nature, Ps. 113:6; this is not a veiling of his glory but expressive of his glory arguing the infinite distance between the Creator and the creature, Ps. 11:4. In his incarnation, he began this humiliation by being conceived in the womb of a woman, Luke 1:31; veiling his glory with the likeness of sinful flesh, Rom. 8:3.

Second, he was thereafter born of this woman into a low condition, being further abased in his birth, Luke 2:7. He was made in weakness and brought forth in greatly reduced circumstances, Ps. 22:6.

Third, he was made under the law as a covenant of works, and not merely a rule for life, so that he might be positioned, for our sakes, to bring redemption, Gal. 4:4, 5. This placed upon him all the just requirements of that law for an acceptable performance of his servanthood, Matt. 3:15.

Fourth, once placed under this command, Christ was subjected to often more than ordinary miseries, so that he was esteemed to be lowly by other men, Isa. 53:2, 3. This contradiction of sinners, and the shame continually cast upon him, was endured for our redemption, Heb. 12:2, 3.

Fifth, in this estate of humiliation, he was made to undergo torments of soul, suffering in the veil of his flesh the terrors of an offended God, Luke 22:44. To this was added, in the agony of his passion, the forsaking of any comfort to be had in the Father or their common divinity, Matt. 27:46. In this state of humility, it actually pleased the LORD to increase his sense of suffering and draw out a sacrifice for sin for our sakes, Isa. 53:10.

Sixth, as his life was brought to an end, he was made to endure the shameful death of the cross, Phil. 2:8. This method of death was stigmatized, especially amongst the Jews, as most painful and agonizing, signaling that the curse of God rests upon the malefactor, Deut. 21:23. This he underwent in order to bring redemption to us, Gal. 3:13.

Seventh, having suffered in the flesh, he died, and having died, he was buried, 1 Cor. 15:3, 4. His flesh was made to undergo the indignity assigned to rebellious men of returning to the earth, Gen. 3:19. This, also, he experienced for our sakes, being made to share in the common grave of wicked humanity, Isa. 53:9.

Lastly, he was made to continue under the power of death for a time, as one destroyed by sin, for our sakes, 1 Pet. 3:18. The very symbol of our rebellion from God was made his as he was wrapped in its grip, Rom. 6:23; Ps. 104:29.

His humiliation, which began with his conception, lasted until his resurrection, which marks the end of this period of Christ's exercising of his Mediatorial character, Acts 2:24-27, 31.