

THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

WHAT MAN OUGHT TO BELIEVE CONCERNING GOD

QUESTION # 48.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #48. *How did Christ humble himself in his life?*

A. Christ humbled himself in his life, by subjecting himself to the law,¹ which he perfectly fulfilled;² and by conflicting with the indignities of the world,³ temptations of Satan,⁴ and infirmities in his flesh, whether common to the nature of man, or particularly accompanying that his low condition.⁵

Question 1—*What is a first way in which Christ has humbled himself in his life?*

Answer—A first way Christ, though he is Lord of all and the lawgiver to all, humbled himself in his life is being made under the law, Gal. 4:4. Though this was the necessary result of his incarnation, his being under this law was by his own consent, Ps. 40:7, 8. In his birth, he was made subject to the ceremonial law, submitting to the painful rite of circumcision, Luke 2:21. He was made subject to the civil and judicial laws, recognizing and enforcing their authority, Matt. 5:31, 33. He was made subject to the moral law, obeying its precepts and suffering its penal sanction in the stead of his people, Matt. 5:17.

He submitted to the preceptive part of the law as a covenant of works, which man had broken, Isa. 42:21; 1 Cor. 15:22. This he fulfilled, being subject to Joseph and Mary, as an obedient son, Luke 2:51; giving attention to the sanctity of the law in keeping it whole and entire, thus fulfilling all righteousness, Matt. 3:15.

Again, he submitted to the threatening or penal sanction of the law, being subject to the curse of it which was due to us for sin, Gal. 3:13. The threatening being enacted, he underwent that which it demanded to the smallest tittle, bearing death in his soul and body on account of our sin, fulfilling its full penalty, Rom. 5:19.

Question 2—*What is a second way in which Christ has humbled himself in his life?*

Answer—All of the indignities of this world, whether contempt, reproach, or despite were poured upon him so that he was despised and rejected of men, Ps. 22:6. When he was but an infant, his parents were warned to flee because of the massacre that was intended to destroy him, Matt. 2:13.

First, they did not own his glory as the Son of God, nor did they see and adore the deity united to the human nature, when he was made flesh, John 1:10. The supremacy of his Person as the Lord of glory was not owned, 1 Cor. 2:8; nor was there any desire to know him as such, Isa. 53:3. The unbelief that he is Christ, contradicted by the many miracles he did, is charged against the Jews, John 10:24-26. When he asserted this divine glory, they charged him with blasphemy and sought to do him harm, John 8:59.

¹ Gal. 4:4.

² Matt. 5:17; Rom. 5:19.

³ Ps. 22:6; Heb. 12:2, 3.

⁴ Matt. 4:1-12; Luke 4:13.

⁵ Heb. 2:17, 18; 4:15; Isa. 52:13, 14.

Second, he was made to endure the contradiction of sinners, Heb. 12:2, 3. He came forth as one to be spoken against, Luke 2:34. Thus, he was accused of being Beelzebub, the prince of the devils, Matt. 10:24, 25. To this were joined accusations of being a drunkard and glutton, Matt. 11:19. So, they watched him, seeking to charge him with wrong doing, Luke 14:1. They listened so that they might find something upon which to make accusation, Luke 11:54. Any perceived misstep was made to form the pretext for another reason to doubt that he was a teacher sent from God, Matt. 15:2. Even his good works were made the basis for their rejection of him, Matt. 8:34. Even his fellow citizens, among whom he had been brought up, were moved against him in the reading and expounding of the Scriptures, Luke 4:16, 29, 30.

Third, he was made to live a life of the most extreme poverty, accompanied with the insult of being denied the common civility offered to travelers of his day, Matt. 8:20. He was so poor that he did not have the money for the temple tax, except by miracle, Matt. 17:27. Even in his greatest moment of recognition, when he led the parade that would end in his death, he was seated upon a lowly ass, not a horse finely outfitted, and that was not even his own but borrowed, Matt. 21:1-9.

Fourth, he was a man whose life was continued under a constant cloud of sorrow, Isa. 53:3. Although we read that he rejoiced in spirit, Luke 10:21; yet never do we read of his laughing. He was frequent in his complaints, tears and groans, weeping over the consequences of sin for individuals, John 11:35; and for the nation of the Jews, Luke 19:41. Question 3—*What is a third way Christ has humbled himself in his life?*

Answer—Another way in which Christ humbled himself in this life was in submitting to temptation, Heb. 4:15; not as though it arose from his own soul, as it does with us, Jas. 1:14. He suffered himself to be tempted in order to be made like unto us in all points not sinful, Heb. 2:17, 18. Thus, he submitted to temptation of the highest sort, when he underwent that peculiar period of time when he was subjected to the direct conflict with the devil, Matt. 4:1-12. Although this was most intense, the departure of the devil and temptation did not end at the finish of this period, but it was continued, Luke 4:13. This temptation by the prince of the power of the air was a conflict he would endure until his death, John 14:30.

Question 4—*What is a fourth way Christ has humbled himself in his life?*

Answer—He was made subject to all the sinless infirmities of the flesh, whether common to the nature of man, or to his low condition, being humbled on our account, Isa. 52:13, 14. Some of these afflictions which he endured arose from the sin and misery of others, Isa. 63:9. He was painful in his exercise of ministry, discharging it with greatest faithfulness, yet without the desired success, Isa. 49:4.

He was angered and troubled by the obstinacy of the multitudes towards his miracles, Matt. 11:20. He was afflicted in his own spirit for the lack of belief amongst those who heard him, Matt. 16:8-11; and because of the hardness of the heart of his disciples, Mark 8:17, 18.

Then, there were those sinless afflictions and limitations he was made to suffer personally, being part of the human nature: 1.) He was hungered, Mark 11:12. 2.) He was thirsty, John 19:28. 3.) He was fatigued, subjected to weariness, John 4:6. 4.) He needed to sleep, Mark 4:38. 5.) He was unable to be present in more than one place at one time, John 11:6, 21.