

THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

WHAT MAN OUGHT TO BELIEVE CONCERNING GOD

QUESTIONS # 51 & 28.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #51. *What was the estate of Christ's exaltation?*

A. The estate of Christ's exaltation comprehendeth his resurrection,¹ ascension,² sitting at the right hand of the Father,³ and his coming again to judge the world.⁴

(Shorter Catechism)

Q #28. *Wherein consisteth Christ's exaltation?*

A. Christ's exaltation consisteth in his rising again from the dead on the third day,⁵ in ascending up into heaven,⁶ in sitting at the right hand of God the Father,⁷ and in coming to judge the world at the last day.⁸

Question 1—*What must be remembered before discussing Christ's exaltation?*

Answer—The exaltation of Christ is the consequence of his humiliation wherein he took upon himself the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, not that he might be kept in this humble estate, but that he might be raised up again, and exalted to the most inconceivable glory, Phil. 2:8, 9.

The exaltation of Christ must be understood to respect his manhood, or his *human nature* alone, Luke 2:52; for, as God, he cannot be exalted, Mal. 3:6; Heb. 1:12. Nor can any addition be made to his glory as he is God, for he shall continue the same, Jas. 1:17; Heb. 13:8. This glory is another glory besides his personal glory, a mediatorial glory, which has acquired, purchased and merited on behalf of sinners, John 17:10. This is a superadded glory, the glory of the bride, which is naturally his glory, even as the glory of the man is the woman, 1 Cor. 11:7.

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

Answer—Christ's exaltation consists in several steps:

First, in his resurrection from the dead upon the third day, 1 Cor. 15:4. It a special article of the faith of believers that Christ was raised from the dead, Acts 13:30-37. Further, it is to be noted that the divine and human natures were not separated at death, but that his soul and body were actually separated, Luke 23:46; however, all the time he lay in the grave, his two natures were most closely united, for it was the same Christ that was dead, Gal. 2:21; and when he rose from the dead, he only resumed that life which he had voluntarily laid down for his people, for this very Christ was made alive again, Rev. 1:18. The time of this resurrection was the third day after his burial, Luke 24:46.

¹ 1 Cor. 15:4.

² Mark 16:19.

³ Eph. 1:20.

⁴ Acts 1:11; 17:31.

⁵ 1 Cor. 15:4.

⁶ Mark 16:19.

⁷ Eph. 1:20.

⁸ Acts 1:11; 17:31.

This resurrection of Christ is abundantly evident from the Scriptures: 1.) It was foretold in ancient prophecy, Ps. 16:10; Job 19:25. 2.) This resurrection was typified in many ways throughout the Scripture, Luke 24:44; such as Joseph's deliverance from prison, Gen. 41:14; which is reflected in Isaiah's prophecy, Isa. 53:8; again, in Abraham's receiving Isaac from the dead in a figure, Heb. 11:17-19; and, of course, of Jonah's coming forth from the belly of the whale, Matt. 12:40. 3.) We have the most direct proofs that it actually took place, and that the very same Jesus who was crucified, arose from the dead, Matt. 28:9; Mark 16:9; Luke 24:15; John 20:14. 4.) Christ himself, after his resurrection, appeared to many at different times, and by many infallible proofs, even appearing to five hundred at once, 1 Cor. 15:5, 6. 5.) We have strong proof of this truth in the conduct of the disciples after his resurrection, for nothing could keep them from publishing what they had seen and what they had full authority to make known, Acts 17:6. 6.) If the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, according to Christ's promise, is considered a proof of his ascension, then it is also proof of his resurrection, John 16:7; Acts 1:8, 9; 2:1, 2.

In this resurrection of Christ, all the divine Persons in the Godhead concur, Acts 2:24; John 2:19; 1 Pet. 3:18. Most importantly, for us, it was the same body that was laid in Joseph's tomb, which rose with all the properties which it formerly possessed, Luke 24:39.

Second, Christ ascended to heaven is also most evident from the Scripture, Mark 16:19: 1.) It was foretold in prophecy, Ps. 24:7-10; 47:5; 68:18. 2.) There are striking types of this; such as Enoch, who was translated to heaven, soul and body, without tasting death, Gen. 5:23, 24; which was, under the patriarchal dispensation, typical of Christ's ascension, Heb. 11:5; Matt. 3:17; Elijah was translated in a glorious manner, 2 Kings 2:11; which is likewise typical of Christ, Acts 1:9. Also, when the priests of old carried the blood and incense into the most holy place, Lev. 4:3-7; Ex. 30:7-10; it prefigured the ascension of Christ to his Father's right hand, where he appears in that most holy place not made with hands, to present that of most infinite value his atoning blood for a propitiation for our sins, Heb. 9:24, 25. 3.) We have many evidences that he really ascended, Luke 24:50, 51; Acts 7:55.

Third, Christ being seated at the right hand of God the Father is clear according to Scripture, Eph. 1:20: 1.) It was foretold in the prophecies of old both openly and by implication, Ps. 110:1; 118:16. 2.) The significance of this *session* is often hinted in the typical ministrations of Moses, Isa. 63:12; as well as the building of the temple, 2 Chron. 3:17. This points to the great honor, power and authority which Christ now has as the consequence of humiliation, Phil. 2:8, 9.

Fourth, Christ will come again to judge the world in righteousness, which will be a more public and solemn manifestation of his glory and will strike the world of mankind with great sobriety and fear, Acts 1:11; 17:31: 1.) That there will be such a day is evident from the Scriptures, Prov. 24:12; 1 Pet. 4:5. 2.) The providence of God requires such a day, that all may appear to have been equal and just in the view of those who deem things unequal and unjust, wherein the ways of God will be justified to man, Rev. 20:12-15. 3.) That the name of Jesus Christ will be glorified together with his government over all things, Rom. 14:10, 11. 4.) The righteous require such a day, that it may appear to all, that although they were deemed the offscouring of all things, they were beloved of God, Matt. 25:34. 5.) The wicked require such a day, that they may receive according to the wickedness that they have done, and that they might receive vengeance to the uttermost, Rom. 2:8, 9. 6.) To judge the world is part of Christ's exaltation, for he must receive from all an account of what they have done in his absence, 2 Cor. 5:10, 11.