

THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

WHAT MAN OUGHT TO BELIEVE CONCERNING GOD

QUESTION # 54.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #54. *How is Christ exalted in his sitting at the right hand of God?*

A. Christ is exalted in his sitting at the right hand of God, in that as God-man he is advanced to the highest favour with God the Father,¹ with all fulness of joy,² glory,³ and power over all things in heaven and earth;⁴ and does gather and defend his church, and subdue their enemies; furnishes his ministers and people with gifts and graces,⁵ and makes intercession for them.⁶

Question 1—*What should be understood by the phrase “sitting at the right hand of God”?*

Answer—The exaltation of Christ is said continue with a glory conferred upon, after his ascension, which is described as being seated at the right hand of God, Heb. 12:2. This setting, or session, at the right hand of God must be taken in a figurative sense, for God, being a Spirit, is without body, or bodily parts, nor can the heavens contain his immensity, 1 Kings 8:27. It must be considered, as applied to the God-man, the Son incarnate, according to his assumed humanity, it does represent a localized presence of his true manhood in the ascension, Mark 16:19. However, its purpose, vis-à-vis God is to express metaphorically not the actual location but the advancement to highest honor and dignity, Acts 2:34. So, when Christ is said to be set, it represents that highest degree of honor conferred in him, as Mediator, Heb. 8:1. So, particularly, the right hand denotes:

First, the place of majesty and honor, which is conferred upon those held in highest esteem, as the church is described, Ps. 45:9. Thus, Solomon placed his mother at his right hand, when he was upon his royal throne, 1 Kings 2:19. So God, in testimony of the great honor and esteem that he puts upon Christ as Mediator, has set him at his right hand, Heb. 1:3.

Second, the power of God, which is contrasted with the weakness of the Psalmist, Ps. 77:10. Thus, the glorious power of the LORD is said to proceed from the right hand of God, Ex. 15:6.

Question 2—*What is implied in Christ’s sitting at the right hand of God?*

Answer—Christ’s sitting at the right hand of God implies several things:

First, that he has entered a state of rest, Mic. 4:4. Christ had a troublesome life while in this world, suffering many indignities at the hands of men and devils, but now he has finished that work which the Father gave him to do, Heb. 10:12. Other servants are said to stand in the presence of the LORD, Dan. 7:10; but Christ is distinguished from them by this mark of regal dignity, he sits and rules, Zech. 6:13.

¹ Phil. 2:9.

² Acts 2:28; Ps. 16:11.

³ John 17:5.

⁴ Eph. 1:22; 1 Pet. 3:22.

⁵ Eph. 4:10-12; Ps. 110.

⁶ Rom. 8:34.

Second, it also points to his continuance in that state, as those four lepers, 2 Kings 7:3. With his session, Christ has moved beyond his days of sorrow upon earth, which shall never recur, to assume that exalted state wherein his crown shall flourish on his head, and his kingdom shall stand firm and be established, Ps. 132:18.

Question 3—*What is denoted by Christ's sitting at the right hand of God?*

Answer—There are several things denoted by this sitting at the right hand of God:

First, his accomplishment of that work, and the consummation of all those offices, which he was to perform on the earth for the redemption of elect sinners, Heb. 1:3, 4. For until all was finished, he was not to return to his glory. Heb. 4:10.

Second, the great delight and satisfaction that the Father had in Christ, and in that glorious work which he had finished, Ps. 45:6, 7. When he returned from earth to heaven, the Father welcomed him with this testimony of his satisfaction and joy, Ps. 110:1. In turn, this advanced Christ to all fullness of joy in the presence of the Father, Ps. 16:11.

Third, the great honor and dignity to which he is advanced in heaven, having more honor bestowed upon him than any mere creature, Heb. 1:13. In this session, he was returned to that glory which pertained to him from eternity, being the Son of God, John 17:5.

Fourth, his being invested with a sovereign dominion and supreme authority and power, being advanced to the highest favor with God the Father, Phil. 2:9, 10. As a result of his state of humiliation on earth, he received this investiture, Heb. 2:7, 8; whereby he is given power over all things in heaven and earth, Eph. 1:22; 1 Pet. 3:22.

Question 4—*What are the ends for which Christ is made to sit at the right hand of God?*

Answer—The several ends for which Christ our Redeemer sits at the right hand of the Father are as follows:

First, that, as a mighty king, he may protect and defend his church and people, against the rage of all their enemies, both temporal and spiritual, Isa. 32:1, 2. From thence, Christ, the Mediator, is made to prevail against all the contrary forces arrayed, Deut. 33:26, 27.

Second, that he may subdue all the enemies of his kingdom and people, the devil, together with his retinue, the world, the flesh, sin and hell, Ps. 110. For this end, he was raised up even to be sitting as both Lord and Christ, Acts 2:36; reigning until he has made all his enemies to submit, Heb. 10:12, 13; 1 Cor. 15:25.

Third, that with a royal munificence he may dispense unto all his faithful subjects all those gifts and graces that may qualify them for the fruition of that glory that is to be revealed, Acts 5:31. From thence, he does furnish both ministers and people with gifts and graces that are able to edify and perfect the saints, Eph. 4:10-12.

Fourth, that he may act the part of a powerful intercessor for them, Rom. 8:34.

Fifth, that he might advance all his friends and followers to be translated into that same glorious estate, being made kings and priests unto God, Eph. 1:4-6; Rev. 3:21.

We might contemplate the great change between our Redeemer's estate while on earth and now in heaven, from a man of sorrows to one anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows, Acts 2:28. He has highly dignified and ennobled our nature, in his own Person, John 1:14; whereby he exalted that nature above the angels, Ps. 8:5; 1 Cor. 6:3. Christ is seated on his throne, and will see to his interests in the world, Isa. 52:7; his rule will prevail as he reigns king forever, Ps. 2:6-10.