

# THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

## WHAT MAN OUGHT TO BELIEVE CONCERNING GOD

### QUESTION # 56.

*(Larger Catechism)*

Q #56. *How is Christ to be exalted in his coming again to judge the world?*

A. Christ is to be exalted in his coming again to judge the world, in that he, who was unjustly judged and condemned by wicked men,<sup>1</sup> shall come again at the last day in great power,<sup>2</sup> and in the full manifestation of his own glory, and of his Father's, with all his holy angels,<sup>3</sup> with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God,<sup>4</sup> to judge the world in righteousness.<sup>5</sup>

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Question 1—*What is the manner and circumstances of Christ's coming in judgment?*

*Answer*—Though he is now known by the judgments he executes, Ps. 9:16; and though the eternal state of all men is fixed at their death, when a particular judgment is passed on them by Christ, Heb. 9:27; yet these present acts of judgment are done without the external and visible marks of glory in his human nature with which he shall appear in the end of time, Acts 1:11. This judgment is called, “the last day,” as it will mark the transition from the common measure of duration that we call time to another which, by reason of its having no end, is called eternity, John 11:24; 12:48.

The manner and circumstances of Christ's coming in judgment shall be: 1.) In the observation of the whole of the assembled world, being seen by the eyes of all who are upon the earth in that day, Rev. 1:7. 2.) Suddenly and surprisingly, at a time when the whole world is sleeping in its deepest security, Matt. 24:37; so that it behooves men to be on guard against the coming of that day, 1 Thess. 5:2. 3.) Seasonably, at the very precise point and period of time fixed in the eternal councils of heaven, being the exact moment set from eternity, 2 Pet. 3:9, 10. 4.) Terribly, in such a manner that the ungodly will be seized with terror and tremble at his appearing, Rev. 6:14-17. 5.) Gloriously, as men behold him in his exalted glory as Mediator, Mark 13:26; Luke 9:26. In evidence of this, consider—this coming shall be in that glory that characterized his transfiguration, Matt. 17:2. It will be accompanied with the most fearful convulsions of nature, as fire breaks out before him consuming all of the corrupted dross, Ps. 50:3; Dan. 7:9, 10. He shall be attended with a retinue of innumerable angels, Matt. 16:27. He shall be seated upon a throne that is high and lifted up, and before him shall appear all men and devils to receive judgment, Matt. 25:31, 32; Rev. 20:11, 12. Then shall he appear in great power, Matt. 24:30.

Question 2—*Who is the one who will judge?*

*Answer*—The one who will judge is even he who was unjustly judged and condemned by wicked men, Acts 3:14, 15. The apostle makes it clear that Jesus Christ is ordained the judge of the world, 2 Cor. 5:10. And this is for the following reasons:

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<sup>1</sup> Acts 3:14, 15.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 24:30.

<sup>3</sup> Luke 9:26; Matt. 25:31.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Thess. 4:16.

<sup>5</sup> Acts 17:31.

*First*, this judgment is to be acted visibly for men shall be judged and the whole process with them shall be for the things done in the body, Rom. 2:6.

*Second*, only Christ is qualified for this office because: 1.) Of the great dignity and excellency of his person, being the eternal Son of God incarnate, Heb. 1:5. 2.) Of the great difficulty of the work of judging aright, for he discerns the thoughts of the heart, Ps. 44:21.

*Third*, Christ alone has been constituted Judge of the world, as a reward of his death and bloody sufferings, Phil. 2:8-10.

Question 3—*Who and what shall be judged?*

*Answer*—There is none that shall escape this judgment seat of Christ, all must appear before it, 2 Cor. 5:10. Men of all conditions, young and old, rich and poor, princes and peasants, believers and unbelievers, none shall be excused, 2 Tim. 4:1.

The things that shall be judged are three: 1.) All the works which men do will come into judgment, whether they are good or evil, Eccl. 12:14. 2.) All of men's words shall also be brought before the tribunal of Christ, whether our words have been employed for the glory of God and edification of one another or for some other base purpose, Matt. 12:36. 3.) The very thoughts and intents of the heart shall be brought to judgment, 1 Cor. 4:5.

Question 4—*What shall be the properties of this judgment?*

*Answer*—The properties of this judgment are several: 1.) It will be a universal judgment, one which shall arraign those who lived under the law, under the Gospel and even those who having no law were a law unto themselves, Rom. 2:12. In order to effect this judgment the bowels of the earth, the depth of the sea, and all the elements shall give up their dead so that none may escape, Rev. 20:13. 2.) It will be an awful day of judgment wherein sinners and devils shall not stand, Jude 6. There will be a dreadful catastrophe of the world which shall fill men's hearts with the horror and fear as the very bands of nature are torn asunder, Matt. 24:29. The very manner of his coming is designed to strike fear in the hearts of his enemies as the shout of an army gathered for battle, 1 Thess. 4:16, 17. 3.) This judgment will be exact and critical for the searcher of the heart will expose all secrets and bring everything to light that is hidden, Rom. 2:16. All the acts of commission in youth and age, whether gross sensuality or any other excess, shall be judged, 1 Pet. 4:4, 5. 4.) It will be a righteous judgment for all of its verdicts will flow from a complete and infallible knowledge of all men's characters and actions, Acts 17:31. 5.) It is a final judgment from which there will be no appeal, so that once sentence is pronounced, it shall be enacted, Matt. 25:46.

Question 5—*What are the final causes or ends of this judgment?*

*Answer*—Among the several ends of this judgment may be accounted the following: 1.) There is a display of both the justice and the mercy of God—the former, in punishing the wicked, 2 Thess. 1:8, 9; the latter, in rewarding those who are his friends, Matt. 25:34. 2.) There is the manifestation of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ who, as Mediator, came in obscurity in the form of a servant but is now to come in power and great glory, Tit. 2:13. 3.) The rewarding of men according to their works and, thereby, vindicating the providence of God from the imputation of unrighteousness in his governing of the world, Ps. 58:11. Things often seem to carry with an unequal balance in the present life, the wicked prosper, as if they were rewarded for being evil, and the godly suffer, as if being punished for being good, but this disparity is because men fail to meditate upon the end of all things, Ps. 73:2-20.