

From Your Pastor

A Study of the Shorter Catechism

WSC Question 21, Part I: Who is the only Redeemer of God's Elect?

Answer: The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continues to be God and man, in two distinct natures, and one person forever.

An explanation: This is an important catechism question and answer to put to memory! What beauty and glory in the content, and what succinctness and accuracy of Biblical teaching concerning Jesus Christ our Redeemer (the immense depths of true biblical, reformed catholic, Chalcedonian Christology is squeezed and "zipped up" in this one)! The only and sole redeemer, there is no other (1 Tim. 2:5), is the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, who loves and saves God's people from their sins by His precious blood on the cross (Rev. 1:6; Col. 1:19-20), is a unique person in that He has two distinct natures, both God and Man. ***"For in [Christ] the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily"*** (Col. 2:9).

From before the ages, according to God's purpose and grace in His electing mercies, He chose a people to be redeemed and called to a holy calling, not because of works, but all because of His grace (2 Tim. 1:9-10). God the Father, according to the purpose of His will, and for the praise of His glorious grace, chose His people to be holy and blameless before Him, and in love He predestined us for adoption as sons (Eph. 1:3-6).

The Father covenanted with the Eternal Son to provide for Him a body, a true human nature, to perform all perfect obedience on their behalf, and to die as true man on their behalf, taking their sins upon Himself. (Heb. 10:5-17). The Eternal Son willingly, out of love for His own, agreed to this covenant, saying ***"Behold, I have come to do your will, O God..."*** (Heb. 10:7; Psa. 40:6-8). And ***"by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all"*** (Heb. 10:10). Through this Covenant of Grace that the Father made with the Son and the Spirit on behalf of all believers (Heb. 13:20-21), He has now put His laws in our hearts and written them on our minds by His Spirit (Heb. 10:17), and has remembered their sins and their lawless deeds no more (Heb. 10:17). Because of the only redeemer of God's elect, ***"there is no longer any offering for sin"*** (Heb. 10:18).

God's elect are now forgiven, because the Eternal Son of God took upon Himself in permanent, personal, union and subsistence unto Himself our nature! Jesus Christ is one Person, with two distinct natures, both God and Man. The man Christ Jesus, enthroned at God's right hand as King of kings and Lord of lords, is God Himself in the flesh, and a faithful and powerful and good and compassionate mediator for sinners (Heb. 2:14-18; 4:14-16). As God, He has goodness and power to bestow forgiveness to sinners, and His sacrificial offering on the cross was inestimably valuable as a payment for sins, because He is God (Acts 20:28); as man, He is a fit representative for sinful man, a faithful second Adam (Rom. 5:12-21), and performed all obedience required of a man as covenant head and representative and head in the place of the elect. God imputes Christ's perfect righteousness to His elect, and gives them the Spirit to renew and renovate them into the image of God, revealed perfectly in the man Christ Jesus (Eph. 4:17-24; to be continued). **More in Part II...**

A Prayer: Glorious God-Man, Savior of the Elect, perfect Savior, and perfect man, thank you for your willing condescension to take upon my nature, and to live, die, and be resurrected and ascended in heaven *for me* (Phil. 2:5-11)! Thank you for taking my nature up into heaven, and giving me perfect righteousness before your Holy Father, and now my Holy Father! Thank you for your Spirit to help me to live holy before you.

In Christ's love,
Pastor Biggs

"Pray...that God would keep up your souls by fresh supplies of His Spirit, unto a constant view of Heavenly things. And you must do it by prayer that God would give you fresh oil, to increase light in your minds and understandings."

- John Owen

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WSC Question 21, Part II: Who is the only Redeemer of God's Elect?

Answer: The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continues to be God and man, in two distinct natures, and one person forever.

An explanation: There is no other Redeemer but the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). Jesus is the unique Son of God by nature, from all eternity (Heb. 1:3-9). "But of the Son he says, *"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom"* (Heb. 1:8). The Son of God became man to suffer the curse of death on the cross in our place (Heb. 2:15-18). *"Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people"* (Heb. 2:17). Jesus Christ had to be God as well as man. He laid down His life to undergo the wrath of the Father on behalf of sinners, and infinitely satisfied infinite justice as the God-Man.

The human nature of Christ is permanently united to the Second Person of the Triune God, and subsists in union with Him: *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth"* (John 1:14). This permanent union between God and man in the one Person of Christ must be emphasized because redeemed sinners need a permanent priest and advocate before the Father: *"...But he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them"* (Heb. 7:24-25; cf. 1 Jo. 2:1-2). Christ is God and man in hypostatical or personal union, both His natures, divine and human, remaining distinct without composition or confusion, in one and the same person (Vincent quoting Chalcedon, 451).

What love that Jesus has for sinners that he would condescend in humility to our impoverished and lowly estate to exalt us and make us rich in Him! *"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich"* (2 Cor. 8:9), and *"And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross"* (Phil. 2:8). The greatest sins of believers can be forgiven and taken away forever! *"He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities under foot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea"* (Mic. 7:19). And, *"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"* (John 1:29).

"He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things" (Rom. 8:32).

A Prayer: Father, thank you for your amazing grace in providing a Redeemer and Advocate for sinners in your Beloved Son! Let us be thankful, and say together: "As for me, I will look to YHWH; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me" (Mic. 7:7).

In Christ's love,
Pastor Biggs

"...Shall God love [Christ Jesus] and delight in him, and shall not our soul delight in Christ? This therefore should stir up our affections to Christ, to be faithful in our conjugal affection as the spouse of Christ, to say, 'My beloved is mine and I am my beloved's' ...Does Christ delight in us, and God delight in Christ, and shall not we delight in Christ that delights in us, and in whom God delights?"

- Richard Sibbes