

—Westminster Shorter Catechism—
Lesson 22—The Estate of Christ’s Humiliation, Q. 27

Christ’s humiliation consisted:

- I. *In His being born, and that in a low condition.* This was an incalculable first step, from heaven to earth, a mystery of infinite condescension, 1Tim 3.16
 - A. The Son of God became a man, taking on the likeness of sinful flesh, Rom 8.3; Phil 2.6-7
 - B. He was conceived in the womb of a sinful woman. He whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain as God was as man shut up for 9 months, being made in the womb of a woman, whom He Himself had made. He took His human substance from her substance, Gal 4.4; Lk 1.31
 - C. He was born to a carpenter, in a cattle trough, welcomed by rags, in obscurity from the world He’d made and came to save, Jn 1.10-11
- II. *In His being made under the law,* though He was Lord of all and the Lawgiver Himself. Though He owed the Law nothing, yet upon His humbling, the Law took Him by the throat, as the sinner’s Surety, and said to Him, “Pay me what you owe.” He took on the debt of the Elect and paid it in full, Jn 19.30; Rom 6.7-8; 8.32-34; Gal 4.4-5
 - A. He submitted Himself to the ceremonial law by entering through the door of circumcision, Gal 5.3
 - B. He submitted Himself to the judicial law by paying tribute, Mt 17.24-27
 - C. He submitted Himself to the moral law, Mt 3.15; 5.17; Rom 10.4; Rom 6.23; Rom 4.25
- III. *In His undergoing all the miseries of this life,* which was infected with the plague of sin and therefore grievous to bear.
 - A. Poverty and homelessness (Mt 8.20; 17.27), sorrow (Isa 53.3), the indignation and contempt of the world (Mk 3.22; 6.3; Lk 5.30), the temptations of Satan (Mt 4), and all the sinless infirmities of human nature, such as weariness, hunger, thirst, sorrow, grief, pain, and death. Boston, “O let us admire his humiliation and abasement, and let his low estate forever hide pride from our eyes, and teach us, in whatever state we are, to be content.”
- IV. *In His undergoing the wrath of God,* humbling Himself to drink the bitter dregs of His Father’s wrath for us, Gal 3.13; Mt 26.38; 27.46
- V. *In His undergoing the cursed death of the cross,* being betrayed by Judas, forsaken by all His disciples, denied by Peter, unjustly tried by the Jews, condemned by Pilate, and put to death by Gentiles.
 - A. It was painful, shameful (Heb 12.2), and cursed (Dt 21.23; Gal 3.13).
- VI. *In His being buried,* Jn 19.38-42; Isa 53.9; Jn 12.24
- VII. *In His continuing under the power of death for a time* (cf. “descended into hell”). He was not only wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, but He died for our sins, Mt 12.40; Rom 5.14; Heb 9.27; Rom 6.23; 2Cor 5.21. [1Pet 3.18-20 *does not* teach that Christ went to hell and preached there or to “Abraham’s bosom/holding cell” and preached there.]
 - A. He was in the tomb long enough to show that He had really died, but not long enough for corruption to begin to take the body, Jn 11.39; Ps 16.10
 - B. And He was delivered out of the tomb and the pangs of death, because it had no right to hold a man whose debt had been fully paid, Acts 2.24

Why was it necessary that Christ be so greatly humbled? *What* did it accomplish for the Elect?

- I. That He might satisfy divine justice in the room and stead of the Father’s elect. He has so fully and perfectly paid all our debt by His obedience and satisfaction that divine justice is completely atoned and pacified and asks for nothing from the elect, Rom 10.4. On the cross He drew His last breath and said, “It is finished,” and was vindicated by His resurrection as having spoken the truth.
- II. To confirm and seal His testament. He’d bequeathed many glorious legacies to His elect in the promises of Scripture, and had these not been ratified by His death and sealed with His own blood, we

might have room to doubt and disbelieve. But by His death, all doubt is removed and every promise is Yes and Amen, Heb 9.16-17; Lk 22.20; 2Cor 1.20

- III. To subdue and conquer the devil, Heb 2.14; 1Jn 3.8. The crucifying of our Lord was the devil's plan to destroy Jesus, but He outshot and overruled him with his own bow, taking him into His own hands and turning the table on him. Boston, "By plotting and pushing on the death of the Son of God to prevent his own ruin, the devil procured and promoted it instead."
- IV. To make an end of sin, taking away all its dreadful effects, Rom 8.3; Col 1.13-14; 1Jn 1.7
- V. To deliver His elect from the curse of a broken law and the wrath of God, Gal 3.13; 1Th 1.10. The wrath of God will pursue and overtake the sinner and, finding itself never satisfied, will never stop its torments and terrors. But for the elect, Christ stepped in between and took the blow, satisfying it so fully that, not only did it let Him loose afterwards, but now not one drop of its curse, not one drag of the divine wrath, and not one spark of hellfire will ever befall one of His elect. He is the City of Refuge for sinners, where they are safe as long as the High Priest is alive, and therefore forever, Heb 7.25
- VI. That in due time He might bring all His people into the possession of eternal glory, 1Pet 1.3-5; Jn 17.24

Reflections

- 1. Boston, The consideration of all our Saviour's sufferings "should excite us to hate sin, the fatal cause of it all, and to endear to us the merciful Redeemer, who, for our sakes, went through all this scene to accomplish our salvation."
- 2. See the love of Christ in its most distinguishing glory. The deeper He humbled and abased Himself, the more He loved us. This is love without precedent and without parallel; but don't let it be without your praise.
- 3. See the awful and tremendous severity of divine justice toward your sin, a justice so great that nothing less than the Son of God humbling Himself to death on a cross could satisfy it. Not a single demand of the law was abated for Him in life, and not a single punishment was spared Him in death. Justice was merciless, full, and exact. And it'll carry on in the same manner with all those outside of Christ.
- 4. See the great evil of sin. How can we treat sin as a small and light matter when we see how low Christ had to stoop in order to satisfy for it? Of all the judgments of God toward sin in Scripture, nothing compares to this. This is what it deserves. All others judgments were hints and shadows of the wrath it deserves. To see the full price of sin, sit at the foot of the cross of Jesus for a while and learn its lessons.
- 5. Let Christ's great condescension for you make you willing to stoop to anything for Him. Don't refuse any service to Him who served you with all He had.
- 6. How highly should you prize your salvation, if it came at so priceless a price!
- 7. Let every impenitent and Christ-hater tremble to see but a token of what awaits him in an eternal hell.
- 8. Avenge the death of Christ on all your lusts and idols. Give His enemies no quarter. Fly from every sin as your and Christ's enemy and show your love to your Redeemer by putting to death all that is earthly and sinful in you.