

—Westminster Shorter Catechism—
Lesson 34—Our Benefits at the Resurrection, Q. 38

- I. The resurrection in general.
- A. In general, *the resurrection* refers to *that day* when the bodies of all men will be raised from the sleep of death, Dan 12.2; Jn 5.28-29; Acts 24.15.
 - B. Given that the *souls* of men immediately passed into eternity at their death, it is their *bodies* which shall be resurrected, 1Cor 15.44; Job 19.25-27; Mk 9.42-47.
 - C. Since this doctrine is a cardinal truth (and hope) of the Christian faith, to deny it is to subvert the foundation of Christianity, 1Cor 15.13-14. Christ said two things cause men to deny the resurrection: their ignorance of: the power of God and the testimony of His Word, Mt 22.29.
 - D. All men shall be raised. The bodies of all who have ever died will rise again. Wherever their bodies were laid to rest, they shall be called forth, reassembled, and put on immortality, to appear before the Eternal One for judgment, Rev 20.11-14.
 - E. The very same body which died shall be raised, though with different, eternal qualities.
 - 1. Christ was raised up with the same body He had before He died, Lk 24.1-3; Jn 20.27.
 - 2. It shall be raised up imperishable and immortal, so that it cannot decay or die but can endure the eternity into which it enters, 1Cor 15.42.
 - 3. The soul shall intuitively recognize the body as its own and *know* that this is the body with which it either served the Lord or served the devil.
 - 4. We shall recognize each other, being able to see the person of the soul in the resurrected body as the very person we knew before death, Jn 20.12; Lk 24.30-31; Mt 17.3.
- II. The resurrection of believers.
- A. This is the last time “believers” shall bear that name, Heb 11.1.
 - B. The bodies of those who are alive when Christ returns cannot be raised, but shall be immediately changed and put on immortality, 1Cor 15.51-53; 1Th 4.16-17.
 - C. Believers shall be raised up, not simply *imperishable*, but *in glory*, adorned with the beauty and glory of Christ’s own body, as His Bride, prepared for His delight, 1Cor 15.42-49; Phil 3.20-21.
 - D. Their bodies will be raised *spiritual*, made into the most fit and perfect houses for the living and abiding *Spirit* of God, 1Cor 15.44.
 - E. Their resurrection shall be as pleasant as awaking out of sleep, 1Th 4.13-16.
 - F. The necessity of the resurrection: The covenant God made with believers requires their resurrection from the dead, Mt 22.32; Hos 2.19. Christ’s total defeat of death requires it, 1Cor 15.54-56. The resurrection of Christ as Head requires it, 1Cor 15.20-23; Eph 2.6; 5.30. Their union with Christ requires it, Rom 8.23.
- III. The benefits received at the resurrection.
- A. They shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment as being the children of God, the Bride of Christ, the temples of the Spirit, Mal 3.17-18; Mt 10.32-33, 39; 25.34; Eph 2.22; Heb 2.13; Rev 3.5.
 - B. They shall be openly acknowledged as righteous in Christ, justified by His works, with all their works brought in as evidence of their faith, Rom 5.9; 8.30, 33; 10.10; Gal 2.16; Rom 2.6-11; Js 2.17.
 - C. They shall be perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity. Their *chief end* shall at last be reached, and shall never end.
 - 1. Sin shall be forever behind them, Eph 5.27; Jude 24-25.
 - 2. Full satisfaction shall be found in God, Job 19.25-27; 1Th 4.17. There shall be no more need for means of grace. There shall be no more stints in their fellowship with God.
 - 3. They shall live with God *forever*, and shall *eternally* grow in knowledge, enjoyment, and glory, Rev 21.3.

IV. The timing of these things.

- A. The Lord keeps the timing of these things to Himself, Acts 1.7. But He has revealed what we need to know to be ready:
 - 1. The Lord can come at any moment and will come without warning, Rev 22.20.
 - 2. The coming of the Lord will effect several things in immediate and simultaneous succession:
 - a) The resurrection of the dead, 1Th 4.13-18.
 - b) The judgment of all men, Acts 17.30-31; Mt 13.36-43, 47-50.
 - c) The end of time and history and the world as we know it, Mt 24.3.
 - d) The giving of rewards to the righteous and punishments to the wicked, Jn 5.28-29; 2Cor 5.10; Mt 25.34, 41.
 - 3. The thousand years spoken of in Rev 20.1-3 refer to the period of time between the first and second comings of Christ, *the last days*. Satan was bound for “a thousand years” by the cross, when his deception of the nations was ended and the gospel covered the globe.
 - a) During this “millennium,” the church undergoes tremendous tribulation and persecution, antichrists arise as a judgment on professors and a test to the elect, and a man of lawlessness leads many astray. As wickedness abounds the church will face its darkest hour. And it is at this point of greatest need that our Lord will return and set in motion all the events and benefits of the resurrection, Rev 20.7-10.

V. Inferences

- A. Come out from this wicked world. When our Lord comes, all who are with the world will be sent away from His presence with the world.
- B. Beware of judging others. However spotted they may be, if they bear signs of Christ’s work in them, they are precious and will one day shine like the stars of heaven. Therefore be charitable and leave the judging of men’s hearts to the Lord. Instead, do what you can to spur one another on in the race.
- C. Don’t be ashamed to own Christ before men, remembering that one day He will own you before the Father, all His angels, and hell itself.
- D. Every happiness of the Christian life is beset here with gall and bitterness. So let us long for and hasten in holiness toward that day when our happiness will be full and pure.
- E. Let us live as those whose bodies are bound for glory, whose hearts are fixed on Christ, whose greatest joys are ahead of us, and whose time on earth is valued as a preparation for eternity.