

THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

WHAT MAN OUGHT TO BELIEVE CONCERNING GOD

QUESTION # 41.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #41. *Why was our Mediator called Jesus?*

A. Our Mediator was called Jesus, because he saveth his people from their sins.¹

Question 1—*What is the meant by the Mediator being called Jesus?*

Answer—We have seen that the nature of the Mediator is both God and man, Rom. 1:3, 4. Throughout the Scriptures, the Mediator is sometimes called *Lord* to denote the infinite dignity of his Person as God equal with the Father, Phil. 4:5. Elsewhere, he is called by the name *Jesus*, denoting the historicity of his incarnation, Matt. 1:25. Again, he is called the *Lord Jesus*, a term which emphasizes that the divine Person is the very one incarnate in the historical Jesus, Acts 9:17. He is the *Lord Christ*, which holds forth the divinity of the Person who is the Mediator, Col. 3:24. In some places, he is called the *Lord Jesus Christ*, whereby the historical reality of the incarnation of the eternal Son is noted as the basis of that mediation, Col. 1:2. In other words, the incarnation is the very basis upon we know him as Mediator, Jude 1; for his name of Mediator, or Christ, is not bestowed by reason of any work which he does, but sets forth his office which results from that *hypostatic* union in one Person of God and man, 1 John 2:1, 2. Furthermore, this office continues by reason of the permanence of this union, Luke 22:69.

Besides denoting the historicity of the incarnation, the name *Jesus* [Ἰησοῦς] signifies a Saviour, 2 Pet. 1:1. The prophet, foretelling the incarnation of the Son, declares him to be the salvation of his people, Isa. 62:11. So, at his presentation in the temple, in his infancy, Simeon held him in his arms and confessed him to be the promised salvation, Luke 2:28-30. He is a Saviour bringing salvation for us, and we attain to it by him, delivering us from evil, Gal. 1:4; and saving us from the wrath to come, Rom. 5:9. Thus, his very name means *Saviour*, being the Greek form of the name Joshua [יְהוֹשֻׁעַ], which means “Jehovah is salvation,” *cf.* Acts 7:45; Heb. 4:8. So, it was intimated and given by the direction of the angel, before his birth, that he should be so called, Matt. 1:21.

Of this name *Jesus*, it may be noted: 1.) He was actually called this by Joseph and Mary as a sign of their faith, Luke 2:21; and this name was that by which he was known by other men, Acts 6:14. 2.) By this name, he is made to identify with his people, Jer. 23:5, 6. 3.) By this name is indicated the main work which he would undertake for his people, salvation, Isa. 45:21, 22.

Question 2—*What is meant by the assertion that he saves his people from their sins?*

Answer—If we should inquire, what is meant by *his people*, the following should be considered:

First, from the very announcement of his birth, it was made clear that his work of mediation and redemption did not apply to every single individual of mankind, Matt. 1:21. Nor did this differ from the prophecy concerning his coming into the world, Isa. 53:12.

¹ Matt. 1:21.

Second, the extent of this mission is confessed by the Lord himself, Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45. Thus, the end of the mission is made to terminate not upon every single individual of mankind but only upon those who are taken into the number of his fold, his sheep, John 10:11-15. These are clearly those alone for whom Christ died, Acts 20:28; and they are those who are the members of his body, the church, Eph. 5:2, 25. Salvation is not indefinite or indeterminate, Jesus was incarnate in order to save a certain number of men who shall eventually obtain the blessing, John 17:9.

By the words *from their sins* should be understood several things:

First, it means that Jesus has taken upon himself all the sins of his people, Isa. 53:6. He bears the guilt of their sin so that they have henceforth no more burden of sin to weigh them down, Ps. 55:22; Matt. 11:28. He saves his people through his personal substitution, by standing in their stead and suffering in their place, 1 Pet. 3:18. This suffering was only possible through the assumption to his divine Person of a true humanity because it is only by virtue of the manhood that the acts of our Lord can be arranged according to those conditions of time which they require for actual fulfillment, Heb. 2:10. There is no other way of salvation but by his vicarious sufferings and death, 1 Cor. 3:11.

Next, he saves his people by the bearing of the penalty due to their sins, for where there is sin, there is penalty, Isa. 53:5. He bore the wrath of God which was due to us, Gal. 3:13. He has suffered this penalty in our stead, if we are his people, 1 Pet. 2:21. All of which he undertook in order to bring us to God, so that we would no longer live in our sins, but partake of his benefits, with that gratitude and consequent hatred to sin which is fitting, 2 Cor. 5:21.

Question 3—*What is implied by this name Jesus?*

Answer—First, we must come to understand that he is one whose name is completely justified by the facts of his life and mediation through his name, Matt. 1:21. It is through faith in his name, that is, the reality that he is the alone Saviour, that justifies, Rom. 3:22, 26; 1 Cor. 6:11. It is the fullness of salvation, redemption, that is wrought by faith in his name, Acts 3:16. Anything contrary to this salvation, or his Mediatorial office, is against his name, Acts 26:9.

Second, since this name is completely justified by him, it should be understood that by our Lord's mediation is meant that he is not a Mediator, but *the* Mediator between God and man, 1 Tim. 2:5. In this, there is a distinction to be made between the Christian church and those who profess some kind of faith in the Lord, while denying the sole mediation, or the true nature of the atonement, which is implied in this name, Acts 4:12. He is what none other can be, the pattern man, *cf.* Gen. 1:27 *with* Heb. 1:3; and the second Adam, 1 Cor. 15:45. Thus, while some profess belief in Christ's mediation, or even his atonement, while attaching no Christian sense to them, a proper view of the incarnation entails a right view of his mediation, Acts 4:10. He is the only medium through which prayers ascend to God, or man finds acceptance with God, John 14:6. He is the door through which heaven and earth are connected, John 10:9.

Finally, this office of Mediator is not transitory but enduring, lasting as long as the Gospel kingdom, Acts 7:56, 59. The incarnation does not cease with removal from the earth and completion of earthly duties, Rom. 8:34, 39. He now bears the office of regency and judge awaiting that great day, which is placed in that office resulting from his assumption of manhood, John 5:27.