

THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

WHAT MAN OUGHT TO BELIEVE CONCERNING GOD

QUESTIONS # 45 & 26.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #45. *How doth Christ execute the office of a king?*

A. Christ executeth the office of a king, in calling out of the world a people to himself,¹ and giving them officers,² laws,³ and censures, by which he visibly governs them;⁴ in bestowing saving grace upon his elect,⁵ rewarding their obedience,⁶ and correcting them for their sins,⁷ preserving and supporting them under all their temptations and sufferings,⁸ restraining and overcoming all their enemies,⁹ and powerfully ordering all things for his own glory,¹⁰ and their good;¹¹ and also in taking vengeance on the rest, who know not God, and obey not the gospel.¹²

(Shorter Catechism)

Q #26. *How doth Christ execute the office of a king?*

A. Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself,¹³ in ruling,¹⁴ and defending us,¹⁵ and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.¹⁶

Question 1—*What does it mean that Christ is executing the office of a king?*

Answer—As our Redeemer, Christ executes the office of a king, Ps. 2:6. This Kingship signifies his advancement to the highest dignity, exercising dominion over subjects, Eccl. 8:4. Christ, as a king, is invested with all regal power and princely authority, Rev. 19:16. That he is a king appears:

First, Christ was prophesied under the Old Testament to be a coming king, Gen. 49:10. Once the kingly line of David had been established, it was prophesied that Messiah should come of this line, Isa. 11:1-3; Jer. 23:5. Furthermore, he was promised to the people of God under this notion of king, Isa. 9:6, 7. These prophesies continued in the latter days of the Israel, when they were rebuilding the temple, Zech. 9:9. It was prophesied that he who was

¹ Acts 15:14-16; Isa. 55:4, 5; Gen. 49:10; Ps. 110:3.

² Eph. 4:11, 12; 1 Cor. 12:28.

³ Isa. 33:22.

⁴ Matt. 18:17, 18; 1 Cor. 5:4, 5.

⁵ Acts 5:31.

⁶ Rev. 22:12; 2:10.

⁷ Rev. 3:19.

⁸ Isa. 63:9.

⁹ 1 Cor. 15:25; Ps. 110:1, 2, *and throughout*.

¹⁰ Rom. 14:10, 11.

¹¹ Rom. 8:28.

¹² 2 Thess. 1:8, 9; Ps. 2:8, 9.

¹³ Acts 15:14-16.

¹⁴ Isa. 32:22.

¹⁵ Isa. 32:1, 2.

¹⁶ 1 Cor. 15:25; Ps. 110.

from everlasting would come forth from Bethlehem as the ruler in Israel, Micah 5:2. Again, before his birth, his kingship was declared by the angel that brought news to Mary of his conception, Luke 1:32, 33.

Second, Christ bears all the ensigns of royalty about his Person: 1.) He has a sword, his word, by which he maintains and propagates the glory and honor of his kingdom, gird about his thigh, Ps. 45:3; Eph. 6:17. 2.) He has a scepter of righteousness, even his Spirit, by which he effects the governing of the world, together with his operations of grace in the hearts of his people, guiding and conforming them to the holy will of God, Ps. 45:6; Heb. 1:8; 2 Cor. 3:8, 9. 3.) He has a crown, whereby his regal dignity appears upon his head, Song 3:11; Rev. 6:2. 4.) He has a coat of arms, importing that he is a conquering and victorious king, Rev. 5:5. 5.) He has a throne, from which he issues his decrees and which is established in heaven, Ps. 89:29, 36, 37; 93:2; Heb. 1:8. 6.) He has subjects over which he rules, even all the creatures in heaven and earth, Ps. 103:19; even the angels are made to yield him worship, Heb. 1:6.

Third, he sealed the truth of his kingship with his own blood, for when he was brought before Pilate, he acknowledges this kingship, John 18:37. For which cause, Paul tells us that he died a martyr, witnessing the good confession, 1 Tim. 6:13; he is the faithful witness who shall, in due time, display his kingship over all things, Rev. 1:5; 1 Tim. 2:6; 6:15.

Question 2—How does Christ execute this office of a king?

Answer—Christ exercises the office of a king in several ways:

First, he does so by subduing sinners to himself, making them willing in the day of his power to submit to his authority and scepter as willing subjects, Ps. 110:3. Before they are brought to Christ, there is no difference between them and the rest of the world, who are subjects of Satan's kingdom, Eph. 2:2. Their hearts are, by nature, full of enmity and rebellion, in opposition to his government, and their lives reveal a fixed resolution not to serve him, Tit. 3:3. They are, until he subdues them, made subject to any but Christ, Isa. 26:13. However, it is the great design of Christ's kingly office as Mediator to raise up to himself a kingdom in the earth, Acts 15:14-16. He does not come without title to conquer, but has the title of his Father's gift and his own purchase, Isa. 55:4, 5; Acts 20:28.

Second, he exercises this kingly office in ruling and governing his subjects, Matt. 28:18. As a visible society on earth, Christ governs the church externally: 1.) By giving them laws according to which they are to demean themselves toward God and man, Isa. 33:22. 2.) By giving them officers into whose hands he has lodged the administration of this government, Eph. 4:11, 12; 1 Cor. 12:28. 3.) By giving them discipline and censures to control the unruly, check the scandalous and keep the society clean, 1 Cor. 5:4, 5. This administration, too, by which he rules his people, has been entrusted to the ministry of men, Matt. 18:17, 18.

Additionally, Christ being God himself, and his laws reaching to the inner man, he governs his people internally: 1.) By bestowing saving grace upon his elect so that they are enabled to repent and receive forgiveness of sins, Acts 5:31. 2.) By writing his law in their hearts, holding forth their duty by inward evidence, Heb. 8:10. This makes known the will and pleasure of God so that they might obey from the heart, Isa. 30:21. 3.) He powerfully inclines and overrules them by his Spirit unto obedience, while he sits at the helm, and steers them as he will, Acts 20:22. 4.) He uses a system of rewards, whereby he bestows spiritual comforts when they are in the way of duty, Rev. 2:17; adding to that the hope of heavenly rewards, Rev. 2:10; 22:12. He also corrects them for their sins, Rev. 3:19.

Third, Christ exercises his kingly office in defending his people: 1.) By preserving his church in being, notwithstanding all the attempts to destroy it, Isa. 27:3. Again, by keeping every believer in particular, so that they never totally and finally fall away, John 10:28. 2.) By giving them necessary support and help under all sufferings, troubles and temptations, never leaving them, Isa. 63:9. He is their shelter from the storm, Isa. 32:1, 2.

Fourth, Christ exercises his kingly office in restraining his enemies and those of his people, Ps. 76:10. Christ has all his and his people's enemies, outward and inward, in a chain, Ps. 104:9. When he sees their rage, and how they set themselves against him with their combined forces and insult, as if they had power to bring about their designs, he mocks them, Ps. 2:1, 4.

Fifth, he executes his kingship in conquering his enemies and those of his people, taking away their power in part: 1.) When their rage against the people of God is laid aside and the church enjoys tranquility, Zech. 2:5. 2.) When he shall rule over kingdoms and nations to serve him and his church, Ps. 110. 3.) By removing the sting of death for believers, 1 Cor. 15:55.

And, making a complete conquest of them, when he gathers all his people into one, transporting them to heaven, where he will reign over them in glory forever, 1 Cor. 15:25. Thus, he is now powerfully ordering all things for his own glory, Rom. 14:10, 11; and for the good of his elect people, Rom. 8:28.

Lastly, he shall take vengeance on the rest, who know not God and obey not the gospel, 2 Thess. 1:8, 9. He shall destroy the nations that will not serve him, Ps. 2:8, 9. Finally, death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire, Rev. 20:14.

Question 3—*Wherein consists the kingdom of Christ?*

Answer—The kingdom of Christ is a twofold kingdom:

First, there is his essential kingdom, which he has by nature, as he is the eternal Son of God, Ps. 47:2, 7, 8. In this respect, he has a universal empire, a dominion which extends over all things in heaven and earth, even hell itself, Dan. 4:25; Rev. 20:11-15.

Second, there is an economical, or Mediator, kingdom, over which he is appointed king as the Mediator, at the center of which is his church, Col. 1:13. Nevertheless, this kingdom extends over all things in creation, giving him authority to direct all to the benefit of his church, Eph. 1:22; John 17:2.