

—Westminster Shorter Catechism—
Lesson 18—The Offices of Christ our Redeemer, Q. 23

- I. Why was it necessary that our Redeemer be by nature God? WLC 38
- A. If He'd *not been God* He could not have come into the world or been incarnate and had the guilt of our sins laid on Him, with His own consent, Heb 10.5-7
 - 1. The terms of our redemption and the covenant made to transact it, were all established in eternity as an everlasting covenant between the Father and our Redeemer. If Christ were not the eternal Son of God, He could not have been a party in that covenant.
 - 2. And once Christ took on our spotless and innocent nature, He could not have been justly charged by the Father with the guilt of our sins and then punished for them, unless He'd consented to be *before* He took on that nature, Heb 7.26-27
 - B. If He'd *not been God*, He could not have sustained and kept the human nature from sinking under the infinite wrath of God and the power of death, Mk 14.34
 - 1. No mere creature, by his own strength, can bear up under God's wrath.
 - 2. Christ took on our nature *Himself, as God, in order that* there might be no possibility of miscarrying in the important work of bearing the full wrath of God, *and in order that* He might make *full satisfaction* for it and come out on the other side of it in the resurrection, Jn 19.30
 - C. If He'd *not been God*, He could not have paid the infinite price incurred by sin and satisfied the infinite justice of an infinite God against sinners, Col 2.13-14
 - 1. As one man, the *most* He could've done is obey for Himself, pay for Himself, and deliver Himself. But what of the whole church of God? What of the elect?
 - 2. Being God, His obedience to the Law, His payment towards the debt, and His purchase for the elect are all of *infinite* worth and value. All His mediatorial works as a man are done by Him *as God*, which gives to all of them an *infinite* value, and secures for the elect eternal life, eternal peace, eternal fellowship with God in heaven, Rom 8.32-34
 - D. If He'd *not been God*, He could not have applied to them all He accomplished for them, Mt 11.28
 - 1. As God, Christ is able to send the divine Spirit, His equal, to apply His purchase to us, Acts 2.33
 - E. If He'd *not been God*, He could not have conquered all our enemies and removed everything that opposed our redemption: *sin, Satan, the world, and death*. Conquering these requires infinite power, Ps 89.19-37; Isa 53.10-12
 - 1. As God, He's able to make satisfaction for sin, break the dominion of sin over us, remove the condemnation standing against us, and free us from the enslaving power of sin by sanctification.
 - 2. As God, He's able to crush Satan under His feet, plunder his house of the elect, and keep them from ever being his slaves again.
 - 3. As God, He's able to deliver His people from the snares of the world and sanctify to them the blessings of providence.
 - 4. As God, He's able to turn death into a servant for His people's good so that it becomes a glorious transition into glory.
 - F. If He'd *not been God*, He could not have brought His people into an everlasting salvation, Jn 10.28
 - G. If He'd *not been God*, He could not have been our everlasting happiness, Jn 17.3; 1Jn 1.3
 - 1. The happiness of the saints is not only found *from* Christ's work, but *in* Christ's person.
- II. Why was it necessary that our Redeemer be by nature man? WLC 39.
- A. It was necessary in order that He might perform obedience to the Law of God. He can't offer obedience to that Law in His divine nature because the divine nature can't be put under obligation, Gal 4.4-5
 - B. It was necessary in order that He might advance our finite nature by uniting it to His divine nature and thereby giving its obedience and suffering and intercession the infinite value of deity, Acts 20.28.

- C. It was necessary in order that He might have a fellow-feeling with all our infirmities, Heb 2.17-18; 4.14-16; Ps 103.13-14
- D. It was necessary in order that by our union with Him in His Sonship to God, we might also become sons of God. His Father is now also our Father, and His Sonship is now the ground upon which we can appear before God as acceptable as He, because acceptable in Him, Jn 20.17; Eph 1.6

III. Why was it necessary that our Redeemer be both God and man, two distinct natures, in one Person?
WLC 40

- A. The works needing to be performed in the human nature for our redemption could not have benefitted us unless they had the infinite value and worth of the divine nature added to them.
- B. The works needing to be performed in the human nature could not have been performed by the divine nature.
- C. The divine nature, which alone could save us, had no way to reach us without the addition of a human nature like ours.
- D. It's *impossible* for the two natures to be united. So in order for the two natures to work together, they must be united in one Person. And since a human person couldn't exalt itself to add deity to himself, it can only be that a divine Person humble Himself to add humanity to Himself, Jn 8.58
- E. The glory of this truth lies in this:
 - 1. The works of each nature must be accepted by God for us, because they're the works of the one Person Christ Jesus.
 - 2. Moreover, we can rely on all those works performed by Him for us, whether on earth during His humiliation or now in heaven as our exalted Intercessor, because He did them all as God and man in one Person, *the Person of our Redeemer*.

IV. What offices must Christ hold in order to redeem us? WSC 23

- A. In the OT, the men of three offices were anointed: prophets, priests, and kings. These were all "the Lord's anointed ones".
- B. *Why* were they anointed? It was a ceremonial ordinance to signify three things: 1) that God had designated them to that office, 2) that they were to expect from God the equipage they needed to perform that office, *and* 3) to typify and foreshadow the offices that the incarnate Christ would execute as our Redeemer: the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, Acts 4.27; Ps 45.7; WSC 24-26
- C. Christ would come as our *Prophet* to teach us the will of God for our salvation (Jn 7.46), as our *Priest* to atone for us, reconcile us to God (Heb 10.14), and intercede for us, and our *King* to rule over us and subdue all our enemies for a full deliverance (Phil 2.9-11).

V. Did Christ take these offices unto Himself? WLC 42

- A. Once Christ consented to be our Mediator in the covenant of redemption, He was *appointed* to these offices by the Father and then *anointed* for each of them by the Spirit, Ps 45.7; Mt 3.16-17; Lk 2.10-11; Jn 1.29-30; 3.27-35; Ps 2.1-6; cf. Heb 5.4-6

VI. In what capacity does Christ execute these offices? WSC 23

- A. He holds and executes these office for us both in the estate of humiliation, which covers from womb to tomb, and in the estate of exhalation, which commenced at the resurrection and will continue forever, without end.

Reflections

1. There's no Saviour like our Jesus. He brings to the table everything we need in a kinsman redeemer and everything we need from a God of grace and mercy.
2. He is fully God to bring efficacy to His every work and fully man to share that efficacy with us.
3. In the direst of straits, we can lean on the infinite value of His work for us. In the saddest of sufferings, we can lean on the fellow-feelings of His nature for us. In the happiest of times, we can be humbled that so great a God had so kind and saving a care for us, as to bring us into fellowship with His joy.
4. There is everything in Christ we need. We're fools to look outside of Jesus; but we're infinitely rich when we throw our all into His work as Redeemer.