

Shorter Catechism 107 “Thine Is the Kingdom” 1 Chronicles 29, Psalm 73, Luke 2

September 10, 2017

Our opening Psalm – Psalm 73 – reflects on how hard it is to pray,
“thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory” –
because so often we don’t see the kingdom and the power and the glory!
What do we see?
We see that the wicked rule.
We see the power of those who hate God.
We see the glory and honor of those who reject Jesus.

And yet the conclusion of the Lord's prayer teaches us to pray
“thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.”

And Psalm 73 helps us with this.

The tune “Full Circle” is aptly named.

Psalm 73 moves through three distinct moods – each signaled by the pronouns:

- verses 1-12 focus on “them” – the wicked –
 - as the Psalmist expresses his frustration at how “they” prosper in spite of their rebellion;
- verses 13-17 then turn to the Psalmist’s me-centered despair –
 - “Have I kept my heart for nothing?”
 - What do I get for obeying God?
- But then in verse 17, Asaph comes into the temple,
 - “then I saw their destiny.”
- And in verses 18-28, the focus is no longer on “them” or on “me” –
 - but on *you* (O LORD).

There are few tunes that could express
all the shifting moods of frustration, despair and confident hope!

But “Full Circle” does it well.

Musicologists tell me that it's not *really* a twelve-bar minor blues,
but the chord structure is identical –
and the walking bass line reminds me of what I used to play in jazz band!
I would suggest that we sing the first four stanzas normally –
but then stanzas five and six should be sung quietly (but with intensity!) –
with a gradual crescendo through stanza six –
stanza seven, then, should start loud, but then (as we sing about the dream)
it can soften again – as we remember in stanza 8,
and then build again through stanzas 9-10.

Sing Psalm 73, etc.

Read 1 Chronicles 29

We have come to the last sermon in our catechetical series.

And we have come *full circle* –

from question 1 – “what is man’s chief end?

Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever” –

to question 107 – where we pray the conclusion of the Lord’s Prayer:

“for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.”

Ironically, this conclusion was almost certainly

not part of the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples!

The phrase, “for thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen”

is not found in any Greek manuscript prior to the fifth century,

and while the Lord’s Prayer is widely quoted by the early Fathers,

only after the fourth century does it conclude with these words.

How did it come to be added?

The Lord’s Prayer ends rather awkwardly.

“Deliver us from evil” is a rather strange way to end a prayer.

And so most likely some early pastor decided to add a phrase from 1 Chronicles 29

to the end of the Lord’s Prayer.

The phrase caught on and by the fifth century a large number of people were using
this concluding phrase.

At some point, probably in the 4th or 5th century,

a copyist was transcribing the Lord’s Prayer

and thought that someone had accidentally left out the concluding phrase.

So he “corrected” the “error”—and since many other copyists perpetuated it,
eventually 1 Chronicles 29:11 became permanently affixed to Matthew 6:13.

I am glad that most modern translations are willing to leave it out of Matthew 6:13.

Jesus almost certainly did not say it, so we should not put it in our Bibles.

BUT, I am also glad that we continue to use this conclusion to the Lord’s Prayer.

Because not only is it true, it is also scriptural.

And the Lord’s Prayer is not just “the words that Jesus used” –

the Lord’s Prayer is the pattern of prayer that Jesus taught us.

When Jesus taught us to pray “thy kingdom come,”

he taught us precisely what David prays in 1 Chronicles 29.

David is about to die.

He had wanted to build the temple himself,

but God had refused.

It was not fitting for David to build a house for God’s name,

because God had built a house for David.

In 1 Chronicles 28, David assembled the people and explained that

God had “chosen Solomon my son to sit on the throne

of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel.

He said to me, ‘It is Solomon your son who shall build my house and my courts,
for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father.’ (28:5-6)
And then David charged Solomon with the same words that Moses had charged Joshua:
“Be strong and courageous and do it. Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed,
for the LORD God, even my God, is with you.
He will not leave you or forsake you,
until all the work for the service of the house of the LORD is finished.”
(28:20)

When all the people had brought their freewill offerings to the LORD,
then David prayed that God would indeed do as he had promised:

Not only is it a kingdom prayer,
but it is a prayer for his son—that his son might reign wisely,
and build the temple for God’s name.
“Grant to Solomon my son a whole heart that he may keep your commandments,
your testimonies, and your statutes, performing all,
and that he may build the palace for which I have made provision.” (29:19)

And it is in that context that David prays,
“Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty,
for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours.
Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head over all.” (29:11)

David prays that God’s kingdom will come through his son,
because he acknowledges that all greatness and power and glory belong to God.
Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and because yours is the kingdom,
please do all that you have promised!

It is fitting, then, that a portion of David’s kingdom prayer
should be attached to the Son of David’s kingdom prayer.

Read Luke 22:38

Do you pray, “thine *is* the kingdom”?
It’s not enough to pray, “thy kingdom come.”
If you just pray “thy kingdom come,”
you are saying that God’s kingdom hasn’t actually come yet.
But when you pray, “thine *is* the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever,”
you are saying that God’s kingdom is both *already* and *not yet*.

In the Lord’s Prayer,
our King Jesus taught us how to pray as citizens of his kingdom.
Joel has taken us through the six petitions of the Lord’s Prayer:
Hallowed be thy name
Thy Kingdom Come

Thy Will be done
Give us this day our daily bread
Forgive us our debts
Lead us not into temptation
Why do you pray that God's name would be treated as holy?
Why do you pray that the kingdom of God would come?
Why do you pray for your daily bread?
Why do you pray for the forgiveness of your sins?

It all comes down to this:

It is because the kingdom belongs to God.
It is because God has the power to hear our prayer, and to answer!
And it is because God's glory is at stake.

Kingdom
Power
Glory

So...

Q. 107. What does the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer teach us?

A. The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, which is, *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen*, teaches us to take our encouragement in prayer from God only, and in our prayers to praise him, ascribing kingdom, power, and glory to him; and, in testimony of our desire, and assurance to be heard, we say, Amen.

1. Thine Is the Kingdom – the Song of Simeon (Luke 2:28-35)

The Song of Simeon highlights the *presence* of the Kingdom.

Because where the Christ is present – where the Lord's Messiah is –
there is the Kingdom.

David's prayer in 1 Chronicles 29 came at the end of his life,
and he prayed that God would prosper Solomon because he confessed
“thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory.”
Here in Luke 2 there is another man who is approaching his death—
Simeon, who was “righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel.”
In other words, he was anticipating the day when the herald would proclaim,
“Comfort, Comfort, ye my people—speak ye peace, thus saith our God!”
And the Holy Spirit had revealed to him
“that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.”

And on the day when Jesus was brought to the temple 40 days after his birth,
Simeon was led by the Spirit to the temple,
“And when the parents brought in the child Jesus,
to do for him according to the custom of the Law,
he took him up in his arms and blessed God.”

There are two things that the law required:

- 1) as Mary's firstborn, Jesus had to be redeemed
- 2) Mary herself had to be purified after childbirth.

According to the Law,

when a baby boy was born,
the mother was unclean for 40 days.

And 40 days after she gave birth to a son,
the mother was required to bring a burnt offering and a sin offering
in order to become clean.

When we think of the offerings and sacrifices in the temple,

we usually think of sacrifices for sin.

In the Old Testament,

when you sinned, you needed to bring a sacrifice to atone for your sin.

But there was more to the OT sacrificial system than just dealing with sin.

Luke points us to the cleansing of the mother (from Leviticus 12:21-27)
and the redemption of the firstborn (from Exodus 13:2, 12).

In Exodus 13:2 God says,

“Consecrate to me all the firstborn.
Whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel,
both of man and of beast,
is mine.”

Exodus 13 comes in the context of the Passover feast,
where God passed over the firstborn of Israel,
and did not kill them, because of the blood of the lamb.

And in this context,

God commands Israel to “set apart to the LORD all that first opens the womb” (13:12)

Moses explains this in 13:13-15

*Every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb,
or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck.*

Moses gives a very clear explanation of why they are to do this:

Every firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem.

And when in time to come your son asks you, “What does this mean?”

*you shall say to him,
“By strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt,
from the house of slavery.*

*For when Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go,
the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt,*

both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of animals.

*Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all the males that first open the womb,
but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.*

The redemption of the firstborn is a sacrament.

It is a visible sign that represents God's saving benefits to his people.
And so as a firstborn son in Israel,
Jesus must be redeemed!

This is not saying that Jesus had sinned, or that he was tainted by original sin.
Rather, it is saying that he was truly man.
He became a full part of the human race—
and not just the human race,
but Israel in particular.

There are three parts of this in Luke 2.

The circumcision of Jesus in 2:21,
where Jesus received the sacrament of covenant initiation.
In his circumcision, Jesus was marked as a Jew.
The redemption of Jesus in 2:22-23,
where his parents presented him to the Lord, redeeming him as the firstborn.
And the purification of Mary in 2:24,
where she offered the sacrifice required in the law,
two birds for a burnt offering and a sin offering,
in order to make atonement for her before the Lord (Lev 12:6).

The details of this sacrament are explained in Leviticus 12.
Mary had become unclean in childbirth.
And when someone became unclean,
the only way to be cleansed was to offer the sacrifices required in the law.

So in the circumcision and redemption of Jesus,
and in the purification of Mary,
Jesus is revealed as a true Israelite,
born of a woman – born under the Law.
The only way for Jesus to redeem his people,
is if he himself fully identifies with his people.
In the Exodus God had revealed that his purposes revolved around his firstborn son.
And now the Virgin Mary has brought forth her firstborn son—
a firstborn son who will be called the Son of God.
He will become all that Israel has failed to be.
He will become all that David's sons failed to be.
For he will deliver his people from their sin.

The virgin birth signals the uniqueness of Jesus and Mary –
but the circumcision of Jesus on the eighth day shows that he is a *Jew*;
the redemption of Jesus on the 40th day shows that he is a *firstborn* Jew;
and the purification of Mary on the 40th day shows that *she* is a Jewish mother,
needing purification from childbirth just like any other Jewish mother.

And it is in connection with this very *ordinary* sacramental occasion,
that Simeon, comes in the Spirit to the temple.

As the Spirit-anointed David had spoken of Solomon,
now the Spirit-anointed Simeon speaks of Jesus,
and says, in effect, “Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever!”

*Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word;
for my eyes have seen your salvation
that you have prepared before the face of all peoples,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and for glory to your people Israel.*

Think about what Simeon is saying!

Simeon sees a baby in his mother’s arms
and he declares that he has seen salvation!

Because when the Word became flesh –
in the incarnation of the Son of God –
salvation came to earth.

And so when Simeon sees a newborn infant, he says,
“My eyes have seen your salvation.”

Glory to the newborn king!
Thine is the kingdom!
Thine is the power!
Thine is the glory forever!

Simeon, with the eyes of faith, sees the future in the present.

Simeon sees the salvation that God had prepared through all ages.
This little baby—helpless and weak—
was the one through whom the nations would behold the light of the glory of God.

Remember how our catechism puts it:

Q. 107. What doth the conclusion of the Lord’s Prayer teach us? A. The conclusion of the Lord’s Prayer, which is, *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen*, teacheth us to take our encouragement in prayer from God only,[225] and in our prayers to praise him, ascribing kingdom, power, and glory to him;[226] and, ~~in testimony of our desire, and assurance to be heard, we say, Amen.~~[227]

Simeon does not see anything kingly, powerful, or glorious.

He sees a little baby.
But by faith, and by the Spirit, he sees the salvation of God’s people.

And so he turns to Mary, and says,

“Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel,
and for a sign that is opposed

*(and a sword will pierce through your own soul also,
so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”*

Everything is going to change because of this child.

Oh, and Mary, a sword will pierce through your own soul as well.
Simeon recognizes that Mary will endure great pain.

Simeon is the first to see that the road to glory will be paved with suffering.

—including the suffering of Mary.

We are all called to share in the sufferings of Christ,
so it should not surprise us that Mary was called to suffer with him as well.
Mary is one with us — in her sharing in the sufferings of Christ —
and yet Mary is unique —
for a mother’s care for her child gives her a unique experience
of sharing in Christ’s suffering!

2. Thine Is the Power – the Prophecy of Anna (Luke 2:36-38)

And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher.

She was advanced in years,

*having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin,
and then as a widow until she was eighty-four*
(or possibly, “as a widow for eighty four years).

She was either 84, or possibly closing in on 110.

Either way, truly she is advanced in years!

*She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day.
And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God
and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem*
(2:37-38)

In Simeon’s case, the Holy Spirit had directed him to Jesus.

For Anna, there is no mention of any immediate direction from the Holy Spirit.

In the providence of God, she happened to be in the right place at the right time.
Because she was always in the right place—
she was always in the temple.

Please don’t take v37 too literally!

When it says that she did not depart from the temple,
worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day,
that doesn’t mean that never ate or slept!

It means that Anna was waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.
Psalm 130 speaks of this.

“O Israel, hope in the LORD!
For with the LORD there is steadfast love,
and with him is plentiful redemption.

And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities!”
And this old woman, advanced in years,
spent her days and nights fasting and praying in the temple.

You and I will never be Mary.
Mary is utterly unique in redemptive history.
You and I will probably never be Simeon.
We will never receive direct revelation from the Holy Spirit.
But you and I *can* be like Anna!
God never promised her anything!
She just longed for the redemption of Jerusalem!

And even so, we can pray without ceasing.
We can devote ourselves to worshiping in the heavenly temple
with fasting and prayer night and day!
Anna is simply heeding the call to be faithful.
She devotes herself to the worship of God.
She fasts and prays.
She eagerly waits upon the Lord,
and the Lord heard her prayers and gave to her a great gift.

And on this particular day, she happened to see this little baby!
Perhaps she heard the words of Simeon.
Perhaps she knew what God had promised him.
And she came up “at that very hour”--
and in the days before clocks with minute hands that had the same meaning as
“at that very minute!”

*And she began to give thanks to God
and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem. (2:38)*

The power of God is revealed in the prophecy of Anna –
and it continues to be revealed in all those who wait for the redemption of Jerusalem!

And remember, Simeon and Anna see no great sign.
They see nothing remarkable.
Just a baby and his mother and father in the temple.

3. Thine Is the Glory – the Song of Asaph (Psalm 73)

And yet they see the glory of God revealed in this baby.

This is why I wanted us to sing Psalm 73 today.
Because Psalm 73 is all about seeing that “thine is the glory”
even when there’s nothing obvious about it!

In Psalm 73 Asaph recounts how he had envied the wicked.

It was not at all apparent that the kingdom and the power and the glory belonged to God!

The wicked prospered and sought to destroy the innocent.

“They set their mouths against the heavens and their tongue struts through the earth”

This describes well what we see.

In our day the wicked prosper.

In our day the godless have also attempted to speak of all things without God.

We have godless education,

godless politics,

godless economics,

and godless science.

How can we pray, “Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever,”
when we can’t see it?

Asaph explains.

We pray “thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,”
the same way that Simeon did.

All Simeon saw was a baby.

All Asaph saw was the sanctuary of God.

“When I thought how to understand this, it seemed to me a wearisome task,
until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I discerned their end.”

When Asaph enters the temple,

then he sees by faith what Simeon would see 1000 years later.

He sees the coming of God’s salvation.

“Whom have I in heaven but you?

And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.”

The wicked lay claim to heaven and earth,

but there is nothing there worth having,

if you do not have God!

“My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.”

Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever!

What compares to that?

In other words,

what Asaph saw in the first temple in Jerusalem,

what Simeon saw in the second temple in Jerusalem, when he saw the baby Jesus,

is what John also saw in the heavenly temple, when in his vision

he beheld the exalted Christ standing at the right hand of the Father.

when he saw the living creatures and the elders and great multitude crying out:

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth
and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!” (Rev. 5:12)

They saw the end of history from the middle of history.
And they saw that because of the end of history,
the middle of history is given its true meaning.

If all you see is the middle of history,
then Asaph and Simeon look like pious fools.

David's sons rebelled and the temple that Solomon built,
the temple where Asaph found comfort,
was smashed by Nebuchadnezzar.

The little baby whom Simeon declared was for "the fall and rising of many in Israel"
was crucified by the Romans, dying an ignominious death.

Do not look for the meaning of the kingdom of God in the middle of history.
Look at the end.
Look at Jesus—not the helpless baby—not the derelict on the cross—
but the one who has been named King of kings and Lord of Lords,
exalted at the right hand of the Father.
In Jesus, the *end of history* has come!
The final judgment *has happened* to Jesus –
and he has been vindicated, exalted to the right hand of the Father!

Thine is the kingdom!
Thine is the power!
Thine is the glory, forever!

And as our catechism puts it,
"and, in testimony of our desire, and assurance to be heard, we say, Amen."

[pray]

Psalm 90 is a fitting place to close.
It is the song of Moses, the man of God.

Teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.

In its own way, Psalm 90 teaches us to pray,
"thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever."