

The Westminster Confession of Faith

Lesson 28: Of Christ the Mediator (§ 8.4b)

High Plains Fellowship PCA

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Introduction

Having addressed the covenants in Chapter 7, we are now reaching the doctrinal “mountaintop” in Chapter 8. Much of what follows in the rest of the Confession is “details”—the *outworking* of the Mediatorial office of Christ in relation to his elect.

Paragraph 4 reads much like the Apostles’ Creed. Since it describes the twofold ministry of Christ in his “humiliation” and “exaltation” we will consider it in two parts, each with its corresponding catechism questions.

This week’s lesson includes six catechism questions, most of which are lengthy with the scripture proofs. The last catechism question that pertains to this chapter is #57, which we’ll consider when we get to paragraph 8.

Opener

- How does our Christian faith—and our hope for the future—depend upon the “exaltation” of Christ? (See Acts 1:1-5; 1 Cor 15:1-8.)
- What are a few of the “infallible proofs” of the resurrection? (Gk. *tekmerios*—“indubitable evidence”)
- What if none of it true? (See 1 Cor 15:14-19.)

WLC Q/A #51–56

Q51: What was the estate of Christ’s exaltation?

A51: The estate of Christ’s exaltation comprehendeth his resurrection,[1] ascension,[2] sitting at the right hand of the Father,[3] and his coming again to judge the world.[4]

1. **1 Cor. 15:4** – And that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

2. **Mark 16:19** – So then, the Lord Jesus, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.

3. **Eph. 1:20** – Which He worked in Christ, by raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.

4. **Acts 1:11** – They also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.” **Acts 17:31** – “Because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He determined, having furnished proof to all by raising Him from the dead.”

Q52: How was Christ exalted in his resurrection?

A52: Christ was exalted in his resurrection, in that, not having seen corruption in death (of which it was not possible for him to be held),[1] and having the very same body in which he suffered, with the essential properties thereof [2] (but without mortality, and other common infirmities belonging to this life), really united to his soul,[3] he rose again from the dead the third day by his own power;[4] whereby he declared himself to be the Son of God,[5] to have satisfied divine justice,[6] to have vanquished death, and him that had the power of [over] it,[7] and to be Lord of quick and dead:[8] all which he did as a public person,[9] the head of his church,[10] for their justification,[11] quickening in grace,[12] support against enemies,[13] and to assure them of their resurrection from the dead at the last day.[14]

1. **Acts 2:24, 27** – But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power. . . . ‘BECAUSE YOU WILL NOT FORSAKE MY SOUL TO HADES, NOR GIVE YOUR HOLY ONE OVER TO SEE CORRUPTION.’

2. **Luke 24:39** – “See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.”

3. **Rom. 6:9** – Knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. **Rev. 1:18** – “And the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forever and ever, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.”

4. **John 10:18** – “No one takes it away from Me, but from Myself, I lay it down. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.”

5. **Rom. 1:4** – Who was designated as the Son of God in power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.

6. **Rom. 8:34** – Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

7. **Heb. 2:14** – Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.

8. **Rom. 14:9** – For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

9. **1 Cor. 15:21–22** – For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

10. **Eph. 1:20, 22–23** – Which He worked in Christ, by raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenly places. . . . And HE PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. **Col. 1:18** – And He is the head of the body, the church; Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

11. **Rom. 4:25** – He who was delivered over on account of our transgressions, and was raised on account of our justification.

12. **Eph. 2:1, 5–6** – And you were dead in your transgressions and sins. . . . even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. **Col. 2:12** – Having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

13. **1 Cor. 15:25–27** – For He must reign UNTIL HE HAS PUT ALL HIS ENEMIES UNDER HIS FEET. The last enemy to be abolished is death. For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, “All things are put in subjection,” it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him.

14. 1 Cor. 15:20 – But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

- What was it that “proved” that Jesus’ resurrection body was the same body that was put to death and laid in the grave?
- How does Paul describe the resurrection body in 1 Cor 15:42-49? How is it the “same” and how is it “different”?
- What does it mean that Christ was “firstborn from the dead”? (Col 1:18, footnote 10)

Q53: How was Christ exalted in his ascension?

A53: Christ was exalted in his ascension, in that having after his resurrection often appeared unto and conversed with his apostles, speaking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God,[1] and giving them commission to preach the gospel to all nations,[2] forty days after his resurrection, he, in our nature, and as our head,[3] triumphing over enemies,[4] visibly went up into the highest heavens, there to receive gifts for men,[5] to raise up our affections thither,[6] and to prepare a place for us,[7] where himself is, and shall continue till his second coming at the end of the world.[8]

1. **Acts 1:2–3** – Until the day when He was taken up to heaven, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over forty days and speaking about the things concerning the kingdom of God.

2. **Matt. 28:19–20** – “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to keep all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

3. **Heb. 6:20** – Where a forerunner has entered for us—Jesus, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

4. **Eph. 4:8** – Therefore it says, “WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, And HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN.”

5. **Acts 1:9–11** – And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. They also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.” **Eph. 4:10** – He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things. **Psa. 68:18** – You have ascended on high, You have led captive Your captives; You have received gifts among men, Even among the rebellious also, that Yah—God—may dwell there.

6. **Col. 3:1–2** – Therefore, if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you died and your life has been hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.

7. **John 14:3** – And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

8. **Acts 3:21** – Whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.

- How is the force of the Great Commission strengthened by the exaltation of Christ? (How is the GC prefaced? See Matt 28:18.)
- What is the great promise of Col 3:1-2 (footnote 6)? How does it help us turn away from the attachments of this life?

Q54: How is Christ exalted in his sitting at the right hand of God?

A54: Christ is exalted in his sitting at the right hand of God, in that as God–man he is advanced to the highest favor with God the Father,[1] with all fulness of joy,[2] glory,[3] and power over all things in heaven and earth;[4] and doth gather and defend his church, and subdue their enemies; furnisheth his ministers and people with gifts and graces,[5] and maketh intercession for them.[6]

1. **Phil. 2:9** – Therefore, God also highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name.

2. **Acts 2:28** – ‘YOU HAVE MADE KNOWN TO ME THE WAYS OF LIFE; YOU WILL MAKE ME FULL OF GLADNESS WITH YOUR PRESENCE.’ **Psa. 16:11** – You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

3. **John 17:5** – “Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”

4. **Eph. 1:22** – And HE PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET, and gave Him as head over all things to the church. **1 Peter 3:22** – Who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.

5. **Eph. 4:10–12** – (He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.) And He Himself gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ. **Psa. 110:1** – Yahweh says to my Lord: “Sit at My right hand Until I put Your enemies as a footstool for Your feet.”

6. **Rom. 8:34** – Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

- What are the particular promises in WLC #54 that regard the church?
- Recall WCF 5.7:

As the providence of God doth, in general, reach to all creatures, so, after a most special manner, it taketh care of his Church, and disposeth all things to the good thereof.

Q55: How doth Christ make intercession?

A55: Christ maketh intercession, by his appearing in our nature continually before the Father in heaven,[1] in the merit of his obedience and sacrifice on earth,[2] declaring his will to have it applied to all believers;[3] answering all accusations against them,[4] and procuring for them quiet of conscience, notwithstanding daily failings,[5] access with boldness to the throne of grace,[6] and acceptance of their persons [7] and services.[8]

1. **Heb. 9:12, 24** – And not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy places once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. . . . For Christ did not enter holy places made with hands, mere copies of the true ones, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

2. **Heb. 1:3** – Who is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power; who, having accomplished cleansing for sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

3. **John 3:16** – “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” **John 17:9, 20, 24** – “I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours. . . . I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word. . . . Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.”

4. **Rom. 8:33–34** – Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

5. **Rom. 5:1–2** – Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we boast in hope of the glory of God. **1 John 2:1–2** – My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

6. **Heb. 4:16** – Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

7. **Eph. 1:6** – To the praise of the glory of His grace, which He graciously bestowed on us in the Beloved.

8. **1 Peter 2:5** – You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

- How does Christ act as an “advocate” before the Father? (See 1 John 2:1; Zech 3)

Q56: How is Christ to be exalted in his coming again to judge the world?

A56: Christ is to be exalted in his coming again to judge the world, in that he, who was unjustly judged and condemned by wicked men,[1] shall come again at the last day in great power,[2] and in the full manifestation of his own glory, and of his Father’s, with all his holy angels,[3] with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God,[4] to judge the world in righteousness.[5]

1. **Acts 3:14–15** – But you denied the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, but put to death the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses.

2. **Matt. 24:30** – And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.

3. **Luke 9:26** – “For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.” **Matt. 25:31** – “But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne.”

4. **1 Thess. 4:16** – For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

5. **Acts 17:31** – “Because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He determined, having furnished proof to all by raising Him from the dead.”

- What are the chances that anyone will miss the second coming?

WCF 8.4

4a. This office [of Mediator] the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake,^a which, that he might discharge, he was made under the law,^b and did perfectly fulfill it;^c endured most grievous torments immediately in his soul,^d and most painful sufferings in his body;^e was crucified, and died;^f was buried, and remained under the power of death, yet saw no corruption.^g . . .

4b. On the third day he arose from the dead,^h with the same body in which he suffered;ⁱ with which also he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of his Father,^k making intercession;^l and shall return to judge men and angels at the end of the world.^m

a. **Psa 40:7–8** – Then I said, “Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book it is written of me. I desire to do Your will, O my God; Your law is within my inner being.” **Heb 10:5–10** – Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, “SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME; IN BURNT OFFERINGS AND sacrifices FOR SIN YOU HAVE TAKEN NO PLEASURE. “THEN I SAID, ‘BEHOLD, I HAVE COME, IN THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME, TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD.’” After saying above, “SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS AND BURNT OFFERINGS AND sacrifices FOR SIN YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, NOR HAVE YOU TAKEN PLEASURE in them” (which are offered according to the Law), then He said, “BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL.” He takes away the first in order to establish the second. By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. **John 10:18** – “No one takes it away from Me, but from Myself, I lay it down. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.” **Phil 2:8** – Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

b. **Gal 4:4** – But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law.

c. **Mat 3:15** – But Jesus answered and said to him, “Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he permitted Him. **Mat 5:17** – “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.”

d. **Mat 26:37–38** – And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed. Then He said to them, “My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me.” **Mat 27:46** – And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?” that is, “MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?” **Luke 22:44** – And being in agony He was praying very fervently, and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground.

e. Matthew 26–27 throughout. (not included here)

f. **Phil 2:8** – Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

g. **Acts 2:23–24, 27** – This Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of lawless men and put Him to death. But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power. . . . BECAUSE YOU WILL NOT FORSAKE MY SOUL TO HADES, NOR GIVE YOUR HOLY ONE OVER TO SEE CORRUPTION. **Acts 13:37** – But He whom God raised did not see corruption. **Rom 6:9** – Knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.

h. **1 Cor 15:3–4** – For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

i. **John 20:25, 27** – So the other disciples were saying to him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side,

I will not believe.” . . . Then He said to Thomas, “Bring your finger here, and see My hands; and bring your hand here and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.”

k. **Mark 16:19** – So then, the Lord Jesus, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.

l. **Rom 8:34** – Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. **Heb 7:25** – Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. **Heb. 9:24** – For Christ did not enter holy places made with hands, mere copies of the true ones, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

m. **Mat 13:40–42** – So just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will throw them into the fiery furnace; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. **Acts 1:11** – They also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.” **Acts 10:42** – And He commanded us to preach to the people, and solemnly to bear witness that this is the One who has been designated by God as Judge of the living and the dead. **Rom 14:9–10** – For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you view your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. **2 Pet 2:4** – For if God did not spare angels who sinned, but cast them into the pit and delivered them to chains of darkness, being kept for judgment. **Jude 1:6** – And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.

“This *right hand of God* denotes the official exaltation of the Mediator to supreme glory, felicity, and domion over every name that is named.”¹

“It was also necessary that he [in his Mediatorial office] subsequently experience a glorious estate of exaltation. . . . rising again from the dead . . . ascend[ing] into heaven . . . sit[ting] at the right hand of God the Father, there to intercede for us, reign over us, and rule all things . . . and he must come again at the last day to judge the living and the dead.”²

- How does the ascension of Christ guarantee salvation for the elect? (See footnote l.)
- What does it mean for our “treasure” to be in heaven? What are the benefits? (See Matt 6:19-20.)
- If God exalts Christ above all things in heaven and on earth, what then should be our posture? (See Psalm 2:10-12.)
- The second coming of Christ marks the end of two great works: *grace* toward the elect and *mediation* on their behalf; afterward, the reprobate are forever separated from Christ to suffer eternal judgment; the elect are gathered to Christ and perfected in body and soul to remain with him forever in heaven. *Our eternal fellowship in heaven will be unmediated.*
- What are several reasons why the fallen angels will receive the greater punishment?

¹ Hodge, p. 148.

² Williamson, p. 78.

Concluding Thoughts

- Christ's exaltation should be our humiliation—he has done (and is doing) all, and deserves all glory for his work on our behalf.

Upcoming Lessons

- April 23: Chapter 8, Paragraph 5
- April 30: Chapter 8, Paragraph 6
- May 7: [Dominic Aquila Q&A]
- May 14: Chapter 8, Paragraph 7
- May 21: Chapter 8, Paragraph 8

Resources & Bibliography (new items added to the top of the list / older items removed)

- *Systematic Theology*, Louis Berkhof, 1949. (PDF version [here](#))
- *The Confession of Faith*, A. A. Hodge, 1869.
- *The Westminster Confession of Faith for Study Classes*, G. I. Williamson, 1964.
- *Roman Catholicism*, Loraine Boettner, 1962. (online version [here](#); PDF version [here](#))

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