

# Westminster Larger Catechism

## *Question 59*

Halifax, 30 November 2008

### **Q. 59 Who are made partakers of redemption through Christ?**

**A. Redemption is certainly applied, and effectually communicated, to all those for whom Christ hath purchased it; who are in time by the Holy Ghost enabled to believe in Christ according to the gospel.**

#### **Introduction:**

As we come to our catechism study,

- I want to remind you once again (as I usually do) about the big picture of what we are looking at...
- For several months we looked at the work that Jesus Christ our Mediator did to reconcile His people to God.

And then two weeks ago, (with Q. 57), we were introduced to the benefits that all of this work brings to us as His people...

- Even redemption along with all the benefits of the covenant of grace...
  - We saw that through His work, everything changes for us!
  - By Him, we are redeemed out of sin, ignorance, guilt, Hell, death, sickness, sorrow, bondage to Satan, and God's curse,
    - and are brought into the household of God to serve Him in righteousness and holiness forever and ever.
    - It is such a huge change, such an all-encompassing change, such a wonderful change!
- And then last week, we looked at how His benefits are applied to His people...
  - We looked at Titus 3 and we saw that they are applied to us by the Holy Spirit who takes us when we are dead in trespasses and sins—
    - no different than everyone else—
    - and radically changes us, even giving us spiritual life so that we truly come alive to God and turn to Christ for salvation...
      - It is such a radical change that it is called the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit.
      - Without this change, we would never come to Christ.
        - The bottom line is, the only reason you came to Christ (if you did) and the person next to you didn't, is because God's Spirit gave you life.

But now, with question 59, we are asked who it is that the Lord does this for...

- to whom does He apply the benefits of redemption?
  - Who are made partakers of His redeeming grace?

And the answer is:

- **Redemption is certainly applied, and effectually communicated, to all those for whom Christ hath purchased it; who are in time by the Holy Ghost enabled to believe in Christ according to the gospel.**

Make no mistake about what is being said here...

- It is saying that every single person for whom Christ died—every person for whom He purchased redemption—becomes a partaker of redemption.
  - The teaching of scripture is not, as is so commonly asserted, that Christ died for every person, and that only those who accept Him receive the benefit.
    - No—the teaching of scripture is that Christ, in His redemptive work, actually purchases salvation for us so that if He has redeemed us, we cannot be lost.
  - The members of the trinity are not divided so that you have Christ dying for everyone and then the Spirit coming along and only applying salvation to the elect.
    - No—the Father elects those who are to be saved from before the foundation of the world...
    - Then Christ came to die for them—to redeem them...
    - Then the Spirit comes to each one of them and connects them to Christ by working in them so that they repent and believe.

This is the teaching of our Lord Jesus in John 6:33-40 which is the text I have selected for our scripture reading.

- READ> John 6:33-40.
- You see in verse 33 that Jesus describes Himself as the bread of that comes down from heaven to give life to the world.
  - He actually does this...He actually **gives** this life (not just makes it available)
    - He says that everyone who believes will receive this life.
    - Yet, He tells those to whom He is speaking that they have not been connected to Him for life because they have not believed.
  - And then He says that everyone whom the Father has chosen **will** come to Him to receive life.
    - In verse 44, He explains that no one will do this unless the Father draws him...

- He further says that these are the ones who are taught of God...
  - God the Spirit opens their eyes and their hearts to believe.
  - Then they come...
    - not because it was already in them to do so,
    - but because God's Spirit gives them life.
- And in verse 38-40, Jesus makes it clear that every single one that the Father has chosen will come.
  - His will is one with that of the Father...
  - It is not as though there were one group of persons that Jesus is trying to save, and another group that the Father is trying to save...
    - It is rather that there are those the Father has appointed to salvation and these are the ones that Christ redeemed and those who will be joined to Him in faith.

But we live in a day when there is a lot of confusion about this topic...

- Many people stumble when they read passages that speak about Jesus dying for the world or for the church and suppose this means that He died to save every person.
  - And so this afternoon, I want to show you what the Scripture actually says about those for whom Christ died...
    - **First, that Christ died for the whole world.**
    - **Second, that Christ died for the church (His covenant people in both old and new testaments)**
    - **Third, that Christ died for the elect.**

## I. Christ died for the whole world

A. The whole world was lost in sin because of the fall.

- We looked at this before when we studied about the fall...
  - **Romans 5:12: Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—**
- In Romans 3, we are told that God's word shows that all the world is guilty before God.
- The wages of sin is death,
  - so the world was condemned to perish under God's wrath and judgement.
  - That was the condition of the world.

- B. But the Bible tells us that Jesus came to save the world.
1. This is brought out in John 3:16-17:
    - **John 3:16-17** “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”
    - The woman of Samaria is therefore fully justified to call Him
      - “The Saviour of the world.”
  2. John the Baptist speaks of Him as that great sacrifice that came to take away the sin of the world.
    - **John 1:29:** The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”
    - His language is unmistakably that of a sacrificial offering, offered to atone for sin...
      - and the sin He atones for is the sin of the world!
      - Observe, John says that He actually *takes away* that sin...
        - By His offering, He makes satisfaction to God for the sin of the world.
        - He expiates or removes sin.
  3. Jesus Himself says (as we saw in John 6:33) that He comes *to give life* to the world...
    - **John 6:33** “For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”
    - Note again, He does not say He comes merely to **offer** life to the world,
      - but to actually **give** life to the world so that the world lives!
  4. This is exactly what was promised to Abraham—that he would inherit the world:
    - a. Rom 4:13 states:
      - **For the promise that he would be the heir of the world [was] not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.**
    - b. This promise was made to Abraham and to his seed in Christ, to whom it was promised that all the nations would be His inheritance.
      - **Psalm 2:7-8:** “I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, ‘You *are* My Son, today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations *for* Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth *for* Your possession.’”

- **Isaiah 49:5-6:** “And now the LORD says, who formed Me from the womb *to be* His Servant, to bring Jacob back to Him, So that Israel is gathered to Him (For I shall be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and My God shall be My strength), indeed He says, ‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.’ ”
  - **Daniel 7:13-14:** “I was watching in the night visions, and behold, *One* like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom *the one* which shall not be destroyed.”
- c. These were very remarkable prophecies in their day!
- For although kings in that day lusted for universal dominion...
    - No one looked for a universal religion, but they simply added the gods of the nations they conquered to their own (the more the better).
    - Yet, here was a Saviour for the whole world!

TRANS> Now the question must be asked,

- Does He actually accomplish what He set out to do?
- Does He actually save the whole world and give life to the whole world?
- Does He actually obtain this everlasting dominion as the Saviour of all nations?

C. The answer is yes!

1. A very remarkable thing happened after Christ was raised from the dead.
  - a. His tiny band of followers were instructed to carry the gospel to the whole world.
    - What was the gospel?
      - That the offering of Jesus Christ had been accepted by the Father for the sins of the world...
      - This news was to be carried to the world!
  - b. And amazingly the nations began to believe!
    - So that Paul was able to say the Colossians that:
      - **“the word of the truth of the gospel, which has come to you, as *it has* also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as *it is* also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth;” (Colossians 1:5-6)**

- This gospel was bearing fruit in the whole world!
- c. To the Corinthians he could say that:
- **2Co 5:19: God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them**
  - observe—
    - It is the **world** that was being reconciled!
    - It is the **world** that was being saved!
2. And how was God able to do this?
- a. It was in Christ—
- He had made satisfaction for their sins in Christ—
    - through the sacrifice that He had made as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.
- b. And that is why John is able to say of Christ that:
- **1 John 2:1-2: 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 the whole world.**
  - John is saying that Jesus is not only the propitiation for our sins (the Jews or the apostles who saw Him),
    - but the propitiation for the sins of the whole world!
  - A propitiation is that which turns away wrath.
    - This is saying that Jesus actually turns away God’s wrath from the whole world!
    - By paying the penalty of our sins in His once offering up of Himself,
      - He is the one who turns God’s wrath away from the world!
  - And when God is thus propitiated, there is no more wrath!
    - There is a complete satisfaction!
      - Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!
    - There is no more remembrance of sin...
      - “Their sin and iniquity I will remember no more!”
3. Now I know that someone will say,

- “Wait just a minute, the whole world is not saved, there are many people who are still lost in their sin.”
- a. Jesus even told His disciples that the world would hate them...
  - And in His great prayer in John 17, He said:
    - **John 17:16** “**They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.**”
  - And John said in 1 John 5:19:
    - **1Jo 5:19: We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies *under the sway of the wicked one.***
  - What’s more, the Bible tells us repeatedly that there are many who will perish.
    - **Rev 20:14-15: Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.**
- b. But who said that every individual would be saved?
  - 1) The Bible only says that the **world** will be saved!
    - That is not the same as everyone!
    - Take the classic superhero story.
      - The arch-villain has plans to destroy the world.
      - He destroys several cities, and then the superhero comes and saves the world.
    - But did he save the world?
      - What about those cities that were destroyed?
      - True, he did not save them, but it is still the normal way of speaking to say that he saved the world...
      - The world would have been completely destroyed,
        - but instead, only a few cities were destroyed—the world was saved.
        - Even if the end result had been that there were only a handful of cities saved, still, the world would have been saved.
          - Even as it was saved in the day of Noah...
    - The world would have entirely perished in sin but for Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world.
      - As it is now, the world is rescued by Him.

- He is the Saviour of the world.
- 2) And not only that, but there are also in God's promises a promise of expansion of Christ's kingdom to a more and more universal scope over the years.
- In the end, it will no longer be true what was true in John's day when he said,
    - **1 John 5:19: We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies *under the sway of the wicked one.***
  - The time will come when what John says will **no longer** be true...
    - Instead, it will be the case that:
      - **Ps 86:9: All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord, and shall glorify Your name.**
      - **Ps 72:11: Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him.**
  - God is now in Christ reconciling the world to Himself and He will continue until the job is finished.
    - Romans 11:25-31 speaks of the fullness of Israel and of the Gentiles being brought in:
      - **Rom 11:25-31: For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this *is* My covenant with them, when I take away their sins." Concerning the gospel *they are* enemies for your sake, but concerning the election *they are* beloved for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God *are* irrevocable. For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy.**
  - Jesus Christ came to save the world, He died for the world, and so the world will live.
    - In time, the world will believe—Jesus has interceded for the world:
      - **John 17:20-23: "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given**



**them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.”**

- To what extent it will be saved, I cannot say...
- We know that there will be tares that will be destroyed out of His kingdom at the last...
  - but the **world** will be saved.

## **II. Christ died for the church (His covenant people)**

### A. The Bible tells us that Christ died for His people (the covenant people)

1. In Matthew 1:21, it is promised:
  - **“And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.”**
  - *His people* are all those who are in God’s covenant.
2. Ps 130:7-8 promises redemption to Israel:
  - **O Israel, hope in the LORD; for with the LORD *there is* mercy, and with Him *is* abundant redemption. And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.**
3. The same is said of the New Testament church:
  - **Acts 20:28: Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.**
    - Notice that it says the church was purchased with His own blood.
      - He has bought it, it is His, the price was good.
    - Ephesians 5:25-26 tells us that
      - **“Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.”**

### B. This should be a great comfort to us

1. When Jesus went to the cross, it was for the whole church
  - a. As the Head of the church, He went before God as our representative...
    - He calls us brethren because He has sanctified us by His own blood.
    - **Hebrews 2:11: For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified *are* all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them**

**brethren, saying: “I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.”**

- b. And when the scripture says,
    - “All we like sheep have gone astray, but the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all...”
    - The “we” is the church (Isaiah and the covenant people)!
  2. In this, Jesus is like the high priest in the Old Testament who performed his work with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel on his breastplate.
    - a. As a priest, He represents us, and offers Himself for us.
      - Exodus 28:21 says: **“And the stones shall have the names of the sons of Israel, twelve according to their names, like the engravings of a signet, each one with its own name; they shall be according to the twelve tribes.”**
    - b. And His offering is effectual to take away our sins! It does its job!
      - **Heb 10:14: For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.**
- C. Therefore, the church is saved
1. It will continue forever in Christ
    - **Mt 16:18 “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”**
  2. But this does not mean that there are no false sons in the church...
    - The Bible is clear that there are false sons who will be cast out.
      - **Matt 8:11-12: “And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”**
    - Likewise, there are false sons among the Gentiles.
      - In John 15, Jesus says:
        - **John 15:1-2, 6 “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.”**
        - **6 “If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned.”**
  3. There is a sense in which the blood of Christ bought even these persons...
    - a. The Bible says that such were bought by His blood...

- **2 Peter 2:1: But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, *and* bring on themselves swift destruction.**
  - **Hebrews 10:29: Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?**
- b. But these were not bought personally.
- If they were bought personally, they would've been saved...
    - The blood of Jesus would've have its effect.
  - The idea is that they were part of the church that was purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ...
    - And so by their association with the church, they were set apart by the blood of the covenant.
    - As in Romans 11, they were part of the tree in the same way that a dead branch is part of a tree.
      - As a dead branch, they will be cut off because they do not participate in the life of the tree.
  - In this way, the church's sanctification is like our own personal sanctification.
    - There are dead parts that do not belong, and these must be purged away—and they will...
      - As long as they remain, they are a part of us...
        - But they will surely be cut off because they are not really of us.
        - We shall be saved, but not that which is corrupt in us.
- c. So all of you who are members of the church, take note!
- Beware of covenant presumption!
  - Just because you are in the covenant does not mean you will be saved!
    - It is only those who *believe* that will be saved.
    - The dead branches will all be cut off just as surely as the living branches will be saved.
  - So you see that it is not that Christ died for the dead branches, but somehow His death had no saving affect on them!
    - He died for the whole tree...

- He died for the church,
  - and the church is surely saved...
  - But He did not die for the dead branches of tree.
- Part of the salvation of the tree includes cutting off the dead branches,
  - for it would not be a complete salvation if they remained!

TRANS> So then,

- Christ died for the world—therefore the world is saved...
- Christ died for the church, therefore the church is saved...
- And finally, I want you to see that....

### III. Christ died for the elect

A. These He calls His sheep.

- **John 10:11: “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.”**
  - Jesus does not give His life for the goats, but only for the sheep. He knows who they are!
    - **John 10:14 “I am the good shepherd; and I know My *sheep*, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.”**
  - He will gather every one of them in to His fold:
    - **John 10:16: “And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock *and* one shepherd.”**
- The result is that not one will perish
  - **John 10:27-29: “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father’s hand.”**

B. Not one of these will perish because Christ died for them and when He dies for you, His death actually accomplishes your salvation.

- His death does more than merely make salvation possible for those that believe.
  - It actually saves.

- Consider the following:
1. He died to redeem and to purchase (so His death does redeem and purchase).
    - **Gal 3:13: Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”),**
      - This does not say He put up the money for our redemption, but it says that He actually redeemed us!
    - The result of our redemption is deliverance from the kingdom of darkness:
      - **Col 1:13-14: He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed [us] into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.**
  2. He died to justify (so His death does justify)
    - **Rom 5:8-9: But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.**
  3. He died to propitiate (so His death does propitiate)
    - **1Jo 2:1-2: My little children, these things I write 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 the whole world.**
    - **1Jo 4:10: In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.**
      - There was a definite purpose in His coming—it was to be the propitiation for our sins—
        - He came to turn away the judicial wrath of God from us, and so, God’s judicial wrath is turned away.
  4. He died to expiate (so His death does expiate or cleanse from guilt and pollution)
    - **Titus 2:14: [He] gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.**
    - **Heb 9:14: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?**
  5. He died to reconcile (so His death does reconcile)
    - **Rom 5:10: For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.**
    - **2 Cor 5:18-19: Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is,**

**that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.**

- **Eph 2:15-16: having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.**
- **Col 1:21-22: And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—**

C. All this shows that He did not come with mere potentially, to make it possible that we could be saved—

- He came actually bringing and imparting salvation to His elect.
- He did not come to try to save, but to save.

Some people complain that by saying that Christ did not die for every individual, we limit the atonement.

- Well, I will not accept that—
  - It is God who has chosen not to save everyone,
  - He is the one who limits who will be saved, and He is under no obligation to save any of us.
- And as for the atonement...
  - The atonement the Bible describes is not an atonement that tries to take away our sin.
  - What would it be for Christ to redeem everyone and then for them not to be redeemed?
    - That would be an atonement that fails to atone.
    - No, the redemption that Christ accomplished paid the full price of sin,
    - It does not fail to redeem any for whom it was made.
- What all this means is that you can come to Him with full confidence.
  - He not only promises that every one whom He has been given to save will come to Him for salvation;
  - He also promises that everyone who does come to Him and believes will be saved:
    - **John 6:36, 37: “But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.”**

- This means that there will never be a person who wants to be saved and cannot be...
- It also means that that there will never be a person God has appointed to salvation who will not be saved.