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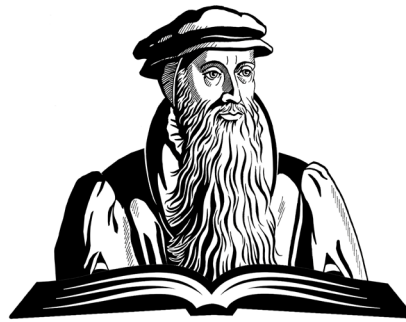
VIDEO LECTURE SERIES

by Rev. Jonathan Mattull

Lecture #15

**Jesus Christ, the Redeemer
of God's Elect**

Catechism Question 21



The John Knox Institute
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VIDEO LECTURE SERIES

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Lecture #15

Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of God's Elect

Question 21: *Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?*

Answer: *The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, for ever.*

The *Catechism* has directed our attention to our great problem. If someone asked you, “What is man’s greatest problem?”—how would you answer? There are many ways of expressing it, but you would do well to remember the Bible’s teaching, as summarized in this *Catechism*. Remember the different answers to our great problem, “The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.” And in speaking of both the sinfulness and the misery, “the sinfulness of that estate into which man fell consists in the guilt of Adam’s first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called Original Sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.” This is our sinfulness, one part of our great problem and our great need. But there’s more: “All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever.” Now, these are a lot of words, and express many related ideas, but what this is telling us is what our great need is. It tells us our bad news, that we have sinned, and we’ve fallen into this state of sin and misery. They help us see what our greatest problem is, and they also help us to see that the only hope for us, who are in this estate of sin and misery, is that someone outside of ourselves, someone beyond us would be our Savior. We cannot fix our problem. No amount of education, no amount of money, no amount of riches can ever address our true problem. Even if we were able to begin following God perfectly, how would we ever begin to address all of our guilt up to that point? How could we ever answer and satisfy God’s justice?

Well, we saw in our previous lesson that, though there’s no hope in us, or no hope by our own works, there is hope, and this hope is from God. God has established a gracious way of salvation, of deliverance. This is known as the covenant of grace. And we saw that he saves sinners by a Redeemer. Today we have the happy privilege of thinking more about this Redeemer. And as we do, we’ll see that he is the only one able to save us from our greatest problem.

Well, let’s look at our question then, question #21 of the *Shorter Catechism*. It asks, “Who is the Redeemer of God’s elect?” And the answer: “The only Redeemer of God’s elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be,

God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, for ever.” Well, as is typical, there is much that is bound up in this answer, and we’ll seek to unpack it as we go through our lesson.

We’ve encountered the word “Redeemer” in our last lesson, and just to be reminded quickly, a redeemer is one who makes a payment to be in possession of something. Well, when we think of this, we’re thinking of the Redeemer of God’s elect, the one who makes a payment in order to gain possession of God’s chosen ones, even those chosen ones who were sinners. And so we get to think about that one who is the Savior of God’s chosen ones.

Well, we have four points for our lesson today. The first is Our Redeemer’s Identity. Second, Our Redeemer’s Divinity. Third, Our Redeemer’s Humanity. And fourth, Our Redeemer’s Person.

So first then, Our Redeemer’s Identity. What is the question? “Who is the Redeemer of God’s elect?” And the answer is so simple, “The only Redeemer of God’s elect is the Lord Jesus Christ.” Well, these words clearly identify for us who the Redeemer is, and in doing so, it is accurately summarizing the scripture’s teaching. We don’t need to spend too much time on this, because the rest of the lesson and the lessons that follow will open this idea more fully. But it’s helpful to see that the Bible clearly indicates that only Jesus Christ is the Redeemer. So notice what Jesus himself says, in John 14, verse 6: “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” There is no other way to be brought to the Father other than by Jesus Christ. He is the only way. He’s not merely “a way,” he’s the only way. He’s the only Redeemer. Peter says the same thing in Acts, chapter 4, verse 12; he says, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Notice, it is not merely that he is “a way” of salvation, as if there are many ways to be saved, or to be redeemed. Peter tells us that no one else is able to save us. Again, Jesus Christ is the only Redeemer. And just to be clear, to see this again, Paul says this same thing. Notice, 1 Timothy, chapter 2, and verse 5, he writes, “There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” This word “mediator” refers to one who goes between two opposed parties or individuals, and brings them into a place of peace with one another. And notice what Paul says, there’s only one mediator, one who goes between and brings them together in peace. And who is it? It’s Christ Jesus. He is the only mediator. He is the only way to the Father. He is the only one with the name by which we must be saved. He is the only Redeemer.

We will see why he is the only Redeemer, both in this, and in the next few lessons. But let’s simply see right now that the Bible is clearly showing us that Jesus Christ is the only Savior of sinners, he is the only Redeemer there is. We would be fools then to look to anyone else, whether ourselves, our parents, even a pastor, to other false gods, and to think that we might have hope by what they or what we do. Because the only Redeemer is Jesus Christ.

So we’ve seen the identity of our Redeemer. Second, let’s look at our Redeemer’s Divinity. This word “divinity” refers to a divine nature. It’s a way of talking about God’s nature. God is divine. Men are human. We speak of God’s divinity, and we speak of man’s humanity. You’ll notice that the *Catechism* refers to Christ as being “the eternal Son of God.” These words are very important. The fact that he is eternally the Son of God, means he’s always been the Son of God, from everlasting to everlasting. He didn’t become the Son of God. He is eternally the Son of God.

In an earlier lesson, we looked at the Bible’s teaching on the Trinity. Do you remember that? We considered that answer, “There are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.” Well, notice our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, is the second person of the Trinity, the eternal Son of God. There are many passages that tell us that Jesus, our Redeemer, is fully God. We don’t have time to

look at all of them, but as we look at a couple of them, it will help you as you study the Bible to be aware and to look for these very clear indications that Jesus is himself fully God.

We first look at John, chapter 1, verses 1 through 4. It's there we read the following: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men." You'll notice that John speaks of Jesus as "the Word." This means a lot. One thing it means is that he is the one that reveals or communicates God. Well, you'll notice, he's not just an instrument that communicates God. He himself is God. Now we know this refers to Jesus, because later on in this chapter, in verse 14, it tells us that the Word became flesh, a truth that we'll look at more in just a moment.

But notice what is said of this one who is "the Word." It tells us that he was with God in the beginning, yet it tells us that he was God. He is, in other words, distinct from the Father, but yet he is also equal to the Father. How is he distinct? Well, we've already seen this in our lesson on the Trinity. He's distinct from the Father as a person. He is a divine person. As a person, he's not the same as the Father. But he is one with the Father, equal to the Father as regards his nature. He is God. Notice that he is, in John 1:1 through 4, said to be the Maker of all things. John wrote "all things were made by him." In other words, he not a creature. He's not even the best of creatures. He's not the first of creatures. Instead, he's the Creator. So Jesus is God—truly, fully, really God.

Let's look at a second passage. Notice Titus, chapter 2, and verse 13. Paul writes, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Well, Christians are looking forward to that future appearing of Jesus Christ our Savior. He has gone up into heaven in his ascension. He's reigning in heaven presently. And we look forward to the day that he'll return. Jesus Christ, oh, what a Savior he is! But notice that Jesus is referred to as "the great God." So what is it we're looking for? Well, we're looking for the glorious appearing of whom?—"of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." He is our Savior, Jesus Christ, who is the great God. And so again we see that he is truly and fully God.

Well, instead of looking at the many other passages that show this truth that Jesus is truly and fully divine, I want to encourage and challenge you to look at one in particular. The one passage I would like you to look at is Hebrews, chapter 1. So as you open your Bible after this lesson, and you read through Hebrews chapter 1, I want you to notice what is said about the Son. As you're reading it, ask yourself these questions. What does the Father say about the Son? What did the Son do with the earth and heavens? What do the angels do to the Son? And as you read through Hebrews chapter 1, and as you answer these questions, you'll discover what's been stated already, that Jesus Christ is shown, and is declared to be, and is revealed as the Son of God, not one who became the Son, but one who has and is eternally, truly, fully, the Son of God.

Well, if we think well upon this, we will be amazed by this truth. Because what's being said is, our Redeemer is God. The Son of God was pleased to step in as our Redeemer. Now think of that. The one against whom we sinned has been pleased to become our Redeemer. But it's more than merely amazing, it is also a most necessary and blessed truth. As fallen, sinful humans, dead in our sins and trespasses, we have no ability to do what is required for our salvation. Who among us can pay off the debt we owe to God? Even more, what one mere human is able to pay off the debt owed to God by multitudes? Well, praise God that he has provided his eternal Son, who is able to do all that is required for our salvation. There is more to say, of course, but this is an important point. Our redemption is the work of him who is truly and fully divine.

Well, third, Our Redeemer's Humanity. As truly amazing as the divinity of our Redeemer is,

we have more to learn about him still. Notice the *Catechism* says, “the eternal Son became man.” He did not merely appear to be a man. He did not merely act like he was a man. The *Catechism* is summarizing the scriptures, and is asserting this Biblical truth. The eternal Son of God truly became a man. This doesn’t mean he stopped being fully God. We see that in the *Catechism*, we see that in the Bible. But it does mean that he took to himself a real human nature. The divine and eternal Son of God, the person of the Son of God, who is fully God, added to himself that true human nature, so that he now is, and, as the *Catechism* says, “and continueth to be God and man in two distinct natures and one person for ever.”

Well, we’ll talk more about this in a moment, and in the next lesson. But let’s be clear about this one point, that our Redeemer is truly man. Jesus became truly human. The scriptures tell us this very clearly. We referred to John 1 earlier, and noticed verse 14 in particular, this Word who was with God, and is God, and who made all things, John then says, “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” The Word, the eternal Son of God, became flesh. This refers to his becoming truly man.

Let’s look at a bit larger passage, namely, Hebrews, chapter 2, verses 14 through 17. And as we do, we will see just how clearly it tells us that Jesus took to himself a true human nature. He didn’t pretend to be man, he didn’t just appear to be man, but he actually took to himself true humanity. It tells us as well why he did this. Well, notice the passage: “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.” Well, there’s much in this passage, but let’s simply note that it tells us that he took on our nature, a human nature, remember? He also “took part of the same.” “He took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren.” Everything that is true of human nature, the Son of God took upon himself. In the next lesson, we’ll see how this came to pass, but simply for right now notice that it did come to pass. He, the Son of God, became man.

This is not only an amazing truth, it is a truth necessary if ever we should be saved. This is what Hebrews 2 tells us as well, that he became man, in order to pay the price that was demanded—that he would die. God can’t die. God is the living God. But the Son of God took upon himself a human nature that could die. And so he could offer up himself to make atonement for our sins. Again, these are truths we will talk more about in the future, but simply notice the beauty of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. As humans, we’ve sinned against God, and so it must be one that is human who makes the payment on our behalf. Humans sinned, humans must pay. But praise God that the Son of God became man to make that payment.

Well, fourth, Our Redeemer’s Person. We’ve seen that our Redeemer Jesus Christ is both fully God and fully man. This is a tremendous truth, and who can fully understand all that this means? Well, while we cannot fully understand everything about this, the Bible does remind us of an important point that we need to clarify. And this is that he is only one person. Now this is a hard idea, but to be clear, this is hard for the smartest and best-trained theologians. Whatever your age, whatever your mental ability, whatever your learning level has been or is, this is a hard idea. How can our Redeemer have two natures, yet be only one person. We need to remember that the Bible

does not tell us everything about how this is the case. It does, however, clearly indicate that it is the case. We've already seen that Jesus is fully God, and that he is fully man.

Let's now look at how the Bible speaks of him as one person. Whenever the Bible speaks of Jesus, it does not refer to him as if he is more than one person. The Bible always speaks of him as one person. Let me give you two examples from the Bible that illustrate this. Remember John 1:14, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Notice even after the divine Son of God took to himself our nature—"the Word was made flesh"—he is still spoken of as one person: "We beheld his glory." The word "his" is singular. He is one person with two natures. It doesn't say "we beheld their glory," but rather, "we beheld his glory." The one person who now has two natures is still one person. The same is taught in Colossians 2, verse 9, "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." The passage is speaking of Jesus Christ. It tells us that he is truly and fully divine—"the fullness of the Godhead." He lacks nothing. He's fully God. It tells us he is fully human—we see the word "bodily." But notice it says, "In him"—singular. Though both natures are referenced, the divine and the human, he is still one person. Let me put it this way. He is not two "who's", rather we could think of it, if we ask, "Who is our Redeemer?" We speak of Christ, and we say, "He is our Redeemer." We would not say, "They are our Redeemer," pointing to Jesus, because he's not two persons, a divine person and a human person. He is one divine person with two natures. He is God and man in one person. This is why we say, "He"—singular—"is fully God and fully man." One person, two natures. The one person of Christ is truly and completely God. The one person of Christ is truly and completely man.

The *Catechism* tells us that these are two distinct natures. His divine nature is not changed into a human nature. His human nature is not changed into a divine nature. His natures are not mixed up together to make a different type of a nature. He is truly and fully God. He did not give up any of his divine attributes. He did not become something less than fully God. He is also, however, truly and fully man. He did not become a demigod of sorts, where he is more than a man, but still less than a God. He is God and man in one person. The divine person of the Son of God, who is himself fully God, took to himself a true human nature. Thus, the divine person of the Son of God now has two whole and entire natures—one divine, and one human. And yet, as the Bible says, he remains but one person.

Does this challenge your mind? Oh, it surely challenges all of our minds. But remember, the rule of our faith is the Bible, and the Bible, which is true, tells us this of Jesus Christ. He is fully God and fully man, and yet he is one person.

Finally we notice that he "continueth to be God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, for ever." The eternal Son of God did not become man for a season, or for a moment. It's not as if he stopped, as it were, being the Son of God incarnate after his resurrection. Rather, we wonder at this great privilege, that Jesus Christ, even now, continues to be God and man forever. Right now, our Redeemer Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man. As hard as it is for us to think of this, millions of years from now, he will continue to be God and man forever. The beauty of this is that Jesus Christ is our Redeemer forever. He's the only one who can reconcile God and man, and he remains that one who has reconciled God and man. Our peace will ever rest upon the Son of God incarnate. God and man, because of sin, are enemies. Yet Jesus Christ, who is God and man, is able to reconcile God and man together. No one else can do this. Because no one else is like Jesus. Why is Jesus the only Redeemer of God's elect? It is because he is the only one suitable to reconcile God and man together, he is the only one who can reconcile God and man together.

Well, we must close, but as we do, we admit that we've been thinking on a truth that is far above our weak minds fully to understand. Well, what should we do with this? Well, first, we should see what a great blessing is before us. The *Catechism* has helpfully summarized the Bible's teaching. There is a Redeemer—Jesus Christ—the Son of God made man. He is able to do all that is required. He is able to represent us, because he has our nature. He is able to represent God, because he is God. He is able to save us to the uttermost. And this is all because of God's great grace in providing us his eternal Son to be our Savior. This is worthy of our praise, that God has made his Son, Jesus Christ, known to us.

But second, we should take hold of this great blessing. What good is it to know of a remedy if we do not make use of that remedy? What a sad thing it would be to know that there is a solution to our greatest need and problem, and yet never embrace it. Certainly there is more to learn, and as God gives us opportunity, we'll look more at these beautiful truths of our redemption. But consider this well—God has made you see that the only Savior is Jesus Christ. And so, what should we do with that but go to Jesus Christ, who is able to save, who is the only one that is able to save, and to ask him, and to beg him, and to trust him to save you. He is the Redeemer of sinners.

Well third, we should give thanks for this great blessing. If God had never provided us his Son, if his Son had never taken upon himself our nature, there would be no hope for any of us. We would be without a Redeemer. But oh, what good news! God has given us his Son. His Son has taken on himself our nature, and, as we'll see, he has done all that is required to save his people. This is worthy of our rejoicing. There is a Redeemer.

Well, we get to think about our Redeemer in the next few lessons, and what a happy thing it is to do so. As we do, may God so bless us, not only to see this great blessing, but to enjoy this great blessing of so great a Savior for sinners.