

THE WESTMINSTER STANDARDS

*Shorter*  
**CATECHISM**

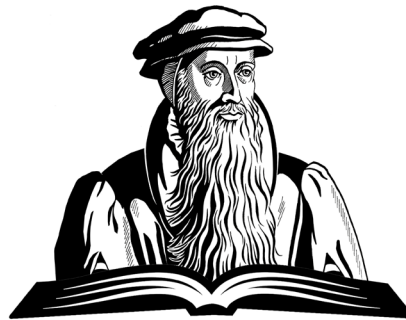
VIDEO LECTURE SERIES

*by Rev. Jonathan Mattull*

Lecture #27

**Blessings of Salvation  
in this Life**

*Catechism Question 36*



**The John Knox Institute**  
of Higher Education

**John Knox Institute of Higher Education**

*Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide*

© 2023 by John Knox Institute of Higher Education

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means for profit, except in brief quotations for the purposes of review, comment, or scholarship, without written permission from the publisher, John Knox Institute, P.O. Box 19398, Kalamazoo, MI 49019-19398, USA.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the Authorized King James Version.

Visit our website: [www.johnknoxinstitute.org](http://www.johnknoxinstitute.org)

Rev. Jonathan Mattull is minister of the gospel at Sovereign Grace Presbyterian Church, in St. Louis, Missouri, a congregation of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing), Presbytery of the United States of America.

[stlpresbyterian.org](http://stlpresbyterian.org)

# *The Shorter CATECHISM*

## VIDEO LECTURE SERIES

*by Rev. Jonathan Mattull*

1. The Chief End of Man—*Question 1*
2. God's Word and Its Teaching—*Questions 2 & 3*
3. What God Is—*Question 4*
4. One Triune God—*Questions 5 & 6*
5. The Decrees of God—*Questions 7 & 8*
6. God's Work of Creation—*Question 9*
7. God's Creation of Man—*Question 10*
8. God's Works of Providence—*Question 11*
9. God's Special Providence Towards Man—*Question 12*
10. The Fall of Man—*Questions 13 & 15*
11. What Sin Is—*Question 14*
12. The Fall's Effect on All Mankind—*Questions 16 & 17*
13. The Sinfulness & Misery of Man's Fallen State—*Questions 18 & 19*
14. The Covenant of Grace—*Question 20*
15. Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of God's Elect—*Question 21*
16. The Incarnation—*Question 22*
17. Christ's Office of Prophet—*Questions 23 & 24*
18. Christ's Office of Priest—*Question 25*
19. Christ's Office of King—*Question 26*
20. The Humiliation of Christ—*Question 27*

# *The Shorter CATECHISM*

## VIDEO LECTURE SERIES

*by Rev. Jonathan Mattull*

21. Christ's Exaltation—*Question 28*
22. Redemption Applied—*Questions 29 & 30*
23. Effectual Calling—*Questions 31 & 32*
24. Justification—*Question 33*
25. Adoption—*Question 34*
26. Sanctification—*Question 35*
- 27. Blessings of Salvation in this Life—*Question 36***
28. Blessings of Salvation at Death—*Question 37*
29. Blessings of Salvation at the Resurrection—*Question 38*
30. The Duty Required of Man—*Questions 39 through 42*
31. The Ten Commandments—*Question 43*
32. The Ten Commandments: Love for God—*Questions 45 thru 48*
33. The Ten Commandments: Love for God's Worship—*Question 49 thru 52*
34. The Ten Commandments: Love for God's Name—*Questions 53 thru 56*
35. The Ten Commandments: A Day for Holy Love—*Questions 57 thru 59*
36. The Ten Commandments: Love for God's Day—*Questions 60–62*
37. The Ten Commandments: Love within Our Relationships—*Questions 63–66*
38. The Ten Commandments: Love for Life—*Questions 67–69*
39. The Ten Commandments: Love for Purity—*Questions 70–72*
40. The Ten Commandments: Love for the Lord's Allotment—*QQ 73–75*

# *The Shorter CATECHISM*

## VIDEO LECTURE SERIES

*by Rev. Jonathan Mattull*

41. The Ten Commandments - Love for the Truth—*Questions 76 thru 78*
42. The Ten Commandments - Love from Within—*Questions 79 thru 81*
43. Understanding Our Sin—*Questions 82 thru 84*
44. Escaping God’s Wrath and Curse: Saving Faith—*Questions 85 and 86*
45. Escaping God’s Wrath and Curse: Repentance unto Life—*Question 87*
46. Escaping God’s Wrath and Curse: Means of Grace—*Question 88*
47. Means of Grace: The Word of God—*Questions 89 and 90*
48. Means of Grace: The Sacraments—*Questions 91 thru 93*
49. Means of Grace: Christian Baptism—*Questions 94 and 95*
50. Means of Grace: The Lord’s Supper—*Question 96*
51. Means of Grace: Receiving the Lord’s Supper—*Question 97*
52. Means of Grace: Prayer—*Questions 98 and 99*
53. The Lord’s Prayer: The Preface—*Question 100*
54. The Lord’s Prayer: The First Petition—*Question 101*
55. The Lord’s Prayer: The Second Petition—*Question 102*
56. The Lord’s Prayer: The Third Petition—*Question 103*
57. The Lord’s Prayer: The Fourth Petition—*Question 104*
58. The Lord’s Prayer: The Fifth Petition—*Question 105*
59. The Lord’s Prayer: The Sixth Petition—*Question 106*
60. The Lord’s Prayer: The Conclusion—*Question 107*



# *The Shorter CATECHISM*

## VIDEO LECTURE SERIES

by Rev. Jonathan Mattull

### Lecture #27

## Blessings of Salvation in this Life

**Question 36:** *What are the benefits which in life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?*

**Answer:** *The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, are, assurance of God love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.*

How excellent is the truth of salvation. Those who are saved by God's grace have been saved indeed. The truths of justification, adoption, and sanctification are great truths, full of many blessings. In the next three Questions, we get to look at some of these blessings. These Questions consider the benefits or blessings that believers enjoy in this life, at death, and at the resurrection. While each of these—justification, adoption, and sanctification—have their own blessings in and of themselves, what we'll see is there are other blessings that are bound up with them, for which we are to rejoice and give thanks to the Lord God. Certainly while health and wealth are good things for which we give thanks to the Lord, neither health nor wealth will continue throughout this life. Eventually, one gets sick. Eventually, one dies. The earthly enjoyments end. But what a blessing—the benefits of salvation never cease. They always continue and advance. And this is true, as we'll see, in this life, and at death, and at the resurrection forever.

Well, today we look at the blessings of salvation which the believer enjoys in this life. Our Question is #36 from the Shorter Catechism, which asks, "What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?"

Now, before we look at the Answer, let's simply notice a key idea. These "benefits"—a word which simply means "good things" or "blessings"—they accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification. This tells us that these benefits do not come to us on their own. Rather, they accompany—that is, they're distinct from but bound with justification, adoption, and sanctification. Likewise, they flow from, that is, they grow from, or they're the fruit of the effects of justification, adoption, and sanctification.

So let's look then at the Answer: "The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, are, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end." Five benefits are noted in this Answer, all of which are enjoyed in this life, before death and before the resurrection. The first is assurance of God's love; the second is peace of conscience; the third, joy in the Holy Ghost; fourth, increase of grace; and fifth, perseverance therein to the end. We'll look at each of these in

the following three points of our lesson. The first point, Gracious Enjoyment; the second, Gracious Growth; and the third, Gracious Perseverance.

Well, the first then, Gracious Enjoyment. Each of these benefits cultivate enjoyment of God. But for this point, we'll look at the first three benefits mentioned in our Answer: assurance, peace, and joy. One who these three benefits will know in this life such enjoyment the world cannot offer or experience. Certainly, anyone that's asked in this world, the question, Would you like to have joy, and would you like to have good things? They would say "Yes," and their lives pursue things that they think will provide them those things. However, nothing that the world pursues is ever able to give that lasting assurance, and that lasting peace, and that lasting joy, but the believer has access to all of them.

Notice the first of these—assurance of God's love. The word "assurance" has to do with certainty. One may be falsely assured of something, and this sets up bitter disappointment. However, here the idea deals with rightly founded assurance. To be rightly assured or certain of a good thing is a great blessing. When a hungry person, after a long day's work, has no assurance of a next meal, they experience an intensifying of their misery. That which they lack is now uncertain to be gained. However, if someone is confident of their next meal, however much hunger they may have, he or she enjoys the benefit of the assurance that they're going to sit down and enjoy the meal which satisfies their hunger. But the benefit here is an assurance of something far better than earthly food or wealth. It is the assurance of God's love. This is an astounding blessing. Love is that delight and devotion one has to another. And here we consider God's love to a believer—God's delight, God's devotion to his people. What a gracious thing that is! In Galatians 2, verse 20, Paul was able to write of "the Son of God, who loved me, gave himself for me." Notice, it's not generic, that God loved, the Son of God loved, and the Son of God gave, but "the Son of God loved me" Paul says, "and gave himself for me." What an assurance that is!

While it's true that many believers speak of, or sometimes even feel an assurance of God's love, this is a false assurance, and if it's not corrected by God's grace, it will show forth a bitter disappointment at their death and at their last day. Remember that unbelievers are in a state of spiritual death. They're dead in their sins. They are under God's wrath and curse. It is a solemn word that we find in John 3, verse 36: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." The unbeliever, in other words, has the wrath of God upon him. The unbeliever has no reason to think that God is pleased with him. He's sinned against God. He stands as one that's rebelled against God, and he has no peace with God, because he does not have Christ.

However, the believer is in a different position. The believer has been brought to believe upon Jesus. He has been forgiven all his sin. He has been received in Christ, and counted righteous by Christ's righteousness imputed to him—there's justification. He has been received into God's family—there's adoption. He has been brought into holy and sanctified fellowship with God by the blood of Christ Jesus—there is sanctification. These three are great blessings. And because of these three, the believer may consider these truths and rightly conclude that he is indeed loved by God. He can say, "God has saved me. God has forgiven me. God has adopted me. God is sanctifying me." What does all this mean? It means, "God loves me."

This is what we see in 1 John 4, verses 9 and 10: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Oh, what a happy blessing this is—the assurance of God's love!

Now the second of these gracious benefits which bring us enjoyment in this life is peace of conscience. What a terrible thing it is to have a conscience burdened and tormented by the guilt of sin—not just sin in general, as if sin is out there, but rather, the sins that I have committed, for which I must give an account before God. There’s no torment or grief in this life equal to such conviction. Peace is like the still and calm waters of the sea on a bright and pleasant day. There’s beauty and enjoyment. One can rest and delight in its beauty. However, a troubled conscience, a convicted conscience is like the sea blown about and troubled, waves rising up and crashing down with such violence that no one can rest. All are consumed with fear in such circumstances. Well, our conscience is that ability of our soul to understand our guilt and to accuse and blame and condemn that guilt. When it accuses and blames and condemns us for our guilt, we are rightly unsettled, troubled, and dejected.

But the believer has a great blessing. While he has sinned, he has peace with God by the blood of Christ. His peace is not founded on what he himself has done. Rather, it’s founded on the perfect work of Christ Jesus, his faultless righteousness, and his sacrifice which satisfies divine justice—all of those truths which we have considered. This is what Paul notes in Romans 5, and verse 1: “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Notice how the peace a believer has is the consequence of justification. The one justified has peace. Now, the sense of that peace may vary as we understand and believe the truth of salvation, or as we ignore it. However, each believer has this peace because of Christ. And this is indeed a great and gracious blessing.

Well finally, the third of these gracious benefits, which bring us enjoyment—joy in the Holy Ghost. To have joy is to have cheerfulness and gladness of soul. But notice, this joy is in the Holy Ghost. Romans 5, verse 5 and verse 11 speak to this. Paul writes, “And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us;” and verse 11: “And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.” The Holy Spirit causes us, who have believed upon Christ, to experience the love of God, and this then leads us to rejoice in God through Jesus Christ. The Spirit’s work within us directing us to Christ makes us aware of his love, and we experience that love, and this then fills us with joy by grace. Well, the same idea is expressed by Paul in his benediction recorded in Romans 15, and verse 13. He writes, “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.” Each believer has this privilege. As the Spirit works within him, and causes him to understand and trust in Christ, the believer has a deep and abiding joy. It’s not the passing happiness of the world, which is there for a moment only to vanish, and never truly to satisfy. Rather it is an abiding joy, because it’s founded on the perfect work of Christ.

Now, we should acknowledge that the sense of these things is not always constant for the believer. There are times when the believer becomes dejected. Some believers have had long seasons of little to no assurance of the love of God to them. Seasons come when the believer’s joy is almost imperceptible. Well, why is this? One thing to note is that it is not because the believer has lost the source or reason for these benefits. In other words, a true believer does not lose his justification. He doesn’t lose his adoption; he’s not kicked out of God’s family; nor does he lose sanctification. Instead, two things may have happened.

First, he may have ignored or lost sight of the wonderful beauty and truth of his salvation. He may have had his thoughts diverted from the true ground of his peace in Christ Jesus. He may have largely forgotten that he is securely within God’s family by grace. He may have neglected his



holy calling. By any of these, what happens is the reason for his assurance, peace, and joy is now overlooked, and it is, as it were, ignored. You could think of it this way, if a wealthy person were to lose sight and understanding of his wealth, it's understandable that he would lose the earthly comfort of having such wealth. However, so soon as he would regain a sight of his finances, his earthly comfort from his finances would return. Well, so it is with the believer. Once a believer returns to understanding and believing Christ and what is the believer's in Christ, then it is that a sense of assurance, and peace, and joy return by God's blessing.

A second reason may be that God, for his own holy and wise purpose, has withdrawn the enjoyment of these benefits—the sense of these benefits. On a sunny day, we may enjoy the light and warmth of the sun. However, if a storm arises and passes by, we no longer enjoy the sun's light or warmth. So it is if God withdraws the enjoyment of these benefits. It's as if a cloud has passed between our sight and enjoyment of these blessings. However, just as a cloud does not remove the sun, so when God withdraws the enjoyment of these benefits, we do not lose the cause and source of them. We are, at such a time, to trust the Lord, and remember that he does all things well. We are to ask him that he would restore to us the blessing which accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, and we are to wait on him in faith until he is pleased to do so by grace.

Well, let us move on to our second main point: Gracious Growth. Grace is what begins our enjoyment of salvation—"By grace are you saved." With other benefits, believers experience in this life the increase of grace, as our Catechism notices. This means that the influence of grace continues with and grows in the believer throughout his life. Neither justification or adoption change. They are final, complete, and decisive. Remember that both of these are called "an act of God's free grace." Once done, it is done forever. Once one is justified, he will always be justified. Once one is adopted, he is always adopted. However, he will grow in the enjoyment of these two aspects of salvation throughout his life. His assurance, and peace, and joy will mature as he better understands and enjoys his justification and adoption. When a sinner is converted and brought to believe upon Christ Jesus, a great change has taken place. He was dead in his sin, now he's alive. He hated holiness in his sin, but now by God's grace he desires to be holy. It's as if God has planted a seed within him, and God will cause that seed to grow or mature. By God's grace, this divine work of sanctification will continue throughout life. It's true there will be seasons of greater growth and lesser growth, yet God will continue to work within his beloved people. Christ gave himself not only to redeem, but to purify a people zealous of good works. And Christ will see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. You see this in Philippians 1, verse 6. Paul writes, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." When God began his work, he began a work that he will continue in the life of his people forever. Notice the confidence of such an encouragement, in 1 Thessalonians 5, verses 23 and 24: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." The confidence that this will continue is founded upon God's faithfulness. The believer's growth, all his lifelong is due to God's grace and his faithfulness to continue this gracious work. What a blessing the believer enjoys in this life!

Well third, Gracious Perseverance. The final benefit for the believer in this life is expressed in these words: "perseverance therein to the end." The believer is guaranteed to persevere, that is, to continue, in God's saving grace throughout his life. This is a great blessing for the believer. Success and victory is guaranteed by God's grace. A rich man may lose his wealth, a healthy man may become sick; a man of many friends may lose every last one of them. However, once a sinner

is saved, he will never be lost. He will never lose his salvation. We're assured of this in the Bible. In 1 Peter 1, and verse 5, among other places, Peter speaks of believers "who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." Believers are protected and preserved by God throughout life. One way God does this is by working within them the grace to persevere. So he preserves or keeps them, and he does so by working through and within them that they would press on and continue in the way of faith, and hope, and love. His work in them causes them to persevere. You can see this in Philippians 2, verses 12 and 13: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Notice, Paul is writing to believers. He's not saying to unbelievers, you are to work or to earn your salvation. Rather, he's speaking to believers who have salvation, and now they're to apply it and work it out, to continue it. But notice, they do so by God who works in them "to will," that is, to choose, and "to do," that is, to act "of his good pleasure." Believers are called to obey and give diligence, but the cause of this is the grace of God, which he has given, and is continuing to work within them. Their act of persevering is the outworking of his gracious preserving them. It is a gracious benefit that he gives them. Not one shall be lost.

Well, each of these is worthy of even more consideration. And I encourage you to gather up Scriptures as you read the Bible, and see how it is that each of these is for the believer throughout his life. But we must close, and as we do, let us take a moment to see what a great blessing salvation is for the believer in this life. It's true, as we'll see, that there are even greater blessings to come for the believer, both at death and at the resurrection. But let's not overlook—the believer in this life has great blessings that they are to enjoy. Remember, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever," and here, we see one way in which the believer may do so. It's true the believer may not have much money. He may suffer much. However, every single believer has benefits which far outweigh the best that the world has to offer. No amount of money can buy the assurance of God's love. No amount of friends can give true peace of conscience, and no worldly experience can provide the lasting joy of the Holy Spirit. Each of these is given to the believer by grace throughout his life.

Also, it's worth noting that not everyone who professes faith is truly a believer. This is why we see some who fall away. They are members of the church, and they depart. They profess faith, and then they leave. It's not that they were saved and now lost their salvation. Notice, John explains this in 1 John 2, verse 19. He writes, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." Though they were numbered among us by profession, they were not truly converted. They were not true believers.

But where does this leave us? It means that we must be sure to look to Christ, and trust in him alone for our salvation. Let us never trust in anything else. It is Christ alone who saves. Let us not trust in our prayers, in our Bible reading, in our feelings, or activities. Rather, let us be sure to look to Christ alone, who is freely offered to us in the gospel. And as we do, may God so bless us with the assurance and enjoyment of all of these benefits. And as we'll see, there are additional blessings at death, and at the resurrection. Thanks be unto God for his marvelous gift of salvation and all of the benefits. May it be that you are brought to trust in Christ, and throughout this life, enjoy each of these to his glory and praise.