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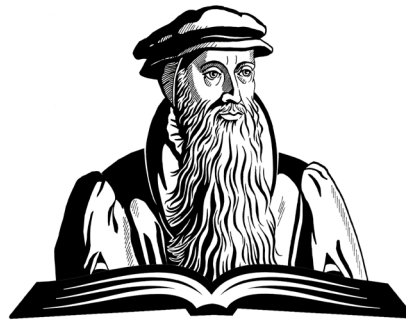
VIDEO LECTURE SERIES

*by Rev. Jonathan Mattull*

Lecture #29

**Blessings of Salvation  
at the Resurrection**

*Catechism Question 38*



**The John Knox Institute**  
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*Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide*

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# *The Shorter CATECHISM*

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*by Rev. Jonathan Mattull*

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# *The Shorter CATECHISM*

## VIDEO LECTURE SERIES

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### Lecture #29

## Blessings of Salvation at the Resurrection

**Question 38:** *What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?*

**Answer:** *At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.*

Who can fully understand all of the riches of salvation? All of this salvation comes to us by grace, and it is as a treasure that can continue to overwhelm us with the blessings that the Lord provides. We have this unspeakable blessing all bound up for us in Christ Jesus. All of the blessings of salvation are ours in and by him. Without him, we have nothing. But with him, we have all things.

Our Question today presents a final chapter to the benefits that believers receive from Christ. However, this final chapter which contains these richest blessings is a chapter that itself never ends. The blessings of Christ continue for the believer forever. The Question is #38 of the *Shorter Catechism*: “What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?” And the Answer, “At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.”

Let’s look at one key word for our Question and Answer today, the word “resurrection.” The word itself means simply “to stand again” or “to rise again.” However, in the Bible, this word refers to a rising again that is greater than any other rising that we’ve ever experienced. It speaks of rising again from the dead. The word refers, in the Bible, to the bodily resurrection from the dead. We see this in the Bible. Of course, it’s what Jesus did. He rose from the dead. Each of the Gospels records this glorious truth. Paul asserts the same in 1 Corinthians, chapter 15, verses 3 and 4: “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.” Christ himself taught that there is a great day, when all who had died will be raised to life again. Notice this in John chapter 5, verses 28 and 29. He said, “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

Well, our Question is directing us to consider the benefits that are brought to believers on this

last great day, when all who have died will rise again, and that unto the final judgment. Well, let's consider it now, as we consider three things about that day. First, The Glorious Day; second, The Public Day; and third, The Blessed Day.

So first then, The Glorious Day. The *Catechism* tells us that at the resurrection, believers will be raised up in glory. It's true, as we saw in John 5, mentioned earlier, that everyone will be raised upon the last day, believers and unbelievers. Yet, there will be a difference. For believers, it will be a glorious resurrection. For unbelievers, it will be the most miserable thing that they have and ever will, and continue to experience.

Well, how will it be glorious for the believer? First, their very bodies will be raised from the dead. We saw this in our last lesson that the souls of believers at their death are made perfect in holiness, and that their bodies do rest in the grave till the resurrection. At the resurrection, the real, physical bodies of believers will be restored and stand again. They'll be resurrected. Now, this brings obvious questions. We realize that after one dies, the body begins to disintegrate and decompose. In many cases, the physical flesh is entirely turned into dust. Of course, we know of tragic deaths, fires and other horrific circumstances which make our ability to identify even the smallest of physical remains impossible. Some have wondered then how the resurrection of one's physical body could take place. How can it be the same body? And is it not just a new body, a different body? Well, the difficulties, of course, are real for us. However, we need to remember that God is Almighty. You'll remember the Question, "What is God?" What a foundation this sets for all of these kinds of questions: "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power," and so on. Notice that which was just mentioned—he is infinite in his wisdom and power. Well, surely infinite wisdom and infinite power may and does accomplish what our very limited wisdom cannot understand, and what our very limited power could never do.

Additionally, God has already shown such power. Remember that God made all things of nothing by the word of his power. All that we see in the earth, all that is in it, the heavens above us, all of the stars, all of these things were brought forth out of nothing. Well surely, God who made all things out of nothing can bring together again all that is needed for the bodily resurrection of all men—their very same body restored on that last day. We also need to remember that this is exactly what God's Word tells us. It does not tell us *how* all of this will happen, although I encourage you to read through 1 Corinthians 15, where Paul talks much of the resurrection. The simple thing you need to note is that the Bible—the Word of God—tells us that it will happen. And with God's Word telling us that, we are very comfortable trusting in the true, faithful, and Almighty God.

Now, how else will it be a glorious resurrection? Well, their very bodies, that is, believers' bodies, will be wondrously transformed. Oh, we speak of things that we do not yet fully know or understand. Yet, this is promised to us in the Bible. It's not just that we will rise again in our own bodies—that is, of course, miraculous. It is that our bodies will be transformed and made glorious. Our very bodies that we now possess, will be the same bodies, and yet gloriously transformed.

what Paul writes in Philippians 3, verse 21, speaking of God, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." We know that certain changes will take place, though we don't understand every detail. For instance, in Luke 20, verses 35 and 36, Christ said, "But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." Notice, he doesn't say they become angels—that's not Biblical—nor that they are the class of angels, but they no longer have

death, they don't decay. They now have such power given them that is like unto the angels. Their very same bodies resurrected, there are certain changes, no doubt, have taken place, such that no longer is there any need for marriage. But each of these changes, as difficult for us to even begin to understand, are changes for the better, that we may better glorify and enjoy God in our bodies forever. It doesn't tell us everything, but it does let us know that great changes will take place, all of which will enable us to honor the Lord forever.

Well, how can we fully understand all of these things? What we do know is that our inglorious bodies will be made like unto His glorious body. Many of you have seen butterflies. Think of how a butterfly begins, as this caterpillar creeping along the ground, and it goes into a cocoon. And when it emerges from the cocoon, it has the same body, but gloriously transformed. Well, think of this for a moment. In that transformation, the caterpillar doesn't die. It's being changed within the cocoon, until it emerges this glorious sight. Now here's something that's an imperfect analogy. Because the believer's body actually dies, and it doesn't undergo transformation in the grave. But rather, that same body will be glorious transformed in a moment, and oh, what a sight it will be on that day.

Well, when will this glorious day be? We don't know as far as a date on the calendar, however we do know that it will be at the end of the world as we presently know it. It is that great day to which all history is moving, and no one shall escape. The Bible speaks of this as "the last day," and in other places, as "the great day." It is on that last day that this will take place. We see this in Matthew 25, verses 31 and following. Jesus says, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left." What a scene that will be! Your eyes will behold every single person on that last great day. It is on that day that God will glorify his dearly loved, his blood-bought, and believing people.

Well, secondly, The Public Day. We have just seen this from the previous passage, but notice the *Catechism* says that believers will be openly acknowledged and acquitted. The word "openly" is similar to the word "publically." When we do something openly, we're doing it in front of, or in the presence of others. When we do something secretly, we're hiding it from others' sight. Well, notice here that the *Catechism* tells us that believers will be openly, that is, publically acknowledged and acquitted. We'll talk more about those words in a moment, "acknowledged" and "acquitted," but for now, simply note that this will be openly done, publically done before all the world. Well, what a thought that is, the whole earth, every man, every woman, every child, all the angels, and the demons, all will be gathered together to witness, to experience this scene. Now this surely can be overwhelming to think of. We can be overwhelmed by standing before a small group of people. However, our focus will not be upon the people around us, though it will be everyone. Our focus will be upon Him, who will be openly acknowledging and acquitting believers, while also openly condemning and showing forth the judgment on unbelievers.

And who will that be?—well, it's Jesus Christ. Notice our *Catechism* presents this in the Question, "What benefits do believers receive *from Christ* at the resurrection?" The Bible teaches this again and again. Remember the scene mentioned in Matthew 25—all nations, all people gathered. And who is it? It's the Son of man who is there—the Lord Jesus Christ! And this is what happens to believers on that day, in Matthew 25, verse 34, "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." It's not the voice of an apostle, as interesting as that might be. It's not the voice of an angel, as impressive as that would be. It is the voice of the King—the eternal Son



of God incarnate and glorified, the Lord Jesus Christ himself. He is the one who will acknowledge and acquit his people before all the world.

And what does it mean to be openly acknowledged? We've just seen it in this passage. To be openly acknowledged is to be publically owned by Christ as his beloved people. "Come, ye blessed of my Father." Notice Christ's words in Matthew chapter 10, verse 32: Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." Well on that last day, we will see this in its fulness. Christ will acknowledge each of his people as those who are his, and who have trusted him, and whom he loved, and for whom he gave himself, and for whom he's prepared a place. They have been mocked in this life. They've been ridiculed by the world in this life. Some have suffered tremendous persecution and horrific pains in this life for following Christ. And the world has laughed at them, and has been cruel to them, have thought little of them. But on that last day, these will be shown before all of the world to be the children of God and the beloved bride of Christ.

Well, what does it mean to be openly acquitted? To be openly acquitted means to be openly cleared of all guilt, as well as of all false accusations. As we've seen, each believer is already justified. They are already declared righteous. They're not waiting to be justified. For so soon as a believer so believers upon Christ, their sins are remitted for Christ's sake, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to them, and they are then and forever declared righteous. All of this is by faith alone in Jesus Christ alone, and that by the imputed righteousness of Christ alone. However, on the last day, this will be publically displayed before all the world. Every sin will be shown to have been pardoned by the blood of Christ. Every false charge against them as well will be entirely dismissed. And oh, what a happy day that will be for the believer, and all the world will witness it.

Well, third, The Blessed Day. What an amazing statement! Believers shall be made "perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity." It will take all eternity to understand the significance of this benefit. We cannot capture all in words now. However, we can indicate a few truths about how believers are made perfectly blessed on that day.

First, all miseries and brokenness will be removed. In our present world, all is touched by brokenness. Even the healthiest body gets sick and hurt. Even the best families experience heartache. Even the most fervent and loving Christian knows some degree of great trouble and trial. Brokenness is part of our current fallen world. And at the resurrection, believers will have no more experience of brokenness. Notice, in Revelation chapter 21, and verse 4, we read this precious testimony: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." All their miseries are removed.

Well second, a complete, full, and lasting joy will be given to the believer. Certainly this will include the blessings mentioned above, however, the complete, and full, and lasting joy will be focused upon God himself. The believer is consumed with the knowledge of the glory of God on that day. The love of God, which multiplies his love to God and his people is now fully consuming that believer. Think of the simple statement of Paul, in 1 Thessalonians 4, verse 17: "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Yes, believers will be with one another, and this is a blessing. But that which transcends all is that believers shall ever be with the Lord, and that in his glory, in such intimacy that we cannot fully understand at the present.

At the end of Psalm 16, we sing about the resurrection, preeminently of Christ's resurrection, and yet, as believers are in Christ, we anticipate our own resurrection. In verse 11, we find the words,

“Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” Fulness of joy, pleasures for evermore—now, we have experienced in this life some joy, even full joy for a moment, and we’ve known pleasures that have gladdened us, but fulness and pleasure that lasts forever, and never diminishes, this is what we will experience in its fulness forever. The enjoyment of God in Christ, his love, his fellowship—we will be transformed, and enabled body and soul to enjoy God forever.

Theologians think of this as the “beatific vision.” It refers to the blessed sight of God in heaven, which in turn furthers our own experience of blessedness. We see this in 1 John 3, verse 2. John writes, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” The believer is right now by faith being transformed into his likeness. It is by faith we know Christ. But then, on the last day, we will see Christ. Faith will be no more. Sight will now possess us, and we’ll see the glorified Christ, and likewise be blessed in him, and ever be with him. What a glorious and blessed truth. For we now know Christ by faith. Soon enough, on that last day, we will know him by sight, and such a sight as will fill us with unending joy and delight forever.

Well, as we close, I want to challenge you to set apart time even today to think about that great day. It is a day that you, and I, and everyone will certainly experience. However far off or near to us it is today, we will experience it. Thomas Watson, a pastor from many years ago, once said, “We are not so sure to rise out of our beds, as we are to rise out of our graves.” We think about and plan for things in this life, tomorrow, and weeks down the road, and even years down the road. And yet all of that is uncertain. We still feel wise to plan for them, but we tend to spend little time thinking about the last day that is certain. Oh, please, take time to think of that day, and by God’s grace in Christ, anticipate that day with much joy.

My own thoughts fail as to how I might exhort, and encourage, and compel you to consider this well. You may be a member in the church, and you may have been baptized, and you may gather with the saints every Lord’s day of the year. However, if you’re not trusting in Christ, if you’re not a believer, this day will come, but it will come as the beginning unending torment to your body and soul. So please consider well that day, and your present need for Jesus Christ, and remember that he is the way, the truth, and the life. He is the resurrection. And so coming to Christ, and taking him, will open to you this treasure of salvation as well.

Well, let me add a word to you who are believing. You may be young, you may be weak. Sometimes for following Christ, you may be made fun of. You may even be abused or persecuted for your faith. But dear believer, there is a day coming when the Lord of lords and King of kings will openly acknowledge you personally as his forever. This is the day coming, when he will certify before all creation that his blood cleansed you from all your sin, and his righteousness justified you. There is a day coming when he will fill you with such blessed joy as will overwhelm you with delight for all eternity. That day is coming. It is yours because of grace.

Oh, then be not weary in serving him today. Do not compromise his promises. Do not compromise his commandments. Do not live for the vanity of this world. Devote yourself to him. Paul says in Colossians 3, if then we’re risen with Christ, we are to set our mind on things above where Christ is. Oh, then devote yourself to him. Nothing you lose in this life is able to be compared with what you will enjoy in that life. Give yourself with renewed diligence to believing, and in believing, lovingly obeying the Lord Jesus Christ.

For those of you who are trusting in Jesus, realize these benefits are yours. They are reserved for you. And one day you will get to experience and enjoy them forever. Yet, remember why they

are yours. They are yours because of God's grace. They are yours because of Jesus Christ. It is most certainly true that no believer on that day will say, "These blessings are insignificant and unsatisfying." No, they will be overwhelmed, and that forever by them. Our everlasting rejoicing is expressed well in Revelation 5, verse 12: "Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." And oh, what a resounding praise: "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (verse 13). Oh, believer, know this: your body and soul joined together on that last day will be among them who ever praise the Lamb of God. That being so, let it be your delight now to give thanks and praise to him, living every day in anticipation of that day when faith will be made sight.