



Advanced Bible Correspondence Course

Lesson 14: The Humiliation of Christ

After dealing with the names of the Mediator, the instructor now speaks about the states. “States” refer to the relationship with God. Lord’s Days 14, 15, and 16 deal with the state of humiliation, which is divided into steps. The word “steps” has respect to the ever-deepening process of Christ’s suffering. Over against this stepwise humiliation, there is also a stepwise exaltation.

LORD’S DAY 14

Q.35. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THESE WORDS, “HE WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY GHOST, BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY”?

ANSWER: THAT GOD’S ETERNAL SON, WHO IS (A), AND CONTINUETH (B) TRUE AND ETERNAL GOD, TOOK UPON HIM THE VERY NATURE OF MAN, OF THE FLESH AND BLOOD OF THE VIRGIN MARY (C), BY THE OPERATION OF THE HOLY GHOST (D); THAT HE MIGHT ALSO BE THE TRUE SEED OF DAVID (E), LIKE UNTO HIS BRETHREN IN ALL THINGS (F), SIN EXCEPTED (G).

(A) I JOHN 5:20; JOHN 1:1, 17:3; ROMANS 1:3; COLOSSIANS 1:15;

(B) ROMANS 9:5; (C) GALATIANS 4:4; LUKE 1:31,42,43; (D) MATTHEW 1:20;

LUKE 1:35; (E) ROMANS 1:3; PSALM 132:11; I SAMUEL 7:12; LUKE 1:32;

ACTS 2:30; (F) PHILIPPIANS 2:7; HEBREWS 2:14, 17; (G) HEBREWS 4:15

The humble birth

The first step of the humiliation of the Son of God was His humble birth. The Lord Jesus took upon Himself the human flesh from the virgin Mary. Paul says: *“But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law.”* (Galatians 4:4) Jesus was born as a human being in Bethlehem. His birth was quite ordinary, but His conception was supernatural. By the operation of the Holy Spirit, the virgin Mary was with child. This happened without the intervention of a man. Whereas we are conceived and born in sin by means of our fathers (see Lord’s Day 3), Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit. For that reason He had no sin. His birth out of the virgin Mary teaches us that He was truly man.

The human nature

The catechism teaches us that Christ is and continues to be true and eternal God. He only took the *human* nature upon Himself. He took upon Himself that human nature out of the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary. He did not bring that human nature from heaven. It is therefore not true that Christ was without sin because Mary should have been holy. Like all other people, Mary was conceived and born in sin. It had been foretold that Christ would come from the lineage of David: “so that He might be the true seed of David.” Paul says of Him, “*Which was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh*” (Romans 1:3). God had promised this. He became like His brethren in all things – a man, like all believers, only without sin. He was perfectly holy.

Q.36. WHAT PROFIT DOST THOU RECEIVE BY CHRIST’S HOLY CONCEPTION AND NATIVITY?

ANSWER: THAT HE IS OUR MEDIATOR (A); AND WITH HIS INNOCENCE AND PERFECT HOLINESS, COVERS IN THE SIGHT OF GOD, MY SINS, WHEREIN I WAS CONCEIVED AND BROUGHT FORTH (B).

(A) HEBREWS 7:27-27; (B) I PETER 1:18-19, 3:18; I CORINTHIANS 1:30-31; ROMANS 8:3-4; ISAIAH 53:11; PSALM 32:1

The Mediator

What profit do we have from Christ’s birth? What blessing does it give us? In the first place, that He is our Mediator. This is in agreement with Lord’s Days 5 and 6. There it says that in order for Him to save us He must be very God and a real righteous man. Jesus Christ fulfills these requirements. He is the Son of God, who assumed our human nature. Through the fall in Paradise we need such a Mediator. A mediator is one who stands between two parties in order to reconcile them. Christ is the Mediator who stands between an angry God and a guilty sinner. Through His incarnation, He can be our Mediator and represent us before God. He is Emmanuel (God with us).

Innocent and holy

The second benefit is that with His innocence and perfect holiness, Christ covers from the sight of God my sins, wherein I was conceived and brought forth. Our conception and birth, the gate through which we enter into life, is sinful. We have been sinners from birth. Jesus began His redemptive work exactly where we went astray, namely at our conception and birth. The Mediator did not become our Mediator until the end of His life, when He suffered and died. He has been our Mediator right from His conception.

With His innocence and holiness He has covered our sins, that is, atoned for them. In one of his penitential psalms, David said, “*Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered*” (Psalm 32:1).

Questions:

1. *What was the first step of the humiliation of the Son of God?*

2. *How did He obtain the human nature?*

3. a. *Why was Mary sinful?*

b. *Why was the Lord Jesus without sin?*

4. *What does Romans 1:3 mean?*

5. *Between which two “parties” is Christ the Mediator?*

Evaluator: _____

Meditation: The Gift of Gifts

O Source of all good,
What shall I render to Thee for the gift of gifts,
 thine own dear Son, begotten, not created,
 My Redeemer, Proxy, Surety, Substitute,
 His self-emptying incomprehensible,
 His infinity of love beyond the heart's grasp.
Herein is wonder of wonders:
 He came below to raise me above,
 was born like me that I might become like Him.
Herein is love;
 when I cannot rise to Him He draws near on wings of grace,
 to raise me to Himself.
Herein is power;
 when Deity and humanity were infinitely apart
 He united them in indissoluble unity, the uncreate and the created.
Herein is wisdom;
 when I was undone, with no will to return to Him,
 and no intellect to devise recovery
 He came, God-incarnate, to save me to the uttermost
 as man to die my death,
 to shed satisfying blood on my behalf,
 to work out a perfect righteousness for me.
O God, take me in spirit to the watchful shepherds, and
 enlarge my mind;
 let me hear good tidings of great joy,
 and hearing, believe, rejoice, praise, adore,
 my conscience bathed in an ocean of repose,
 my eyes uplifted to a reconciled Father;
 place me with ox, ass, camel, goat,
 to look with them upon my Redeemer's face,
 and in Him account myself delivered from sin;
 let me with Simeon clasp the new-born Child to my heart,
 embrace Him with undying faith,
 exulting that He is mine and I am His.
In Him thou hast given me so much that heaven can give no more.

Taken from "The Valley of Vision", a collection of Puritan Prayers & Devotions