

Each week of 2019 we will take a brief look at one or more questions from the Westminster Shorter Catechism. To read previous weeks' briefs go to oakhillpca.com/wsc

Q. 102. *What do we pray for in the second petition?*

A. In the second petition, which is, *Thy kingdom come*, we pray that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed; and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it; and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism closes with teaching on prayer by unpacking each petition of the Lord's Prayer. This second petition requests "Your kingdom come" (ESV). We need to understand what the kingdom of God is and how it comes in this age.

A kingdom is a realm ruled by a king or queen. In Scripture there are two distinct spiritual kingdoms that have influence and impact on earthly kingdoms and life. This is the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. Satan always has been and will be subordinate to God. God reigns over all of creation (cf. Ps. 93). Satan is called the "ruler of this world" (Jn. 12:31) and "god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4) and "prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2). God has given authority to Satan over the "domain of darkness" (Col. 1:13), but God "will soon crush Satan" (Rom. 16:20).

So, the second petition is a two-pronged request: that Satan's kingdom would be reduced and crushed, and that God's kingdom would continue to advance and be established forever. In God's providence, this request is fulfilled in two stages.

The first stage, which our Catechism answer calls "the kingdom of grace," is best summed up in Colossians 1:13. "He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son." This is the current church age, where "this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations" (Matt. 24:14). This kingdom advances against Satan as the gospel is preached, people come to saving faith in Christ, and the Church remains faithful and bold in Christ.

The second stage is fulfilled at the end of the age, when Christ returns, all opposing kingdoms and authorities are destroyed, death and sin are finished, and the eternal kingdom of heaven is established (cf. 1 Cor. 15:24-26 and Rev. 21:1-8). Revelation 21-22 speak about this final stage in symbolic language, picturing heaven coming down to earth for eternal union. The book of Revelation concludes with a prayer similar to the second petition when John prays, "Come, Lord Jesus!" (22:20). Amen! Your kingdom come now in the power of the gospel and soon in the return of Christ!