

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

A. 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 continues to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, forever.

Q. 22. *How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?*

A. Christ, the Son of God, became man, by taking to himself a true body, and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.

Jesus. Wonderful Savior. God's chosen Redeemer of his people. We have no other hope.

Question 21 is one of the most beautiful questions in the Catechism. Q. 20 was the turning point. God does not leave his people in the misery and corruption of sin, but covenants to deliver them into salvation by a Redeemer. Now the identity, nature, and work of the Redeemer are spelled out clearly. First, his identity and nature.

Jesus Christ is the only Redeemer God has provided. Jesus affirms this, "No one comes to the Father except through me" (Jn. 14:6). Peter reaffirms this truth, "There is salvation in no one else" (Acts 4:12). And Paul proclaims it as well, "There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5). This is the exclusive claim of Christianity. There is no relationship with God apart from Christ (1 Jn. 2:23).

Jesus Christ, in a mysterious manner, is one person with two distinct natures. The nature of the person of Jesus was greatly debated in the early church. Some taught that Christ was created and not divine (Arianism). Others taught that Jesus had a human body and soul, but a divine mind (Apollinarism). Still others taught that Jesus did not have a real physical body, but he was merely a spirit (Docetism). Early heresies like these actually helped the church hammer out clear statements about Christ from the Councils of Nicea, Constantinople, and Chalcedon.

The reality that Jesus is fully human and fully God both comforts and humbles us. He understands our suffering and temptation as a human (Heb. 2:18 & 4:15). He is powerful to redeem and rescue us from sin as God (Heb. 7:25)

Jesus, the eternal Son of God, took on the human nature in the incarnation. Christmas is the celebration of one of the most mysterious acts of God. The eternal Son of God becomes a baby. We cannot fully explain or understand the incarnation, we can only affirm what Scripture teaches (Luke 1:35), which the Catechism does.