

## From Your Pastor

### *Benefits from Christ at Death*

**Shorter Catechism Question 37:** What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death? **A** The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness,(1) and do immediately pass into glory;(2) and their bodies, being still united in Christ,(3) do rest in their graves,(4) till the resurrection.(5) (1)Heb. 12:23 (2)2 Cor. 5:1,6,8; Phil. 1:23; Luke 23:43 (3)1 Thess. 4:14 (4)Isa. 57:2 (5)Job. 19:26,27

**Scripture Memory:** “For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep” (1 Thess. 4:14).

**An Explanation:** What a privilege as believers to know that Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life, the One who has overcome death, hell and devil, and rose in newness of life and power to bestow resurrection life upon all of His people (John 11:25-26; Heb. 2:14-15; 1 Tim. 3:16; Rom. 8:31-39)! Jesus says: “For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will” (John 5:21). “**Perfect in holiness**”: Though we struggle our entire lives against sin, and seek to live lives of holiness that are pleasing to God, we know that we will not be made completely perfect until heaven! (Gal. 5:16-25; Heb. 12:14, 23; Phil. 3:12-16). Jesus Christ, our Beloved Savior, has turned the horrible curse into death into a blessed window of hope through which we achieve the glorification-perfection of our bodies and souls. We cry in response: “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” (1 Cor. 15:55). Perfection is coming, let us fight the good fight now!

“**Pass into glory**”: Our hope and blessed encouragement as those who die in the LORD (1 Thess. 4:13-18) is that we shall pass into glory and see our Christ face to face, and we shall be like Him. Though we now walk by faith on our pilgrimage in this world, one day soon we shall walk by sight, beholding the glory of Jesus, being fully at “home with the Lord” (1 John 3:1-3; cf. 2 Cor. 5:1, 6-8). In our regeneration, we are united to Christ by the Spirit, and this is a uniting of the whole man unto a whole redemption (Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:22-24; 2 Cor. 5:17). “Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 5:24). This means that our whole selves, our bodies and souls, are united to Christ by faith. Our whole selves in union with Christ by the Spirit are renewed into His likeness, and will eventually at the Last Day, rise to be fully restored in glory as whole persons, embodied souls, dwelling in incorruptible, eternal bodies made like unto the LORD’s glorious body (1 Cor. 15:42-48; cf. Phil. 3:21; Rev. 21:3-7).

“**Bodies being united to Christ**”: But in the intermediate time, between our deaths and the Last Day, our spirit-souls at death will be perfected with Christ in heaven, as we await the raising up of our bodies, and this reunion of body and soul that Christ will perform on the Last Day. In the meantime, our bodies, though they corrupt in our graves, they are nevertheless still united to Christ! (1 Thess. 4:14; cf. Psa. 16:9-11). “But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself” (Phil. 3:20-21; cf. 1 Thess. 4:13, 16-17). We look forward as believers to the day where we shall dwell with God in Christ in Zion, in fully glorified, renewed, perfected bodies and souls, seeing God in the very flesh and blood in which we were clothed here on earth and did enjoy Him in Christ!

Let us exult with our forefather Job in meditating upon this future glory: “And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!” (Job 19:26-27).

**A Prayer:** Thank you, Heavenly Father, for the union I have body and soul with my dear Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Living One, the Resurrection and the Life. Thank you that by your grace, I am an heir of the Heavenly and Glorious Kingdom to come! Thank you that you have made me a partaker of this Heavenly Kingdom Life by the Spirit even now (2 Cor. 1:21-22; Eph. 1:14; Heb. 6:4-6). Thank you that grace in Christ received is glorification begun!

In Christ’s Love,  
Pastor Biggs

“...Accepting our weakness, He has strengthened us by His power; by receiving our poverty unto Himself, He has transferred His wealth to us...”