

Studies in the Westminster Confession of Faith

Newtownabbey Free Presbyterian Church

Rev Brian McClung

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Chapter 6 Part 4

Genesis 3

Chapter 6 - The Fall, Sin, and its Punishment.

Section II: By this sin they fell from their original righteousness, and communion with God,⁽³⁾ and so became dead in sin,⁽⁴⁾ and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.⁽⁵⁾

Scripture Proof Texts: (3) Genesis 3:6-8; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Romans 3:23. (4) Genesis 2:17; Ephesians 2:1. (5) Titus 1:15; Genesis 6:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:10-18.

This section of chapter six points out the consequences of the sin of our first parents both in regard to themselves and how they also now stood with respect to their Creator. The following four propositions are here taught:

1. By sinning our first parents lost their original righteousness.
2. By sinning our first parents could no longer enjoy communion with God.
3. By sinning our first parents became dead in sin.
4. By sinning our first parents fell into total depravity.

1. By sinning our first parents lost their original righteousness. When first made our first parents were created in the divine likeness. That likeness, in part, entailed a true righteousness, true holiness and true knowledge, *Ephesians 4:24: And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness; Colossians 3:10: And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.* When our first parents sinned this ‘original righteousness’ was corrupted and lost. They no longer had any righteousness with which to stand in God’s presence and be accepted of Him. When sin entered defilement followed and therefore they lost their holiness. Choosing to believe the lie of the devil and eat the forbidden fruit they lost the true knowledge of God.

2. By sinning our first parents could no longer enjoy communion with God. This was very evident by their conduct in the garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the Garden in the cool of the day they ran and hid themselves. They now had a sense of sin and they were conscious that they were in the presence of a holy God. A breach in the relationship between God and the creature had occurred.

In losing this ability and privilege to commune with God they lost access to the One who is the source of all that is good. There is none good but one, that is God. In losing this privilege they forfeited God’s favour and goodness, and incurred His righteous displeasure and wrath.

This loss of communion with God was physically demonstrated by their being driven from the Garden, *Genesis 3:23,24: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.* They were expelled from that pleasant and delightful abode in which God had placed them. They were first commanded to leave and then forcefully put out.

The significance of this second term is to be observed in noticing that the original word translated ‘*drove out*’ is in two other places, in the Scriptures, translated as ‘*divorced*’, cf. *Leviticus 21:14; 22:13*. This clearly signified the exclusion of Adam, and all his guilty race, from that communion with God which was the bliss and glory of paradise. The tokens of God's favour towards Adam and His delight in the sons of men, which he had in his innocent estate, were now suspended.

3. By sinning our first parents became dead in sin. Adam and Eve were told that in the day they ate the forbidden fruit they would die: *Genesis 2:17: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.* This warning of impending death is to be considered in three parts, namely physical, spiritual and eternal death.

The very day in which our first parents sinned, the sentence of death, though not immediately executed in its fullest extent, began to lay hold upon them. They became mortal, and were exposed to the disorders of a corrupted constitution; the principle of spiritual life was extinguished in their souls, and they were bound over to eternal wrath and death.

Had not a Mediator been provided, not only would they have returned to the dust, but they would have been a punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

[1] Physical death. This consisted in the dissolution of the union between the soul and the body. Adam would have physically died immediately if it were not for the fact that God had a purpose of grace for him.

Adam's body was not entirely immortal by creation. There being no sin, there was no death. However, in the original plan of creation and probation provision was made for the later immortality of the body, *Genesis 3:22: And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever.* After Adam sinned it was necessary for God to prevent the immortality of the body by a special act of His power and authority.

The difference between the immortal body of holy Adam and the mortal body of fallen Adam is that prior to the Fall the human body was not liable to death from internal causes but only from external causes. Adam's body had no latent disease or seed of death in it. It could, however, have been put to death by outward causes. If Adam had obeyed then he would have partaken of the tree of life and become totally immortal and lived for ever.

Alongside this physical death that came upon the creature, there was the curse of sin upon all creation. The creation now groans under the burden of sin, *Romans 8:22: For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.*

The ground was cursed with barrenness for their sake. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth. Our first parents were doomed to lead a life of toil and sorrow, *Genesis 3:17-19.*

[2] Spiritual death. This consists in the loss of the favour and the image of God. Spiritual death is the opposite of spiritual life. Someone now can be physically alive and spiritually dead, *1 Timothy 5:6: But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.* There are no true spiritual desires after God.

Spiritual death also includes terror and shame over sin, cf. *Genesis 3:8,10,24: And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.*

[3] Eternal death. This consists in the everlasting separation of both soul and body from God for all eternity. God could have dealt with Adam as he had dealt with the angels that sinned. Hell was instantly prepared for these fallen angels and they were immediately cast down to that place of torment. The only difference with Adam was that God purposed to redeem. Nevertheless eternal death will eventually come upon all those who have sinned.

That this is eternal death is proved by noticing that this death was the opposite of the life promised. The life promised was eternal and so the death to be visited upon sinners is eternal as well, *Romans 6:23.*