

Studies in the Westminster Confession of Faith

Newtownabbey Free Presbyterian Church

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Chapter 6 Part 2

2 Corinthians 11:3

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

Section 1: Our first parents being seduced by the subtlety and temptation of Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit. ⁽¹⁾ This their sin God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory. ⁽²⁾

Scripture Proof Texts: (1) *Genesis 3:13; 2 Corinthians 11:3.* (2) *Romans 11:32.*

God having created our first parents holy, and with sufficient knowledge as to His will, capable of obedience yet fallible, this section proceeds to teach the following four propositions:

1. Upon being placed on Probation in the Garden of Eden our first parents sinned.
- 2. Our first parents were seduced to commit this first sin by the work of the devil.**
3. The particular sin they committed was their eating the forbidden fruit.
4. God purposed, in permitting sin to enter the world, to overrule it for His own glory.

Under the first proposition we thought about the origin and the character of the first sin. A different set of circumstances prevailed when our first parents were on Probation compared to what any of us have ever known.

2. Our first parents were seduced to commit this first sin by the work of the devil. The account in Genesis speaks of the part that the '*serpent*' had in this first sin. The Devil/Satan entered into the serpent and employed this creature in the seducing of our first parents. He was the real tempter and he made use of the literal serpent as his instrument in carrying on the temptation.

The Devil/Satan is subsequently called in Scripture '*the old serpent and dragon*', *Revelation 12:9: And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him; Revelation 20:2: And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.*

The use of the term '*serpent*' is significant as to the nature of the Devil/Satan. The serpent is secretive and silent in motion. Its nature is poisonous and its embrace is destructive. The serpent has fatal powers of fascination. These are apt features to represent the arch deceiver.

[1] The origin of the Tempter. The Devil/Satan was of angelic nature, a rational and spiritual creature, superhuman in power, wisdom, and energy. He was an archangel, one of the '*princes*' of heaven. *Exodus 20:11* makes it clear that his creation came within the six days of the creation week as described in *Genesis 1*.

He became a fallen angel. The angels also once had a time of probation, where some fell and others didn't. The condemnation of those who fell is now irrevocably fixed. The Devil/Satan is the recognised head, *Matthew 12:24*, of those angels who kept not their first estate, *1 Peter 2:4; Jude v 6*.

At the end of the creation God saw that everything He had created was very good, *Genesis 1:31*, therefore the fall of the devil was subsequent to this time. His '*fall*' must have taken place after the end of the creation week and before the '*fall*' of our first parents. His fall must have been soon after his own creation, *1 John 3:8: ...for the devil sinneth from the beginning.*

His attack upon our first parents must have come soon after their creation.

One insight we have into the devil's fall are the words of *1 Timothy 3:6: Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride*

he fall into the condemnation of the devil. It is concluded from this, that pride was the cause of the devil's condemnation. The inference is strengthened by the circumstances of the fall of our first parents, in which the spiritual temptation of pride, the desire *'to be as gods,'* was a subtle and deadly suggestion.

Another insight is the desire to be worshipped. This is seen in his temptation of the Saviour, *Matthew 4:9.*

In Scripture the Devil/Satan is spoken of as a *'spirit'* in *Ephesians 2:2;* as the prince or ruler of the demons in *Matthew 12:24-26;* and as having other angels subject to him in *Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:7,9.*

[2] The work of the Tempter. The whole description given of the Devil/Satan, in the Scriptures, emphasises his spiritual nature and influence. The name *'Devil'* means *'slanderer'*. This aptly describes his activity of slandering God to man, *Genesis 3:1,5,* and man to God, *Revelation 12:10.* The first is shown clearly in his tempting our first parents, the second in his accusing Job before God, *Job 1:9,10.*

The name *'Satan'* means *'adversary'*, *1 Kings 11:14,23,25.* An adversary is one who resists and who opposes. Hadad, the Edomite and Rezon, the son of Eliadah, were certainly adversaries to Israel and Solomon. Satan is the great adversary of the soul. He is out to ruin and destroy and overthrow the rule of the greater than Solomon.

[3] The tempting of the Tempter. In engaging in the work of slander the Devil/Satan represented God, to our first parents, as an arbitrary and selfish ruler, seeking His own good and not that of His creatures. Furthermore he suggested that God was withholding something better from them. He imputed cruelty to God.

This was his slander against God. In tempting our first parents he shows himself indeed to be the adversary.

This tempting of our first parents was not by force or compulsion, but through his subtlety, *2 Corinthians 11:2: But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.* Seduced by the tempter, Eve *took of the fruit, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat, Genesis 3:6.*

The Devil/Satan tempted our first parents by attacking the Word of God: (i) He first doubted/questioned the Word of God, *...Yea, hath God said..., v1.* (ii) He next denied the Word of God, *...Ye shall not surely die, v4.* (iii) He finally substituted the Word of God with a lie, *For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil, v5.*

This is why the Devil/Satan is called a liar, *...He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it, John 8:44.*

It is ever the mark of the devil to attack the Word of God. The devil has many minions today who do his bidding. They are continually attacking the accuracy, veracity, inspiration and even the content of the Word of God. In its place they substitute the vain philosophies of men. They replace the Truth with a lie. The devil never changes!

The effect of this tempting of our first parents was to stir up in them a desire for freedom. They believed the devil's lie that God was not seeking their good and was withholding something from them. He caused them to seek for a fanciful independence which never existed.

[4] The success of the Tempter. Our first parents were *seduced by the subtlety and temptation of Satan.* They were deceived by the lie and taken in. Through this first sin the devil brought sin, sickness, disease and death into the world. Well may the Scripture say of the Devil/Satan: *...He was a murderer from the beginning..., John 8:44.*