

THE WESTMINSTER CONFSSION OF  
FAITH  
VI. OF THE FALL

Second Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC

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## I. THE FALL OF MAN

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

# I. THE FALL OF MAN

Issues:

- Answers the vital question of *what has gone wrong with our world? How did evil enter the creation?*
- The first sin involved rejecting the *authority* of God in violating his express prohibition.
  - The tree of the knowledge of good and evil spoke to God as the source of knowledge and morality.
- Satan did not *compel* Adam & Eve but *beguiled* and *tempted* them.
  - Sin therefore began with the fall of the angels, about which the Bible speaks little.
  - Satan sowed “the seed of suspicion: all the trees? The seed of doubt: you will not die. The seed of ambition: you will be like God.” (D. Macleod).
  - So also today, it is *listening* to voices of evil that energizes sin (Ps. 1:1).
- Although the Fall was a victory for Satan, it did not institute a fundamental *dualism*, but reflected the mysterious will of the Creator, for the praise of his glory.
  - “The Fall was a shocking event to us, but it was not to God. . . . He allowed our first parents to sin because he was going to work it all to his own glory” (C. van Dixhoorn).

## 2. THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN

By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the parts and faculties of soul and body.

- Fell from righteousness & communion
  - Sin separates us from God (Gen. 3:8-10)  
“Having given their ears to Satan, they could no longer hear their God without fear.” (van Dixhoorn).
- Dead in Sin (Eph. 2:1-4)
  - God’s pre-announced punishment (Gen. 2:17): bodily, spiritual & eternal death.
- Wholly defiled (Rom. 3:10-18).

## 3 & 4. ORIGINAL SIN

3. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed; and the same death in sin, and corrupted nature, conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation.
4. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.

## 3 & 4. ORIGINAL SIN

### Issues:

- Adam as covenant head as well as first man (Rom. 5:12)
- Imputation of Adam's guilt
  - “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men *in that* all sinned” (Rom. 5:12).
  - When Adam sinned, we sinned / we suffer the punishment of death via Adam's guilt
- Corrupt nature conveyed to posterity by ordinary generation
  - “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?” (Jer. 17:9).
- Results in spiritual inability (Eph. 2:1; 1 Cor. 2:14; Jn. 6:44)

## 3 & 4. ORIGINAL SIN

- Results in enmity to God (Rom. 8:7-8).

“For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”
- *We sin because we are sinners!*
  - “utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil” (WCF 6.4).
- By this arrangement, God ordained our salvation in Christ, of whom Adam was “a type of the one to come” (Rom. 5:14)

“For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous” (Rom. 8:19).

## 5. SIN & REGENERATION

This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated; and although it be, through Christ, pardoned, and mortified; yet both itself, and all the motions thereof, are truly and properly sin.



## 5. SIN & REGENERATION

### Issues:

- Christians still struggle with a fallen nature (Phil. 3:12; 1 Jn. 1:8).
  - Rules out Christian perfectionism.
- Through Christ, our corrupt nature is pardoned and mortified (Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:5).
- Concupiscence = Sin
  - Concupiscence is our sin orientation that disposes us to evil; pre-volitional sinful tendencies.
  - Sinful orientations must therefore be confessed, repented, and mortified.
  - “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God,’ for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own *desire*. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death” (Ja. 1:13-15).

## 6. GUILT & PUNISHMENT

Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner; whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries spiritual, temporal, and eternal.

## 6. GUILT & PUNISHMENT

- Issues:
  - We are guilty of Adam's sin and our own.
  - All sin brings guilt and *deserves* punishment.
  - What makes sin sinful is its transgression toward God.
  - Death is caused by sin.
  - Our punishment for sin is *spiritual* (Eph. 4:18); *temporal* (Rom. 8:20), and *eternal* (Mt. 25:41).
  - In this way, the Fall, sin, and punishment is the *problem* for which Jesus Christ is the *answer*.