



**The Westminster
Confession of
Faith
Kings, Queens and
Corruption**

Kings, Queens and Corruption: Creation, Fall and Consequences

- I. Creation (WCF 4.1)
- II. Covenantal Ruling and Covenant Breaking (WCF 7.1 & 7.2)
- III. Image Bearers of the Triune God (WCF 4.2)
- IV. Sin and Its Consequences (WCF 6)
- V. The Promise of Hope (WCF 7.3 – 7.6)

I. Creation: The Core Biblical Doctrines

- A. The Sole Actor: The Triune God (4.1) – Gen. 1:1-2; Jn 1:1-4
- B. The Purpose: The manifesting of God’s glorious “power, wisdom, and goodness.”(4.1) – Rom. 11:36
- C. The Source: God alone (4.1) – Acts 17:24
- D. The Extent or Scope: All things other than God Himself (4:1)
- E. The Time: “in the Space of Six days” (4.1) – Gen. 1:1-31
- F. The Result: “all very Good” (4.1) – Gen. 1:31
- G. The Crown: Humankind – Male and Female – after His own Image (4.2) – Gen. 1:26 - 31

II. Covenantal Ruling & Covenant Breaking (WCF 7)

A. WCF 7.1

The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience unto him as their Creator, yet they could never have any fruition of him, as their blessedness and reward, but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which he hath been pleased to express by way of covenant.

II. Covenantal Ruling & Covenant Breaking (WCF 7)

B. God Must Condescend so that Humankind may have any “fruition (from latin, “frui” – joy) of Him as their blessedness and reward.”

1. This is a Natural, not an Ethical, Necessity – the condescension precedes the Fall.
2. The manner by which God Condescends is through the use of Covenants.

II. Covenantal Ruling & Covenant Breaking (WCF 7)

C. The Confession sees TWO Principal Covenants: (1) The Covenant of Works and (2) The Covenant of Grace (WCF 7.1-7.2)

1. The Covenant of Works (AKA, “The Covenant of Creation”) with Adam as the Head of Humanity:
 - a. The Covenant Promises and Obligations: Adam, Eve and ALL their posterity will receive Life (in fullness in communion with God) upon the condition of perfect obedience.
 - b. Criticisms: (1) The language of Covenant is not seen in Gen. 1-3; (2) Covenants are only “Redemptive” in Scripture; (3) It fails to recognize the grace that attends creation.

II. Covenantal Ruling & Covenant Breaking (WCF 7)

B. The Confession sees TWO Principal Covenants: The Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace

2. The Covenant of Grace (WCF 7.2) - Occasioned by the sin of Adam, leading to death, God freely offers/promises a new Covenant. (WCF 7.3) (*considered later*)

III. Humankind as Image Bearers of God (WCF 4.2)

A. WCF 4.2.

After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness after his own image, having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfill it; and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change. Besides this law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; which while they kept were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures.

III. Humankind as Image Bearers of God (WCF 4.2)

B. Image Bearing as a Collection of Attributes

1. Humankind bears the image of God because humans have certain attributes that are not shared with the rest of creation, e.g. immortality, reason, conscience.
2. At the Fall, some of these may become distorted, but they continue to remain. Because they remain, human beings continue to bear the Image of God.

III. Humankind as Image Bearers of God

C. Image Bearing as an Office

1. The Model: The Suzerain – Vassal Covenants
 - a. Superior King covenants with inferior Kings.
 - b. Inferior Kings will either continue to bear or begin to mar the “image” of the Superior by their faithful or unfaithful representing of the Superior King

III. Humankind as Image Bearers of God – 4.2

C. Image Bearing as an Office (cont'd)

2. “Image – Bearing” is not just a collection of attributes, but an office established by a covenant - “. . . a human being does not bear or have the image of God, but *is* the image of God.”

H. Bavinck

3. The attributes are necessary to execute the office faithfully and so human beings are endowed with those attributes by God.
4. After the Fall, human beings are still representatives (albeit rebellious/treasonous ones) of God but they are due the dignity of the office to which God has appointed us.

IV. Sin and Its Consequences (WCF 6)

A. How did sin enter the Garden?

1. By the subtilty and temptation of Satan. (WCF 6.1)
2. In the holy counsel of God, He permitted the fall, “having purposed to order it to his own glory.” (WCF 6.1)
3. J. Murray: Temptation here means “solicitation to sin and the placing of an inducement to sin in the way of another. [God is incapable of this] (James 1:13). He did not solicit sin in Adam and Eve; He did the opposite. He warned them against it and placed the inducement in the opposite direction. God did try our first parents. He was the agent of the probation. The serpent was the agent in the temptation. It is of God to try and prove with a view to moral or religious strength, confirmation and increased blessing. It is satanic to seduce and it is designed for weakening and degradation.

IV. Sin and Its Consequences

B. Did Adam and Eve have the ability to obey? (WCF 9)

Answer: Yes.

WCF 9.1 God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined to good or evil.

WCF 9.2 Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom and power to will and to do that which is good and well-pleasing to God; but yet mutably, so that he might fall from it. (*posse peccare & posse non peccare*)

IV. Sin and Its Consequences (WCF 6)

B. What Were the Consequences to Adam and Eve upon the Fall? (WCF 6.2)

1. They fell from their original righteousness and communion with God into judgment.
2. They became spiritually dead and this “began a physical death. On the day that Adam and Eve foolishly ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they died, in a very real sense (Gen. 2:17). It was a slow death, yes. But death and decay now entered their bodies and minds, and it was inevitable from that moment they would one day become dust again” – C. VanDixhorn.

IV. Sin and Its Consequences (WCF 6)

B. What are the Consequences to all of the Human Race? (WCF 6.3, 6.4 & 6.6) See Rom. 5:12-19; I Cor. 15:21-22; Rom. 7; Eph. 2:1-5

1. All humanity that descends by ordinary generation from Adam and Eve share the guilt, death, and corruption that they bore after the fall.
2. From this corruption (“utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good and wholly inclined to all evil”) flow all our actual transgressions (any lack of conformity to God’s law).
3. All, by original sin (our by being included in Adam) and by actual sin, stand as guilty sinners before God and are properly are objects of His wrath, “subject to death, with all miseries spiritual, temporal, and eternal.”

V. Our Only Hope – The Covenant of Grace (WCF 7.3-7.6)

A. A Second Covenant Appears

1. The Promise of a Seed appears in the midst of the curses in Gen. 3 – A seed of the woman shall crush the head of the serpent even as the serpent strikes him with a mortal wound (heel).
2. When more fully revealed it becomes clear that this Covenant offers life and salvation to all sinners who have faith in Jesus Christ and then gives that faith, by the Holy Spirit, to those “ordained unto eternal life.” (WCF 7.3).

V. Our Only Hope: The Covenant of Grace (WCF 7.3-7.6)

B. The Administration of the Covenant of Grace

1. This *Covenant of Grace* is administered differently **in the time of the law** (from the fall to the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, e.g. OT) and **in the time of the gospel** (from the life, death, resurrection of Christ until He comes again).
2. **In the time of the law:** By promises, prophecies, ordinances delivered to the people of Israel – all “fore signifying Christ to come.”
 - a. Those signs were sufficient and effective, by the Holy Spirit, to build them up in faith in the promised Messiah
 - b. Salvation was not a result of trusting in the signs (the blood of bulls and goats), but by trusting in the one signified – Jesus.

V. Our Only Hope: The Covenant of Grace (WCF 7.3-7.6)

B. The Administration of the Covenant of Grace

3. In the Time of the Gospel.

- a. The Substance of the Covenant of Grace has been exhibited – It is Christ. He is the Good News (gospel) to be proclaimed.
- b. The appointed ways in which the Covenant of Grace is now dispensed (supplied), are (1) preaching of the Word and (2) the administration of the sacraments (baptism and the Lord's Supper)