

The Theology of the Westminster Standards
WCF 4.2 – The Creation of Man (Part 2)

“Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves.” – John Calvin

I. Review

- A. The Context of WCF 4: Ch .1 (*Of the Holy Scripture*), Ch. 2 (*Of God, and of the Holy Trinity*), Ch. 3 (*Of God’s Decree*), Ch. 4 (*Of Creation*), Ch. 5 (*Of Providence*)
- B. The Content of WCF 4.1 – The triune God’s creation of all things, visible and invisible, out of nothing, in the space of six days, and all very good.
- C. The Content of WCF 4.2 – The triune God’s creation of man, male and female, as His image.

II. WCF Chapter 4.2 – The Creation of Man, Male and Female

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. Beside 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, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures. – WCF 4.2

- A. “... *having the law of God written in their hearts ...*”
 - 1. **Rom 1:21, 32** – “*For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him ... Though they know God’s righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die ...*”
 - 2. What is the relation between this law and the human conscience?
 - a. **Rom 2:15** – “*They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness ...*” (cf. 1 Tim 4:2; Heb 5:14)
 - 3. What was unique about Adam and Eve’s situation before the fall?
- B. “*Beside this law written in their hearts, they received a command ...*”
 - 1. WSC 12. *What special act of providence did God exercise toward man in the estate wherein he was created?* A. When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death.
 - 2. **Gen 2:16–17** – “*And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘You may surely eat of every tree of the garden,¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’*”

3. Why the tree of “the knowledge of good and evil”?
 - a. To acquire rational knowledge of good and evil? (No)
 - b. To acquire forbidden knowledge? (Not quite)
 - c. To acquire “experiential” knowledge in terms of one of two covenant consequences? (Yes!)

“Sin had come into the world when Satan tempted Adam and Eve, at the beginning of history, to declare their independence from God, persuading them to act as though the world had not been created and ordained by God, and as though they themselves had not been made in God’s image; persuading them to conceive that they possessed within themselves the only principle of truth, apart from their Creator, and that they could establish themselves in life only if completely independent of God ... God placed man in the way of life through love, to be expressed by obedience to His will, covenanting with man, ‘Do this, and you shall live; do that, and you shall die.’ But Adam and Eve chose death by disobeying God’s expressed command. All men thereafter, coming from them, were then guilty, being all covenant-breakers in Adam, all haters of God, all dead in trespasses and sins against Him.” – Cornelius Van Til

C. Our Calling Today

1. **Micah 3:1–2** – *“And I said: ‘Hear, you heads of Jacob, and you rulers of the house of Israel! Is it not for you to know justice? — You who hate the good [טוֹב] and love the evil [רָעָה], who tear the skin from off my people and their flesh from off their bones...”*
2. **Mal 2:17** – *“You have wearied the LORD with your words. But you say, ‘How have we wearied him?’ By saying, ‘Every one who does evil [רָע] is good [טוֹב] in the sight of the LORD, and he delights in them.’ Or by asking, ‘Where is the God of justice?’”*
3. **Is 5:20** – *“Woe to those who call evil good [טוֹב] and good evil [רָע], who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!”*

“When one no longer believes the doctrine of a judgment one turns aside from moral distinctions. The condemnation may apply to a large segment of the population and may have included people from all walks of life. Those who would subvert all moral distinctions in effect introduce chaos and in place of true ethics substitute expediency and utilitarianism.” – E.J. Young

“For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing ...

²⁴ *Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?*

²⁵ *Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (Rom 7:19, 24–25)*