

The Theology of the Westminster Standards
WCF 6.2–3 – The Effects of Adam’s Fall

I. Review – WCF 6.1 – The First Sin, and the Permission, Purposes and Glory of God

Our first parents, being seduced by the subtlety 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. (*WCF 6.1*)

A. The cause of Adam and Eve’s sin?

1. **2 Cor 11:3** – *“But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.”*

“Indeed the safest road to hell is the gradual one – the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts.” – Uncle Screwtape, *The Screwtape Letters*

B. The ultimate nature of Adam and Eve’s sin?

C. The agent of Adam and Eve’s sin?

1. **John 8:44** – *“You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning ...”*
2. **Rev 12:9** – *“And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world ...”*

D. God’s “permission” of the fall?

“It was the will of Satan that sinned in leading the rebellion of angels, just as it was the will of Adam that sinned in taking the forbidden fruit. These were ultimately according to God’s decreed will, yet Satan and man remain responsible for their sin.”
 – Richard Phillips, “The Origin of Sin,” *Gospel Coalition*

II. WCF 6.2 – The Consequences of Sin for Adam and Eve

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. (*WCF 6.1*)

A. What are the signs in Genesis 3 that Adam and Eve “fell from ... communion with God”?

1. **Gen 3:8** – *“And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.”*

B. What does it mean to be “dead in sin”?

C. Does “wholly defiled” refer to defilement in degree or extent?

III. WCF 6.3 – The Consequences of Adam and Eve’s Sin for their Descendants

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. (WCF 6.3)

- A. What are the two-fold consequences of Adam’s sin for all of his and Eve’s descendants?
1. **Rom 5:12** – *“Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned ...”*
 - a. Option 1 = “all sinned” in their own persons independently of Adam, but after his bad example?
 - b. Option 2 = “all sinned” in their own persons due to corrupt nature inherited from Adam?
 - c. Option 3 = “all sinned,” not in their own persons, but “in Adam” as our covenant representative?
 2. **Rom 5:18–19** – *“Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. ¹⁹ 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.”*
- B. On the surface, what does WCF 6.3 seem to suggest a biological connection to Adam and Eve in their sin. Is this true? How does this differ from WLC 22?

WLC Q. 22. *Did all mankind fall in that first transgression?* A. The covenant being made with Adam as a public person, not for himself only, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in that first transgression.

- C. Is “covenant solidarity” with Adam “fair”?

“If one has an objection to the imputation of sin and no objection to the imputation of righteousness, one thereby betrays that the objections that one advances rest more on self-interest than on a sense of justice. The covenant of grace is nothing other than a covenant of works accomplished in Christ, the fulfillment of which is given to us by grace.”
 – Geerhardus Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:31

- D. How does the gospel disrupt the effects of sin?

*Let the water and the blood,
 From Thy riven side which flowed,
 Be of sin the double cure,
 Save me from its guilt and power.*

-“Rock of Ages” by A.M. Toplady