

Heritage OPC: Sunday School
Westminster Larger Catechism

Q 21. *Did man continue in that estate wherein God at first created him?*

A. Our parents being left to the freedom of their own will, through the temptation of Satan, transgressed the commandment of God in eating the forbidden fruit; and thereby fell from the estate of innocence wherein they were created^a.

- a. Gen 3:6-8, 13; Eccl 7:29; 2 Cor 11:3

Epicurean Trilemma

1. How can a God who is:
 - a. Omnipotent – all powerful
 - b. Benevolent – all good
 - c. Allow evil
2. Possible Defenses:
 - a. Free will of man
 - b. Greatest possible good

God's Providence as it Relates to Evil

1. Differentiating between individual things vs the intended goal
 - a. Gen 45:5
 - b. Gen 50:20
2. God wills to permit evil/sin
 - a. Rom 8:28
 - b. Jn 9:1-3
 - c. Rom 9:22
 - d. Rom 11:33-34
3. Evil is the absence of good
 - a. Ex: cold vs heat
 - b. Evil cannot come from God and did not exist before the world
4. Divine permission of evil is good
 - a. For since God is good to the highest degree, he would in no way permit there to be anything evil in his workings, unless he were not so almighty that even concerning evil he would still do good” – Augustine, *City of God: On the Nature of Good*
 - b. God sovereignly brings all things out of evil
5. Test vs Temptation
 - a. Jam 1:13-15
 - b. Gen 22:1-12
 - c. Heb 11:17-19
 - d. Heb 12:3-4

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Evil Summarized in WCF 5.4

WCF 5.4 The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God so far manifest themselves in His providence, that it extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men,(1) and that not by a bare permission,(2) but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding,(3) and otherwise ordering and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to His own holy ends;(4) yet so, as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God; who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.(5)

Free Will

1. Free will is not synonymous with autonomy
2. God's Decretive will vs. Prescriptive Will
 - a. Decretive will – will from eternity past, cannot be violated
 - b. Prescriptive will – decreed by God, can be violated
3. Could we do better?
 - a. No – part of God's deciative will
 - b. Satan's influence is strong
 - c. State of man's heart is wicked: Ecc 7:29, Jer 17:9

The First Sin of Man

1. Comes from Eve – Gen 3:2-23
2. Fails to properly identify the tree
3. Adds to what God says
 - a. the sin of unbelief - protestants
 - b. the sin of pride - Catholics

Adam's Failure

1. Present with Eve – Gen 3:6
2. He eats the fruit – Gen 3:6

Consequences of Sin

1. Adam and Eve's perspective of the created world changes instantaneously – Gen 3:7
2. Their relationship with God is destroyed – Gen 3:8
3. The image of God is defaced in man