

## Key Teachings of the Christian Faith

Vision: Strengthen our faith by examining key teachings of Christianity

### Fall For Redemption

- **The Fall of Mankind**

#### **Genesis 2:15-17, 3:6**

Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. [16](#) The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; [17](#) but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil **you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.**"

Genesis 3: [6](#) when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, **she took from its fruit and ate;** and she gave also to her husband with her, **and he ate.**

1. Our father Adam disobeyed a simple and clear command from God.
2. The penalty for disobedience was death.
3. God displayed mercy from the beginning by not immediately executing the death penalty.
4. God had/still has a purpose greater than simply administering justice.

#### **Romans 5:18-21**

[18](#) So then as **through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men,** even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. [19](#) For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, **even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.** [20](#) The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; **but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,** [21](#) so that, as sin reigned in death, even so **grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

5. God has ordained that grace will reign through Jesus Christ.
6. The Word of God "explains" the grace of God to us.

#### John 1:14-18

[14](#) And the Word became flesh, and **dwelt among us,** and we saw **His glory,** glory as of the only begotten from the Father, **full of grace and truth.** [15](#) John testified about Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'" [16](#) **For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.** [17](#) For the Law was given through Moses; **grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.** [18](#) No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, **He has explained Him.**

How great is this grace of God?

To fully appreciate the grace of God, we must understand the depth of the fall of mankind. How severe was the fall? Was it a slight stumbling? Or a quick fall from which we bounce back up and look around hoping that no one noticed? Did mankind skin a knee that is sufficiently treated with surface disinfectants? Could God simply hug us and tell us that everything's okay, all will be fine like a mother comforting her child?

Genesis 3:19

By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, **Till you return to the ground**, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, **And to dust you shall return.**"

1. Before sin, Adam's destiny was not to return to the ground from which he was taken. But after Adam's sin, death reigns as a 100% pandemic; everyone is affected; everyone dies.

Romans 5:12

**12** Therefore, just as **through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men**, because all sinned—

Let's consider what the Westminster Confession says about the fall of mankind.

## Chapter VI

### *Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and the Punishment thereof*

I. **Our first parents**, being seduced by the subtilty and temptations of Satan, **sinned**, in eating the forbidden fruit.<sup>[1]</sup> This their sin, God was pleased, **according to His wise and holy counsel**, to permit, **having purposed to order it to His own glory.**<sup>[2]</sup>

II. By this sin **they fell from their original righteousness and communion, with God,**<sup>[3]</sup> and so became **dead in sin,**<sup>[4]</sup> and **wholly defiled in all the parts and faculties of soul and body.**<sup>[5]</sup>

2. By sin, man lost sweet communion with God and became **wholly defiled**. This pollution **reaches to every part of our being**. There are no islands of righteousness within us that are unaffected, uninvaded by the plague of sin.

Romans 3:10-12

"THERE IS **NONE RIGHTEOUS**, NOT EVEN ONE;

**11** THERE IS **NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS**,

THERE IS **NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD**;

**12** ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS;

THERE IS **NONE WHO DOES GOOD**,

THERE IS **NOT EVEN ONE.**"

**After such a severe fall, how can there be any hope of recovery?**

**How can grace reign through Jesus Christ our Lord?**

Isaiah 42:1-7 – God’s Promise concerning His Servant

**1** “Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold;  
**My chosen one in whom My soul delights.**

I have put My Spirit upon Him;  
**He will bring forth justice to the nations.**

**2** “He will not cry out or raise *His voice*,  
Nor make His voice heard in the street.

**3** “**A bruised reed He will not break  
And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish;**  
He will faithfully bring forth justice.

**4** “He will not be disheartened or crushed  
Until He has established justice in the earth;  
And the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law.”

**5** Thus says God the LORD,  
Who created the heavens and stretched them out,  
Who spread out the earth and its offspring,  
Who gives breath to the people on it  
And spirit to those who walk in it,

**6** “I am the LORD, **I have called You in righteousness,**  
I will also hold You by the hand and watch over You,  
**And I will appoint You as a covenant to the people,  
As a light to the nations,**

**7** **To open blind eyes,  
To bring out prisoners from the dungeon  
And those who dwell in darkness from the prison.**

3. This servant is not a light only to the house of Israel but to all nations.

Jeremiah 31:31-34

**31** “Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “**when I will make a new covenant** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, **32** not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. **33** “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD, “**I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it;** and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. **34** “They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ **for they will all know Me**, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the LORD, “**for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.**”

4. God promises to **change hearts** so that **the new covenant will not be broken** like the old covenant. All **whose hearts are changed will know Him**.

5. This is **not a covenant for the house of Israel only**. Hebrews 8 references this covenant as a **new covenant mediated by Christ**.

Hebrews 8:6

**6** But now **He has obtained a more excellent ministry**, by as much as **He is also the mediator of a better covenant**, which has been **enacted on better promises**.

6. A major feature of the new covenant is **individual, personal instruction from God Himself. He will write His Law on their hearts. He will give His people new hearts of flesh, alive to Him.** In John 6:45 (see below), Jesus states that **God is teaching everyone who comes to Him.**
7. **This trademark of the new covenant, this individual, personal indwelling** of the Holy Spirit that quickens and instructs, is **a major step in the restoration of the communion with God that man lost** through the fall.
8. **Jesus links this intimate, personal teaching** of people by God (the new covenant spoken of by Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah and other old covenant prophets) with the **giving of His flesh for the life of the world.**

John 6:44-51

**44** “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. **45** “It is written in the prophets, ‘**AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.**’ **Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me.** **46** “Not that anyone has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father. **47** “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. **48** “I am the bread of life. **49** “**Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died.** **50** “This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. **51** “**I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.**”

**Jesus proclaims that His flesh will be given for the life of the world.**

The author of Hebrews elucidates this further.

Hebrews 9:11-14

**11** But when **Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered** through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; **12** and not through the blood of goats and calves, but **through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.** **13** For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, **14** how much more will **the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God,** cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Hebrews 9:26

but now **once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.**

9. And in chapter 10, the author of **Hebrews links the intimate, personal teaching of God with the offering of Jesus** just as Jesus did in John chapter 6:44-51.

Hebrews 10:14-18

**14** For **by one offering** He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

**15** And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying,

**16** **“THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM**

**AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD:**

**I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART,**

**AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM,”**

*He then says,*

**17** **“AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS**

**I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE.”**

**18** Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer *any offering for sin.*

1. The logic in verse 18 implies that **an offering for sin was necessary. Forgiveness without an offering was/is not possible;** it is not an option. **Forgiveness without an offering is a great injustice.**
2. But **Christ died to purchase forgiveness.** And now **we can freely forgive without violating justice because of Christ’s death and resurrection.**
3. **His offering/atonement for sin was/is completely acceptable; He perfectly satisfied the demands for justice.**

Let’s summarize what we have seen thus far by reviewing chapter VII of the Westminster Confession, Of God’s Covenant with Man.

## Chapter VII

### *Of God's Covenant with Man*

I. **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 has been pleased to express by way of covenant.**[\[1\]](#)

1. God has **voluntarily condescended through Jesus Christ.**
2. He has been and is **pleased to communicate with us through covenants.**

II. The **first covenant** made with man was a **covenant of works,**[\[2\]](#) wherein **life was promised** to Adam; and in him to his posterity,[\[3\]](#) **upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.**[\[4\]](#)

III. Man, by his fall, **having made himself incapable of life** by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a **second,**[\[5\]](#) commonly called **the covenant of grace;** wherein He **freely offers** unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ; **requiring** of them **faith in Him,** that they may be saved,[\[6\]](#) and **promising to give** unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life **His Holy Spirit, to make them willing, and able to believe.**[\[7\]](#)

3. The Old Covenant prophets and Jesus spoke of God writing His Law upon their hearts. **God promises to change stubborn hearts of stone into believing hearts of living flesh.**

IV. This **covenant of grace is frequently set forth in scripture by the name of a testament, in reference to the death of Jesus Christ** the Testator, and to the everlasting inheritance, with all things belonging to it, therein bequeathed.[\[8\]](#)

4. It was **necessary for Jesus to establish a better covenant through his death and resurrection.** The better covenant provides for the **forgiveness of all sin**, the removal of all debts and penalties associated with the fall of man, **the greatest amnesty of all time and eternity.** The better covenant also provides everlasting life and an eternal inheritance.

Hebrews 9:15

[15](#) For this reason **He is the mediator of a new covenant**, so that, since a **death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions** that were *committed* under the first covenant, **those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.**

**Christ is mediator of a better covenant.**

**What is the reach, the scope of this covenant of grace?**

Westminster Confession Chapter VII:

V. This covenant was **differently administered** in the time of the law, and in the time of the Gospel:[\[9\]](#) under the law it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all foreshadowing Christ to come;[\[10\]](#) which were, **for that time, sufficient and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit**, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah,[\[11\]](#) by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation; and is called the Old Testament.[\[12\]](#)

1. **Christ's perfect mediatory work**, His offering of Himself, effectively **saves all who believe in all ages** from all ethnic backgrounds and geographies.

VI. Under the Gospel, when **Christ, the substance**,[\[13\]](#) was exhibited, the ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed are the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper:[\[14\]](#) which, though fewer in number, and **administered with more simplicity, and less outward glory**, yet, in them, it is held forth in **more fullness, evidence, and spiritual efficacy**,[\[15\]](#) to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles;[\[16\]](#) and is called the New Testament.[\[17\]](#) There are **not** therefore **two covenants of grace**, differing in substance, but **one and the same, under various dispensations**.[\[18\]](#)

2. There is **only one**, has only ever been one, and only ever will be one, **genuine covenant of grace** established by God **through the perfect obedience of Jesus Christ** in His life, death, and resurrection.

Acts 4:5-12 – Peter speaking before the Council of Elders in Jerusalem

On the next day, their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem; **6** and Annas the high priest *was there*, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent. **7** When they had placed them in the center, they *began to inquire*, “**By what power, or in what name, have you done this?**” **8** Then Peter, **filled with the Holy Spirit**, said to them, “Rulers and elders of the people, **9** if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well, **10** let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that **by the name of Jesus Christ** the Nazarene, **whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead**—by this *name* this man stands here before you in good health. **11** “He is the **STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED** by you, **THE BUILDERS**, *but WHICH BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone*. **12** “**And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.**”

3. There is **only one** covenant of **salvation/redemption** for all mankind **in all ages** with **only one mediator**.

1 Timothy 2:5-6

For there is one God, and **one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus**, **6** who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony *given* at the proper time.

4. This **unique covenant of redemption** was **prepared before the foundation of the world**. We see this clearly stated in prophetic scriptures.

Matthew 25:34

"Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, **inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world**."

Revelation 13:8

All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written **from the foundation of the world** in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.

Revelation 17:8

"The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth, whose name has not been written in the book of life **from the foundation of the world**, will wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come.

5. Prophetic, **eternal truth is often interwoven with practical exhortations** to holy, daily living.
  - a. This overarching prophetic truth of God's redemptive purpose is interwoven with practical exhortation in Peter's 1<sup>st</sup> epistle. This passage demonstrates how important the eternal view is in motivating, inspiring us to live godly lives for the glory of Him who has done more than we can imagine, above all that we can ask or think. (Ephesians 3:20)

1 Peter 1:10-12

**10** As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that *would come to you* made careful searches and inquiries, **11** seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as **He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow**. **12** It was revealed to them **that they were not serving themselves, but you**, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—**things into which angels long to look**.

- b. Prophets prophesy of **grace that will come**. They prophesy before the time of a later time.
- c. The grace of God spans time periods beyond human life spans. **The prophets were not serving themselves but those who would live later**.
- d. **Angels are not limited within time like we are**. These truths are considered valuable by angels.

Can you see **the eternal perspective**? This gospel of grace reaches through all time.

1 Peter 1:13-19

**13** Therefore, **prepare your minds for action**, keep sober *in spirit*, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. **14** As obedient children, **do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours** in your ignorance, **15** but **like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves** also in all *your* behavior; **16** because it is written, “YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.” **17** If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one’s work, **conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; 18 knowing** that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, **19** but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ.

- e. **Practical exhortations** to holiness in verses 13-19 **hinge/rest upon** a clear understanding of **the eternal, everlasting work of Christ**.

**20** For **He was foreknown before the foundation of the world**, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you **21** who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

Hebrews 9:24-26

**24** For **Christ** did not enter a holy place made with hands, a *mere* copy of the true one, but **into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; 25** nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own. **26** Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but **now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself**.

Hebrews 13:8

**Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.**

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