

**“Milk and Meat” – Answering Questions on Christianity**  
Life Bible-Presbyterian Church Adult Sunday School

**DOCTRINE OF MAN - part 2**

**7. Does man have free will?** [Alan Cairns, *Systematic Theology lectures*]

a. **The human will is a voluntary state.**

- i. John Calvin says that the human soul consists of 2 parts: understanding and the will. WGT Shedd defines the will as the faculty of the soul which determines, inclines, desires, and chooses in reference to moral objects, which are all centered and summed up in God (paraphrased).
  - ii. The first man, Adam, was created sinless and became a sinner because he chose to sin against God. God justly holds him responsible for his inclinations.
- b. **Free will.** God created man with a positive, holy inclination, biased toward God as his chief end and his supreme good. But God did not fix that bias by divine decree, as he did not create man as a robot, but an intelligent being. God gave Adam the power of choice to change the state of his will from Godly to selfish, from holy to sinful.
- c. **The essence of free will is self-determination** - the power to choose according to the inclination of the will. This is true of God, angels and men. Martin Luther wrote in his book *Bondage of the Will*, that fallen man is powerless to originate a holy disposition. Man is in bondage to his unholy inclinations. Hence man is helpless and imprisoned to his sinful desire; he cannot but sin.

**8. What is the Covenant of Life/Works?** [Westminster Shorter Catechism, G I Williamson]

a. **Elements of the Covenant.**

- i. “When God 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 the pain of death.” (Answer to WSC Q.12)
- ii. Two parties: God and man.
- iii. Condition: perfect personal obedience to the will of God revealed in a simple prohibition (Gen 2:17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it)
- iv. Promise: eternal life, as implied in Gen 3:22 “...lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever.”; Rom 7:10 “commandment, ...was ordained to life...”.
- v. Penalty: death.
  - Gen 2:17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.
  - Rom. 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

b. **What is a covenant?**

- i. A covenant is an agreement between two or more persons. When God enters into a covenant with man, it is not a “50-50” proposition between two equal parties. God does not consult with man in order to decide what the covenant will be, and what the terms of the covenant will be. In God’s covenants, His absolute sovereignty is emphasized. God alone decides there shall be a covenant. And He alone decides what the terms of that covenant shall be. He alone imposes that covenant upon Himself and upon man.
- ii. Illustration. In the figure below we see Sammy with his pet dog, Fido. In his hand, he



has a bone. He is going to give that bone to his dog. But before he does that, he requires the dog to obey him by sitting at his command. It was Sammy

alone who decided to give his dog this bone, and Sammy alone who decided what his dog must do in order to have that bone. But we cannot say the dog has earned that bone. It would be its duty to obey Sammy even if there were no reward. The dog did not perform any work to pay for his bone by his act of obedience. It is Sammy who has decided to make this the condition upon which he will reward his dog with the bone.

- iii. This is similar to the covenant that God gave to man. In the “covenant of life/works” we do not mean that Adam could do anything that would make God owe him something in return. But God was pleased to require a certain obedience as the condition upon which a gift would then be given. It was a covenant of
- “*life*” because it was life that God promised to Adam.
  - “*works*” because God required Adam to obey him before he conferred the gift.

## 9. Nature of the Covenant of Works [Alan Cairns, *Systematic Theology lectures*]

- a. ***It was generous.*** God has provided for every need and just desire of man’s body and soul. The garden of God was a place of good and plentiful provision. God gave Adam the freedom to eat of every tree of the garden, with one exception: He commanded him not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- b. ***It was gracious.*** In the middle of the garden was the tree of life. We may infer that if man had eaten of that tree, he would be confirmed eternally in the state that he was in at the time of eating: “lest he ... take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: (Gen 3:22)
- c. ***It was probationary.*** God used it as a trial of Adam’s obedience to his Creator. Satan’s temptation of our Lord was also his trial. The difference between divine trying and satanic tempting is:
- i. Divine trying calls us to holiness and is intended to bless and strengthen us.
  - ii. Satanic tempting leads us to sin and is intended to enslave and injure us.
- d. ***It was clear.***
- i. There is one tree - don’t eat of it.
  - ii. Adam later tried to excuse himself by saying that the woman God gave him gave him the forbidden fruit. But God had told him not to eat of it, no matter who induced him.

## 10. Did our first parents pass the test? (*Westminster Shorter Catechism Q.13, G I Williamson*)

- a. ***The Fall.*** Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the state of innocence, by sinning against God.
- b. They had the liberty to follow the path of obedience unto life, or the path of disobedience unto death. No one is forcing them to go either way.
- c. They had the ability to choose either one of these two alternatives, because God had created them with the ability to do either good or evil.
- d. ***Illustration.*** The manchineel tree, which grows in the West Indies, bears a very attractive apple. The fruit looks delicious and smells very fragrant. But to eat, is death. The natives dip their arrows into the sap of this tree in order to poison their enemies. A few drops of this sap or juice is very dangerous. Q: How does this tree in its appearance and consequence illustrate the fall of man and the truth of sin?



## 11. How did Satan tempt Adam & Eve? (*Bible Doctrine, James Beeke*)

- a. ***Perversion. Satan placed God’s command in a negative light.***
- i. He asked Eve “Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” (Gen 3:1b). God had said Adam and Eve could eat from all trees (thousands), except one.

- ii. Eve corrected Satan, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees... but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.” (Gen 3:2-3).
- b. **Deception. Satan slanderously questioned God’s nature and motive.** He lied and told Eve, “Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods” (Gen 3:4-5).
- c. **Pride. Satan enticed man with the proud thought of being his own god.**
  - i. “and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (Gen 3:5b)
  - ii. In other words, “*you can decide for yourself what is right and wrong, you don’t; need God to boss you around. Be your own god. Decide for yourself what’s good for your life.*” This is rebellion against the one true God.
- d. **Lust. Satan made sin appear pleasurable and attractive.** “And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat” (Gen 3:6).
- e. *The following story illustrates how Satan continues to use the same techniques today when tempting people to sin?*

“Jim, you go ask the boss,” Jim’s co-workers urge him.

Upon entering the office of his employer, Jim asks him, “Sir, would it possible for us to have the Monday and Tuesday off before Christmas Day? This would give us a nice long weekend to spend with our family from Saturday through Wednesday.”

After pausing in deep reflection and studying his calendar, his employer replies, “Jim, I would love to say yes, but this year I can’t. You know we promised our client to ship their large order by the end of the year. This is very important to our company’s reputation to ensure that we deliver our promise. Looking at the calendar, I’m afraid we are going to need every day to make it by January 1. I’d love to look at your request again next year.”

“What did he say?” the other employees ask Jim eagerly upon his return.

“He said, Nope! We have to work hard to finish the orders by January 1,” Mark angrily reported.

“I knew it,” said another, “He wants to get more profits from us before the year ends. That’s why he won’t even consider giving us a day off!”

“Maybe we should just take an extra day off or two anyway,” suggested a third, “I’m tired of his treating us like slaves. We have a right to make a decision. If we all phone in sick, what can he do? Sack all of us?”

“I picture it already, peacefully sleeping in Monday Tuesday, preparing for Christmas Eve, nice day with family, leisurely walk in the park, - sounds good to me!”

*Can you identify the same four steps of temptation being used by Satan to entice Jim and his colleagues to sinfully rebel?*

- f. **Beware of Satan’s devices**, as he continues to tempt us in the same manner today. “Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.” (2 Cor 2:11) Satan, using a serpent as a means approached Eve, in the following manner:
- g. **Note the 3 parallel sources of temptations in Gen 3:6 and 1 John 2:16:**

1 Jn 2:16	Gen 3:6	Modern equivalent
lust of the flesh	<i>good for food</i>	so fun, pleasurable – makes me happy
lust of the eyes	<i>pleasant to the eyes</i>	looks nice, fashionable – elevates my status.
pride of life	<i>desired to make one wise</i>	makes me smartest person – feeds my ego.

## 12. What was Adam’s response? [Alan Cairns, Systematic Theology lectures]

- a. **Eve was deceived.** Note that Satan attacked Eve, not Adam. Commentators say this was because she presented a greater opportunity for his deception. It appears from Gen 2:17 that God had personally informed Adam of the terms of the covenant of works, not Eve. If this is so, Satan targeted Eve for deception. She was deceived, and was first in the commission of sin.
- b. **But Adam was not deceived,** (1 Tim 2:14 “And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.”). Adam sinned with his eyes open. Adam knew

he was rebelling against God. Adam had a choice to make: his wife or God. Adam willfully, deliberately chose the creature over the Creator.

c. **Essential nature of the Fall.**

- i. Adam believed Satan's lie over God's truth.
  - ii. Adam & Eve impugned the goodness of God – as if God is so unjust to deprive them of the good fruit of one tree, while ignoring the hundreds/thousands? of other attractive fruits graciously provided for them.
  - iii. Adam disobeyed God's law & rebelled against God's authority.
  - iv. Adam elevated "self" as man's chief end. Adam decided the enjoyment of self was more important than obedience to God.
  - v. Adam attempted to be a god – equal with his Creator God.
  - vi. Adam asserted his right to choose to be independent from God, his right to choose what is good for his life, his right to ignore God's direction for his life – *"I have the right to decide what I do with MY life; after all, it is MY life."*
- d. This is the folly that infected the mind and will of our first parents, and ever since, all mankind as well. In what ways do we also, like Adam, fall into the same sins? (*Thought: Man are still asserting their "right" to live selfish, self-centered, indulgent materialistic hedonistic life, reject God's moral law and design of heterosexual monogamous marriage, to be independent from their Creator God.*)

**13. What is sin?** (Westminster Shorter Catechism Q.14, G I Williamson)

- a. The first sin is recorded in Gen 2:17, 3:1-8.
- b. **Two views of sin:**
  - i. God's view of sin: sin is the lack of conformity to or breaking of God's law. Sin is what is wrong because God says so. It was God who alone had the right to say, "this is right" or "this is wrong." The only rule for Adam to determine right or wrong was the command of God.
  - ii. Satan suggests to Adam that: sin is anything that proves to be harmful to men. Sin is what is wrong because it harms us. But what harms one man does not seem to harm another. A thing that seems a sin to one man does not seem a sin to another. That is why Satan concentrated his power of temptation on this point: "Ye shall not surely die." (Gen 3:4). In other words, he tempted Adam to believe that God's word did not have to be accepted as the only sure rule, but Adam could decide for himself what was right and wrong, and what was best for him.
- c. **God defines 2 categories of sin:**
  - i. Sins of Omission – when we have a duty to perform and do not perform that duty, we lack conformity to God's law. We sin because we fail to do what God requires of us to do. If we do not worship God, or do not keep the Sabbath, we have sinned.
  - ii. Sins of Commission / Transgression – when we do the things that God forbids eg. Adam eating the forbidden fruit, when we lie, steal, covet, trespass, commit adultery, or dishonour our parents.

