

# History and Survey of the Westminster Confession of Faith

Leadership College: Module 2  
Part 2: The Doctrine of the Confession  
Of Creation (ch. 4),  
and Of Providence (ch. 5)



## Ch. 4 – Of Creation

1. It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning, to create, or make of nothing, the world, and all things therein whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days; and all very good.

“By the word of His power”

**WLC Q. 15. What is the work of creation?**

A. The work of creation is that wherein God did in the beginning, by the word of his power, make of nothing the world, and all things therein, for himself, within the space of six days, and all very good.

**WSC Q. 9. What is the work of creation?**

A. The work of creation is, God’s making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good.

Hebrews 1:1-4

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup> but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

<sup>3</sup> He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, <sup>4</sup> having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

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### “Yom” and “Layil”

- Linguistically
  - “Day” – used both specifically –
    - Readily recognizable when associated with a number
    - Or when associated with the word “night”
  - as well as generally: *in [the] day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.* (Gen. 2:4)
- Structurally
  - The writing is strictly prose
  - “You have to begin with the premise that this is poetical or allegorical to arrive at the conclusion that it is poetic or allegorical.”
- Contextually
  - No other passage of Scr. does this

## Genesis 1:4-5, ESV

<sup>3</sup> *And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.*

<sup>4</sup> *And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness.*

<sup>5</sup> *God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.*

“in the space of six days”

Here the error of those is manifestly refuted, who maintain that the world was made in a moment.

For it is too violent a cavil to contend that Moses distributes the work which God perfected at once into six days, for the mere purpose of conveying instruction.

Let us rather conclude that God himself took the space of six days, for the purpose of accommodating his works to the capacity of men.

Calvin's Commentary on Genesis 1:5

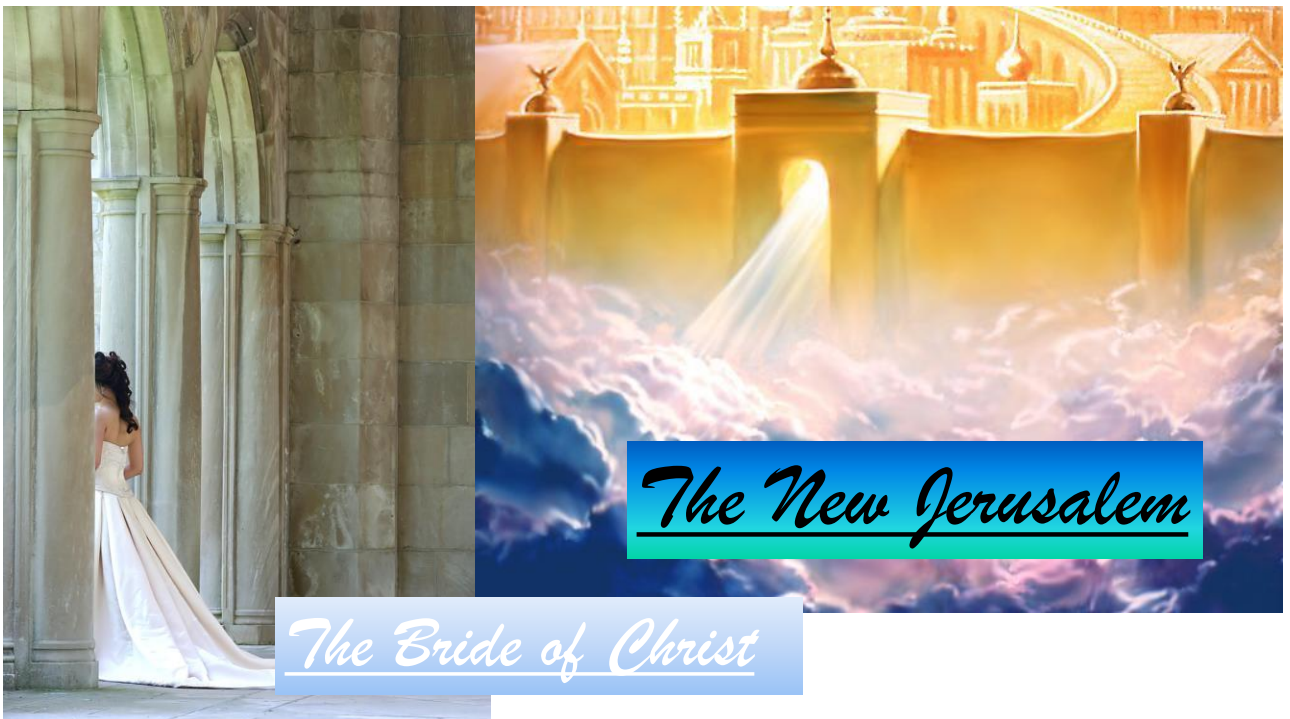
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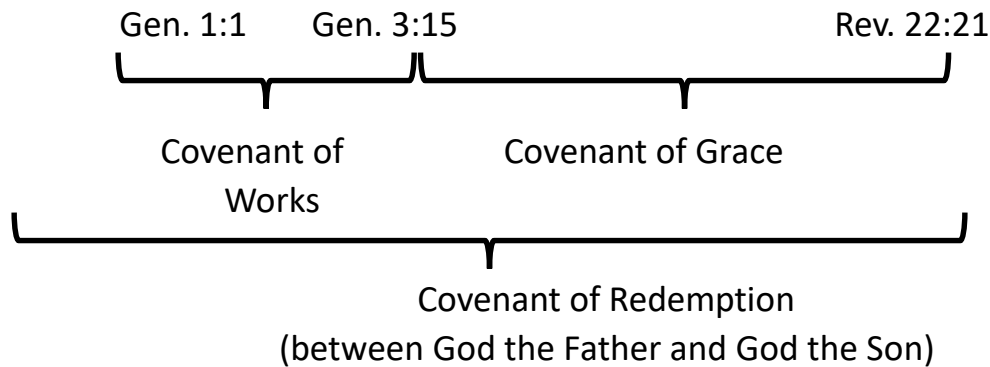
“Death did not create Adam, Adam created death.” (D. Wilson)

*For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.*

*(Rom. 1:19-21, ESV)*



## A Covenant Plan



Views on Creation Deemed Acceptable  
PCA Report of the Creation Study Committee, 2000

### **Widely held views:**

- The Calendar Day Interpretation
- The Day-Age Interpretation
- The Framework Interpretation
- The Analogical Days Interpretation

### **Not widely held**

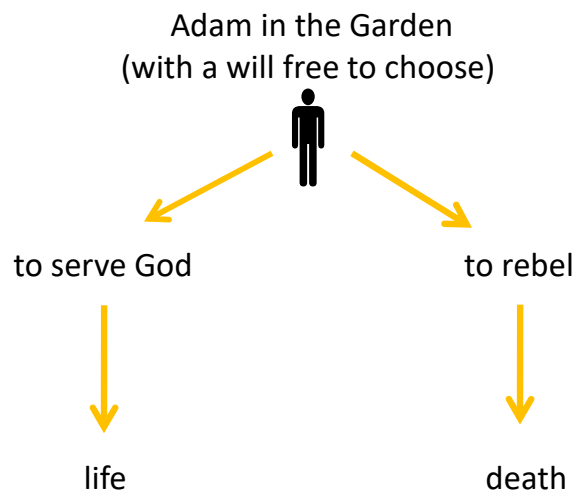
#### **but still acceptable:**

- The “Intermittent Day” Interpretation
- The “Gap” Interpretation
- The “Days of Revelation” Interpretation
- The “Days of Divine Fiat” Interpretation
- The “Focus on Palestine” Interpretation
- The “Expanding Time” Interpretation

## Ch. 4 – Of Creation

2. 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.

Adam was freely able –  
to obey or to sin.



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## Ch. 5 – Of Providence

1. God the great Creator of all things doth uphold, a direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.



## Ch. 5 – Of Providence

2. Although, in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the First Cause, all things come to pass immutably, and infallibly; yet, by the same providence, he ordereth them to fall out, according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.

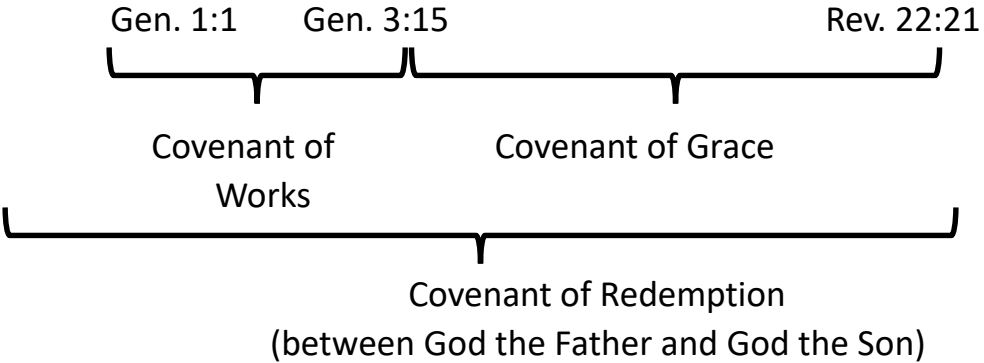
## Ch. 5 – Of Providence

3. God, in his ordinary providence, maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them, at his pleasure.

### Ch. 5 – Of Providence

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; and that not by a bare permission, but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering, and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to his own holy ends; 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.

#### A Covenant Plan



## Ch. 5 – Of Providence

5. The most wise, righteous, and gracious God doth oftentimes leave, for a season, his own children to manifold temptations, and the corruption of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled; and, to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon himself, and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for sundry other just and holy ends.

## Ch. 5 – Of Providence

6. As for those wicked and ungodly men whom God, as a righteous Judge, for former sins, doth blind and harden, from them he not only withholdeth his grace whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings, and wrought upon in their hearts; but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had, and exposeth them to such objects as their corruption makes occasions of sin; and, withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan, whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, even under those means which God useth for the softening of others.

## Ch. 5 – Of Providence

7. As the providence of God doth, in general, reach to all creatures; so, after a most special manner, it taketh care of his church, and disposeth all things to the good thereof.



