

Theology Simply Explained — WSC12 “The God Who Binds Himself to Creatures”

Pastor walks his children through Westminster Shorter Catechism question 12—especially explaining how the Creator has stooped down, in infinite generosity, to covenant with creatures.

Q12. What special act of providence did God exercise toward man in the estate wherein he was created? *When God had 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 pain of death.*

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Our catechism question this week. What special active providence did God exercise toward, man? In the estate where he was created. And the answer is when god had 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 pain of death.

Now, the way that the answer begins. Is of course, biblically true. When god had created man. He entered into a covenant with him. Notice to say that. God bound himself to man. I know that the children's catechism which was authored in the Middle of the 19th century says, and For our covenant, is an agreement between Two persons.

But really a covenant is. A binding of two parties together. Is a better way to say it. And it is amazing. That god who creates man would then bind himself to him. This is the most infinite. Of condescensions that is the most infinite. Of stooping down. That can be imagined that the creator.

Would enter into covenant with the creature. The god would bind himself to someone whom He has just recently, formed out of dirt and breathed into his nostrils. And then god, the living god. Who is? Blast forever and dwells and unapproachable light. He's the only true god from everlasting to everlasting.

He? Turns into covenant with this creature, from the dirt. How great is? The grace and mercy and generosity. And goodness of god. Even before men becomes a sinner and we'll get to you. The second covenant, the covenant of grace. But that is not to say that this is not.

A covenant in, which there is grace. Of course, it must be a covenant in, which there is grace. Where it? We are dependent upon god for our being And so, there is a sentence in which this is gracious. It is not a covenant of redeeming grace. And it is not a covenant, in which We were to be passive.

Where god himself. Secures Both sides of the covenant.

The condition of this covenant was The perfect obedience of Adam. God made it very clear that The first. Transgression of this covenant by adam. Would destroy him in the day that you eat of it. Dying, you shall die. Said God to adam. And so it is upon condition, a perfect obedience.

But the implication then, Is that? If Adam. Had kept the covenant living, he would live. That there is a life that is promised. The implication of a promise of life in this covenant. That corresponds not to who and what adam is and was at the time that that god entered into this covenant with him.

But the corresponds to who god is, That. Uh, there is a period. We don't know what it is. Except that It was not completed. A period of trying a period of testing. In which adamite by perfect obedience, fulfill the government, fulfill the covenant And be bound to the living, god forever with a life.

That it was according to the life of god. But adam transgressed, the covenant. So that everyone who breaks the covenant with god. God may say of them as he does in isaiah about israel. That Like adam. They had transgressed. The covenant. And so when god had created, man, he entered into a covenant and The language and the confession as a covenant of works.

Which focuses upon the condition. This teaches a covenant to work. So it says upon condition of perfect obedience. Doesn't say upon condition satisfied by god and not man. It is a covenant of works, but here the title given it Is with reference to that, which is secured or would be secured by the covenant.

If man had kept, The terms of the covenant. And what he would have received then as life when god had created, man, he entered into A covenant of life with him. And so here's god, the creator entering into covenant with man the creature. And here's god, who sustains us by his grace, in this case, not redeeming grace to save from sin, but still sustaining grace.

Giving man. Independence upon his sustaining grace, the opportunity. To obey perfectly. And enter into. A sort of life. Uh, that is so much greater Then what he initially receives. When he has made in the garden. That it belongs, not so much to his creation. As to his being bound to god joined to god.

In covenant. Now we can even see more. The mercy of this covenant with its one stipulation. Forbidding him to eat. Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Of course, if man had sinned in any other way, he would have violated the covenant. But god gave him this one thing to do.

So that by receiving god's. Um, God's terms. Uh, by god's word. He might know that all of his obediences. Were to be rendered unto god. As. An expression of belonging to him. And acknowledging. God's covenant lordship over us. And yet, this one stipulation, Not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

He did not keep for god's sake. He did not keep for the sake of the life that was promised to him. He did not keep. Even. For the sake of what was threatened. If he broke it. And that you see in the end of the answer here, Upon pain.

Of death. And so, we really did willfully and violently sin against god. In our first father, adam. When there was such a merciful, And generous covenant. With such an easy.

And, Uh, light as it were. Command. Uh, term of the covenant, forbidding him to eat. Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And so certainly god was very good. Very generous. Very merciful. Not only in the fact that he bound himself to creatures. In covenant. But even the terms of that covenant, We're so kind and so good.

So that we should. When we come to did. Did man continue in the estate or in, he was Uh, first created. Um, did our first parents continue in the estate when they were first. Uh, created we come to that answer. Uh, we must Has shrink from what we were.

In our first father, Adam. That we would sin against such a god and such a covenant as this one was.

I think we should be careful. We it's easy for us in our flesh. To be hard-hearted against god. The covenant of works. As if it was not merciful and he didn't help us and It wasn't generous, and it was. A hard, covenant. No, all All of the fault is in us in our first father, adam.

This was a good and generous and merciful. Covenant, from our good and generous. And merciful god. So the question is, what's special act of providence? Did God exercise toward, man? And the estate wherein he was created. And the answer is when god had created, man. He entered into a covenant of life with him.

Upon condition of perfect obedience. Forbidding to him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Upon the pain of death.