

CHANGES IN THE WESTMINSTER STANDARDS

ADOPTED IN THE BIBLE PRESBYTERIAN CONSTITUTION

The first general synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church was held September 6-8, 1938. At that time the synod adopted the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms with the following changes in the Confession and Larger Catechism (the Shorter Catechism was not changed). These changes were designed to reflect the premillennial doctrine held by the founders of the synod, and to eliminate confessional statements that could have been used to deny premillennialists a place in the ministry of the church. Words eliminated are marked by ~~strikeout~~, and words added by *italics*.

Changes in the Confession of Faith

Chapter 8, Of Christ the Mediator

“4. . . . On the third day he arose from the dead, with the same body in which he suffered; with which also he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of his Father, making intercession; and shall return to judge men and angels, at the end of the ~~world~~ *age*.”

Chapter 32, Of the State of Man After Death, and of the Resurrection of the Dead

“2. At the ~~last day~~ *return of the Lord Jesus*, such *living persons* as are found ~~alive~~ *in him* shall not die, but be changed: and all the dead *in Christ* shall be raised up with the self-same bodies, and none other, although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls for ever.”

“3. The bodies of the unjust shall, *after Christ has reigned on earth a thousand years* ~~by the power of Christ~~, be raised *by the power of God* to dishonor; ~~the bodies of the just, by his Spirit unto honor, and be made conformable to his own glorious body.~~”

Chapter 33, Of the Last ~~Judgment~~ *Things*

“1. God hath appointed a day (*which day in Scripture in reference to the last things may represent a period of time including the thousand years following the visible, personal and pre-millennial return of Christ*) wherein he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father. In which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged; but likewise all persons, that have lived upon earth, shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds; and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil.”

Changes in the Larger Catechism

Larger Catechism #82

“Q. 82. What is the communion in glory, which the members of the invisible Church have with Christ?”

“A. The communion in glory, which the members of the invisible Church have with Christ, is in this life, immediately after death, and at last perfected ~~at the resurrection and day of judgment~~ *in their resurrection.*”

Larger Catechism #84

“Q. 84. Shall all men die?”

“A. Death being threatened as the wages of sin, it is appointed unto all men once to die, for that all have sinned. *However, believers in Christ who are alive on the earth at his return will not die, but will be caught up to meet him in the air.*”

Larger Catechism #85

“Q. 85. Death being the wages of sin, why are not the righteous delivered from death, seeing all their sins are forgiven in Christ?”

“A. The righteous shall be delivered from death itself at the ~~last day~~ *return of Christ*, and even in death are delivered from the sting and curse of it; so that, although they die, yet it is out of God’s love, to free them perfectly from sin and misery, and to make them capable of further communion with Christ in glory, which they then enter upon.”

Larger Catechism #86

“Q. 86. What is the communion in glory with Christ, which the members of the invisible Church enjoy immediately after death?”

“A. The communion in glory with Christ, which the members of the invisible Church enjoy immediately after death, is in that their souls are then made perfect in holiness, and received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory; waiting for the full redemption of their bodies, which even in death continue united ~~to~~ *with* Christ, and rest in their graves, as in their beds, till at the ~~last day~~ *return of Christ* they ~~be~~ *are* again united to their souls *and live and reign with him upon the earth a thousand years*. Whereas the souls of the wicked are at their death cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness; and their bodies kept in their graves, as in their prisons, until the resurrection and judgment of ~~the great day~~ *ungodly men, after the millennial reign of Christ.*”

Larger Catechism #87

“Q. 87. What are we to believe concerning the resurrection?”

“A. We are to believe, that, ~~at the last day,~~ there shall be a ~~general~~ resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust: when *Jesus Christ returns* ~~they~~ *the just* that are then found alive shall in a moment be changed; and the selfsame bodies of the dead *in Christ* which are laid in the grave, being then again united to their souls for ever, shall be raised up by the power of Christ. The bodies of the just, by the Spirit of Christ, and by virtue of his resurrection as their head, shall be raised in power, spiritual, and incorruptible, and made like to his glorious body *in the first resurrection.* ~~and the~~ *The bodies of the wicked shall, after a thousand years, be raised up in dishonor by him as an offended judge in the second resurrection.*”

Larger Catechism #88

“Q. 88. What shall immediately follow after the resurrection?”

“A. Immediately after the *second* resurrection shall follow the ~~general and~~ final judgment of ~~angels and men: the day and hour whereof no man knoweth, that all may watch and pray, and be ever ready for the coming of the Lord.~~ *men and angels, the destruction of the earth by fire, and the ushering in of the new heaven and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.*”

Larger Catechism #89

“Q. 89. What shall be done to the wicked ~~at the day of judgment~~ *after their resurrection?*”

~~“A. At the day of judgment~~ *After their resurrection*, the wicked shall be ~~set on Christ’s left hand~~ *judged*, and, upon clear evidence and full conviction of their own consciences, shall have the fearful but just sentence of condemnation pronounced against them; and thereupon shall be cast out from the favorable presence of God, and the glorious fellowship with Christ, his saints, and all his holy angels, into hell, to be punished with unspeakable torments both of body and soul, with the devil and his angels for ever.”

Larger Catechism #90

“Q. 90. What shall be done to the righteous ~~at the day of judgment~~ *after their resurrection?*”

~~“At the day of judgment~~ *After their resurrection*, the righteous, being caught up to Christ in the clouds; shall be ~~set on his right hand and there~~ openly acknowledged and acquitted: shall join with him in *the millennial reign*, and the judging of reprobate ~~angels and men~~ *men and angels*: and shall be received into heaven, where they shall be fully and for ever freed from all sin and misery; filled with inconceivable joys; made perfectly holy and happy both in body and soul, in the company of innumerable saints and angels; but especially in the immediate vision and fruition of God the Father, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, to all eternity. And this is the perfect and full communion, which the members of the invisible Church shall enjoy with Christ in glory, at the resurrection and day of judgment.”

Resolution adopted by the first synod

“WHEREAS this General Synod has adopted changes in the Confession of Faith and the Larger Catechism which bring our doctrinal standards into harmony with the pre-millennial view of that blessed hope, the second coming of our Lord; and

“WHEREAS although we hold this view to be taught in God’s Word, we yet recognize that there are sincere Christians who hold to other views of the events which shall accompany our Lord’s return but who nevertheless are one with us in receiving the system of doctrine taught in the Bible and stated in our doctrinal standards;

“THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this General Synod declares that subscription to our doctrinal standards upon the part of all office-bearers shall be understood as leaving them and our churches and members free to hold any eschatological view which includes the visible and personal return of our Lord to earth, and which is not otherwise inconsistent with the system of doctrine of the Bible and the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this Church.”