

**FROM
ADAM
TO
ADAM**

**OLD TESTAMENT
BIBLICAL THEOLOGY. II**

**PRE-FALL TO POST-FALL
CONSIDERATIONS**

Leonard J. Coppes, ThD

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“The God of Abraham ... judge between us.” Gen. 32:53

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PREFACE

This book opens with a survey of the matters of prolegomena to biblical theology. Then after a discussion of certain introductory items, it deals first with the prelapsarian, pre-fall, covenant of God with Adam and then with the postlapsarian, post-fall covenant. Hence, it is entitled from Adam to Adam.

Having studied biblical and systematic theology for many years, the author concluded with what he first encountered in the works of Geerhardus Vos. Vos maintain that systematic and biblical theology must be employed as partners. Thus, the question arises as one works through the Bible: does biblical theology essentially repeat the themes of systematic theology? This is especially relevant in the earliest layers of biblical revelation, Gen. 1-6. Some explanations of this material (e.g., Vos) do not reflect a harmony between the results of the two disciplines. Hence, the author has heard it said that since biblical theology is the foundational study, systematic theology needs to be rewritten. This conclusion is granted if its major premise is correct, viz., the results of biblical theology do not harmonize with the results of systematic theology. However, this present work seeks to demonstrate what the author believes is a better conclusion, viz., that biblical theology needs to be revisited. Also, the revisiting shows that the position of the Westminster Standards and the Three Forms of Unity is, indeed, seen in the Bible. There is a covenant of works and the covenant of grace set forth in the early chapters of the Bible. Using these ideas as the foil against which the acts and statements are presented allows the reader to understand better what is recorded. He also sees that what God Himself states later in the Bible is the meaning and significance of those early chapters. To put it in other words, the results of biblical theology harmonize with the way the New Testament understands the portion of the Old Testament being studied. It assumes that the New Testament authors and the Holy Spirit were good biblical theological exegetes.

The position espoused in this work is that “covenant” is the proper and necessary unifying element of all biblical revelation and of each particular revelatory unit, e.g., the pre-fall revelation. Moreover, “covenant” is a complex idea entailing several sub-ideas that cannot easily be harmonized to the satisfaction of human logic and reason. In this regard, it is like the concepts of the Trinity, the natures of Christ, and the

Atonement. All of these concepts are presented in the Bible as a combination of aspects seemingly incapable of being harmonized. Hence, rather than working for harmony as an intellectual ideal, one should understand that these aspects taken as a whole define the concepts under consideration. This does not mean these doctrines are irrational in the ultimate sense of the word. Indeed, they are thoroughly rational from God's perspective. Like so many things outside of the Bible the rationality of these matters are beyond the scope and capability of human reason. Among the many issues that must be "held in tension" are those involved in the problems of the one and the many, identification, the relationship between rationality and irrationality, etc. In the non-philosophical arena, one meets similar conundrums, too, such as the problems relating to space, time, and gravitation, and the matter of the liquidity of glass.

"Divine covenant" signifies a unilaterally disposed "agreement" formally concluded and establishes a bond and an administration. The eternal intertrinitarian covenant, on the other hand, is a bilateral agreement formally concluded. The pre-fall material recorded in Gen. 1:1 through the fall clearly is a covenant of works because:

- (1) the focus is on the probation and the lose of the original blessed state, so that the entry and blessing attained by this covenant were by divine grace while the continuance of those blessings hinged upon obedience (works),
- (2) when Paul discusses the pre-fall Adamic covenant (over against the covenant in Christ or the covenant of grace), and its continuance throughout created history, he speaks in terms of works as the condition of life—a condition no mere man can fulfill (cf., Rom. 1-3:19, Gal. 3:11), and
- (3) as argued below, Hosea 6:7 calls what happened in the fall, the breaking of a covenant,

The covenant of works is not only an accepted idea in reformed systematic theology, but is a thoroughly biblical concept. It is set forth in several passages of the Bible and assumed as the foil against which the pre-fall record was presented and should be understood. Viewed against this foil the biblical record evidences a unity throughout. Indeed, the entire revelation of God to man now reflects its consistent and ever-present assumption, i.e., all mankind is responsible to and in violation of the covenant of works.

The first publication of the covenant of grace, the Adamic covenant, was divinely enacted after the fall. There are many things in the biblical report demonstrating this is, indeed, a covenant and that its initiation and application rested on divine monergism. It is also evident in the Gen. material that God "preached" it to Adam and Eve (in word and deed). Prominent among those truths "preached" by God are:

- (1) their fallen nature with their complete inability to regain a proper relationship to God their Creator,
- (2) His provision of a satisfactory covering of their sin and sinful condition, and
- (3) this provision would find its consummate expression in the seed of the woman who would destroy the devil and his works--the text also clearly implies that victory would involve the death of the promised seed but not in the sense of total and final destruction.

These truths display themselves in the text as one works through the material. Indeed, they greatly illuminate what is said and done. Understanding that this is as what is being taught unifies and explains many otherwise seemingly incidental and perhaps even otherwise unessential textually revealed matters (e.g., the renaming of the woman, the significance of the extent and nature of the covering god provided, the naming of Cain and Abel).

Finally, the following supplementary reading material is highly recommended: Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology* (Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, 1948). Also recommended as supplementary reading are O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants* (Presbyterian and Reformed, Phillipsburg, NJ, 1980), and J. Barton Payne, *The Theology of the Older Testament* (Zondervan Publishing Company, 1962).

INTRODUCTION		1
I. PROCEDURE		1
II. INTRODUCTION: RELEVANT MATERIAL FROM THE PREVIOUS BOOKLETS		2
A. The Characteristics of a Proper Biblical Theology	2	
1. The Presuppositions of a Proper Biblical Theology		
2. The Nature of a Proper Biblical Theology		
3. The Content of a Proper Biblical Theology		
4. The Method of a Proper Biblical Theology		
B. The Definition of Covenant Discussed	7	
C. The Position Taken in This Work	11	
III. CONCLUSION		13
Chapter 1. “COVENANTS OF REDEMPTION”		15
I PROLOGUE		15
II. THE COVENANT OF GRACE		16
A. A Proposed Definition of “Covenant”	17	
1. A divine covenant is a bond.		
2. A divine covenant is a bond in blood.		
3. It is sovereignly administered.		
B. A Response to the Foregoing Definition	22	
1. Divine Covenant in General		
(a). It is an administration		
(b). It is a bond unto life		
2. Unique Aspect of Divine Covenant.		
C. A Proper Definition of Covenant	25	
D. The Origin of the Biblical Divine Covenants	25	
E. The Foil of the Covenant of Grace	28	
F. The Unity of the Covenant of Grace	28	
1. The Forensic Unity of the Covenant of Grace		
2. The Structural Unity of the Covenant of Grace		
3. The Unity Evident Genealogically		
4. The Thematic Unity of the Biblical Covenants		
G. The Unity Between the Old Testament Covenant(s) and the New Covenant	34	
H. The Content of This Covenantal Unity.	34	
III. CONCLUSION		35
Chapter 2 THE PREFALL COVENANT WITH ADAM – THE COVENANT OF WORKS		38

I.	THE COVENANT OF WORKS IN THE WESTMINSTER STANDARDS	38
II.	THE SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE FOR THE “COVENANT OF WORKS.”	40
	A. The Bible Passages	
	B. The Argument	
III.	THE ELEMENTS OF THE COVENANT OF WORKS	45
	A. Its Foundation: the Grace of God	45
	B. Its Context: the Creation	46
	1. The Order of Creation	46
	a. The Beginning	46
	b. The Creator	47
	(1) His pre-existence, eternity, and omnipotence (just covered)	
	(2) The Trinity	
	c. The Order: Submission to God	50
	(1) Primary teaching: order	
	(2) Sovereignly ordered: sets forth God’s power, inherent right and resultant right	
	(3) Ruling structure appointed (sixth day)	
	(4) Man submitted to the divine Ruler: serving the Lord	
	(5) Time was to structure service & work: Sabbath service	
	d. The Fact of Creation	54
	e. The Fiat Creation	55
	The Theory of Evolution is Groundless	
	f. The Crown of Creation:	58
	(1). Man, His Nature, and His Mandate, Grace Given	
	(2). No death before fall (verse 29)	
	(3). The service of man - as priest	
	2. The place of man	62
	a. The Sovereign	62
	b. The Context of the Probation	63
	(a) The garden: the blessing granted, grace given	
	(b) The probation	
	(c) The exercise of fealty	
	C. Its Parties	71
	1. God.	
	2. Adam	
	D. Its Promises and Threats	73

E. Its Principles	75	
1. Revealed in Appropriate Symbols	75	
2. Revealed in Creation Ordinances	76	
a. The Sabbath	76	
b. Marriage and Procreation	79	
(1) The Sanctity of Marriage		
(2) The Divine Origin of Marriage		
(3) The Wonder of Interpersonal Fusion		
(4) The Role Relationship in Marriage		
c. Labor	87	
(1) Meaningful Labor		
(1) Labor is not a Curse		
(2) Labor mandated for all societies		
d. Dominion	90	
e. Summary Statements	92	
IV. THE BREAKING OF THE COVENANT OF WORKS		98
A. The Probation and Temptation	98	
B. The Serpent, the Tempter	98	
C. The Temptation Itself	100	
1. It was Addressed to the Woman		
2. It Came in Two Stages		
3. It Resulted in Death		
V. THE PRESENT STATUS OF THE COVENANT OF WORKS		107
A. The Continuing Necessity of Observing the Sabbath	107	
1. Matthew 1:27-28		
2. Mark 2:27-28		
3. Meeting on the First Day of the Week		
4. Isaiah 56:2-7		
5. Isaiah 58:13-14		
B. God Continues to Require of Man Perfect Obedience to the Covenant of Works	112	
1. The Abiding Validity of the Law (the Covenant of Works)		
a. Romans 3:19-20		
b. Galatians 3:1-13, 22		
2. Man Unable to Keep the Law (the Covenant of Works)		
3. Man Needs a Mediator-Substitute		
4. The Covenant of Grace Rests on Christ' Fulfillment of the Covenant of Work.		
VI. CONCLUSION		118

Chapter 3. THE ADAMIC COVENANT	123
I. INTRODUCTION	123
A. Its Historical Context	123
B. Its Covenantal and Biblical Significance.	125
C. Its Relation to the Covenant of Works	127
II. EXPOSITION	128
A. General Principles	128
B. The Context of the Adamic Covenant Gen. 3:8-13	126
C. God's Word of Triumph (over Satan), Gen. 3:14-15	133
1. The Promise of Satan's Defeat	
2. The Promise of Christ's Victory	
a. The establishment of enmity	
b. The three-fronts of enmity	
3. The Divine Initiative in the Enmity	
4. The Identity of the Two "Seeds"	
5. The Meaning of Bruising	
D. God's Word of Curse and Blessing, Gen. 3:16-19	149
1. God's Word to the Woman	
2. God Promises Blessing Upon Man	
3. God Promises Judgment Upon Man Because of His Sin	
E. The Effects of the Covenant. Gen. 3:20-24	158
1. The Faith of Adam and Eve: the Renaming of the Woman	
2. The Divine Seal on Their Faith: a Covering For Their Sin	
3. The Divine Sanction on Eternal Life	
F. The Faith of Adam and Eve Seen in the Naming of Their Sons. Gen. 4:1	165
G. The Faith of Abel and Rebellion of Cain (The Two Seeds). Gen. 4:2-15	167
III. CONCLUSION	172
 Chapter 4. CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY	 176
 CHAPTER QUESTIONS	 180

INTRODUCTION

This book is a continuation of the previous book on biblical theology. In the previous book we sought to give a general introduction to the whole subject by reviewing various approaches to biblical theology and evaluating them in terms of what is in the Scripture itself. There were many good things in several of the works presented and some of those things will be reviewed here. We saw that none of those suggested structures of biblical revelation—those approaches to biblical theology—satisfies the biblical material. Still other systems could be examined to argue that the only satisfactory biblical theology is one that more closely represents the traditional position of the Reformed Church as set forth in the Bible and accurately reflected in *the Westminster Confession of Faith*.¹

It is important to note that biblical theology is but a branch of exegetical theology. There are four branches of divine (as over against non-revealed) theology: exegetical, systematic, historical, and practical theology. Exegetical theology embraces the content of the Bible, systematic theology seeks to correlate the whole of that teaching and relate the results to the various issues which have developed in the history of the Christian church. Also, systematic theology and biblical theology work hand in hand in understanding the Bible. Historical theology studies the history of doctrine as it has unfolded and developed since New Testament times. Practical theology entails the study of the application of divine theology. Biblical theology is a branch of exegetical theology. It stands alongside exegesis proper (the study of the content of the Bible), introduction (the study of the matters such as the identity of the human authors, the times and occasions of the writing of the various parts of the Bible, the history and reliability of the original language texts, etc.), and canonicity (the study of the nature, growth, and determination of the canon). Biblical theology treats the revelation of God in the Bible as it groups itself into larger sections—as well shall see below.

I. PROCEDURE

In this book a brief introduction to biblical theology, generally

¹ Also, see L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (The Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 1989), 262.

conceived, will be presented first, and then it will be employed as we work through a more detailed study of our subject. The more detailed study starts with Gen. 1 and proceeds through the Bible as far as possible in the space allotted. Due to the space limit, the material presented will be restricted in depth and extent (not all the teachings in a given section of the Bible will be examined and what is examined will be treated rather briefly).

A general study guide in this presentation may be found in a syllabus authored by Dr. Joseph Morecraft.² This book will work through that syllabus making changes as seems appropriate. The reader is urged to get Mr. Morecraft's "Covenants of Promise" and work through it as a guide in following the book. Additional suggested reading is included in the bibliography mentioned in this book.

II. INTRODUCTION: RELEVANT MATERIAL FROM THE PREVIOUS BOOK

A. The Characteristics of a Proper Biblical Theology

It is useful for one to orient oneself to the issues introduced in the previous book with reference to a proper biblical theology and its presuppositions. Furthermore, it is recommended that one read and study that book.³ Also, it would be extremely helpful to carefully read Geerhardus Vos' *Biblical Theology*.⁴

1. The Presuppositions of Proper Biblical Theology

² Mr. Morecraft's, "Covenants of Promise" (*Studies in the Covenant of Promise*) (Chalcedon Presbyterian Church, Cumming, GA, n.d.), is, to a considerable degree, "a paraphrase, condensation, restatement, clarification, addition, popularization, etc.," of O. Palmer Robertson's *Christ of the Covenants* (Presbyterian and Reformed, Phillipsburg, NJ, 1980).

³ The booklets are: *Dispensational Theology: A Presentation, Comparison and Evaluation of Old and New Dispensationalism*; *Descriptive Theology: A Presentation and Evaluation of the Theology of the Theology of Gustave Oehler*; *Promise Theology: A Presentation and Evaluation of the Work of Willis Beecher and Walter Kaiser*; *Kingdom as a Basis for a Biblical Theology: a Presentation and Evaluation of the Biblical Theological Approach of John Bright*; *Testament Theology: An Examination and Evaluation of the Biblical Theological Approach of J. Barton Payne*; *Treaty Theology: An Examination and Evaluation of the Biblical Theological Approach of Meredith Kline, Sr.*

⁴ Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology*. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, 1948.

Both Dr. J. Barton Payne and Dr. Meredith Kline Sr. rightly say that the triune God of the Bible is the one and only true God and the Bible is His self-revelation and that this should be the self-conscious presupposition upon which biblical theology builds. This divine self-revelation and all ultimately true knowledge is "from above," or from eternity, and not "from below," or from this creation. Hence, biblical revelation (the whole of Scripture as it is found in the Old and New Testaments) should determine what we know and believe religiously speaking, and should be the test of truth for all other knowledge. This means that other knowledge may exceed the bounds of what is set forth in the Bible, but should not violate its foundational principles. Hence, what we know and believe should not determine or set the limits of biblical knowledge. Indeed, the origin of true knowledge and of the creation determines the nature of that true knowledge. Also, the divine self-revelation has been set forth in propositions and is knowable by man. Thus, although that knowledge is "from above" it is delivered to us in terms of what is "from below" (Deut. 30:14, Isa. 55:8-11). Finally, that effective revelation is limited to the Scripture insofar as our ability to know it in terms of propositions (Jn. 17:17, 2 Tim. 3:16-17, Eph. 2:20, Jude 1:3).

Now these are not all of our presuppositions but these certainly are the main ones undergirding our study of biblical theology.

2. The Nature of a Proper Biblical Theology

As Dr. Payne says, biblical theology is historical in nature. It was delivered in conjunction with and deals with objective events. Chronology is its extenuating and conditioning factor. Hence, its events and statements should be viewed insofar as possible from the perspective of the time period in which those things occurred. However, we should also remember that the interpretation or significance of an event might rest either with the time of its writing or the time of its fuller explanation (e.g., Heb. 11:10-16).

The material of a proper biblical theology is divine insofar as it comes from God. Also, it is divine insofar as God is its central interest. It deals both with divine acts or deeds, and divine teaching or words. Sometimes these two concepts are labeled deed-revelation and word-

revelation. Biblical theology declares how God relates to man. It presents the Bible, the revelation God has given, as an internally consistent unit that comprehends what God wants man to know and believe. The Bible, in its original form, is inspired and accurate in all it reports and teaches.⁵ In its present form this accuracy is *virtually* unimpaired. This is with reference to the biblical content itself. Although occurring in great variety, the content of biblical revelation is not contradictory. Dr. Payne describes the content of the Bible as the “cumulative knowledge of the many facets of the living God.” The unity of biblical revelation is related by way of “variety, supplementation, and clarification.” It never truly evidences replacement, correction or self-contradiction. It is redemptive; that is, biblical theology and the content and message of the Bible is salvific or redemptive insofar as its primary purpose is to set forth God's concern to bring man back to himself.⁶

Finally, biblical theology is covenantal, i.e., all that is presented in the Bible is selected and organized according to the divine covenant. Every period of that presentation builds on what has gone before and points to what is to come after.

3. The Content of a Proper Biblical Theology

The subject matter for study is the material of the Bible. It is to be studied and examined primarily in itself. Other sources may be of help in understanding that biblical material, but the primary material for biblical theology is to come from Scripture. Other sources may include Ancient Near Eastern documents, archaeology, linguistic studies, comparative religion studies, philosophical studies, etc.

⁵ Some have stumbled at this concept of the Bible being inspired and accurate in its original form. The problem with this is, they maintain, that we do not have the original. A very insightful illustration has been offered to answer this difficulty. In the Smithsonian Institute in Washington DC there are platinum rods which serve as the official standard for the various measurements used in the USA, e.g., yard. No one hesitates to build a skyscraper or is so bold as to challenge the trustworthiness of such a building on the basis that the carpenters and other workers did not have the platinum original when they were constructing the building. What they had is sufficient. The same thing may be said of the measurements of rocket ships and our most sophisticated machines. They are sufficient for the job. Even so, the Bible is sufficient for the job intended by God even though we lack the original texts.

⁶ J. Barton Payne, *The Theology of the Older Testament*, Zondervan, 1962, 17-18.

4. The Method of a Proper Biblical Theology

Geerhardus Vos and Gustave Oehler⁷ present several principles that should guide and determine the study of biblical theology.

First, proper method is *historico-genetic*. While biblical theology develops its subject matter in accordance with the historical eras represented in the Old Testament, it should be genetic insofar as it treats everything recorded in the Bible as expressive of a single organically interrelated divine revelation. This is necessarily implied because since God is one, the plan of God must be one (unified), (cf., Eph. 1:11, Tit. 1:2).

Second, it should employ the results of *historical-grammatical exegesis*. Today such a hermeneutical approach is derided by some as a narrow-minded lack of scholarly objectivity. It is the belief of this writer that deviating from a proper historical-grammatical exegesis as one's foundation sets the scholar, and the church he seeks to serve, adrift on a sea of interpretive relativity similar to that which strangled the Roman Catholic Church at the time of the Reformation. This historical-grammatical exegesis:

- (a) operates according to the rules of the language being considered,
- (b) gives due regard to the historical-cultural environment and particular circumstances of the material,
- (c) seeks to grasp the inner psychological state of the writer (as it is reflected in the biblical material) in the sense of seeking to understand how the writer understood, and/or should have understood, what he was presenting,
- (d) places particular statements in the context within the document in which the statements occur, within the thought system of their writer, and within "the special region of the dispensation of revelation to which the book belongs [the biblical-theological era]," (p. 41)
- (e) seeks to set forth the direct meaning of a text—the intention of the author/Author, and
- (f) and places limits on other hermeneutic approaches such as the medieval Roman Catholic view. Catholics argued for a fourfold sense of Scripture: literal, tropological (seeing in a text a moral

⁷ Gustave Oehler, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Eerdman's: Grand Rapids, 1883).

meaning or significance apart from its direct meaning), allegorical, and analogical.⁸

Third, biblical theology refines this historical-grammatical work by seeking to set forth the totality of biblical revelation in its historical *unfolding* and as an “*organic process of development*” (p. 41). This is sometimes termed *historical-redemptive* exegesis. One should be cautious, however, in being carried away by this approach to such a degree that the historical-grammatical basis is seriously overshadowed, if not replaced, by an unrestrained typological or analogical interpretation.

Fourth, as implied above, this organic process should be influenced and focused by its conclusion—at least in part, since the final and perfect revelation is Jesus Christ and the New Testament. It assumes that God is ultimately the author of everything in the Bible and that His explanation is the perfect, final and sufficient explanation. This divine monergism means that there is ultimately one meaning to any given passage of Scripture and that it is the task of the exegete-theologian to garner that meaning from the biblical text. This *Christological* exegesis also needs to be balanced by proper historical-grammatical work to guard against excesses and exaggerations.

Fifth, biblical theology should seek to show how this process of *God’s* communications with man unfolded and developed throughout the Scripture. It should, generally speaking, view everything in the Bible as revelation and as *theologically significant*.⁹

Sixth, in addition to these principles mentioned by Drs. Oehler and Vos, one should employ the reformation principle that *the best interpreter of the Bible is the Bible itself*. Consequently, a divine interpretation from a later period of revelation may be used in discerning the significance of a particular passage appearing in an earlier period.¹⁰

⁸ Louis Berkhof, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation*, Baker, 24f.

⁹ The inadequate use of this principle greatly weakens Vos’ work, e.g., he does not see covenant before the Noahic era. Consequently, much of what is necessary and beautiful in Gen. 1-5 does not appear in his work.

¹⁰ This author once experienced a case of such excessive application of the Christological perspective worked out in typological interpretation. There were some who interpreted Jephthah as a type of Christ insofar as he led Israel into obedience to God. Yet, the focus of the account of Jephthah is ostensibly on obedience to divine Law. Also, Jephthah was the

Seventh, a proper biblical theology addresses the content of the Bible in terms of its *covenantal units*. In doing this it seeks to set forth the teachings which are characteristic of the period in view. This sets it off from exegetical theology, which addresses the content of the Bible in smaller units. It also sets it off from systematic theology that seeks to address the Bible viewed as a whole setting forth teachings in their fullest revealed expression.

Eighth, a proper biblical theology views the content of each particular unit of biblical revelation as expressive of the *covenant of God as a whole* and as well as being expressive of the particular covenant of God which characterizes and defines the period of revelation in view.

B. The Definition of Covenant Discussed

The Bible teaches that all of God's dealings with man may be subsumed under the concept covenant (to be defended later). This is a very important concept as we sought to argue in the previous book¹¹. At this point in our study, we focus primarily on this prior work, but for the sake of clarity we will extend the discussion beyond that work to review briefly the positions of Prof. John Murray, and Dr. O. Palmer Robertson.

The discussion in the previous book built on the hypothesis that covenant should not be defined exclusively in terms of any particular historical publication of the covenant nor in terms of any particular historical form presented in the Bible. Since the various historical publications often employ differing covenant forms (structures) and use a word or concept in various ways depending upon the covenant form employed, to set forth any one of these forms as *the* form (and definition) of covenant involves one in a false historicism. When this fallacious methodology is employed, the content of the Bible is often forced into a pattern and

son of a harlot, an exile driven away by his people. He was joined by political malcontents (worthless men). He gained his victories by the use of the sword. He dedicated his unmarried daughter to the Lord with the probable result that she remained a virgin. There is no record of clear preaching of the Gospel, no itinerate ministry, no working of miracles, no divine nature, no death in behalf of those he represented, no kingship over Israel, no building of a temple, etc.

¹¹ *Old Testament Biblical Theology, I, Introductory Matters* (Providence Presbyterian Press, Denver, CO), 2004.

meaning that does not retain the distinctives of the text, or texts, being considered.

The various covenant forms employed in the Bible set forth varying ideas as to the role of similar or identical elements.¹² For example, in the Abrahamic covenant death, represented in the animals through which God passed in Gen. 15, is the curse and penalty for breaking the covenant. Moreover, the deathlessness of the eternal God is the guarantee or seal that the covenant will be kept. Hence, the penalty will never be exacted upon the covenant maker or the covenant receptor—God the Maker or the elect unto eternal life, the receptors (cf., Heb. 6:13-18). On the other hand, in the Mosaic covenant (as pointed out by Dr. Meredith Kline's work on the Mosaic covenant as patterned on the Hittite law treaties¹³) death is the penalty upon man for his breaking the covenant. Indeed, man must die because he is fallen and a covenant breaker by virtue of the bondage adhering to his inherited nature. Death, however, also serves to guarantee or seal the covenant, i.e., the covenant will be kept because of the future sacrificial and substitutionary death of the covenant maker/receptor, viz., Christ (cf., Gal. 3).

In Heb. 9:15-18 the covenant is explained in terms of a Roman last will and testament under which concept the benefits of the testament do not accrue to the heirs until and unless the testator dies. Death is necessary; it is not the guarantee or seal of covenant blessings yet to be realized, but is the necessary and prior condition of the covenant's blessings. Of course, using this form as the only and controlling form of the covenant leads us to query how the Old Testament saints could have been born-again (the chief benefit of the covenant). So, according to Heb. 9 the covenant-maker (Christ) must die before the testament can go into force and the inheritance distributed and enjoyed. This is a different idea of death than what Gen. 15 presents. There the idea is that passing through the parts of the slain beasts guarantees the benefits of the covenant—the benefits of the covenant accrue as long as the covenant

¹² The idea that there are differing conceptual forms presenting a major theological teaching, that each form presents supplementary and interrelated aspects of that teaching, and that the Biblical definition thereof lies in properly setting forth all those aspects while properly balancing them as to the ultimate teaching, is not a new idea. It is what is seen in a proper development of other Biblical teachings such as the Trinity and the atonement, cf., Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 384ff.

¹³ Kline, Meredith., *Treaty of the Great King* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1963).

maker lives. Thus, death is not the gate to blessing but the penalty for violating the covenant.

The form of testament employed in Heb. 9 is that seen in Roman law. It is a form that allows the testament to be changed prior to the death of the testator. On the other hand, the form of testament used in Gal. 3:15 is that found in Greek law whereby the testament could not be changed once it was made by the testator—before his death even he could not change it.¹⁴

Surely, it is evident from this brief survey that (1) no one of these forms (with the accompanying roles exercised by death, life, oath-taking, etc.) explains all the others, and (2) these different forms variously depict or employ the elements involved in each. We conclude, therefore, that covenant must be defined in terms of what the Bible teaches about covenant rather than in terms of the forms it employs to present, explain, or illustrate it.

(Now we come to the brief excursus by which we will address the positions of Murray, and Robertson.)

It for this reason that we are somewhat attracted to Prof. John Murray who defines covenant as a sovereign administration of blessing and promise. It is sovereign insofar as God alone sets its terms and dispenses it. It is “administration” insofar as covenant identifies the way God initiates, communicates, and governs His blessing and promise in decree, revelation, and providence. Prof. Murray argues that administration rather than contract (agreement) best defines the essence of covenant because administration implies neither a two-sided or bilateral agreement. Rather, it clearly sets forth the unilateral and sovereign character of God's granting His covenant to those with whom He makes it. We hesitate, however, to adopt Prof. Murray's definition because it does not satisfy the diversity of forms the Bible employs in describing the word and concept covenant. Also, it lacks the *formalizing* and *formality* of the contexts where divine covenants (and other covenants) are described. It does not seem to satisfy the more abstract idea employed when the Bible speaks of

¹⁴ R. Gaffin, ed., *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation, the Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos*, “Hebrews, the Epistle of the Diatheke” (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1930), 177-181.

the eternal covenant of God made before the foundation of the world (cf., e.g., Tit. 1:2, Heb. 6:16-17). The idea there is the divine agreement as to what is to be done.

Dr. Robertson goes beyond Prof. Murray when he argues that something more specific than administration is required in defining covenant. Dr. Robertson, however, seems to offer at least two different, somewhat interrelated definitions of covenant, viz., covenant is a bond sealed in blood and covenant is a bond with life and death consequences. Neither of these definitions taken separately or together satisfies the Scriptural material. Covenant is more than a bond because, for example, the reason why David and Jonathan make a covenant with one another is that there already existed a strong bond between them (compare, 1 Sam. 20:3, 8, and 16). The word bond is used in English to refer to any strong relationship between two or more people, e.g., a mother has a bond with her child—the mother-child relationship is not a covenant. Therefore, we maintain that the word bond is insufficient to describe the unique essence of a covenant. Just in passing we note that a covenant sealed in blood is not the same as a covenant with life and death consequences. Also, the pre-fall covenant, the covenant consummated immediately after the fall, and the Noahic were not sealed in blood in the sense that they were sacramentally sealed as was, for example, the covenant God made with Abraham and his seed. Nor do the covenant between David and Jonathan and the Noahic covenant have life and death consequences.

The foundational definition of covenant is crystallized in the words, “covenant is an agreement between two or more persons.” This definition must be refined by noting that a covenant is an “agreement” either in terms of a mutual agreement or in terms of something imposed by a superior authority and either passively or actively entered by the receiving party. In addition, covenant usually involves a formalizing element. Even when considering the eternal inter-trinitarian covenant one must keep in mind that the use of this word covenant implies a formalizing of the “agreement” or promise (cf., Tit. 1:2). Moreover, when used defining biblical covenants the term “formalizing” often comes to mean a formalizing of the agreement in some kind of rite. This latter aspect is not always present. But it is nearly always present when considering the divine covenants with man after the covenant God made with Adam. So that in the New Testament, although other usages occur, the ubiquitous

underlying concept of that entire revelatory period is that God's covenant with man is to find expression in man's formalizing this covenant by a covenant making ceremony in keeping with the redemptive-historical precedents from the time of Abraham on.

There are two areas where seemingly exclusive biblical teachings, or at least teachings that are hard to interweave, need to be held in proper balance and to be related properly. For example, Robertson's definition focuses of the initiation of the covenant and Murray's on the administration or on-going working. Both offer extensive biblical and theological support for their positions, and both are persuasive. It seems that the truth lies in a proper balancing of these two concepts. One's definition of covenant must face both arrays of biblical teaching. Since the Bible uses covenant of both concepts, one's definition of covenant must allow for both the initiation and the continuation of "covenant." A second "balance" is needed: the balance of a bilateral (two-sided) and a unilateral (one-sided) covenantal initiation process.

The idea that allows for the needed concepts (as set forth above) and for a proper balance of the two areas just mentioned is that covenant, considered in its broadest sense, is a formalized "agreement" (or pact)¹⁵ between two or more persons. Similarly, the concept "agreement," understood as presented above, lends itself well to the biblical representation of the divine covenants as eternal and temporal, as spiritual and external, as foundational and secondary, and as conditional and unconditional.¹⁶

C. The Position Taken in This Work

The position taken in this book we believe to be that of historic Calvinism and, with that in mind, it is essentially the same position defended by Prof. John Murray and Dr. Robertson. For an exposition of

¹⁵ Agreement is italicized because neither it nor any other word satisfactorily entails both the unilateral and bilateral ideas. Hence, "agreement" is offered as a substitute for the non-italicized form of the word. It is offered as an expression embracing, albeit unnaturally, both ideas.

¹⁶ For the definition of covenant, also see 16f., and 35.

this position see *The Westminster Confession of Faith* chapter 7 and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms associated with that Confession.¹⁷

Another position that may be of interest is that which has come to be known as reconstructionism. This view has been defined by five “planks.”

a) Presuppositional apologetics as evidenced in the work of Dr. Cornelius Van Til.

b) Theonomic ethics: that the Old Testament (including the Mosaic Law) is binding on the church in all its moral teachings. Every command of God rests on His moral character and to that extent every command is moral in its fundamental essence. From another perspective, many of the commands are particularizations of the moral principle(s) underlying them. As particular commands they may or may not apply today, but the moral principle(s) they express does apply. The Old Testament forms are generally seen as shadows and the New Testament as the substance (cf., Col. 2:17).

c) A popularization of the view of covenantal structure found in the work of Meredith Kline, Sr.

d) Postmillennialist eschatology: that Christ's visible bodily coming will occur after an extended time during which He reigns visibly on earth through His people.

e) Preterism: that all or most of the New Testament prophecies of Christ's second coming were fulfilled when Israel was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD.

This writer is not what might be called a reconstructionist as Dr. Morecraft may appear to be (this is not to say that he agrees with all those who call themselves “theonomic,” nor with all of the five points just presented). Thus, if one is using Dr. Morecraft’s outline of biblical theology, differences will be noticed between the present work and his.

This presentation of biblical theology, considered abstractly, embraces:

(a) the pre-adamic covenant—sometimes called the covenant of works,

¹⁷ Also see Carl Bogue, *Jonathan Edwards and the Covenant of Grace*, and Leonard Coppes, *The Ten Points of Calvinism, Are Five Points Enough?*

- (b) the post-fall covenant—usually simply called the Adamic covenant,
- (c) the covenant God made with Noah or the Noahic covenant,
- (d) the Abrahamic covenant,
- (e) the Mosaic covenant,
- (f) the Davidic covenant, and
- (g) the new covenant.

Because of the amount of material involved in such a project we will not be able to treat every revelatory unit (covenant) just set forth.

III. CONCLUSION

The above discussion sets forth the various characteristics of the study of biblical theology. The grounds for such a study are not set forth in this discussion. Rather, it is assumed that the propriety of the study is rather evident given the nature of biblical revelation, viz., that it is progressively revealed through history and that there is a progressive unfolding ending with the completion in Jesus Christ—the New Testament.

The individual sections are abbreviated on the grounds that these matters are discussed more thoroughly in the other works cited in the bibliographies, especially the works of Oehler, Payne, and Vos. One should not, however, doubt the importance of these preliminary discussions.

We note the importance of granting the foundational influence of the theology set forth in Reformed Standards. Although serious students should be willing to set aside the conclusions of these Standards if they are found to be out of conformity with the Scriptures, on the other hand, one should not quickly turn to such deviating from the historic Standards. Rather, that historically accepted theology should be assumed as the correct teaching of what the Bible records unless the biblical material simply teaches otherwise. Indeed, we shall discover in following chapters that the Reformed tradition does reflect what the Bible presents.

It is especially significant to emphasize that a proper method of biblical theology includes evaluating the importance of later biblical material in understanding the earliest eras of divine revelation, i.e., the

pre-fall and post-fall Adamic periods. Yet, neither should one treat the earlier sections of biblical revelation as setting forth God's revelation to man in the completed fullness and clarity of what is recorded in the New Testament or represented by systematic theology.

One of the theological themes uniting the Reformed Standards is that the Bible teaches a covenantal theology. This means that the central structural theme of all biblical revelation is the covenant. In this regard, the reader is pointed to the definition of covenant proposed above. As noted there, much of the preliminary defense of this centrality and definition is contained in the author's first book on Old Testament theology.¹⁸ Two matters are noteworthy regarding the proposed definition of covenant. First, there is no one picture or analogy of covenant presented in the Bible. Indeed, there are several pictures, e.g., the covenants between equals, the Hurrian covenant making process (Abraham), the Hittite law treaty (Deuteronomy), the Biblically revealed marriage relationship, the Roman last will and testament, and the Greek last will and testament. These diverse forms may be classified as unilateral (one-sided) or bilateral covenants (two-sided). The discussion argued that the biblical presentation of covenant should be conceived as similar to the presentations of other biblical doctrines. In other cases, the Bible offers differing pictures of the doctrine to teach its complexity. One may compare the way the Bible speaks about the Trinity, the personhood of Christ, inspiration, and the atonement. Hence, God's covenants with man are unilaterally and sovereignly deposited. They are formally concluded—often with a rite of conclusion involving a sacrificial ceremony. They often involve an outward and inward aspect so that all of the human recipients receive certain defined outward and temporal benefits, while some of those recipients also receive particular spiritual and eternal benefits. Moreover, all of the recipients are summoned to actively embrace the covenantal relationship with God. Briefly stated, a divine covenant is an “agreement” or “bond” sovereignly deposited and formally enacted.

¹⁸ *Old Testament Biblical Theology, I.*

Chapter 1. COVENANTS OF REDEMPTION¹⁹

I. PROLOGUE

The focus of the entire Bible (Old Testament and New Testament) is the Lord Jesus Christ. Anything we do in trying to understand the Bible should be pursued with that goal or that assumption in mind. God declares repeatedly that everything in the Bible speaks of Jesus Christ.

“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.; . . . For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me.” (John 5:39, 46).

"And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. (verse 27) . . . Then He said to them, ‘These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me.’" (Luke 24:27,44)

“For Christ is the end [ultimate message and focus] of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.” (Rom. 10:4)

The centrality of Christ in Biblical revelation and the Christian faith must never be blurred, compromised, or exaggerated. Neither law nor covenant (the foundational revelatory and organizing structure) nor doctrine should replace Him as the center and focus of a proper Biblical theology. Paul wrote: “I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified,” 1 Cor. 2:2. Every “jot and tittle” of the Bible must be viewed in the light of the revelation of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The central promise of the entire Bible is that a believer in Christ enjoys union and communion with Almighty God, cf., Gen. 3:15, 17:7; Exod. 6:6f; 2 Chron. 23:16; Ezek. 34:24; Jer. 31:33; Eph. 4:25; Heb. 8:10; and 2 Cor. 6:16. This promise theme may be called “the Emmanuel principle,” God with us. It reaches its climax through

¹⁹ We use this term, at this point, to represent all the post-fall covenants. Later, the term “covenant of grace” will be used.

*embodiment in a single person, Jesus Himself*²⁰ (Isa. 49:8; John 1:14; Eph. 2:21f; Rev. 7:15; 21:3; Isa. 42:6; 49:8; 55:3,4).

Thus the various strands of Biblical truth may be unified as they “dove-tail” into or “flow out of” the person and work of Christ. He is the fulfillment and administrator of the totality of covenantal promises, 2 Cor. 1:20. His presence and activity is the power by which His kingdom advances in the subduing of men's hearts to the Lord God of the Bible, Matt. 13:1f. Thus Dr. Robertson writes:

“Because the various strands of hope for redemption converge on this single person, He becomes the unifying focus of all Scripture. Both 'kingdom' and 'covenant' unite under ‘Emmanuel,’ Matt. 26:28, Lk 22:20. In the person of Jesus Christ, the covenants of God achieve incarnational unity. Because Jesus, as the Son of God and mediator of the covenant cannot be divided, the covenants cannot be divided. He himself guarantees the unity of the covenants, because he himself (sic) is the heart of each of the various covenantal administrations.”

In this work we are concerned with how the covenant theme and structure of the Bible reveals the glories of the person of Christ and the riches of salvation that are our glorious covenantal inheritance, Deut, 28:1f. The whole Bible calls us *to live exclusively and totally by His covenantal law motivated by the covenantal promise*, Ps. 1:1f. All are called *to build a Christian culture in the “land He is giving us,”* Deut. 7:1f, Rom 4:13, *to conquer the world and have dominion over it in terms of the gospel of the covenant*, Rom. 14:8f., to work for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, Matt. 6:10, and to expect total victory for God's covenant over all opposition in all areas, Matt. 28:19f., Gal. 3:8, 1 Cor. 15:26.

II. THE COVENANT OF GRACE

The content of the Bible after the fall may be variously labeled as the covenant(s) of redemption or the covenant of grace.

²⁰ Italicized sentences and paragraphs are from Dr. Morecraft's “*Covenants of Promise*” (*Studies in the Covenant of Promise*).

A. A Proposed Definition of “Covenant”

According to Dr. Robertson a divine covenant is “a bond in blood sovereignly administered.”²¹

In seeking to evaluate this definition we should begin by considering the definition of "covenant in general" as “a [formalized] “agreement” (or “pact”) between two or more persons”. A word study of the word covenant in the Bible would reveal several instances where one person formally agreed with another about a certain course of action (Gen. 21:27, 26:28, 31:44, and 1 Sam. 20:8,16). This formal mutual agreement is termed a covenant. The definition of divine covenant with man or men (hereafter, just divine “covenant”), however, is somewhat more specific. Prof. Murray correctly adds that a divine covenant is “a sovereign administration of blessing and promise,” or that a divine covenant involves a sovereign administration of blessing and promise. Yet, this definition, as already said, does not satisfy the biblical use of the word covenant. Prof. Robertson adds a needed clarification when he says a divine covenant is a bond in blood. But, again, this definition also does not satisfy the biblical material. A study of the biblical concept does evidence that a divine covenant is in one sense contractual and in another sense it is not. Regardless of this debate, every divine covenant is binding on the parties involved and thus involves a bond as a characteristic element. Divine covenants are primarily, at least in their central essence, unilateral or one-sided, that is, they are sovereignly administered. But the biblical concept goes further than the word bond. It involves a formalizing element that is either verbal (by assertion or oath) or ceremonial. So *divine covenants may be defined as formalized bonds* (“agreements,” or “pacts”).²² Indeed, in the case of the covenants after Abraham, they are formalized “agreements” which God dispenses upon man or men, and they regularly attest man’s reception of the terms of the covenant by means of a formal ceremony. In some cases the recipient of the covenant plays a passive role and in others an active role.

²¹ O. Palmer Robertson, 3-15. The references to Robertson in this section of this work appear in the place just cited.

²² However, cf., p 16f., and 34 below.

Now, we come to a more detailed consideration of the concept, as set forth by Prof. Robertson, that is, a covenant is a bond sealed in blood or a bond with life and death consequences.

1. A Divine Covenant is a Bond.

A covenant commits and binds the parties to each other. To support this the following argumentation is offered.

a. *The prominence of oaths and signs in the Biblical covenants underlines this point.*

(1) There are many passages in which verbal commitments are termed covenants—Gen. 21:23,24,26,31; 31:53; Exod. 6:8; 19:8; 24:3,7; Deut. 7:8,12; 29:13; Ezek. 16:8. These verbal commitments are typified by oaths and signs.

(2) In other passages, symbolic commitments are termed covenants—Gen. 21:31:44f, Josh. 24:27, Exod. 24:8, Ps. 50:5, Ezek. 20:37. These passages report rites and acts through which the covenanting parties pass in order to make this bond enforced and binding.

b. The signs of the covenants, says Dr. Robertson, demonstrate that covenant is basically a bond.

We have several signs in the Bible such as rainbows, circumcision, Sabbath, etc. Each sign enforces the binding character of God's covenant and serves as a “token(s) and pledge(s) of constant faith and abiding love.”

Historically, theologians have struggled with trying to define covenant. They have debated how we can use a word like contract or agreement to define covenant when these words imply a two-sided or bilateral agreement because in the case of divine covenants we are talking basically about a one-sided or unilateral “agreement”. This is true both of the covenant of grace and the covenant of works. Prof. Murray solves this verbal dilemma by defining covenant with the word administration. Robertson solves it by using the word "bond" and adding to it the concept of sovereign administration. This implies that the covenant is an

administration whereby the parties are committed and bound to each other. It is doubtful if this is contrary to what Prof. Murray offers although it does provide a welcomed clarification. The new element in Robertson's definition is the idea that covenant is a bond. An additional idea is introduced with the words "in blood" and it is to a consideration of this latter element that we now turn.

2. A Divine Covenant is a Bond in Blood.

Robertson explains that "bond in blood" means *it is a bond of life and death. There is an ultimacy and finality in the covenantal commitment of God and men to each other.* The following arguments are offered by Robertson to support this position.

a. *"To make a covenant" in the Old Testament is literally "to cut a covenant,"* Gen. 15:18, 21:27,32, Josh. 9:6f., 1 Sam. 11:1,2, Job 31:1, and Ps. 50:5. How did this concept originate, i.e., the concept that a covenant made is a covenant cut even though there is no such cutting stipulated in the context? We suggest it originates with what is recorded in Gen. 15:10. There is finality in "cutting a covenant" because it rests on what God revealed to Abraham in Gen. 15:10.

b. The conclusion that covenant is a bond of life and death import is reinforced by the constant repetition of the phrase "as the Lord lives," cf., Judg. 8:19, Ruth 3:13, 1 Sam. 14:39, 14:45, 19:6, etc. This phrase serves as an oath guaranteeing that a promise or "agreement" shall be kept, i.e., that a covenant shall be kept. Thus throughout biblical history men affirm agreements and promises on the understanding that just as the Lord lives to keep His promise or oath (Gen. 15), so the Lord lives to guarantee their oath or promise. The oath or promise will be kept because God is the one who oversees it, and He will punish its violator with death.

c. Our thesis is especially emphasized in Gen. 15:10 where God makes the covenant with Abraham and in Jer. 34:18 where God reminds Israel that throughout their history whenever they enter into the Mosaic covenant they figuratively and spiritually repeated what was done in Gen. 15. Israel passed through the pieces when the Mosaic covenant was enacted. This figure, understood in terms of Jer. 34:18, brings us to the

conclusion that malediction is an important part of this covenant. Hence, this teaches us why God so often says to Israel and, specifically to the breakers of the covenant, that they will be dismembered as wild beasts and exposed, left out and not buried just like the wild beasts. So, the punishment of breaking the covenant is to become like those wild beasts in Gen. 15 *where the dismembered animals symbolized a pledge of loyalty to death*, cf., Deut. 28:26, 32,24, 1 Sam. 17:44, 46, 21:10, Isa. 56:9, Jer. 12:9, and Ezek. 39:17-20.

d. The point, says Morecraft, is that *God's covenant commits the participants to faithfulness to covenant obligation upon pain of death*. Heb. 9:22 and the Old Testament sacrificial system with their emphasis on the shedding of blood, remind us that the only way of relief from these obligations is death.

e. *Christ's death, especially as presented in the book of Hebrews is to be seen within the context of this meaning of "covenant". He died as a substitute for covenant-breakers.*

In brief response to this it might be noted that "covenant as a *pledge to death*" (point (e) above) is different than a "covenant with life and death consequences" (point (b) above). For if they are the same things then covenant is a pledge to death just like it is a pledge to life. One cannot maintain this parallel without equivocation because in the Abrahamic covenant while there may be a pledge to death on man's part, there is no pledge to life on his part, rather there is the guarantee of life received by man. Also, Robertson's bond of life and death is more inclusive than his bond in blood (death) insofar as the biblical material describing divine covenants evidences covenants made without the shedding of blood, i.e., they are not bonds in blood (e.g., the pre-fall, the Adamic, and the Noahic covenants). Perhaps this is why he defines covenant as a bond in blood, but he explains (redefines) covenant as a bond in (to) life and in (to) death. It seems that his definition (his basic definition) and his explanation contend against one another, i.e., the explanation contradicts his definition. Hence, the proof he offers goes beyond the definition he offers, too.

3. It is sovereignly administered.

a. Morecraft, summarizing Robertson, explains that the Bible teaches that *God sovereignly and graciously imposes His covenant promises, demands, and relations on people He has sovereignly chosen as participants. There is no bargaining. It is not a relation of equals. In this covenant of friendship God remains sovereign actor and man remains servant responder.* Many passages support the idea that in the Bible the divine covenant is a sovereign disposition of grace and blessings. Robertson especially draws our attention to the divine "I will's" and "I am's".

“Now the LORD had said to Abram: ‘Get out of your country, From your family and from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing.’” Gen. 12:1f.

“Then He said to him, ‘I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it.’” Gen. 15:7

"And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly." Gen. 17:2

Other passages are offered which establish the same point, compare Exod. 20:2; Rom. 9:11f; Deut. 4:13f, etc. This part of Robertson's work stands the test of the texts.

b. Again summarizing Robertson, Morecraft writes that *God's covenantal dealings with man remain first and last a declaration of His divine Lordship and are manifested in the execution of promises and threats.* Robertson seems to agree with Dr. Kline, who said, “A covenant is a declaration of God's lordship, consecrating a people to Himself in a sovereignly dictated order of life.”²³

Therefore, there is a uniqueness of the divine covenant over against what may be called non-divine covenants. Non-divine covenants are those covenants in the Bible that one man makes with another person—such as the covenant that David made with Jonathan, the son of Saul, or the covenant that Jacob made with Laban, his father-in-law. These are bilateral, or two-sided, agreements made between two equals, i.e., they are equal

²³ Kline, *Treat of the Great King*, 45.

insofar as making the covenant is concerned. God's covenants with men (other than Jesus²⁴) are always sovereignly administered or deposed. They are unilateral, or one-sided.

B. A Response to the Foregoing Definition

1. Divine Covenant in General²⁵

a. It is an administration whereby the parties are committed and formally bound to each other.

Covenant is more than a bond, although it is a bond. It is a bond formally entered or ratified. It is also all that goes into establishing and working out the bond thus established. To make a covenant is to initiate or enter into this arrangement formally. To live in covenant is to be committed and to be bound. But the divine covenant is more than the making (the binding) and more than the instrument that commits and binds, it is that which governs the resulting relationship (e.g., the old covenant and the new covenant, Heb. 9:15). In this sense, covenant is an administration—the way life is to be lived under the covenant. In other words, it is God's sovereign administration of blessings and of curses. The old covenant and the new covenant are clearly one in this. They clearly partake of the same nature of God's sovereign deposition and God sovereign administration of His grace and blessing.

b. It may equally be said that divine covenant involves a bond in life as well as in death but is fundamentally a bond unto life.

(1)Robertson's "bond of life and death" is more inclusive than a "bond in/of life." Biblically speaking, the Abrahamic covenant is set forth as indicative of the central essence of covenant (Rom. 4: 9-16, Gal. 3, and Heb. 2:16, 8:8-17) and this shows that the fundamental essence of the divine covenant is the guarantee of life. While it is true that this covenant involves the threat of death on all its members, this threat is ultimately relevant only to those who are members in a "secondary" or "external"

²⁴ A fuller explanation of Jesus' covenantal relationship to God is very *complex*—it involves several unique elements.

²⁵ The definition of covenant is also discussed on 10f. and 25.

sense. As Paul remarks, not all Israel is Israel. Not all Israel are the eternally elect chosen by God on the basis of His free election (Rom. 9). Therefore, to identify a bond in blood with a bond in life *and death* is a false identification. Moreover, the Abrahamic covenant as depicted in Gen. 15 and Rom. 4 does not hold death for those who truly are Israel—it is not a covenant or bond of life and death, but a covenant of life—its certain consequence is life.

(2)“To make a covenant” in various historical contexts is said to be “to cut a covenant” (implying a death sanction, Heb., *karath*) but this is not always the case either explicitly or implicitly, cf., Gen. 9:9,11,12,17.²⁶ In each of these instances God specifically says that He is making a covenant with Noah. However, the specific words used to refer to the process of making the covenant is not “cut” but it is “to establish” or “to raise up.” Also, the Noahic covenant does not directly involve the sanction of death upon man and nature. So, that removes what appears to be a very strong argument for Robertson’s position.

(3)The eternal covenant of God involves God's self-pledge or guarantee (cf., Gen. 15) and Christ's self-pledge to self-sacrifice in behalf of those whom He represents (Gen. 3:15, Tit. 1:2). In this case (Christ’s self-pledge to death) the death is not the mere threat of death but it is the promise of death, yet not death as a curse upon a party who merits judgment because of sin He has committed. It is death as a means of blessing, viz., that by dying and taking upon Himself the penalty that men deserve, Jesus Christ will establish the covenant. So there is a wonderful interworking in the Scripture between Jesus' life and Jesus' death. Consequently, Jesus comes in the Gospels to say that He is the eternally, all-living source of life,

“I lay down My own life and I raise it back up and so because I am the one who never dies, I can die and restore Myself again.”

It is a beautiful almost paradoxical use of the two ideas.

(4) It is methodologically wrong to read what occurs in many instances as what must have occurred in all instances (e.g., “cutting”) and on this basis to form one's definition of covenant. Robertson takes the

²⁶ In these passages the word is from the root *qum*.

word or the concept of cutting, the activity that occurs in many, maybe even most, instances of covenant initiation and then insists that it must occur in all instances. This seems, at root, to be an unwarranted conclusion. Would it not be more logical and biblical to look for a larger category (than initiation by cutting) that includes all the particulars, rather than forcing the particulars into some category which obviously does not include them all?

(5) Some covenants do involve the sanction of death. The covenant of works under which all mankind since the fall, live, involves the death sanction. As a result, the New Testament teaches us that all men are dead in their sins (Eph. 2:1ff.). Death is also the sanction upon those who break the Mosaic covenant (Ezek. 33:8, 14). Finally, although the central emphasis of the Abrahamic covenant is the promise of certain life, the secondary teaching in Gen. 15:17ff. is that covenant breakers shall suffer the curse of death—symbolized in the dead and dismembered animals of verse 10. This secondary aspect of the Abrahamic covenant is the emphasis of the Mosaic covenant (cf., Jer. 34:18-20). The Bible clearly teaches that the primary and foundational emphasis of the divine covenant of grace is the promise of life on the grounds of God's work in behalf of His elect people (cf., Rom. 9) and the secondary emphasis is the curse of death upon covenant breakers (all those who are under the covenant but not "in God"). Throughout post-fall biblical redemptive history "they are not all Israel who are of Israel" (Rom. 9:6). Consequently, it is proper to speak of eternal and outward dimensions to, or aspects of, the divine covenant of grace, or of outward and internal aspects.

(6) It has already been affirmed that in the Bible life is the central promise of the covenant. Jesus came to bring eternal life not to bring eternal death. Hence, the divine covenant is in its most essential definition not a bond of life and death, but a bond of life. This is seen especially in the Abrahamic covenant and in the covenant making process in Gen. 15 where God passes through the animals which had been slain. Thus God takes upon himself the pledge to death. In His case this is a guarantee of life, insofar as He cannot die. Henceforth, the saints of the Old Testament repeatedly took an oath guaranteeing the certainty of something when they said, "As the Lord lives" (Judg. 8:19; Ruth 8:13; 1 Sam. 1:26, 14:39). In this regard, Prof. Murray's definition that focuses on the gracious, life-

giving, aspect of the covenant is to be preferred. The divine covenant is a bond sovereignly administered which dispenses life upon its objects.

2. Unique Aspects of Divine Covenant.

One should keep in mind that the divine covenant is sovereignly administered. Many definitions of covenant begin with a general treatment of the idea and then focus on a specific use of the concept and idea in the Bible. They start with the covenants man makes with men and move without further specification into the covenants God makes with men. Hence, this procedure involves a fallacy—it ignores or denies that the connotation of “covenant” changes relative to a given context. This “changing” is reflected in the way the Bible identifies the divine covenant of grace with the Hurrian/Abrahamic rite, the Hittite/Mosaic pattern, the Greek testament (Gal. 3:15) and the Roman testament (Heb. 9:15-18) patterns. Moreover, what is true of divine covenants is not true of all covenants, viz., they are not all sovereignly administered. All biblical covenants are not sovereignly disposed and administered—but all divine covenants are.

C. A Proper Definition of Covenant

At its foundation covenant, generally conceived, is a formalized agreement between two or more persons (1 Sam. 11:1-2, cf., Gen. 15:7-21). There are man-initiated covenants between man and God in which men agree to what the Lord has already stipulated (2 Kings 11:17). The definition of the *covenant(s) God makes with men* involves several things. It is divinely initiated and concluded—it is unilateral and monergistic. It establishes a bond and sets in place an administration. Finally, it is solemnized and/or formalized with an oath and often with a ceremony. It summons man to his responsibility to be a faithful servant of His Lord, i.e., to keep the covenant’s stipulations (Deut. 7:1f., Exod. 31:16, Deut. 29:9); and it promises judgment on those who break it, i.e., violate its stipulations (Deut. 31:16). It is always by grace through faith.²⁷ between two or more parties. There are man-initiated covenants between equal

²⁷ This definition is very similar to what is said by Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Carlisle, Banner of Truth, 1998), 264, although developed independently from the Biblical text on the basis of a Biblical theological methodology and not consciously seeking to work on the basis of Berkhof or any other systematic theologian.

parties (Gen. 21:27) and there are man initiated covenants between a superior and an inferior party in which the superior imposes his will on an inferior.

D. The Origin of the Biblical Divine Covenants

1. *Biblical divine covenants and the entirety of God's creative and redemptive work originate in His eternal counsel and sovereign decree resting on His grace.*²⁸ They do not originate historically although they are, of course, revealed and expressed historically.

The Bible is clear that there is a divine counsel and plan which precedes creation—it antedates the original creation, Isa. 46:10; and according to which all things are carried out, Eph. 1:11. It is God's "good pleasure," Luke 2:14; and "the counsel of His own will," Eph. 1:5,11. See also Acts 20:27, Isa. 14:24, 46:10, Heb. 6:16, Ps. 33:11, Prov. 19:21, Rom. 9:11, Eph. 1:9, 3:11, Rom. 8:28, and 1 Cor. 2:7.

That "eternal counsel" of God includes the election of people to be recipients of covenantal blessings, Eph. 1:3f; Rom. 8:29f; 9:13f, Acts 13:48, Tit. 1:2.

That "eternal counsel" includes the method of actually accomplishing the covenant blessings (salvation) through Jesus Christ, which God wants to bestow on His elect, or chosen people, Isa. 42f., Matt. 12:18, 26:42, John 4:34, Phil. 2:8,9, Heb. 5:8, Isa. 53:10, John 6:38-40, 10:18, 12:49, 17:4, 24, Ps. 2:8, and Eph. 3:11.

That "eternal counsel" includes the method of applying the covenant blessings by the Holy Spirit of God, John 16:7, Acts 12:3, Rom. 8:15, Tit. 3:5, Eph. 1:13, 4:30.

“The love of the Father, the Grace of the Son, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit are well founded for the people of

²⁸ B. B. Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield*, II, “Predestination” (Baker, Grand Rapids), 3-67, demonstrates how all that happens flows from God’s eternal counsel and decree.

the Lord in the eternal and immutable counsel of God.”²⁹

Morecraft presents the scriptural basis for affirming that when one approaches the Bible, he must see that covenant, biblically understood, is not a temporal category but first and foremost, it is an eternal category. This principle should be understood by seeing that the eternal category finds particular expression in several different historical forms that cannot all be identified with one particular historical form.

2. The Biblical divine covenants originate in the covenant life of our triune, covenant Lord, Rom. 11:36.

It has been said that,

“God is the eternally living one in Himself. There is the most perfect unity of being in God, and nevertheless personal distinction: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, willing and thinking and loving always the same, and knowing one another perfectly, and yet so, that each of the three person's lives that divine life according to His personal attributes. It is herein that the essence of the covenant is to be found. That life of God is a covenant life, a life of the most intimate communion of love and friendship, resting in the unity of God's being and living through the personal distinction. The Lord God is a covenant God.”³⁰

Here Dr. Hoeksema explains that the concept of covenant ultimately has its roots in the nature of the eternal triune God himself.

“Now it has pleased God, according to His sovereign good pleasure, according to the counsel of His will, to reveal this covenant life outside of himself and to make the creature a partaker of that divine covenant life.”³¹

It pleases God to dwell with His people, to walk with them, to know them, to be known by them, to speak to them, to hear them and to hold

²⁹ H. Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith* (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI), 260f.

³⁰ H. Hoeksema.

³¹ H. Hoeksema.

intimate communion with them, Ps. 25:14. And even, wonder of wonders, it pleases Him to dwell in them.

This biblical truth helps us to appreciate our covenant making and covenant keeping God. It is displayed in the following divine characteristics:

1. *the unity, tri-unity, and blessedness of our God, and*

2. *the love the triune God has for sinners.*

2. *Furthermore, since God's being and counsel are the eternal fountain of the covenant of grace and plan of salvation, this Biblical truth assures us of the certainty of the unchangeableness of our salvation. It rests on a safe and solid base.*

E. The Foil of the Covenant of Grace

The Covenant of Works is the foil against which the covenant of grace must be understood. It is the necessary and divinely revealed backdrop against which subsequent redemption and its recorded history (the Bible) plays out. This is evidenced by several facts. The Bible teaches that in Adam all mankind sinned and are under the curse and wrath of God (Hos. 6:7, Rom. 5:12, Rom. 6:23). As a result they are born into the state of sin and misery (Rom. 5:12, Eph. 2:3). Christ stands as the covenantal or federal head of His elect people. Through his life and work their sin has been forensically removed (Rom. 3:2-16). Part of that work was His death on the cross by which He bore the penalty of the covenant of works in behalf of His elect people (Gal. 3:10-14). Thus, all mankind are responsible to keep the covenant of works—to be perfectly obedient to the righteous law of God (Rom. 2:26).

F. The Unity of the Covenant of Grace

1. The Forensic Unity of the Covenant of Grace

The pre-fall covenant (as the necessary background and foil of all that follows historically and legally) and the various post-fall covenants of redemptive history in the Bible *unite in one over-arching covenant of grace* (sometimes called the covenant of redemption—a term often reserved for the eternal inter-Trinitarian covenant) *from creation to the consummation at the end of the world. This one covenant is eternal. It*

began in eternity past, embraces all of history, and continues in its blessings and curses throughout eternity to come. This unity and oneness is evident from two perspectives: God's covenants manifest a structural and a thematic unity in the Bible.

The entire revelation of God recorded in the Bible displays a forensic or legal argument. All mankind is under the legal judgment of the covenant of works, and God has responded to that sentence in behalf of His people. Much of the biblical record details how mankind evidences their rebellion against God and justifies the censure of God upon them (Rom. 1:1-3:19). The covenant of grace is God's response to man's situation (state).

2. The Structural Unity of the Covenant of Grace

As noted above, this involves a shift in meaning from the eternal divine covenant that embraces the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, to the covenant of grace alone. In the discussion of the structural unity of the covenant, we deal only with the covenant of grace.

This unity is evident in the history and experience of God's people from Adam to Christ.

a. Adam: the Covenant of Commencement (Gen. 3:14-19; Rom. 8:7, 20-22; 16:20; 1 Tim. 2:15)

God's words to Adam, Eve, and the serpent immediately after the fall set forth promises and curses that ultimately find their completion in Jesus Christ. Since these statements sovereignly define the conditions of life under a corporate and representative head, it has rightly been concluded that they are the substance of the covenant. The central promise of this covenant, restoration through the destruction of the serpent and the wounding of the seed of the woman, establishes this as a covenant of grace. God's words declare the nature of the struggle that shall ensue in the cause of bringing man to salvation. In the sweat of man's face, through the pain of childbirth, by the provision of a singular Champion, God shall achieve for man thoroughgoing redemption. The aim of this entire program is the restoration of man to the situation of fellowship and blessing in which he was created originally and which he enjoyed in the

garden of Eden—with the new element that in the covenant of grace it is guaranteed that redeemed man will never fall from that condition into which God brings them (Rom. 9).

b. Noah: The Covenant of Preservation (Gen. 6:17-22; 8:20-22; 9:1-17)

After the flood, God made a covenant with mankind through Noah guaranteeing to preserve the earth until the history of redemption was complete. This preservation has as its primary goal the sustaining and governing of the world until full redemption is achieved in Jesus Christ, i.e., until the promise of redemption in the seed of the woman is fulfilled. God's grace sovereignly centers on, or elects, a single family that He saves from the destructive judgment of the flood. He seals His gracious relationship to them and all their posterity by the sign of the rainbow. After the flood God declares that the descendants of Noah shall be blessed in Shem suggesting that redemption was to come through that family line, and thus briefly God outlines the history of the world. It is clear that redemption rests solely upon divine grace and comes through the promise. With this in mind, it is difficult to understand how biblical readers can conclude that the covenant of God with Noah was not redemptive in its central substance. Surely that is its central point, that God guarantees history shall continue as the background through which redemption will come to be—the redemption He is going to work upon and through man.

c. Abraham: The Covenant of Promise (Gen. 15, 17; Rom. 4; Gal. 3; Exod. 2:24; 6:4-8; 32:13,14; 23:31; Josh. 1:3)

This covenant of the promise may be termed thusly in a unique sense in view of Rom. 4 and Gal. 3. In this covenant God advanced His redemptive purposes by choosing a certain people (family) and promising to grant them eternal life and world dominion (Rom. 4:13). These promises were set forth in types as the promises of a land (cf., Heb. 11:8-10, 13-16, Rom. 4:13), a seed (Rom. 4:9-12), and a blessing to all the nations of the world (Rom. 4:16-18, Gal. 3). If one studies the scriptural references included here, he will become very much aware that each of these covenants is integrally related to the other. The prior covenants (including the covenant of works) become the presupposed base(s) upon

which each successive covenant is built. The final covenant looks back and becomes the fulfillment of everything that proceeded.

d. Moses: The Covenant of the Law (Josh. 21:43-45; Exod. 19:6; Deut. 30; Exod. 6:1-8; Deut. 1:1f; Exod. 32:13; Ps. 105:8-10; Lev. 26:42.)

Although somewhat a misnomer, this has been called the covenant of the Law because it is here that God's law finds its most detailed recorded expression. God now forms the people of Abraham into a nation through the giving of the land and the law. In this He fulfills the promises given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (it is important to emphasize that the ultimate and final fulfillment is in Jesus Christ). As explained in Josh. 21:43-45, not one of all the promises that God gave to Abraham failed. All were fulfilled. Israel was solidified as a distinct nation and consecrated as God's own priests (Exod. 19:6). The precepts of the Law were particular expressions (many of them were "particular law") of eternal justice and truth, of God's own nature (Ps. 19). They taught the people the requirements of godly living thus convicting them of sin (the first use of the Law, 1 Tim. 1:8-11), enhancing their awareness of their need for redemption (the second use, Rom. 7:7-11), and emphasizing the type of life expected for God's holy people (the third use, Rom. 8:7-9; 13:8-10; Jam. 2:8-12). This covenant sets forth the promise of redemption by grace both through types and in prophecies (cf., Deut. 30). It did not teach that man could save himself by good works (Gal. 2:15-16, 3:1ff.).

e. David: The Covenant of the Kingdom (2 Sam. 7, Ps. 78:60-72, Matt. 1:1, Luke 1:32, 69; John 7:42, Acts 2:29-36, 13:23, Rom. 1:3, Heb. 1:5, 2 Sam. 7:8f., 23:5, 2 Sam. 7:6,23, and 1 Kings 2:3f.)

The Davidic covenant is rooted in the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants. The centralization of worship under David was anticipated by Moses, Deut. 12:5,11,14,18. The ark brought to Jerusalem connected with the coronation of the king and the establishment of God's (the king's) throne was in fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant (1 Chron. 16:15-18, 2 Kings 17:13f.). In the covenant made through David, God transformed a nation that He had chosen in Abraham to be a merely human kingdom into an eternal kingdom where His throne would ever dominate (1 Sam. 6:5-9, 2 Sam. 7). Under David and Solomon the land was more fully possessed and the kingdom of God was typologically established on earth.

God promised to establish His rule forever over His people through a descendant of David. As the kingdom crumbled, God revealed to His people more fully that greater day when a greater occupant of David's throne would come. This promised and anointed one (the Messiah) would sit on the throne of David forever and rule the world in righteousness (cf., Heb. 1:5, Acts 2:29-36).

3. The Unity Evident Genealogically

This unity is evident in the development of the covenants genealogically, in the line of continued generations.

a. *That God's covenant arrangements run along genealogical lines is evident from the "seed" promise with its first presentation under Adam in Gen. 3:15, its republication under Noah in Gen. 5:29, and its repetition in Abraham in Gen. 15:18, in the Mosaic covenant in passages such as Exod. 20:5,6, Deut. 7:9, and in the Davidic covenant in 2 Sam. 7:12. Here the Messiah, David's son is heir to the promises of Moses and Abraham. See also Deut. 5:2,3; 29:14f; Ps. 105:8-10; Isa. 59:21; Acts 3:25.*

b. *Deut. 7:9 tells us that covenant promises extend to one thousand generations, not only reminding us that there is an eternal central theme to the covenant but also that it involves a continuous succession of generations.*

c. *Two important principles must be kept in mind at this point.*

The "grafting in" principle, Gen. 17:12,13; cf., Exod. 12:38, Num. 11:4 and Lev. 24:10 with Num. 9:1-5 and Exod. 12:43-49; cf., Num. 13:6 with 32:12). Any definition of the significance of "Israel" must include this dimension. "Israel" cannot be restricted to a closed ethnic community, Rom. 11:17,19. By "ingrafting" the Gentile becomes an Israelite in the full sense of the word. His line stands as a legal heir of genealogical promises.

The "pruning" principle is another important principle and it teaches that God not only grafts in certain individuals or families but he cuts others off. This is presented throughout the Bible and, according to

Paul in Rom. 9:6, these two principles must be used together in defining what the Bible means by Israel (also, cf., Mal. 1:2-3, Gen. 25:23). This must also be included in identifying “Israel” today (Rom. 9:6).

These two principles also teach us that there is a fundamental or foundational essence of the covenant (including only those who are eternally elect, Rom. 9:11) and a “secondary” aspect to the covenant (including those under the covenant in an “external” or “outward” way only), Rom. 9:8.

4. *The Thematic Unity of the Biblical Covenants*

There is not only forensic, structural and genealogical unity of the covenants throughout the Bible but there is also a thematic unity.

a. *Union and communion of God in Christ with believers is the heart of all Biblical covenants, Gen. 17:7, Exod. 6:6,7, 19:4,5, Lev. 11:45, Deut. 4:20, 29:13, 2 Kings 11:17, 2 Chron. 23:16, Ezek. 34:24, Jer. 24:7, 31:33; 32:37f., Zech. 2:11, 8:8,16, Eph. 4:25, Heb. 8:10, and 2 Cor. 6:16. These verses argue this very clearly.*

b. *There is the “Emmanuel-principle,” God with us, throughout the Bible. In the Old Testament it is developed in terms of God's actual dwelling (in the tabernacle) in the midst of His people, Exod. 25:8, 29:42-45, Lev. 26:9-13, Deut. 12:5,11,14, 14:22, 16:2-11, Ezek. 37:26-28. Also, compare the presence of God in the garden of Eden where God comes and dwells from time to time with Adam and Eve, having fellowship with them, Gen. 3:8, and compare this with the coming of the Angel of the Lord where God comes and fellowships with His people, Gen. 16:11-13. Now Christ dwells among us as Emmanuel “tabernacled” with us (never to depart or be taken away), John 1:14, Eph. 2:21f., Rev. 7:15, 21:3. In Christ the heart-theme of the Old Testament reaches a climax in that the promise of God dwelling with His people is embodied in a single person, Isa. 42:6, 49:8, and 55:3,4.*

c. *All expressions of the covenant of grace rest on grace. Before the fall grace originates the blessed state of man while the continuation of that state rested on man's obedience (works). After the fall both regaining and maintaining a blessed relationship rest on grace—it is initiated and*

sustained by grace. Now works are that which evidences true faith (James 2:18).

d. All expressions of the covenant of grace call man to fulfill his responsibility as prophet, priest, and king. In each successive covenant, those themes of prophet, priest and king are not only set forth and assumed, but also often are further developed and given more explicit definition.

e. All the covenants from Eden to the new covenant present man, that is, man as a male, as the head over womankind.

G. The Unity Between the Old Testament Covenant(s) and the New Covenant

The New Covenant may be understood in no other way than as a realization and fulfillment of the projections and promises of the Old Testament covenant(s), i.e., Adamic, Noachian, Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic. These various promises are picked up and in the New Testament applied explicitly to the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 1:20).

Jer. 31:31f., 32:41, and 32:39-40 show the intertwining of the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants in the New Covenant.

Ezek. 34:20f shows the intertwining of the Davidic and New Covenants.

Ezek. 37:24-26 combines all three in the New Covenant. (See Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; Heb. 8:6-13; 10:15-18, 2 Cor. 6:16.)

When the following passages are compared to other passages in the New Testament a unity of the Adamic and Noachian Covenants with the New Covenant is evident, Gen. 8:22, Rom. 16:20, and Gen. 3:15.

H. *The Content of This Covenantal Unity*

1. *The Old Testament covenants and new covenant have the same goal: the establishment of a kingdom of priests and of a holy nation, Exod. 19:5f., 1 Pet. 2:9, i.e., a kingdom of prophets (Acts 21:7-21, cf., 1 Cor. 2:10-16), priests, and kings. God calls His people a "kingdom of*

prophets" in the New Testament as well. He addresses them as "a new priesthood," as "royal kings" in such passages as 1 Pet. 2.

2. *The Old Testament post-fall covenants and the new covenant are all covenants of grace, Exod. 14:13; 15:2, 19:4, 20:2, 22:19, John 3:14, Exod. 32:13, Deut. 20:3f., and Heb. 11:24-29.*

3. *The Old Testament covenants and the new covenant define sin as transgression of revealed law, Josh. 7:11, Isa. 24:5, Hos. 6:7, 1 John 3:4.*

All post-fall biblical covenants have the same goal, definitions, principles, operating power and foundation. "Grace is the foundation, and holiness, the character of all covenant relationships with God."³²

It is important to realize that this concept of the covenant of grace is not a new theological concept. It certainly was expressed clearly by John Calvin.³³

III. CONCLUSION

This chapter has sought to contrast and compare our proposed definition of covenant with the proposals of Robertson and Murray. Both scholars present helpful contributions to the ongoing discussion of biblical theology. The proposals they advance, however, entail certain inadequacies. Robertson's proposal is that a divine covenant is both a bond in blood and a bond with life and death consequences—both definitions are inadequate to explain the biblical material because neither is sufficient to describe all the biblical covenants. Murray proposes that a covenant is essentially a divine administration of grace. Such a definition lacks the specificity of Robertson's "bond," although it does more adequately "flesh out" Robertson's bare bones offering, etc. Thus, both proposals focus on a particular aspect of biblical divine covenants and offer significant insights. So, what is needed is a definition that embraces both while going beyond them by including a focus on the formalizing

³² G. Bahnsen, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics* (The Craig Press, Nutley, NJ, 1977), 183-203.

³³ A. Hoekema, "The Covenant of Grace in Calvin's Teaching," *Calvin Theological Journal*, Nov. 1967, 130-139.

element the word “covenant” carries. So, too, the definition proffered in the introduction to this book is advanced as a more proper biblical view.

There were several significant propositions noted here. First, the Biblically revealed divine covenants with man have their origin in the eternal nature and decrees of God. Second, the covenant of grace, and all of its particular historical publications has as its foil the covenant of works. Third, the covenant of grace that embraces the entire biblical revelation after the fall is unified forensically, structurally, genealogically, and thematically. The plurality of divinely revealed covenants is presented in the Bible under the names old covenant and new covenant. Traditionally, believers have used the words Old Testament and New Testament in referring to this biblical distinction. The treatment also noted that, biblically speaking, there is a unity between these two units.

The chapter concluded with a brief outline of the content of the covenant of grace.

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Chapter 2. **THE PREFALL COVENANT WITH ADAM – THE COVENANT OF WORKS**

We come now to a more specific introduction, having given somewhat of a survey presenting the idea of “covenant” not only in its central core meaning but also as it extended throughout the whole Bible. At this point we are looking at some of those things needed to contextualize our discussion of the specific section by section exposition of the Bible from the perspective of covenantal theology and of biblical theology, i.e., covenantal biblical theology. Then we will turn to a more detailed consideration of the covenant of works.

No era in the history of redemption from post-fall Adam to Christ (to the end of the world) stands outside the realm of God's covenantal dealings with His people in Christ.

I. THE COVENANT OF WORKS IN THE WESTMINSTER STANDARDS

The Westminster Standards say many things about the covenant with Adam before the fall (prelapsarian).

Westminster Confession of Faith, VII, II:

“The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, (Gal 3:12), wherein life was promised to Adam; and in him to his posterity, (Rom 10:12-20), upon condition of perfect and personal obedience, (Gen. 2:17, Gal 3:10).”

Westminster Confession of Faith, XIX, I, II:

“God gave to Adam a law, as a covenant of works, by which He bound him and all his posterity, to personal, entire, exact and perpetual obedience, promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it, and endued him with power and ability to keep it, (Gen. 1:26,28, 2:17, Rom. 2:14,15, 10:5, 5:12,19, Gal. 3:10,12, Eccles. 7:29, Job 28:28).

“This law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness . . .(Jam. 1:25, 2:8,10,11).”

Larger Catechism, Question 20:

“What was the providence of God toward man in the estate in which he was created? The providence of God toward man in the estate in which he was created was, the placing of him in paradise, appointing him to dress it, giving him liberty to eat of the fruit of the earth, (Gen. 2:8, 2:15,16), putting the creatures under his dominion, (Gen. 1:28), ordaining marriage for his help, (Gen. 2:18), affording him communion with himself, (Gen. 1:27, 28), and instituting the Sabbath (Gen. 2:3); entering into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience, (Gen. 2:16,17, Rom 5:12-14, 10:5, Luke 10:25-28), of which the tree of life was a pledge; and forbidding to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death (Gen. 2:17).”

Larger Catechism, Question 21:

“Did man continue in that estate wherein God at first created him? Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, through the temptation of Satan, transgressed the commandment of God, in eating the forbidden fruit, and thereby fell from the estate of innocence wherein they were created (Gen. 3:6-8,13, 2 Cor 11:3).”

Larger Catechism, Question 22:

“Did all mankind fall in that first transgression? The covenant being made with Adam, as a public person, not for himself only, but for his posterity, all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, (Acts 17:26, Gen. 2:16,17, Rom 5:12-14; 10:5, Luke 10:25-28), sinned in him, and fell with him in that first transgression (Gen. 2:17, Rom 5:12-20, 1 Cor 15:21,22).”

Shorter Catechism, Question 12:

“What special act of providence did God exercise towards man, in the estate wherein he was created? When God created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience (Gen. 2:16,17, Rom 5:12-14, 10:5, Luke 10:25-28); forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death (Gen. 2:17).”

Shorter Catechism, Question 16: (does not read this, only refers to it).

“Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression? The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, (Acts 17:26, Gen. 2:16,17, Rom 5:12-14, 10:5, Luke 10:25-28), all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression (Gen. 2:17, Rom 5:12-20, 1 Cor 15:21,22).”

This covenant with Adam (prelapsarian) is given several names: “the covenant of works,” emphasizing the conditions of this covenant; “the covenant of life,” emphasizing the central blessing; “the covenant of creation,” emphasizing its universality, etc. Any of these titles is adequate, but not totally so.

II. THE SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE FOR THE COVENANT OF WORKS

We come now to consider specifically the revelation of God contained in the Bible, given to Adam before the fall. One question is often asked, namely, "Why do we call this a *covenant* of works?" Indeed, it is somewhat debated in Reformed circles whether the term covenant rightfully applies to this period of revelation as the Westminster Confession of Faith and Standards say it does. The Bible gives us a number of clear passages demonstrating that the Confession is not merely expressing the opinion of human beings, but is summarizing the teaching of the Bible.

First, there is Hos. 6:7,

“But like Adam [NKJV, men] they transgressed the

covenant; there they dealt treacherously with Me.”

This passage states that *just as Adam transgressed the covenant arrangement established by God at the creation, so Israel has transgressed the covenant given at Sinai. Thus, Hos. 6:7 specifically mentions a covenant with Adam—see the parallel in Job 31:33.* It cannot mean “like men they transgress the covenant” because (a) in the Hebrew the word Adam, although it possibly means men in the plural, is not in the plural—it is a singular noun, and (b) it would be rather meaninglessly redundant to say that like men, men transgressed the covenant because how could men sin any other way except like men. Nor can this verse mean, as it is sometimes rendered, that they sinned “at Adam” that is, the geographical place called “Adam” (cf., Josh. 3:16), because the Hebrew clearly reads “as Adam” rather than “at Adam.” Moreover, “at Adam” leaves us with a reference to some otherwise unknown historical event while the context requires a well-known historical event.³⁴

Second, among the several other passages that establish that the pre-fall material is called a covenant in the Bible are, Rom. 8:20-23.

“For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.”

In this regard, let us also consider,

“The earth mourns and fades away, The world languishes and fades away; The haughty people of the earth languish. The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.” Isa. 24:4,5

According to Rom. 8, then, God subjected the creation to futility

³⁴ For a more detailed exposition of this passage cf., B. B. Warfield, *Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield* (Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing), 1970, “Hosea Vi. 7: Adam or Aman?”, 116ff.

because of the fall, and it groans for deliverance now and until the consummate coming of Christ. This refers to more than subjection. By necessary implication, it refers to the fact that God laid down a certain condition to Adam (Gen. 2:17). He transgressed this condition and did die—spiritually, that is (Gen. 3:6-7). Moreover, Gen. 3:14-15 establishes that the act of Adam and Eve involved all mankind, indeed the entire creation, in their sin and fall (cf., Rom. 5:12). Since the return of Christ effects the “glorious liberty of the children of God,” Paul is referring in Romans to the promised reversal of the effects of the fall (cf., Gen. 3:15). Hence, he is referring to the breaking of the covenant of works and the result, the futility and groaning of the entire creation.

The earth mourns and fades away (is subjected to futility), etc., because of its inhabitants as Paul repeats in Romans. It is fading away because of the sin of Adam. When Isa. 24:4-5 is compared to Rom. 8:20-23 it is evident that the everlasting covenant that was broken was the covenant of works. To support the interpretation that “earth” and “world” refer to the entire world and not just to the land of Palestine compare, Isa. 24:21,

“It shall come to pass in that day that the LORD will punish on high the host of exalted ones, and on the earth the kings of the earth.”

The words “and on earth the kings of the earth,” specifically teach that the reference in Isa. 24:4-5 is not just to the land and kingdom of Palestine but the entire creation.³⁵

Thus, in Rom. 8:20-22 Paul alludes to Isa. 24:4-5 insofar as his language virtually repeats some of that earlier language (cf., “the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs,” with “the earth mourns and ... languishes³⁶”), and his thought is virtually the same. Also, we see this as a reference to the covenant of works because Isa. 24 expressly states that the inhabitants of the earth have broken the “everlasting covenant,” which, since it refers to a universal covenant whose terms are binding on all men appears to be referring to the created circumstances upon

³⁵ Cf., E.J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, Vol. II (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1969), p. 158.

³⁶ Cf., *The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Moody Press, Bible Works Program), ‘*ml*’, “to languish.” Hereafter, *TWOT*.

mankind, or, to the covenant before the fall. We call this the covenant of works because, although established by grace and its blessings of life were granted by grace, the continuation of this latter condition depended on man's sustaining the probation, i.e., on man's works.

Third, another series of verses teaching there was a pre-fall covenant which God made with mankind is Jer. 33:20-21, 25-26, 35-37.

“Thus says the LORD: 'If you can break My covenant with the day and My covenant with the night, so that there will not be day and night in their season [cf., Gen. 1:14-18³⁷], 'then My covenant may also be broken with David My servant, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and with the Levites, the priests, My ministers.’” 33:20-21

“Thus says the LORD: 'If My covenant is not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, 'then I will cast away the descendants of Jacob and David My servant, so that I will not take any of his descendants to be rulers over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For I will cause their captives to return, and will have mercy on them.’” 33:25-26

“Thus says the LORD, Who gives the sun for a light by day, the ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, who disturbs the sea, and its waves roar (the LORD of hosts is His name): “If those ordinances depart from before Me, says the LORD, then the seed of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before Me forever.” Thus says the LORD: “If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, says the LORD.” 33:35-37

The terminology in these passages is an obvious allusion to the covenant established at creation, rather than to the one with Noah. The sun and moon and stars, as light-bearers, are mentioned in Gen. 1 and Jer., but not in Gen. 9 (the Noahic Covenant). Both the creation narrative

³⁷ Note that this covenant is with day and night and that the Noahic covenant was with the earth and all its inhabitants (Gen. 9:13, 15)

and Jer. refer to stars and moon, while the Noahic Covenant makes no such reference. The covenant in Jer. is a covenant with the day and night while the covenant in Gen. 9 is a covenant with the earth and all its inhabitants. Therefore, *Jer. 31 alludes to the covenant with Adam established at creation before the fall.*

The omission of the word, “covenant” in the verses in Gen. one and two prior to the fall is no argument against referring to this revelation as the covenant of works. *The word, “covenant,” is also absent in the affirmation of the Davidic covenant in 2 Sam. 7 and 1 Chron. 17, but that relationship is clearly covenantal.* All the elements required by the definition of “covenant” as a sovereign bond formally concluded or instituted and issuing in an administration of blessing and promise,³⁸ are present in this divinely established pre-fall relationship between God and Adam (mankind).

Fourth, the parallel that Paul draws between Adam and Christ in Rom. 5:12-20 and 1 Cor. 15:21-28 can be understood only on the assumption that Adam, like Christ, was the head of a covenant, who stood in a covenant relation to his descendants.

Having surveyed the evidence that there was a prefall covenant, it remains to defend the label “covenant of works.” As previously noted, there are several suggestions regarding the appropriate label for this covenant. “The covenant of works” is preferred in this discussion, because this identifies this covenant more closely with Paul’s discussion of justification by grace through faith (Rom. and Gal.). It should be apparent that he is contrasting two posited paths of justification: justification by grace through faith and justification by works. It is this latter thesis that identifies the path of justification under the prefall covenant. As noted in the previous paragraph, Paul’s discussion also parallels Adam and Christ as federal, or covenantal, heads. Hence, the label “covenant of works” is to be preferred. The following verses are helpful in reviewing Paul’s teaching: Rom. 3:19, 27, 4:2, 4, 6, and Gal. 3:10-14. The latter states:

¹⁰ “For as many as are under the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed *is* everyone who does

³⁸ Cf. 16.

not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.’¹¹ But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God *is* evident, for “the just shall live by faith.’¹² Yet the law is not of faith, but ‘the man who does them shall live by them.’¹³ Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed *is* everyone who hangs on a tree’),¹⁴ that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” Gal. 3:10-14

Verse 10 virtually says, “as many as are under the covenant of works are under the curse.” As shall be argued below God holds all men responsible not only for the laws before the fall but for all the stipulations (laws) after the fall. This statement, of course, assumes that the reader understands the difference between particular and non-particular laws. All of God’s laws express His eternal holiness, righteousness and will, but particular laws are unique insofar as they address situations and commands which providentially change. Hence, in the case of particular laws, the form of such laws passes away as the history of redemption advances but the principles they encase continue.

Verse 12 may be understood to mean “yet the covenant of works is not a covenant of faith because the man who keeps its ordinances shall seek his life in them and there is no life found in this pursuit [because no mere man can successfully complete it].” Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law that prevails under the covenant of works, having become the curse for us.

Therefore, the label “covenant of works” is used in this current discussion.

III. THE ELEMENTS OF THE COVENANT OF WORKS

A. Its Foundation: the Grace of God.

R.L. Dabney:

“God's act of entering into a covenant with Adam... will be found to be one of pure grace and condescension. God moved

by pure grace, condescended to establish a covenant with his [sic] holy creature (Adam), in virtue of which a temporary obedience might be graciously accepted as a ground for God's communicating Himself to him, and assuring him ever after of holiness, happiness and communion with God.”

Westminster Confession of Faith, VII, I.

“The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience unto him [sic] as their Creator, yet they could never have any fruition of him [sic], as their blessedness and reward, but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which he [sic] hath been pleased to express by way of covenant.”

This relationship was not simply a natural one of Creator and creature, like that between a sovereign and his subject devoid of any claim, yet it is also a sovereign disposition of an eternal God towards an undeserving creature. It had the added quality of a covenantal relation wherein a loving Father graciously [sought] (and continues to seek) the welfare and happiness of His dependent creature.

B. Its Context: the Creation

1. The Order of Creation

a. The Beginning

Someone has said that perhaps the most important statement in the Bible is "in the beginning God."

In Gen. 1:1 we read “In the beginning God.” This asserts that when the beginning came and indeed before there was a beginning, God existed. Some scholars argue that the phrase, "in the beginning" (i.e., Hebrew, *b^ereshith*), should be understood in terms of the Akkadian *enuma* (literally, “*in the day*,” but connoting “*when*”) that opens the Babylonian account of the creation. This whole problem is discussed by Heidel in his book, *The Babylonian Genesis*. He points out that there is no linguistic equivalence between the Babylonian phrase, *enuma*, and the Hebrew

phrase, *b^ereshith*. The Hebrew for “in the day” or “when” would be *b^eyom*. The Hebrew phrase, “in the beginning,” points to a *definite beginning* of things that did not exist before, whereas the Babylonian phrase, *enuma* merely points to an *intermediate* step in the continuation of a series of steps.³⁹ Moreover we conclude that when the Bible says, “in the beginning God”, it refers to God as that person who existed before the beginning and who initiated all things.

Thus, matter and created energy are not eternal, only God the Creator is eternal. There is an emphasis here on His preexistence and eternity because time is created in the creation event itself—God is the eternal one (Deut. 33:27). There is an emphasis upon the divine omnipotence because since only God existed, only God had the power and the authority to bring all things into existence—God is the almighty one (Gen. 17:1). Additional qualities or attributes of God are also implied in this creation account, but we leave this matter undiscussed.

b. The Creator

(1) His pre-existence, eternity, and omnipotence (just covered)

(2) The Trinity, Gen. 1:26

We see in the creation account, furthermore, a reflection of the Trinity. Some scholars have concluded that the “us” in verses such as Gen. 1:26, is not to be taken as a plural of separate persons but is to be understood as a plural of royalty (or majesty). As the kings referred to themselves in the plural, i.e., as “us,” so say these scholars, God speaks in the plural as “us.” Others say that the plural here is to be understood not as a plural of royalty but as a plural of exaltation or majesty (for lack of a better word). That is, in using the plural, the Bible is intending to say that this God exists as the most exalted of all gods and, since it is the biblical God here represented, there is none other. Moreover, they offer as proof the fact that when the Bible talks about Baal, it often talks about Baal in the plural, i.e., in Hebrew, *baalim*. Often the translations render this word as not Baal but Baals, whereas the results of archaeology make it clear that there was only one god called Baal. The same is true of the goddess Asherah. Asherah often occurs in the Hebrew in the plural, *Ashtoreth*, and

³⁹ Young, 3-14.

sometimes is even translated thus. Ashtoreth seems to be the same goddess as Asherah. Both names identify the consort of Baal. Ashtoreth, a plural noun, is specified as the one consort of Baal in Judg. 2:13, and as one goddess in a list of gods in 2 Kings 23:13. Yet, we know from archeological studies that there is only one goddess Asherah. Hence, in the ancient biblical world the plural was used in the case of gods not to indicate there was a multiple number of gods identified by the same name, but to indicate that this god is an exalted being—either real or imagined. Hence, argue many scholars, the plural referring to our God in Gen. 1:26 should be read as, "and God (Hebrew, *elohim*), said..." The plural verb, "let us make," appears, therefore, not to suggest that the speaker is a plurality but simply to keep the verb in agreement with the plural subject, *elohim*.

We see this usage of the plural, however, as a suggestion of the Trinity because of what is said in John 1:1—a verse that provides a brief commentary on Gen. 1:1. Here, the Holy Spirit points to the creation by citing the opening words of Gen. 1:1, "In the beginning." He also teaches us that, like "God," the "Word" was present prior to the creation. "The Word was" also "with God." The preposition used in Greek, *pros*, is not only a "with" of accompanying, but a "with" of accompanying as an equal. But, if that is not sufficient, the Holy Spirit adds that the "Word" was God. The two words "Word" and "God" are related interestingly in the Greek. First, what is the predicate nominative in English, viz., "God" is the first word in the Greek clause. It is clear from the context, however, that the subject is "the Word." By placing "God" first in the clause and then putting the predicate "was" followed by the subject, "the Word," the emphasis falls decidedly on "God." It should be certain to the trained eye that the subject is "the Word" insofar as the entire sentence carries this noun throughout as its repeated and emphasized subject. Finally, the word "God" has no definite article. Some have suggested that the Bible is teaching that the Word was a God. But this is far from the truth either theologically or grammatically. The Bible repeatedly teaches there is but one true God. It says there is no other God, there is no God besides Him, and "before Me there was no God formed, nor shall there be after Me" (Deut. 6:4, Isa. 44:6, 8, 43:10). The Bible is emphatically monotheistic. Thus, John 1:1 cannot be saying, "the Word was a God." It must be saying, "the Word was God." Indeed, it says this most uniquely by omitting the definite article before the word "God." This construction in

the Greek attributes all of the characteristics of the predicate nominative (God) to the subject (the Word). Thus, Jesus is granted the fullness of deity just as Paul teaches in Col. 2:9 and as Hebrews asserts in 1:3. Now, in view of God's own understanding of the creation account, we conclude that the Trinity is implied in the "us" of Gen. 1:26. The Father, the Spirit (who hovered over the surface of the waters), and the Son (who was, in some way, the word spoken) are all present in the creation account.

Moreover, we learn additional significant truths elsewhere in the Bible that help us understand that the three persons of the Trinity were active and mentioned in Gen. 1.

[1] The Father, Rom. 11:36, 1 Cor. 8:6

In Romans it tells us that the creation is from God the Father "from whom, to whom, and for whom are all things."

[2] The Son, John 1:1, Eph. 3:9, Col. 1:16, Heb. 1:10. Rev. 1:8, 1 Cor. 8:6

We find much elsewhere in the Bible that further supports our understanding of Gen. 1. In Eph. 3:9 we read that God created all things by Christ.⁴⁰ Col. 1:16 says of Jesus, "For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him." Verse 17 adds that He "is before all things, and by (Him) all things consist." Heb. 1:2 teaches us that God "made the worlds" through Jesus Christ. In Rev. 1:8 Jesus declares, "I am the Beginning and the End." Finally, there are at least two confessions in the Bible acknowledging Jesus had an active part in the creation of all things in the beginning. First, there is Heb. 1:10, "And: 'You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands.'" Paul confesses in 1 Cor. 8:6, "yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live." While these verses all reflect specificity not found in Gen. 1:1, they do tell us that Christ was present and active in the creation. It is John 1:1, however,

⁴⁰ We note that the "by Christ" does not occur in the Western readings.

that specifically stands as a divine interpretation of Gen. 1.

[3] The Holy Spirit, Gen. 1:2

We see the Holy Spirit in Gen. 1:2 when it says that the Spirit of God “brooded.” The Spirit is described as brooding over the surface of the primordial waters.⁴¹ The picture set forth is that of a large bird sitting upon its nest over its eggs waiting for them to hatch. Thus, the Spirit is active in the creating process—at least at the beginning, if not throughout the entire process. Moreover, the Spirit is clearly distinct from the God who does the speaking calling forth the various works of creation. Warfield concludes this speaks of the Holy Spirit as He was involved in the creation depicting Him as a distinct person of the Trinity. He connects this with other Old Testament appearances of the Spirit in His capacity as the agent executing the divine will in the creation—the cosmos. He calls this the cosmical Spirit. The Old Testament also depicts the Spirit as having a national (a corporate) and an individual (a personal) function. Warfield cautions that the presentation of the person and the work of the Spirit in the creation account is only germinal.⁴²

Therefore it appears that all three persons of the Trinity appear in Gen. 1 and although they are not be depicted as specifically as in the New Testament, nonetheless, from the outset of the biblical revelation, the idea of the Trinity is, in seminal form, clearly set forth.

c. The Order: Submission to God

Having looked at the "beginning nature" of the creation and at the Creator, at least briefly, we now look at what the text says about the order of creation. Certainly, one of the most significant teachings in the opening chapter of Genesis is the fact that God created all things in a specific order. Our God from the beginning is a God of orderliness who requires

⁴¹ Young, *Studies in Genesis One*, 36-42.

⁴² B.B. Warfield, *The Words of Benjamin B. Warfield*, II (Baker: Grand Rapids, 2004), “The Spirit of God in the Old Testament,” 107ff. Warfield points to Gen. 1:2 as the first mention of the Holy Spirit in the Bible. He identifies this use as the cosmical Spirit and explains that although in the Old Testament the Holy Spirit performs all the functions and bears the same characteristics as in the New Testament, the Old Testament does not clearly present the Spirit as “a distinct hypostasis in the divine nature,” 124-125. So, what is patent in the New Testament is latent in the Old Testament, 140ff.

us to submit to Him, His covenant and His directions.

(1) Primary teaching

The primary teaching in this creation account is the fact of order and orderliness, and not the length of days. Sometimes we evangelicals get caught up in the extensive discussion of the meaning of the word "day" as it is used in the repeated phrase "and it was evening and it was morning, the ... nth day." This certainly is an important discussion because, if for no other reason, God put the material there for us to know and believe. There are four prevailing views among reformed evangelicals: one view is that the word "day" means an extended period of time; another is that the word "day" means a 24 hour period—or, an ordinary day; a third view holds we do not know how long the days were and perhaps some of them were very, very short; and a fourth view is that the significant thing here is not the order of the creation but the structural and theological framework the account sets forth.⁴³ Regardless of what view one holds, he must be careful not to be distracted from the main teaching of the passage. The main teaching is that God has created things in order—in a specific order. He has assigned an order to things and He expects us to follow that order. The creation account, therefore, anticipates and underlines the responsibility of Adam and Eve (and all mankind) to submit to God's lordship.

(2) Sovereignly ordered

The order of creation sets forth God's power, and His inherent and resultant sovereign right—sovereignty orders all things. This is not a fortuitous or accidental teaching indirectly attached to the revelation, but the Bible specifically says God spoke and within a specific period that aspect of the creation He commanded came to be. God then went on to the next thing. He was the One who determined the length of the days. He was the One who determined the sequence of the days and He sets it all forth for a specific purpose.

(3) Ruling structure

Now all of what we have just set forth came to a climax on the sixth

⁴³ Cf., Coppes, *The Divine Days of Genesis*, (Providence Presbyterian Press, Thornton, CO, 2004).

day when God appointed man as the ruler over all the beasts, and over all the earth. The idea of lordship or ruling structure, however, is suggested before this. It is seen in the use of the ordinals and in the sequence of days. It may seem that is rather a minor theme in what the Bible says about days one to five, but is still a clear teaching. Some view the text as teaching that the elements created on the first day have rulers appointed over them on the fourth day. The rulers over the elements created on the second day were created and appointed on the fifth day. What was created on third day has rulers appointed and created on the sixth day. In spite of what might look to some as a structure or framework rooted in solid exegesis, a thoughtful study of the text demonstrates otherwise.⁴⁴ The framework interpretation has to ignore what the text says in favor of affirming its view. Day three specifically states that the heavenly lights, the sun and the moon, were to rule the day and night respectively—not the light. The record states that the birds of the fifth day were to multiply on the earth (Gen. 1:22) (their area of “dominion” included the earth) and, surprisingly, states that they were to fly above the *earth* across the face of the firmament of the heavens (Gen. 1:20). Thus, where day two speaks of the creation of the firmament without the dry land, day four speaks of the firmament only with the dry land—the two days envision two different entities. The birds are specifically related to the “entity” of day four (or even of day three) and not to the entity of day two. Moreover, man is appointed to rule over everything not just the dry land and plants of the third day. Specifically, he is granted dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the cattle, the creeping things, and over all the earth. It is almost as if the Lord anticipated the emergence of the framework hypothesis and carefully developed an explicit denial of it.

But, even if one accepts the framework hypothesis (which we do not accept), he must never allow that secondary framework to become the dominant teaching determining our understanding of what God is telling us in Gen. 1. It lies on the surface of the revelation that God's focus is on the order of the creation and with the earthly supremacy of man and the importance of the Sabbath rest of God, and this understanding is supported by careful exegesis of the creation account and what is learned from ancient Near Eastern studies. This understanding is further strengthened by what is said in Heb. 4. The inspired writer of Hebrews

⁴⁴ Cf., E. J. Young, *Studies in Genesis One*, (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishers, Phillipsburg, NJ), 1964, L.J. Coppes, *The Divine Days of Genesis*.

sees in the creation account the very themes just set forth, viz., the supremacy of man as the only earthly creature created in the divine image and the summons of all mankind to enter into God's rest (the state from which man fell). It is specifically stated that God rested on the seventh day—and, therefore, the text recognizes the six plus one order of the creation (Heb. 4:4). Hence, the focus of the creation account is on man's total submission to his Creator and the calling to enter God's rest. In Gen. 1 what God reveals to us emphatically underlines and emphasizes these themes. The repeated phrase "it was evening and it was morning" serve as an additional emphasis even to someone unfamiliar with the characteristics of Hebrew literary and grammatical techniques. This emphasis is more obvious to those who realize that the Hebrew writers used repetition as a significant tool to emphasize something. The conclusion of the revelation of each day's work with the ordinals *first*, *second*, *third*, *fourth*, and *fifth*, point and dramatically lead to the sixth day (the Hebrew text distinguishes the sixth day by prefixing the definite article, a grammatical normality omitted with ordinals "first" through "fifth"). The text also distinguishes the seventh ordinal with the definite article. Thus, the use of the definite article marks days six and seven as climatic and conclusive—a phenomenon consistent with the theological structure and teaching of the creation account. The sixth day is especially marked because of the uniqueness and centrality of man's creation. Finally, seven is the day that God claims and sanctifies. He demands that man as a person under His sovereignty, indeed, as the federal head, keep that day holy to Him. Thus, the crowning statement of the whole creation account and its primary teaching appears in Gen. 2:4 where it says, "God sanctified the seventh day."

(4) Man submitted to the divine Ruler: serving the Lord

Everything in the creation history is so developed and set forth as to underline service to God. God commands man to be fruitful and multiply, to till the soil, and to name the animals (in chapter 2).

In the first chapter it is evident that man is created to be in submission to God. The following elements set this forth. First, there is the bare fact that God commands man to serve him. God's command of submission is seen in the various orders and structures just listed. Second, the command of God necessarily implies man's responsibility to obey his

Creator and Lord. This responsibility is emphasized by the vast range of commands and structuring God gives to him. In chapter 2 every aspect of man's existence is ordered by God. Third, man is obligated to obey because he is a creation of God. He owes all obligation to his Creator.

Fourth, man is privileged to serve God in a unique sense. Of all that God created only one creature was made in God's image, man. This was a privilege not enjoyed, therefore, by any other creature within the created universe. The focus of this privilege is that man could *fellowship* with and serve God. This service is not burdensome because it was to be prosecuted before and apart from the fall. Once man fell, labor or service became cursed. Its excellency and blessedness is restored only in Christ. Hence, the New Testament joins together two otherwise disparate ideas, viz., service or slavery and blessedness, cf., John 18:36, Rom. 1:1. Moreover, here in Genesis the great God of all time and all creation who has made this creation, and set man in the middle of it asks man to serve Him—what a blessed privilege for man. Man's divinely commanded responsibility and privilege to rule and cultivate the earth to the glory of God are sometimes termed the cultural mandate.

(5) Time was to structure service & work: Sabbath service (Heb. 4)

Time was to be structured. Man's time was to be structured in such a way that all that is in man serves God. Six days he is to work in obedience to God's command (Gen. 1:28) and he is to rest from his labors on the seventh day (2:3). His service was divinely structured so that it was always to be crowned by rest and worship. As Jesus said, the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath (Mark 2:27). This implies that from the beginning a day was divinely set aside for rest and worship.

d. The Fact of Creation

We come now to a consideration of the fact of creation. This is an important matter. It is important because in the Bible, the totality of man's responsibility comes time and again to the fact that God alone is the Creator. Some interesting things need to be emphasized in response to those who would attack the Scripture or otherwise detract from the fact that God indeed is totally sovereign.

The first is that the whole creation was *ex nihilo*, that is, God created everything out of nothing. Some defend this thesis of God having created all things out of nothing from the Hebrew word "*bara*'." The biblical text reads, "In the beginning, God created" ("*berishith bara Elohim*"). Many evangelicals assert that the word, "*bara*'" in its root meaning, necessarily locks one into the idea of a creation out of nothing. But, this interpretation stumbles over passages like Ps. 104:30 that speaks of the renewal of the earth every spring and describes it with this Hebrew word, "*bara*'." There "*bara*'" does not mean to create out of nothing, but merely means to revive that which already exists. It is the combination of "in the beginning" and "*bara*'" that mandates the *ex nihilo* creation—God could not "renew" what did not previously exist. "In the beginning" is not a repeated phenomenon. Thus, we are told that there was nothing but God in the beginning and He originated or created all things that were created (the heavens and the earth, cf., John 1:1-3). The conclusion that all things were created out of nothing rests not only on Gen. 1:1 and John 1:1-3, but also on passages such as Heb. 11:3 where we are told, "by faith we understand that the things that do appear were made out of the things which are not seen." Therefore, we affirm that the word, "*bereshith*," which in Hebrew certainly means "in the beginning," implies and mandates that nothing except God Himself existed before that. And what follows in the creation account demonstrates clearly that what came to be had to come out of nothing because there was nothing but God that existed before that.⁴⁵

e. The *Fiat* Creation

We often talk of the *fiat* creation. The word *fiat* is Latin for "let it be," and is used to capulate and capture the idea that every creative event happened because God commanded it. God spoke and it was. This is a very central truth. God spoke and that which did not exist before, came into existence out of nothing. When it comes to man, the Bible emphasizes that man's soul was created out of nothing that preexisted. It is a *de novo* (brand new) creation. Moreover, man's body was not created out of a preexisting like-form. He was created out of the dust of the ground. The Genesis account describes the creation of man's body with the Hebrew word, "*yatsar*," which means to take something and mold it. It is

⁴⁵ For a more detailed discussion cf., Young, 3-14.

descriptive of what God did. He took the dust of the earth. He did not use a preexisting sub-human form, but the dust of the earth. He formed it into the body of man, and He breathed into that body the breath of life. So, at the very beginning, man is presented as having a physical element formed of out of the dust of the ground and a non-physical element, resulting from God's breathing into that body the breath of life. So, man became a living creature. Note that in all of this the Bible clearly speaks against that belief known today as evolution (macroevolution).⁴⁶

Not only is the theory of evolution contradicted by the creation account, but also much evidence has been offered to demonstrate this conclusion further. Such lines of evidence may be found in the following works: Phillip E. Johnson's *Darwin on Trial* (Intervarsity Press, Downers Grove, 1993, ed.), Evan Shute's *Flaws in the Theory of Evolution* (Craig Press, Nutley, 1976), Michael Behe's *Darwin's Black Box* (Simon & Schuster Adult Publishing Group, 1998).⁴⁷

From a Christian perspective, the extra-biblical evidence against evolution is mounting. One line of evidence is set forth in the tape series created and produced by the Creation Research Institute. These tapes give abundant scientific or factual material demonstrating that the unbeliever has twisted some evidence and denied other evidence in defending his anti-biblical position, evolution. Of course, any argument documented in print or some other permanent fashion, will soon be out of date, as far as some of its details are concerned, due to the ongoing development of evolutionary theorists. So, although some of the details may call for updating, the resources mentioned here supply arguments that continue to be valid.

The tapes also remind us that evolution was not a creation of Charles Darwin. In fact the early Egyptian literature that is among the oldest known human writings in existence, clearly sets forth evolution. These records show that some early Egyptians believed that all things evolved out of the eternally evolving reality. The belief in evolution was

⁴⁶ Additional biblical arguments obviating evolution may be found in William G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, 3rd Ed., (Presbyterian and Reformed, Phillipsburg, N. J.), 1891, Vol. 1, 371 ff., and Coppes, *What Say the Stones?* 46.

⁴⁷ The argument against evolution is summarized in the author's *What Say the Stones?* (Providence Presbyterian Press, Thornton, 2004), 67ff.

widespread in the ancient Orient—this is not to say that this belief dominated at that time. It was also encapsulated in the writings of some Greek philosophers and has been a much-heard philosophy among unbelievers in Western culture from these very early beginnings. On this basis, we understand that evolution is not simply a scientific theory but is a non-scientific, philosophical and religious commitment. In contrast to all this, the Bible clearly mandates and teaches that there is no such thing as macroevolution (the theory that all things came to be by purely nontheistic means and slowly developed from simple life forms to the complexities existing today). The tapes from the Creation Research Institute help some of us who are not experts in the various branches of science to see a review of how all the evidence that has been found readily adheres to the creation view.

Now we come to consider the fact that this was a *fiat* creation (*fiat* is Latin for “let there be”). We have already addressed this matter briefly but it is important to emphasize the Bible teaching that before the creation there was nothing but God, and thus there was nothing material at all. Then God spoke and things came into existence. The creation was not a process initiated and advanced by “nature”; the creation began and was advanced by divine monergism—including some sudden creative acts. The crown of the creation is man. At the very end of the creation, God created man, the earthly ruler over all that He had made, and He appointed him as the earthly ruler. God created man in His own image as the Westminster Larger Catechism teaches, God “created man male and female...after his own image in knowledge, righteousness and holiness [and with] dominion over the creatures.

The Bible teaches that God has no body, no material form. Some people have suggested that the idea of the image of God in man argues that God has body. Man is in the image of God, man has a body, and therefore, God must have a body. But, this runs into direct conflict with passages like Gen. 1:1 (cf., Heb. 11:1) that teaches the origin of all material things was a work of the eternal Creator and Deut. 4:15-20 where God explicitly commanded Israel to make no image of Him whatsoever because He has no body. John 4:24 teaches that God is a Spirit, i.e., He is purely spirit, and therefore He must not be worshipped in one particular place. This necessarily implies that since God is not *physically* located anywhere, He has no material form.

f. The Crown of Creation: Man, His Nature, and His Mandate,
Grace Given

(1) Man, His Nature, and His Mandate, Grace Given

The teaching of the Bible with reference to man is summarized in the Shorter Catechism 10 which states that "God created man male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness..., and with dominion over the creatures."

This means that man from the beginning had two parts. There is a material part, which the Bible describes as being the dust of the earth that was molded by God and a non-material part that the Bible describes when it says that God breathed into man the breath of life. So, that man is a unity of two separate parts from the beginning. God, on the other hand, does not have a body.

The Bible places special emphasis on the uniqueness of man. Man alone was created in the image of God. As the Bible reports it, both male and female were created in the divine image. The Catechism summarizes this aspect of man's being. He was created with a true knowledge of things. This does not mean man had equal knowledge with God, but simply that he was given the tools to know things, viz., an intellect, the ability to see, hear, feel, etc. Moreover, this original knowledge meant that man had a proper worldview from the outset. His reasoning processes were not clouded and biased by sin. Hence, all of his thinking rested on the presupposition of the Triune God and, without being clouded by the effects of the fall, proceeded on the basis of the existence of the Triune God. Consequently, man was not in rebellion against His Creator and was unstained by all the effects of sin. Initially man was the opposite of the description of fallen man presented in Rom. 1:20ff. He clearly saw and acknowledged the invisible attributes of God. He saw and glorified God as God. He was thankful to God for all the blessings heaped upon him. He gladly and from the heart submitted to the law of God. Thus, he was righteous, having never been polluted by sin. He was holy, having never been stained by sin. His inmost heart's desire was only to live in unbroken fellowship with God (cf., Rom. 8:7). Moreover, there was not another law, the law of sin and death, at work in his members (Rom. 7).

God gave His mandate to man. Man was to fill the earth, rule over it in service of God—he was to serve God as the vice-regent over the whole earth. In the midst of all this, the Bible makes it clear that when God first created man, He gave him every tool he needed to be a faithful servant, to continue serving God throughout all eternity. No good thing was withheld from man in the creation.

Grace was extended to man. This grace was expressed in the original creation of man in the image of God. No other creature was so favored. Man did nothing to gain or earn this distinction. Grace was extended to man with respect not only to his initial created nature, but with respect to the living fellowship with God into which he was placed upon his first becoming a conscious being. Grace was extended to man not only in being placed in such a fellowship but in God's enhancing that fellowship by His immediate presence. So, the Bible implies that it was a daily experience in the garden before the fall that God came to meet with man—both man and woman (Gen. 3:8). Grace was extended to man in God's perfect provision with reference to meeting man's physical needs. The weather, the food and drink, the blessing of work, etc., were all extended out of grace. Grace was extended to man in that he lived in covenant with God. God commanded man not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil lest he experience death. But in the context of the purposeful and studied gracious provisions of God, just mentioned, it is clearly and emphatically implied that the probation meant to bring a greater blessing. Indeed, the probation was intended and designed to bring that greater blessing insofar as the revealed will of God is concerned. Access to the tree of life was the last and ultimate divine grace—that man would be eternally sealed in his fellowship with God. And man was graciously given all the intellectual, emotional, and physical tools he needed to enable and lead him to perfect obedience to God.

(2) No death before the fall

This teaching (no death before the fall) finds expression in Gen. 1:29-30. It is to be compared and contrasted with 1 Cor. 15:25 where the Apostle Paul tells us that Jesus is now bringing all things under his authority and conquering every enemy and that the last enemy is death. This verse in 1 Cor. 15 implies that death originated as a result of the curse and Gen. 3 says just that. But not just death as the death of man, but

that death became a normative and dominant principle. So, Paul in Rom. 8 can remark that the whole earth is now groaning for redemption awaiting the perfect redemption of mankind in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. He implies very strongly and undeniably that death and the subjugation of the creation as a whole to the death principle originated with the fall. However, this does not settle the question as to the prelapsarian (before the fall) existence of death in particular instances, e.g., the death of plants, bacteria, etc.⁴⁸ It speaks certainly only to the death of man and to the all-pervasive effects of the death principle after the fall.

The following statement summarizes what might be said about this subject:

In conclusion, the Bible does not give us a clear answer to many questions about the state of things before the fall. It does tell us that mankind was not subject to death and that the world was not subject to corruption. The matter of man's subjection to death is clear – they would not die if the pre-fall situation persisted. On the other hand, the Bible does seem to teach that the plants were subject to death – they were to be eaten. Does this mean that things used for 'food' were subject to death. If so, were worms eaten by pre-fall birds? Were plankton, worms, and bugs eaten by pre-fall fish? Or, were all the creatures subject to vegetarianism? Are the general statements in Genesis 1 and Romans 8 intended to be understood exhaustively? Certainly, the death of some plants teaches there is some 'wobble room' in these statements. Moreover, what is the line between plants and animals? This is unclear to today's science. It is also unclear whether the 'lower' creatures (those creatures that are not clearly animal life) were subject to death, e.g., viruses, the smaller bacteria and some bugs. Therefore, whether 'animals' of some kind were subject to death is not clearly defined. One may decide they were not subject to death, another may decide they were.

Also, what does the post-fall subjection to corruption entail? It does appear certain from what the Bible says that man

⁴⁸ Coppes, *The Divine Days of Genesis*, 138ff.

and the animals being commanded to be fruitful and multiply and *fill the earth*, were subject to aging so as to grow into adulthood and become fruitful. Therefore, whatever changes post-fall ‘corruption’ introduced (and they were obviously extensive), it does not mean that things matured only after the fall. Finally, even were one to interpret the changes resulting from the fall very extensively so as to deny pre-fall death to all but plants and the smallest creatures, one should not deny that there was some death before the fall and some aging. It is also a possibility that once having reached maturity, had there been no fall, the creatures would not have aged any further – there would have been no ‘corruption’.⁴⁹

(3) The service of man Gen. 1:26ff., 2:1-3

The Bible makes much in the creation account in Gen. 1 of the service of man. Man is set forth as the king over the creation in Gen. 1:26ff., "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." With these words, God appoints man to be the ruler over all the earth under the divine authority of God himself. This mandate is in terms of man's immediate environment and what he is able to attain to within the limitations with which he began. His mandate is to conquer what has not yet been conquered: the entire earth. Nothing here explicitly forbids man from going outside the bounds of earth just as nothing prohibits him from going outside the garden. Man is appointed vice-regent of the entire creation, if God allows him to get there. This vice-regency then is to be carried out in populating and subduing the earth, i.e., exercising dominion over it.

Man is also appointed as priest over all the inhabitants of the earth when in Gen. 2:1-3 it reads, "Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day, God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work of creating. God sanctified the seventh day." This needs to be compared with Heb. 4 where the writer argues that the Sabbath principle and the obligation of man to set aside

⁴⁹ Coppes, *What Say the Stones?* 138-148.

one day out of seven was started on the seventh day of creation. It was sanctified by God from the very beginning. It was distinguished from the other days of the week and set aside for a special, a divine use. As other passages make clear, on that day man was to rest from his ordinary work, get bodily rest, and worship God, i.e., enter into His rest (esp. cf., Heb. 4, and Exod. 20:11). Thus, man was to serve God as a priest in the garden of Eden, worshipping Him faithfully and according to His directions.

We will shortly discuss the naming of the animals by Adam. This was a prophetic activity insofar as the names, like the name he gave to his wife upon her being presented to him, were probably declarative, indicative, and prophetic of the role the particular animal played within the creation.

2. The Place of Man, Gen. 2:4-25

a. The Sovereign

Some liberal scholars and a few evangelicals have seen Gen. 1:1-2:3 and Gen. 2:4-25 as two different accounts of creation, but they are not two different accounts. K. A. Kitchen argues that Gen. 1-2:3 is a general presentation of the creation in a summarized or outlined form and that Gen. 2:4-25 further details a major point of this general presentation. Moreover, he points out how this sequence of general presentation followed by a detailing of a particular point or points is well attested in the Ancient Near Eastern documents.⁵⁰ Formally speaking, both the Bible and this Near Eastern material are prone to use different vocabulary and a somewhat different style in the two parts of a document. Thus, the two parts are not to be viewed as two independently pre-existing documents or accounts, collated by a later editor. They are to be seen just as the other ancient Near Eastern documents—as two parts of an original document.

Each part of the biblical account, therefore, goes over some of the same material—but they view it from a different perspective. They constitute one document whereby God revealed two different aspects of the same event. In the summary of the creation in Gen. 1, God emphasizes the fact that He is the sovereign Creator and that man is His servant. By

⁵⁰ Kitchen, K.A., *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (Inter-Varsity Press, Chicago, 1966). 116ff.

this it is clearly implied that man owes to God all allegiance and faithfulness. The detailing part of the document emphasizes that man was greatly blessed by God and given everything that he needed to accomplish that obligation and service. And so we see again, that man's place in creation was as a servant of God, but we see it in greater detail.

The "account" in Gen. 2 emphasizes that God is the covenantal God. This idea is introduced into the account when the Bible says in Gen. 2:4, "This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created in the day that the Lord God made heaven and earth." The new element in this report is that the name of God now is expanded from Elohim or God to Jehovah (or Yahweh) Elohim, the *Lord* God. The Word "*Lord*" in the Hebrew, as pointed out by the conservative higher critic Umbreto Cassuto, emphasizes that God is the God-of-the-covenant. The term Elohim emphasizes and points to God's lordship over the whole of creation. So, when Jehovah (i.e., the word "*Lord*") is added to it, then our mind is focused not only on the fact that God is sovereign Creator and Ruler but also that He is the covenant God. And so in the second part of the account, the repetition, the review, the reemphasis of the purpose of the creation in Gen. 2, God sets before us man's covenantal responsibilities in particular. It is this second part (Gen. 2:4-31) that completes and emphasizes the theological main-motif of the creation record: not only is God the Sovereign Creator and Ruler, but also He has specifically created all things as the context for man's *covenantal* living.

b. The Context of the Probation. Gen. 2:4-31

(1) The garden: the blessing granted, grace given 2:4-14. Grace was given to man over and above that which he deserved, of course, or it would not be grace.

2:4: Prologue

"This *is* the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens."

With reference to the phrase, "these are the generations of" R. K. Harrison remarks that in the Ancient Near East,

“The colophon, which concluded the individual tablet or the series, normally contained the name of the scribe or the owner of the tablet, as has been remarked above, and frequently it also included some attempt at dating. In addition, it often embodied the title given to the narrative, and if the tablet was part of a series it furnished the serial number and a statement as to whether the tablet did or did not conclude the series.”⁵¹

In view of this ancient oriental background, Harrison argues that the phrase cited above is used in Gen. to open (not close) the various major sections of Genesis. Hence, a proper translation may be different than “these are the generations of” as it is in the NKJ which is cited above. Therefore, Gen. 2:4-6 constitutes a prologue to the second half of the creation account.

Here we have the emphasis that God was the covenant God who endowed man with grace and set before men the terms of the covenant—see the above remarks concerning the use of the divine name *Lord*. So, what is in view is that man is given a tremendous opportunity and obligation to seal his love and service to God in ever continuing obedience to the covenant God.

2:5-6 Condition

Here we see the condition of the garden itself.⁵² The Bible reads that “no shrub of the earth was yet in the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprouted for the Lord God had not sent rain upon the earth and there was no man to cultivate the ground.” But here in the garden a mist or “*ED*”, an underground river, used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground (in the garden, at least). The Bible is emphasizing that the material circumstances under which man was offered the probation were more than sufficient to give him everything he needed for a completely happy and satisfied life. God provided him all the blessings his heart could desire and more. There was no reason for him to turn from God except his own sinful rebellion.

2:7 Creation of the earthly ruler: man

⁵¹ Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1969), 544.

⁵² This point is discussed in E. J. Young, *Studies in Genesis*, 60ff.

“Then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living being.”

That is, God formed the creature to serve perfectly and to rule completely in the perfect environment that He Himself had created. Man was created in relation to his environment (the rest of the creation), but as distinct and different from it. He transcends everything else in the creation. He transcends the material creation because he has the breath of life, and he transcends the animate creation because he is in the image of God. He was created to rule the rest of creation and to serve the living God.

2:8-9 Man placed in the Garden

"And the Lord God, planted a garden towards the East in Eden and there He placed the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food. The tree of life also in the midst of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

This perfect environment heightens man's responsibility and deepens the heinousness of the fall. God provides plenty of food for him and a beautiful garden as his home. Before him were the two sacramental trees—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and the tree of life. Later in the text, God clearly explains the significance of the first tree and, it appears, the significance of the second tree. The significance of the second tree was divinely explained as is necessarily implied by the report that God blocked man's access to it when, after the fall, He set guards before it. There needed to be guards because, apparently, man understood it as the doorway to eternal life—of course, this was an erroneous judgment on man's part. Blocking the path to that tree symbolically taught fallen man in a concrete fashion that the only path to life was through the Seed of the woman. There is no mechanical means by which eternal life might be gained. Both trees were sacramental. Eating their fruit would signify and seal man in the path he had chosen. After the fall, only the Holy Spirit functioned as the divine seal on eternal life (although this is not explained until the New Testament).

The idea of a covenant God is introduced again in the repetition of the divine name *Lord*.

Thus, God placed man in the perfect environment and gave him everything that he could possibly long for or need. Against this background then comes the probation.

2:10-14: Location.

Here the Bible stipulates that this was a real place on the face of the earth. It tells us the various rivers that existed in the area of Eden and that defined its specific location. Archeology offers support for what the Bible affirms, viz., that this was a real place that has some reality in the geography of the ancient Near East. Of course, that geography has been greatly interrupted by the great flood recorded in the Bible so that it is only a reflection of what it was in the days of the creation. But nonetheless, it is a reflection. We have discovered that the biblical names for three of the four rivers appear in ancient Mesopotamian records (the names Pishon, Gihon, and Hiddegal or Tigris⁵³). The Bible allows us to know clearly that any sensible reading of this passage of the Scripture would tell us that this is no pretended temptation, no allegorical garden, but a real historical location and the events that happened there were real historical events.

(2) The Probation, 2:15-17

2:15 "Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it."

This verse stipulates the context of the probation or trial of Adam. The word "Eden" is certainly an interesting word. There are indications that remnants of some ancient Near Eastern languages embedded in the Hebrew of the creation account. *Eden* is such a word. This is a transliteration of the Hebrew word that comes very close to what appears in the ancient Sumerian language—Sumerian is one of the oldest known ancient Near Eastern languages. In the case of the word, "*Eden*," scholars have puzzled for years what this word means. Now on the basis of some

⁵³ Cf., Coppes, *What Say the Stones?*, 31f.

of the more recent discoveries, many think that the word "Eden" reflects a Sumerian word signifying "plain or plateau." If this is true, the garden would be on a plateau. This was where man was placed so he could cultivate and keep it.⁵⁴

There is a similar phenomenon in Gen. 2:6 where we read that "a mist went up." The Hebrew word there is "*ED*". This is a very difficult word to understand because it occurs so infrequently in the Bible. "Mist" is a guess at the translation. The Hebrew word "*ED*" may well be a transliteration of the Sumerian word "*ID*", and the Sumerian word means, "an underground stream."⁵⁵

"And the Lord God commanded the man saying, 'From any tree of garden you may eat freely, 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 shall surely die.'" Gen. 2:16

This is the probation. God sets before man his responsibility to be faithful as a vice-regent under divine lordship. As seen above, God created everything perfectly for man and gave him everything he needed for a full and productive life—except that man was to abstain from this one thing. Later, as we consider the temptation, we will see that "man," Adam and Eve, was not satisfied with all that God had given them—they wanted more. But the explanation of that waits for a later time.

(3) The Exercise of Fealty, 2:18-25

The main theme is that in the midst of this perfect environment, man having been created in the image of God, with all the tools that he needed to serve God, was faced with this demand (moral imperative) of God, this requirement to be faithful to God—to exercise fealty.

2:18 Divine decision: lordship. "Then the Lord said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone, I will make him a helper suitable for him.'"

God saw man as a creature who needed someone like himself with whom he could share his life so that man would not feel isolated in the

⁵⁴ Coppes, *What Say the Stones?* 34-35.

⁵⁵ Young, *Studies in Genesis One*, 62, n. 50.

creation. What a loving God, and what a gracious act! Indeed, man was created with a need for such a creature. The need was covenantal (if man is to obey the creation ordinances), reproductive, biological, emotional, psychological, and spiritual.

2:19-20 Lordship exercised

Gen. 2:19 says, "And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky and brought to the man to the man to see what he would call them and whatever the man called the living creature, that was his name."

Now this informs us that man, in the garden of Eden before the fall, certainly exercised a prophetic function. He served as a prophet of God in naming the creatures. Thus, man identifies their essential relationship to God, himself, and the creation and calls them by their names. These creatures carried this name from that time on—at least until the confusion of languages at the tower of Babel. Adam did this as part of his divinely given authority. Throughout the Bible, the naming of someone or something often constitutes an identification of the nature of that person or thing. This is especially true in the earlier chapters of the Bible but it continues throughout almost all of the Scripture. Names bore significance. They were not just tags upon things or people. If someone today is called the name, "John," it has nothing to do with the concept of his having a dove-like personality. "John" is just a label. If someone is named "Leonard", it does not mean that people see in him a great warrior, someone that is lion-hearted. It is just a nice name. But, in biblical times names described the character of the person receiving the name. Often individuals, if they did some great thing, received a new name setting forth their distinctive accomplishment or characteristic. Especially, this is true of people who had become important personages.

Adam saw all the creatures that God had made and God did not name those creatures as He had named Adam (Gen. 1:26). Rather, God allowed and appointed Adam to name those creatures in His behalf.

In Gen. 2:20 it says, "Man gave names to all the cattle and to all the birds of the sea, the sky and to every beast of the field, but for Adam, there was not found a helper suitable for him."

The verse intimates that one of God's purposes in creating the animals first was not only so Adam could function prophetically, but also so he would come to the realization that he had no companion. He was created for fellowship. Part of his being in the image of God was to reflect the fact that God Himself lived eternally as a Trinity. That we believe, as previously indicated, was implied from the beginning of Genesis. God's eternally existing in fellowship, that part of the divine nature, is reflected in man's nature and stirs in man a need for fellowship with another person like himself.

2:21-25 Lordship extended.

Creation. "So God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man and he slept and he took one of his ribs and he closed up the flesh at that point."

Here the Lord extends the blessing that He had previously heaped upon Adam. He made him a helper that was suitable to him, that met his needs, that met the crying out of his heart, and that filled the loneliness that was within him. He made that being, later to be identified as "woman," from the rib or side of man emphasizing that she is under his protection (1 Pet. 3:7), that she is part of him and yet she is subordinate to him. Thus, the headship of the man is set forth in terms of how the woman was made (1 Tim. 2:13). Her body was not made solely from the ground as Adam (man) was, but she was made, in part, from man. So, here we see the principle of submission, and the principle of companionship in the concrete terms of her formation; she was made from Adam's rib (from under his arm).

2:22 Presentation. "The Lord fashioned into a woman, from the rib which He had taken from the man and He brought her to him." Here God underlines the principle of man's headship over woman in the fact that she was presented to Adam and not he to her.

2:23 Definition: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh, she shall be called woman because she was taken out of man.

Adam faithfully and obediently receives this person whom God has made for him. This was an arranged marriage in the fullest sense of the

term. Not only was there no other woman in the world but there was no complaint about the one God had designed and brought to him. Adam received her and then confessed that she indeed was perfect, i.e., suitable in his sight. He describes her as “like him” as he had desired, i.e., bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh (cf., 2:18ff.). Man gives her a name that corresponds to that word which identifies himself (2:23)—the Hebrew word used here for “man” is “*ish*.” Before this point, Adam is called ‘*adam*’ (another Hebrew word for “man”⁵⁶). Adam calls his new wife, “*ishah*.”⁵⁷ Whether Adam spoke Hebrew in the garden is not established but because of the way the inspired Word of God relates ‘*ish*’ and ‘*ishah*’, Hebrew must be similar to whatever language he did speak—at least in the homophony of the words for man and woman. In English, for example, there is a similar correlation between the word “man” and the word “woman.” At least the element, “man” occurs in both words. Adam is identifying this person as part of himself, as an extension of himself and yet as his companion. He confesses that God has done exactly what was needed. God had answered the longing of man’s heart and has given this perfectly suitable created being. Moreover, the principle of man’s headship over woman is seen and exercised, once more, in the fact that he prophetically defines her identity and role.

2:24 Principle. “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”

Then the Bible emphasizes that the union of Adam and Eve was a perfect union. But there is more. This union is to be the pattern for the remainder of created history. “Therefore”—and what does this refer to? Actually, it refers to two reasons: because God had created the woman and perfectly designed her for Adam, and because God had joined one man and one woman together. “A man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife and they shall become one flesh.” It is the woman, not the father and mother, who is the divinely intended companion of a lifetime. So, the necessary implication here is that the woman should also leave and cleave. Man, however, is especially designated and appointed to leave his parents and cleave to his wife in

⁵⁶ The *TWOT*, comments on ‘*Adam*’, “Although the etymology of _____ cannot be explained with certainty (cf. *TDOT*, I, p. 78), the word probably relates to the original ruddiness of man’s complexion (cf. F. Maas, _____ *TDOT*, I, pp. 78-79).”

⁵⁷ The italicized words are Hebrew.

every sense of the word, "cleave." Jesus reflects on this principle in Matt. 19 when He explains that there ought to be no divorce and a man ought to cleave to his wife.

2:25 Innocence.

Here the Bible reports that the man and woman were without sin and they saw each other in innocence and perfection when it says, "And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed." They were one, united together, in every human and non-organic sense of the word. Thus the Bible in this review of what God especially did for man, underlines that God perfectly provided for him. When man faced the probation, he had been supplied with everything his heart could desire, and everything for which his nature longed. There was no *excuse* for him violating the probation. All this certainly makes it shocking when we come to Gen. 3 and read about the fall.

But first we need to look a little bit more at this opening section of the covenant of works.

C. Its Parties.

1. God

The one, true God, the Blessed Trinity, is the Creator and Lord of heaven and earth, Gen. 1:2,26,28, etc. He is the God of the covenant.

2. Adam

Adam, as a dependent creature is the divinely appointed representative of the entire human race, Gen. 1:28; 2:16; Rom 5:12f; I Cor 15:22,47. Later in the Bible it makes explicit in the New Testament passages just listed what is implicit in the creation account, viz., that Adam was not only an individual but was the federal head of the entire human race.

God, constituted Adam the representative (covenantal) head of mankind, so that he could act for all his posterity.

God placed Adam on a temporary probation, to determine whether Adam would willingly submit his will to the revealed will of God.

God gave Adam the promise of continued life in the way of obedience, thereby sustaining life for himself and for all his descendants through obedience, and the curse of death for all through disobedience.

Adam's deliberate choice of disobedience corrupted himself. Because he was the natural, covenantal, and representative head of mankind, his disobedience affected, corrupted and condemned all his descendants. In righteous judgment, God imputes the guilt of Adam's sin to all those represented by and covenantally related to him (Rom. 5:12). As a result, Adam's descendants are born in sin and in need of a Savior.

This teaching of the federal headship of Adam is clearly set forth repeatedly in the Bible but it meets with great objection certainly among unbelievers and sometimes from believers. Unbelievers see here that God is unjust and unfair and they respond by asking why they are held responsible for the sin of someone that lived so very long ago. But, in a real sense, their question is irrelevant (cf., Rom. 9:20). They are responsible because God appointed it. The real question is not why are they responsible but what are they going to do in light of the fact that they are responsible? When you go from one city to another in an airplane, the pilot flies the plane, but if the pilot falls asleep and wrecks the airplane, you are killed. Is that fair? The question of fairness is beside the whole point. The real issue is the fact that it happened. Better make sure you have a good pilot because whatever he does is going to happen to you whether you like it or not. The fact that man fell in Adam is evidenced by the unbelievers' unbelief. Point out to them the joys of heaven, the glories of eternal life, the certainty and psychological stability that all this provides, all the other blessings that we have and not one benefit of the covenant and not one argument will move an unbeliever from his adamant resistance toward and enmity against the Lord God. The more he is told about the law and the rule of God, the more he evidences that were he the Adam, back in the garden of Eden, he would do exactly what Adam did. He hates the law of the Lord God. He is at enmity to the Lord God. That is, the thing that the Bible said resulted from Adam's fall is evidenced by the life of this unbeliever. So, the whole question of fairness becomes insignificant and unimportant. The unbeliever attests to himself by his

own lifestyle that he indeed did fall in Adam. The whole exhortation and argument against biblical justice and the biblical account falls flat on its face. The covenantal headship of Adam is what pertained in the covenant of works. He was the covenantal head for all his posterity and when he sinned and fell all his posterity sinned in him and fell with him. Moreover, he is responsible because God is sovereign and the one who determines what is right and wrong. When a man calls God into question, he assumes there is a standard higher than God—a standard to which God must conform. Van Til does an excellent job of showing that such an assumption does not conform to the reality in which man himself lives. The only assumption, or presupposition, that does properly explain such questions is the existence of the Triune self-revealing God.

D. Its Promises and Threats.

God justly threatened Adam and his posterity with death if Adam ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall surely not eat, for in the day that you eat from it, you shall surely die," Gen. 2:17. Now, some elements in this statement need to be examined.

First, what was to happen to man when he ate of the forbidden tree? Certainly, we know from the biblical record that Adam would not have been subject to physical death if he had not eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Some have proposed that this is all that is envisioned when God said they shall "surely die in the day that [they] eat of this tree." But that is clearly not what the Bible says, because the Bible affirms over and over that man did die in the day he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and yet it also records that Adam physically lived long beyond that time. So theologians have said, and certainly it is true, that the Bible is telling us that, in principle, man died at the very moment he ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. It was at that point in his life that eternal life was removed from him physically and the principle of death was implanted in him.

Man died spiritually at the very moment that he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Therefore, as soon as he ate of the tree, he became aware, says the Bible, of his nakedness and he took steps to cover it. God taught him that nakedness was not his real problem, but sin was

the problem—we will look at that a little later. Man entered upon spiritual death from the very moment that he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Another phrase that gives scholars some pause and thought is, "for in the day that you eat of it." That is, "in the day" is a debated phrase. What does that mean? Is it a 24-hour period, is it a long period, or is it a moment? The Bible clearly teaches that this phrase, "in the day," means the very moment that he ate it. So, as soon as man ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the sentence of death came upon him. That is evident from the steps immediately taken by Adam and Eve in an attempt to hide their sin and shame.

Many have debated the phrase, "knowing good and evil." What does it mean? Several books survey various views explaining why they are not adequate. Geerhardus Vos in his *Biblical Theology* gives a number of views and very thoroughly and scholarly shows their weaknesses.⁵⁸ For example, one theory is that by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, man came into some intellectual knowledge that he did not have before. Man, however, already had an intellectual understanding of good and evil. He had it because God had instructed him as to what good and evil really were. Another view is that this tree brought man the experiential knowledge of evil. It is true that by eating of this tree man experienced evil for the first time. But, this does not explain why it is the tree of the knowledge of both good and evil—since man had already experienced good, this eating this fruit was not the path to experiencing good. Moreover, neither of these views accounts for the fact that God is identified as the One who "knows good and evil"—a goal set before Adam and Eve by the Devil and accomplished by them, i.e., they became like God, knowing good and evil, Gen. 3:22.

Rather, this tree was the means by which man assumed self-autonomy. Through eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil man was to become the one who decides for himself what constitutes good and evil. He becomes the one who sets the terms of good and evil for himself, and that is exactly what the whole account seems to communicate. God told man not to do this and man said that he would do it. He would not submit himself to the Lord God. He would not accept

⁵⁸ Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 39-43.

His standards for him but would determine for himself the standards for all of life. If man eats of this tree he assumes control of his own ethical decisions, his own ethical standards, and sets aside God's sovereignty over him. So, in Rom. 8:7 we learn that after the fall, those who are unregenerate are enmity or hostility towards the law of God. This is the very point here. “What are you going to do,” says God, “with My law?” “What you ought to do is to submit to it. By eating of this tree, you declare your autonomy and you enter into rebellion against Me.”

What are the promises of the covenant of works? In the covenant of works, God graciously, by implication, promised Adam that if he would obey Him and not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, then he would be able to partake of the tree of life.⁵⁹ Adam had not yet partaken of it when he partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Thus, when God drove man out of the garden He said that He would block him from the tree of life lest he partake of that tree and “become like one of Us, and live forever.” That is, he would be blocked to keep him from thinking he would be receive eternal life and yet live in the state of condemnation and judgment. So, God promised by implication that were Adam to sustain the probation, he could be sealed forever in the state of blessedness by eating of the tree of life. God promised eternal blessing upon Adam and his posterity teaching that, if he obeyed His commands, they would enjoy the fullness of eternal life in God's presence and under His blessing, Lev 18:5; Deut 30:15; Ezek 10:11; Matt 10:17; Rom 2:6,7; 7:10; 10:5; Gal 3:12.

E. Its Principles⁶⁰

1. Revealed in Appropriate Symbols

a. *The principle of life in its highest potency was sacramentally symbolized by the tree of life, Gen. 3:22.* Geerhardus Vos discusses in considerable detail each of the principles now being presented—all of Vos’ discussion is very brief and carefully worded. He maintains that the tree of life is a sacrament because if Adam were obedient, the tree of life would serve as God's instrument to signify and seal him in that obedience.

⁵⁹ Both trees functioned sacramentally not mechanically, cf., p. 75.

⁶⁰ 1-4 below discussed in depth in G. Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 27f.

By eating of the tree of life, the eternal life Adam had gained through his obedience would be sacramentally sealed upon him forever.

b. *The principle of probation symbolized by the tree of knowledge of good and evil, Gen. 2:17.* The “tree of the knowledge of good and evil,” being explained, is the tree by which man asserts his submission to God as the one who defines and grants life and blessing (good and evil) or by which he asserts his autonomy and appoints himself as the one who defines and grants life and blessing. The sin is not in the tree or its fruit. The sin was in the heart of Adam and Eve. It is simply that the tree was the occasion by which that sin came to formal expression. Thus, it served as the seal upon that rebellion in the heart and life of man. It was necessary to partake of the tree to consummate and complete the sin, but the mere eating of itself is not the sum totality of that sin.

c. *The principle of temptation and sin symbolized in the serpent, Gen. 3:1.* We will discuss more about the serpent later, but here we emphasize that it was both a real serpent and the sign and symbol of temptation.

d. The principle of death reflected in the dissolution of the body, Gen. 3:19.

2. Revealed in Creation Ordinances

“Because of an exclusive concentration on the specific test concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the broader responsibilities of man as created in God's image frequently have been ignored. By thinking too narrowly about the covenant of creation, the Christian church has come to cultivate a deficiency in its entire world-and-life view. Instead of being kingdom-oriented, as was Christ, it has become exclusively church-oriented.”⁶¹

Robertson is saying that the Church has focused exclusively on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as the condition of the covenant of works rather than seeing man’s broader responsibility. Specifically, God appointed Adam in the garden of Eden to be the king over the world, to develop every aspect of life under the Lordship of Christ. So, there were

⁶¹ Robertson, 68.

many, many dimensions to Adam's stewardship unto God. Adam violated explicitly in the one dimension. He violated what God chose as the particular probation and thus in principle, i.e., implicitly, he rejected the sovereignty of God in everything. So, if we are to be obedient to God in conformity to the Scriptures, implies Robertson, we should not narrow our attention to the Church so as to do only the things that are done within the confines of the church mandate or the Great Commission. We are responsible before God to develop every aspect of our life, to bring every aspect of creation and living under the lordship of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 10:5).

a. The Sabbath, Gen. 2:3

(1) *Jesus taught that God instituted the Sabbath for the good of mankind and the entire creation, Mark 2:27-28.* He said, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.” When the Jewish religious leaders came to Jesus to complain about His activities on the Sabbath, He said that He was the Lord of the Sabbath, the One to whom it was dedicated and furthermore, by necessary implication, He was the One who created the Sabbath day. As the Creator, in the form of the second person of the Trinity, Jesus said that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. That rather simply understood verse is often twisted. Jesus clearly and emphatically states that the Sabbath was made for mankind. It has no temporal limitations, i.e., as long as there is mankind and the creation persists, this creation ordinance rests upon man. Jesus also said, as a corrective to the Pharisees, that the Sabbath was made for mankind and not man for the Sabbath. The Pharisees felt that man was made to be crammed into the Sabbath. They so exalted the Sabbath by adding to the biblical rules that they laid upon a man a burden so heavy that even the Pharisees themselves were unable and unwilling to bear it. God made the Sabbath for man as a blessing and as one of the signs of His gracious relationship with man.

(2) “The sanctifying of the Sabbath indicates that the Lord of creation has established the pattern by which he is to be honored as God.”⁶²

⁶² 69.

This theme of the Sabbath rest is referred to in Heb. 4 where the New Testament sets forth the Sabbath as a perpetual, indeed a creational, ordinance for man. Heb. 4:4 reminds us that God reports in the creation account that he rested on the seventh day from all of His initial works of creating. The divinely intended theological significance of this creation rest is explained in Heb. 4:3: “‘So I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter my rest,’ although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.” So, God is explaining how during the exodus He told Israel they would not enter His rest. In contrast to Israel who refused to walk by faith and chose to walk by works, the Lord states that the rest attained upon entering into His rest would be like that rest whereby He ceased all His works at the beginning (or from the foundation of the world, Gen. 2:3). Heb. 4:4 cites Gen. 2:3 confirming this truth from the Old Testament Scripture.

Heb. 4:10 says, "For he who has entered his rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His." In other words, verse 10 repeats the theme that God entered His rest when He finished the initial creating process. In Heb. 4, the writer is attempting to prove to the Christian that we must imitate God. We like ancient Israel also have a rest set before us and must enter that rest even as God did. The discussion of the rest is climaxed in verse 9, "There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God." It should not escape our attention that throughout Heb. 4, the writer uses the Greek word that means "rest" whenever he talks about the concept of "rest," but in Heb 4:9 when he comes to climax of his discussion, he specifically creates a new Greek word. He transliterates the Hebrew word, writing it in Greek characters and adjusting it to fit Greek grammar. So he says, therefore, that there exists or remains for the people of God a *sabbatismos* or a Sabbath. One cannot help seeing in this new word a reference to both the creation cessation-rest of God and the Sabbath rest-worship He sanctified as mankind's earthly memorial.

In Heb. 10 the writer comes back to this Sabbath worship-rest theme. Heb. 10:25 is especially significant because throughout the book of Hebrews the writer has explained to the reader the significance of the Old Testament levitical or sacramental law for the Christian era. He explains how that law anticipates and typologically sets forth the Lord Jesus Christ. He explains how the Law reflects and imitates by divine command the worship of God in heaven. So, the thesis is that the

heavenly prototype is that which is imitated here on this earth—not only in the Old Testament but also in the New Testament worship. Moreover, the earthly setting forth in the Old Testament is typological-anticipatory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Most of the particular practices of Old Testament sacrificial law are so fulfilled in Christ that we do not need to repeat them in the way they were practiced in the Old Testament—now those practices are abrogated. Having said all that, in Heb 10:24-25 he specifically says,

"And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching."

Apparently in the early church, some Christians erroneously concluded that because all the Old Testament ceremonial law was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, they did not have to keep the weekly Sabbath.

The writer particularly focuses our attention on keeping the weekly Sabbath when he says, "not forsaking our own assembling together." In Lev. 23:3, God states that His Sabbath day is, among other things, a day for public convocation. The word convocation in the Hebrew is a word that means to call people together. The force of the word is that the Sabbath day is characterized as a day for public assembling. That very same idea appears in Heb. 10:25 when it says, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together." So the thrust of the passage is that the Sabbath commandment is still binding on the Christian insofar as weekly worship is concerned, and that the Old Testament levitical law specifies *the* way the weekly worship day was sanctified, i.e., by public worship. Thus, the Bible teaches that the Sabbath or the keeping of the Sabbath holy or sanctified to the Lord, is a creation ordinance.

b. Marriage and Procreation

(1) The Sanctity of Marriage

Marriage and procreation, cf., Gen. 1:28, 2:18. God sanctified marriage, i.e., He made it a holy institution. Because it is thus sanctified by God, it "belongs" to God and is to be "set aside" to Him. This means that man is not granted license to change the institution to suit his whims.

Gen. 1:28 sets forth the principle of God's command for marriage and procreation. It is repeated in Gen. 2:18.

“Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’” Gen. 1:28

“And the LORD God said, ‘*It is* not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.’” Gen. 2:18

(2) The Divine Origin of Marriage

By showing mankind that the origin of marriage is in the sovereign creative act of God, the sanctity of marriage is declared. The sanctity of and pattern for marriage as God intended it become binding on all men for all time. We support that conclusion from the explicit words of Jesus in Matt. 19:4-5.

“And He answered and said to them, ‘Have you not read that He who made *them* at the beginning “made them male and female,” and said, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh”?’”

The Pharisees had concluded that the proper exegesis and understanding of Deut. 24:1 was that man could divorce his wife for almost any reason—no matter how insignificant and small. So in their traditional law, they had tremendous latitude in the grounds for divorce. Their divorce law went well beyond what God intended or said. But Jesus, instead of exegeting Deut. 24 as one might expect, referred them to the creation account citing the following words, "God made them male and female and for this cause a man shall leave his mother and father and shall cleave to her and the two shall become one flesh." He employs the principle that the best interpreter of Scripture is Scripture itself. Jesus draws the necessary implication in Matt. 19:6, "Consequently they are no more two but one flesh and what God has joined together, let not man separate." And then the Pharisees raise the next logical question asking

Him if He is teaching that God contradicts God? They ask if He is teaching them that the creation ordinance is different than what Moses said because Moses certainly allowed divorce and thus they logically imply that Jesus is talking about no divorce at all.

So, in Matt. 19:7 they say, "Why then did Moses say to give her a certificate and divorce her?" He said to them, "Because of the hardness of your heart, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives but from the beginning it has not been this way." Jesus recognizes the validity and the binding character of the Mosaic law upon the Pharisees of that day and by necessary implication, upon this day—this is a creation ordinance. Because of the hardness of man's heart, because of sin, of unrepented sin, divorce becomes permissible. But God neither encourages nor approves of divorce as a primary principle. So the two become one and divorce is only when there is serious unrepented sin on the part of one party or the other. Thus, Jesus argues that divorce is permissible under the divine law.

Two important facts are instructive in understanding what Jesus says about divorce and the grounds of divorce. While Jesus says divorce is legitimized only by sexual adultery (Gr., *porneia*) Paul says divorce is allowed for abandonment (1 Cor. 7:14) and that the woman is bound by the marriage until her husband dies—divorce is not allowed (Rom. 7:2-3). It should be immediately apparent that none of these three statements say all there is to say about marriage and divorce. One must also consider that Jesus' teaching was set forth while He was under the Law and, therefore, seeking to obey and exposit that Law (cf., Matt. 5-7). Are we to understand that being still under the Law, Jesus teaches against the Law while He is trying to correct the Pharisees' false interpretation of the Law? Also, it seems reasonable to understand that the statements of both Jesus and Paul were made in somewhat different contexts. Jesus spoke while the Law was still the rule of the church. Hence, He says that Deut. 24 means that the only grounds for divorce is sexual immorality-infidelity. On the other hand, He assumes that the death penalties of the Old Testament Law also broke the bonds of marriage as is implied in Deut. 25:5ff. Paul's statements were after the resurrection but they also assume that the Old Testament marriage laws and death break the bonds of marriage (so Exod. 21:4-11⁶³, Rom. 7:1-3). Should not the believer

⁶³ This passage allows divorce if the husband refuses to provide food, clothing and marriage rights for his wife. Such a refusal constitutes abandonment! Cf., WCF 24.5.

conclude, therefore, that sexual adultery, abandonment and those crimes worthy of death under the Law constitute legitimate grounds for divorce?

So we have seen in the Bible how marriage, as set forth in the creation, is held to be the pattern for all time. From the creation to the consummation of this world, man is to marry and to procreate. God's pattern was one man for one woman for life. God created and joined Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve.

(3) The Wonder of Interpersonal Fusion

“Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: ‘This *is* now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.’ Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.”
Gen. 2:22-25

Surely, the words of Adam set forth not only his opinion, but are a revelation, a prophecy as it were, the very Word of God. That is why it is recorded here. What he recognizes is that woman is intimately part of himself. Certainly this is true physically, but more than that. She is also part of Adam in a spiritual sense.

A new family unit is started. God has brought her to him and they have formed together a deeply interpersonal bond. At every level of their being and activity the two become one while remaining distinct persons. This interpretation of Adam's words is supported by Gen. 2:24-25. Because of the proper understanding set forth by Adam in Gen. 2:23, the Lord says, "for this cause, a man shall leave his father and mother." So, this now becomes the command of God. Moreover, it is not just that we shall leave our father and our mother, although that is certainly said, but it is because man forms a very deep bond with his wife.

The relationship of man and wife supersedes the relationship of mother and father. This marital union should not be broken. But not only should the marriage relationship not be broken but also, by good and

necessary implication, this union between a man and wife takes precedence over a relationship between a man and his father and mother. A man should cleave to his wife, not in a cold logical or theological sense but in a deeply personal relationship. So that in the New Testament when the Apostle Paul in Eph. 5 expounds this idea from the Bible he talks in terms of laying down one life for his wife. He talks in terms of adorning her and seeing to her private needs in every realm and avenue of life. Also, Peter talks about man as the protector of his wife, 1 Pet. 3:7, recognizing that God has given man some abilities in strength and in psychology that uniquely suit him to be the head over and protector of his wife.

Now, the idea of headship is also implied earlier in Gen. 2 as argued before. We pointed out that the woman was presented to the man, and that the man was the one who prophetically declared her role in life. Now in 2:24, the Bible focuses on man's responsibility rather than on the responsibility of the woman. But surely, woman's responsibility is a good and necessary conclusion from the Scripture—because of the unity set forth in verse 23? Not only should a man leave his father and mother but the woman should also leave her father and mother once the marriage transpires. The two are bound together. Not only should they leave, but also they ought to cleave. They ought to determine in their minds that regardless of what happens, the two of them are a unit. This should be an unbreakable union so far as they are concerned. Consequently, in our Christian marriage vows, we say, "We take this marriage for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do us part." So many wives, I suppose, are tempted to say. "Why do we get the 'poorer'? Why do we get the 'worse,' and why do we get what sometimes is almost death?" But biblically, the Mosaic Law implies that this is where the role of man comes forth (Lev. 19:18). It is his responsibility not just to have the wife but to provide for all of her needs.

Then the Bible concludes, "And they shall become one flesh" (2:24). Because of this deep interpersonal unity, because of the way they were bound together just by following what God implied when He presented the woman to the man, the Bible says, "And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed." They had nothing between them—especially not sin. They were totally committed to one another in every sense of the word.

(4) The Role Relationship in Marriage

In Gen. 2:18 it says, "It is not good for the man to be alone, I will make him a helper suitable for him." Now, when God created man, He created him with a need for companionship and specifically that kind of companionship that can be obtained and fulfilled only within the bounds of marriage. It is not good for a man to be alone. That becomes a fundamental presupposition of the Scriptural model of society. It is part of the creation ordinance.

Now, over against this the New Testament reports that Jesus said some men were born eunuchs (Matt. 12) and Paul said that in times of persecution and tremendous need in the church, it is better for men not to marry (1 Cor. 7:8). But, those two provisions in the Bible stand as a sub-point under the general rule that it is good for a man not to be alone. Ordinarily, men require a helpmeet, a helper suitable to fulfill and augment his abilities and talents and to draw out of him his full potentiality. And so Gen. 2:18 says that God will make him a helper suitable for him.

Implied in the concept of helper is the idea that the woman is the assistant, the helper, so that man is given the leadership role within the family and in all the family does. And in that role, it is his responsibility to see not only that the family is held together, to see to the integrity of the family, but also to see to the prosperity of the family in every sense of the term. The man is responsible to see to the education of the children and of the wife.

To this end, God has revealed all those passages in the Bible that apply this headship principle to particular situations. For example, in 1 Cor 14:34 Paul says it is not allowed for a woman to speak in the church—i.e., men are appointed to be the leaders/heads. Incidentally, Paul is not talking about speaking in the hallway of the church, nor is he talking about taking public vows of church membership. In the context, he is talking about speaking during the worship service as a contributor to the leadership in teaching or worship. The necessary background of this statement is the practice of the early church, whereas, like the synagogue of that day, the men sat in the front of the room and the women sat in the back. The men could interact with the speaker (Luke 6:6ff.), while the

women should not. So, if a woman would whisper to her husband or ask him any questions, it would be very difficult for him to hear her. She would have to talk across the room to be heard and that would be an unavoidable contribution to the teaching ministry of the church (and probably extremely inadvertently disruptive).

Also, a little later in the history of the church some fuller implications of the role of the woman in the church are revealed, cf., Gal. 3:29. Paul says there is neither male nor female under the new covenant. This implies that women could be full communicant members of the church—unlike the rule in the synagogue and temple. There is no imaginary bar behind which women must remain like there was in the synagogue and the temple. Thus, later in the church history men and women sat side by side. So, today it seems that it is not sinful for a woman to quietly ask questions of her husband as long as it is not disruptive to the service or the man. In addition, Paul is also teaching in 1 Cor. 14 that a woman ought not to lead in public worship.⁶⁴ This raises a question with reference to other passages of Corinthians, but we will leave that to a discussion of New Testament biblical theology.

Woman is called to share with man in developing the cultural mandate.

“... the woman shares with the man the responsibility to subdue the earth to the glory of God. She joins with him in his task of forming a culture glorifying to God the Creator.” O. P. Robertson.

At crucial places in the Bible man is not depicted as doing everything by himself while the wife remained, as some in America say, "barefoot and pregnant." But rather they are viewed as unit that works together (e.g., Prov. 31)—man and woman side by side. In the garden of Eden, on the farms of Israel, and on the farms of early America, men and women worked side by side with the man being the head of the family.

In American textbooks today, the Puritans of early America are often excoriated as treating their women as non-entities, as chattel. But

⁶⁴ In Jewish Temple worship and in early Christian worship only ordained priests were to lead in public worship. In the synagogues only men led in worship.

the seafaring merchants of early America that sailed the high seas were away from home for three or more months at a time. Who stayed home and managed the family business? Who managed everything except, as the Puritan records clearly show us, the women? Also, Prov. 31 does not depict a woman as a non-entity, but as a full partner in the family business and, yet, under her husband's headship. In this passage the husband appears to be an elder in the city and spends a lot of his time sitting at the city gate. There he joined with the other judges helping people make decisions and judging cases of dispute (Ruth 4:1ff.). Meanwhile, the wife is back at home taking care of all the business of the household.

Men should bear the primary responsibility for the economics of the family. It appears to be contrary to Scripture for the man not to assume the leadership in every avenue, not to make certain that the burden of the worry and the burden of facing the world falls upon him. He should live with his wife as the weaker vessel (1 Pet. 3:7). He should be the one who stands at the forefront in every avenue and every compartment of their life.

Men should lead their families religiously. It is saddening how it seems that so often in America, Christian men tend to relegate the raising of their children and religious matters to the wife. That ought not to be. The husband ought to be the chief instructor of the home.

On the other hand, he should not exclude his wife in all this. The historical practice is to have daily devotions together as a family with the husband basically leading devotions, and the wife participating in the teaching and in the explanation to the children and the children sitting there, able to ask questions. This is a good practice and employs some of the principles here in Genesis.

So, Genesis sets forth not simply that a man should have a wife, but that the man should be the head of the family. It teaches that the husband and the wife should operate together. This ordinance persists from the time of the creation to the time of Second Coming. This is God's law governing how Christian society ought normally to be conducted.

(5) God accomplishes His purposes of redemption through the propagation of the race and by means of the institution of marriage. This

theme runs throughout the Bible. Beginning with the promise of the coming Seed of the woman in Gen. 3:15, it emerges in the genealogies that trace covenantal history through the male heads of families. It is evidenced in the ever-present hope for a male child. It is seen in the confession of Noah's father (Gen. 8:21) and the certainty of Abraham that God would not allow the promise of the coming redeemer to be cut off by the death of Isaac (Gen. 22). It is the emphasis of prophecies from Gen. 3:15 through Gen. 24:10 and Isa. 7:14. It finds its climax in the birth and work of the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

c. Labor

“Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.” Gen. 2:15

The third ordinance is termed the ordinance of labor.

(1) Meaningful Labor

Prof. John Murray said, “The stress laid upon the six days of labor needs to be duly appreciated. The divine ordinance is not simply that of labor; it is labor with a certain constancy.”⁶⁵

Meaningful rest is possible only in the context of meaningful labor, and vice-versa. If one has not worked, then he has rested all the time and there is no distinction in the rest he undertakes on the Sabbath day. Consequently, God commands man to *work* six days a week and to rest one day of the week. It is noteworthy that, biblically speaking, rest on the Sabbath is *not* comprehensively expressed in the Hebrew word, *shabbat*. The fundamental meaning of the word *shabbat* is cessation from ordinary labors. Too often present-day Western culture and Christianity look upon observing the Sabbath day as no more than stopping work and doing other things. But the Puritan tradition and the historical Reformed tradition properly see the other element of rest as communicated in the word, *nuach*. In the two recensions of the Ten Commandments these two words are used (Deut. 5, *nuach*, and Exod. 20, *shabbat*). They communicate two ideas—*shabbat*, that we should cease from our ordinary labors, *nuach*, that we should enter the rest and God's salvation (a celebration of what

⁶⁵ John Murray, *Principles of Conduct* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1984 reprint, 83.

God has done for us in Christ). And so the biblical Sabbath is not just a cessation. From the very beginning it was to be an enjoyment of God, of the salvation He bestows, and of the blessings He has gives. Thus, the weekly work is to be service to God in the sense of working out the gifts and the stewardship He has given us.

(2) Labor is Not a Curse

Labor is initiated before the fall and, hence, is not in itself a curse. It is not a curse but is part of man's creational stewardship and as such, it is a blessing. What a thrill to realize that even before the fall, man was deemed worthy of being a servant of the Almighty God.

God created this garden specifically for man designing it in a beautiful and a wonderful manner, and then He put man in it as the steward or the keeper of the garden. As man applied his labor to the soil, it gave forth its fruit providing for his physical needs. Labor was to be done with constancy throughout the entire duration of the creation. The Christian culture should view labor as originally a blessing, as later cursed by God and made more difficult, and as something to be renewed and restored in Christ.

Christians have always viewed labor as a stewardship. The things of the creation are given to man to be brought into submission to his needs in conformity with the laws of God as set forth in the Scripture. This has uniquely defined Christian culture.

Christian culture as foundationally informed by the historic Reformed creeds and, when compared to the world's cultures, exhibits a unique and wonderful characteristic and a resulting blessing. It is called prosperity. God has blessed people when they properly approached the creation. He has blessed cultures when they properly approached work and He has granted them great prosperity. He has blessed them when they properly structured economics—biblical culture is inherently capitalistic.

There are many other rules set forth in the Scripture and specifically in the Mosaic law, that more clearly define man's role economically and culturally—with reference to tilling the soil. However, this is not the place to go into the details more thoroughly, but here we simply enunciate

the principle that from the foundation of the world, man was commanded to work and was promised personal material prosperity.

(3) Labor is Mandated for all Societies

“For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.” 2 Thessa. 3:10-12

Work is fundamental to Christian society. To some, this may seem to be a very difficult rule but we must recognize that it is founded upon the reality of the creation ordinance. God set man in this world and commanded him to work. The almighty and sovereign God could have created man so that he did not need food. He could have created man so that he did not need exercise and He could have created man so that he did not need a purpose or a goal to achieve. He could have created man so that he did not have the blessing and the pleasure of doing a good job and seeing a product produced and blessed by God. But God chose not to do all that. Instead, He put man in the garden of Eden to be His steward and His servant, to be the ruler over the world, and to take care of it under His regency. In the New Testament Paul, building upon this principle, reaffirms it. Either you work or you do not eat (1 Thessa. 3:11). Work is fundamentally obedience to God. Not just work and labor but work and labor that provides our bodily needs. How many Christians are there today who like those about whom Paul speaks, work but get no profit from it? They do not do the kind of work producing an income for themselves and their families. Paul says that in such an instance, those people ought not to be fed. Now certainly it should be acknowledged, consistent with the Bible, that due to sin and its effects not all people are capable of working. Or maybe they do not even have the real opportunity. Each case, of course, has to be treated individually, but we should recognize that because of sin there are some exceptions to the “don’t work, don’t eat!” rule. But for the able bodied person the rule in the church is the rule that originated in the garden of Eden. If a man will not work then let him not eat.

Paul says that some of the idle were going around gossiping—perhaps the implication is that they were going around begging for food (1 Thessa. 3:11). They are not occupied with work. He sets all this before the church as sin that needs to be corrected.

So, Paul reaffirming the creation ordinance of work as mandated by God, teaches it is binding on the Church until the Second Coming of Christ.

Following God’s creation ordinance is not only the command of God, it is our privilege. It is rebellion for a Christian man to refuse to work when God has created us to do that very thing. What a rebellion for a Christian man to act contrary to God and try to get other people to give him his living without in any way investing his own talents and time. We note that the legal kinds of work are not addressed in Genesis. They are addressed in the Mosaic Law and the rest of the Scripture.

The Old Testament and New Testament confirm that godly labor, joined with marriage and Sabbath rest are integral to the proper exercise of or living up to the image of God.

d. Dominion

“Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’” Gen. 1:28

Another creation ordinance is the command for man to exercise dominion. We have already discussed being fruitful, multiplying and filling the earth but God also says to man that he is to subdue the earth. This is not said in the context of a wild chaotic existence, but in the context of the garden of Eden. What does it mean to subdue the earth, i.e., the garden of Eden? It means to bring it under control, and to use it in a profitable way under the rulership of the Lord. It means that the earth should become a servant of man, not that man should be the servant of the earth. In addition, this teaches us that God from the beginning, appointed man to be the ruler over the totality of the earth. And it is the Bible’s thesis from this point on that from the creation of the world until the

consummation in the Lord Jesus Christ, God intended and appointed man to have dominion over the whole earth.

Mankind cannot be understood apart from these two fundamental facts: he is made in God's image, and he is to have dominion not only over the earth but also over the totality of all creation. Man was given everything that was needed to fulfill this dominion charge. He was made with the desire to rule over the earth, even as God by nature rules over all things.

This matter of man's dominion over the creation has been greatly debated among many Christians, especially when we began sending manned ships to the moon and now we are planning to send men beyond the moon to other planets. Some Christians argue that man was appointed only to have dominion over the earth. In response, we note how in the Bible man was placed only in the garden of Eden. So, if we understand the dominion command in terms of where God placed man, then we might conclude that it was God's intent that man would never leave the garden of Eden. And yet after the fall, man was driven out of the garden, not because he had no inherent right to the rest of the earth but because by his sin he gave up the most precious place in all the earth. After the fall, God allowed man to continue in the arena he was created to dominate (viz., the earth) as he would increase and fill it. What was he to fill? The whole earth. That is his natural territory.

Moreover, we argue by good and necessary implication that God, who placed man in the garden of Eden, drove him beyond Eden to the rest of the earth according to His own intention and design. Similarly, God placed man on the earth and has allowed him the talents and abilities to go beyond the earth to this solar system and potentially to the rest of the universe. Only God knows the limitations He has placed upon man. Indeed, in the absence of divine command, if God did not want man to be on the moon, He surely would have stopped it and would not have given us the talents and the abilities to bring the moon under dominion.

This dominion ordinance *has reference to the harnessing and utilizing the earth's resources for the building a Christian culture. The subduing of the earth involves the expenditure of thought and skill and energy in bringing the entire earth under the godly dominion of men and*

women obedient to God's word.

It is worth noting that all the creation ordinances have as their goal world dominion and continue in effect even after the fall. Christ came, as the last Adam, to restore His order and dominion and to place His people in a position to reign with Him. Consequently, Christ laid claim to the whole world and all things in it (John 1:10, Heb. 1:2).

Dr. Gary North's statement expresses the creation ordinance and man's position well,

“For man to live is to exercise dominion. Only in hell . . . can man at last escape the responsibilities of the covenant of dominion (“works”); he can never escape its consequences.”⁶⁶

e. Summary Statements

God created man in a perfect sinless state and placed him in an ideal environment ordering his life in an ideal way. The creation ordinances that are revealed in the Bible work to the end of realizing this ideal ordering of human existence. God gave man a weekly rest. In essence, He gave man vacations once a week. The weekly Sabbath was something Adam was to anticipate. He was to enjoy it fully. He was not to withdraw from it. He was to cease from his ordinary activities and enter as fully as possible into that vacation with its worship of God. God gave a helper designed to be enjoyed in the estate of marriage. God wanted man to fulfill his emotional, psychological, and fleshly desires in his own wife. This was to be a wonderful and permanent union. God gave man labor intended to result in prosperity. It is taught by good and necessary implication that God promised man that every bit of his labor would produce adequate and abundant fruit. In a very real sense, God created man to be wealthy and made him wealthy. God gave man dominion intended to result in a sense of accomplishment and self-respect. God created man to rule and not to be in subjection to anything or anyone except God Himself, i.e., not to be enslaved to others.

These ordinances taken together are descriptive of that for which the nature of man longs—at least to a great part. On a purely natural level, we

⁶⁶ Cited by Morecraft in the section “Covenant of Works,” 4.

long for rest and vacation, we long for a marriage and the fulfillment of our emotional, psychological and sexual desires. We long for labor and to be productive and even to be wealthy, and we long for dominion. These are things that especially the unbeliever gets caught up in constantly. But because of his sin, he twists his talents and in rejection of the Lord God, in a very real sense, he denies these things while seeking them (Eccles. 2:1ff.). The path that God has set forth by which unbelievers can truly attain these things (i.e., the happiness and satisfaction such attainment might bring) is denied. Consequently, they strive for the things and sometimes attain them but often by biblically unlawful means—they have life, but not life more abundantly. Moreover, they use these blessings not to serve the Lord God but to rebel against Him, and so there is no true satisfaction for them. The Christian ought to seek the blessings implied in a proper pursuit of the creation ordinances, but we ought to seek them in a biblical way. We ought not to say that to be rich is sin. The wrongful gaining of riches is sin. The wrongful use of riches is sin and the fixing of our minds and our attention on our riches, not in a way to serve God but to serve ourselves, is sin. Vacations are not sin provided we have done our work. God has blessed us and perhaps has given us vacations—specifically that weekly vacation, the Sabbath. It is a tremendous blessing and it ought to be valued as a blessing. It ought to be a structured and organized as a blessing. What is better in the Christian church than for us to take a day to read the Scripture, to be with God and to spend with God's people? It is only in the Lord Jesus and by the following the commandments in the Word of God that we use these things properly and rightfully and pursue them in a godly fashion.

One of the effects of the fall, of course, is that God no longer guarantees us wealth—in fact, now wealth is a special blessing. The land and the ground are cursed and will not give us prosperity to the extent we may desire. The Bible fixes our minds not on this earth but on heaven as the place where the riches of the garden of Eden will not only be given to us but will be given to us in a fashion and degree that we can only imagine (Rev. 22:1-5). The same is true with reference to rest and dominion. These creation ordinances help to control and guide our fundamental thinking, or at least ought to do so.

“The creational ordinances of marriage, labor, and Sabbath did not have a distinctive existence separated from Adam's

responsibility to refrain from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”⁶⁷

There is a unique relationship between the kinds of laws that God gave in the creation ordinances. There were standing laws, so to speak, binding man from the time of creation to the time of consummation when Jesus returns. That is one kind of divine law. The other kind of law, particular law, was that forbidding them to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Gen. 2:17,

"but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Look at that very carefully. The unique thing about this law is that it is a particularization of a principle and the particularization does not continue after the fall. The general principle is that man must submit to whatever rules God gives him—this is the rule behind all of the creation ordinances and the particularization as well. It binds all divine law together.

But the choice of this tree and even the choice of not eating of the tree were arbitrary on God's part. He chose something merely as a test of man's obedience to Him. He does not explain why this particular thing is chosen, simply that He is God and that man should obey Him. Is it not true that so often in the Bible the test of Christianity, the test of our faith, is the same kind of test that was put before Adam? Will we obey God simply because He is sovereign and recognize that He is God who sets the terms of good and evil? Will we obey Him without question, happily and joyfully as Adam was called upon to do? This seems to be the thrust of this Edenic command forbidding consumption of the fruit of a particular tree. It is the principle that stands behind it. Adam's obedience was focused on this command.

Now, if today there were such a tree as the knowledge of good and evil tree, some might argue man still is forbidden to eat of it. However, this simply is not true because once having eaten it, mankind will never again face this probation. In fact, that kind of tree (apple, pear or peach)

⁶⁷ Robertson, 82.

may still be around so far as we know. The main thing is that God chooses something as a test of Adam and Eve's faith to see whether man will obey Him. It is interesting that in the Bible when the Lord God talks about the Sabbath with Israel in the book of Isaiah (as we shall see later), He talks about it with reference to the time of the Messiah, the Messianic era, the Christian age. Both before and after the coming of Christ, the Sabbath then is a test. We should do this simply because the Lord God commands it. We see that the obedience of man before God is a full-orbed, complete obedience but it has one thing designated by God as a special test—the Sabbath (cf., Isa. 56:6).

[Man's] "life as a covenant creature must be viewed as a unified whole—all of the ordinances and laws in the Garden are bound together. This same unity of covenantal relationship subsequently characterized the various administrations of the covenant of redemption."⁶⁸

Each covenant in turn pictures man's responsibility before God as the full-orbed responsibility touching every area of his existence. "Always the total life of the participant in the divine covenant finds its ordering through the covenantal administration." (Robertson)

The following quotations from Robertson and accompanying comments further depict this full-orbed responsibility as it appears in the respective covenants.

1) "God's covenant with Noah embraces the total orientation of man to the creation."⁶⁹

2) "Under the Abrahamic covenant, the promises of land, seed, and blessing, coupled with the all-inclusive demand for Abraham to walk before God in 'completeness' (Gen. 17: 1) involve the broadest possible dimensions of human life."⁷⁰ God said to Abraham, 'I am God Almighty, walk before Me and be blameless.' With these words, He reminds Abraham that He is sovereign. In other statements God addresses to Abraham, He

⁶⁸ Robertson, 82.

⁶⁹ Robertson, 82.

⁷⁰ 82.

asserts not only His sovereignty, but also sovereignty resting upon His inherent rights as the Creator. ‘I am God Almighty, walk before Me and be blameless and be complete and whole in all that you do.’”

3) “The summation of the Mosaic Law in terms of whole-souled love to God and neighbor depicts a covenantal relationship which encompasses every thought and action.”⁷¹ Jesus emphasizes this understanding of the two commands to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind and “you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” When asked about the Law, Jesus asked the rich young ruler what was the summation of the law and that gentleman properly said that the summation of the Mosaic Law is the command to love God. Jesus told him he should obey it. The second command stands underneath the commandment to love God but it is not secondary as to man's responsibility to keep it. It is important for the Christian to understand that the command to love the Lord is at the heart both of the New Testament (Matt. 22:37) and the Old Testament (Deut. 6:5, cf., Matt 22:39). It is important to understand that the command to love your neighbor as yourself comes from Lev. 19:18. That command, too, is very much at the heart and soul of things. Jesus sets these two commands before us as the summary of the totality of the Mosaic Law. Not only that, but He also sets them before us as His desire as to what we ought to do. Subsequently, these two commandments, being the summary of the Law, are used to undergird the ethics of the rest of the New Testament.

4) “The kingdom-covenant under David obviously intends to order the entire realm of existence of the servants of the King.”⁷² The Prophets, as they expand upon that covenant of David, demonstrate this in every sense of the word.

5) The New Testament fulfilled covenant also involves a total-life relationship: “Covenant-relationship involves a total-life relationship. Rather than addressing itself to some ill-conceived "religious" aspect of man, the covenant of God is all-inclusive.”⁷³ And so we point out in Reformed circles that all of life is religious or covenantal and especially

⁷¹ 82.

⁷² 82.

⁷³ 82.

focused on formal public worship—the cultus. When reformed scholars use the words “cultus” and “cultic,” they do not mean that biblical religion is like a cult, but they mean that certain aspects of our religious life have to do with formal covenantal acts of worship and are to be more narrowly conceived. They do not, however, entail the sum of our responsibilities and relationship to God.

Some Christians “may conceive of the significance of the covenant more narrowly in terms of the salvation of the soul. Too often, he may fail to consider adequately the effect of redemption on the total life-style of man in the context of an all-embracing covenant. That view results frequently in by-passing the responsibility of redeemed man to carry forward the implications of his salvation into the world of economics, politics, business, and culture in general.”⁷⁴

“The total life-involvement of the covenant relationship provides the framework for considering the connection between the ‘great commission’ and the ‘cultural mandate.’ Entrance into God's kingdom may occur only by repentance and faith, which requires the preaching of the gospel [or the Great Commission]. This ‘gospel,’ however, must not be conceived of in the narrowest possible terms.”⁷⁵ Once within the gospel realm, we are in the kingdom and as kingdom members we are responsible to bring into submission to our Lord every aspect and part of our existence. “It is the gospel of the “kingdom.” Jesus teaches us to pray, “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” Does not that prayer teach simply and conclusively that we are to pray according to our Lord Jesus Christ that God’s will, His law, be practiced on earth? Indeed, surely this implies we are also to work for God's will to be done on earth with the same exhaustiveness and completeness as it is in heaven where every aspect of man's existence gladly and joyfully worships and serves the eternal God.

Our mandate from God “involves discipling men to Jesus Christ.” This must never be made secondary, must never be made unimportant.

“Integral to that discipling process is the awakening of an awareness of the obligations of man to the totality of God's

⁷⁴ 82-83.

⁷⁵ Robertson, 83.

creation. Redeemed man, remade in God's image, must fulfill—even surpass—the role originally determined for the first man. In such a manner, the mandate to preach the gospel and the mandate to form a culture glorifying to God merge with one another.”⁷⁶

And so we have in the Bible, as the Reformed faith sets before us, the emphasis that man’s responsibility is to win souls. But, we are also responsible to lead those souls into facing all the commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ. This includes the commandments set forth not only in the Gospels but also in the totality of the Scripture (cf., Rom. 6:1-14).

IV. THE BREAKING OF THE "COVENANT OF WORKS Gen. 3:1-7

A. The Probation and Temptation

These two things occur simultaneously in a single event. God uses this event to challenge and test mankind with a view to mankind's promotion. That is the probation. The Devil uses this event to challenge and test mankind with a view to mankind's demotion. That is the temptation.

B. The Serpent, the Tempter

1. It Was a Real Serpent.

As we work through the account, we see that the Devil uses a serpent to be the agent of the temptation. That this was a real serpent is established by the plain meaning of Gen. 3:1 and by the punishment recorded in Gen. 3:14 when it says,

"And the Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle and more than every beast of the field and on your belly you shall go and dust you shall eat, all the days of your life.'"

⁷⁶ 83.

Obviously, this is speaking of a real serpent. Many unbelievers have difficulty accepting the fact that in the garden of Eden the Devil used a serpent putting himself into it and that the serpent spoke to Adam and Eve. Unbelievers sometimes make fun of the Bible because of this. Hardness of heart limits what such unbelievers see as credulous. Let us remember that the ancients were not like children who would accept everything naively. They were called upon by God to submit only to the Word of God. Indeed, they were challenged by God in Deuteronomy to test those who claimed to be prophets and to test them carefully in accordance with the revelation of God in the Bible (cf., Deut. 13). The serpent was a real beast.

2. The New Testament Teaches That the Devil Used a Real Serpent

The serpent was the instrument through which the Devil spoke and worked as is evident in John 8:44 where Jesus says, "You are of your father the Devil, and the desires of your father you want to do." The Devil was a murderer from the beginning, and *does not* stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, "he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it" (John 8:44). This reinforces the thesis that this incident in Genesis is indeed understood as being a real historical incident. It rests upon the authority and teaching of Jesus Christ to draw that conclusion.

Matt. 13:38 "The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked *one* " Again Jesus teaches that this incident in Genesis is to be taken seriously as an actual historical incident.

Rom. 16:20 "And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly." Paul, too, in consistency with Jesus, takes the Genesis account as a real historical incident.

I John 3:8 "He who sins is of the Devil, for the Devil has sinned from the beginning"

This fact is repeated in New Testament (2 Cor. 11:3): “But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”

Rev. 12:9 "So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world". So, in Revelation, Satan is viewed and called as a serpent.

3. The Serpent Was an Effective Choice

The serpent, says the Bible, was more subtle (wily, NASB) than "any beast of the field." The subtlety, craftiness, lies in the fact that through the serpent the Devil approaches Eve indirectly and craftily. Thus, he intended to catch her off guard and he did. She was unprepared for this approach. No doubt, the speaking serpent was a curiosity to Eve. It is certainly a possibility that her curiosity led her to speak to the serpent. But still it was sinful for her to do so. Here is the lowliest of all of the animals in the garden of Eden. As one reads the account with this in mind, it is surprising that Eve listened to the animal speak and responded. Perhaps she was so caught off guard, so overawed, and so overcome by her curiosity that she gave in to this conversation. So, the serpent was the most subtle and crafty of all the beasts of the field and through it the Devil was able to design a means of speaking to Eve that would immediately catch her attention. Moreover, as we study the unfolding of the temptation, we can see how slyly he spoke through the serpent so that the words said were put in a most crafty and tricky manner.

C. The Temptation Itself

1. It Was Addressed to the Woman

Why did the Devil choose to approach the woman? Probably because she was the weaker of the two persons as said in 1 Pet. 3:7—the apostle says we should “live with our wives as the weaker vessel.” Not only are husbands to live with them as *if* they are the weaker vessel but in so far as they *are* the weaker vessel. This is how God created mankind from the beginning. Adam was created by design to be the leader and the head of the family. In one sense, the woman did not have all of the

abilities that he had. He was in some way stronger. He is not superior, she is not inferior—they were just different.

In America we have a tremendous debate going on that may extend throughout all of human history. Women in America often are told that Christian men look upon them as inferior. If this is true, it should not be the case. Women are just different than men just like Eve was in the garden of Eden. In the garden of Eden when God created man and woman, man in one sense man was inferior. For example, he could not have babies. And woman was superior, i.e., she could have babies. The having of children in the garden before the fall was not a curse. It was a wonderful and blessed thing and it was necessary to fulfill God's commandment to man that he be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. Without the help of the woman, the man could not achieve perfection or fulfillment of God's command. There must have been other differences as well. Whatever the differences between Adam and Eve, she was not inferior to him, she just had a different role and was designed accordingly.

Satan used the differences to creep in and test man, and ultimately to lead them into the fall. Thus, it is evident that she was weaker insofar as Satan chose to attack through the woman. Apparently, she was more easily overcome by him. Perhaps, this vulnerability was due the fact that she had not personally heard the command from God.⁷⁷ More likely, this suggests that Adam had not sufficiently instructed his wife. The fact that he so easily succumbed to eating the fruit when it was offered to him by his wife, suggests that he had latent doubts in his own heart that easily came to fruition and to sin.

It should have been obvious to the woman that this encounter with an animal was a most unusual confrontation. Mankind was appointed to rule the animals not to be ruled by them. Once having satisfied her curiosity and having heard the words of the serpent, then certainly she ought to have fled. She ought to have realized that the serpent was attempting to assume the position of God. He was seeking to rule her immediate action and her future disposition. Moreover, the animals did not speak. For Eve to speak with an animal was not an everyday occurrence for her. This was very extraordinary. The minute the serpent

⁷⁷ Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 45.

spoke, it was evident that something was wrong. Certainly as the conversation unfolded, she was aware that this was a terribly wrong thing.

2. It Came in Two Stages

a. Stage one: Satan seeks to lead Eve to doubt the facts of God's prohibition

(1) Satan's first foray.

Satan seeks to stir Eve's doubt as to the factuality and fairness of what God had said. Said the Devil, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'" (Gen. 3:1) This implies doubt as to the fairness of God's word. Consequently, Satan is trying to lead Eve into a distrust of God. He says, "has God indeed said." In the way this was phrased (no doubt also in the tone of Satan's voice) he was seeking to stir doubt whether God had actually said this—and he tried to stir that doubt in Eve. With the words, "You shall not eat of every tree of the garden" he was trying to point out God's unfair limitation on them. The woman accepts this first doubt as her own, in a sense, and opens the door to the second stage of doubt in her reply.

(2)The Woman's Reaction

In one sense, Eve rejects what the serpent says. She says that they could eat from any fruit in the garden except the forbidden fruit. This is a good and proper response. She affirms that the prohibition was given, when she reports that God said, "You shall not eat of it." She rejects the suggestion that God forbids too much (was unfair and unreasonable) by accurately reporting that God had forbidden them to eat only of the one tree when she says, "we may eat of every tree of the garden, except the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden."

Then she betrays her doubt by adding "or touch it lest we die." She suggests that God may have been too harsh and thus implies that God was unjust. She admitted the seed of the act of sinning into her heart when she says, "we may not eat of the tree or touch it, lest we die."⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Vos, p. 46.

b. Stage two: Satan leads Eve to accept the injustice and unfairness of God's prohibition.

Now having gotten a little opening, Satan expands upon the implication of his initial statement and seeks to bring Eve to a full recognition of God's injustice and unfairness.

(1) Satan's second foray.

Satan raises doubts and questions about God's motives and reliability. He pointedly contradicts what God had said with the words, "you will not surely die." Then he sets forth a clear accusation against God, "For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." He calls God a liar and says He lies out of selfishness.⁷⁹ "You shall not surely die." The phrasing in the original text is emphatic and unique. He begins by affirming that it is not so what God said, namely this, "You shall surely die." He started with a strong affirmation that it is not so. "God is wrong." He suggests to Eve that she needs to see that God is unfair, unjust, and wrong. He then sets forth a clear accusation against God. "For God knows that in the day that you eat of it, your eyes will be open and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." He suggest to her that God operates out of wicked motivations and his concern is to retain the blessings of self-determination, the blessings of knowing good and evil for himself.

We should notice that in this accusation Satan uses the phrase, "knowing good and evil." He tells her that God knows good and evil—this is true. Before the fall, God knew good and evil and He knew it in the sense that He practiced it. He knew it as terms and definitions He had set forth. He determined what good and evil was. He was the Lord of good and evil. Thus, Satan affirms his own autonomy putting himself in the place of God. He asserts himself as the lord of good and evil. The temptation set before Eve is that God is treating her like a child not allowing her to make her own decisions. It is time for her to stop being a child—time for her to stand on her own two feet. Satan suggested that she is being held back from some of the greatest blessings of life. So, we see Eve receiving this temptation of the Devil.

⁷⁹ 46.

It is interesting to study this whole temptation, especially noticing the words the Devil used. The Devil always refers to God simply as *Elohim*. He never refers to Him as Jehovah. Could it be that he wishes to avoid the full implication of that divine name, Jehovah? If so, the Devil wishes to avoid using God's covenantal name. Using that name might remind Eve that God loves her and that He perfectly provided for them. Using the divine name "Elohim" might suggest God is ruthless—a tyrant. Maybe, it suggests He is a ruler and king who does not care what happens to them. This may not be the case, but it does seem to be implied.

(2) The Woman's Reaction. Gen. 3:6

Her thoughts: that the fruit was good to eat (sensual appetite) and desirable to make her wise (spiritual appetite). Eve's viewing the tree as offering good food was not just an empirical experience signifying that for some reason or other she had not seen the tree properly. But it is a spiritual experience. The Devil has led Eve to question whether that fruit of the tree might be good were she to sample it. Something good could come out of the eating. It was good for food and it was tasty. That was the first thing that came into her mind. If it was good for food, then why had God kept it from them? Perhaps she reasoned that this fruit was just like any other fruit they had eaten, and that, no doubt, the results of eating it would be the same, too. So, the Devil must be right. The text also says that she saw it was a delight to the eyes and *desirable to make her wise*. Why would God withhold from them something that is good, delightful, and that would lead to wisdom? So often, these kinds of questions are repeated in Christian circles. Something is good, delightful in someone's eyes and enjoyable to do—and they ask the question, "Why would God withhold me from that?" Eve concludes that God is unfriendly to her and that Satan wants her well being. In so doing she, in principle, substitutes Satan for God and, indeed, makes herself her own god.

Her actions: she took of the fruit and gave it to Adam and he ate. The text records how Eve saw that the tree was desirable to make one wise. She concluded in her heart that God had withheld from her one of the most important of all blessings, viz., wisdom. She was being held back, forced to have a childlike position in life and existence. There grew

up in her a longing to be wise. A longing to be autonomous—to determine her own rules of right and wrong.

So, after looking at her inner condition and her inner thoughts, the Bible now looks at her external action. Her inner spiritual condition is the platform and the background for her actions. These are put together so closely that one flows into the other (Matt. 15:18). The Bible says, "And so she took of its fruit and she ate." Having decided that there was no proper reason to reject this sin, she took it upon herself to eat of the fruit—thus she violated her submission to God and Adam.

The last section is very interesting, "and she also gave to her husband with her and he ate." The Bible presents his action as abrupt, as being done without question, as being done without hesitation. It appears that she did not have to convince him to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He simply did it. The thought must already have been there. Perhaps subliminal, but it was still there. When the New Testament explains what happened in the garden of Eden, it is interesting that Adam is responsible as the primary agent in the sinning. This teaches that Adam acted as the federal (covenantal) head of mankind (cf., Rom. 5:12), while Eve is viewed as his subordinate in this particular act.

We also note in all of this that there is a reversal of the roles of Adam and Eve. Eve now becomes the leader over Adam. She takes the primary role just as earlier in the text the Devil assumed kingship or leadership over Eve. So the whole of God's designed creation order is reversed, and now the lowest of all of the creation, the serpent, is made the ruler, as it were, at least in the souls and actions of Adam and Eve.

3. It Resulted in Death

The results of the sin of Adam and Eve are set forth in Gen. 3:7, "The eyes of both of them were opened and they knew that they were naked and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin cloths."

a. Eating the tree was the occasion of the entrance of the awareness of nakedness, the sense of one's own sinfulness.

One of the cultural characteristics of many societies, and Christian society in particular, is that nakedness is not natural to man. In Christian society nakedness is understood to exhibit man's sinfulness. The open and unashamed display of nakedness is rooted in man's rebellion against God. In the Mosaic Law God repeatedly reinforces the disapproval of public nakedness. He forbids people to look upon anyone else's nakedness—except within the bonds of marriage and parents seeing to a baby's needs. This is reemphasized in several New Testament passages (by good and necessary implication). But, man's prefall state in the garden of Eden argues that nakedness is not the primary problem in Gen. 3:7. The primary problem is the knowledge and awareness-of-their-nakedness. The ultimate problem, however, is that they had died spiritually, i. e, in the "day" (moment) you eat of it you shall surely die.

b. Adam and Eve's death should be understood both as physical and spiritual death (Rom. 5:12, 1 Cor. 15:21-26).

Physically speaking, the principle and certainty of death came upon mankind as soon as they ate. Spiritually speaking, the reality of spiritual death and separation from God also came upon them as soon as they ate. They died spiritually when they ate of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. God's prophecy was fulfilled, i.e., in the moment that they ate it they did die. However, Adam and Eve did not physically die at this point, although they did die physically *in principle*. Their bodies began to die. The death principle began to rule within them the moment they ate the fruit. It has rightfully been said every human that is born, is born to die. This was not true of Adam and Eve before the fall. They were created to live and their status changed upon the eating the fruit of the tree of good and evil. Because of this change, they had a tremendous personal sense of their nakedness before God and man.

c. The fact of this death is seen in their awareness of their nakedness both spiritually and physically.

It was not only that they had died physically, but they also died spiritually and their nakedness-awareness was an evidence of their shame due to their sin. They knew what had happened. The account that follows sets before us the fact that they were ashamed in their nakedness. But the account, indeed, clearly teaches that they were not just hiding their

physical nakedness, rather they were hiding both their physical nakedness and spiritual nakedness-death. Physically speaking, as we said, the principle and certainty of death came upon man as soon as they ate. Spiritually speaking, the reality of spiritual death and separation from God also came upon them as soon as they ate. The fact of their awareness of their nakedness both spiritually and physically is established by their act of making loincloths or aprons of fig leaves for themselves. Their awareness of their spiritual death is emphatically set forth when they hid from presence of God (Gen. 3:8).

d. All men have sinned as the result of Adam's federal (covenantal) headship.

We note that because of Adam's sin, this principle of death, both physically and spiritually, came not only upon Adam and Eve, but as the Bible says, it simultaneously came upon all mankind. Paul in Rom. 5:12 reflects this truth when he says death came by sin and so all men die in that all men have sinned. That is, all men have died and do die not because they personally did something wicked, but they sinned in Adam. In the following verses, Paul sets forth the work of Adam and the work of Christ as corresponding to one another. Adam represented all of mankind just as Jesus Christ represents all of His people (those who are covenantally under or in Him). So, the Catechisms and the Westminster Confession of Faith rightly point out that Adam acted as the federal or covenantal head of all mankind when he partook of this tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Therefore of Adam's sin, all mankind have come under the curse of death both spiritually and physically.

V. THE PRESENT STATUS OF "THE COVENANT OF WORKS"

We must look at the creation ordinances and ask what is the status of the creation ordinances today? All of the creation ordinances, the Sabbath, marriage, labor (the command that man should work) and the dominion ordinance are binding today and until the return of Jesus Christ.

A. The Continuing Necessity of Observing the Sabbath

1. Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath

In Matt. 2:27-28 Jesus Christ says He is the Lord of the Sabbath. One ought not to take away the importance and force of this statement. When Jesus said this, the Jews, no doubt, realized Jesus was saying that He stood in the place of God, the Creator. The Creator was the Lord of the Sabbath. He was the One that that designed and initiated it. The necessary implication of the biblical creation account, and of Jesus' statement is that the Creator of the Sabbath was the One who later in the Mosaic Law stipulated how the Sabbath was to be kept. He was the administrator of the Sabbath. He alone has the right to do with it whatever He desires. He is the Lord of the Sabbath.

2. God Made the Sabbath For Man

In Mark 2:27 Jesus said that God made the Sabbath for man. As the context argues, He intended to teach that man ought not to add to God's laws concerning the Sabbath. Man is put under the laws of the Sabbath by the Lord of the Sabbath and it is not man's role to redesign the Sabbath—as the Pharisees were doing.

Moreover, God has designed these laws for man's good. To change them is to move away from what is good for man.

Jesus Christ is the Lord of the Sabbath. Since Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath, man is not made to be lord over it, but as the servant of Jesus Christ, he is made to keep the Sabbath of His Lord. God made the Sabbath for man. So long as there is man living in the created and cursed world, the Sabbath remains for him to keep.

The inclusion of the “even” (sometimes rendered “also” or “indeed”) places Jesus on the level of God. “Also” implies He holds the position, the Lord of the all things, with the Father. “Indeed” emphatically affirms His equation with the Father, i.e., just as God is the Lord of the Sabbath, so is Jesus. Neither sense could have been well received by the Jewish leaders.

3. Meeting on the First Day of the Week

The rest of the New Testament teaches us that the Christian era becomes, in a sense, a new creation, the realization of the new covenant

(cf., 1 Cor. 5:17). The new creation implies a new Sabbath and the New Testament supports this implication. In the Old Testament when the Sabbath commands are given, one of the reasons God says Israel should keep the Sabbath holy was that God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. According to Gen. 2:3, God consecrated the seventh day—the climactic day of the original creation. Jesus consecrated the first day of the week when He arose from the dead on that day—the climactic day of the new creation.

The New Testament shows and demonstrates that the change of the day to the first day of the week was, indeed, divinely affirmed. On the first day of the week the Holy Spirit came out of heaven upon the church and, thus, ministerially began the Christian era by anointing it for its extended mission, viz., to pursue the Great Commission as well as the Cultural Mandate. The Bible tells us that not only is Israel to keep the Sabbath, because God created the world and rested on the seventh day, but Israel is to keep the Sabbath because God delivered them from the captivity in Egypt—He brought them out of captivity. Therefore, they were to consecrate the seventh day unto the Lord as the day of deliverance. Thus, the seventh day marks deliverance under the Mosaic, or old, covenant. Jesus delivered us from death and marked His victory when He arose from the grave on the first day of the week. So, Reformed scholars have maintained that the theology of the Sabbath in the Old Testament is reinterpreted and reapplied afresh by Jesus the Lord of the Sabbath in the New Testament. The day of victory and deliverance under the new covenant, the new creation, is the first day of the week (cf., Heb. 4).

This is confirmed by the fact that in the New Testament Christians worshipped on the first day of the week. In Acts 20:7 Luke indicates that it was on the first day of the week that the Christians met together. Paul spoke to them until late that night. The text strongly implies that this was a worship service. They had a love feast together, as was the Christian custom (cf., 1 Cor. 11:18ff.). It is probable that this love feast concluded with the observance of the Lord's Supper. We do not know whether the love feast concluded the evening and came after Paul spoke, or whether it came earlier in the worship service. Another element arguing that this was the regular day of worship is the fact that Paul planned to leave the next day. Ordinarily, the Jews did not travel on the Sabbath. It seems that Paul

waited until Monday morning to leave because he did not want to travel on the Christian Sabbath.

Moreover, Paul commands the Christians at Corinth to gather for worship and to bring their offerings before the Lord on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:2). The command to “lay something [their tithes, 1 Cor. 9:13, and offerings] aside” on the first day of each week is explained when Paul adds “that there be no collections when I come.” Paul seems to be referring to a weekly day on which the offerings should be gathered. The gathering of offerings was most clearly an element of Christian worship, just as it was an element of Jewish worship. The Christians, however, are commanded to do this on the first day of the week. Hence, they were to gather for public worship on the first day of the week.

John reports he was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day. This day is called the Lord's day—clearly referring to Jesus Christ as the Lord (cf., Rev. 1:9-10). Thus, John acknowledges that Jesus especially sanctified a day. As was just shown, the Bible acknowledges that Jesus sanctified this day, the first day of the week by His resurrection and by the sending of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33).

4. Keeping the Sabbath is Keeping the Covenant, Isaiah 56:2-7

This passage refers to the Messianic Age. God speaks about those who have no rights to come into the court of men in the Temple, those who are cut off and have no inheritance in Israel according to the Law of Moses, viz., the son of a foreigner and a eunuch. He says that in the future age they will be included as heirs of God. They will have a portion with Israel. In that age the Mosaic Law will be superceded. That is what makes one believe that this passage is, indeed, a reference to the Messianic Age.

“Blessed *is* the man *who* does this, and the son of man *who* lays hold on it; who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and keeps his hand from doing any evil. Do not let the son of the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD speak, saying, ‘The LORD has utterly separated me from His people’; nor let the eunuch say, “Here I am, a dry tree.’ For thus says the LORD: ‘To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, and choose what pleases Me,

and hold fast My covenant, even to them I will give in My house and within My walls a place and a name better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off. Also the sons of the foreigner who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants—everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and holds fast My covenant—even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices *will be* accepted on My altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." Isa. 56:2-7

This passage, and especially verses 4-6, teaches that Sabbath-keeping is holding fast God's covenant. Verses 4 and 6 prophesy that eunuchs will keep the Sabbaths. So, the curse on eunuchacy in the Mosaic Law now is transcended in the Messianic Age. Eunuchacy becomes a blessing provided a eunuch chooses to keep God's Sabbath. Holding fast God's Sabbaths pleases Him. Indeed, Sabbath observance constitutes a key part of keeping the covenant of the Lord (v. 4, 6). In the Mosaic Law, too, one of the repeated themes was, in essence, that keeping the Sabbath is keeping the covenant (Exod. 31:16). We know from a full study of the Mosaic Law that there is much more to keeping the Mosaic Law than keeping the Sabbath, but it constitutes almost a "probation-tree" in that Law. Here in Isa. 56 it is again assumed that Sabbath observance is, in this sense, the commandment of God above all other commandments. It is the "test" of whether or not one is faithful to the covenant. "Keep the Sabbath," says God, "and you keep the covenant."

Isaiah applies the same theme to the foreigners who ordinarily would not be citizens at all. They are not citizens, are not under the covenant, and therefore have no rights to the covenant, but God says that if they keep the Sabbath then they keep the covenant (cf., Rom. 2:27-29).⁸⁰ Indeed, they and the eunuchs who keep the Sabbath will receive a name that is better than merely that of sons and daughters, viz., an everlasting name (vs. 5).⁸¹ They will be brought into the house of God which now is

⁸⁰ On the basis of Paul's argument in Rom. 5:15-23, one must conclude that properly keeping the Sabbath mandates outward conformity to the law.

⁸¹ Cf., the discussion of the namings in Gen. 1 and 2.

a “house... for all nations” (cf., Heb. 12:23). Under Mosaic Law they are barred from this privilege.

5. Keeping the Sabbath Commanded By God

“If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, *from* doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy *day* of the LORD honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking *your own* words, then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the LORD has spoken.” Isa. 58:13-14

Our understanding of this passage should be informed by the whole context of chapters 53-66, and especially by 56:2-7. This entire section of Isaiah is highly messianic. Isa. 56:2-7 deals with the function of Sabbath observance in that envisioned age.

Now we turn to a brief exposition of Isa. 58:13-14. As he reads, one must always keep in mind the theme of Isaiah 40-66—God’s coming deliverance of Israel. Indeed, it is evident that here Isaiah moves smoothly from the matters of his era to the matters of the messianic age. It is not always possible to determine which subject he is addressing. On the other hand, Isa. 58:13-14 clearly does apply to the messianic Age—especially in view of what Isaiah says in chapter 56. It is evident that Isaiah 56 speaks of the messianic era, just as it is evident that 58:13-14 speaks of it. In this latter passage to delight oneself with the Lord, is to keep the Sabbath, and this is to keep the covenant (to feed on the heritage of Jacob). Both passages speak of keeping the Sabbath as a sign of covenantal obedience in the messianic age. Therefore, Reformed theology since the Reformation, for the most part, has taken Isa. 58:13-14 to apply to today's age. So, the Sabbath ordinance in the Bible begins in the creation, and is set forth as binding upon all mankind until the consummation.

B. God Continues to Require of Man Perfect Obedience to the Covenant of Works

In the pre-fall garden of Eden God required of man not only a heartfelt obedience, but an obedience at every point and to everything He said. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was a test of that commitment. In a sense, not eating the fruit of this tree was a small thing—even an insignificant thing. But this was the probationary focus and test of man's obedience to God by God's choice and design. Man's total obedience to the covenant hinged upon his abstinence—his not eating the forbidden fruit. In the covenant of works, as it originally operated, man was responsible to obey all of God's commands. This general rule lies behind both the creation ordinances and the probationary particularization, and constitutes the fundamental requirement of the covenant of works.

1. Discussion of Abiding Validity of the Law

a. All Men are Responsible to Keep the Covenant of Works

This responsibility of all men to keep the covenant of works emerges in Rom. 3:10ff. The point of all this is expressed in Rom. 3:19-20.

“Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.” Rom. 3:19-20

Here Paul is referring to the Old Testament. He does not exclude the opening chapters of Genesis. He does not exclude the Law of Moses or the prophets. In fact, his quotations in verses 10-18 come from various Psalms, Isa. 59:7f, and Prov. 1:16 and so when he speaks of law, he is speaking of the Old Testament as a whole and not just that section the Jews referred to as the Law. The verses he cites hold the reader responsible to keep the Mosaic Law, indeed, all of God's commandments. Moreover, Paul says that we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law. He implies this is common knowledge in the church of his day. Then follows a statement as to the intended purpose of the Old Testament law—God's commands to men: "That every mouth may be closed and that all the world may become accountable to God." In this passage Paul stipulates that one thing we know (or at least should

know) is that every mouth may be closed and that every man may become accountable to God. Why? Because everyone is under the law and that law addresses all of us. All men stand under responsibility to the law as it is recorded—i.e., to the oracles of God (Rom. 3:2). The words “no flesh” must refer to all men since the fall in the garden of Eden. Surely, this is what is implied in the words “in the day you eat of it you shall surely die,” and in Gen. 3:15. Gen. 3:15 implies that all mankind has fallen under the curse of sin and death and that the seed of the woman will bring the needed restoration. Hence, all men since the fall are under the curse and are responsible to keep the covenant of works.

The New Testament works out this responsibility toward the Old Testament in various ways but this is a matter to be handled elsewhere.

b. All Men Liable to the Penalty of the Law

“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed *is* everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.’” Gal. 3:10

In this passage, Paul addresses the same theme, viz., man’s responsibility to the Old Testament law. The words “the book of the law” specifically refer to particular parts of the Mosaic Law and by necessary implication, to the totality of divine law. Thus, all men are responsible to keep God’s law: “as many as are under the works of the law are under a curse.” So, all men are under the curse of the law. Some fuller implications of the abiding significance of the Old Testament emerge in Gal. 3:12ff.

To some, it seems Paul is speaking only of Jewish Christians being under the law and not being able to earn their salvation. Assuming this explanation, one must conclude that Christ died on the cross fulfilling the responsibility of the Jews all of whom were unable to keep the law and therefore were under the curse of the law—specifically under the censure of hanging. However, this explanation is pointedly contradicted by what Paul says in verse 14. He says that Christ died on the cross so the Gentiles might receive the Abrahamic blessing. It is proper to argue that He also bore the penalty of the curse for the Jews. Therefore, we Gentiles in

particular are under the curse and penalty of the law, and are liable to die by hanging on a tree. Jesus suffered that penalty for any and all of us who are in Him (elect, Rom. 9:6-16).

This Galatians passage refers indirectly then to Gen. 1-2 (the covenant of works) since Paul repeats in principle the very thing set forth in the garden of Eden, viz., that mankind as a whole is under responsibility to perfectly keep the law of God. Moses adds that the one who is hanged is cursed, Deut. 21:23. But, by good and necessary implication, Paul's reference is not only to the Mosaic Law. Because that law (Deut. 21:23) does not tie hanging directly to any particular sin—only to any sin worthy of death. But what sin has every man committed that is worthy of death under that law? Certainly, under that law, not all men are under the censure of physical death. Hence, Paul must be referring to another law that sentences all men to death. Indeed, what sin is it that has placed every man under the curse of death? It is the sin we have all committed in Adam, Rom. 5:12. It is the sin of eating the forbidden fruit, of rejecting the dominion of God, and all that sin implies. We have all rebelled against God and broken His covenant—i. e., the covenant of works set forth in the garden of Eden. The penalty for that sin is death, and its expression in Jesus' case was the cross—the worst form of death under the Mosaic law.

Moreover, Paul also implies that more has been violated than what was set forth in Eden when he says, “for as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse.” These words, “the works of the law,” refer to all that God commands man to do (Rom. 2:32). Because man does not keep that law and throws off the Lordship and headship of God, and because man assumes for himself autonomy and becomes his own dictator and his own determiner of right and wrong, mankind is under the curse. This is the curse of death, the very curse that fell upon Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. Paul speaks here of more than the principle of death abiding in each man—this is addressed directly in Rom. 5:12 (cf., 1 Cor. 15:21). Paul teaches that man's sinfulness comes from their covenantal involvement with Adam. But here he addresses the evidence that this nature is present in man, i.e., the working out of it found in every single man who rejects the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:3). Every man is responsible for the sinful actions that flow out of the nature he has inherited from Adam. All men are under the curse of the law.

2. Man Unable to Keep the Law (the Covenant of Works)

Man, the sinner, is unable to produce that perfection, that total obedience required by God, and therefore he is under a curse and condemnation. When we read Rom. 3:10ff. we see a catalogue of verses from the Old Testament that describe man's inability. "There is none perfect, no not one." "There is none that seeks after God and they have all gone astray." They are neither willing nor able to achieve the perfection required by God. Therefore man is under the curse and condemnation of death (Rom. 6:23).

3. Man Needs a Mediator-Substitute to Satisfy the Demands of the Covenant of Works

Man is in need of a mediator-substitute to meet and satisfy the demands of the covenant of works—to be saved from death and hell. Those demands are perfect obedience to God's law or satisfaction by death for breaking the law. So, in Rom. 8 Paul comes to a treatment of what we should do in view of our inability to overcome that sin within us.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.” Rom. 8:1

In Rom. 7 Paul has spoken of Christians, of those who are regenerate. We are not able to keep the demands of the law perfectly. What shall we do? Paul declares that there is no condemnation for us in Christ. Indeed,

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus [the “law” of the Gospel] has made me free from the law [of the covenant of works] of sin and death.” Rom 8:2

There is a “law” that has been put upon us and under which we live, the law of the spirit of life. Life comes from Jesus and if we are in Jesus, we live under that law when it comes to our judgment before God. If we are not in Jesus, we are under the law of sin and death. The law of sin and death rules our life and determines where we stand with God. The joy of

the Christian is not total freedom from all sinning. The joy of the Christian is this war that we carry on against sin—unlike the unregenerate, we fight against the sin within us; we are not hostile to the law of God. The ever presence of sin in our members does not fix our judgment but instead it is fixed by our union with Christ. This union is evidenced by the law that predominates in our inner man as Paul explains in Rom. 7. This is the law that makes us delight in what the God has revealed. Paul says in Rom. 8:3:

“For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh.”

And so because we cannot keep the revealed law by ourselves, we need the mediator who has kept the law in our behalf. Moreover, we never stop needing the mediator even after we are born again. So, the joy of the Christian gospel is that being united to Christ and being placed under His headship, we are now judged by a new law: the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. From the time of the garden of Eden, man needed this mediator-substitute. Once fallen, man is unable ever to restore himself to a right relationship with God—only the Lord Jesus Christ can work that restoration. So, it is not man that does it, says Paul in Rom. 7, but it is Jesus Christ who does it—as he explains in Rom. 8. Robertson remarks,

“Once ‘the covenant of works’ had been violated, ‘no way of relief from the death-curse may be found other than a bloody substitution. Only as Jesus the lamb of God bears in himself the ultimate curse of the creation covenant may restoration be accomplished.’”⁸²

4. The Covenant of Grace Rests on Christ’ Fulfillment of the Covenant of Works.

The covenant of grace rests upon Christ's perfect fulfillment of the covenant of works in behalf of all His sheep who will believe in Him (1 Pet. 1:15-16). God calls upon man demanding perfect obedience and only Christ can properly respond to that call and demand. He fulfilled the

⁸² Robertson, 87.

covenant of works. He did what none of us can do because of the weakness of our flesh (Rom. 8:1-3). He has merited for His people eternal life in the highest degree of perfection by taking upon Himself on the cross the eternal death and curse our disobedience deserves (Gal. 3:10ff.).

VI. CONCLUSION

There are several important conclusions supported by or advanced in the above discussion. The first is that the recorded prefall revelation does conform to what is said in the Westminster Standards. In particular, the Standards affirm that this material constitutes or contains a covenant, and that this may rightly be described, among other things, as a covenant of works.

Our conclusion that the Bible does set forth a covenant in this prefall material does not rise from or rest solely on what the Standards teach. To the contrary, we hold to the faithfulness of the Standards because what they teach rises from and rests on what the Bible teaches.

There are numerous passages of Scripture that either directly or indirectly teach that the Bible sets forth a covenant that God made with man before the fall. It is explicitly called a covenant in Hos. 6:7 and its parallel Job 31:33. Similarly, Isa. 24:4-5 (cf., Rom. 8:20-23), and Jer. 33:20-21, 25-26, 35-37 also refer to the prefall relationship as described in the Bible, as a covenant. Although other passages only indirectly refer to and use this early revelation as a covenant, they do most necessarily present and use it as a covenant, cf., Rom. 8:20-23, Rom. 5:12-20, 1 Cor. 15:21-28, Rom. 3:19ff., 4:2ff., and Gal. 3:10-14.

The Gen. record also argues for the conclusion that there is a covenant of works revealed here. It provides important information emphasizing the covenant giving God's authority and power. The tremendous difference between man the creature, and God the Creator, is emphasized in the nature of God's creating all things. He did this sovereignly, *ex nihilo*, and in bringing forth an ordered structure. In this entire work He reveals Himself as the Triune God of later biblical revelation, although this dimension of His being is not fully set forth in the kind of detail seen in the New Testament. The Trinity, or multiple

“personness” of God, emphasizes just how much greater than man He is. The revelatory creation record certainly emphasizes the orderliness in the process of the creating, and in the result of that work. Thus, we are presented with an all-powerful Being who is totally different than the crown of His work, man. To Him naturally, and by virtue of His creating work, belong all glory and deference.

This divine Being created man as the crown of His work. He graciously created man in His own image. With this, He enabled man to accomplish successfully everything required of him by the benevolent Creator. It is important to emphasize that although there were things required of man, God’s emphasis is on the blessedness of the resulting obedience rather than on the burden or possible oppression of the requirement. The record teaches that it is God’s intent and accomplishment to grant man every good and wonderful blessing. Man was created in God’s image—He had every intellectual and spiritual enablement needed to realize the full blessedness God intended for him. God surrounded man with every natural blessing he could possibly desire and that enabled him to satisfy all of his physical needs. Finally, God created a help suitable to man’s nature and needs, i.e., a woman.

This enabling corresponded perfectly with man’s responsibilities. God created all things for His own glory. Moreover, to the end that divine glory might be more fully shared with other beings, God created man. He made man in such a way that this high purpose might be most fully achieved. Hence, man was created to enter, as fully as possible, into displaying and enjoying God’s glory. But since man was not God, the Creator from the outset graciously instructed His “child.” Man received the directions in explicit and implicit commands. Among the explicit directions or commands, was that he should multiply and more fully populate the earth, that he should cultivate the soil, and that he should enter into the day sanctified for divine fellowship and observance. Among the implicit commands was that he should live as a faithful vice-regent of God. Man’s overall responsibility to live as God’s vice-regent is focused on the explicit prohibition not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil lest he die, and the implicit command not to eat of the tree of life. Thus, man’s obedience and his opportunity to enhance his blessedness by extending its duration was focused on the great probation and the probationary tree.

Now, these things define a covenant. There are the covenant maker, God, and the covenant recipients, Adam and Eve—with Adam as the federal or covenantal head. There is the description of covenant blessings many of which are bestowed uniquely upon man, e.g., only human beings bear the image of God. There is the covenantal obligation of holy obedience to and fellowship with a loving and effusively generous God. Also, there are covenantal obligations leading to an increased blessedness. All of this is formally contracted by the divine deposition of this most blessed state of things and by His explicit explanation of what it all was and means to man.

We also saw that the Bible sees the covenant of works as extending throughout human history. Its ordinances continue to be obligatory, e.g., keeping the Sabbath, marriage according to God's design and intention, and the exercise of godly dominion. Moreover, the universal obligation of mankind generally and particularly to render perfect obedience to God persists. Man, by virtue of His existence stands responsible to render glory and deference to God.

Another very significant conclusion suggested by the discussion in this chapter is that there is extra-biblical evidence that some of the basic biblical teachings about man and His responsibility to God persisted among men from his earliest beginnings. This evidence comes primarily from the Mesopotamian writings that have been recovered by archaeologists. Some writings reflect the biblical report of the creation of man. In turn the Bible and other ancient writings reflect some of the same themes and literary structures. Both the Bible and other Ancient Near Eastern documents employ a literary structure consisting of two parts: a summary or outline section followed by a detailing of one or more elements of that summary section. This literary structure, however, is not found in the Babylonian creation account, but in the ancient Mesopotamian historical materials. God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. This pattern became a frequent literary tool in the Ancient Near Eastern materials. Especially noteworthy in buttressing the conclusion that the creation ideas persisted (albeit in a degenerated form) among the ancients outside the covenantal society, is that the Mesopotamian creation myths and the Bible both teach that there was a watery mass at the very beginning, that this universe was created out of this

watery mass, that light came before the light producers were created, etc. Also, both reports have the same order of created events. The Bible accurately reports that these elements were created in the space of six days while the Mesopotamians heard that, for the most part, they all occurred at the same time. The most central ideas shared by the two ideas of creation is that man owes his existence, and fealty to the divine creator, and that man was created out of both divine and non-divine elements.

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Chapter 3. THE ADAMIC COVENANT

I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter will discuss the post-fall covenant God made with Adam. The first covenant, discussed in the previous chapter, was the covenant of works. The second covenant is sometimes called the Adamic covenant. It is the first publication of the covenant of grace. Hence, the following discussion will sometimes focus on the Adamic covenant as a part of the covenant of grace and sometimes as a particular covenant in itself.

A. Its Historical Context

The Adamic covenant both in itself and as the first publication of the covenant of grace, *was established immediately after the fall when Adam and Eve transgressed “the covenant of works,” Gen.. 3:1-13.*

The wonders and riches of God's grace are abundantly manifested in God's immediate promise of restoration in the face of human rebellion and divine judgment. This is a covenant of grace in the fullest sense of the word, both as to basis and purpose—“to the praise of the glory of his grace,” Eph. 1:6. At every point, this covenant demonstrates the grace of God. This cannot be emphasized enough as we work through an exposition of the biblical material setting forth this covenant. This will show that God's grace towards man is manifested in the face of man's open rebellion. Man expects and deserves judgment and punishment but what God gives him is grace minimizing the judgment that should come upon him and promising redemption.

The covenant of works was established by grace but its primary blessings were retained and made permanent by works. By grace God created man in such a way that he had all that he needed to obey and serve God perfectly. By grace, God put man in the garden of Eden. By grace, God made everything perfect and conducive to man's task of serving Him in holiness and honor. But the maintenance of that condition and those blessings hinged upon sustaining the probation. So, the covenant of works was established by grace, but its primary blessings were retained and perfected by works.

The covenant of grace is established by grace and its primary blessing (eternal life with God) is retained and made permanent by grace. In the garden of Eden, keeping the blessing of God was a matter of man making the right choice and doing the right action at the right time. But, under the covenant of grace, being introduced into the blessing and maintaining that relationship with God hinges ultimately and fundamentally upon the working of God. This is not the place to defend this proposition extensively but the reader is reminded that this is the necessary implication of Rom. 7 and 8. The tremendous problem that Paul faces in Rom. 7 is that because sin is ever present, and in a sense dominant, in his life as a believer how can he expect any salvation? As a believer, in his heart, he loves the law of God—an inward condition not present in the heart of an unbeliever, Rom. 8:7. On the contrary, the mind of the unbeliever is enmity with the law of God as predicted and set forth in Gen. 3:15. We note here two things: that Paul shifts from describing his own condition as an example of the human condition in chapter 7 to the condition of mankind as a whole in chapter 8. Hence, he is speaking of believers in general in chapter 7—albeit indirectly. Secondly, in Rom. 8:7 he speaks about the mind of the unbeliever in terms of a predisposition toward God and His law. So, Paul says that in his flesh and actions he seems to be dominated by an influence contrary to the inward love for God and His law that underlies all of his thoughts and actions. He is constantly being led astray and even bound by sin. What is he going to do? In chapter 8 Paul confesses that his redemption, freedom of conscience and freedom of emotion reside in the fact that Jesus Christ perfectly fulfills the law for all believers and so we *live* under a new law, the law of spirit and life in Christ Jesus. By grace the great blessings of God now come upon and are guaranteed to the believer. Fellowship with God continues not because of the believer's works but because of the working of God—this is first set forth in Gen. 3:8-24.

It is important not only to acknowledge the precedent to the covenant with Adam but also to acknowledge the antecedent(s). In the previous paragraph, this approach was employed to explain the condition of Adam and Eve after the fall. This principle is both fruitful and necessary. The early chapters of Genesis present only what is necessary to understand what follows, and yet seem to depend on what follows to be understood properly—as just seen above. On the other hand, one should

be cautious in using this approach. There is always the danger of reading more into a text than is warranted. Nonetheless, keeping that rejoinder in mind we will proceed with our presentation, seeking in the process to argue carefully when using antecedent biblical material. We note in passing that several of the covenantal positions already discussed in the author's book employ this hermeneutical procedure.

B. Its Covenantal and Biblical Significance

This covenant *contains in seed-form the basic elements of salvation that are developed throughout the rest of the Old Testament history and that culminate in Christ and the New Testament. The entirety of the history of God's kingdom can be defined in terms of the personages, conflict and conquest set forth in the covenant of God with Adam, i.e., in Gen. 3:15.* In this regard, one should note the three issues especially emphasized in this covenant. The first is: in view of the universal fall of man how can the relationship between God and man be restored? Secondly, who is the promised seed and when will he come? Thirdly, what covering will be divinely provided for man's sin and shame? These three issues inform the history of the world until Christ comes. The interweaving of these three issues is not evident in the earliest revelation. This does not necessarily mean that Adam and his descendants did not understand how they interrelated. On the other hand, there are some indications that they understood more than is recorded in the text. The full explanation is given before the New Testament dawns, but it certainly is trumpeted in the New Testament.

Notice how in Rev 12:1-17 John picks up on the various themes and personages involved in the covenant of God with Adam called the Adamic covenant. He uses this covenant to depict the whole history of the world. It should be evident that John's imagery, at least at one point—a very significant point—reflects Gen. 3:15. His prophecy should be understood in terms of the seed of the woman who would be bruised by the serpent and the serpent that would seek to destroy the seed of the woman. Rev. 12 clearly suggests that the seed of the woman is the Lord Jesus Christ. Consider the following:

“She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.” Rev. 12:5

John expands upon this theme of the Adamic covenant showing that it is the necessary background to understand the entire history of God's people from the garden of Eden to the end of the age. Martin Luther remarked:

“This text Gen. 3:15 embraces and contains within itself everything noble and glorious that is to be found anywhere else in the Scriptures.”

The promises and threats of Gen. 3:14-19 are clearly covenantal. Robertson correctly says this is “the first declaration of the covenant of redemption [grace]” and “reveals in a most balanced fashion the various elements constituting his [God's] commitment to redeem his fallen creation.”⁸³

This relationship of fallen Adam and Eve to God includes all the ingredients of a “covenant” as a duly formalized bond (indeed, an “agreement”) entailing a sovereign administrative structure including blessings and promises. Notice in the text of Gen. 3 that nothing is said about this covenant being sealed with blood. Rather, this covenant is depicted as a formal disposition of sovereign grace. God freely gives His grace—He does not invite Adam and Eve to partake of it, but simply and sovereignly grants it. Throughout the account, He gently and persistently dispenses His grace upon them in act after act. By grace they do not immediately die and go to an eternal hell. By grace, He seeks them in the cool of the evening. By grace, they continue to live as they emerge from the trees. By grace, he has renewed His relationships with them, etc. Thus, in these verses the marvelous grace of God is set forth. This grace guarantees to Adam and Eve, and to their posterity, salvation ultimately through the Lord Jesus Christ (the seed of the woman).

Robertson calls Gen. 3:14-19 “the covenant of commencement” because it “records the provisions of the Adamic administration of the

⁸³ Robertson, 93.

covenant of redemption” at its very beginning.⁸⁴

C. Its Relation to the Covenant of Works

Although the 'probation' (concerning the tree of knowledge) is over, man under this covenant continues to be responsible to live in the context of the original responsibilities (creation ordinances) given him by God at the time of his creation in the pre-fall “covenant of dominion” (works). We see this in a number of points in the text. We will go over them more carefully later but summarize them briefly at this point. In Gen. 3:16 again the woman is commanded to be fruitful and multiply indirectly because it is said that she would bear many children. In the end of that verse, her submission to the man is again discussed. But the thrust of the whole thing is that the man would rule over her. So, the original creation ordinance setting forth the internal structure within marriage, namely the headship of the man over the woman, is confirmed in Gen. 3:16—in the Adamic covenant. In Gen. 3:18, Adam is called upon to till the soil, to fulfill the cultural mandate. Thus, Robertson remarks,

“This inseparable connection of the covenant of creation [prelapsarian] with the covenant of redemption [postlapsarian] stresses the restoration goal of the covenant of redemption [grace]. From the very outset, God intends by the covenant of redemption to realize for man those blessings originally defaulted under the covenant of creation [works].”⁸⁵

So, we come to see the tremendous need for a covenant of grace.

“[We] learn from Adam's fall, how unable we are to stand in our own strength. If Adam, in the state of integrity, did not stand, how unable are we now, when the lock of our original righteousness is cut. If purified nature did not stand, how then shall corrupt nature? We need more strength to hold us than our own.

“See in what sad condition all unbelievers and impenitent persons are. As long as they continue in their sins they continue

⁸⁴ Robertson, 93.

⁸⁵ 91.

under the curse of the first covenant; and if they die in that condition, they are damned to eternity.

“See the wonderful goodness of God, who was pleased, when man had forfeited the first covenant, to enter into a new covenant with him. Well may it be called a covenant of grace; for it is bespangled with promises as the heaven with stars.”⁸⁶

II. EXPOSITION

A. General Principles (Gen. 3:8-19)

This text sets forth the divine initiative in the work of deliverance (the working of freedom from the temporal curse) and salvation (the working of freedom from the eternal curse). It reports the reversal of positions, relationships and attitudes resulting from the fall and declares, in principle, the restoration of all things. When we dealt with the fall, we noted that step by step that the relationships God had established were shattered and, indeed, were reversed. Now when we study the covenant of grace in the Adamic covenant we see that step by step that those relationships are set back on course. In Gen. 3:14-15 it particularly sets forth the continuation of the work of deliverance/salvation through the seed of the woman culminating in Christ the true seed of the woman. Also, it defines the issue of the enmity, viz., the death of the tempter and final destruction of all he intended and implies this will be accomplished in the life of mankind through the work of Christ. Finally, we see here a wonderful display of God's grace and justice toward mankind.

B. The Context of the Adamic Covenant (Gen. 3:8-13)

“And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.” Gen. 3:8

Looking specifically, then, at the historical context of this Adamic covenant beginning with Gen. 3:8, immediately we see an emphasis upon the grace of God when it says that “they heard the sound [or the voice of God] walking ... in the cool of the day.” Is it not amazing that we see the

⁸⁶ Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity*.

God of judgment, the God who has been offended, the Regent against whom they have just rebelled, coming not in judgment but in grace and seeking them out? He could have rained fire from heaven and He could have snatched them away into hell. Instead, they continue to live even after the eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

But in addition to that continuation of life, God Himself comes to see them. The whole scene here is very pastoral and ministerial. It is not a scene of confrontation and of rugged judgment. The sound of the Lord comes in the garden at the end of the day, in the cool when all the heat is gone and man customarily turns to rest and to reflect on the goodness of the day—God comes and appears before them. It seems that God intentionally chooses this period of rest, the coolness, in order to emphasize to man that He is being gracious toward them.

What is man's reaction to their sin? It seems from the context that man, Adam and Eve, before seeing God, heard a sound that they recognized as the presence of God. Now, perhaps a special divine act toward them enabled them to recognize this sound. However, it seems more likely that they had been accustomed to meet God every day in the cool of the day and to fellowship with Him. They recognized what they heard but instead of hastening to the presence of their Ruler and King, the man and his wife hid themselves from His presence among the trees. They knew it was God and they expected judgment. They had already attempted to hide their sin and shame with aprons, or loincloths, made of leaves. However, by this act of fleeing from the presence of God and hiding not just among a few leaves but among the totality of the garden, are not Adam and Eve exhibiting awareness of the total inadequacy of their own attempts to cover their sin? This certainly seems to be an inescapable conclusion.

“Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him,
‘Where *are* you?’” Gen. 3:9

Here, and in other verses in this text, God is called by the name Lord God. This stands in contrast to the previous statements of the Devil who refers to God only as God. When God Himself comes to declare the significance of what is happening, He repeatedly introduces with fresh emphasis that He comes not only as God the sovereign King and Ruler

over all mankind and over all creation, but He comes as Jehovah God. He comes as the One who gives and keeps the covenant—the One who graciously relates to His people. And that gracious relationship now emerges even more clearly in Gen. 3:9 when it says that God called to the man not in judgment, not in mocking or in threatening, but in grace and gentleness and He asks man where he is. God does not ask the question because He does not know where Adam is, but asks because He is trying to elicit from Adam a confession of Adam's own sin. The question queries not merely his physical location, although that is the occasion and even the form of the question. But ultimately the question concerns his spiritual location as the conversation that follows demonstrates. God is concerned about where Adam (and Eve) is spiritually. And in His graciousness, rather than declaring where Adam is, He is trying to elicit from Adam and Eve a confession of their sin and, ultimately, to lead them to true faith and repentance. The interesting thing about the whole context is that the result God was seeking to obtain certainly came to fruition as is evidenced in the remainder of the chapter. God graciously saved Adam and Eve in this passage not because they made a decision and not because they acknowledged their lost condition. But, when God declares the curse upon Adam and Eve, by grace alone He restores them to fellowship with Him and seals them in the relationship that He intended from the beginning. Therefore, as is seen later in the context, Adam and Eve confess their newly acquired faith and conversion by their responsive actions—as will be shown below.

Thus, in Gen. 3:9, grace not judgment, dominates and determines God's dealings with man. This brings us to verse 10.

“So he said, ‘I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.’” Gen. 3:10

Here Adam resumes family headship and, indirectly, confesses his sin by stating that he is naked. On the other hand, he does not get the point of God's question, "Where are you spiritually?" He answers in terms of his physical condition rather in terms of his spiritual condition. Is this intentional? It certainly appears to be. Adam is still ashamed of his spiritual condition and he is so ashamed of it that he dare not confess it to God. He still hides behind his apron, his own provision of a covering of his sin.

Now we note how God pointedly. Why does He address Adam first? Because, here again, the Bible emphasizes that Adam is the head of the family. He is the one chiefly, i.e., covenantally, responsible for the sin. Adam is the one first and chiefly called to responsibility for the sin of his family. Would that men today would see how much this headship responsibility is emphasized throughout the Scripture. What happens in a man's family is his responsibility. He must see that his children are taught the things of God. He is responsible to see that the family is properly provided for both materially and spiritually. If this does not happen, it is his failure. God will hold him accountable just as He held Adam responsible here in the garden of Eden. Adam, however, confesses not his spiritual condition but his material-physical condition, "I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and so I hid myself." There is no confession here of the sin of eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He hides behind his self-preservation, his own provision to cover his sin.

“And He said, ‘Who told you that you *were* naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?’” Gen. 3:11

God's gentle gracious probing prior to this did not elicit from Adam the desired confession of sin and so God graciously leads Adam a little further by asking another question. With this, God is trying to get Adam to face his sin clearly. "Who told you that you were naked?" It probes behind Adam's prior answer seeking to elicit from him what the second question states, "Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" Apparently with this end in view God proceeds before Adam can answer. He almost puts the words in his mouth. What more gracious activity could God extend towards man? Here is the confession I want you to make. In essence, God says, "Here is what I want you to say to me in order to be redeemed and forgiven." But Adam, due to the hardness of his heart (as is explained so clearly by Paul in Rom. 3), because of his fallen nature, is unable or unwilling to make the confession that God offers to him.

God's direct question elicits the response recorded in verse 12:

“Then the man said, ‘The woman whom You gave *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.’” Genesis 3:12

Adam shifts the blame rather than accepting it. He claims, in modern terms, he is a victim and that in two ways. He is a victim of his wife’s misleading influence, and he is a victim of God Himself. Ultimately then, he places the blame for his fallen condition upon God. It is almost as if he is saying, "If you had not set me up for this, I would never have done it. The fault is yours, God, because you gave me this women and since you did not do a good job in making her, she misled me." Thus, he refuses to face squarely the fact that God had placed upon his own shoulders the responsibility to be the head of the home. He refuses to face squarely the fact that God had constituted him so uniquely that he was completely able to exercise that headship. He refuses to confess and face the fact that, covenantally, he was the only one responsible for eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And so the Lord God graciously turns from him.

God does not confront Adam with his sin at this point but he turns to Eve as Gen. 3:13 says,

"Then the Lord God said to the woman, 'What is it that you have done?' The woman said, ‘The serpent deceived me, and I ate.’”

Now God seeks to elicit a confession from Eve, but she does not confess either. She displays that her nature, like Adam's, is corrupted by the fall and she is unable fully to face the fact that she has fallen into sin. She does not confess that she is morally and spiritually responsible for that sin and that she can do nothing at all to extricate herself from that terrible condition.

Eve shifts the blame as well, "The serpent deceived me and I ate." She blames the serpent—she does not face her sin. Again, there appears to be a double shifting of blame. Eve, too, sees herself as a victim. In her statement, she identifies the serpent as the real problem. Moreover, she seems to imply that God victimizes her implying that, “I was so weak I could not see through the deception.” Surely, in her confession there is a veiled reference to the inadequacies of God’s work in creating her—if so,

then, for her, this explains why she lacked the strength to perceive the deception of the Devil.

Hence, this entire introductory section, Gen. 3:8-13, bares the grace of God to us as He continues to deal with Adam and Eve, His creations. God does not thrust them away from Himself, but instead as a loving Creator He reaches out towards them and offers them a renewed and continued friendship and a continued blessing. However, they do not take the hint. Indeed, they do not even seem to understand what God's words and actions mean—God has restored them. They continue viewing God as the guilty agent behind everything. They continue viewing God as an enemy in spite of His gracious disposition towards them.

C. *God's Word of Triumph* (Gen. 3:14-15)

1. *The Promise of Satan's Defeat* (Gen. 3:14)

God now sets things right point by point—the “curses” occur in the same order as the sins they correct. God's response to man's refusal to repent is God's sovereign cursing-blessing. Here we see His sovereign and gracious reconstitution of the fundamental nature and order of the creation.

“So the LORD God said to the serpent: ‘Because you have done this, you *are* cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life.’” Gen. 3:14

The history of the covenant of grace, from this point, involves the totality of man and his created environment. The Lord God addresses the serpent first. This was the instrument that the Devil used. The effect of this curse on the serpent is seen throughout all history—snakes “go” on their bellies. This is a living testimony to mankind that this *animal* was used by the Devil and cursed by God.

Behind and accompanying the curse on the serpent is the curse on the Devil. The Devil is sealed forever to be the lowliest of creatures—the furthest from God and His blessings. This theme is worked out in Scripture, and we find its conclusion in the book of Revelation. The Devil

was bound by the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 12:26-29), and was cast out by His work and ministry from what up to this time was his virtually unchallenged rule over the nations. Rev. 20:2-3 depicts the final defeat of the Devil when he is cast into the bottomless pit never to ascend from there, eternally to be punished for his evil and his rebellion against the Lord God.

In Gen. 3:14 it is important to note that the Bible again teaches it is the *Lord God (Yahweh Elohim)* who spoke to the serpent. The emphasis is upon the covenantal God, not only as gracious but also as sovereign. He sovereignly disposes His will first upon the Devil and then the other parties involved in the fall. Therefore, it is the sovereign God over all (*Elohim*) who introduces the history of the covenant of grace at this point, viz., in verse 14, and it involves the totality of man and of his created environment.

The promise is that Satan and all his forces will “bite the dust,” in other words, they will be utterly defeated. This idiom is used throughout the Old Testament, showing how the salvatory hope of the Old Testament saints persisted from the garden of Eden, cf., Ps. 72:9-10, Mic. 7:17, Isa. 49:23, and 65:25. Thus, several Old Testament verses show how this phrase, i.e., “bite the dust,” is applied to Satan and his hosts. He and those that serve him are to be laid down into the dust because of their rebellion and then, of course, Satan and his hosts are ultimately relegated to eternal Hell.

The Old Testament interprets the promise of Gen. 3:14 to signify the defeat of the serpent in time and history—on earth as well as in eternity. Throughout the whole Old Testament period, leading up to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Devil and his hosts are continually in opposition to God. They are continually put down by the Lord God. Whenever God chooses He speaks and the Devil and his hosts are defeated—they bite the dust. When the Devil faces the Lord Jesus Christ during His early life, and seeks to overcome Him, it is the epitome of his rebellion against God. The Devil ought to have known that he had no hope, no chance in defeating Jesus. But, in his rebellion, he assumed that he could continue to set his own standard, and that God was not absolutely sovereign. He assumed God could be defeated if only he could trick the Lord Jesus Christ, the second Adam, into sinning. But at the temptation Jesus overcomes His temptation

and does what Adam did not do (Rom. 8:3). With a word, Jesus dismisses the Devil overcoming him once for all in behalf of all His people.

The curse of the agent (perpetrator) is seen in the curse of the instrument; that is, the curse of the Devil is seen in the curse of the serpent. Satan aspired to rule the creation; he is sealed to be its lowest creature. This is the intent of the text but it does not claim, nor seek, nor intend to conform to modern scientific knowledge. Many have said that the serpent is not the lowest of the creatures—what about the ants and worms? Moreover, they charge that there is an error here. But this line of reasoning misses the point. The Bible is speaking in terms that everyone ought to understand—in terms of common everyday experience. Among the beasts of the field of that day, figuratively speaking Satan was consigned, figuratively speaking, to lowest position physically, as well as in every other sense. This is not a scientifically crafted statement but a theological-literary statement. So, looked at from the angle of the semi-poetical speaking of every day experience, what Adam and Eve (and the readers of the Old Testament) understood is not an untrue statement. That is just what they observed when they looked at the state to which the snake and the Devil were relegated.

2. The Promise of Christ's Victory

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.” Gen. 3:15

The Hebrew word rendered “enmity” stands emphatically at the beginning of vs. 15 overshadowing all else and setting the tone for the entire verse. Enmity is the focus and enmity is the punishment settled upon the Devil. Hostility will rule in his own nature and person. This verse expresses the essence of the salvation that God is promising to men. Enmity rules between the Devil and those who are God's people. God desires, in one sense, that all men would be in His kingdom. So, throughout the Scripture, He readily and sincerely invites all men to cross the line, to change kingdoms and to participate in His salvation. He knows, as He teaches in the Bible, that sin dominates man's heart. He

knows that man, left to his own wiles, will not advance beyond the state of Adam and Eve when they refused to confront and confess their sin. Like Adam and Eve fallen man refuses to grasp hold of God's offer of redemption and fellowship. Thus, throughout all subsequent history, fallen man rejects the free offer of the gospel, and of redemption. In Gen. 3:15 God distinguishes between the seed that He chooses and the seed that stays with the Devil. Hence, in Rom. 8:7, the Apostle Paul, probably alluding to Gen. 3:15, properly describes the status of the unbeliever as that of enmity against God.

First, Adam (and all mankind since Adam),

“needs above all else a complete reversal of all his values. He must learn to hate what formerly he loved, and he must learn to love what formerly he hated.”⁸⁷

This enmity is in the very nature of every unregenerate man. We note that it is placed there by God. Moreover, it's continuance rests upon the continuing sovereign action of God. Hostility reigns throughout all history between the elect, or chosen, people of God, the Devil, and his minions.

Second, Adam will now hate the serpent and love God. That is implied because there is enmity between the seed of serpent and the seed of the woman (Adam's spiritual descendants). Adam and all his spiritual posterity are promised “a new heart.” The New Testament calls this a “new birth,” cf., John 3:3, 8. It is significant that in John 3:3 and 8 the word for the new birth is not a word that simply means "a rebirth, to be born again physically" but a word that may bear both that connotation and that of a birth from above. John 3:3, 8 emphasize a supernatural intervention into the course of a man's life so that God radically changes that man. This connotation of the word is intended when it says that a man must be born again. It means that he must be born from above—by the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. Man of himself will not choose to do this. He must be recreated by God first. In 2 Cor 5:17, the Apostle Paul talks of the new birth, therefore, in terms of a new creation—not simply a rebirth or a new birth but a new creation and a creation that

⁸⁷ E.J. Young, *Genesis Three* (Banner of Truth Trust, London, 1966)

affects the totality of a man's existence. Paul says that in Christ Jesus we are new creations and behold, everything has become new.

Third, the enmity will be resolved eschatologically. One cannot fail to notice that in this new creation there are overtones of the New Heaven and the New Earth emphasized in Isa. 66. The new birth does not seem to include the fullness of what is described in Isa. 66, but one can hardly escape concluding that it includes much of that meaning because Paul so clearly says that in Christ everything is new. It includes the heavens and, by implication, the earth—everything having to do with the Christian. So, in one sense, as some New Testament theologians correctly emphasize, Paul says that we have already entered the new heavens and the new earth. And yet in another sense, the Bible teaches that the fullness of that experience is not yet. So, the New Testament sets before us what is termed, "the already, not yet" aspect of eternal life. The most important thing at this point is to note that not only enmity but also the restoration to a proper relationship by God are entailed in the promise of Gen. 3:15. This is a result of a sovereign regenerating act of God—Adam is *made* into a "seed of the woman." What man refused to do prior to Gen. 3:15, what he refused to confess, the path that he refused to follow, now God sovereignly establishes or disposes upon man,

"I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed. He will bruise you on the head and you will bruise him on the heel."

Above all, God announces the new birth of Adam *and Eve* in saying He will put enmity between her seed and the seed of the serpent, cf., Rom. 8:7.

Fourth,

"The old Adam must go; he was in the way of death; there must be a new Adam, an Adam who will love what he should love and hate what he should hate."⁸⁸

c. *The Three-fronts of "Enmity"*

⁸⁸ E. J. Young. *Genesis Three*.

The first front is between Satan and the woman, *signifying Eve and womankind in general, which has had and will continue to have a most important part in this cosmic conflict*. Throughout subsequent history, the Devil attacked womanhood degrading her special and unique role(s) as the bearer and raiser of children, and the helpmeet (helper suitable to man) for man. He constantly tries to get woman to rebel again against the authority and the proper order of things as established by God in the creation. In the first temptation, the order and rebellion came to expression in woman seizing the leadership of the family by eating of the fruit. In this she rejected the overlordship of her husband. By then going to her husband and offering him the fruit, she assumed the leadership over him. Throughout history, womanhood faced that same temptation. Will she be satisfied with the order of God? Will she be a help suitable to man or will she insist on assuming the leadership over him? Now, there are many verses throughout the Bible declaring that God's proper role for woman is that of being in submission to her husband. In rejecting her proper role(s) woman submits to the onslaught of the Devil. There is an enmity between true (godly) womanhood and the Devil and his intentions. The Devil tries to get woman to rebel against God but the true woman, the godly woman, seeks to conform to the law order of God.

Woman according to the curse, and especially in Gen. 3:16, is to be the bearer of children.

“To the woman He said: ‘I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire *shall be* for your husband, and he shall rule over you.’” Gen. 3:16

Woman is the primary one to bear and raise children in fulfilling the creation mandate that mankind should fill the earth by self-propagation. In contrast, the Devil attempts to get womanhood to understand and see bearing and raising of children as an inferior task. What a terrible thing! Child bearing and rearing is no more an inferior task than driving a car is inferior to driving a truck. Being a father or mother are different tasks—one is not inferior or superior to the other. Every task God assigns is a glorious task and ought to be esteemed that way. The Devil's intent is to lead man to see his task as inferior as well as leading woman to see her task as inferior. Especially in the present-day western culture, the

rebellion of man and woman against the law of God permeates our society.

The second front is between Satan's seed and the woman's seed, cf., Gen. 3:15.

“By the process of natural birth, the fallen woman brings forth a depraved seed (I Jn 3:12). But by grace, God establishes enmity within the heart of particular descendants of the woman. Naturally, woman conceives Cains. But by God's grace, those Cains are transformed into godly men like Abel. These individuals may be designated as the woman's 'seed'.”⁸⁹

That is, the Abel's of the world, those who love the Lord God from the heart and seek to fulfill the commandments and requirements of the Lord God in their actions, these are the true seed of the woman. In this text the seed of the woman are not necessarily the natural seed since some of these are reprobate, but are the seed by promise. Thus, God introduces a history-long struggle—warfare between the kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of “the seed” (of God). This struggle informs a proper understanding of Gen. 4-5. In that passage, we see that the line of Cain not only begins with rebellion but increases in rebellion against God. The line of Abel is not snuffed out by the death of Abel but is continued through Adam and Eve's son, Seth, through Enosh (Gen. 4:26). As that line is traced historically we see that there is an ever presence of true godliness until the pre-flood end of the line. At this end of the line, the number of the truly godly seems to have narrowed and is, indeed, declared to have narrowed to a single individual, Noah. By the grace that Noah found in God's sight not only Noah but his whole family was preserved from the great judgment. However, the struggle between the seed of Cain and seed of Abel or Seth, climaxes in the great struggle and story of Gen. 6:1-6. Here the seed of the woman/God (the godly kingdom) renounces its uniqueness and covenantal calling by intermarrying indiscriminately with the seed of man/Satan. Thus, God worked the judgment in the great flood that came upon all mankind except his elect (Noah and his house/family).

The third front is the enmity between “He” and Satan in the

⁸⁹ Robertson, 98.

statement “*He shall bruise you on the head.*” We see this as a Messianic reference. Significantly, now the seed moves from generic-seed to specific individual-seed. In the Hebrew, as is well known, the word “seed” is a generic term. And so when it appears earlier in the passage, we understood “seed” generically to refer to many individual descendants of Adam and Eve. The Bible expositis this verse historically in the terms of that exegesis (Gen. 4-5). But now when we come to Gen. 5:28-29, the other application of the word “seed” is emphasized, namely that it refers to one particular individual—ultimately, this is Jesus Christ. Vos has a careful discussion of this passage defending this thesis.⁹⁰

In Gen. 3:15, therefore, the Bible sets before us enmity between the Devil and a particular individual who will come forth ultimately from the woman—He will be her seed. And it says of that seed that the Devil will seek to kill Him but will only bruise Him on the heel. On the other hand, it is implied that this seed ultimately will defeat the Devil completely, bruising him mortally on the head.

As we look at the New Testament, Jesus is presented as the seed promised by God. In Rev. 12 John certainly seems to be interacting particularly with this verse—Gen. 3:15. In terms of apocalyptic language with its use of symbolism, John sets before us the Devil’s intent to destroy Jesus Christ at His birth—he was of course, unsuccessful. We find that same truth depicted historically in the gospels when the Devil, using his agents, sought to destroy the Lord Jesus Christ as soon as He was born. In working through the life of Jesus, we find that at the climax of His life, as in Noah’s time (Gen. 6:1ff.), the Devil gathered against Him the full force of the mightiest human empire of that day, all of the wicked rejecters among the covenantal people—the forces of the Kingdom of God supposedly. It is as if the kingdom of man (the seed of the serpent) and those who outwardly belonged to the kingdom of God (the seed of the woman), again as in Gen. 6, united to try to usurp the authority of God. But God had everything under control and thoroughly planned. He sovereignly committed His Son to the death of the cross in accordance with the need of mankind, the elect mankind—the seed was smitten on the heel. God sovereignly thwarted the purpose of the Devil and his cohorts in bringing victory and eternal life through the death of Jesus Christ—the serpent was fatally smitten on the head. This verse then, Gen. 3:15, sets

⁹⁰ Vos, 58-59.

before us the interaction of God and His followers and of the Devil and his followers throughout human history. These are tremendously potent verses crammed with meaning and full of great significance and fulfillment all down through human history.

3. The Divine Initiative in the Enmity

The divine initiative in creating and sustaining this animosity must be underscored. “God himself shall perpetuate a continuing warfare.”⁹¹ This progressively worked out warfare against the Devil finds its consummate triumph at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament, after the flood, God selected for Himself a particular people, starting with Abraham, among whom He chose to reign. Throughout the history of Israel from that point on His prophets and revelations primarily and nearly exclusively came to that chosen people. The rest of the nations are “turned over to the Devil” who appears to have had full rule with little interference from the prophecies, the promises, the gospel preaching, and from the solicitation of the Lord God (Rom. 3:1-2, 9:4, 10:14). But the Devil also worked within the chosen people. For the most part the history of that people evidences that in spite of God's graciousness towards them, in spite of God's heaping upon them promises and indeed delivering to them countless blessings, the people of Israel do not turn to God in true repentance, Rom. 2:17-3:19. The Devil repeatedly attacked and wounded the heel of the corporate seed, but did not strike its head fatally, Rom. 11:17, Gal. 3:16. How clearly the history of mankind reflects what God said in Gen. 3:15.

It is in the sovereign work of God in preserving a remnant throughout the history of Israel—a work that culminates in the coming and work of Jesus Christ—that the Devil finds his ultimate defeat. When Jesus was on this earth He declared His kingdom had come (Mark. 1:15). The defeat of the Devil was evidenced in the presence of Jesus Christ (Luke 10:17-18). The consummation of the ministry of Jesus Christ on the cross and the sealing and final introduction of the kingdom on the day of Pentecost, introduced into this period, marked the worldwide dethronement of the Devil. God is no longer limiting His prophecy and message to one nation. Now He is going throughout the whole kingdom of the Devil to gather from it all of His people sovereignly and finally.

⁹¹ Robertson, 96.

So, Paul in 1 Cor. 15 teaches that from the cross or the resurrection to the time of Jesus' Second Coming, Jesus continues to claim His victory over Satan. In the book of Acts, Jesus expands His kingdom through His people, the Church. He continues to bind the Devil across the nations of the world bringing to Himself all of those He has chosen from before the foundation of the world. Christ's victory is sealed in the resurrection and worked out historically as Jesus leads his people militantly throughout history until His Second Coming (Matt. 12:29). Ultimately, when Jesus Christ comes back again the Devil will be once for all bound firmly and cast into an eternal Hell (Rev. 20:10). Thus, Gen. 3:15 summarizes and anticipates the entire history of the world. It is part of that background we need to understand properly what is said by the Old Testament prophets, and in the New Testament—indeed, and in the entire postlapsarian history reported in the Bible. It should be the presupposition, the assumed content, of our understanding if we are to understand the Scripture properly.

God says, "I will place enmity," not, "I will arouse enmity that is dormant," not, "I will promote enmity," not, "I hope to place enmity," but as the Almighty Sovereign God, He says, "I will place enmity!" It will be done! It is the accomplishment of sovereign grace! It is this gracious and sovereign initiative which issued in our salvation because this enmity took Jesus to the cross.

4. *The Identity of the Two "Seeds"*

Now we return to review more carefully the identity of the two seeds set forth in these verses.

Behind the serpent is Satan himself, cf., Rom. 16:20, Rev. 12:9, 20:2. The serpent was literal or real and he was the instrument in the hands of the Devil to carry forth his purposes. Consequently there was a curse placed upon the serpent, the instrument, but the final and ultimate curse is upon the perpetrator of the wickedness himself—the Devil.

In the Romans passage, the Apostle Paul very interestingly says that, "the God of peace will soon crush Satan [the serpent] under your feet." Now, remember that God accomplishes His victory—the crushing of the Devil—in the world through His people. Hence, Rom. 16:20 evidences

this divine work of God through His people. In Rev. 12:9 the Bible says that the serpent of old "who is called the Devil and Satan was cast out of the heavens." His casting out cleared the way for the agents of Christ as the elect are being gathered from the four corners of the earth. This sentiment, the defeat of the Devil by Christ, is repeated almost word for word in Rev 20:2-3. And so we see that the whole Bible repeats the teaching of Gen. 3:15.

The following passages show that *the seed of the serpent is unregenerate mankind in rebellion against God and energized by Satan.*

First, Eph 2:1-3 says,

“And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others”

Notice here the emphasis, the sentiment of the garden of Eden: mankind died in the moment that Adam and Eve ate the fruit. Paul, in Rom. 3:10ff., teaches that this death, spiritually speaking, was thoroughgoing (cf., 1:18-3:9). In Rom. 7 and 8 he teaches that the effects of the fall are evidenced not only before salvation but even after salvation. The effects of the fall rule in us so that we are unable even after being regenerate, to keep the law of God's perfectly, Rom. 8:3. Our triumph rests solely and wholly upon the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul points the Ephesian Christians back to their former unregenerate state and says that they were following the leadership of the Devil, the prince of the power of the air, Eph. 2:1-3. The Devil was no longer supreme over the earth to be certain, but the Devil certainly *rules among the sons of disobedience*. Paul's teaching is built upon the assumption of what is taught in Gen. 3.

1 John 3:11-12 also teach that the unregenerate mankind is the seed of the serpent,

“For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain *who* was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous.”

In this passage Cain is used as the first of a long line of individuals who stood in rebellion against God and having enmity against God and against their fellowman. In contrast to that wicked service of the Devil, John admonishes us not to follow in that path. Rather, we should be dominated by the love of God in attitude and action. That divine love graciously brought God to fallen Adam and graciously reversed the dominion of the Devil over him and all mankind. It also sealed the Devil's fate to an eternal Hell. That love of God has graciously lead God to continue to work among His people down through the ages, and He has graciously worked in us. True, this sometimes brings discipline upon us but He is always leading us more to Himself. Paul expositis this love of God repeatedly but especially in Rom. 7 and 8. That love, as defined and determined by the Law of God, should lead us to relate to one another in accordance with the will of God. So, here again in 1 John 3:11-12 we have mankind depicted as the instruments of the Devil in pursuing rebellion against God.

John 8:44 is another relevant text. It reads,

"You are of *your* father the Devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and *does not* stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it.”

Jesus speaks these words to the Pharisees, the religious leaders of that day. They believed they were the consummate expression of godliness and holiness. With all their strength, they sought to obey the law of God. But Jesus points out that they missed their goal because they molded and, thus, changed, that divine law to suit their own desires. Their wickedness did not lay in a desire to fulfill God's law. Their wickedness lay in their changing the law of God so that they did not have to fulfill it at all. He tells them that in saying that they are godly, in saying they are

holy, they are liars just like the Devil at the beginning. They are sons of the Devil, and by necessary implication, he is the father of the lie they accept and practice. He is the perpetrator of the lie that God, and God alone, is not sole determiner of right and wrong. Indeed, man needs to go beyond what He says or take away from what He says in some way or another in trying to improve upon it—just like the Pharisees did. This is the theme of the Devil throughout all of history. So, he entangles even those who claim to be godly, when they deviate from the Scripture and knowingly or unknowingly twist it do as these pharisaical instruments of the Devil. What a tremendous and painful condemnation upon so many men!

The seed of the woman is Jesus Christ,

“Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as of many, but as of one, ‘And to your Seed,’ who is Christ.” Gal. 3:16

The Apostle teaches that Abraham received the promises of redemption and salvation through a Redeemer who would come and deliver God's people. He would bring upon them tremendous blessings from God, including the reversal of the Adamic curse and the restoration of the blessings of Eden—that promise was made to a seed which Paul says is Jesus Christ. The ideas entailed in the promise to Abraham are seen in the redeemer promised in Gen. 3:15 because “all the promise of God in Him *are* Yes, and in Him Amen,” 2 Cor. 1:20. The seed of the woman would destroy the serpent, would usurp his authority and would reestablish the blessings of God upon the people of God—He will be the heir of the world. In Gen. 3:15 and in the promises given to Abraham, the seed is the same. Abraham, like men before him, understood the seed was the promised restorer-redeemer.

Heb. 11:13-19 argues that he and the other patriarchs looked forward to heaven—the city whose builder and maker was God. The promises they looked to were not merely the promises of earthly blessings; they were promises of heavenly and eternal blessings (13-16). Moreover, they understood that the promised son represented more than their continued family line—he represented the coming restorer-redeemer. So, Abraham was tested with offering up Isaac. He had another son, Ishmael,

but God made it clear that Ishmael was not the son of the promise (Gen. 17:20-21). Hebrews places this test in the context of the promise of eternal things rather than the context of merely temporal things. What does it mean that he concluded “that God was able to raise [Isaac] up, even from the dead”? It means that Abraham, like the other men of faith, believed that through the godly descendants of Adam there would be a seed of the woman who would destroy Satan and that his son was in that line—through him the seed would come. This appears to have been the belief of Noah’s father Lamech (Gen. 5:29). Consequently, the joy of Abraham’s heart was the promise of the coming seed—it was what he looked forward for (John 8:56). And so we know that the promised seed is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

Additional support for the conclusion that man knew of the promise of the coming seed and redemption comes from Ancient Near Eastern and Egyptian studies. The Babylonian concept of creation appears in the ancient myth entitled *The Enuma Elish*. The myth appears to have been widespread among the cultures of the Mesopotamian valley from the time of the earliest known writing. Remnants of it are from before 3000 B. C. and perhaps earlier.⁹² This demonstrates that the Near Eastern peoples (the ancestors of Abraham) passed down a garbled version of the creation record from the most ancient times. This especially relevant for believers since we believe the original account was the Bible. Thus, the ancient Near Eastern material suggests that the creation account was passed down from the beginning either orally or in writing. The literary forms employed in the biblical creation are forms widely used starting with the most ancient extra-biblical oriental material known to date. The ancients recorded many things in two parts: the first section was a more general statement and the second section further detailed one or more of the elements in the first section. The two sections often, if not usually, used different divine names, different vocabulary and different grammar. Hence, the biblical creation has the same creative events and the same order of events as the mythological material and the same literary structure as the ancient historical material. Other myths give garbled versions of the temptation and fall of man, of the genealogies showing that the patriarchs lived very long lives, and of the flood. In each case, details of

⁹² Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1969), 99ff.

the records reflect more than incidental and accidental parallels with what the Bible preserves.⁹³

Also, the seed of the woman are all the truly godly descendants of Eve—all who belong to Christ by election and faith, belong to the family/seed of Christ. In Gal. 3:29 (and elsewhere in Gal. 3) Paul explains that when we become believers by the supernatural work of God, in a mysterious and wonderful way we are incorporated into Christ. Without becoming Jesus and without becoming part of Him, we are spiritually incorporated into Him so that what He has done and what He stands for, we do and we stand for. So the “seed” in Gen. 3:15 embraces all those who belong to Him—who are “in Him”—by election and faith, Gal. 3:29, Rom. 16:20.

“The continuity of the work of deliverance is declared; the enmity extends to the SEED of the woman and of the serpent. God's promise is to the effect that he will keep up the enmity in the line of human descent and will not allow it to die out. The phrase, 'seed of the woman,' indicates that the organism of the race will be drawn within the circle of redemption, which does not, of course, mean that all individuals are to become enemies of the serpent. The point is that God saves not merely individual men, but the seed of the woman.”⁹⁴

5. *The Meaning of “Bruising” (Gen. 3:15)*

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.” Gen. 3:15

Christ strikes the head of the serpent with a fatal blow, and Satan strikes Christ's heel. Each is possessed with the determined purpose to destroy the other. Although Satan “wounds” Christ, Christ is the victor “bruising” Satan mortally and defeating him totally.

This theme of Christ crushing God's enemies under foot fills the Old and New Testaments, cf., Ps. 110:6f., 91;11-13, Col. 2:14-15.

⁹³ Coppes, *What Say the Stones?*, 12-126.

⁹⁴ G. Vos, 53.

“He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill *the places* with dead bodies, He shall execute the heads of many countries.”
Ps. 91:11-13

“For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways. In *their* hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone. You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, The young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot.” Ps. 91:11-13

“...having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.” Col. 2:14-15

In Col. 2:14 we see the climax and summary of the Devil’s attacking the heel of Christ with the intent of killing Him and His people. In Col. 2:15 we actually see the climactic triumph of Christ accomplished by His work on the cross through which He disarmed the rulers and authorities making a public mockery of them. Other passages speak in a similar vein. Heb. 2:14 tells us that Jesus through His own death destroyed the Devil who had the power of death. According to John 12:31 the cross both marked the judgment of Satan and his minions (human and otherwise) and concluded the casting him out of his ruling position. 1 John 3:8 asserts that the Son of God (Jesus) was manifested to destroy the works of the Devil. Thus, although the Bible links the statement in Adamic covenant (Gen. 3:15) to many divine acts, it focuses especially and specifically on the crucifixion of Christ Jesus where this prophecy comes to fulfillment and to its clearest expression. Dr. Robertson remarks:

Inherent in this imagery of the accomplishment of redemption through the victorious overthrow of the seed of Satan lies a principle of God's dealings which has continued throughout the ages. The deliverance of God's people always comes through the destruction of God's enemies.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Robertson, 102.

H.G. Stigers correctly notes,

The trampling of Adam and Eve by Satan assured his own trampling by Christ when he shall be cast into hell, Rev. 20:10. ... the death of Christ on the cross put the elect forever beyond the reach of Satan . . . Satan's effort to secure final dominion over God's works will come to naught. Here is the vanity of Satan's effort.⁹⁶

D. *God's Word of Curse and Blessing* (Gen. 3:16-19)

God's words in Gen. 3:16-19 declare both curse and blessing. Primarily however, it is an exhibition of His grace, setting things aright. Previously, God had asked, "Man, what have you done?" Man lied. God asked, "Woman, what have you done?" and woman in essence lied, too. Perhaps He did not ask the Devil what he had done because He knew that Satan would lie, but probably because there was no gracious calling of Satan to faith and repentance—he is beyond recovery. And so in the curses He merely puts upon Satan His sovereign control and decree.

1. *God's Word to the Woman* (Gen. 3:16)

Now we return to a consideration of God's word to the woman in Gen. 3:16,

"To the woman He said: 'I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire *shall be* for your husband, and he shall rule over you.'" Gen. 3:16

God promises that she will have children—"a seed will be provided for the sake of entering into conflict with the satanic seed."⁹⁷ This is implied in the curse pronounced on the Devil but it is specifically addressed in the curse upon the woman. Moreover, underlying this curse is the promised blessing of God in continuing the history of man and ultimately bringing his redemption. Thus, cradled in the curse is the great blessing of continued life for mankind. But, this is equally a great

⁹⁶ Stigers, H.G., *A Commentary on Genesis*, (Zondervan Pub. House, Grand Rapids, MI 1976), 77f.

⁹⁷ Robertson, 103.

blessing upon the woman. She would bear and raise children. Godly women starting with Eve, acknowledge this as a great privilege and blessing from God (e.g., Gen. 16:1f., 30:1).

On the other hand, *God does pronounce judgment upon woman because of her sin.* He heard her confession and her shifting the blame from herself to the Devil and now He bypasses that, He does not debate with her and He does not discuss it with her, He just promises the judgment. "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth."

This judgment has reference to her child-bearing. She will have multiplied sorrow in conception and birth of children. Apparently, her physical constitution is now weakened. Note that the pain in childbirth extends not just to the bearing of children which, of course, becomes painful for her from this point on, but it, no doubt, extends to the raising of children. Man is to work in the field, woman is to work in the home—part of her task is the raising of children (at least in until they can go into the fields to work with the man). Woman both receives this curse and is summoned to live in conformity to it—it is God's law. So, hereafter, when the consummate rebellious woman tries to get away from God's judgment upon her, she not only tries no longer to have children but she also tries to get away from raising those children properly.

Another important subpoint is that in the blessings God put upon Adam and Eve (in the promise of the coming redeemer) it is not only that the redeemer would deal with them spiritually (they would be restored to fellowship with God) but materially (they would have and raise children). As the Bible unfolds, this promise of material blessing is expressed in the Mosaic Law (Exod. 6:7, 32:13, Deut. 1:10). In particular when Israel was going into the promised land God describes the blessings there not only as the relief from spiritual oppression but as relief from material oppression (Deut. 6:18-25). The latter blessing depended on a large degree to Israel's faithfully living according to the requirements-stipulations of the covenant. Taking that as a type of what Jesus did on the cross, it is altogether proper and right to understand that Jesus, in principle, fulfilled and made that Mosaic promise possible (2 Cor. 1:20). Thus as we move into the New Testament church age, we should see deliverance not only from the spiritual oppression of sin but also from the material oppressions of sin (Rom. 4:13).

If it is true that women must submit to the curse as a law of God, one might ask if it is appropriate for them to use modern medicine to help in child bearing. Or, is it proper for the Christian church to turn to medicine in an effort to ease the pain in having children? Of course, it is altogether proper and right. The coming and development of medicine is a blessing and fulfillment of pursuing the cultural mandate. Consequently, the history of the Church, and especially of the Reformed Church, shows how the Reformation (especially Calvinism) was the cradle of the nascent sciences. Calvinism has and should protect, if not promote, doctors and medical hospitals. In other words, we have seen our covenantal task as an accomplishment and the furthering of the cultural mandate. One aspect of pursuing this mandate is that now it is possible to help women in easing the pain of childbirth. Many other implications may be drawn but this is not a treatise in ethics. However, what has been said demonstrates that what is said in Gen. 3 is germinal or and has tremendous implications throughout the history of man.

This judgment affects her relationship with her husband. That is particularly emphasized in Gen. 3:16b.

“There is to arise psycho-emotional complications for her in her interpersonal relations with the man.”⁹⁸

This conclusion can be drawn about Eve's “desire” for her husband and Adam's “rule” over her. Compare the parallelism of terminology in Gen. 3:16 and 4:7. There is a strong and striking formal parallel that has led many to conclude that the meaning of the two phrases is the same. That is, “its desire shall be for you,” says that sin is going to try to overcome Cain. Similarly, in Gen. 3:16, “your desire shall be for your husband” means that the curse upon woman means that she shall forever be struggling to overcome the authority of her husband. Taken that way, the last part of the verse, “and he shall rule over you,” serves as the corrective for the first part. The two lines stand in opposition to one another. One is that woman will be fixed forever in rebellion and the other is that, in spite of her rebellion, her punishment forever will be her husband's rule over

⁹⁸ Stigers, H.G., A Commentary on Genesis, pg. 77f, Zondervan Pub. House, Grand Rapids, MI 1976.

her. Now, sadly enough, often this is exactly the way many people live out the roles of men and women.

But, in language, similarity of form does not necessarily mean equality of meaning. Consider the following phrase: "The horse is fast." This phrase has a different meaning in the following contexts: "The horse is on the racetrack, the horse is fast and cannot move" and "the horse is fast on the race track and will win the race." In one context, the phrase says that the horse moves quickly. On the other hand, in the other context the phrase means something entirely different. So, the similarity of words does not yield an equality of meaning. We propose that in Gen. 3:16, the phrase, "your desire shall be for your husband" has the opposite meaning of the similar phrase in Gen. 4:7, "its desire is for you."

These curses are set forth in Hebrew parallelism. The first "curse" says: "Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all the cattle" is parallel to "more than every beast on the earth." "More than all the cattle" is repeated the phrase, "more than every beast in the field." Similarly, "on your belly you shall go" is parallel to "you shall eat dust..." The third curse is given in a similar form, "Because you have heeded... Cursed is the ground for your sake" is parallel to "in toil you shall eat of it." More parallels could be cited. Indeed, the curses are dominated by synonymous parallelism. On this basis, there is a presumption in favor of understanding the second curse in terms of such a use of parallelism. The introductory formula is, "Because you have eaten of the tree..." Then comes the curse, "I will multiply your sorrow and your conception" that is parallel to "in pain you shall bring forth children." This in turn, is followed by another parallelism, "your desire shall be for your husband" that is parallel to "and he shall rule over you."

The traditional passage acknowledges the consistency between the enmity between the serpent and the woman (Gen. 3:15) and what God tells her here. Romans 8:7 teaches there is enmity between the ungodly (unregenerate) and God implying that there is no enmity between God and those who are regenerate. So, if there is enmity between the devil and the woman, then there is no enmity between her and God (as defined in Rom. 8)—she is regenerate. Her sin was the successful attempt to disobey God and assume leadership (lordship) over her husband. The proclivity expressed in this attempt exhibited an enmity towards God. Since the

enmity between her and God is gone, the proclivity after her restoration should be to be in submission to her husband—or, at least, to long for that state.

Moreover, the traditional exegesis also retains a uniform pattern in God's work in each curse. Hence, it is to be preferred not just because of the literary parallelism, but also because of the conceptual thrust of what God is doing in each of these curses. In each curse, in a very real sense, God is not fixing the individual in rebellion but is reaffirming the created order of rule—although not thoroughly (unsaved mankind and Satan will continue to live in rebellion against God). Whereas in the fall Satan usurped the dominion of God over mankind and sought to establish rule over mankind, God reinstates the serpent in the lowliest position—under man (and God) not over him. Thus, no matter what the devil might do he is now explicitly and prophetically set under God and His messiah (the coming seed). Whereas man (in Adam and Eve) usurped the position of God and placed himself under the dominion of Satan, God reinstates man in the position of divine service—tilling the soil and having dominion over the creation rather than being under the soil and the serpent. By regenerating Adam and Eve, God reinstates their submission under Himself. Whereas Eve assumed the leadership of the family (usurped Adam's position) and placed herself under the devil (cast off God's dominion), God reaffirms the woman as the source of life and the helper of man. He is putting things back, at least in part, to the way they ought to be—He placed her under His dominion. So, when God says to woman, "your desire shall be for your husband," He is not saying that henceforth she is fixed in rebellion. Just the opposite is true, given the theological context. He is telling to her that He is fixing in her that with which she was created—that against which she rebelled. So, He tells her that her innermost heart shall long to be for her husband. She was created to recognize that the man is her head and from now on she will inwardly long for this kind of a relationship. Thus, a woman's inner desire is for her husband and she longs to have that loving relationship and leadership just as all human beings will continue to long for the loving dominion and rule of God Himself.

Understood in this way, the line "your desire shall be for your husband" is also parallel to the next line, which says, "and he shall rule over you." Woman desires that which God provides. She longs to have a

husband who will uphold her in all the hardships of life. She longs to have a good leader who lovingly, and in accordance with biblical commands, leads the way also “runs interference” between her and all the dangers of life.

So, here then God gives a real blessing that sets things right—a real exhibition of His grace towards the woman. The first part of the verse teaches that in this “curse” is a demonstration and exhibition of God's grace upon the woman who had been a channel through whom death came upon all mankind and who now is the source of life itself.

2. God Promises Blessing Upon Man (Gen. 3:17)

“Then to Adam He said, ‘because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘you shall not eat of it’: cursed *is* the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat *of* it all the days of your life’.”

God promises man that he will “eat bread” by his labor. In introducing this statement, God tells Adam “because he has listened to the voice of his wife.” It is significant that again, He does not begin by seeking to get Adam straightened out. He assumes Adam's evaluation of the situation: Adam does not confess his sin but blames Eve, he also blames God in implying that He ate the fruit because of the woman God gave him. Instead of arguing with Adam, God preaches the gospel to him saying in essence: “You are a sinner and must repent because you listened to the voice of your wife. You did this and whether you confess it or not, I am declaring it to you.” The first step of the gospel is to declare the law of God and the sinfulness of man.

“And you have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you.” The second step of the gospel is to specify not only the nature of sin, but also its specifics. Paul rightfully expresses this same theme in the Rom. 7:7ff. confessing that “before the law came, I did not truly *know* my sin.” He is not saying that he was unaware of his sin in general (cf., Rom. 1-2). He already knew he was a sinner, but here he is saying he did not understand the nature, degree and guilt of *his* sin. When the law *came* (i.e., was personally applied to him by the Holy Spirit), it told him that he

was guilty of sin. Thus, it introduced him to his *need* of the kind of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Next, the Bible records the curse in God's saying to Adam "cursed is the ground because of you." God promises judgment upon man because of his sin. This is not just a promise. It is a declaration. It is the "fixing" of man in a certain relationship. In like manner, God "fixed" Eve in a certain relationship and condition with reference to that which characterized her in her original creation: the functions of child bearing, and being the helper to man. God introduced great pain into these two central functions so that womanhood, throughout created history, would have constant reminders of the sinful trend and nature that dominates her. The intended and gracious design is that this would lead her to repentance and salvation. This in turn, after her regeneration, should have led her to thanksgiving before God because, contrary to that fallen nature against which she constantly fights, she enjoys salvation through the seed that is to come through womanhood, namely Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:11-15).

God deals with man similarly. In the very characteristics and functions God originally ordained for man in the creation covenant, the curse now comes. The statement that the ground is cursed specifically addresses the creation mandate of labor. Man was created to till the soil, to rule over the ground (and the creation as a whole) bringing it into submission to God. He was to use his talents as God's vice-regent to give glory to God. Now that task, at least in these early times, is inescapable for man, man had to work or he would not eat. Either he worked or he died. In that task, the very ground itself is cursed and it is cursed because of the sin of Adam.

But here, too, the curse comes with a redemptive and gracious design. First,

*God graciously promises to provide working man with that which is necessary to maintain life "so that God's purposes to redeem a people to himself [sic] may be realized."*⁹⁹ (See Matt. 5:45)

⁹⁹ Morecraft, "Adamic Covenant," 3, citation from Robertson, 105.

Also, this curse points man to his need for the kind of redeemer God has set forth in 3:15 (cf., Gen. 8:21). The curse remains to man, even on the regenerated man (cf., Rom. 7), a constant reminder of the great grace of God in bringing upon him salvation and perfecting that salvation until it takes him to heaven. Note that according to Gen. 5:29 Noah's father explained the significance of his baby's name, Noah (rest), saying the child would "comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD has cursed." He joins relief from the Adamic curse on the ground with deliverance through a child (the seed of the woman).

Notice how God's pronouncement of judgment does not allow Adam to give any more excuses. Just as He silenced the excuses of Eve, now He silences the excuses of Adam. "Cursed is the ground because of you. In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life." God tells Adam that because of his sin, the ground will no longer readily deliver its blessings to him—but it will yield blessing to him. He will gain his from the ground. Thus, God promises to man the continuation of fellowship with God, the continuation of life, and the continuation of the means to support his life.

One of the most interesting things about all this (the promises of blessing through obedience) is that when God describes to Israel the blessings of the land of Palestine, He tells them that if they obey Him and if they keep the commandments, then the land will give of its produce fully, the rains will be abundant and all the animals will abundantly bear for them (Deut. 7:12-16). In other words, they will have plenty of food and the fruitfulness and the blessing of Eden will return to them. It is also in the context of the Mosaic law (Gen. 15:4-7) that God says to Israel that if they do all these things then there would be no poor among them—and then He immediately adds that the poor would always be with them (cf., Mark 14:7). And thus God says to Israel that the blessing is there if they meet His standard of thoroughgoing obedience but He knows that they are not going to do it. And so they (and we) will always have the poor with them. God says to Israel, in principle, that Eden and all of its blessings are before them. But because of their sins and rebellion, this fullness of blessing awaits the coming of the redeemer, of Jesus Christ. When Christ came God explained to us that although all blessings already come upon us, yet it also awaits Jesus Second Coming (Rev. 22:2, 14).

3. God Promises Judgment Upon Man Because of His Sin (Gen. 3:18-19)

“Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you *are*, and to dust you shall return.”

Here God tells man that the ground will resist his efforts. How much we see this curse upon us even in this modern day. When we try to raise a garden, it does not readily produce its fruit but it readily produces thorns and thistles. This happens with reference to everything man does. Symbolical thorns and thistles grow up at every point. In the parable of the sower of the seed, Jesus says that some of the seed falls on good ground but thorns and thistles, the concerns of this world, quickly grow up and choke out the seeds. Hence, we face those thorns and thistles—both spiritually and physically thorns and thistles plague us throughout our lives. This is the result of the curse.

Then in Gen. 3:19 God tells Adam, again emphasizing His grace, you shall live by the sweat of your face—but you shall live! It will be difficult to pursue living, but the bread for life will come forth. This situation shall persist—you shall do this until you die.

For mankind the earth and life as a whole is cursed. But through the Lord Jesus Christ, this curse is mitigated. The more faithful we become to the commandments of God, the more faithfully we use our vice-regency and pursue the cultural mandate, the more readily the ground produces its life to us—this part of the curse is mitigated. On the other hand, we are never fully without it until we get to heaven. Mankind can, however, alleviate it, so that in many nations (and Christian nations in particular), and especially in this land of America where our forefathers built a government trying to be obedient to the laws of God in the Bible, the end result has been great prosperity. How much better than America is heaven going to be where men have no confusion because of sin and perfectly and wholly do the will of God?

Morecraft summarizes the curse on man in four points:

1. *“This curse is not the requirement of work, for man was created for meaningful work.”* (Morecraft *“Covenants of Promise”*, 3)

The requirement of work existed long before the curse. The curse was put upon man because of his sin and it was focused in the resistance the creation would, from this time on, give man when he seeks to bring forth blessings by his labors.

2. *“The curse is the excessive amount of work necessary for the small amount of fruit produced from a less than cooperative earth.”* (p. 4)

3. *“The ultimate curse on man is death, 3:19,”* (p. 4)

So, man was cursed not only to struggle with the deterioration and degeneration of the earth, but the end of this life would normally be death. Almost every man in the history of the world was born to die and with very few known exceptions, they did die. This law binds man. It is not a natural law. It is a law that is foisted upon the creation by God as a matter of judgment. Man was created to live. He was created to enjoy life, not to have death. Death is an intrusion. Thankfully, it is an intrusion that will be removed when our Lord Jesus Christ returns. It is interesting in this regard that modern science struggles with why we age. “What makes us get older?” Scientists, if they are not believers, just refuse to realize that now, in the nature of things, God's curse is upon us. We must and will die. God has given us means to alleviate pain through medical science. He has given us means to alleviate and even cure some sicknesses but every time we cure one series of sicknesses, another series of sicknesses cries out for a cure. Ultimately, there is no cure in history for death and sickness—in spite of what the imaginations of modern men may think.

And so we see that God's “curse” upon manhood bears a tremendous and undeniable emphasis on the grace of God. If these verses did not use the word “curse” so much, one would almost be tempted to see these divine statements as pronouncements of the blessing and grace of God with a curse worked into them. Because God demonstrates His grace to man in these matters, we see in them the beginning statements of the covenant of grace.

4. “Adam was created to rule the earth, but because of sin, the earth (dust) shall rule him.” (p. 4)

E. The Effects of the Covenant, Gen. 3:20-21

Here we have a most interesting and noteworthy thing. We see Adam and Eve receiving the pronouncement of the curse and subsequently confessing their faith in the promised seed—the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace produces its effects in them—acts of faith.

1. The Faith of Adam and Eve: The Renaming of the Woman, A Confession of Faith

Gen. 2:23 reports how Adam prophetically named his wife calling her woman. This name, woman (Heb. *Ishshah*) describes her origin and relationship to him. Now we are told Adam gave her a new name, “And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living” (Gen. 3:20). This new name, Eve, exhibits Adam's faith in God's promise of redemption (3:15) because it confesses that now life and not death is their hope (cf., 3:7-8). Here in Gen. 3:20 we have a wonderful thing. God rejects the false confessions, the sinful sidestepping of Adam and Eve. He has placed upon them His sovereign gracious covenant—they not only continue living but they are promised a redeemer (3:15). In that sovereign disposition there is also a spiritual effect upon Adam and Eve that is not stated explicitly in the text. Nowhere does it explicitly say that God worked regeneration in Adam and Eve. However immediately after the curse-promises were given, Adam renamed his wife Eve. In Hebrew, the word, “Eve” arises from and sets forth the root meaning “life.” So, he changed her name from saying that she is one that corresponds to him under the covenant of works, to the one who is the source of life under the covenant of grace. Her new name expresses the essence of the promises that God has given in delivering the “curses.” The central promise is that God would bring forth life through Eve and, ultimately, He would bring forth salvation.

It is also interesting that the word “Eve” is explained in the text, “He called her Eve because she was the mother of all the living.” In the Sumerian language the word for woman is NIN.TÍ and it could be

translated either, "the mother of all living," or "the lady of the rib."¹⁰⁰ Surely, that ancient language and culture reflect the biblical account? The Christian position is that Adam and Eve came first and all other cultures flow out of their culture. So, all other religions and their proposed gods are degenerations of the pure religion in the Bible. This is especially attested in the area of the Mesopotamian Valley where the descendants of Noah settled. The civilizations of that area produced explanations of the origins of man and his ancient history that reflect what is recorded in the Bible. Sumerian and Babylonian accounts are garbled and confused but they bear a strong remembrance to what is recorded in the early chapters of Genesis.¹⁰¹

2. The Divine Seal on Their Faith: A Covering for Their Sin By Means of Blood, Gen. 3:21

“Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.”

Not only does Adam change his wife’s name to Eve, but according to Gen. 3:21, God did something very significant. Remember that right after they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam and Eve had made for themselves aprons, or girdles, out of leaves. That is, they made for themselves coverings for their shame, and ultimately for their sin, that did not cover very much and it was made out of plant material. It seems natural to see the text placing God's provision of a covering for their sin over against man's own provision of a covering for his sin and shame. God made them garments. His provision is not just an incidental and somewhat curious historical note inserted into the account. The NKJ translation "tunics" correctly represents the Hebrew word sometimes rendered "garment." God did not just make for them “garments” but made them “tunics.” Their self-made coverings were girdles or loincloths—just enough to cover around their thighs/loins. When God made a tunic, He made enough to cover their bodies totally. What is He saying to them? He is saying that their estimation of their sin is inadequate. The degree of their sin is much more than they comprehended. So, in making this much more sufficient garment, God preaches a sermon to them in a concrete practical way. He is teaching them that their sin cannot really be covered

¹⁰⁰ Coppes, *What Say The Stones?*, p. 28.

¹⁰¹ Coppes, 12-16.

by any man-made provision. Whatever they may think of the degree of their sin—it is much more extensive than they think.

Next, God used a different kind of material in covering Adam and Eve. He did not make the covering out of plant material but He slew animals and made the covering out of animal skins. The choice of material certainly seems to be as intentional and educational as the size of the garments is. God could have made tunics out of plant material, but He did not. Surely He is declaring to Adam and Eve that the nature of the covering needed is different than they provided. Moreover, He could have made the new garments out of wool—He could have used animal “stuff” without killing an animal. He choose, however, to kill an animal to provide a covering for them. This teaches that they needed to be covered by a living sacrifice. It must have been shocking for Adam and Eve to see God killing animals. This is the first recording of the killing of animals and it was done by God for the expressed purpose of covering Adam and Eve.

God is declaring to Adam and Eve that they cannot cover themselves and that they do not even know the nature and the degree of their sin. God alone can make the covering and He is making it for them. What a tremendous statement of the grace of God occurring against the foil of the promise in Gen. 3:15 that the promised seed of the woman would fatally bruise the serpent. It is significant that the atonement eventually is explained as a “covering.” Indeed, the Hebrew word for atonement means a “covering.” The atonement is a special use of the word. God thus teaches Adam and Eve that He would provide a covering (although He does not use the word “covering,” the concept is clearly present), an atonement for their sin, through the promised seed. It is hard to escape the conclusion that this truth was at the core of their faith when one reads the list of the faithful in Heb. 11. So, in a very real sense, God’s covering was a sacrament—a sign and seal of His atoning work in their behalf.

3. The Divine Sanction on Eternal Life, Gen. 3:22-24

²² “Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live

forever"—²³ therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken.²⁴ So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.”

This passage shows what more God did after the fall to emphasize and extend His grace and mercy toward Adam and Eve. Note again that God had replaced the self-made covering of their sin and shame. This was His provision in grace. Nothing less than the promised divine covering would be a satisfactory provision of grace (Gen. 3:15). As remarked before, Satan said they would become like God knowing good and evil and, therefore, implied that God knew good and evil. Of course, the word of Satan is not normally a trustworthy expression of biblical and divine truth, but here God Himself says that man has become "like Us, knowing good and evil." With these words, God says that He knows evil. He does not know the practice of evil, but He knows it conceptually and sovereignly—He is the one who sets the standard for evil. This offers additional support for the previously affirmed explanation of what the tree of the knowledge of good and evil signified: it was a tree whereby man became like God by setting the standard of right and wrong, of good and evil, for himself.

We note again God uses the plural, "behold the man has become like one of *Us*." This is another adumbration of the doctrine of the Trinity. It is not a full exposition clearly setting forth that doctrine in New Testament specificity, but it *is* a foreshadowing of it—a suggestion that the one true God exists in a plurality of persons.

Then God says, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil and now, lest he stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever..." This states the reason why God drove man out of the garden of Eden. It may seem to some that He is mercilessly blocking man from a tremendous blessing. It appears that in the tree of life, man has the chance for eternal life and God, by driving him out of the garden of Eden, is separating him from that possibility. However, what seems to be a blessing on the surface, is by no means a blessing when considered more carefully.

First, man has fallen into sin and he needs regeneration to be in a blessed state. Indeed, even redeemed man still carries in himself the affects of sin and the results of the fallen nature. Redeemed Adam finds himself in the state Paul describes in Romans 7. Paul confesses that in his heart, he loved God and the law of God—in his heart he cried out, "Abba, Father." He longed to be obedient to the Lord, but in his members, in his flesh, he found that he could not accomplish what he wanted to do. Indeed, he found himself doing exactly what he did not want to do—he sinned against God. This is a state of misery, albeit a limited state of misery—as Paul confesses. If the mere eating this fruit would necessarily have bestowed eternal life, Adam and Eve and all their posterity, would have been sealed in a state of anguish whether or not the one sealed is regenerate.

In addition, this erroneously makes eating the fruit of the tree of life a sacrament that bestows eternal living—it would have worked *ex opere operato*. However, the church has correctly rejected such a view of the sacraments and of the possible effect of eating of this tree of life. The hope for Adam and Eve was not eating the tree of life, but believing in the Christ to come. Regeneration would not have come by eating of the tree of life any more than it comes through the mere partaking of the New Testament sacraments.

But why then did God bar them, and others, from the tree of life? No doubt, it was to teach them concretely that their only hope was in the coming Christ—the seed of the woman. By barring them from the tree, God concretely blocked them from their possible self-efforts to gain the full blessings of eternal life. After all, eating the fruit of this tree would be far easier than seeking to live a life of obedience to God. However, since they already had eternal life (as just argued previously), all that remained is the gaining of eternal life in its full blessing (life-more-abundantly perfected), and this is obtainable only in heaven. This is another gracious act of God pointing Adam and all his posterity to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Only His coming would complete that redemption promised to man in Gen. 3:15 and depicted in the divinely provided tunics. What man needed now was not the fruit of this tree, but fellowship with God through Jesus Christ. Indeed, the coming of Jesus was a necessary part of man's receiving salvation at this early time. If Jesus did not come, then man would have no salvation at all. So, the promise of the coming seed

teaches there was no salvation in eating the tree of life. That eating, like the eating of the Lord's Supper was sacramental. It was a sign and seal, not regenerating act—it would seal man in the life he currently had. To deny this *ex opere operato* idea of sanctification, this potentially shortcut to sanctification, even more pointedly to Adam and all his posterity the Lord God sent man out of the garden of Eden.

The next matter in the text is, "to cultivate the ground from which he was taken." This brings us back to the creation mandate that man should labor and minister as a servant under God to bring the totality of the earth into submission to Him and to demonstrate the glory of God as man worked as God's servant. This validates the interpretation of the labor mandate suggested in the previous discussion of the covenant of works. Thus, God Himself told Adam, Eve, and all their posterity that the labor mandate is a creation ordinance—although this language is not used.

The text adds that God drove them out of the garden. It is significant that the word chosen for "drove" suggests that they did not leave voluntarily. They longed to be in the garden of Eden. Who would not have? Who wouldn't have longed to be in that place of tremendous blessing even though he is under the curse? After all, this was their home. So God took the initiative and drove them out. God had just sovereignly placed them under the covenant of grace. Now He again directly interferes with the course of human history by evicting them. But this is another act of God's grace because it teaches them that true blessedness is in the future not in the past. It is in the eternal life they have just graciously received and not in the life they had lost by the fall. It is in the promised Redeemer and not in the ruined and lost blessings of the garden.

Furthermore, the text reports, "that at the east of the garden of Eden, God stationed cherubim." Whatever these angelic creatures were they served as guards blocking the entrance to the garden of Eden and therefore guarding man from seeking eternal life in eating the fruit of this tree. God blocked man from thinking that eating this fruit was a means of redemption or perfection. By stationing the flaming sword that turned in every direction to protect the tree, God sealed the entrance to the garden of Eden and the tree of life.

By guarding the tree of life with the sanction of death, God informs man about true worship---approaching God the only source of eternal life. It is significant that in 1 Cor. 11 Paul speaks in a similar way about approaching the Lord's Supper. It too, is sanctioned by God. Paul remarks that those who had been approaching the table unworthily, coming, as it were, symbolically into the presence of God, eat unworthily. They come unprepared—without properly and adequately examining themselves, repenting of their sin, and renewing their conscious dependence on divine grace. They did not work out their sanctification but sought a shortcut. Therefore, some were sick and some were even dying (1 Cor. 11:30). This is reminiscent of Num. 17:12-18:7 where the children of Israel, during the course of their sojourning through the wilderness wandering, had come to the conclusion that they did not want to come to God through Aaron and Aaron's sons. Rather, they appointed their own priests to bring what the Bible calls "strange fire before the Lord." Hence, they were approaching God in an unworthy manner. They did not take care to follow God's instructions to maintain the level of holiness requisite to approaching Him—they were taking a shortcut. At the end of Num. 17, after God's judgment came upon Israel, essentially the people said to Moses, "Do something to help us for when we approach God, we ourselves are being smitten with sickness and death." Therefore, in Num. 18, Moses, in behalf of the Lord God again affirms to Israel that the only way to approach God is through God's chosen priest. This line of biblical teaching at Sinai makes it clear that the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ is exclusively for His people. Who can approach God outside of the Lord Jesus Christ and not suffer His judgment? God preached this same gospel message in the garden of Eden when He stationed these cherubim to block entrance to the tree of life. The only approach to God, the source of life, the only path of life, is through the mediator, the seed of the woman, promised by God and fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ. This theme informs the rest of the Scripture from beginning to end (e.g., Num. 17:12-13, 18:7, I Cor. 11:30).

F. The Faith of Adam and Eve Seen in the Naming of Their Sons,
Gen. 4:1

“Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, ‘I have acquired a man from the LORD.’²

Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.”

The statement that Adam knew Eve his wife and she conceived suggests that prior to this time she had not conceived and, hence, he had probably had not “known” her in this way. It is reasonable that when God created Adam and Eve and commanded them to be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth, they would not have trouble in conceiving and childbearing. This, in turn, suggests that this conception took place shortly after their creation. It also appears that this conception took place after the fall. It is possible, of course, that the conception was before the fall, but was unknown to them. In either case, there could not have been an extended period between their creation and the fall.

The first son was named Cain because, as Eve explained, “I have acquired a man from the Lord.” Note that the Bible reports that Eve related the word, “Cain” to the Hebrew root, “*qanah*.” When Eve explains that she has “acquired” a manchild with the help of the Lord, she used the root “*qanah*” (translated “acquired”). The name “Cain” is somewhat related to “*qanah*.” She said, “I have *qanahed* a man with God” and she called the child “the *qanahian*.” It appears that to Eve the name she gave her son expresses the nature and the significance of the son as one “acquired from the Lord.”

Now the translation “gotten” (or “acquired”) is not appropriate because it does not represent the original language accurately. That Hebrew root does not mean just to get something but it means to get it as a moveable possession, as a salable possession. It envisions something that is property and not simply a person. Are we to understand that Eve, in explaining the name of her first born son, intended to say that she views him as a possession, a commodity, a piece of economic furniture? Surely, there is a better explanation of these matters?

So, we have to look elsewhere for a meaning of this word and what Eve confessed about her son. The key is found later in the book of Gen. when this word is used to describe God as the Creator (NKJ renders it Possessor) of the heavens and earth, cf., Gen. 14:19,22.¹⁰² In this and

¹⁰² The root *qanah* is known in Phoenician, a cousin to Hebrew, with the customary meaning, “to create.”

other Old Testament uses this root is best understood to mean “create,” cf., Ps. 139:13, Deut. 32:6, Prov. 8:22. Using this meaning, Eve says that she has “created a man.” Indeed, she says that she has created a man *with the help of God* or *with God*. *With* or *with the help of* is a much better translation of the Hebrew preposition than *from*. She viewed Cain as the promised redeemer. So, she said, “I have created a man with God,” and she called him, “the [new] creation.”

With these words, Eve declares that the promised “seed of the woman” had been begotten.¹⁰³ She is confessing that this son born to her, is the fulfillment of the seed of woman, the seed-to-come of the woman. He is the new beginning.

Eve named his brother Abel—a Hebrew word meaning “futility” or “useless.” Now why would a mother select such a name for her second-born son? It makes good sense for her to have done this if “Cain” means the man created with God, the promised seed. This seed having arrived, his brother bears no significance. And that explains why Gen. 4:2 provides no explanation of the name “Abel.” What woman would call her third or fourth or fifth son, “vanity” let alone her second? Does this not argue very strongly for the understanding of Cain as the “created one?” Why was the name “Abel” chosen? It was chosen because, in her judgment, he was unimportant. She does not explain why she gave him this unusual name but no doubt, in Eve's mind the significance, the characteristic of this second son Abel is expressed in his name.

G. The Faith of Abel and Rebellion of Cain, The Two Seeds, Gen. 4:2-15

There are two boys. One whose parents looked upon as the fulfillment of all their hopes, the fulfillment of their hope for life and for eternal life and the other upon whom they looked as a needless addition to their family. Almost saying in his name, “we have what we need, why do we have another one?” Perhaps this attitude governed the way Adam and Eve raised the two boys. One was privileged, constantly being told with every calling of his name that he is a very special person—almost, that he is the promised redeemer. Upon him hinge the hopes of his parents and

¹⁰³For a fuller discussion see L.J.C. “QNH”, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 804.

the certain defeat of Satan. The other was being told repeatedly, you are valueless. Can you imagine the humiliation of Abel as they call them to supper? "Come here worthless, time to have supper." "Come here special person, creation with God, come and get your supper." What a tremendous effect that must have had on the two boys. We add this to the background of the history that unfolds in Gen. 4:2-15.

The provision of the covering by God and the names of the two boys help understand this account of the offerings and struggles of the two boys. The covering explains why a bloody sacrifice was more acceptable than the non-bloody sacrifice—it was sacramental. The difference lies not only in the disposition of the two boys but also in the kind of offerings that they bring. One confesses that his only hope is in a bloody sacrifice yet to come—something that God will provide. The other arrogantly says that he will give God whatever *he* wants to give. One selects of the first fruits of his flock and the other selects of the leftovers to bring to God. One says that he is worthless and finds all of his worth in God. He pleads God's mercy and believes in His promise. The other assumes he is the messiah and needs nothing from God. Indeed, God needs to be grateful to him for the gift he brings. So, the difference between the two offerings is a combination of their inward dispositions and the things they offer to God.

Some have questioned this interpretation of Abel's offering-sacrifice as a sacrament. In response, we note that the next record of an offering-sacrifice is Gen. 8:20 when Noah made an offering after the flood. The Bible does not record a divine command for this offering. Yet, we are told that God found Noah's offering pleasing to Him as bearing a "soothing aroma." Moreover, as we shall see below, this offering bore specific marks of divine instruction—e.g., it consisted of clean animals. Thus, God was pleased with it because it expressed outward obedience to His instructions and inward understanding of its typological significance. Just how much Noah and his family understood is not stipulated. Yet, they surely understood that God required a bloody and substitutionary sacrifice (the beasts died in the stead of the offerer; they, like the tunics God made for Adam and Eve, were a covering for the sin of the offerer), and that these repeated offerings pointed to a final and all-sufficient offering. Also, it is certainly implied that Abel's offering was pleasing to the Lord. These and, no doubt, other pre-Mosaic bloody offerings (Gen. 4:26) spoke

of the covering/atonement God had made for Adam and Eve when he covered their nakedness with tunics of animal skins. Thus, we maintain that the Bible indicates that the Noahic offering was sacramental and divinely commanded even though it records no explicit command of God requiring it. Similarly, there is no reason to doubt that the sacrifice made by Abel was divinely commanded—even though there is no explicit command recorded in the Bible. God does not leave His people ignorant.

In the Mosaic exposition of the law it is clear that even if one is able to keep all of the details of the sacramental law doing everything exactly right, unless his heart is right with God, then all his efforts are polluted at their source (Deut. 10:16; 30:6). Because the source is polluted, everything that comes from it is polluted. This is what Jesus taught about the Pharisees who rigorously sought to follow the details of the law (Matt. 7:17-18). In their concern for keeping the law, they sought to draw a hedge around it. So, if the law were in the center, they moved several steps out from the law in saying that they would not even approach violating the law. While the Bible forbids taking the name of God in vain, the Pharisee would not even pronounce the divine name, Yahweh (Jehovah). They even stumbled at saying the Greek word “God.” So strong their influence in the history of the transmission of the Bible, that today we are not even certain how “Yahweh” is to be pronounced because the Pharisees did not allow the vowel points to be written (once the vowel points began to be inserted). Before the invention of the vowel points, they forbid to pronouncing the divine name. They substituted the Hebrew word for “Lord” for the correct pronunciation of Yahweh. The result is that when we say *Jehovah* we are pronouncing an artificial word that has the consonants of Yahweh but the vowels of Adonai (the Hebrew word for “Lord”). Indeed, Jesus called them whitewashed tombs (Matt. 23:29). They appeared to be squeaky white, but inwardly were stinky black-dead.

In Gen. 4:6 God asked Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?" He is not seeking information but is trying to draw out of Cain a confession of sin. Cain should have said that he was angry because sin dominates his heart and he is in rebellion against his Creator. Moreover, he should have confessed that in his attitudes and actions he rejected the authority and lordship of God, as well as the promised salvation, Gen. 3:15. He should have repented and asked the Lord God to save him, to change his heart, and to make him His servant.

Then in Gen. 4:7 God says, "if you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up?" Doing well implies here, as it does throughout the whole of Scripture, both belief in the promised redeemer and conformity to the law of God. Thus, God tells Cain that his sin is not the result of his being a victim. God knew the nature of fallen man but He does not point to that nature as the cause of Cain's rebellion. He points to Cain's own decision and own personal rebellion. Sin was seeking to overcome him and by good and necessary implication, God is saying to Cain that he was responsible to overcome it. He was responsible to change and to be faithful like Abel.

Cain's offering thus demonstrates his rejection of God's directives for worship and constitutes a continuation of the spirit of Adam and Eve when they ate of the fruit—they set their own standard of good and evil. Cain proudly sets his own standard of good and evil and expects God to receive what he offers. Abel, on the other hand, humbly submits to God's will. Cain's self-centered autonomy is furthered expressed by his lack of repentance when his offering does not please the Lord and when he kills his brother (even after God called him to repentance).

Gen. 4:8 reports, "Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him"

Cain told Abel what God had said to him and he probably did it with a good deal of gusto and rebellion against the Lord God. Could it be that Abel tried to instruct Cain—tried to bring him to repentance? Very possibly, this is what happened, because the result of this talk seems to have been Cain's angry outburst. Kill the message by killing the messenger.

Ever since that first confrontation, one of the frequent effects of pressing upon people the claims to obedience to God and the call to repentance is their anger. For example, Jesus preached to the religious authorities of his day—the Cains walking around in his day. In essence, he told them that their hearts were wrong, that their offerings were not acceptable, that they were sons of the Devil and walking in the footsteps of Adam and Eve when they ate of the tree. The Pharisees and the scribes

and others of Jesus' day did not thank Jesus for that gospel message. They did not condescend to believing and trusting in Him but instead the more Jesus pressed upon them their need for change, the more furious they became at him and, ultimately, they saw him as a threat to the existence of their religious system. Because of that, they rose together and put Him to death, imitating the activity of Cain reported in Gen. 4:8.

“Then the LORD said to Cain, ‘Where *is* Abel your brother?’ He said, ‘I do not know. *Am* I my brother's keeper?’”
Gen. 4:9

Again, God is not seeking information from Cain. He is seeking his repentance. Notice how graciously God repeatedly comes to Cain seeking to bring him to repentance. Again and again, the grace of God is extended to this reprobate child. Instead of repenting, Cain says, "I do not know"; he lies to God. He does not just shift attention from himself, he does not just pass off his responsibility, but there is a straightforward lie. The New Testament tells us that those who lie demonstrate that they are the sons of the Devil and not the sons of God. In this statement, Cain demonstrates again that he is not the promised seed. He is not the one who is going to bring victory over the Devil. On the contrary, he demonstrates that he is the true son of the Devil and then he arrogantly says, "Am I my brother's keeper?" The word, "keeper" in the Hebrew is the same word used in Gen. 3:24 when it says that God "set the angels to *guard* the way to eternal life." Cain is saying, "Am I my brother's guard?" He was asking if it was his responsibility to guard Abel from all harm and wickedness. In this statement Cain seems to be saying that he knows wickedness or evil has befallen his brother, and that he is not responsible for it.

¹⁰ “And He said, ‘What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground. ¹¹ So now you *are* cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. ¹² When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth.’” Gen. 4:10-12

Man cannot hide his sin from God. This incident spiritually introduces the development leading up to the Noachian covenant. It supplies important background for that covenant. The biblical material

from this point to the flood makes it evident that Cain's wickedness is passed on through his descendants. Indeed, it is not only passed on but it increased in its intensity and its frequency. Ultimately, it increased in its territory so it consumes almost every man—they all became Cains.

III. CONCLUSION¹⁰⁴

The provisions of this covenant for the maintenance of the new life of mankind continue in operation (through both common and special grace). God extends to Abel not only His grace and His protection (Abel's eternal life was secure) but He also extends it to Cain. "Even today, the basic struggles of mankind involve the questions of providing bread, relieving pain, performing labor, bearing children, and dealing with the inevitability of death."¹⁰⁵ The penalty that ought to have come upon man and, ultimately will come upon him, is the penalty that comes upon the Devil. Because of the curse on him, the Devil will be cast into the burning lake of fire to suffer forever the most excruciating pain. So too, unrepentant man will be cast into the eternal lake of burning fire with the Devil, as Jesus instructs us in Matt. 24 and 25. Today, God holds back this sentence just as He withheld it from Cain. In the meantime, He extends a number of blessings as well as His constant grace and His invitation and constant drawing man to Himself as it says in Rom. 2:4, "do you not know that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?"

The promises of this covenant set the stage for the history of redemption. Like the material set forth in the covenant of works, the material set forth in the covenant of Adam is the necessary background for understanding subsequent redemptive history. Indeed, this is the foil of all subsequent revelation. It should not be ignored in exegesis and biblical theology. This is especially true with the teaching that man needs a restored relationship with God, the promise that a man would be born of woman and enter into conflict with Satan, and the promise of a divine provision to cover/atone for man's sin. *He [God] would destroy Satan and accomplish redemption for his people.* Of course, we know by implication and by biblical declaration that this speaks about Jesus Christ.

¹⁰⁴ Sections 1-4 are based upon Robertson, 105f.

¹⁰⁵ 106.

In this covenant we see why some people receive Christ and His gospel while others reject Him—there are the seed of the woman and the seed of the Devil, there are Cain and Abel (God shows how “Cain I have hated, Abel I have loved”), cf., John 1:11-13, Rom. 9:6-13. Here we see that man receives Christ and the truth not because of his own work but because of the grace of God. Cain was God's own creation and ought to have rested his hopes and joys on the redemption offered by God in the promised seed but did not. So Jesus, that very seed in human form, living before the Cains of His day, came to His own and His own did not receive Him. As Abel received the Messiah in principle and in faith (Heb. 11:4), so throughout subsequent human history after Cain and Abel, when men receive the gospel, God gives to them the authority/ability to believe in Christ (John 1:12). Now lest we think that God teaches that receiving the gospel is a precondition of receiving life, John goes on to tell us this is not the case. Fallen men do not have in themselves any power or authority to become new creations in Christ Jesus. When the truth is offered to them, even as with Cain, they do not repent but rather their hearts become even harder against God—as we see step by step in Gen. 4. So today, when the truth of God is offered to men apart from the work of God's Holy Spirit converting and changing them, they turn a hard heart. Those who do believe do so because they are "born again, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man," John 1:13. It is not simply a result of their being born into the right family or tribe. It is not a result of their making the right choice. It is not the will of the flesh that is moved by nature or by instinct, nor is it a result of what some describe as free will of man. But what force is it that causes man to make the right choice and to be born again? The Bible tells us that men are born again because they are born of the will of God. This biblical truth is reflected in the story of Cain and Abel. God sovereignly discriminates between Cain and Abel as He does with all other men. He sovereignly discriminates between all mankind as He sovereignly and graciously sets hostility (enmity) against Satan in the hearts of many. These are the “seed of the woman.” He allows others to continue in their alliance with Satan and their enmity toward God. These are called the “seed of Satan.”

“Progress in the history of God's program to redeem a people to himself may be traced along the line of the enmity between these two seeds.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ 106.

So beginning in Genesis, the rest of the story of the history of mankind becomes the account of the struggle between the two seeds. It is the struggle between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the Devil. This interpretation of history is set forth the book of Revelation where we see the spiritual struggle between the two kingdoms.

This covenant presents us with the climax and goal of God's redemptive plans,

“to bring the whole earth into subjection to the glory of God. This glorious consummation focuses on the redemption of man in the context of his total potentialities. In the wholeness of a creature made in God's image, man shall be brought to redemption by realizing the fullness of possibilities available to him.”¹⁰⁷

Ps. 8 teaches that this is accomplished in Jesus Christ. It clearly reflects upon the creation account—God created man with all the potentialities to be the perfect ruler here upon this earth. Heb. 2:7-9 reviews man's potentiality and teaches that Jesus fulfills God's design and intention for man. That design and intention was disrupted and destroyed when Adam and Eve ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Heb. 2 recognizes that all things are subjected to Jesus—the seed that was promised in Gen. 3:15. Hebrews teaches us that Jesus is the means and vehicle through which God has, in principle, accomplished the perfect restoration of man.

As the corporate “seed of the woman” in Christ (Gal 3:16,29) believers are called to keep separate from evil and live in obedience to God, Rom 16:17f. God will enable us to keep “bruising” the head of the serpent. By His grace God would enable the Romans to crush the serpent under their feet, Rom. 16:20. By our working in obedience to Christ, Satan is pushed back and thwarted. The effects of evil are more and more progressively destroyed here on this earth by Christ working through us and through His own sovereign working against the Devil. These forces will still be mighty and widespread when Jesus returns (Rev.). This is the message of the gospel and the hope that Paul sets before the church in 1

¹⁰⁷ 107.

Cor. 15:24 and 1 Cor 15:18. God is pushing back and thwarting the advance and effects of evil in the earth, until Christ will triumph over all opposition in all areas upon His glorious return, 1 Cor 15:24f., 58.

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Chapter 4. CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

The material set forth in the early chapters of Genesis is foundational to all that follows. Hence, it is very important for the Bible student to get this material clearly in mind. This book has argued that the system of doctrine in the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and the other *Westminster Standards* which entails and specifically names the pre-fall covenant of works, its continuation and expansion after the fall and throughout human history, and the introduction of the covenant of grace in a post-fall Adamic covenant, is consistent and set forth in the revelation of God recorded in Gen. 1-4.

To that end, the first chapter works through the various matters of introduction to biblical theology seeking to summarize them in a useful way. It does this against the background of several other significant approaches. Among those approaches to biblical theology or, at least, attempts to explain how the Old and New Testaments relate, is some very useful material. The various scholars have helped to define the characteristics of a proper biblical theology. The work of some of the leading scholars in the field has been summarized and interwoven to help the reader understand the principles involved in producing a biblical theology. Among the scholars who are closest to what might be considered an approved biblical theology are J. Barton Payne, Geerhardus Vos, O. Palmer Robertson and John Murray. But each work has certain flaws. Hence, in the work produced in this book those flaws are addressed and avoided.

In the process of evaluating these four positions, a fifth, hopefully more acceptable, position is proposed. Among the significant and, perhaps, corrective elements of this proposal is the principle that the early chapters of Genesis are to be understood in terms of later interpretations and application in the Bible. Vos seems to accept the principle that one must view biblical revelations somewhat as a range of mountains which gradually lifts from the plain to its highest limits. The plain is the total absence of divine revelation and the heights are what are recorded in the New Testament. Hence, more or less, one must not presuppose the presence of later theological concepts when dealing with the early chapters of Genesis, i.e., the Trinity, the covenant, substitutionary sacrifices, etc. This approach, first introduced by the higher critic Gabler,

is contrasted with the reigning position among orthodox scholars—or, at least, what was affirmed to be their approach. Orthodox scholarship tended to view the Bible in terms of mountain peaks only. It is suggested here that neither concept is satisfactory. Rather, recorded revelation before the New Testament, and especially the early chapters of Genesis, are more like a pack of icebergs. One should be aware that much material lies hidden below the surface. A clear example of this “hidden part” are seen in God’s command to Noah that he distinguish between clean and unclean animals when taking beasts into the ark. This “iceberg” idea is useful for understanding God’s directives to Noah regarding murderers, the use of covenant as the structural assumption in Gen. 1-4, the work of God in restoring Adam and Eve to divine fellowship, His promise of the coming Redeemer, His provision of a covering for their sin, etc.

This fifth position is set forth more fully in the first chapter where the idea covenant is developed more fully. The primary subject of this chapter is not covenant generally conceived, but the covenant of grace in particular. It is argued that the divine covenant(s) with man is a unilateral disposition of God’s will. This disposition is gracious in its inception and sustaining. It involves a formalizing element and an administrative element (i.e., ongoing divine administration of the covenant). This covenant is conceived, in God’s revelation, as fundamentally an “agreement”. Although those who enter it enter by divine regeneration (unilaterally), this divine work is not contrary to their will even though their entrance does not involve their cooperation. On the other hand, once brought into the covenant by regeneration, normally they are cooperative in receiving the covenant (John 1:13). The other side of the covenant may be termed secondary. Viewed in this way, the covenant is primarily cooperative or bilateral. Here, man is summoned to faith and repentance as a response to the free offer of his restoration to fellowship with God, receiving the benefits provided by the Seed of the woman, and receiving the blessing of the covering (atonement) God provides for his sin.

There are a few additional important points established in this first chapter. It briefly discusses the ever-present assumption of the continuance of the demands and curses of the covenant of works. Hence, the Bible is unified under the divine covenant it represents and reveals. The covenant of grace, in addition, is unified forensically, structurally,

genealogically, and thematically. There is a brief discussion of the unity of the two Testaments and of the content of this covenant of grace.

The second chapter details what the pre-fall record teaches about the covenant of works. The subject is introduced by a survey of the teachings of the Westminster Standards on this matter. Next, come the major biblical passages teaching that this pre-fall revelation does set forth a divine covenant. The bulk of the chapter discusses the elements of this covenant. It is demonstrated that its foundation and initiation is the grace of God. There is an extended discussion of the order of the context of this covenant specially addressing the order in the creation and the place of man. To that end, the absoluteness of the beginning of all things as presented in the creation record is reviewed. The Creator and covenantal originator is presented in His sovereignty and uniqueness—it is argued that the creation account contains adumbrations or reflections of the doctrine of the Trinity. The entire presentation of things places man in obligation and subjection to God—in covenantal relationship to Him. Man's position under God is further detailed as the Bible reviews him acting as priest, prophet, and king. Central to the entire covenant of works is the probation. This is discussed in detail. The original covenant also entailed promises and threats, sacramental symbols, blessings, and ordinances or divine commands.

Considerable space is given to a detailed discussion of the breaking of the covenant and the curses that accrued to Satan and man as a result. A significant dimension of these curses is that they are given in the same order as the violations of the covenant occurred and that they are restorative as well as punitive in nature.

Finally, considerable attention is given to the continuing relevance of this covenant of works. The focus is especially on the New Testament reaffirmation of the creation mandates—especially, the mandate to render total obedience to the Lord God. The New Testament, as the Old Testament, assumes that all mankind are obligated to obey whatever law(s) God reveals. At the same time, the permanent and universal effects of the fall work to make it impossible for man to comply with this obligation. Indeed, because of the fall he does not even desire to comply. Hence, all mankind need, and cry out for, the divinely promised mediator-

substitute who will do for them what they cannot do for themselves—restore them to a just and right relationship to their Creator.

The final chapter addresses the first publication of the covenant of grace—the Adamic covenant. The revealing and definition of this covenant are primarily in terms of divine and human acts. By grace God does not totally destroy man, but He seeks them out when they have fled from His presence. By grace, God promises the divine restorer-redeemer when they rebelled against Him. Their act to gain autonomy by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil did not bring that autonomy as a blessed state. Rather, they fell into sin and shame. Their total lack of wisdom is reflected in the loincloths they made for themselves. Shame and sin were the problems, awareness of nakedness was the immediate evidence, but they could not make a provision that satisfied themselves (they covered their nakedness but still hid in the trees) or God. What man could not do for himself because of the inherent weakness of the flesh, God did in promise and act. He promised the redemptive restoration through Seed of the woman. He covered their nakedness with a more extensive and more divinely acceptable covering. The sermons thus preached were understood by Adam and Eve. The faith they exercised evidences their regeneration and understanding that they were restored to fellowship with God. Adam gave his wife a “redemptive” name; Eve gave their first-born a “redemptive” name. However, in the name “Abel” the parents demonstrate that their knowledge of God’s revelation was woefully inadequate. The two boys work out the prophetic significance of their names. In the process, Abel shows that he, and probably his parents, had learned a good deal of what God communicated in His acts of continuing His fellowship with them, reaffirming their relationship to Him and each other in the “curses,” and in providing the covering for their sin. Abel offered a sacrifice on the correct nature and with the correct disposition. All this demonstrates both that God had entered into and revealed to them His covenant of grace, and that they understood and trusted in the terms and provisions of that covenant.

CHAPTER QUESTIONS

Introduction

1. What are the four branches of divine theology?
2. What is the definition of each branch?
3. What are the branches of exegetical theology?
4. What are some of the presuppositions of a proper Biblical theology?
5. What is meant by the statement that true knowledge is “from above?”
6. Describe the nature of a proper Biblical theology?
7. Describe the method of a proper Biblical theology?
8. What fallacious methodology is often used in defining covenant?
9. What forms or patterns are used in the Bible with reference to covenant?
10. What is the problem with Prof. Murray’s definition of covenant?
11. How does Robertson improve on that definition?
12. What is the weakness of Robertson’s definition of covenant?
13. What is the intended position of this book?
14. What are the various divisions entailed in what the Bible records?

Chapter 1

1. What is the focus of Biblical revelation?
2. What is the definition of covenant proposed here?
3. Discuss the proposition: covenant is a bond.
4. What is the weakness of the following statement: covenant is a bond in blood?
5. How is covenant sovereignly administered?
6. What is the weakness of the following statement: covenant is a bond unto life (a bond of life and death)?
7. What are some of the important unique aspects of divine covenant?
8. When did the divine covenant originate?
9. What is the foil of the covenant of grace?
10. In what ways is the unity of the covenant of grace evidenced?
11. What is content of covenantal unity?

Chapter 2

1. How do the following argue for the covenant of works: Hos. 6:7, Rom. 8:20-23, Isa. 24:21, Jer. 33:20-21 (also, 25-26, 35-37), Rom. 5:12-28 (also, 1 Cor. 15:21-28)?
2. Where does one find the initial presentation of the covenant of works?
3. How is the Trinity evidenced in the creation account?
4. How is order evidenced in the creation?
5. How does this demonstrate a covenant?
6. How does the fact of divine creation demonstrate a covenant?
7. What is *fiat* creation and how does this demonstrate a covenant?
8. What mandate did God give to man before the fall?
9. How is grace extended to man before the fall?
10. How does the prefall revelation demonstrate man was appointed to be prophet, priest and king?
11. Explain the structural relationship between Gen. 1:1-2:4 and the rest of Gen. 2.

12. What great truth is set forth by the context of the probation?
13. What are the elements of the probation?
14. What is the main theme of Gen. 2:18-25?
15. What is the significance of Adam's naming the woman?
16. In what way is the probation tree the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?
17. What promises and threats were there in this first covenant?
18. In this prefall covenant what principles are revealed in what symbols?
19. What creation ordinances are set forth under the covenant of works?
20. Prove from Scripture that these are creation or standing ordinances, i.e., ordinances that last as long as this creation lasts?
21. How does the covenant of works call man to a full-orbed responsibility?
22. How does the Noahic covenant call man to a full-orbed responsibility?
23. What is the cultural mandate?
24. What teaches us that the serpent of the temptation was a real serpent?
25. What does the NT say to teach us that the Devil used the serpent?
26. How was the serpent an effective choice?
27. Why did the Devil choose to approach the woman?
28. Why should it have been obvious to the woman this encounter with an animal was unusual and wrong?
29. What are the two stages of the Devil's attack on Eve?
30. What evidence is there that Adam and Eve knew they had fallen into sin?
31. How did Adam's and Eve's "death" be understood?
32. What acts of Adam and Eve resulted as an awareness of their fall?
33. What Biblical evidence argues for the continuing necessity of keeping the Sabbath?
34. How does the church keep the Sabbath after the resurrection of Christ, and why?
35. Why is keeping the Sabbath keeping the covenant?
36. What Biblical arguments support the conclusion that God requires post-fall man's obedience to the covenant of works?

Chapter 3

1. What is the first publication of the covenant of grace?
2. How do the covenant of works and the covenant of grace differ?
3. What does this Adamic covenant contain in seed-form?
4. What three issues are especially emphasized in this covenant?
5. How is the grace of God evidenced in the Biblical account of the context of the fall?
6. How did Adam and Eve attempt to hide their sin? What is a loincloth?
7. What is the significance of the name "Lord God" in Gen. 3:9?
8. What does God address Adam first in Gen. 3?
9. What are the parts of God's word of triumph over the Devil?
10. What did God establish between the Devil and his seed and the woman and her seed?
11. What are the three fronts of the enmity?
12. What does the following phrase mean, "your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you"?
13. Who are the two seeds?
14. What does the "bruising" mean in the curse upon the serpent?
15. What is the substance of the cursing element in what God said to Adam?
16. How are the "curses" expressions of grace?

17. Explain the first and second naming of Eve? How does the second naming reflect their faith?
18. What covering does God give them for their sin and what significance does this have?
19. How is the tree of life a sacramental tree?
20. What is the significance of the divine locking up the tree of life?
21. Why was this tree not a means of communicating grace?
22. How do the names of Adam's and Eve's sons exhibit their faith?
23. How do the divine provision of the sin covering and the naming of the two sons help understand the offerings made by the sons?
24. What does Cain's offering reveal about his relationship to the covenant of grace and its Maker?
25. What is God seeking in His question to Cain?
26. What does Cain's response demonstrate?
27. What conclusions may be drawn from the study of the post-fall Biblical material relating to Adam, his wife Eve, and their sons?

Chapter 4

1. What is the basic thesis of this book?
2. What proposal was set forth as a corrective to some of the previous works in biblical theology?
3. What illustrations are offered to explain the nature of the unfolding of biblical revelation?
4. What is the definition of covenant offered in this book?
5. What are the elements of the pre-fall covenant of works?
6. What happened to the covenant of works after the fall?
7. What is the first publication of the covenant of grace?
8. How is grace evidenced immediately after the fall, including in the "curses?"

SUBJECTS-NAMES INDEX

- Aaron, 165
 Abel, 139, 165, 167, 168, 170, 171, 172, 179
 Abraham, 10, 11, 17, 19, 30, 31, 32, 43, 45, 87, 95, 141, 145, 146
 “Agreement”, ii, 10, 11, 14, 17, 18, 19, 126, 177
 Asherah, 47
 Atonement, 8, 161, 168, 177
 Baal, 47
 Babylonian accounts, 159
 Babylonian concept of creation, 146
 Babylonian creation, 120
 Bahnsen, 35, 36
 Bavinck, 26
 Beecher, 2
 Behe, 56
 Berkhof, 1, 5, 8, 36
 Blessing, 9, 17, 21, 22, 23, 29, 30, 44, 45, 59, 63, 69, 75, 76, 77, 88, 89, 93, 95, 111, 114, 124, 133, 149, 150, 151, 153, 156, 158, 162, 163, 164, 177
 Bogue, 12, 36
 Bright, 2
 Cain, 139, 144, 151, 165, 166, 167, 169, 170, 171, 172
 Calvin, 35-37
 Calvinism, 11, 12, 151
 Cassuto, 63
 Covenant of grace, 16, 18, 24, 25, 28, 29, 33, 34, 35, 118, 123, 124, 127, 128, 133, 134, 158, 159, 164, 176, 177, 178
 Covenant of works, 13, 18, 24, 28, 29, 30, 38, 40, 42, 44, 45, 71, 73, 75, 76, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 123, 159, 164, 172, 176, 177, 178
 Coverings, 160
 Creation ordinance, 77, 79, 81, 84, 89, 90, 92, 127, 164
 Culture, 16, 57, 85, 87, 88, 92, 97, 98, 139, 159
 Curse, 8, 23, 24, 28, 44, 45, 59, 72, 88, 101, 107, 111, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 127, 128, 130, 133, 135, 138, 142, 145, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 164, 172, 179
 Dabney, 36, 45
 Darwin, 56
 David, 10, 21, 31, 32, 43, 96
 Death and sickness, 158
 Devil, 74, 98, 99, 100, 102, 104, 105, 129, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 138, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 148, 149, 150, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174
 Dominion, 16, 30, 39, 52, 57, 58, 61, 80, 90, 91, 92, 93, 107, 120, 127, 144, 149
 Eden, 29, 33, 34, 62, 65, 66, 68, 72, 76, 85, 87, 89, 90, 91, 93, 99, 100, 101, 105, 106, 113, 114, 115, 117, 123, 124, 126, 131, 134, 143, 145, 156, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165
 Elohim, 48, 55, 63, 104, 134
 Emmanuel, 15-16, 33
 Enmity, 72, 75, 124, 128, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 142, 144, 147, 173
 Enosh, 139
 Eternal life, 8, 15, 24, 30, 65, 72, 73, 75, 76, 118, 124, 137, 140, 162, 163, 163, 164, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 170, 174, 177, 179
 Evolution, 56, 57
 Ex nihilo, 46f.
 Exegetical theology 1, 7
 Federal headship, 71
 Fellowship, 26, 30, 33, 54, 59, 69, 120, 124, 129, 130, 136, 150, 156, 163, 177, 179
 Fiat, 55, 57
 First day of the week, 51, 107, 108, 109
 Framework, 51
 Fruit, 39, 59, 65, 74, 76, 88, 92, 94, 101, 102, 104, 105, 106, 113, 115, 138, 143, 154, 157, 162, 163, 164, 170
 Gabler, 176
 Gaffin, 9
 Gospel, 7, 16, 97, 98, 117, 136, 141, 154, 165, 171, 173, 175
 Great Commission, 77, 97, 109
 Greek last will, 14
 Harrison, 63-64, 146
 Headship, 69, 70-72, 83, 84, 86, 107, 115, 117, 127, 130, 131, 132
 Heavenly lights, 52
 Historical theology 1

- Historical-grammatical
exegesis, 5
- Historical-redemptive
exegesis, 6
- Hittite, 8, 14, 25
- Hoekema, 27, 35
- Holy Spirit, 26, 27, 48, 50,
109, 110, 136, 154, 173
- Image of God, 57, 58, 59,
67, 69, 90, 120
- Israel, 6, 12, 19, 23, 24,
31, 32, 36, 41, 43, 57, 78,
86, 95, 109, 110, 112,
141, 150, 156, 165,
- Jehovah, 63, 104, 130,
169
- Jephthah, 6
- Johnson, Phillip E. 56
- Jonathan 10, 12, 21, 36
- Kaiser, 2
- Kitchen, K. A., 62
- Kline, 2, 8, 12, 21, 37
- Knowledge of good and
evil, 120
- Laban, 21
- Labor, 54, 87-90, 92-94,
107, 154, 155, 163, 172
- Loincloths, 107, 129, 160,
179
- Lord's Day, 110
- Lord's Supper, 109, 163,
164
- Marriage, 14, 39, 69, 80,
81, 82, 83, 84, 87, 90,
92, 93, 94, 106, 107,
120, 127-93, 105, 106,
119, 125
- Mesopotamian writings,
120
- Messiah, 31, 32, 95, 173
- Mic. 7:17, 134
- Morecraft, 2, 12, 20, 21,
27, 155, 157
- Mosaic Law, 12, 83, 90,
96, 106, 108, 110, 111,
112, 113, 114, 115
- Moses, 15, 31, 32, 81,
110, 113, 115, 165
- SUBJECTS-NAMES INDEX**
- Murray, 9, 10, 11, 17, 18,
24, 37, 87, 176
- Nakedness, 73, 105, 106,
168, 179
- Name, 21, 43, 48, 53,
62, 63, 64, 65, 68, 70,
104, 111, 129, 155,
159, 160, 166, 167,
169, 179
- Near Eastern documents,
4, 62, 120
- New creation, 109, 26f., 173
- Noah, 13, 23, 30, 32, 43,
87, 95, 139, 140, 146,
155, 159, 168, 177
- North, 92
- Oehler, 2, 5, 13
- Particular law, 31, 45, 93
- Payne, 2, 3, 4, 13, 176
- Pharisees, 77, 80f., 108,
144f., 169f.
- Pishon 66
- Postmillennialist, 12
- Preterism, 12
- Probation, ii, v, 43, 59,
64, 66, 67, 71, 72, 75,
76, 77, 95, 98, 111, 120,
123, 127, 178, 181
- Promise, 9, 10, 15, 16,
17, 19, 23, 24, 29, 30,
31, 32, 33, 44, 45, 72,
87, 123, 134, 137, 139,
145, 146, 147, 150, 154,
156, 159, 161, 163, 168,
172, 177, 179
- Promised seed, 125, 146,
158, 161, 167, 171, 173
- Public worship, 79, 84f.,
92, 97, 109f., 164, 170
- Reconstructionism, 1
- Redeemer, 87, 145, 146,
150, 155, 156, 159, 166,
167, 169, 179
- Reformation, 5, 112,
151
- Reformed Standards, 13,
14, 118
- Reformed Standards 13
- Rib 69, 81, 159
- Robertson, 2, 9, 10, 11,
16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21,
22, 23, 37, 76, 85, 94,
95, 97, 117, 126, 127,
139, 141, 148, 149,
155, 172, 176
- Roman last will 8, 14
- Sabbath, 18, 39, 52, 54,
61, 77, 78, 79, 87, 90,
92, 93, 94, 95, 107, 108,
109, 110, 111, 112, 120
- Sacrament, 75, 161, 163,
168
- Sanctification, 163, 164
- Satan, 39, 99, 100, 101,
102, 103, 104, 133, 134,
135, 138, 139, 140, 142,
143, 146, 147, 148, 149,
162, 167, 172, 173, 174,
178
- Second Coming, 60, 87,
90, 141, 142, 156
- Serpent, 29, 76, 98, 99,
100, 101, 102, 105, 125,
132, 133, 134, 135, 136,
137, 140, 142, 143, 144,
145, 147, 148, 153, 161,
174, 181
- Seth, 139
- Shedd, 56
- Shute, 56
- Solomon, 31
- Sovereignty, 51, 53, 75,
77, 96, 178
- Stigers, 149, 151
- Substitutionary
sacrifices, 176
- Sumerian, 66, 67, 159
- Symbol, 75
- Symbols, 76, 178
- Systematic theology, i,
ii, 1, 7, 14
- Temptation, 39, 66, 67,
76, 98, 100, 103, 104,
134, 138, 146, 181
- Ten Commandments, 88
- Tigris, 66
- Testament, 8, 9, 14, 25

Theonomy, 12
Tree of life, 39, 59, 65,
75, 120, 161, 162, 163,
164, 182
Tree of the knowledge of
good and evil, 39, 40, 59,
65, 67, 73, 74, 75, 76, 94,
105, 107, 113, 119, 129,
131, 132, 160, 162, 163,
165, 179, 181

SUBJECTS-NAMES INDEX

Trinity, 8, 14, 47, 48, 49,
50, 69, 71, 77, 119, 162,
176, 178
Unilateral, 3, 8, 14,
47, 48, 49, 50, 69, 71,
77, 119, 162, 176, 178
Van Til, 12, 73
Vos, 2, 5, 9, 13, 74, 75,
101, 102, 140, 147, 176
Warfield, 26, 41, 50
Watson, 128
wealth, 93

Westminster Confession
of Faith, 1, 12, 38, 40,
46, 107, 176
Woman, 82, 85, 100,
102, 104, 138, 149, 150,
153, 159
Yahweh, 63, 134, 169
Young, E. J., 47, 50, 52,
55, 64, 67, 136, 137

SCRIPTURE INDEX

Gen. 1-4,	176, 177	Gen. 3:14-15,	133	Gen. 17: 1,	47, 95
Gen. 1:1,	55, 57	Gen. 3:14-19,	29, 126	Gen. 17:2,	21
Gen. 1:14-18,	43	Gen. 3:15, 15, 23, 87,		Gen. 17:20-21,	145
Gen. 1:2,	50	114, 124, 125, 135, 137,		Gen. 17:7,	15
Gen. 1:2,26,28,	71	139, 140, 143, 145, 147,			
Gen. 1:22,	52	148, 152, 156, 159, 161		Gen. 21:23,24,	18
Gen. 1:26, 47, 48, 49, 68		-163, 169, 170, 174		Gen. 21:27,	17
Gen. 1:26,28, 2:17,	38	Gen. 3:16,	138, 151	Gen. 21:27,32,	19
Gen. 1:26ff., 2:1-3,	61	Gen. 3:16),	149	Gen. 21:31:44f,	18
Gen 1:27, 28,	39	Gen. 3:16-19,	149	Gen. 24:10,	87
Gen. 1:28, 39, 54, 80, 90		Gen. 3:17,	154	Gen. 26:28,	17
Gen. 1:29-30,	59	Gen. 3:1-7,	98		
		Gen. 3:18,	127	Gen. 31:44,	17
Gen. 2:3, 7, 39, 78, 109		Gen. 3:18-19,	157	Gen. 31:53,	18
Gen. 2:3,	76, 77, 108	Gen. 3:19,	76		
Gen. 2:4,	53	Gen. 3:20-21,	159	Exod. 2:24;	6:4-8;
Gen. 2:4-25,	62	Gen. 3:21,	160	32:13,14; 23:31,	30
Gen. 2:4-31,	63	Gen. 3:22,	74, 75	Exod. 6:6f,	15
Gen. 2:4-6,	64	Gen. 3:22-24,	161	Exod. 6:7,	150
Gen. 2:6,	67	Gen. 3:24,	171	Exod. 6:8,	18
Gen. 2:8, 2:15,16,	39			Exod. 19:8,	18
Gen. 2:10-14,	66	Gen. 4:1,	165	Exod. 20,	62, 88
Gen. 2:15,	87	Gen. 4:2-15	167	Exod. 20:2,	21
Gen. 2:15-17,	66	Gen. 4:6,	169	Exod. 20:5,6,	32
Gen. 2:16,	71	Gen. 4:7,	152, 170	Exod. 20:11,	62
Gen. 2:16, 17, 39, 40		Gen. 4:8,	170	Exod. 21:4-11,	81
Gen. 2:17, 38, 39, 73,		Gen. 4:9,	171	Exod. 23:31,	30
76, 94		Gen. 4:10-12,	171	Exod. 24:3,7,	18
Gen. 2:18, 67, 80, 84		Gen. 4:26,	169	Exod. 24:8,	18
Gen. 2:18-25,	67			Exod. 31:16,	111
Gen. 2:18ff,	70	Gen. 5:29,	150, 155		
Gen. 2:19-20,	68			Lev. 18:5,	75
Gen. 2:20,	68	Gen. 6:17-22,	30	Lev. 19:18,	83, 96
Gen. 2:21-25,	69				
Gen. 2:22,	69	Gen. 8:20-22,	30, 168	Num. 17:12-18:7,	165
Gen. 2:22-25,	82	Gen. 8:21,	87, 156		
Gen. 2:23,	69, 159			Deut. 4:13f,	21
Gen. 2:24,	70	Gen. 9,	23, 43	Deut. 4:15-20,	57
Gen. 2:25	70	Gen. 9:1-17,	30	Deut. 5:2,3,	32
Gen. 3:1,	76, 102	Gen. 9:9,	23	Deut. 6:18-25,	150
Gen. 3:1-13,	123	Gen. 12:1f,	21	Deut. 6:4,	48
Gen. 3:6	104	Gen. 14:19,	22, 167	Deut. 6:5,	96
Gen. 3:6-8,13,	39	Gen. 15, 19, 23, 24, 156		Deut. 7:1f,	16
Gen. 3:7,	105	Gen..15:4-7	156	Deut. 7:12-16,	156
Gen. 3:8, 59,	107	Gen. 15:10,	19	Deut. 7:8,12; 29:13,	18
Gen. 3:8-19,	128	Gen. 15:17,	30	Deut. 7:9,	32
Gen. 3:8-24,	124	Gen. 15:17ff.,	24	Deut. 21:23,	115
Gen. 3:9,	129	Gen. 15:18,	32		

SCRIPTURE INDEX

Deut. 24:1,	80	Ps. 110:6f,	148	Matt. 5:45,	156
Deut. 25:5ff,	81	Ps. 139:13,	166	Matt. 7:17-18,	169
Deut. 28:1f,	16			Matt. 10:17,	75
Deut. 28:26,	20	Prov. 8:22,	166	Matt. 12, 26, 84,	134,
Deut. 30:14,	3	Prov. 31,	85	142	
Deut. 30:15,	75			Matt. 13:1f.,	16
Deut. 32,24,	20	Eccles. 7:29,	38	Matt. 13:38,	99
Deut. 32:6,	166	Eccles. 2:1ff.,	93	Mark 14:7,	156
Deut. 33:27,	47			Matt. 15:18,	105
		Isa. 7:14,	87	Matt. 19,	70
Josh. 1:3,	30	Isa. 24:21,	42	Matt. 19:4-5,	80
Josh. 21:43-45,	31	Isa. 24:4,5,	41	Matt. 19:6,	80
Josh. 24:27,	18	Isa. 24:4-5,	42, 118	Matt. 19:7,	81
Josh. 9:6f,	19	Isa. 42:6,	16	Matt. 22:37,	96
		Isa. 44:6, 8, 43:10,	48	Matt. 22:39,	96
Jud. 2:13,	48	Isa. 46:10,	26	Matt. 24,	172
Judg. 8:19,	19, 24	Isa. 49:23,	134	Matt. 26:28,	16, 80
		Isa. 49:8,	16	Matt. 26:28,	16
Ruth 3:13,	19	Isa. 55:3,4,	16		
Ruth 8:13,	24	Isa. 55:8-11,	3	Mark. 1:15,	141
		Isa. 56:2-7,	111, 112	Mark 2:27,	54, 108
1 Sam. 1:26, 14:39,	24	Isa. 56:6,	95	Mark 2:27-28,	77
1 Sam. 11:1,2,	19	Isa. 56:9,	20	Mark 14:7,	156
1 Sam. 14:39,	19	Isa. 58:13-14,	112		
1 Sam. 17:44,	20	Isa. 59:21,	32	Luke 2:14,	26
1 Sam. 20:3,	8, 10	Isa. 65:25,	134	Luke 6:6ff.,	84
1 Sam. 20:8,16,	17	Isa. 66,	137	Luke 10:17-18,	141
				Luke 10:25-28,	39
2 Sam. 7,	31, 32, 44	Jer. 12:9,	20		
2 Sam. 7:12,	32	Jn. 17:17,	3	John 1:1,	48, 49
		Jer. 31,	15, 34, 43	John 1:1-3,	55
2 Kings 23:13,	48	Jer. 31:33,	15	John 1:10,	92
		Jer. 33:20-21,	43, 118	John 1:11-13,	173
1 Chron. 17,	44	Jer. 34:18,	19	John 1:12,	173
		Jer. 34:18-20,	24	John 1:13,	173
2 Chron. 23:16,	15, 33	Ezek 10:11,	75	John 1:14,	16
		Ezek. 16:8,	18	John 3:3, 8,	136
Job 28:28,	38	Ezek. 20:37,	18	John 4:24,	57
Job 31:1,	19	Ezek. 34:24,	15	John 8:44,	98, 144
		Ezek. 39:17-20,	20	John 8:56,	146
Ps. 1:1f.,	16			John 12:31,	148
Ps. 50:5,	18	Hos. 6:7,	28, 40	John 18:36,	54
Ps. 72:9-10,	134				
Ps. 91:11-13,	148	Mic. 7:17,	134	Acts 2:33,	110
Ps. 105:8-10,	32			Acts 3:25,	32

SCRIPTURE INDEX

Acts 20:7,	109	Rom. 8:20-23, 41, 42, 118	Eph. 1:11,	26
Rom. 1:1,	54	Rom. 9:6,	Eph. 1:6,	123
Rom. 1-2,	154	Rom. 9:6-13,	Eph. 2:1-3.,	143
Rom. 1:1, 5	4	Rom. 9:6-16,	Eph. 2:3,	28
Rom. 1:18-3:9,	143	Rom. 9:11f,	Eph. 3:9,	49
Rom. 1:20ff,	58	Rom. 10:12-20,	Eph. 4:25,	15
Rom. 1-2,	154	Rom. 11:17,	Eph. 2:1ff.,	24
Rom. 16:20, 29, 99,	143	Rom. 11:36,	Eph. 2:20,	3
Rom 2:6,7; 7:10; 10:5,	75	Rom 16:17f,	Eph. 2:21f,	16
Rom. 2:14,15,	10:5,	1 Cor. 5:17,	Phil. 2:8,9,	26
5:12,	, 38	1 Cor. 7:14,		
Rom. 2:17-3:19,	141	1 Cor. 8:6,	Col. 1:17,	49
Rom. 2:26,	28	1 Cor. 9:13,	Col. 2:14-15,	148
Rom. 2:27-29,	111	1 Cor. 11,	Col. 2:17,	12
Rom. 2:32,	115	1 Cor. 11:18ff.,	Col. 2:9,	48
Rom. 3:1-2, 9:4, 10:14,	141	1 Cor. 11:30,	2 Thessa. 3:10-12,	89
Rom. 3:2,	114	1 Cor. 14,		
Rom. 3:2-16,	28	1 Cor. 14:34,	1 Tim. 1:8-11,	31
Rom. 3:10ff,	113, 116	1 Cor. 15, 16, 44, 106,	1 Tim. 2:11-15,	155
Rom. 3:19, 27, 4:2, 4, 6,	44	115, 142, 175	1 Tim. 2:13,5, 10, 23,	69
Rom. 3:19-20,	113	1 Cor. 15:21-28,	1 Tim. 2:15,	29
Rom. 3:19ff., 4:2ff,	118	1 Cor. 15, 25		
Rom. 4,	30	1 Cor. 15:26,	2 Tim. 3:16-17,	3
Rom. 4: 9-16, 2	2	1 Cor. 16:2,		
Rom. 4:13,	16, 151	2 Cor. 1:20, 16, 145, 150	Tit. 1:2, 5, 9, 10, 23, 26	
Rom. 5:12, 28, 72,		2 Cor 5:17,	Tit. 3:5,	26
106, 107, 115		2 Cor. 6:16,		
Rom. 5:12-14,	10	2 Cor. 10:5,	Heb. 1:2,	92
Rom. 5:12-20, 44,	71	2 Cor. 11:3,	Heb. 1:10,	49
118			Heb. 2:14,	148
Rom. 6:23, 28,	116	Gal 3:10,	Heb. 2:16,	22
Rom. 7, 31, 58, 81, 116,		Gal 3:12,	Heb. 2:7-9,	174
117,		Gal 3:12ff.,	Heb. 4, 52, 54, 61, 78,	
124, 143, 144, 154, 155		Gal 3:16,29,	109	
Rom. 7:1-3,	82	Gal. 3, 8, 16, 22, 30, 44,	Heb. 4:3,	78
Rom. 7:7ff.,	154	45, 114, 118, 141, 145,	Heb. 4:4,	53
Rom. 8:1,	116	147	Heb. 4:10,	78
Rom. 8:2,	116	Gal. 3:10,12,	Heb. 6:13-18,	8
Rom. 8:3,	134	Gal. 3:10-14,	Heb. 6:16-17,	10
Rom. 8:7, 20-22, 29, 75,		Gal. 3:15,	Heb. 8:10,	15
124, 136, 152		Gal 3:16,29,	Heb. 8:8-17,	22
Rom. 8:20-22,	42	Gal. 3:29,	Heb. 9:15-18,	8, 25
			Heb. 9:15,	22

SCRIPTURE INDEX

Heb 10:24-25,	79	1 Pet. 1:15-16,	118	Rev. 12,	100, 125, 142,
Heb. 10:25,	78	1 Pet. 3:7,	83, 100		143
Heb. 11,	161, 173			Rev. 12:1-17,	125
Heb. 11:1,	57	1 John 3:11-12,	141, 144	Rev. 12:9,	100
Heb. 11:10-16,	3	1 John 3:8,	99, 148	Rev. 20:2,	143
Heb. 11:13-19,	145			Rev. 20:10,	142, 149
Heb. 11:4,	173	Jude 1:3,	3	Rev. 20:2-3,	134
Heb. 12:23,	112			Rev. 22:1-5,	93
		Rev. 1:8,	49	Rev. 22:2, 14,	157
Jam. 1:25,	39	Rev. 1:9-10,	110		
Jam. 2:8-12,	39	Rev. 7:15,	16		

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