

## **Dr. Jeffrey Niehaus, Biblical Theology, Session 3, The Adamic Covenant, After Fall**

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This is Dr. Jeffrey Niehaus in his teaching on Biblical Theology. This is session 3, The Adamic Covenant after the Fall.

We resume now with the creation covenant matters, but life under that covenant regarding the fall and what happens afterward.

Genesis 3, this chapter contains the serpent's challenge, human failure, and consequences. What about the serpent's challenge? Well, the first thing we read about him is that he was more crafty than any of the wild animals. The word crafty, *arum* in Hebrew is a homonym with the word naked; they look just the same.

I think the wordplay is purposeful because it is that sinless quality of physical and spiritual nakedness before the Lord and before each other without shame. It's going to be lost as a result of the craftiness of the serpent. So, what does the serpent do? Well, he's identified as that ancient serpent called the devil or Satan who leads the whole world astray.

And that's what he does. He leads astray, and he does it by means of lies, and he's called by Jesus the father of lies. He trades in sin, which is deceptive.

Hebrews warns not to let your hearts be hardened by the deceptiveness of sin. Paul makes it clear: well, what is sin? There are different kinds of sins, of course. But Paul, I think, gives the consummate definition of it in Romans, whatever is not of faith is sin.

And we'll have to understand what faith is, I think, biblically expressed. And it's more than what you read in Hebrews 11, although it's consistent with it, but we'll talk about that. These are important facts if we're going to understand the nature of what the serpent does here.

So, the serpent comes, and he challenges. He begins with a seemingly harmless question. Well, did God really say you must not eat from any tree in the garden? My colleague at Gordon Conwell, Doug Stewart, likes to give the serpent a German accent and say, what did God really say? You don't eat this fruit? It's not the word of God.

You don't have to believe it. He says that the serpent was the first liberal scholar, the first higher critic. But be that as it may, the question seems harmless, but it's barbed.

Did God really say? It's pretty emphatic; he's questioning what God said? Well, what about his question, you must not eat from any tree in the garden? The whole phrase is actually exactly what God said, except for the word not. Because God had said, you may eat from any tree in the garden.

The only difference is that the serpent turns it on its head. He makes it a negative. And this is clearly, I think, to prepare the ground for further suggestions that God doesn't have human interests at heart. It already suggests that God has denied some good things to humans, the fruit of any tree in the garden.

Well, of course, the woman knows that this is not the case. That she and her husband may, in fact, eat from the trees in the garden. And we understand that she was created, according to Genesis 2, after the Lord had told Adam this.

So, Adam must have told her this. That's the most likely scenario, I think. And so she repeats it faithfully. She then responds further, and some have seen her next statement as an unwarranted addition to what God originally said.

She repeats the command about the tree in the middle of the garden that there is this one tree that we may not eat of its fruit. And then she adds, and you must not touch it. The classic view, in fact, is the view that I have a book in process for a publication called *Wind and Eve's Sin*, addressing this issue.

Because the classic view from ancient interpreters to modern is almost universal, the woman is adding to what God said, and so she's already going astray. My dear mentor, Meredith Klein, from whom I learned so much, took this view.

I heard this when I attended his lectures as a student, and I thought, well, yeah, that makes sense. And it does seem to make sense. But there are problems with it, which we're going to look at here.

But the problem is that this is where faith and sin and their relationship come in. Because if she's adding to what God has said, she's already in sin. That's the problem here.

So, such an addition, putting words into God's mouth that he didn't speak, would be an act of sin. It would be a misrepresentation of what God said. There's nothing in the Bible at all that would encourage us to think that.

Let me explore that with you a little bit. Go through this and then comment on it more. Her addition is best understood as a consequence of the laconic nature of the previous narrative.

So, Genesis 2 does not inform us that God prohibited even touching the forbidden tree. But apparently, he did because we now receive that information from the woman who's not yet in a state of sin and is not yet a liar. Her statement supplies data not contained in the earlier account.

Now, just to address this a little bit more. If she is putting words into God's mouth that he didn't say, she is stating that which is not true. She is a liar, which means automatically, she's in sin.

And there's no way of excusing it, I think, by saying, well, maybe she misremembered what Adam told her. Or maybe she's adding to it to fortify the case. Because if either of those things is true, she's still in sin.

She's saying that God said something he didn't say. That's not true. Whatever is not of faith is sin.

Faith, biblically, is amening God. It's amening his being and doing. And that's what the Hebrew verb means.

The first time it occurs is in Genesis 15.6, where you read, literally, Abraham, amen to God, amen the Lord. And he credited that to him as righteousness. Amen in Hebrew, amen means "it is so."

The verb means, the way I would translate it for this usage, is to affirm, to make it so, to own that it is so. And I would compare it to a sermon. Somebody's in a congregation hearing a sermon.

And the preacher says something at one point. Someone in the congregation says amen. What does that mean? That means, at that moment, that person completely owns and embraces and agrees with what the preacher has just said.

That's what you and I do when we come to faith in Christ. We see who Christ is. We see what the claims are.

We see what he has done, and the claim is that he's done for us. If we go no further than that, we're no better than the devil. We're no better off than the devil.

He knows all that. He knows it at least as well as we do. But unlike us, he does not amen it.

He doesn't own it. He doesn't appropriate it for himself. But we do.

That's the meaning of faith. And so, as Paul says in Romans 14:23, whatever is not of faith is sin. Which, on that understanding, shows us how utterly hopeless our condition is.

Because if we are not amending God in everything, in every nanosecond, then we have no hope of salvation. So, of course, Christ has taken care of all that. And by amending him, we have his righteousness credited to us.

We have salvation. But for her to be putting words in God's mouth, as it were, is sin by definition. And there's no way around it.

Paul, of course, makes it very clear that this was not the case. Because in 1 Timothy 2, he says the woman being deceived became a sinner. And I think it's quite impossible to make the case that when she answers the serpent at this point, she's already deceived.

She's just answering the question. I don't think it will do either, as some older Jewish interpreters would have it, that Adam misinformed her. That, indeed, he didn't even trust her.

He wasn't sure that she could be relied on. So, he made it seem as though God's restrictions were even heavier than they really were. Because then he's in sin.

So, there's no way around it. Well, if that's all true, then how do we explain her addition? And the addition, I believe, is explained by the word laconic that we've just used. The Lord, in his providence, is the way he gave and arranged this scripture through Moses.

He gives us some information in Genesis 2:17. He gives us more through the woman. So, he gives us some in the third-person narrative in Genesis 2. He gives us more through the first person in Genesis 3. This happens again in Genesis. In Genesis 12, for instance, Abram and Sarah go down to Egypt.

And he says, you know what? You're a good-looking woman. They're going to see you. They're going to kill me and take you.

So, tell them you're my sister. We later learn that she is his half-sister. So, it's not entirely a lie.

But, you know, the purpose is to mislead. Later, in Genesis 20, they enter the kingdom of Abimelech and Gerar. And he tells her to do the same thing.

And Abimelech takes her. He has no relations with her yet. But God warns him in a dream.

You can't have her because she's his wife. And Abimelech then, the next day, reproaches Abraham with this. And says, why did you do this? You know, we could have committed a great sin.

Abram says, well, I said to myself, I don't know if there's any fear of God in this place. And moreover, wherever we have gone, wherever we have gone, I've told her, this is how you can show you love me. Tell them you're my sister.

Well, that's the first time we learned of that. How many times did that happen? We don't know. But in Genesis 12, we get it in the third-person narrative.

In Genesis 20, we get the first-person account that adds the information. One more case in Genesis. All of God's dealings with Abraham.

You can take them, Genesis 12 through 22. We see all of the dealings. When God reaffirms that covenant in Genesis 26:5 with Isaac, he says, I'm doing this because Abraham obeyed all of my laws and requirements and decrees and statutes.

Well, what were those? We don't know. We're not told any of that. He had circumcision in Genesis 17.

The Lord said, walk before me and be blameless. But we don't have all those other things. They are terms that later appear in the Mosaic covenant.

So, I think it's a good bet that whatever they were, they reappear in the Mosaic covenant with a lot more added to them. But we don't know what they were. But again, you have this third-person narrative.

And later, the Lord himself in the first person, giving you the supplemental data. So, this is just the way history is written. It's laconic.

And in these cases, the Lord provides more information later. The same is true, incidentally, of Paul's Damascus Road encounter in Acts, reported by Luke in the third person. And then Paul's own accounts in Acts 22 and 26.

So, this is, I think, the best understanding of the woman's response. She's not yet in sin. She's not going astray.

She's not overstating what the Lord said. She's just telling the truth. So, there we have it.

That's her response. Well, what does the serpent say in return? Well, he says, you will not surely die. So, he's not now just kind of obliquely addressing the issue and kind of raising doubts.

He's coming flat out and saying, no, you're not going to die. God said that, but it's not true. Because why? When you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you'll be like God, knowing, literally knowers of, good and evil.

Well, there are a number of things in this reply by the serpent. First of all, his address is in the second plural. You, plural, will be knowers, plural of good and evil.

You, plural, will not die, and so on. So, this may enhance the attractiveness by including the woman's husband, indicating that, you know what? You do this. You don't have to be alone in it.

Your husband can do it, too. You'll both benefit from this. It certainly shows, though, that he has in mind bringing both of them down because he's talking in terms of the two of them.

So, there's that. There's also the term Elohim and the participle knowers. Elohim, that's normally translated, always translated God in this passage, in this statement.

But it could include angels. Some people think that that's the case in Genesis 1.26. Let us make man in our image. God says that.

Although, I think we'd have to say that, although arguably angels are also created in God's image, angels didn't have a hand in creating humans, so they let us probably has to be seen either as a royal plural or an indication of the triune nature of God because he's making people in God's image, not the image of angels directly. But anyway, the possibility here is that Elohim could include angels. Incidentally, there is one place in the Bible where indisputably, clearly, Elohim refers to angels and God and angels, and that's in Genesis 35.7, where the reflection is back on Jacob's experience; it's where he saw God and angels, and the ladder and all the rest of it.

Genesis 35.7, you read it, and you'll read that that's the place where God revealed himself to Jacob, but the Hebrew says it's where Elohim revealed themselves, which has got, that's referring back to God and the angels. So, there is that one place where clearly, although for some enigmatic reason, I don't know why translators don't translate it that way, but that's what it means. So, Elohim here could mean you'll be like God and angels, you'll be like heavenly beings.

The reference for knowers then becomes ambiguous, too. It could mean you're going to be like Elohim, God, and angels, who are knowers of good and evil, or it could

mean you're going to be knowers of good and evil, as are God and the angels. The bottom line is pretty much the same in either case.

But that's a temptation, and there is a possibility also that the combination good and evil are what's called a merism or a merismus, meaning everything, in fact. You'll be like God, and you'll be omniscient. Well, so then, what is the consequence? We know what the consequence is.

In one brief verse, when the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good and so on, and it was desirable, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Okay, there's a lot to talk about here too.

And again, it's a matter of these early statements telling you a lot and sometimes not telling you everything you'd want them to tell you. So, let me just add something here parenthetically. When we read this account, you get the impression that the woman's a real pushover.

You know, the serpent just had a brief conversation with her, and that's all it took. I have found reading C.S. Lewis very intriguing, especially with regard to this and other matters. A colleague of mine at the seminary, David Wells, has referred to C.S. Lewis as the 13th apostle, which I think is a little exaggerated, and he's, of course, a little tongue-in-cheek about that, but there's something to it.

Lewis had a lot of insight. He wrote a space trilogy, the second novel of which is *Perelandra*. In that novel, you have a Venusian Adam and Eve, and you have someone there who is Satan in the body of an earth physicist who's traveled there, and he's trying to tempt the woman.

Venus, in this novel, is a water planet. You know now, of course, that's not true, but it's a watery planet, has a lot of floating islands, and there is a mainland. But there, God has one thing that he tells the Venusian Adam and Eve they may not do, and that is they may not go to the mainland.

While the Satan in the body of the human physicist tries to persuade her that God actually wants her to go to the mainland, he wants her to disobey. This will be a step in her growth. It'll be good for her, and it'll be good for her husband.

And he takes days and days to try to wear her down. He almost succeeds, but he doesn't. But that reveals something, I think.

This is a very concise narrative in Genesis 3. We don't know how long the serpent talked with the woman. We don't know how long it took for him to bring her to this point. But again, that's the laconic nature of the narrative.

Okay, so, but what about this statement that we read here about the fall? Well, the woman saw that the tree was good, and she took it. So, the first human sin begins with what John would later call the lust of the eyes. It is important to understand that the sin lay not in the object but in the disobedience that moved the woman and then the man to take it.

This sequence of words occurs later in a couple of very notable cases. Seeing that something is good and then taking it. In Genesis 6, the sons of God, about whom we'll talk later, different schools of thought on who they might have been, although the majority view throughout history has been that they were fallen angels, but we'll look at all that.

Whoever they were, they saw that the daughters of men were good, the same word that you find in Genesis 3. It's usually translated as beautiful. They married, but again, they used the same verb that is used in Genesis 3; they took any of them they chose. So, seeing that it's good, you take it.

And whoever these sons of God were, they seem to have been bad actors. So, this is not a good thing. Genesis 7, very clearly, Achan, the same sort of thing.

He confesses that he saw in Jericho a beautiful or good, the same adjective as in Genesis 3, a Babylonian robe and silver and gold, and then he took them. So this clearly, with these three examples, is an Old Testament way of portraying a sinful taking. And again, in the case of the woman here, it's not that knowledge of good and evil necessarily is a bad thing, but it was forbidden, and she was transgressing by taking it.

Well, was she alone when all this was going down? The second sentence presents us with a real ambiguity. She also gave some to her husband. Who was with her, as the NIV translates it and other translations, many of them do the same.

Well, the English poet John Milton, in his epic *Paradise Lost*, chose or sought to justify the ways of God to man, which might seem like a tall order, but he thought he was up to it. Anyway, he portrayed the serpent as one who craftily waited until he was alone before attempting a seduction. This has been a traditional view, the thinking being that militarily if you're attacking some enemy force, you want to pick the weak link in the defense, you want to pick the weak chink in the armor, and try to make your inroad there.

Now, that may be true, or it may not be true; we can't tell that from the text. And so that's just, again, a matter. It's important to recognize the limits of the evidence. The narrative says she gave some to her husband, who was with her, but the Hebrew simply says to her husband, who was with her.



Now that could indicate immediate presence, but it doesn't have to. Later on in the same chapter, Adam refers to Eve as the woman you put here with me, which refers back to the creation of the woman as his help me. And the Hebrew there is literally the woman you gave or put with me.

The preposition in Genesis 3.6, where she gave some to her husband with her, is the preposition *im* in Hebrew. The preposition later, the woman you put here with me, is *imad*, which is really two prepositions fused into one. *Im* means with, and *ad* is directional, so it suggests the woman you put here with me as a close companion, something like that.

Luther translated it this way, with the German verb *zugesellt*, you put her here as a companion for me. Earlier, Jerome used the Latin word *socia*, which again is a companion, someone for my society. And so, if we look at the latter case first, it implies an even closer contact, but we're not going to say, I think, that it requires us to think that Adam is telling the Lord, she was with me every second.

You put her here with me, and she was with me here every second. I mean, who knows how long they were in the garden before the serpent came? Who knows that they weren't apart at different times, doing different things in the garden? I say my wife lives with me. Well, is my wife living now? Yes.

Is she with me now? No. So, there's nothing mysterious about the Hebrew preposition. It's a preposition in a different language, but it basically means the same thing.

So, that doesn't necessarily mean that she was with him all the time, and in the present case, it doesn't necessarily mean that he was with her when he saw this all taking place. Okay, so what is possible? Well, certainly, it's possible that he was with her at the very moment, or it's possible that he was with her afterward, and she gave the fruit to him. It's possible that he was generally with her, but not at the moment of her temptation, and so, again, she gave it to him later.

I think another possibility, I haven't listed here, but it's in my first volume, is that now that she gave it to him and he took it, he was with her in sin, a partner in crime, if you will. So, and it's worth noting, too, although this is more of a circumstantial thing, circumstantial piece of evidence, when the Lord does come and rebuke them, he pretty clearly rebukes them for the things they did or didn't do, and he does not rebuke Adam for just standing by and watching his wife drift off into covenant disobedience or into sin, and you would think that that was a pretty big issue, and he might have mentioned it if that had been the issue. But the truth is, well, you paid heed to the voice of your wife.

You did what she said to do, and we'll talk about that, too. So, there's, and again, later in the Bible, Adam is never accused of that, rebuked for that, reproached for it. So, it's not a very sustainable position.

I'm not sure why some people want to see it that way, but it's really not possible to maintain. In a court of law, this sort of evidence would not stand. So I don't think it should stand in scholarship, either.

Well, what about the consequences of the fall, then? Consequences for human relations. Well, I think the nature of Adam's response has been understood for a long time. He says to the Lord, the woman you put here with me, she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.

Well, what does that suggest? It might even suggest, you know what? I didn't know where this fruit came from, but I took it, and now look at the fix I'm in. But even more, he's basically finding fault with God. He's saying, you know what? You gave me this woman, and look what happened.

As though he's just kind of innocent, or he couldn't help falling into the sin that he fell into. It certainly is an avoidance of responsibility. It's pretty selfish.

And it's not true, the reality, because, after all, he did make a choice. We know he made a choice because he ate the fruit. Well, what about the woman's response to God? The serpent deceived me, and I ate.

Now, that is a much better answer because that's exactly what happened. And it's not as though she's making an excuse. Oh, well, you know, somehow I just didn't put it all together.

The serpent deceived me. Because Paul says this, too, later, he says that she was, in fact, deceived.

And could I just comment on this a little bit? You know, we're told not to let our hearts be hardened by the deceptiveness of sin. The nature of sin, apart from the fact that it is not of faith, is not amending God; it's not in line with God.

The nature of sin is that it is a lie. It's deceptive. In other words, you and I, to the extent that we get led into sin anyhow, and our own thoughts lead us into sin, in some way, the sin has to be looking good to us.

It has to be looking like it gets us something good. It turns out, you know, we think it's fruit. It turns out to be ashes in our mouths.

But it looks good. And that's why it works because we are made for what is good.

And so, the enemy, if he's tempting us, will try to make that which is bad look good. And that's why it's deceptive. But that's what sin is.

It doesn't excuse us, but I think it explains something about sin. And that's what happened with her. He made it look good.

Well, what is the consequence here? There's a consequence that I think they in no way anticipated. And that is, the woman accepted the serpent's Torah. Let's understand that's really what's going on here.

He's saying to do something. He's giving reasons for it. And she does it.

The man follows her Torah. He pays heed to the voice of his wife. He does what she says to do.

That's what God reproaches him with. And so the woman is treating the serpent in effect as her suzerain. She's substituting his Torah, his law, his counsel, for what the Lord had said.

And Adam is doing the same thing. He's treating his wife's word, which is what we're told. And incidentally, the fact that the Lord says, you paid heed to the voice of your wife, that suggests, to me at least, that Adam was not present when it happened, when the serpent tempted her, because he heard about this from his wife.

And he followed what she said to do. And so, in both cases, and this Hebrew idiom, to pay heed to the voice, in Hebrew, is something that shows up a lot later, and it becomes clear that this is a covenant sort of idiom. When you pay heed to somebody's voice, you are treating them as the authority over you.

In the covenant terms, it's the Lord, and Israel is supposed to pay heed to his voice. Well, in this case, Adam paid heed to his wife's voice. He treats her as though she were his lawgiver.

The idiom is not used with regard to the woman, but she clearly does the same thing. So, they both effectively do this. They both effectively follow the counsel of the serpent.

She directly, and him through her. That is Adam through her. By doing that, they are effectively taking the serpent on as a substitute suzerain.

They're following his Torah, not the Lord's. They're rejecting the Lord's Torah. They're not abstaining from the fruit.

They're taking it. And what does that do? That introduces him, and I would say his angels, into the world. And that's why he becomes, with a small s, the suzerain of this world.

Or as Paul puts it in 2 Corinthians, he becomes the God of this world with a small g. God, of course, is still the capital S suzerain. He's still the capital G God over the world. But he has allowed this to take place.

And this is the legal consequence of their transgression. And so this is what we're all stuck with because of what they've done. And we still, of course, we've all sinned and fallen short of the Lord's glory.

So, we have no excuse. But this is the background to it. This is what has led to this.

And in his wisdom, God allows this to happen and go on for a long time until the Lord finally returns and put an end to all of it. Well, the sinfulness of human beings, because although we are in that condition and although we are under the small g God of this world, everybody in the world is, whether they believe in God or the devil or not, doesn't matter. And, of course, in Christ, we now are able to live effectively for our God and our suzerain.

And so that doesn't change the fact that the devil, Satan, is still the small g God over the whole world under God and with his permission. It has consequences. So we are still going to carry out those mandates.

We are obviously still being fruitful and multiplying. The world's population is always increasing. We're ruling over the earth.

We're subduing things, obviously, and in a sinful manner so that we are damaging the planet, even destroying it. When John wrote Revelation 11, 18, the time came for destroying those who destroyed the earth. I think it would have been hard.

One would have been hard put in John's day to look around and say human beings are destroying the earth. But we know now that that's a real possibility. It was foreshadowed also foreseen in Isaiah 24, which is an eschatological poem where we read the earth lies polluted under its inhabitants.

So, human beings continue what is sometimes called the cultural mandate, ruling, and subduing, but in a sinful way, out of step with the spirit and destroying the earth. Well, what is God's response to this situation? He comes, and he begins with judgments. Incidentally, we've talked about covenant mediator prophets and covenant lawsuit prophets.

Adam, we've argued, is a covenant lawsuit covenant mediator prophet. He mediates this Adamic covenant. Under the Mosaic covenant, there were covenant lawsuit prophets.

The ones we think of are Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Michael, and Minor Prophets. Also, there are those who didn't write, like Micaiah, Elijah, and Elisha. In this situation, a covenant has been broken, and a lawsuit has to be brought.

But the only humans around are the vassals who have broken the covenant. In fact, one of them, shall we say, Adam, was the mediator of the covenant. So, if there's going to be a covenant lawsuit brought, the Lord has to bring it.

And he must bring it. He will be true to himself. And so, he does.

And so, the Lord himself is the first covenant lawsuit prophet if you will. And I suspect then that what you have here is the Son coming in judgment as he will eschatologically come in judgment. And I'll mention this here.

I don't know that we'll go into it much later, but I've written about this in several places. What is typically translated in Genesis 3, 8, and the following, you read that the Lord came in the cool of the day. Now, on extra-biblical evidence from Akkadian, which is the language of Assyria and Babylon, there's a good case to be made that that word day, Yom in Hebrew, as in Yom Kippur, the day of atonement.

There's another Hebrew Yom, which means storm. And you can actually find this in Holladay's Hebrew dictionary. And so, the translation I have argued should be in the wind of the storm, not in the cool of the day.

And I think this resolves what has seemed for 2,000 years and more, a very peculiar Hebrew expression. And the wind of the day, the cool of the day, something like that, has just, I think, been a best guess at what it is. But this is one of those cases, I believe, where extra-biblical cognate language evidence helps clear something up.

But so, we're going to pause because the Lord is coming in his first storm, theophany, which is the way he shows up after the fall. And people are afraid after the fall. That was never the case before.

God spoke to the man and the woman before the fall. There was no fear. He shows up in the garden after the fall.

Adam is afraid. He was afraid because he was naked, but as Calvin suggested, there's probably more than just physical nakedness going on here. There's spiritual fear, which I think is true.

And incidentally, that is the problem that continues. Whenever the Lord shows up in something of his glory in the Old Testament, there's fear. Jesus' incarnation, the Son of God's incarnation, is the first step towards solving that problem because Jesus can say he who sees me sees the Father.

And they see his glory when he does miracles, but they're not afraid of him. Nonetheless, when he appears to John in a glorious way on Patmos, John, who I think was the beloved disciple who was close to Jesus, reclined in his bosom and had the Holy Spirit in him at that point. Yet when the Son appears in his glory, he falls down like a dead man.

And I think if the Lord appeared this way in our presence, we'd do the same, even though we have the Spirit in us, because it's still the sinfulness of the flesh that reacts in fear to the holiness of God. It's not a matter of power; it's a matter of holiness. Anyway, the Lord here in Genesis 3 is bringing the first covenant lawsuit, and he brings the first part of the curse.

He curses the serpent first. The serpent's the instigator of all this. He says, you're cursed above all the livestock and all the wild animals.

Well, this does indicate that the animals, too, are under a curse and suggests that the whole creation is under a curse. And so, as Paul says later in Romans 8, the creation was subjected to frustration. The creation is prevented from being what it could be, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, namely God, in the hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God, which is certainly going to happen.

Well, the second part of the curse is that the serpent will crawl on his belly and eat dust all the days of his life. The serpent figure remains a mystery. Later in Revelation 12:9, he is referred to as that ancient serpent called the devil and Satan, a great dragon.

So, somehow, this serpent is the devil, whether he took possession of a snake and used it, or whether, who knows, that's a mystery. But, physically, the crawling of serpents on the ground is taken as a symbol of judgment on the serpent. Milton portrays the serpent as being able to balance on its tail, coiling and speaking to the woman.

Very cleverly, he suggests that the fact that the serpent can speak makes the woman think because the serpent says, hey, you know what, I ate that fruit, and look, now I can talk. So, the woman thinks, wow, if that'll do that for this snake, what's it going to do for me? So, very clever stuff. We can't know all of that, of course, but that's his poetry, and he had every right to do that, and it's great reading, whether it's actually the way it happened or not.

And so, but that's the curse on the serpent. Well, the third part of the curse, though, is what is called the protevangelium, the first statement of the gospel. I'm going to put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers.

He will crush your head. You will strike his heel. And we'll talk about the verbs used there.

I'll mention it right now because the translation here, crush and strike, would make you think two different verbs are used, but it's really the same verb in Hebrew, and so that really indicates that in both cases, those are going to be sort of mortal blows and the son does indeed die. He lays down his life, but, of course, he has the authority to take it up again. But this is foreshadowing all of that.

And so, in Hebrews 2:14 indicates this victory, too. Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity, that is Jesus so that by his death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil. I think this idea, this conflict, and this supremacy of the son shows up in Psalm 110 in a way that I'm not aware anyone has tried to portray, but I have written about this also in volume one.

This psalm, which has long been understood to be a messianic psalm, the son here, the Lord said to my Lord, I'll put the nations as a footstool under your feet, you read that he will judge the nations, heaping up the dead, and the son and then here again, the NIV, this is a normal sort of translation for this, crushing the rulers of the whole earth, well, the line actually reads in Hebrew, he will crush the head over the great earth. Well, the head over the earth that's going to get crushed is the God of this world, the God according to 2 Corinthians 4:4, which is Satan, the devil, and the Messiah is indeed going to crush his head, and the verb used for crush there is machatz in Hebrew, the verb used in Genesis 3 is shuph, they amount to the same thing, the fact that the verbs are different, you should know, doesn't make a difference at all to this argument, because in ancient Near Eastern stock phrasing, different verbs can be used sometimes, but you realize the phrase is telling you the same basic thing, and I think that's what's going on here. So, Psalm 110 is indeed messianic, and it expresses something toward the end that I don't think has been actually recognized, but it is forecasting the victory of the seed of the woman and the fulfillment of this prophecy.

Well, what about the curses on the man and the woman? Because there are things going on here, too; it's not just the serpent. Well, the woman is going to have increased pains in childbearing. Now, we know that that's not fun; we know that, indeed, childbearing can sometimes lead to the death of the mother, but the good thing about this is that there will be childbearing, so this is indicating immediately that although the Lord is bringing judgment on them for what they've done, he is not that day putting them to death, he is not putting an end to them, which incidentally

in the context of these early chapters makes it clear that day doesn't have to mean 24 hours.

On the day that you do this, you will die; the Lord didn't back out of that or compromise on it, a day meaning an extended period of time as we know. I mean, even the summary of the creation account says this is the account of these things on the day the Lord made them, and you've already had six days, so the day can be used in different ways that term, but the Lord's going to be with painful labor, and there is this other curse, yes, there is this other curse which we read in Genesis 3:16 that your desire will be for your husband, but he will rule over you. The term desire shows up in Genesis 4 and in the Song of Songs chapter 7. The woman's desire in Genesis 3 will be for her husband.

In Genesis 4, sin's desire is for Cain. In Song of Solomon, the lover's desire, in this case the man's desire is for his beloved. I think the best understanding of the flavor of this term is a desire for intimacy, and so what are we being told here? Well, the woman is going to want intimacy with her husband, and I think since we're in a fallen condition, we could understand there's going to be some inordinacy about it.

The woman's going to want maybe more intimacy or want it more powerfully than is healthy and balanced, and the other part of it, though, is that the husband is going to rule over her. The way I'd like to translate that is lorded over her because that would express more, again, the unbalanced nature of the thing. It doesn't necessarily mean that he was not her head before the fall.

Whether he was or not, you can't get there from this, but somehow, there's going to be a rule here over her, which might even be controlling. It's going to be inordinate. My wife, Maggie, told me this expression.

I don't know where she got it years ago, but she said that women are insatiable and men are obtuse, which isn't quite the same, but it's getting there. So, the relationship is going to have qualities that relate to qualities that would have had before, perhaps, but inordinately. It's not going to be healthy.

The verb for ruling over the woman is the Hebrew verb *mashal*. It's used of royal rule. It's used in Genesis 1 of the lights ruling the day and night.

In Genesis 4 of Cain's obligation to rule over sin. The different verb is used for the man and the woman ruling over the animals, but they're both used for the royal rule, so I don't think the verbal difference there matters a whole lot, and it's not pertinent really to what we're talking about anyway. And so, it would seem that we might, from the other usages, later usages, we might reckon that while Adam is going to rule over her in a royal manner and may be controlling, and as we said, this doesn't



apply a loss of previously equal authority, he may have been her head before, to use the term of Ephesians 5, and yet not controlled her.

But again, this early material leaves all this very, very ambiguous, and so I don't think you want to go making arguments about the nature of the marital relationship on the basis of the terminology used here. We do understand that in Christ and having the spirit dwell in us, it's got to be better than it was after the fall and before the giving of the spirit. Well, there's also a curse on the ground that's going to be as we read here.

So, the ground is cursed, which Adam was supposed to be working with in his ruling over the world, and his wife was also to be doing this. Now it's going to produce resistance, painful toil as a result, thorns and thistles, and then Adam himself will return to the ground, the dust from which he was taken. So, if we look at what's going on with these curses, I think this would be a good way of displaying what's going on.

There's a judgment on the field of endeavor, and there's a reduction of obtained or implied authority. So, the field of endeavor for the serpent is the fields. He's the most clever of all the beasts of the field.

He crawls on his belly. A reduction of obtained or implied authority, I say obtained because and applied in his case because he really hasn't just now made himself the god of this world with a small G. His head's going to be crushed. One of the women's fields of endeavor, at least, is pregnancy, which is going to be compromised and made difficult.

The man, he's supposedly ruling over the earth and the land and so on, but now it's going to produce resistance. So God's approach in each case is to produce futility or frustration over the individual in his or her characteristic or major field of endeavor and then to pronounce a reversal authority or reduction of authority for each one. This sort of curse is not unknown later in the Old Testament.

Dr. Stuart, my colleague at Gordon Conwell, has aptly termed this a futility curse. He writes about this quite a bit in his Exodus commentary, which I would highly recommend if you're looking for a good commentary on Exodus. Very thorough.

And so, but, some examples. In Deuteronomy 28, the Lord will send on you curses, confusion, rebuke, and everything you put your hand to until you're destroyed and come to sudden ruin because of the evil you've done in forsaking him. You'll be unsuccessful in everything you do.

Day after day, you'll be oppressed and robbed with no one to rescue you. Pretty obvious futility there. And a little later in Deuteronomy, just one verse later in fact, it's very clearly expressed.

You will be pledged to be married to a woman, but another will take her and ravage her. You will build a house, but you will not live in it. You will plant a vineyard but you will not even begin to enjoy its fruit.

And against those exemplars, Genesis 3 becomes clear. Your desire will be for your husband, but he will lord it over you. So it's a futility curse.

There's going to be that futility in the relationship, which, of course, was never meant to be there. Well, if we look at life further under the Adamic covenant after the fall, Cain and the non-elect line, The classic thinking on this, which certainly seems to be the way it's set up is that you have a line of elect good people, who are descendants of Seth through Adam, Seth and their descendants and then Cain and his descendants and so intriguingly it's from the Cainite line that we read about the development of cities and technology.

So, Cain is the first one to build a city. Cain's son Jabal lives in tents and raises livestock, so it is the beginning of animal husbandry, apparently. His brother Jubal is the beginning of music with instruments.

Tubal Cain, their half-brother, forges tools of bronze and iron. And so, Homo Faber there again a little Latin man the maker. Interestingly, it's the fallen line that seems to have come up with these things.

I would guess there is a reason for this. The Hebrew word for city comes from a root that seems to mean to be watchful. The analogous root in Aramaic is the plural is used for angels.

They are called the watchful ones. They don't sleep. They are always watchful.

I think the idea with a city is that people are on the watch. That is to say, you have walls, and you have watchmen. Cities in those days were built for security.

What is that saying? Cain builds a city. He feels insecure. We know he feels insecure.

He says the Lord, you are driving me away from here. Anyone who finds me will kill me. The Lord says no, I will take care of that.

He feels insecure. He builds a city. His offspring developed these technologies.

It looks like people are saying we are going to figure out ways to protect and take care of ourselves. We are going to invent things that make life interesting and diverting and so on. All of these things are produced under common grace.

They couldn't happen without God's help. This is not to say that if you have an iPhone, you are going to the devil. We are made to produce technologies.

God enables that. This seems to have arisen out of insecurity. The risk is that we develop powers and capabilities ourselves and feel like we don't need God.

That has been happening in our culture. This is what is going on in the early days of going here. There is also a lot of ego involved in this.

We see this in Lamech. He is the first one to marry two women. If you read the song of Lamech as it is called, I am not going to go into it a great deal, but there are ways in which that song violates Hebrew poetic conventions, which is a way of suggesting I believe poetically that Lamech himself is a rule-breaking person.

That would seem to be indicated by his taking more than one wife. He also says in this poem that God promised that Cain would be avenged seven times if he was killed, but if I am even bruised by someone, even by a boy, I will avenge myself 77 times. That seven times was something that God said.

Lamech is saying that is what God said. I will do even worse. Pretty egregious.

If you are ever preaching on that passage, or if you are ever preaching on this passage in Matthew 18:21, 22, it would be good to connect the two. In the Matthew passage, Peter comes to Jesus and says, well, if a brother sins against me, how many times should I forgive him? Seven times, which would seem seven, is the number of perfection, right? Seven days in the creation, and so on. Sabbath is the seventh day, and so on.

Jesus says, no, no, 77 times. That is a clear allusion to Cain. Whereas the spirit of Cain, anti-God, is I will be avenged 77 times.

The spirit of Christ says you forgive 77 times. It is an obvious allusion, and it is a good illustration. But anyway, that is what life is like under the line of Cain, and things get worse.

So sin increases, and we read in Genesis 6, when men began to increase in number on the earth, and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, as we noted before, the word is *to*, good, and they married, as we noted before, the word is *to*, taken, and it is later used of the rape of Dinah, so it doesn't have to mean marriage, but they took them, any ones they

chose, then the Lord said, my spirit will not, the way we're going to translate that is, my spirit will not remain with man forever, that is to say, my spirit will not continue to sustain a human being's life forever, his days will now be 120 years. And I think we see that play out; sometimes you'll hear about someone who's lived 140 years; that's a very rare thing, but 120 is pretty much the upper limit. The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them, they were the heroes of old, the men of renown.

There are a number of things in this passage, but we'll finish reading these verses. The Lord saw how great men's wickedness on the earth had become; every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time, and so the Lord was grieved that he had made men on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. I will make this comment: let's just not think that, okay, the Lord here was suddenly taken by surprise, and he said, what? They've become this bad? I'm so sorry I even made them.

I think we know in our own nature, in our own being, we can do something. We can even know that it's probably going to have some bad consequences, but it's right to do it anyway, and we can be grieved that we did it because of the bad consequences, and we may even have to do something to undo the bad consequences, but we're complex enough that that can be, and I think that's certainly true of God, too. He has feelings, but he overall knows what he's doing, and he's going to make things turn out the way he intends for them to turn out, so he brings this judgment.

I'm going to bring this judgment. I'm going to wipe them out. Well, what about the terms here? There are terms that are not all that; I think some of them are fairly clear, but they're not all that clear, and some of the things just are not clear at all and can't be settled in the passage.

The sons of God, Bnei Elohim. There are three different views on this. The sons of God, the fallen angel interpretation, which is the one we'll spend the time on, is the one that historically has been almost universally affirmed, although modern people have a bit of a problem with it.

Elsewhere in the Old Testament, that term is only used of angels. Of course, Genesis 6 could be an exception, but this is just collecting the data here. The Septuagint, the Septuagint, translates this as the angels of God.

The Targums, the Aramaic translations, give further information if you want to call it that. He even gives us the names of them. So, the Targums get a little imaginative at times here.

Genesis 6 does seem to set up a contrast between the sons of God and the daughters of men. So, the liberal scholar Von Rad, again, doesn't believe that any of this happened, but he does say there's clearly a contrast here. It's intentional.

You've got the sons of God, who are heavenly beings, and the daughters of men, who are human beings. And there are kindred phrases in some ancient Near Eastern materials. Well, what about this? Can angels come and have sexual relations with human women? We do know that angels can do certain physical things.

They appear as men in Genesis 18. There, you have three men who appear before Abram's tent. One of them, we learn later, is the Lord.

Two of them are angels who go off to warn Lot of the coming judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah. When those two go, they eat what Lot gives them, as indeed the Lord and the angels ate what Abraham gave them. So, they look like men.

They can do physical things like eating food. Psalm 78 refers to food from heaven as the bread of the mighty ones, but that is poetry, after all. So I'm not sure we make a lot of that.

It's worth noting that the men of Sodom and Gomorrah when they see these men, who we know are angels, want the cities to empty themselves out. All the men, young and old, come to have sex. They want to know them.

They want to have sex with them. That's not to say that they could, but it does indicate that they look like men and seem to be objects of sexual desire. The enigmatic passage in 1 Corinthians 11 the man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake; therefore, the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head because of the angels.

Well, what does that mean? It could mean if a woman should have a symbol of authority on her head, you don't want to offend the angels by not doing that. Or it could mean a symbol of authority makes it clear that the women are taken, and so the angels aren't tempted to fall and try to take them. Totally unclear what that means, I think, but it's a passage that might be looked at in connection with this.

New Testament passages seem to refer to Genesis 6 in this sense. In 2 Peter, if God did not spare angels when they sinned but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment, and this is an interesting concept. You may remember that when Jesus is going to cast the demons out of the gathering demoniac, they beg him, don't send us into the abyss, which might be this.

Now, since there are a lot of demons around, Jesus ministers to people who have them. Paul, even in 1 Timothy 4, warns Timothy against the doctrine of demons in

the church. 1 Corinthians 10:20, he says the pagans offer their sacrifices to demons, so demons are around, so not all demons were put into the abyss or gloomy dungeons or whatever.

So, this seems to be talking about some group of fallen angels that must have done something very egregious and were put into these holding pens for eternal judgment, and it sounds as though the demons that Jesus cast out of the pigs didn't want this to happen to them, and so they asked Jesus not to send them to the abyss. So, it's interesting, and he sends them into the pigs, and then what? They kill the pigs. Well, where do they go after that? Maybe their thinking is we'll kill the pigs, then we're out, and we're free to bother other people.

Maybe Jesus sent them to the abyss anyway. Who knows? But it's an interesting possible connection there. But anyway, he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood, and he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and he rescued Lot and so on. So you have a sequence of events here, the flood and then Sodom and Gomorrah, which might help us to understand who these angels are.

It becomes even clearer, I think, in Jude, where we read that the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home, these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great day. So this would seem to be Jude's way of putting what we read in 2 Peter. He sent them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment.

Okay, so God did this. He put them in darkness, bound with chains for judgment on the great day. And then, in a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion.

Now, as we've said, these fallen angels are not demons. They're not demons in general since they're still around and active. But in a similar way, the Greek says, in a manner like these, the men of Sodom and Gomorrah gave themselves up to homosexuality, abandoning their proper place.

And so, the these is teutois there, and it's a masculine plural. So, the men of Sodom and Gomorrah abandoning their proper place, if you will, and giving them up to improper sexual, crossing a sexual boundary and going for homosexuality, they were doing so in a manner like these. Well, who were the these? The theme, that third masculine plural, refers back to the fallen angels.

So that would suggest that, okay, like the men of Sodom and Gomorrah who transgressed a sexual boundary and went into homosexual desire, like them, these fallen angels transgressed a boundary and went into desire for human women. And both are sexually related sins—very intriguing passage.

It's one of those cases where knowing the original language and working with it helps you to avoid it and helps you to see things that a translation wouldn't necessarily reveal. And then after saying that, I have to say that our translations really are quite good, and everything that's really essential to know, you know. Whether you understand this business about, you know, the antecedent of two toys or not, you can be saved and not understand that, right? So the important thing is that most of it comes through very clearly, but sometimes translators make choices that obscure things.

Thankfully, those are not things that are essential to our salvation. But what about arguments against this fallen angel interpretation? There's no biblical evidence to support marriage between angels and humans or other angels. Well, first of all, we understood that that verb doesn't necessarily mean marriage, but we'll let that go.

People will often refer to what Jesus says about angels, and they give him this: those Sadducees who didn't believe in a resurrection pose this problem to Jesus, which they think is insurmountable. So, you have this woman here who's had all these husbands, all these brothers, excuse me, all these brothers, and so then they raise the question, well, okay, she's had all of the brothers, at the resurrection, whose wife will she be? Since all of them had her. All of them were married to her.

And Jesus replies you are in error because you don't know the scriptures or the power of God. At the resurrection, people will neither marry nor be given in marriage. They will be like the angels in heaven. Okay, well, let's just stop and not look at what Garrett says, but let's just try to think of this rationally here, okay? Jesus is talking about the angels in heaven, and he's talking about what they do and what they don't do.

Genesis 6, if the angelic interpretation is right, is talking about fallen angels. Jesus is not talking about fallen angels, and he's not talking about what angels could be capable of doing. He's only talking about holy angels, angels in heaven, and about what they do and do not do.

Not what they might be able to do. So, these actually have no connection whatsoever. This is not a counterexample to the angelic understanding of Genesis 6. I'm not insisting on the angelic interpretation, although I think it's right, but I'm perfectly happy to be persuaded otherwise, if someone can bring the evidence.

I'm just saying the evidence points that way, and what Jesus says in this case is nothing against it, and it's just important to think clearly and understand that. Well, my former colleague, Dwayne Garrett, in this book, *Angels and the New Spirituality*, which is another book I'd highly recommend. When I got interested in angels and demons and all that, I thought I might write a book about it.

Then I read his book, and I said, well, he said everything I would think of saying, so that's the book I don't have to write. That's great, and it's a really good book. But he says about this matter, Genesis 6, in short, the ancient Hebrew would take this to mean that angelic beings somehow took on corporeal form as males and had sexual relations with women, and this is how the ancient Jewish interpreters all took it.

This does not really contradict the teaching of Jesus that angels do not marry, and thus are presumably without gender, since clearly what the angels do here is illicit and represents an abandoning of their proper place. I suspect that the real reason modern people reject this interpretation is that they just find it too far-fetched, and I think that's a very fair statement. Well, other arguments against this have been, well, wait, why did God punish humanity for something the angels had done? So, Walter Kaiser, Old Testament scholar, formerly president of Gordon Conwell, said in his book *Hard Sayings of the Old Testament*, he says, well, if the B'nai Elohim were angels, then God should have flooded heaven, not the earth.

The culprits came from above. The women seem to have been doing nothing except being beautiful. Well, but, you know, rhetorically, that's very nice, but the fact is the passage tells us why God brought the flood, and it's because of the increase of human wickedness.

And so, I think the angelic view would entail this sort of understanding. Namely, the increase in human sin was so bad that it became possible for such a thing to happen. Angelic beings, fallen, evil, took on the form of men and did what they wanted.

This may present a parallel to what we find happening toward the end, when because of the increase of evil, God sends a powerful delusion on them to use the term of 2 Thessalonians and lets them believe the lie because they don't want the truth. In that kind of global cultural context, and now it's global or will be, it will be possible for an Antichrist to come, and his prophet, and do signs and wonders, and the people will be in awe of it, and they'll think it's God because they won't have the spiritual wherewithal to understand that it's the works of the devil. And I think you see an early version of that in Genesis 6. That would make perfectly good sense.

It's not proof, but it would be parallel if the angelic fallen angel understanding is correct. Well, just to cite another argument against the angelic view, if you ever read Calvin's Institute, I recommend it. It's great stuff. His commentaries are very good; one doesn't agree with everyone on everything, of course, but in this case, he says, well, this ancient figment concerning the intercourse of angels with women is abundantly refuted by its own absurdity, and it is surprising that learned men should formerly have been fascinated by ravings so gross and prodigious. Which is kind of fun to read, but actually, you know, if you look at that too seriously, you begin to think, well, wait a minute, raising someone from the dead or healing someone from



some epilepsy by just, you know, praying, who could believe that? That seems equally ridiculous, so that cannot be the criterion, you know, the limits that modern reason would set for God's behavior or the behavior of evil spirits. That's hardly the right way to go about trying to define the parameters of what those beings might do.

So, but that's Calvin. The other interpretation I'll just mention briefly in wrapping this up is the royal interpretation. This was taught by Meredith Klein when I was a student, and at the time, I thought, yeah, well, that makes sense.

The royal interpretation is that the sons of God are ancient Near Eastern kings who took as many women as they wanted; they certainly did that, and it's true that they sometimes, one would call himself a divine offspring. In Egypt, the pharaoh was always divine offspring. He was the incarnation of the sun god.

In Mesopotamia, some kings claimed to be divine offspring, but others did not. But the thing is that ancient Near Eastern kings in no ancient Near Eastern inscription are ancient Near Eastern kings or any group of them referred to as sons of a god or god. So, speaking strictly about the term, that's just not the way it's used.

There's no extra-biblical evidence for that. So, I don't think it's a good argument. The Sethite interpretation is that the sons of God are descendants of Seth, and they committed the sin of marrying daughters from the line of Cain.

And this sounds a bit like reading back into this situation of something that is later showing up in the Mosaic Law. In the Mosaic Law, they are not to marry Cainanites. But there's nothing at this point in the Bible that says that godly men, shall we say, Sethites, might not marry Cainites, daughters of Cain.

In any case, as even von Raad suggested, there seems to be a pretty deliberate contrast here between sons of God and daughters of men. Why the Cainite daughters should be called daughters of men rather than daughters of Cain that's a little hard to see. So, the majority view has been that the sons of God are fallen angels, and I think that's where most of the evidence points.

But thankfully, our salvation doesn't depend on our view of this issue. So that will wrap this up, and we'll move on to talk about the Noahic Covenant next.

This is Dr. Jeffrey Niehaus in his teaching on Biblical Theology. This is session 3, The Adamic Covenant after the Fall.