# Dr. Jeffrey Niehaus, Biblical Theology, Session 1, The Adamic Covenant, Part 1 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

## 1. Abstract of Niehaus, Biblical Theology, Session 1, The Adamic Covenant, Part 1, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

**Dr. Jeffrey Niehaus's "Biblical Theology, Session 1" explores the concept of the Adamic Covenant within the broader framework of biblical covenants.** The lecture critiques traditional "covenant theology" and alternative modern views, arguing for the existence of an Adamic Covenant based on its structural parallels to ancient Near Eastern treaties. **Niehaus proposes that the Adamic and Noahic covenants together form a "common grace" legal package, distinct from the subsequent "special grace" covenants like the Abrahamic and Mosaic.** He examines biblical evidence for the Adamic Covenant in the Old and New Testaments, including the creation account's structure and the role of Adam as a potential covenant mediator, paralleling Christ as the second Adam. **The session also discusses the nature of humanity as created in God's image and different interpretations of the creation "days" in Genesis 1, culminating in Niehaus's "major paradigm" of God working through the Spirit and the Word to establish covenants and temples.**

## 2. 17 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Niehaus, Biblical Theology, Session 1 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Theology → Biblical Theology - Niehaus).

# 3. Briefing Document: Niehaus, Biblical Theology, Session 1, The Adamic Covenant, Part 1

**Briefing Document: Dr. Jeffrey Niehaus on the Adamic Covenant (Biblical Theology, Session 1)**

This briefing document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Jeffrey Niehaus in the first session of his Biblical Theology series, focusing on the Adamic Covenant. Niehaus examines various proposed covenant schemes, critiques them based on ancient Near Eastern covenant practices, and presents his arguments for the existence and nature of the Adamic Covenant. He also delves into the anthropology of the covenant, specifically the creation of humanity in God's image, and offers a "major paradigm" for understanding God's work throughout biblical history.

**I. Critique of Traditional Covenant Theology:**

- Niehaus begins by outlining the classic 17th-century "covenant theology," which posits an "Adamic covenant" as a "covenant of works" and all subsequent covenants as a "covenant of grace."
- **Quote:** "The classic thing that is called covenant theology... is something that originated in the 17th century... But the idea is that you had an Adamic covenant, which was a covenant of works... After the fall, it's impossible for any human being to fulfill any of God's covenantal requirements completely, and so all of that has to be considered. Then, those covenants can exist and continue because of grace. And all of the biblical covenants after the Adamic covenant are lumped together and called a covenant of grace."
- Niehaus identifies two primary problems with this model:
- It lumps together distinct covenants (like the Noahic and Abrahamic) in a way inconsistent with ancient Near Eastern understanding of covenants.
- It incorrectly categorizes the Noahic covenant (a common grace covenant for all humanity) with the Abrahamic through the New Covenant (special grace covenants related to salvation).
- **Quote:** "in the ancient world, no one would have lumped together a bunch of related and yet different covenants and called them one covenant... The other problem with it is that the Noahic covenant is a common grace covenant, and it is, in fact, a renewal of the Adamic covenant, and yet the covenant of grace

scheme lumps it together with the Abrahamic through the new, which are all special grace covenants."

**II. Examination of Alternative Covenant Schemes:**

- Niehaus briefly reviews John Walton's proposal, which correctly distinguishes the Noahic covenant as common grace but still uses "covenant" as an umbrella term for multiple special grace covenants and omits an Adamic covenant.
- He also discusses the view of William D'umbrell and Scott Haefemann, who see all covenants as embodying one covenant relationship, which Niehaus argues blurs crucial distinctions between covenants (e.g., Mosaic vs. New).
- **Quote:** "If we say that all of these covenants embody one covenant relationship, well, let's consider the relationship a person had to the Lord under the Mosaic covenant... The relationship that we have with God under the new covenant is quite different, structurally and dynamically, from the relationship that a person under the Mosaic covenant had, for instance. So, it doesn't really make good sense to talk about one covenant relationship."

**III. Niehaus' Proposed Understanding of Covenants:**

- Niehaus proposes that the Adamic and Noahic covenants are both "common grace" covenants, with the Noahic being a renewal of the Adamic. He suggests they form "one legal package," similar to how the Sinai and Moab covenants (within the Mosaic covenant) are viewed.
- He identifies four "special grace or revelation covenants": Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and New. He argues that the first three no longer function as covenants as they are fulfilled in the New Covenant through Christ.
- **Quote:** "The Adamic covenant, for whose existence we will argue, and the Noahic covenant together constitute, they are both common grace covenants. Since the Noahic renewed the Adamic, a good way to put that together would be to form one legal package... The Abrahamic covenant, the Mosaic, and the Davidic Covenant covenants no longer function as covenants because they've all been taken up and fulfilled in the New Covenant through Christ."

**IV. Arguments for the Existence of the Adamic Covenant:**

- Niehaus argues against the notion that the absence of the explicit term "covenant" in Genesis 1-2 negates its existence, pointing out that the Bible

doesn't explicitly call God "triune" or Noah a "prophet," yet these are understood concepts.

- He draws a parallel to the Noahic covenant, which lacks a recorded covenant oath or ratification ceremony yet is explicitly called a covenant.
- **Key Argument:** Niehaus posits that Genesis 1:1-2:3 exhibits the essential elements of a **Second Millennium B.C. Hittite treaty form**:
- **Title:** Genesis 1:1 ("In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth") functions as an introduction of the "suzerain" (God as creator and king).
- **Historical Prologue:** The creation account itself structures the reality in which humanity will live.
- **Stipulations:** Genesis 1:28 (be fruitful, subdue the earth, rule over creation).
- **Deposition and Regular Reading:** While not literal documents, the biblical narratives themselves embody and articulate the covenants.
- **Witnesses:** Arguably, God himself in Genesis 1:31 ("God saw all that he had made, and it was very good").
- **Blessings:** Genesis 1:28 (blessing of fruitfulness and dominion), Genesis 2:3 (blessing of the Sabbath).
- **Curse:** Genesis 2:17b (the consequence of eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil).
- **Quote:** "Genesis 1:1 through 2:3... has the essential elements of a Second Millennium Treaty. It has a title... a historical prologue... stipulations... witnesses... blessings... There's also the curse element in Genesis 2.17b..."
- Niehaus suggests that divine-human covenants articulate God's nature, and the Hittite treaty form, developed by a culture made in God's image, naturally reflects this power relationship.
- He interprets the use of the Hebrew verbs *nathan berit* and *hakim berit* ("to give a covenant" and "to cause the covenant to stand") in the Noahic covenant (Genesis 6) as indicating the putting into effect or reaffirmation of a pre-existing covenant, namely the Adamic.

- Prophetic evidence from Jeremiah (references to God's "decrees" regulating creation in covenantal terminology) suggests a covenantal nature to the created order established in Genesis 1.
- New Testament evidence includes the parallel between Jesus as the "second Adam" (mediator of the new covenant) and Adam as the first. Luke's genealogy calling Adam the "first son of God" further supports this. The new humanity and new creation brought about by the new covenant under the second Adam imply a similar covenantal role for the first Adam.

**V. Anthropology of the Adamic Covenant (Imago Dei):**

- Genesis 1:26 ("Let us make the human in our image, in our likeness") indicates that both terms (*tselem* and *demuth*) signify a "formal outline," similar to statues resembling their originals. In the ancient Near East, kings used these terms for their statues, implying humans were made to have God's form.
- The Hebrew poetry in Genesis 1:27 emphasizes that God created both male and female in his image.
- While both genders share the Imago Dei (capacity for communication, understanding, and rule), Genesis 1 does not explicitly address or imply differentiation in their roles beyond the biological reality of reproduction in Genesis 1:28. Niehaus cautions against importing later theological perspectives on gender roles into this initial creation account.
- Genesis 2 portrays Adam's role in the Garden of Eden as involving "avad" (work/serve, used for Levitical service) and "shamar" (keep, also used for temple service), suggesting a priestly function in what could be considered the first temple (God's dwelling place).
- Adam's hearing from God signifies a prophetic role. His role as a covenant mediator is implied by the consequences of his actions for all his offspring and the parallel with Jesus as the second Adam.
- Made in God's image before the fall, Adam and Eve were morally perfect and "able not to sin," though they ultimately chose to sin. Niehaus references a Puritan structure of human capacity for sin before and after the fall.

**VI. Structural Understandings of Creation (Genesis 1):**

- Niehaus discusses Meredith Kline's "framework hypothesis," which views the six days of creation as structured thematically (days of forming and filling domains) rather than strictly chronological.
- He highlights the recurring "command fulfillment" pattern in Genesis 1, emphasizing God's absolute authority as the creator.
- He briefly reviews various interpretations of the "days" of creation (literal 24-hour days, day-age theory, days of God, pictorial days, literary device, gap theory), noting the historical motivations behind some interpretations (reconciling with geological timelines). He indicates his preference for Kline's framework hypothesis but does not definitively resolve the issue.

**VII. Niehaus' "Major Paradigm":**

- Niehaus concludes by proposing a recurring pattern in God's work throughout biblical history:

1. **Prophetic Dynamic:** God works by his Spirit through the Word (or a prophet figure) to overcome opposition.
2. **Covenant Establishment:** God establishes a covenant with a people (initially individuals/families), making them his covenant partners.
3. **Temple Establishment:** God establishes his dwelling place (initially Eden, then the Tabernacle/Temple, and ultimately the church in the New Covenant).

- **Quote:** "God works by his Spirit through the Word, a prophet figure, to war against and defeat his foes. Then, he establishes a covenant with a people... And again, when the times are right for it, he establishes a temple among them."
- He suggests that the creation account itself demonstrates a "prophetic dynamic" with the Spirit working through the pre-incarnate Word to bring about creation.

This first session lays the groundwork for Niehaus' approach to Biblical Theology by establishing his understanding of covenants, particularly the foundational Adamic Covenant, and introducing a paradigm for interpreting God's actions throughout Scripture. His emphasis on understanding biblical concepts within their ancient Near Eastern context and his nuanced approach to interpreting Genesis 1 are key takeaways from this session.

# 4. Study Guide: Niehaus, Biblical Theology, Session 1, The Adamic Covenant, Part 1

**Study Guide: Niehaus on the Adamic Covenant (Session 1)**

**Key Concepts:**

- **Biblical Theology:** Understanding the overarching narrative and themes of the Bible, particularly how God works with humanity through history.
- **Covenant Theology (Classic):** A 17th-century theological framework emphasizing an "Adamic Covenant" (covenant of works) before the Fall and a unified "Covenant of Grace" after the Fall.
- **Covenant of Works:** The idea that Adam's relationship with God before the Fall was based on perfect obedience to earn life.
- **Covenant of Grace:** The idea that all covenants after the Fall are based on God's gracious gift of salvation.
- **Common Grace Covenants:** Covenants extended to all humanity (e.g., Adamic, Noahic) focused on maintaining the created order.
- **Special Grace Covenants:** Covenants focused on God's redemptive plan for a specific people (e.g., Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, New).
- **Ancient Near Eastern Treaty Form (Second Millennium BC):** A structure common in Hittite treaties that includes elements like a title, historical prologue, stipulations, deposition, regular reading, witnesses, blessings, and curses.
- **Adamic Covenant:** The covenant relationship between God and Adam in the Garden of Eden, characterized by responsibilities and consequences. Niehaus argues for its existence based on the parallels with the ancient Near Eastern treaty form.
- **Noahic Covenant:** God's covenant with Noah after the flood, renewing aspects of the Adamic covenant and extending common grace to humanity.
- **Mosaic Covenant (Sinai Covenant):** God's covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai, forming one "legal package" with its renewal in Deuteronomy (Moab Covenant).
- **Abrahamic Covenant:** God's covenant with Abraham, initiating the special grace program of salvation and foreshadowing later covenants.

- **Davidic Covenant:** God's covenant with David, promising an eternal dynasty.
- **New Covenant:** The ultimate special grace covenant fulfilled in Christ, in which the promises of previous covenants are realized.
- **Image of God (Imago Dei):** The concept that humanity is created in God's likeness, possessing certain attributes and responsibilities reflecting God.
- **Prophetic Dynamic:** Niehaus's paradigm for how God works: through the Spirit, via the Word (or a prophet figure), to defeat foes and establish covenant and temple.
- **Framework Hypothesis:** An interpretation of Genesis 1 emphasizing the logical and thematic structure of creation in terms of created domains and their rulers.

**Quiz:**

1. According to classic covenant theology, what is the primary distinction between the Adamic Covenant and the Covenant of Grace? What are two problems Niehaus identifies with this framework?
2. Explain the difference between common grace covenants and special grace covenants, providing one example of each as discussed by Niehaus. What is the fundamental purpose of common grace covenants?
3. What is John Walton's view on the Adamic Covenant, and what is Niehaus's primary critique of Walton's use of the term "covenant"?
4. Describe the Second Millennium BC Hittite treaty form. According to Niehaus, how does Genesis 1:1-2:3 exhibit key elements of this treaty form?
5. Niehaus argues that the use of the Hebrew idioms *nathan berit* and *hakim berit* in the Noahic covenant narrative suggests what about a prior covenant? Why was a different idiom used compared to *qarat berit*?
6. What Old Testament prophetic books does Niehaus reference as potentially alluding to a covenantal understanding of the created order? Give one specific example he provides.
7. How does the concept of Jesus as the "second Adam" provide New Testament support for the idea of an Adamic covenant? What role did Adam potentially fulfill that parallels Jesus's role?

8. Explain Niehaus's understanding of the "image of God" based on the Hebrew terms *tselem* and *demuth*. What does the poetic structure of Genesis 1:27 suggest about who bears God's image?
9. According to Niehaus, what priestly function might have been associated with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, based on the verbs used in Genesis 2:15? What is the significance of Eden being considered the first temple?
10. Briefly outline Niehaus's "major paradigm" for how God works, as presented at the end of the session. What are the key components of this dynamic?

**Answer Key:**

1. Classic covenant theology distinguishes the Adamic Covenant as a "covenant of works" based on perfect obedience before the Fall, and the Covenant of Grace as God's gracious offer of salvation after the Fall. Niehaus identifies two problems: it's inconsistent with the ancient Near Eastern use of the term "covenant" to lump together distinct covenants, and it incorrectly categorizes the Noahic covenant as special grace when it is a renewal of the common grace Adamic covenant.
2. Common grace covenants are extended to all of humanity and focus on maintaining the created order (e.g., Adamic, Noahic), while special grace covenants are focused on God's redemptive plan for a specific people (e.g., Abrahamic). The fundamental purpose of common grace covenants is to keep the planet functioning so that God's special grace program of salvation can occur.
3. John Walton believes the first covenant identified in the biblical text is with Noah, arguing against the existence of an Adamic covenant because the term "covenant" is not used. Niehaus critiques Walton for using the term "covenant" to encompass multiple distinct special grace covenants, which he argues is not consistent with ancient Near Eastern or biblical usage.
4. The Second Millennium BC Hittite treaty form typically included a title identifying the suzerain, a historical prologue detailing the suzerain's past benefits, stipulations outlining the vassal's obligations, provisions for deposition and regular reading of the treaty, a list of divine witnesses, blessings for obedience, and curses for disobedience. Niehaus argues that Genesis 1:1 presents God as the suzerain through his act of creation (title), Genesis 1 details God's structuring of reality (historical prologue), Genesis 1:28 contains stipulations (commands), and Genesis 2:17b introduces a curse for disobedience.

5. Niehaus suggests that the use of *nathan berit* and *hakim berit* ("to give/put into effect a covenant") in the Noahic covenant narrative indicates that the Lord is renewing a pre-existing covenant, the Adamic covenant. The idiom *qarat berit* ("to cut a covenant") was often associated with a ratification ceremony involving a curse for breaking the covenant, which is not present in the common grace Noahic covenant, necessitating a different idiom.
6. Niehaus references Hosea, Jeremiah, and Isaiah. In Jeremiah 33, the Lord speaks of his "covenant with the day and my covenant with the night" and "ordinances of heaven and earth," using covenantal terminology to describe the created order established in Genesis 1.
7. Jesus is presented as the "second Adam" in the New Testament and is the mediator of the new covenant. If Jesus, the second Adam, is a covenant mediator, it suggests that the first Adam also functioned as a mediator of a covenant for his offspring.
8. Niehaus explains that *tselem* and *demuth* both mean a formal outline or resemblance, often used of statues meant to represent the original. The poetic structure of Genesis 1:27 ("God created the Adam in his image... male and female he created them") suggests that both males and females are created in God's image.
9. Based on Genesis 2:15, where Adam was placed in the Garden to *avad* (work/serve) and *shamar* (keep), verbs also used for Levitical service in the tabernacle, Niehaus suggests a priestly function. Eden being considered the first temple signifies it as the dwelling place of God, where Adam and Eve had a unique relationship and responsibility.
10. Niehaus's major paradigm is that God works by his Spirit through the Word (or a prophet figure) to war against and defeat his foes. Following this, he establishes a covenant with a people, making them his own, and then establishes a temple among them as his dwelling place.

**Essay Format Questions:**

1. Compare and contrast the classic "covenant theology" framework with Niehaus's proposed understanding of the biblical covenants. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each approach in interpreting the overarching narrative of Scripture?

2. Analyze Niehaus's argument for the existence of an Adamic covenant based on the parallels with the Second Millennium BC Hittite treaty form. How persuasive is this argument, and what potential counterarguments could be raised?
3. Discuss the significance of the distinction between common grace and special grace covenants in Niehaus's biblical theology. How does this distinction impact the interpretation of different covenants in the Old and New Testaments?
4. Explore the implications of humanity being created in the "image of God" according to Niehaus's interpretation. How does this concept relate to the Adamic covenant and the roles and responsibilities of humanity before and after the Fall?
5. Evaluate Niehaus's "major paradigm" for how God works throughout Scripture. How well does this paradigm account for the various covenants and God's interactions with humanity as presented in the Old and New Testaments?

# 5. FAQs on Niehaus, Biblical Theology, Session 1, The Adamic Covenant, Part 1, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

**Frequently Asked Questions on the Adamic Covenant and Biblical Theology Based on Niehaus's Session 1**

### 1. What is "covenant theology" as classically understood, and what are Dr. Niehaus's main concerns with this traditional framework?

Classical covenant theology, originating in the 17th century and articulated in documents like the Westminster Confession, posits an "Adamic covenant" as a covenant of works, where Adam could have earned life through perfect obedience before the Fall. After the Fall, it proposes a "covenant of grace" encompassing all subsequent biblical covenants, as humanity is incapable of perfect obedience. Dr. Niehaus raises several concerns. First, he argues that lumping together diverse covenants like the Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, and New under a single "covenant of grace" doesn't align with the ancient Near Eastern understanding of covenants as distinct agreements. Second, he points out that the Noahic covenant is a common grace covenant, applicable to all humanity and a renewal of the Adamic, focused on sustaining the created order, unlike the special grace covenants (Abrahamic onwards) centered on salvation. Finally, he notes that the 17th-century theologians lacked the knowledge of ancient Near Eastern treaty forms that modern scholarship possesses, limiting their ability to fully understand the nature of biblical covenants.

### 2. How does Dr. Niehaus categorize the biblical covenants, and what distinguishes the common grace covenants from the special grace covenants?

Dr. Niehaus proposes a categorization of biblical covenants based on their scope and purpose. He identifies two common grace covenants: the Adamic and the Noahic. These covenants extend to all humanity and focus on the general sustenance and regulation of the created order. The Adamic covenant, established at creation, outlines humanity's initial relationship with God and the created world. The Noahic covenant, a renewal of the Adamic after the flood, reaffirms these principles for the post-flood world. In contrast, the special grace covenants (Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and New) are specifically focused on God's redemptive plan and his relationship with a chosen people, ultimately culminating in salvation through Christ.

**3. What evidence does Dr. Niehaus present to argue for the existence of an Adamic covenant, even though the term "covenant" is not explicitly used in Genesis 1-2?**

Dr. Niehaus argues for an Adamic covenant by drawing parallels between the narrative of creation in Genesis 1:1-2:3 and the structure of second-millennium BC Hittite treaties. He identifies key elements such as a title (God as creator king), a historical prologue (God's creation of the world as the context for humanity's life), stipulations (commands given to Adam and Eve, like being fruitful and subduing the earth), and blessings (God's blessing on humanity and the Sabbath) and curses (the consequence of disobedience in Genesis 2:17). He also points to later Old Testament references, such as Jeremiah's allusions to God's covenant with day and night and the ordinances of heaven and earth, as suggestive of a covenantal foundation for the created order established in Genesis 1. Additionally, the New Testament's portrayal of Jesus as the "second Adam," mediating a new covenant that reverses the effects of the first Adam's actions, implies a covenantal role for the first Adam.

**4. How does Dr. Niehaus address the arguments against an Adamic covenant, particularly the absence of the word "covenant" and the lack of a formal ratification ceremony in Genesis?**

Dr. Niehaus counters the argument from silence (the lack of the term "covenant") by pointing out that the substance and structure of a covenant can be present even if the explicit terminology is absent. He notes that the Noahic covenant is explicitly called a covenant, yet it also lacks a recorded oath or ratification ceremony in Genesis 9. If the Noahic covenant is accepted as such without these elements, then the Adamic arrangement, possessing the substantive elements of a treaty, can also be considered a covenant. He further argues that biblical covenants are often articulated through narratives rather than formal treaty documents, citing 2 Samuel 7 (the Davidic covenant) as an example where the word "covenant" isn't used but the covenant is understood.

**5. What is the significance of the Hittite treaty form in understanding the Adamic covenant, according to Dr. Niehaus?**

Dr. Niehaus emphasizes the parallels between the creation narrative in Genesis 1:1-2:3 and the structure of second-millennium BC Hittite treaties to demonstrate the covenantal nature of God's relationship with humanity from the beginning. The presence of elements like a preamble (title of the suzerain), historical prologue (actions of the suzerain), stipulations (obligations of the vassal), blessings and curses (consequences of obedience and disobedience), and witnesses aligns with the common structure of these ancient legal agreements. This suggests that the creation account is not merely a description of events but an articulation of a binding relationship, a covenant, between God (the suzerain) and humanity (the vassal).

**6. How does Dr. Niehaus interpret Genesis 1:26-27 regarding humanity being created in God's image, and what implications does this have for understanding the Adamic covenant?**

Dr. Niehaus explains that the Hebrew terms for "image" (tselem) and "likeness" (demuth) both signify a formal outline or resemblance, similar to statues representing their originals. He argues that in the ancient Near Eastern context, these terms implied that humans were created to have the same form as God, noting that when God appears in theophanies, he has a human form. Furthermore, Dr. Niehaus highlights the poetic structure of Genesis 1:27, suggesting that both male and female were created in God's image. This indicates that both share in the representation of God and have a royal and cultural function (ruling and subduing the earth), though the passage does not explicitly define specific gender roles beyond the biological aspect of procreation mentioned in Genesis 1:28. Being created in God's image underscores humanity's unique relationship with God within the Adamic covenant, possessing the capacity for communication, understanding, and a degree of dominion reflecting God's own.

**7. What does Dr. Niehaus mean by the "major paradigm" of God's working, and how does the Adamic covenant fit into this framework?**

Dr. Niehaus proposes a "major paradigm" that describes the consistent way God works throughout biblical history. This paradigm involves God working by his Spirit through the Word (often embodied by a prophet figure) to accomplish his purposes. After the Fall, this also includes warring against and defeating his foes. Subsequently, God establishes a covenant with a people (initially Adam and Eve), designating them as his covenant partners or vassals. Finally, God establishes a temple (initially Eden) as a place of his presence among his people. The Adamic covenant represents the initial establishment of this relationship and the first "temple" in Eden, setting the pattern for subsequent covenants and God's interaction with humanity.

**8. How does Dr. Niehaus discuss the concept of "days" in Genesis 1, and what is his preferred approach to understanding them in the context of the Adamic covenant?**

Dr. Niehaus reviews various interpretations of the "days" in Genesis 1, including literal 24-hour days, day-age theory, pictorial days, and a literary framework. He acknowledges the long-standing debate and the attempts to reconcile the biblical account with geological findings. While he presents different scholarly views, he indicates a preference for Meredith Kline's framework hypothesis, which understands the six days not necessarily as chronological periods but as a literary structure organizing the creation into domains (days 1-3) and their rulers/inhabitants (days 4-6), culminating in the Sabbath. This approach emphasizes the order and authority inherent in God's creation without being strictly tied to a particular duration for the "days." Dr. Niehaus suggests that the focus should be on the theological significance of the creation narrative in establishing the Adamic covenant and God's sovereign authority, rather than solely on the precise timing of creation.