Dr. Jeffrey Niehaus, Biblical Theology, Session 2, The Adamic Covenant, Part 2 Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Niehaus, Biblical Theology, Session 2, The Adamic Covenant, Part 2, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Jeffrey Niehaus's session on Biblical Theology explores the Adamic Covenant, specifically addressing the relationship between Genesis 1 and 2, refuting the higher critical view of contradictory creation accounts. Niehaus argues for complementary narratives akin to ancient Near Eastern texts, where a general overview is followed by detailed specifics, particularly focusing on humanity in Genesis 2. The session examines the concept of Eden as a temple and questions whether Adam was indwelt by the Holy Spirit before the fall, suggesting he was sustained by the Spirit but not a temple of it. **Finally, Niehaus analyzes the creation of woman as a helper suitable for man and discusses the relational implications in Genesis, including naming and Paul's later interpretations regarding submission and headship in marriage, urging careful consideration of the biblical text.**

2. 21 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Niehaus, Biblical Theology, Session 2 – 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).

Niehaus_BibTheo_Session02.mp3

3. Briefing Document: Niehaus, Biblical Theology, Session 2, The Adamic Covenant, Part 2

Briefing Document: Dr. Jeffrey Niehaus on the Adamic Covenant, Part 2

Overview: This briefing document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Jeffrey Niehaus in Session 2, Part 2 of his Biblical Theology series, focusing on the Adamic Covenant. The session primarily addresses the relationship between Genesis 1 and 2, the nature of Eden as a temple, the question of whether Adam was a temple of the Holy Spirit, and the implications of the creation of woman for gender roles and marital relationships, particularly in light of New Testament interpretations.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. The Relationship Between Genesis 1 and Genesis 2:

- Niehaus argues against the higher critical view that Genesis 1 and 2 are contradictory accounts from different authors (JEDP). He posits that this view arose due to a lack of understanding of ancient Near Eastern writing conventions.
- He proposes that these chapters should be seen as **complementary accounts**, a common structure in the ancient Near East where a general overview is followed by a more detailed focus.
- Niehaus cites Ken Kitchen, who states, "**the strictly complementary nature of the two accounts is plain enough. Genesis 1 mentions the creation of man as the last of a series and without any details. Whereas in Genesis 2, man is the center of interest...More specific details are given about him and his setting. There's no incompatible duplication here at all.**"
- The supposed contradiction in the order of creation (animals before man in Genesis 1, apparently man before animals in Genesis 2) is addressed through the translation of the verb in Genesis 2:19. Niehaus explains that the verb can be translated as a **pluperfect ("had formed")**, as in the NIV, which resolves the contradiction by suggesting God had already formed the animals before bringing them to Adam.
- Niehaus notes that even S.R. Driver, a proponent of the two-source theory, was aware of this alternative translation, suggesting a degree of "**obscurantism**" in suppressing this information to support his argument.

- Niehaus also suggests understanding Genesis 1:1-2:3 as an **ancient Near Eastern list** with formulaic introductions and conclusions to each component, similar to the Sumerian king list.

2. Eden as a Temple:

- Niehaus explores the idea of Eden as a temple, supported by several parallels:
- God placing man in the garden "**to work it and to keep it**," which were priestly roles.
- Parallels between the river and the tree of life in Genesis 2:9-10 and similar imagery in eschatological visions in Ezekiel and Revelation, where a river flows from God's presence with fruit trees along its banks.
- The guarding of the way back to the Tree of Life after the fall by **cherubim and a flaming sword**, noting that cherubim in the ancient Near East guarded temples and palaces.
- The ultimate resolution in Revelation where "**there's no temple because the Lord God and the Lamb are its temple**," linking back to the idea of God's presence.
- This aligns with the principle that "**end site parallels urzeit, which is German for end time parallels primordial time.**"

3. Adam as a Temple of the Holy Spirit:

- Niehaus argues against the idea that Adam was a temple of the Holy Spirit before the fall.
- He points to Genesis 6:3, where God says, "**my spirit will not contend with man forever, for he's mortal.**" Niehaus favors the translation "**my spirit will not remain with**," suggesting the Spirit sustained life but did not indwell people.
- He highlights Elihu's statement in Job: "**the spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life**," noting the parallelism between "spirit" (Ruach) and "breath" (Nishamah), the latter being the same word used in Genesis 2.
- A crucial point is that "**the word temple is never used by a human being until Jesus comes...So, no one in the Old Testament is ever called a temple, Adam, or anyone else...And you're never told in the Old Testament that the Holy Spirit dwelt in anyone...it was easy to say if it was ever the case.**"

- Niehaus examines instances in the Old Testament where the Spirit comes "**upon**" or "**to**" individuals (Moses, Saul, David, individuals filled for specific tasks like Bezalel) but emphasizes that the language of the Spirit "**dwelling in**" someone is absent.
- Ezekiel 36:27 ("**I will put my spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees...**") and John's statement about the Spirit not yet being given until Jesus was glorified are presented as promises of the indwelling Spirit under the new covenant.
- Jesus' words in John 14:17 ("**the spirit of truth, he lives with you and will be in you**") clearly distinguish between the Spirit's presence with the disciples and the future indwelling.

4. The Creation of Woman and its Implications:

- Niehaus acknowledges the controversy surrounding male-female roles and examines key terms related to the creation of woman.
- The term "**helper**" (ezer) is analyzed. While often used of God as a deliverer and related to strength, its use in Ezekiel 12 regarding helpers subordinate to a prince creates ambiguity regarding its meaning in Genesis 2. Niehaus concludes, "**you come up with a completely ambiguous picture with regard to the use of the term helper...It could mean that she's...subordinate to him in some role sense. It could mean she's his equal. Why not? You can't know.**"
- The phrase "**helper suitable**" (kenegdo) suggests correspondence and being before or in front of, likely based on both being made in God's image, but it doesn't define roles.
- The woman being "**built**" from the man (rib) in Hebrew is noted, but Niehaus cautions against drawing hierarchical conclusions from this, comparing it to man being made from dust.
- The act of "**naming**" is explored. While Adam names the animals, the same idiom is used when God names creation. When Adam names the woman "**woman**," it's the same passive idiom. The later naming of "**Eve**" uses a different idiom ("called the name of"), which is also used when God renames individuals and for naming children and cities, suggesting authority to confer identity. However, the same idiom is used when Hagar names God, indicating that the namer does not always have authority *over* the named.

5. New Testament Interpretations and Gender Roles:

- Niehaus briefly touches upon Paul's statements in 1 Timothy 2:11-14 regarding women learning in quietness and not having authority over men, noting the debate about whether these instructions were Ephesus-specific or universally applicable due to Paul's appeal to the created order ("**for Adam was formed first, then Eve.**").
- He discusses the relational implications in Genesis 2:24 ("**a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife, and they will become one flesh**"), highlighting the verb "**united**" (cleave to) and its use elsewhere to describe Israel's relationship with God.
- Paul's use of Genesis 2:24 in Ephesians 5 regarding the marital relationship is examined, particularly the statement "**wives submit to your husbands as to the Lord**" (Ephesians 5:22) and the analogy of the husband as head of the wife as Christ is head of the church.
- Niehaus addresses the argument for mutual submission based on the double-duty use of the verb "submitting" from Ephesians 5:21, arguing that this is "**a very flawed reasoning**" as double-duty use doesn't imply the same application in both instances.
- He concludes by sharing his own complementarian understanding of marriage, emphasizing that it doesn't necessitate tyranny and allows for shared decision-making, with the husband bearing ultimate spiritual guidance and responsibility. His aim is to understand "**what the biblical data are telling us**" rather than prescribing a specific outcome.

Concluding Questions (Presented by Niehaus):

- What do you think of the double-duty use of submitting?
- What do you think of verse 24 (Ephesians 5:24)?
- How do these verses relate as an active interpretation? How should they be understood together?
- What do you think of the parallelism that Paul draws here (between husband/wife and Christ/church)?

Conclusion:

Dr. Niehaus's Session 2, Part 2 on the Adamic Covenant offers a detailed examination of the early chapters of Genesis, engaging with historical-critical interpretations while emphasizing a complementary understanding of Genesis 1 and 2. He delves into the significance of Eden as a temple and carefully argues against the notion of Adam possessing the indwelling Holy Spirit before the fall. Furthermore, he explores the complexities of the creation of woman and its implications for gender roles and marriage, highlighting the ambiguities within the Genesis account itself and examining relevant New Testament passages, particularly in Ephesians. The session encourages a careful and nuanced reading of the biblical text, acknowledging both what it explicitly states and what remains open to interpretation.

4. Study Guide: Niehaus, Biblical Theology, Session 2, The Adamic Covenant, Part 2

Study Guide: The Adamic Covenant, Part 2

Key Concepts to Understand:

- The relationship between Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 as complementary accounts rather than contradictory ones.
- The ancient Near Eastern literary context for understanding the structure of Genesis 1 and 2.
- The debate surrounding the timing of animal creation relative to Adam in Genesis 2 and the significance of verb translation.
- The concept of Eden as a temple in light of parallels with later biblical descriptions (Ezekiel, Revelation).
- The role of cherubim as temple guardians and their appearance in Genesis.
- The question of whether Adam was a temple of the Holy Spirit before the fall.
- The distinction between the Spirit being "upon" or "with" someone versus the Spirit "dwelling in" someone in the Old Testament.
- Old Testament examples of the Spirit's work and the timing of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
- The meaning of the terms used to describe the woman in Genesis 2: "helper," "suitable helper," and the implications for understanding male-female relationships.
- The significance of naming in Genesis 2 and 3, particularly in relation to authority.
- The implications of the derivative creation of the woman from the man.
- Paul's use of the Genesis creation narrative in 1 Timothy and Ephesians regarding gender roles in the church and marriage.
- The interpretation of "submission" in Ephesians 5 and the concept of mutual submission.
- The idea of *urzeit* (primordial time) and *endszeit* (end time) parallelism.

Quiz:

1. Explain why Dr. Niehaus considers the idea of Genesis 1 and 2 being completely contradictory accounts by different authors with different theologies to be a problematic view.
2. Describe the ancient Near Eastern literary pattern that Dr. Niehaus suggests provides a better framework for understanding the relationship between Genesis 1 and Genesis 2.
3. Discuss the apparent discrepancy in the order of creation between Genesis 1 and Genesis 2, and explain how a specific translation of a Hebrew verb resolves this issue.
4. What evidence does Dr. Niehaus present to support the idea that the Garden of Eden can be understood as a temple? Provide at least two specific examples.
5. According to Dr. Niehaus, what is the distinction between Adam being "made alive by the Spirit" and having the "Spirit dwelling in him" before the fall?
6. Provide two examples from the Old Testament where the Holy Spirit is described as being "upon" someone, and explain the significance of this preposition in contrast to "dwelling in."
7. How does Dr. Niehaus interpret Ezekiel 36:27 and John 7:38-39 in relation to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit?
8. Discuss the meaning of the Hebrew term *kenegdo* ("suitable helper") in Genesis 2 and explain why its interpretation regarding male-female roles is complex.
9. Analyze the significance of the different Hebrew idioms used when Adam names the woman ("woman") before the fall and Eve after the fall, and how this relates to the concept of authority.
10. How does Paul use the creation order in Genesis in his letters (specifically mentioning 1 Timothy and Ephesians), and what caution does Dr. Niehaus offer regarding the interpretation of these passages based solely on Genesis 1 and 2?

Answer Key:

1. Dr. Niehaus argues that viewing Genesis 1 and 2 as contradictory accounts stems from higher criticism, which lacked the understanding of ancient Near Eastern writing conventions. He suggests that these accounts are better understood as a general overview followed by a more detailed focus on specific aspects.

2. Dr. Niehaus proposes that Genesis 1:1-2:3 functions like an ancient Near Eastern list, similar to the Sumerian king list, characterized by a formulaic introduction, conclusion to components, and narrative content. This explains the repetitive nature that higher critics misinterpreted.

3. The apparent discrepancy lies in Genesis 1 seemingly creating animals before humans, while Genesis 2 appears to create Adam first. This is resolved by translating the verb in Genesis 2:19 as a pluperfect ("had formed"), indicating God had already created the animals before bringing them to Adam to be named.

4. Dr. Niehaus points to the Lord placing Adam in the garden to "work it and keep it," which are priestly roles, and the parallels between the river and the tree of life in Eden with similar imagery flowing from God's presence in eschatological visions in Ezekiel and Revelation.

5. Dr. Niehaus suggests that Adam was made alive and sustained by the Spirit (through the "breath of life"), but the Spirit did not indwell him in the same way as believers under the new covenant. He bases this on passages like Genesis 6:3, which implies the Spirit sustains life rather than dwells.

6. In Numbers 11, Moses speaks of the spirit "that is on you" being placed on the seventy elders, and in Judges 3:10, the Spirit of the Lord "came upon" Othniel. This preposition suggests an external empowering for a specific task, rather than an internal, permanent indwelling.

7. Dr. Niehaus interprets Ezekiel 36:27 ("I will put my spirit in you") and John 7:38-39 (the Spirit "had not yet been given") as prophecies and statements indicating that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit was a future promise associated with the new covenant, not a reality for believers in the Old Testament.

8. *Kenegdo* can mean "corresponding to," "before," or "in front of," suggesting a relationship of suitability and correspondence due to both being made in God's image. However, Dr. Niehaus argues that the term itself does not definitively establish hierarchy or specific roles within the relationship.

9. Before the fall, the idiom "to call to" is used when Adam names the woman, which is the same idiom used when God names creation and Adam names the animals. After the fall, a different idiom, "to call the name of," is used when Adam names Eve. While the latter idiom often implies authority (as seen in renaming), its use when Hagar names God suggests authority is not always the primary meaning.

10. Paul uses the creation order (Adam formed first, then Eve) in 1 Timothy 2 to argue for limitations on women teaching or having authority over men in the church. In Ephesians 5, he uses the creation of woman from man and the "one flesh" concept to illustrate the relationship between Christ and the church, applying it to marriage. Dr. Niehaus cautions against drawing definitive conclusions about gender roles solely from the laconic data of Genesis 1 and 2 without considering the New Testament context, but also notes the appeal to the created order in Paul's writings.

Essay Format Questions:

1. Compare and contrast the traditional higher critical view of the relationship between Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 with the understanding presented by Dr. Niehaus. What are the key differences in their approaches and conclusions, and what evidence does Niehaus offer to support his perspective?
2. Discuss the significance of understanding Eden as a temple. What are the biblical parallels that support this interpretation, and what implications might this have for our understanding of God's relationship with humanity at the beginning?
3. Analyze Dr. Niehaus's argument that Adam was not a temple of the Holy Spirit before the fall. What scriptural evidence does he use to support this claim, and how does this understanding contrast with the experience of believers under the new covenant?
4. Explore the complexities in interpreting the Genesis account of the woman's creation and the terms used to describe her role ("helper," "suitable helper") in relation to male-female relationships. How does Dr. Niehaus approach these terms, and what conclusions does he draw (or not draw) from them?
5. Examine how the Genesis creation narrative is utilized in the New Testament, particularly in the writings of Paul, to address issues of gender roles in the church and marriage. What specific passages are relevant, and what cautions does Dr. Niehaus offer regarding the interpretation of these connections?

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Higher Criticism:** A school of biblical interpretation that emerged in the 19th century, emphasizing the human authors and historical context of the Bible, often leading to theories about multiple sources and later redactions of the text (e.g., the JEDP theory).
- **JEDP Theory:** A theory within higher criticism proposing that the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) was compiled from four independent literary sources: the Jahwist (J), Elohist (E), Deuteronomist (D), and Priestly (P) sources.
- **Ancient Near East (ANE):** A geographical and historical region encompassing the area of the Middle East from Mesopotamia to Egypt during ancient times. Understanding ANE literature and culture provides crucial context for interpreting the Old Testament.
- **Complementary Accounts:** The view that Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 present different but harmonizing perspectives on the creation event, with Genesis 1 providing a general overview and Genesis 2 focusing on specific details, particularly regarding humanity.
- **Pluperfect Tense:** A verb tense that indicates an action was completed before another past action (e.g., "had formed"). Understanding verb tenses in the original Hebrew is crucial for accurate interpretation.
- **Obscurantism:** The practice of deliberately preventing the full details of something from becoming known. In a scholarly context, it refers to suppressing information that would weaken one's argument.
- **Narrative Naturalism:** The inclusion of natural processes and details within a narrative. Dr. Niehaus points to the description of the lack of rain in Genesis 2 as an example.
- **Eschatological:** Relating to the "end times" or the final destiny of humanity and the world, as described in biblical prophecies and apocalyptic literature (e.g., Ezekiel, Revelation).
- **Imago Dei:** Latin for "image of God," referring to the theological concept that humanity was created in God's likeness, reflecting certain divine attributes.
- **Urzeit:** A German term meaning "primordial time" or the beginning.
- **Endszeit:** A German term meaning "end time" or the eschatological future.

- **Cherubim:** Celestial beings described in the Bible, often associated with guarding sacred spaces and God's presence. They are depicted with complex and powerful features (e.g., Ezekiel 1).
- **Ruach:** A Hebrew word that can be translated as "spirit," "wind," or "breath," often referring to the Spirit of God.
- **Nishamah:** A Hebrew word specifically meaning "breath," particularly the breath of life breathed into Adam by God (Genesis 2:7).
- **Common Grace:** The undeserved favor and blessings that God bestows on all humanity, regardless of their faith or lack thereof.
- **Covenant:** A solemn agreement between two parties, often used in the Bible to describe God's relationship with humanity (e.g., the Adamic Covenant, Mosaic Covenant, New Covenant).
- **Helper (עֵזֶר - ezer):** A Hebrew term often translated as "helper," but with connotations of strength and support, sometimes used to describe God as Israel's deliverer.
- **Suitable Helper (עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ - ezer kenegdo):** A Hebrew phrase describing the woman in Genesis 2:18, often interpreted as a helper corresponding to or facing Adam.
- **Double Duty (of a Verb):** A grammatical construction where a verb stated in one clause is understood to apply to a subsequent clause as well.
- **Complementarian Marriage:** A view of marriage that recognizes distinct but complementary roles and responsibilities for husbands and wives, often with the husband understood as the head of the household.
- **Egalitarian Marriage:** A view of marriage that emphasizes equality between husbands and wives in roles, responsibilities, and authority.

5. FAQs on Niehaus, Biblical Theology, Session 2, The Adamic Covenant, Part 2, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: The Adamic Covenant and Genesis

1. How should we understand the relationship between Genesis 1 and Genesis 2? Are they contradictory creation accounts? Many people view Genesis 1 and 2 as two distinct and potentially contradictory creation accounts. However, a more accurate understanding, consistent with ancient Near Eastern literary practices, is that Genesis 1 provides a general overview or "skeleton outline" of creation, while Genesis 2 "zooms in" to offer a more detailed account, particularly focusing on humanity and its immediate environment. They are best seen as complementary narratives rather than contradictory ones, with Genesis 2 elaborating on aspects briefly mentioned in Genesis 1.

2. Why does Genesis 2 appear to present a different order of creation, with man being created before animals? The apparent difference in the order of creation (animals before man in Genesis 1, and seemingly man before animals in Genesis 2) largely depends on the translation of the Hebrew verb in Genesis 2:19. The King James Version suggests God formed the animals *after* creating Adam. However, the verb can also be translated in the past perfect tense, as the NIV does ("Now the Lord God had formed..."). This interpretation indicates that God had already created the animals sometime before bringing them to Adam to be named, thus resolving the apparent contradiction.

3. What evidence suggests that the Garden of Eden can be understood as a temple? Several parallels suggest Eden's temple-like nature. God places Adam in the garden to "work it and keep it," which are described as priestly roles. Furthermore, the imagery of a river flowing from God's presence and the presence of the Tree of Life in Eden find echoes in eschatological visions in Ezekiel and Revelation, where a river flows from God's throne, nourishing trees of life. The presence of cherubim guarding the entrance to the Garden after the fall, similar to how cherubim guarded ancient Near Eastern temples and palaces, further supports this idea.

4. Was Adam created as a temple of the Holy Spirit before the fall? While Genesis 2:7 describes God breathing the "breath of life" into Adam, making him a living being, the evidence suggests Adam was not indwelt by the Holy Spirit in the same way believers are after the new covenant. Old Testament passages like Genesis 6:3 ("My spirit will not remain with man forever") and statements by Elihu in Job indicate that the Spirit sustained life but did not necessarily dwell within individuals. Additionally, no Old Testament figure, including Adam, is ever explicitly called a "temple," and it is not stated that the Holy Spirit dwelt in anyone before the New Covenant. The promise of God putting His Spirit *in* people is a feature of the new covenant, as seen in Ezekiel 36:27 and John 7:39 and 14:17.

5. What does it mean that God made the woman a "helper suitable" (ezer kenegdo) for Adam? The Hebrew term "ezer" is often used to describe God as a helper and deliverer for Israel, implying strength and resource. In the context of the woman, it does not necessarily denote subordination. The term "kenegdo" suggests a correspondence or being "before" or "in front of" him, implying a relationship between equals who are both made in God's image. Therefore, the phrase "helper suitable" indicates that the woman was created to be a capable and corresponding partner for Adam, without definitively establishing a hierarchical relationship based solely on this terminology.

6. Does Adam naming the animals and the woman signify his authority over them? The idiom used when God names creation and when Adam names the animals is the same ("call to"). When Adam calls the woman "woman," the same passive idiom is used. After the fall, when Adam names her Eve, a different idiom is used ("call the name of"), which is also used when God renames individuals (Sarai to Sarah, Jacob to Israel) and in the naming of children and cities, contexts that often imply authority to confer identity. However, the fact that Hagar uses the same idiom when naming God demonstrates that this specific naming idiom does not always indicate authority *over* the one being named. Therefore, while the naming of Eve might suggest Adam's authority in conferring her identity, it is not conclusive proof of general authority over her, especially before the fall.

7. How does the creation of the woman from Adam's rib relate to the concept of hierarchy or authority? The creation of the woman from the man's rib in Genesis 2 is a descriptive account of how God formed Eve. In itself, this act does not inherently establish a hierarchy or authority structure. The text notes that God formed Adam from the dust, but this does not imply the dust had authority over Adam. While the New Testament, particularly Paul's writings, does draw upon the order of creation (Adam formed first, then Eve) to address certain issues, the Genesis account itself is laconic on the implications of this mode of creation for male-female roles and authority.

8. How does the Genesis account of the male-female union (leaving and cleaving) inform our understanding of marriage, especially in light of New Testament teachings like Ephesians 5? Genesis 2:24, which describes the man leaving his parents to "cleave" to his wife and become "one flesh," establishes a foundational principle for marriage as a close and intimate union. Paul quotes this verse in Ephesians 5 to illustrate the relationship between Christ and the church. He uses the Genesis passage as a basis for instructing wives to submit to their husbands as the church submits to Christ, and husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church. While the concept of mutual submission in Christ is mentioned in Ephesians 5:21, the subsequent verses specifically address the wife's submission and the husband's headship and loving service, drawing a parallelism with the Christ-church relationship. This suggests a complementary relationship with distinct roles and responsibilities within marriage, rooted in the created order described in Genesis.