

# Dr. Jeffrey Niehaus, Biblical Theology, Session 3, The Adamic Covenant, Part 3, After the Fall Resources from NotebookLM

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

## 1. Abstract of Niehaus, Biblical Theology, Session 3, The Adamic Covenant, Part 3, After the Fall, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

**Dr. Jeffrey Niehaus's lecture on Biblical Theology, Session 3, examines the Adamic Covenant following humanity's transgression.** The session analyzes the serpent's deceptive challenge, the failure of Adam and Eve, and the subsequent consequences as described in Genesis 3. **Niehaus explores the nuances of the biblical text, considering the nature of sin as a lack of faith and the implications of the woman's response to the serpent.** He discusses the curses pronounced upon the serpent, the woman, and the man, including the protoevangelium and the altered relationship dynamics. **The lecture also investigates the lineage of Cain and Seth, the development of civilization, and the perplexing account of the "sons of God" in Genesis 6, ultimately favoring the interpretation of them as fallen angels.**

**2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Niehaus, Biblical Theology, Session 3 – 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\_S  
ession03.mp3**

### **3. Briefing Document: Niehaus, Biblical Theology, Session 3, The Adamic Covenant, Part 3, After the Fall**

#### **Briefing Document: Dr. Jeffrey Niehaus on The Adamic Covenant After the Fall**

##### **Overview:**

This briefing document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Jeffrey Niehaus in Session 3 of his Biblical Theology series, focusing on the Adamic Covenant after the Fall (Genesis 3). Niehaus meticulously examines the serpent's challenge, human failure, and the subsequent consequences, offering insightful interpretations of key passages and addressing various scholarly views. He emphasizes the nature of sin as deception and a failure to "amen" God, analyzes the curses pronounced upon the serpent, woman, and man, and explores the implications of the Fall for humanity and the created order. Finally, he delves into the complexities of Genesis 6 and the identity of the "sons of God."

##### **Main Themes and Important Ideas:**

#### **1. The Serpent's Crafty Challenge (Genesis 3:1-5):**

- Niehaus highlights the wordplay between "crafty" (arum) and "naked" (arum) in Hebrew, suggesting a deliberate connection to the loss of sinless innocence.
- The serpent is identified as "that ancient serpent called the devil or Satan who leads the whole world astray" (referencing Revelation 12:9).
- The serpent operates through lies and deception, echoing Jesus' description of him as "the father of lies."
- The serpent's initial question, "Did God really say you must not eat from any tree in the garden?" (Genesis 3:1), is a subtle but barbed challenge to God's word.
- The serpent misrepresents God's command by adding the word "not" to the permission to eat from any tree, subtly suggesting God is withholding good from humanity.
- Niehaus discusses the woman's response, particularly her addition of "you must not touch it" to God's command regarding the forbidden fruit. He challenges the classic view that this addition signifies early sin, arguing instead that it provides supplemental information not explicitly stated in Genesis 2, a characteristic of the "laconic nature of the previous narrative."

## 2. The Nature of Sin and Faith:

- Drawing on Romans 14:23, Niehaus defines sin as "whatever is not of faith."
- He explains biblical faith as "amening God," affirming and owning His being and doing. He connects this to the Hebrew verb "amen," meaning "it is so," and the act of someone in a congregation saying "amen" to a preacher's statement.
- Niehaus argues that if the woman were adding to God's word, she would be lying and therefore in sin, contradicting Paul's statement in 1 Timothy 2:14 that "the woman being deceived became a sinner," implying deception preceded her sin.

## 3. The Fall of Humanity (Genesis 3:6):

- The woman's act of taking and eating the fruit begins with "the lust of the eyes" (referencing 1 John 2:16), seeing that the tree was "good for food," "pleasing to the eye," and "desirable for gaining wisdom."
- Niehaus emphasizes that the sin lay not in the object itself but in the disobedience to God's command. He provides Old Testament examples (Genesis 6 - sons of God, Genesis 7 - Achan) where "seeing that something is good and then taking it" portrays sinful acquisition.
- He addresses the ambiguity of whether Adam was present during the temptation, noting that the Hebrew "who was with her" (im) in Genesis 3:6 doesn't necessarily imply immediate presence. He suggests Adam may have followed his wife's "Torah" (instruction) after the fact.

## 4. Consequences of the Fall:

- **Human Relations:** Adam's response, blaming God and the woman ("The woman you put here with me... she gave me some fruit... and I ate it"), reveals an avoidance of responsibility and a finding fault with God. The woman's response, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate," is considered a more accurate reflection of what happened, aligning with Paul's account.
- **Shift in Authority:** By heeding the serpent's and then the woman's "voice," Adam and Eve effectively treat them as authorities, substituting the Lord's "Torah" with the serpent's. This introduces the serpent (Satan) as the "small g god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4), under God's ultimate sovereignty.
- **Continued Mandate, Sinful Execution:** Despite the Fall, humanity continues the cultural mandate (being fruitful, multiplying, ruling, subduing), but now in a sinful

manner, leading to the damaging and destruction of the earth (Revelation 11:18, Isaiah 24).

- **God's Response: Covenant Lawsuit and Curse:** God initiates a "covenant lawsuit" as the first "covenant lawsuit prophet." Niehaus argues for a translation of Genesis 3:8 as "in the wind of the storm" (using the Hebrew "yom" meaning storm, based on Akkadian cognates), suggesting a theophany in judgment. Fear enters human-God relations.

## 5. The Curses (Genesis 3:14-19):

- **The Serpent:** Cursed above all animals, will crawl on its belly and eat dust. This symbolizes judgment. The "protevangelium" (Genesis 3:15) promises enmity between the serpent and the woman, and between their offspring. The same Hebrew verb (shuph/machatz) is used for "crush" (his head) and "strike" (his heel), indicating mortal blows, foreshadowing Christ's victory over Satan (Hebrews 2:14, Psalm 110).
- **The Woman:** Increased pain in childbearing and a dynamic in her relationship with her husband: "your desire will be for your husband, but he will rule over you." Niehaus interprets "desire" as a longing for intimacy, potentially inordinately so in a fallen state, and "rule over" (mashal) as potentially controlling and unbalanced. He cautions against building comprehensive marital theology solely on this ambiguous passage.
- **The Man:** The ground is cursed, resulting in resistance and painful toil ("futility curse"). Adam will ultimately return to the dust from which he was taken. Niehaus cites Deuteronomy 28 as a later example of a "futility curse."

## 6. Life Under the Adamic Covenant After the Fall:

- **Cain and the Non-Elect Line:** Intriguingly, the development of cities and technology (city-building, animal husbandry, music, metalworking) is attributed to Cain's line, potentially arising from insecurity and a desire for self-sufficiency.
- **Lamech:** His bigamy and boastful song are presented as examples of rule-breaking and an egoistic spirit, contrasting with the spirit of Christ's forgiveness (Matthew 18:21-22).
- **Increasing Sin and Genesis 6:** The narrative progresses to increasing wickedness, culminating in Genesis 6 and the account of the "sons of God" and the "daughters of men."

## 7. The Identity of the "Sons of God" (Genesis 6:1-4):

- Niehaus reviews three main interpretations:
- **Fallen Angel Interpretation:** Historically the dominant view, supported by the use of "Bnei Elohim" elsewhere in the Old Testament referring to angels (Psalm 89:6, Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7), the Septuagint translation as "angels of God," and a deliberate contrast with "daughters of men." Niehaus addresses objections, arguing that Jesus' statement about angels not marrying refers to holy angels in heaven, not fallen angels. He cites 2 Peter 2:4-5 and Jude 6-7 as New Testament passages that seem to support the idea of fallen angels who committed a significant sin related to sexual transgression, drawing a parallel to the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah.
- **Royal Interpretation:** Suggests the "sons of God" were ancient Near Eastern kings. Niehaus dismisses this due to the lack of extra-biblical evidence of kings being referred to as "sons of a god" or "god."
- **Sethite Interpretation:** Proposes the "sons of God" were descendants of Seth intermarrying with the daughters of Cain. Niehaus finds this unlikely given the deliberate contrast in terminology and the lack of any prior prohibition against such marriages.
- Niehaus concludes that the fallen angel interpretation is the most supported by the evidence, but emphasizes that one's view on this issue is not essential for salvation.

### Conclusion:

Dr. Niehaus provides a comprehensive and nuanced examination of the Adamic Covenant after the Fall. He highlights the deceptive nature of sin, the brokenness introduced into human-God and human-human relationships, and the pervasive impact of the curse on creation. His detailed analysis of Genesis 6 offers a robust defense of the traditional fallen angel interpretation while acknowledging alternative views. The session underscores the foundational nature of these early chapters for understanding the trajectory of biblical theology and the subsequent need for redemption.

## 4. Study Guide: Niehaus, Biblical Theology, Session 3, The Adamic Covenant, Part 3, After the Fall

### Study Guide: The Adamic Covenant After the Fall

#### Key Concepts

- **Craftiness (arum) and Nakedness:** The Hebrew word for crafty is a homonym for naked, highlighting the loss of sinless innocence as a consequence of the serpent's deception.
- **Serpent's Challenge:** The serpent subtly twists God's command, questioning its restrictiveness and God's intentions.
- **Woman's Response:** The woman accurately recounts God's command regarding the forbidden tree, including the detail about not touching it, which is likely supplemental information revealed through her.
- **Faith as Amening God:** Biblically, faith is understood as affirming God's being and doing, owning and embracing His truth. Sin is defined as whatever is not of faith.
- **Serpent's Lie:** The serpent directly contradicts God's warning of death, promising enlightenment and godlike knowledge of good and evil.
- **Consequences of the Fall (Genesis 3:7-24):** Shame, hiding from God, broken human relationships (blame-shifting), the woman's increased pain in childbirth and struggle in her relationship with her husband (desire and being lorded over), the man's toil and struggle with the cursed ground, and eventual death.
- **Protevangelium (Genesis 3:15):** The first announcement of the gospel, foretelling enmity between the serpent and the woman, and the eventual victory of her offspring over the serpent.
- **Covenant Lawsuit:** After the breach of the covenant, God acts as the first covenant lawsuit prophet, bringing judgment upon those who have transgressed.
- **Futility Curse:** Dr. Stuart's term for the nature of the curses in Genesis 3, where God brings frustration and reduced authority in the areas of the transgressors' primary endeavors.
- **Line of Cain:** Characterized by the development of cities and technology, potentially driven by insecurity and a desire for self-reliance. Lamech exemplifies increasing sin and disregard for God's ways.

- **Sons of God (Genesis 6):** A debated term with three main interpretations: fallen angels (historical majority view), royal figures, and the line of Seth. The fallen angel interpretation suggests a transgression of boundaries and illicit relationships leading to increased wickedness.
- **Nephilim:** The offspring of the "sons of God" and the "daughters of men," described as heroes of old, men of renown.
- **God's Grief (Genesis 6):** God's deep sorrow over the pervasive wickedness of humanity, leading to the decision to bring the flood.
- **Common Grace:** The idea that even fallen humanity can produce good things and develop technologies through God's general provision.

### Quiz

1. Describe the wordplay in Genesis 3:1 regarding the serpent. What is the significance of this wordplay in the context of the fall?
2. How does the serpent challenge God's command in Genesis 3:1? What specific tactic does he employ?
3. Explain Dr. Niehaus's argument regarding the woman's addition to God's command about the forbidden fruit. Why does he believe she was not necessarily sinning at that point?
4. Define "faith" as it is biblically understood according to the lecture. How does this definition relate to the concept of sin presented?
5. Summarize the serpent's direct contradiction of God's warning in Genesis 3:4-5. What does he promise instead?
6. Identify and briefly describe two consequences of the fall for human relationships as outlined in Genesis 3.
7. Explain the significance of Genesis 3:15, often referred to as the "protevangelium." What does it foreshadow?
8. What is a "futility curse" as described by Dr. Stuart and exemplified in Deuteronomy 28? How do the curses in Genesis 3 align with this concept?
9. According to the lecture, what might be the underlying reason for the development of cities and technology in the line of Cain?

10. Briefly outline the three main interpretations of the "sons of God" in Genesis 6.  
Which interpretation does Dr. Niehaus lean towards and why?

### Quiz Answer Key

1. The Hebrew word for "crafty" (arum) is a homonym for "naked" (arum). This wordplay is significant because it highlights that the serpent's craftiness leads to the loss of the original sinless state of spiritual and physical nakedness and innocence that Adam and Eve possessed before the fall.
2. The serpent begins by questioning the extent of God's command, asking, "Did God really say you must not eat from any tree in the garden?" He subtly distorts God's words by adding the word "not" to "any tree," implying God is withholding something good from them and casting doubt on God's generosity.
3. Dr. Niehaus argues that the woman's addition ("you must not touch it") is likely supplemental information that was not explicitly stated in Genesis 2 but was nonetheless part of God's instruction. He suggests that since the woman is not yet in a state of sin, her statement should be taken as truth, implying God provided more detailed instructions than initially recorded.
4. Biblically, faith (amening God) is the act of affirming, owning, and embracing God's being and doing. It is a complete agreement with and appropriation of His truth. Sin, conversely, is defined by Paul in Romans 14:23 as "whatever is not of faith," meaning anything that does not align with and affirm God.
5. The serpent directly contradicts God's statement that eating the fruit will lead to death by saying, "You will not surely die." Instead, he promises that their eyes will be opened, and they will become like God, knowing good and evil.
6. Two consequences for human relationships are Adam's blame-shifting response, where he faults God for giving him the woman, and the altered dynamic between man and woman described in the curse, where the woman will desire her husband, but he will "rule over" (lord it over) her, suggesting an imbalance and potential for unhealthy control.
7. The protevangelium (Genesis 3:15) is God's declaration of enmity between the serpent and the woman, and between their offspring. It foreshadows a future conflict and ultimate victory of the woman's offspring (understood messianically as Jesus Christ) who will crush the serpent's head, although the serpent will strike his heel.



8. A "futility curse" involves God bringing frustration and lack of success in the primary areas of an individual's endeavor as a consequence of disobedience. In Deuteronomy 28, this is seen in curses affecting various aspects of life, leading to oppression and lack of enjoyment of one's labor. The curses in Genesis 3 align by bringing futility to the serpent's craftiness, the woman's childbearing, and the man's work with the ground.
9. The lecture suggests that the development of cities and technology in the line of Cain may have arisen out of a sense of insecurity following Cain's sin and banishment. These developments could be seen as human attempts to provide protection and fulfillment independently of God, highlighting a lack of trust and reliance on Him.
10. The three main interpretations of the "sons of God" are: fallen angels, ancient Near Eastern royal figures, and the descendants of Seth. Dr. Niehaus leans towards the fallen angel interpretation, citing the historical prevalence of this view, the use of the term "sons of God" elsewhere in the Old Testament to refer to angels, and parallels in New Testament passages like 2 Peter and Jude.

## **Essay Format Questions**

1. Analyze the interaction between the serpent and the woman in Genesis 3:1-6. What rhetorical strategies does the serpent employ, and how does the woman's response evolve throughout the conversation? Consider the implications of her statements and actions.
2. Discuss the concept of "faith as amening God" as presented in the lecture. How does this understanding of faith illuminate the nature of sin and the consequences of the fall in Genesis 3?
3. Compare and contrast the curses pronounced upon the serpent, the woman, and the man in Genesis 3:14-19. In what ways do these curses represent a "futility curse," and what do they reveal about the altered relationship between humanity, God, and creation after the fall?
4. Explore the significance of the "protevangelium" in Genesis 3:15 within the broader narrative of the Adamic Covenant after the fall. How does this verse offer hope amidst the judgment, and how does the lecture connect it to later biblical passages?

5. Evaluate the different interpretations of the "sons of God" in Genesis 6. Based on the evidence presented in the lecture, which interpretation do you find most compelling, and what are the implications of this passage for understanding the increase of wickedness before the flood?

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Adamic Covenant:** The covenant established by God with Adam in the Garden of Eden, outlining his responsibilities and the blessings and consequences associated with obedience and disobedience.
- **Arum (עָרוֹם):** Hebrew word meaning "crafty" or "shrewd," used to describe the serpent in Genesis 3:1. It is also a homonym for "naked" (רוֹם - arom).
- **Amening God:** A concept presented in the lecture defining biblical faith as actively affirming, owning, and embracing God's being and doing; agreeing with and making His truth one's own.
- **Protevangelium:** A theological term for Genesis 3:15, the first announcement of the gospel, which speaks of enmity between the serpent and the woman and the eventual triumph of her offspring over the serpent.
- **Laconic:** Characterized by using very few words; concise to the point of being enigmatic or mysterious. Used in the lecture to describe the early narratives in Genesis that provide essential information but may lack exhaustive details.
- **Merism (or Merismus):** A figure of speech by which a totality is expressed by two contrasting parts. The lecture suggests "good and evil" in Genesis 3 could be a merism meaning "everything" or "all knowledge."
- **Torah:** Hebrew word meaning "law," "teaching," or "instruction." In the context of the fall, the lecture discusses the woman accepting the serpent's instruction as her Torah.
- **Suzerain:** A dominant state or authority that controls other subordinate states or entities through a covenant or treaty. The lecture refers to God as the ultimate Suzerain and, after the fall, Satan as the "small s" suzerain of the world with God's permission.
- **Theophany:** A visible manifestation of God to humanity, often accompanied by dramatic natural phenomena. The lecture discusses God's coming in the "wind of the storm" after the fall as His first theophany of judgment.

- **Futility Curse:** A term used in the lecture, attributed to Dr. Stuart, to describe curses that result in frustration, lack of success, and reduced authority in the areas of the cursed individual's primary responsibilities or endeavors.
- **Common Grace:** The undeserved favor of God shown to all humanity, regardless of their faith, which allows for earthly blessings, abilities, and the development of societies and technologies.
- **B'nei Elohim (בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים):** Hebrew phrase meaning "sons of God." Its interpretation in Genesis 6 is debated, with the primary views being fallen angels, royal figures, or the descendants of Seth.
- **Nephilim (נְפִילִים):** A term found in Genesis 6:4, referring to the offspring of the "sons of God" and the "daughters of men." They are described as heroes of old, men of renown.

## 5. FAQs on Niehaus, Biblical Theology, Session 3, The Adamic Covenant, Part 3, After the Fall, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

### Frequently Asked Questions: The Adamic Covenant After the Fall

**1. What was the key challenge the serpent presented in Genesis 3, and how did it relate to God's original command?** The serpent initiated his challenge by questioning God's word, asking, "Did God really say you must not eat from any tree in the garden?" This was a subtle but profound manipulation of God's actual command, which was, "You may eat freely of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat" (Genesis 2:16-17). The serpent's question introduced a negative where God had emphasized permission, implying that God was withholding something good from humanity. Furthermore, by asking "from *any* tree," he misrepresented God's generosity and set the stage to cast doubt on God's benevolence and truthfulness.

**2. The woman in Genesis 3:2-3 adds the phrase "you shall not touch it" to God's command about the forbidden fruit. Is this considered sinful?** Traditionally, many interpreters believed the woman's addition was a misrepresentation of God's command and thus a sin, potentially even preceding her eating the fruit. This view suggests she was already going astray by putting words in God's mouth. However, Dr. Niehaus proposes an alternative understanding. He argues that the earlier narrative in Genesis 2 is "laconic," meaning it provides only a limited amount of information. The woman's statement, including the prohibition against touching the tree, could be supplemental data that was indeed part of God's instruction to Adam (and subsequently relayed to Eve) but not explicitly recorded in Genesis 2. In this view, she is not sinning by lying or misrepresenting God, but rather providing a more complete picture of the divine restriction. The concept of faith as "amening God"—affirming and owning His being and doing—is central here. If she were lying, she would not be amening God's truth.

**3. What was the core deception used by the serpent, and what did he falsely promise to Adam and Eve?** The serpent directly contradicted God's warning of death, stating, "You will not surely die." This was his primary lie. He then proceeded to offer a false promise, claiming that by eating the fruit, "your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." This played on the inherent desire for knowledge and elevated status, suggesting that God was keeping them from achieving their full potential. The serpent's use of the plural "you" also subtly included Adam in the temptation.

**4. What does Dr. Niehaus suggest was the fundamental sin committed by Adam and Eve in response to the serpent's temptation?** Dr. Niehaus argues that the core sin was the act of accepting the serpent's "Torah" (law, instruction) over God's. When the woman heeded the serpent's counsel and ate the fruit, and when Adam heeded the voice of his wife and followed suit, they were effectively treating the serpent (and then the woman's word) as the authority in their lives, substituting his guidance for God's explicit command. This act of disobedience and misplaced allegiance led to the introduction of the serpent (Satan) and his influence into the world, making him the "god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4) with God's permission.

**5. What were some of the immediate consequences of the fall on human relationships and the created order?** The immediate consequences included a breakdown in trust and harmony. Adam deflected blame onto Eve and indirectly onto God, saying, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate" (Genesis 3:12). Eve, while acknowledging the serpent's deception, still bore responsibility. The relationship between man and woman was also affected, with God stating that the woman's desire would be for her husband, but he would "rule over" or "lord it over" her, indicating a potential for imbalance and unhealthy control. Furthermore, the ground itself was cursed, leading to painful toil and the production of thorns and thistles, frustrating humanity's mandate to subdue the earth.

**6. How does Dr. Niehaus explain the seemingly paradoxical development of civilization and technology through Cain's lineage after the fall?** Dr. Niehaus notes the intriguing detail that the descendants of Cain are credited with the development of cities, animal husbandry, music, and metalworking. He suggests this may have arisen out of a sense of insecurity and a desire for self-reliance in a fallen world. Cain built a city because he felt vulnerable. His offspring developed technologies that offered protection, diversion, and a sense of control. While these developments occur under God's common grace, the underlying motivation and potential outcome can be a feeling of independence from God, echoing the original temptation to "be like God."

**7. What is the prevailing interpretation of "the sons of God" in Genesis 6, and what evidence supports this view?** The majority view, historically and among many scholars today, is that "the sons of God" (B'nei Elohim) in Genesis 6 refer to fallen angels who engaged in sexual relations with human women ("the daughters of men"). Supporting evidence includes the fact that elsewhere in the Old Testament, this term is used exclusively for angels. The Septuagint translates it as "the angels of God." Furthermore, New Testament passages like 2 Peter 2:4-5 and Jude 1:6-7 seem to allude to a specific group of sinning angels who are imprisoned, potentially connecting their sin to the events of Genesis 6 and the sexual immorality of Sodom and Gomorrah.

**8. What is the "protevangelium" in Genesis 3:15, and why is it significant?** The "protevangelium" (first gospel) is God's declaration to the serpent in Genesis 3:15: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." This is a foundational prophetic statement that foreshadows the future conflict between good and evil, represented by the offspring of the woman and the offspring of the serpent (understood as Satan). The "bruising of the head" by the woman's offspring signifies a decisive and ultimately fatal blow to the serpent's power, while the "bruising of the heel" indicates suffering that the offspring will endure in this conflict. This verse is considered the first announcement of the coming redemption through the seed of the woman, ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ's victory over Satan.