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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Eschatology

“The Edenic Covenant”

TRANSCRIPT

In our last study together which was entitled “The Covenants of Scripture: Everlasting and Historical,” we considered the nature of the covenantal system, and we spoke about such things as the essentials of a covenant, the two types of covenant, and we defined a covenant as a gracious undertaking of God or administration by which he determines to confer upon certain persons his blessings.

We also talked about the theological covenants, and by theological covenants we refer to the covenant of redemption, the covenant of works, the covenant of grace. I feel that last time I overlooked saying one sentence that might be of significance. When we were speaking of the covenant of redemption what I said about that I stand behind totally, but when I was speaking about the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, I should have added something that might help to cast a little bit different light on what I was saying.

It is true that the Bible does not say that there is such a thing as the covenant of works, and also the Bible does not speak specifically of the covenant of grace, and so as far as I am concerned in the case of this latter covenant, particularly, I do not feel that the covenant of grace is really a scriptural covenant, but I presented those three covenants because they are part of the covenantal system, and being part of the covenantal system

held by a great number of theologians, it is of importance to us in our interaction with them that we understand that there is on the part of a great mass of genuine believers the claim that there are three covenants that are paramount in the theological system of the Bible: the covenant of redemption, the covenant of works, the covenant of grace.

The remainder of our study was devoted to the eternal covenant of redemption, and I sought to show from the word of God that there is justification for believing that there does exist such a thing as the covenant of redemption - a covenant made between the persons of the Godhead in eternity that determines our individual salvation. I also said, and this I think is an important point, I tried to point out that the covenant of redemption is manifested in the historical covenants that are set forth in the Scriptures. In other words, the covenantal system that is found in the Bible -- the specific historical covenants made at points of time in the history of mankind, such as the covenant in the Garden of Eden, the Noahic Covenant, the covenant made with Abraham, the Sinaitic Covenant, the Palestinian Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, the New Covenant -- all of these historical covenants are the outworking in time and the fulfillment in time of the stipulations that pertain to the eternal covenant between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. So what I am suggesting to you is that the historical covenants are the outworking in time of the eternal covenant of redemption.

Now we will deal with each one of the covenants in order, and we are turning to the Edenic Covenant called by the theological system, the Covenant of Works -- the Edenic Covenant and Eschatology. So this is our subject. We want to look at the Edenic Covenant and Eschatology. This is the first of the historical covenants in which the eternal covenant of redemption issues.

Now let’s read for our Scripture reading Genesis chapter 2 verse 8 through verse 17. And we read in the 8th verse,

“And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and

there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became four heads. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; (that would be a nice place to know about in the present economic crisis) And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Cush. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: and this is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates. And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to till it and to keep it (or as the King James version says, to dress it and to keep it). And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

The passage as you recognize has to do with man’s probation. It suggests many interesting questions such as is the probation of man in the Garden of Eden a real probation or is it a mythical probation? Is it something that happened in history or is it simply a literary device by which the writer of the Book of Genesis refers to a kind of general truth? How does sin begin in the human heart? That is a question we will not try to answer tonight, but that is a question suggested by the probation. Was Adam a representative man? If so, is that fair? Is it fair that one man should stand for many?

Now of course the Bible, I think, presents very plainly the fact that Adam was a representative man. We will say a great deal more about it later. And the Bible also suggests that there is nothing unjust about it. God did not deal with mankind as with a field of corn where each stalk stands upon its own individual root, but he dealt with mankind as if mankind were a tree, all of the branches of which have one common root and trunk. If you strike with an axe at the root of a tree the whole tree falls, not only the trunk but also the branches and the leaves. And so when Adam fell, God permitted Satan to lay the ax to the root of the tree, and when Adam fell all his posterity fell with him for Adam was a representative man. That is the picture in the words of a well-known commentator that Genesis chapter 2 presents for us.

The passage also suggests the doctrine of the covenants for it may contain the description of the first of the historical ones. I shall seek to show that it does contain the history of the first of the historical covenants. Is there in reality a covenant here? That question we will seek answer. If so, what are its features and how is it related to Eschatology? That of course is what we are trying to do tonight in our time of study. So we turn first of all to the biblical description of the probation. Genesis 2 verse 8 through verse 17.

Derek Kitner who has written a very useful commentary on the Book of Genesis has said some very effective words about the probation in the Garden of Eden. He has said, “The Lord’s probation is a model of parental care. The fledgling is sheltered but not smothered. On all sides discoveries and encounters await him to draw out his powers of discernment and choice, and there is ample nourishment for his aesthetic physical and spiritual appetites. Further, there is a man’s work before him, for his body and mind.”

Now it is evident I think from a careful looking at the context here that God did everything he could to make this probation a favorable probation for Adam and for Eve. But let’s look at it in a little detail. First the garden and the trees, and there are three factors that demand just a little bit of notice here under the garden and the trees.

First of all, I want to mention my opinion that this scene is a real scene and not a symbolical scene. Many modern theologians describe this probation which is set forth for us in Genesis chapter 2 as a myth. Now by myth they do not mean that this is an event that is totally untrue. By myth, they mean a symbolical representation of non-historical truth. They wish to affirm that the facts of Genesis, chapters 1 through 3 are true; that is, that men evidently have had a fall or at least that men are sinful. But the historical details of Genesis 1 through 3 are denied. Barth’s term for this particular kind of literature is, saga, but there are things in the context that suggest that the writer of the Book of Genesis regarded these events here as true historically.

For example, we have geographical phrases mentioned which were well known geographical phrases and secondly, we have descriptions of the land and the rivers descriptions that speak to us of a definite locale. And these things emphasize that Eden is an actual and not an allegorical spot. Further, when we turn to the New Testament, the New Testament authors as they look back at the creation and the fall, they regard also these events as true and historical. There is no evidence whatsoever that the Apostle Paul accommodated himself to the language of the people and wrote as if they were historical though he did not believe that they were historical. And our Lord Jesus himself refers to these same events, and so far as he is concerned again, there is no evidence that he accommodated himself to these stories as if they were not true, but he was accommodating himself to them only because the people believe them to be true and because they did communicate certain general truths. So the scene is real. It is not symbolical.

Second I want you to notice there are two trees in the midst of the garden. That is specifically stated here in the context.

The third thing the trees are literal trees, and yet they are sacramental or symbolical in significance. Now I don’t want to you to misunderstand this I’m not denying what I have said previously. I am saying that they are historical trees, but they

also have a sacramental or symbolical or spiritual sense. They are seals. They are outward visible signs of the blessings that were promised in the covenant that is made between God and man, and they are also signs, these seals of the covenants, of God’s faithfulness in giving his covenants.

We see this particularly in the case of the Noahic Covenant in which the rainbow becomes a seal of the faithfulness of God, and then we see it in connection with Abrahamic Covenant in which the male children are to be circumcised in token of the faithfulness of God in fulfilling the covenant to a certain class of people, for the circumcision, the rite of circumcision, becomes the sign and the seal of the righteousness which is by faith. And so the tree of life in the Garden of Eden is a kind of seal or symbol of the covenant that is made between God and man.

We must not of course err as has so often been done and take the seals as seals that produce life of themselves. Paul argues against that in the case of circumcision in Romans chapter 4. He points out that the Jews have made a very serious mistake in thinking that the rite of circumcision is that by which a person becomes righteousness. It is only a sign and a seal. It was never intended of itself to convey blessing, but it’s symbolical of the blessing that God conveys. And this of course applies to baptism, which is a kind of sign and seal of the New Covenant inaugurated by our Lord Jesus Christ, for all who have believed are to be baptized in water. But this is a sign and seal of what has taken place spiritually through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and our Lord Jesus Christ and of course it is never to be understood as that by which we attain to righteousness.

The rivers are set forth here, and I don’t want to comment on them I just refer you to the fact that in verses 10 through 14 Moses describes the rivers that proceed out of Eden. We come to see in our outline the probation, verses 15 through 17. This is God’s work ethic. We hear a lot about work ethic when we think about sociology and also our present society in the United States. Well this is God’s work ethic. Man was put into the

Garden of Eden to till it and to keep it. He was given a specific task to do. The first sin was a willful and wanton sin, since it was committed under circumstances that made it easy not to commit it.

Now I hope that you get this because there are some who seem to think, I think it really is part of our human nature, that God was unfair in putting man in the Garden of Eden and resting the destiny of mankind upon Adam's response to the test with which he was faced.

Now I think of course that this idea that God is unjust in doing this arises out of our nature. We are individuals who are born into this world under sin. I have often said and I stick by it today that we are born legalists and Pharisees, and then we are born again as Arminians, and it is the work of God the Holy Spirit to bring us from legalism and pharisaism into Christianity, and it's the work of God the Holy Spirit -- and I don't know if the Holy Spirit were able to speak out he might say that this is a harder work -- to bring a Christian from Arminianism into an understanding of the doctrines of grace.

Now this is one reason why man tends to think of these provisions of God as being unfair. He reacts negatively to the idea that Adam should stand for us. We should each stand on our own. Why are we guilty because someone has sinned, and all of the kinds of objections that the old nature thinks up and there are many of them. I want you to notice that every opportunity was given to man in the Garden of Eden to succeed in this testing. Let me suggest a few things that enhance Adam's standing in the garden.

First of all, Adam's glorious endowment. He was free from sin. Negatively free from sin. He had no ancestry behind him of sinners. He had no corruption within him. Now the Pelegians as you know deny original sin entirely. They rule it all out and they say that we all stand on our own merits before God. That would be terrible, because no one of us would ever be saved. We all stand up on our own feet before God. Well if you say, what about Adam? What about the fact that everybody seems to fail? Well it is true, everybody seems to fail, but the reason we fail is not because we sinned in Adam

and a sin nature is communicated to us, the reason we sin is because we have such bad examples in front of us.

Now of course, when the Lord Jesus came there was one good example, but nobody appears to have followed him. The Pelegian system falls to the ground. Adam was free from sin negatively, he had no bad ancestry behind him, he had no corruption within him and positively he was made in the image of God, he was blessed with divine communion in fellowship with God and placed in the fairest of environments. Talk about the new society or the Great Society. This was truly a great society, and in the midst of the great society we have a great fall by a person who was in communion with God. So Adam’s glorious endowment was a tremendous incentive for man to succeed.

Second, the maximum freedom was allowed Adam and the minimum was forbidden. Even the way in which Eve expresses it illustrates that. We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden she says, but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden the Lord God had said it, in verse 16 of of chapter 2, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but there is just one -- just one -- the maximum is allowed the minimum is forbidden. Every opportunity is given, humanly speaking, to succeed.

And third, he is not given a policy that he is to follow. He is not given a principle that he is to follow. There might be some question about the application of a policy or a principle. What he is given a bare word -- a direct word -- do not eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. That is just about as explicit as you could possibly have a provision. Therefore, this probation is a kind of probation in which everything seems to be working for man and nothing seems to be working against him.

We come now to the theological significance of the probation. Is there an Edenic Covenant and what are its features? Now I want to speak first about the fact of the Edenic Covenant. You can see as you read through Genesis chapter 2 and Genesis chapter 3 that the term, covenant, is not found here at all. That would seem right at the beginning that well, this must not be a covenant; the word covenant is not found. But we have learned

in our theological study, I hope, that we don’t necessarily have to have a specific word to have the essential features of a thing.

We have seen this in the most obvious illustration in the case of the Trinity. There is no term for “trinity” in the Bible and yet that basic and essential doctrine is clearly taught. We do not have any specific terms for the old nature and the new nature and yet that specific and important doctrine is clearly taught in the New Testament. Whether we call it our two wills our two natures our two dispositions, we still have the fact of this conflict within the believing individual. It is taught in Scripture, even though the expressions, the two natures, may not be found. In Augustine’s, the two wills, may not be found. So we admit the term covenant is not found. But nevertheless the essentials of this kind of arrangement are found.

What is a covenant? Well in a covenant a covenant is an arrangement between parties with stipulations of performance. An agreement with between parties and in this agreement there are stipulations of performance.

Now it’s evident that this is an agreement between two persons and there are stipulations of performance. And second, in a covenant, you ordinarily have a promise of reward for faithful fulfillment of the stipulations. We have promise of reward in this section. That seems to be the implication, and when we study the whole of the Bible, it appears plain that the promise of reward implicit in all that is set forth here is the promise of an eternal life. that would be unlosable as far as Adam is concerned. And third in covenants there was a threat of penalty in case the covenants were broken.

Now there is certainly a thread here, because we read if Adam eats of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the day that he eats of it he shall surely die. So here is an agreement between two persons with stipulations of performance, there is a promise of a reward, and there is also a promise of the sanction of a penalty. Now that is what a covenant is. So even though the term is not used what we do have in Genesis chapter 2 is a covenant between Adam and Christ.

Now I think we do have outside of Genesis a reference to this as being a covenant, so I’m going to ask you now to turn over with me to Hosea chapter 6 and verse 7. The Book of Hosea. Now for those of you that are desperate, I am looking at page 923 in the New Edition of the Scofield Reference Bible. Now Hosea chapter 6, and I want you to notice specifically verse 7. Now Hosea chapter 6 and verse 7. The text reads,

“But they (now of course Hosea is speaking about Israel’s backsliding and apostasy from God and he says) But they like men have transgressed the covenant.” (The key phrase is the phrase like men.)

Now as you well know from your study of the Bible by now, the term for man is *adam*, and the term for Adam, Adam’s name, was *Adam*. His name was “man.” Now this in the original text, in the Hebrew text here, is not plural but singular so we really should render this I think, But they, Israel, like Adam, have transgressed the covenant. And thus it seems to me that Hosea chapter 6 and verse 7 is a biblical justification for saying that there is such a thing as an Edenic Covenant, or a covenant of works, as the Theological System suggests a covenant of works. They like Adam have transgressed the covenant.

We look now at the features of the Edenic Covenant, and now I want to speak in just a little more detail about the features of this Edenic Covenant. First of all, the contracting parties, the parties in this covenant are the triune God on the one hand and the first man, Adam, on the other. These are the parties in the Edenic Covenant or the covenant of works or the first historical covenant.

Now one might say, one might ask at this point, did Adam consent to this arrangement? Well I think there is every evidence in this opening account in the Book of Genesis that he did consent. In the first place, it would be inconceivable that God’s creation in fellowship with him should refuse to enter into such a gracious arrangement with God. We have no evidence of Adam’s refusal. That of course does not positively

say that he did consent. But when we turn over to chapter 3, we read with reference to the temptation of the woman, the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field and he said unto the woman, yea hath God said ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden God hath said, ye shall not eat of it neither shall ye touch it, let ye die. So it’s evident that as far as Eve was concerned, she considered herself to be under the covenant, so her response suggests that there was no question about the consent of Adam to this arrangement.

Further, after the fact of their sin when God comes down into the Garden of Eden, and when he begins to ask Adam and Eve questions, the most logical answer for Adam to have given God in the light of his failure if it were true, would be for him to say, but I never accepted that covenant. I never accepted that arrangement. And since there is nothing of that there, we conclude that there is good evidence for saying in answer to the question, did Adam consent? Yes, Adam did consent to this covenant.

Now he stood, therefore, as a representative man. That is made plain for us in Romans chapter 5 verse 12 through verse 21, 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and verse 22 and other passages throughout Scripture. Those are the two great passages of course. As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. If it were not true that Adam was a representative man, then all of us come into the world as children of wrath by nature, Paul says in Ephesians chapter 3, we come in as children of wrath by nature. We are corrupt we have an old nature that we are born with. We cannot help but sin. We are on our way to perdition, and we are on our way to perdition, we are corrupt, we are children of wrath by nature, for nothing at all if Adam were not a representative man.

The injustice of an arrangement such as this is something that we don’t have time to deal with in great detail -- the so-called injustice of course. We don’t have time to deal with this in detail, but I’m sure that you realize that as far as the Bible is concerned, there

is no question about the justice of this arrangement, and if you have any question about it you should consider the alternatives.

Let us suppose that we do not have such an arrangement as this. Then we say that we each stand for ourselves and further, we must stand for ourselves alone. Adam was a fully matured man who came fresh from the hand of God in creation, but in our case when should we stand our test? Just at the time that we came to accountability. When is the age of accountability? Why the age of accountability, when we would we know? Many people think the age of accountability is for between the ages of eight say and fifteen. How would you like to stand your test at that time? When would you like to stand your test? Would like to stand your test as soon as you came to accountability, or would you rather have your test undertaken for you by a person who came fresh from the hand of God and who stood as a mature person created by God who had fellowship with God in such a beautiful environment as the Garden of Eden? I think God’s arrangement is eminently wise and eminently proper. We’ll talk about that a little more later on. The contracting parties then, the triune God and Adam.

Second. The promise of the covenant. One might say, did not Adam have spiritual life already? How can we say then that through the covenant in the Garden of Eden he was promised life? Well yes, Adam had spiritual life in the garden, but the life that he possessed was amissible. That is, it was something he could lose. It was not something that was his permanently. He had it. It was amissable. It was probationary. It was not the ultimate eternal life. The penalty that follows suggests that eternal life was the promise, ultimately, and Adam if he passed his test, would attain to eternal life, but the kind of life that he had before he fell while it was spiritual life, it was not eternal life.

Three. The objective test of the covenant. The tree is the center of course of the objective test of the covenant. What does it mean to partake of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil? There have been a number of interpretations given of this. Some have suggested that this tree signifies the experimental knowledge of good and evil,

and that Adam and Eve by partaking of the fruit of the tree entered into the experimental knowledge of good and evil. Why that could hardly be the meaning of it, because in the 22nd verse of chapter 3 and we read, “And the LORD God said behold the man has become as one of us to know good and evil.” And God does not know experientially good and evil by having himself been guilty of good and evil. That is not what it means to partake of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Von Raute, a well known Old Testament scholar, has suggested that it is really omniscience that is offered, or that is referred to by the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, but even he himself becomes unsatisfied with his own suggestion, because having made the suggestion in a few words later on he acknowledges that not is not really exactly what is meant, signifying of course that Von Raute has confusion running around in his mind.

Others have said that this is sexual awakening; the knowledge of good and evil has reference to sexual awakening. Augustine speaks with respect to that though he does not hold that particular view.

The most of the commentators and students of the Book of Genesis have affirmed that what is involved here is autonomy in the determination of right and wrong, that this was something that rested totally with God. It is he who has the autonomous right to determine autonomously what is right and what is wrong. And man being a creature should have respected the fact that God the Creator has that ultimate right to determine what is right and wrong. And so since the latter belongs only to God, man by sin forfeits his creaturehood’s glory by seizing from God his right to determine what is right and what is wrong.

It is evident, too, and I think anyone studying Genesis chapter 2 gets this impression, it’s evident that the emphasis does not fall upon the tree itself and its properties so much as it falls upon the fact that it was the center of the test to which Adam was put. It was not sinful to eat of the tree per se -- there was nothing sinful or

immoral about the tree -- it was what that tree signified that made it sinful and immoral. It wasn't an immoral tree. It wasn't a tree full of pieces of fruit or parts of it that were for example, narcotic or alcoholic. It was not an immoral kind of tree. In itself it was all right. It was a bare tree which was put in that garden to symbolize an important spiritual fact that God is the Creator and we are the creatures, and he has that right to determine good and evil. In other words, the issue was not a tree and its properties. The issue was simply this submission to the sovereign will of God. That was the issue.

Four. The subjective test of the covenant. God's demands were settled upon one point: faith-obedience to his will. Adam was placed under law, natural law; that is, he was prompted by his nature to please God. Moral law -- he was under the equivalent of the Ten Commandments. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart with all thy soul with all thy mind thy neighbor as thyself. And he was under the special law relating to that particular tree. But the issue is faith-obedience. Will Adam believe God or will he not believe God? That is the question.

Five. The purpose of the test. The aim of the test was immutable perfection. It was God's desire that Adam, so far as the text is concerned, that Adam, by successfully meeting the test should attain to indefectability or immutable perfection. God was not carrying out this test as a kind of satisfaction of his curiosity. He didn't create Adam and say, now, I wonder what Adam will do. I wonder what this creature of mine will do; I'll play with him like a man plays with an animal or with one of his own creations. He didn't create Adam out of a sense of malevolence. Now, I'm going to put it to my creation. But rather he wished that Adam, his preceptive will was that Adam should survive the test and attain to immutable perfection. He was created something like a child, someone has said, perfect in parts but not yet in degree. He had positive holiness but it was an amissible holiness; that is, a holiness he could lose. It appears that all of God's creation that are sensible undergo tests. Even the angels, some of them, attained to

the test, passed it -- the elect angels. Some have not. Some angels have been cast down to torture us. Some have failed in other ways.

Sixth. The penalty of the covenant. Now I’m sure from our studies together that you understand that the penalty of the covenant was spiritual death. That includes corporeal death with all the miseries that go along with our present circumstances of life. All of the miseries that we undergo are simply the issues of our spiritual death. This by the way is why there is no such thing as healing as a ministry of the Holy Spirit throughout this age. For all of us die. All of us have to have cavities in our teeth; that is, most of us there may be someone who has not but it’s a general fact of human nature. All of us get wrinkles on our faces. I’m not trying to call any attention to yours, but just look at mine. All of us obtain gray hairs sooner or later if that is if we have any hair. There are the unmistakable signs of age in all of us.

Now those unmistakable signs of age are the unmistakable signs of sin, and they are the unmistakable signs of the Fall. They are the unmistakable signs of the penalty of eternal death. In the 116th Psalm and the 3rd verse we read, “The sorrows of death have compassed me, and the pains of Sheol got hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.” You can say this about every human experience. We are all faced with troubles and sorrows and those troubles and sorrows are the explicit, direct consequences of Adam’s fall in the Garden of Eden and our participation in it.

Now in addition to spiritual death, including corporeal death with its miseries, we have ultimately eternal death, consignment to the lake of fire. So the essential penalty of sin in the Garden of Eden was spiritual death manifested in physical death, with all of the intermediate consequences, and eternal death if we do not escape through faith in our Lord Jesus.

Capital C. The failure of man in the covenant. We must touch here only upon the nature of man’s fall. Many of you in this class have been with me when we spent several hours on the Fall of Man -- in fact spent five or six or seven hours on the Fall and its

consequences a couple of years ago. I only want to emphasize again that when Adam fell it was a representative fall, and when he fell the covenant was broken. They like Adam or like man have transgressed the covenant. The covenant in the Garden of Eden was broken when Adam sinned. That covenant of works is no longer in force. The single failure of Adam is described in the book of Romans in the 5th chapter by such terms as “the offense of one,” “the transgression of one,” “the disobedience of the Garden of Eden.” It was a rebellion against the law of God, and so it was a transgression -- that word means to step over the line. You know how we often used to do as a kid, get in an argument, you want to fight and you want to lay the blame on the other person if you can, draw a line say step over that and I’m gonna swat you.

Now when you step over you transgress that’s the very word that is used by Paul in Romans chapter 5. It expresses the fact that God gave Adam this command in Genesis chapter 2 verse 16, and he stepped over the line, and as a result he fell. Offense. That’s a term that means to fall by the wayside. *Paraptoma* – it means “to fall by the way.” Why that is exactly what happened. It was a fall. A fall by the way. And further, the law came along that that fall might abound, so later on God gave the Ten Commandments in order that you might see that you have fallen that there might be a kind of recognition of the Fall in the Garden of Eden in your case, and you would see the connection perhaps. And then it was spoken of as a disobedience in the sense that it arose out of a heart which rebelled against God in unbelief. However, when Adam sinned, we all sinned because Adam was a federal head. Theologians like to use the term, public. Adam was a public person. He’s a person who stood representatively for others so that you and I were in Adam. In Adam all die. In Christ shall all be made alive. And so everyone of us was in Adam, and Adam – [indistinct] women’s lib -- Adam was the legal representative of Eve. Don’t like that, do you ladies? But it was true.

Now that is shown by Genesis chapter 3. I wonder if you’ve ever noticed this. Genesis chapter 3 and verse 7 when we read that the woman she took of the fruit and she

ate and nothing happened. Did you ever notice that? Nothing happened. But we read she gave also to her husband with her and he did eat, and then I want to use a figure of speech which we often use, all hell broke loose, for we read in verse 7, “And the eyes of them both were opened.” Now you will notice that Eve’s eyes were not opened until Adam sinned. It is Adam who is the public person. It is Adam who is the representative man. The eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons. When Eve ate the fruit nothing happened. When Adam did the eyes of them both were opened. Adam is the head. Eat your heart out, libbers.

Now when we turn over the 5th chapter to the Epistle to the Romans, Eve is not even mentioned in Romans chapter 5: “Wherefore is by one man’s sin entered into the world and death by sin so death passed upon all men because all sinned.” And then the count goes on to talk about the sin of Adam. Reason for this, of course, is that Adam is the representative man and Eve is taken out of Adam. She is from Adam. He is the head.

Now on the other hand, ladies, this is your opportunity. It was Adam who deliberately murdered unnumbered generations of men by his rebellious act against God, and we should never forget that. Eve was deceived. Paul says she was utterly deceived. But Adam was a man who looked the consequences full in the face, evidently understood, and simply, rebelliously rejected the word of God. That’s nothing to be proud about men.

There is a divine aptness in this. As we look back now, of course, we see that this plan is such a beautiful plan. I have no objections, no objections whatsoever to it. It often tries my patience that man objects to this arrangement in the Garden of Eden. Had God enabled Adam to stand, could we speak then of Adam as our savior? That would have been far too great a glory for any human creature. But the justice of it is set forth in so many ways, and I have spoken this so often and outlined those ways -- it’s not necessary for me to talk about it in its detail -- but as far as I’m concerned, I am happy

that Adam stood as my representative. I am sure that had I stood by myself, I should have fallen.

And further, since Adam was my representative and God entered into this kind of system whereby one man stood for the great mass to follow, think of the benefits of having resting upon your conscience as motivation the fact that your act will involve your posterity. In other words, Adam as my representative, was given certain motivations which I could never have if I stood on my own, because my act would not affect my posterity, since I would not be a public man.

And then also, in addition, in this arrangement which God has established between Adam and the race, there is also implicit in it the possibility of another Adam coming and standing as a representative man for others. And so by establishing a representative principle in dealing with men, God evidently in his wisdom establishes also the possibility of dealing with us in redemption in the same way, and our Lord Jesus has come as a representative man and has died as a representative man and thus through his victory has made it possible for a great multitude which no man can number to come into the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and the possession of eternal life. I like representation. I love it. I think it’s one of the most masterly thoughts that God has ever had. The thought of federal representation.

Now finally Roman three, just a few comments here: The Eschatological significance of the Edenic Covenant. We notice only a couple of aspects of this. The original purpose of God ,looking at it perceptively, of course, is expressed in Genesis chapter 1 verse 26 through 28, and here we read, “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.” Notice that God created man for dominion -- let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and we read in verse 28, “And God blessed him, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it:

and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” In other words, God gave man dominion over the earth.

That was his mind, that man should have dominion over the creation, but the Fall took place and as a result of the Fall, man’s promised dominion was lost. Jesus Christ however has come and through his saving work has regained for man, for he acts representatively, the dominion which Adam lost in the Fall so we read in Hebrews chapter 2 and verse 5, “For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, of which we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.” That is in the original constitution. For in that, he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him.

But now the writer says now we see not yet all things put under him, because the Fall has come into existence and man is not in rule over his creation. The creation is not in subjection to him. But the author says we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. And through our representative we shall have the dominion which God intended that man should have as a result of his original creation. That of course is something that is to come to him in the ultimate working out of the purpose of God.

So I say just a word now about the ultimate purpose of God. There are two things to note simply. First, the Messianic rule -- that’s the fulfillment in history of just what we have been talking about -- through the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus, through the victory of that Advent, the Lord Jesus is going to assume dominion over the whole of the earth for the millennial kingdom. We read in verse 25 of 1Corinthians 15, and the

passage we have looked at already we shall look at it in detail later, “For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.” So the fulfillment in history of the Messianic rule is one of the purposes of God through redemption. In other words there’s going to be a restoration to the pristine glory of Eden in which man really does have dominion over the creation.

And then finally the eternal rule. In the eternal rule which is the ultimate purpose of God God shall be supreme in his creation for eternity with a host of worshippers in grace, but they throughout that eternal age shall rule and reign in their and with their representative, the Lord Jesus Christ. And have you noticed that in the Book of Revelation when we come to the last chapter of that book, which is the last book of the Bible, we have again reference made to features of the Garden of Eden. We read in Genesis in Revelation chapter 22 and verse 2, “In the midst of the street of the new Jerusalem, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bore twelve kinds of fruit, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of nations.” In other words, the whole program of God is working toward the ultimate eternal state by which we shall have a restoration of Edenic conditions, but with this important addition: that through redemption we shall not simply be restored to the condition that Adam had before the Fall, but restored to the condition apparently that Adam would have had had he been obedient in the test of the Edenic Covenant. And so God’s Edenic Covenant while broken shall find its completion in the Messianic reign and ultimately and finally in the eternal state.

So it has a tremendous Eschatological significance. It is also stated by the way, in Revelation chapter 2 verse 7 that that tree of life is in the paradise of God. And you noticed in Revelation chapter 22 and verse 5 at the completion of the description of the new Jerusalem in the eternal state the last clause is, “and they shall reign forever and ever.” Our time is up. Let’s close in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we are grateful to Thee for the privilege of the study of the word.

We ask Thy blessing upon us as we continue to think about Eschatology.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.