

I. THE ADAMIC COVENANT or THE COVENANT OF WORKS: Genesis 2:16-17

INTRODUCTION.

God created Adam and blessed him (Gen 2):

1. God blessed Adam with **Physical provision** (vegetation and animals).
2. God blessed Adam with **Spiritual provision** (made in God's image, having knowledge, holiness, righteousness).
3. God blessed Adam with **Moral provision** (the Law of God was written on His heart).
4. God blessed Adam with **Aesthetic provision** (the beauty of creation which God repeatedly called "good").
5. God blessed Adam with **Social provision** (making Eve out of his rib and bringing her to the man).

BOYS AND GIRLS...

But the Lord gave Adam something even greater—He condescended to enter into a Covenant with him. This Covenant is the first Covenant that God enters into with man, and it is called The Adamic Covenant.

- Sometimes it is called *the Covenant of Life* or *the Covenant of Creation*. Most frequently it is called *the Covenant of Works*. But since it is made with Adam, and the rest of the Covenant's in the Old Testament are named after the men they were made with or through, we can call it the Adamic Covenant, as some theologians do.

Today we are embarking on a short journey together over the next few weeks as we consider Covenant Theology.

QUESTION 1. What is a Covenant?

ANSWER. A Covenant is a solemn agreement which establishes a binding relationship between at least two persons, with rules to follow, blessings for faithfulness, and curses or consequences for unfaithfulness.

BOYS AND GIRLS...

When we speak of Covenant Theology we are talking about how God saves sinners and turns them into saints. We are talking about God's plan for all of history. We are talking about why God entered in a

Covenant with Adam, with Abraham, with Israel, with David, and, ultimately, with Christ and believers in Him.

Properly understanding Covenant Theology will help you see such things as who should be baptized, who should partake in the Lord's Supper in a particular church, why no one is able to merit eternal life through their works, how to understand Old Covenant Israel compared with today's nation state of Israel; properly understand Covenant Theology even helps shed light on what is happening right now between the Israelis and the Palestinians over the land in Palestine; additionally, properly understanding Covenant Theology will help save you from making grave errors in your Eschatology (the doctrine of the last things).

But most of all, understanding Covenant Theology will help you better love and appreciate and desire to glorify our Triune God—Father, Son, and Spirit—as you see God's loving-kindness traced not only from the Creation of Adam to the incarnation of Christ, but traced from before God created the heavens and the earth, when the Father and the Son entered into the Covenant of Redemption to redeem a people—even you and me who believe.

QUESTION. Why does this matter whether or not we properly understand and apply Covenant Theology?

ANSWER 1. CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON: "[Covenant Theology] is the key of all theology—the covenant of works by which we fell, and the covenant of grace by which we stand, Christ fulfilling the covenant for us as our surety and representative, fulfilling it by the shedding of his blood, so leaving for us a covenant wholly fulfilled on our side, which is Christ's side, and only to be fulfilled now by God." — **Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *The Blood of the Everlasting Covenant (sermon)***

ANSWER 2. R.C. SPROUL: "Covenant theology is important for many reasons... Over against this diversified view of redemptive history [dispensationalism], covenant theology seeks to present a clear picture of the unity of redemption, which unity is seen in the continuity of the covenants that God has given throughout history and how they are fulfilled in the person and work of Christ." — **R.C. Sproul, *The Covenant of Works***

I WOULD ADD, one of our Deacons, Micah Due, agrees that it is crucial to properly understand Covenant Theology, so much so that he wrote an entire Catechism on Covenant Theology. It is titled, "[The Root of All True Theology: A 1689 Federalist Catechism](#)" by Micah Due. You can currently get it on amazon via Kindle, and I encourage all of you to do so. It

is an excellent resource.

MICAH DUE: "What is a covenant? A covenant is a formal agreement initiated by God, which establishes a relationship between Himself and His people." — **Due, Micah. The Root of All True Theology: A 1689 Federalist Catechism (p. 12). Kindle Edition.**

CON(TEXT). **Genesis 2:16-17** "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.'"

THE BAPTIST CATECHISM

A16. When God had created man, He entered into a covenant of works with him, upon condition of perfect obedience, forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death (Gen. 2:16,17; Gal. 3:12; Rom. 5:12).

QUESTION. Why do we call it the Covenant of Works or the Adamic Covenant when Genesis 2 does not explicitly name it a covenant?

Three answers:

ANSWER 1. Because Hosea calls it a Covenant.

Hosea 6:7 "But like Adam they transgressed the covenant; there they dealt faithlessly with me."

ANSWER 2. Because Paul casts Adam as mankind's natural covenant (federal) head.

Romans 5:12 "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned..."

ANSWER 3. Because all of the ingredients of a Covenant are there.

There are

Two parties (God and Adam),

A stipulation,

A threatening, and

A promise.

OUTLINE.

Four points of Instruction (teasing out answer 3).

Six points of Application.

DOCTRINE. The Adamic Covenant was instituted by God with Adam and his posterity. It stipulated perfect works of obedience, threatened death, and promised eternal life.

I. THE LORD GOD ENTERED INTO THE ADAMIC COVENANT WITH ADAM AND ALL MANKIND IN HIM.

Genesis 2:16-17 "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

- **TBC:** "When God had created man, He entered into a covenant of works with him"
- **THOMAS WATSON:** "This covenant was made with Adam and all mankind; for Adam was a public person, and the representative of the world." — **Watson, Thomas. The Works of Thomas Watson (p. 218). Monergism Books. Kindle Edition.**

II. THE STIPULATION OF THE ADAMIC COVENANT WAS WORKS OF PERFECT OBEDIENCE.

Galatians 3:12 "But the law is not of faith, rather 'The one who does them shall live by them.'"

- **TBC** "upon condition of perfect obedience, forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,"

Adam was able to uphold the condition of the Adamic Covenant perfectly, because "God created man...after His own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness..." (TBC, Q14).

- **Ecclesiastes 7:29** "See, this alone I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes."

III. THE THREATENING OF THE ADAMIC COVENANT WAS DEATH.

Genesis 2:17 "for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

- **TBC** "upon pain of death."
- **Genesis 3:19** "By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."
- **WATSON:** "God commanded Adam not to eat of the tree of knowledge; but gave him permission to eat of all the other trees of the

garden. God did not envy him any happiness; but said, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" because he would test Adam's obedience. As King Pharaoh made Joseph chief ruler of his kingdom, and gave him a ring off his finger, and a chain of gold—but said he must not "touch his throne." In like manner, God dealt with Adam. He gave him a sparkling jewel, knowledge; and put upon him the garment of original righteousness; "Only," said he, "you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil," for that is aspiring after omniscience." — **Watson, Thomas. The Works of Thomas Watson (p. 218). Monergism Books. Kindle Edition.**

- **WATSON:** "The threatening, "When you eat of it you will surely die;" Hebrew, "In dying you shall die;" that is, you shall die both a natural death and an eternal, unless some expedient be found out for your restoration." — **Watson, Thomas. The Works of Thomas Watson (p. 219). Monergism Books. Kindle Edition.**
- **This threatening of death includes,**
 - I) Natural Death (one day, physically dying),
 - II) Spiritual Death (right then [i.e. dead in trespasses and sins], and
 - III) Eternal Death (one day, being judged for sin in hell).

BOYS AND GIRLS

IV. THE *PROMISE* OF THE ADAMIC COVENANT WAS ETERNAL LIFE.

Genesis 3:22-24 "22 Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—" 23 therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. 24 He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life."

- **C.F. Galatians 3:11-12** "11 Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith." 12 But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them."
- **TBLargerC Q20.** "[God entered] into a covenant of life with [Adam], upon condition of personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience, of which the tree of life was a pledge. . ."
- **WATSON:** "The promise was, "Do this and live." In case man had stood, it is probable he would not have died—but would have been translated to a better paradise." — **Watson, Thomas. The Works of Thomas Watson (p. 219). Monergism Books. Kindle Edition.**

THOMAS WATSON: *"Why did God give Adam this law, seeing he foresaw that Adam would transgress it?"*

(1.) It was Adam's fault that he did not keep the law. God gave him a stock of grace to trade with—but by his own neglect he failed.

(2.) Though God foresaw Adam would transgress—yet that was not a sufficient reason that no law should be given him; for, by the same reason—God should not have given his written Word to men, to be a rule of faith and manners, because he foresaw that some would not believe, and others would be profane. Shall laws not be made in the land, because some will break them?

(3.) Though God foresaw Adam would break the law, he knew how to turn it to greater good—in sending Christ. The first covenant being broken, he knew how to establish a second, and a better covenant." — Watson, Thomas. The Works of Thomas Watson (p. 219). Monergism Books. Kindle Edition.

APPLICATION (6)

I. See the *love* and *condescension* of God in bending low to enter into a covenant with man (Psalm 8:3-5).

– **Psalm 8:3-5**

*"3 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,*

*4 what is man that you are mindful of him,
and the son of man that you care for him?"*

*5 Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings
and crowned him with glory and honor."*

– **WATSON:** *"For the God of glory to make a covenant with dust and ashes; for God to bind himself to us, to give us life in case of obedience; for him to enter into covenant with us was a sign of friendship, and a royal act of favor." — Watson, Thomas. The Works of Thomas Watson (p. 222). Monergism Books. Kindle Edition.*

II. See the *holiness* of God in that He will only accept perfect obedience (Habakkuk 1:13).

The reason that the general condition of the covenant of works was perfect obedience is because God is holy, and none can have fellowship with Him unless they be perfectly holy.

– **Habakkuk 1:13** *"You...are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong..."*

III. See the *kindness* of God in that the simplest command was given

(Deuteronomy 30:11).

- **Deuteronomy 30:11** "For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off."

IV. See where our great enemy, death, came from (Romans 5:12; 6:23).

- **Romans 5:12** "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned..."
 - **Romans 6:23** "the wages of sin is death."
BOYS AND GIRLS, death is not natural. Death is an enemy. Death entered the world through Adam because he broke the Covenant of Works. And Christ, the better Adam, will one day kill death!
1 Corinthians 15:25-26 "25 [Christ] must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death."

V. See how foolish it is to try and get yourself to heaven by works (Romans 3:20).

The Covenant of Works has already been broken!

- **Romans 3:20** "For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight..."
 - **GEORGE WHITEFIELD**: "What! Get to heaven by your own strength? Why! you might as well try to climb to the moon on a rope of sand."
 - **BOYS AND GIRLS...** Do you remember this quote from Church History 101?

You cannot get to heaven by your own works, but through faith in Christ, Jesus will throw you on His back and carry you up the hill of God to everlasting life!

Psalms 24:3-10 (1650 Psalter)

3 Who is the man that shall ascend
into the hill of God?

Or who within his holy place
shall have a firm abode?

CHRIST AND ALL WHO ARE UNITED TO HIM THROUGH FAITH!

You who are not yet converted to Christ, trusting in Christ, and laboring to obey Christ: Turn from your sins, trust in Christ alone for salvation. Then come and be baptized, join with the church, and walk closely with God's people for your whole life so you can glorify and enjoy God!

VI. See how wonderful the New Covenant is (the New Covenant of Grace), **where Jesus perfectly upholds our end of the bargain** (Hebrews 10:15-17).

– **Hebrews 10:15-17** "15 And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying,

16 "This is the covenant that I will make with them

after those days, declares the Lord:

I will put my laws on their hearts,

and write them on their minds,"

17 then he adds,

"I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more."

– **BOYS AND GIRLS...** If you believe in Christ with me, Jesus upholds our end of the deal between us and God.

– **WATSON:** "Works in the covenant of grace are not required under the same notion, as in the first covenant with Adam. Works are not required for the *justification* of our persons—but as an *attestation* of our love to God; not as the cause of our salvation—but as an evidence of our adoption.

Works are required in the covenant of grace, not so much in our own strength as in the strength of Christ. "It is God who works in you." Phil 2:13. As the teacher guides the child's hand, and helps him to form his letters, so that it is not so much the child's writing as the master's. Just so, our obedience is not so much our working as the Spirit's co-working." — **Watson, Thomas. The Works of Thomas Watson (p. 220). Monergism Books. Kindle Edition.**

CONCLUSION.

Psalm 24:3-10 (1650 Psalter)

V 3 Who is the man that shall ascend
into the hill of God?

Or who within his holy place
shall have a firm abode?

C 4 Whose hands are clean, whose heart is pure,
and unto vanity
Who hath not lifted up his soul,
nor sworn deceitfully.

V 5 He from th' Eternal shall receive
the blessing him upon,
And righteousness, ev'n from the God
of his salvation.

C 6 This is the generation

that after him enquire,
O Jacob, who do seek thy face
with their whole heart's desire.

V 7 Ye gates, lift up your heads on high;
ye doors that last for aye,
Be lifted up, that so the King
of glory enter may.

C 8 But who of glory is the King?
The mighty Lord is this;
Ev'n that same Lord, that great in might
and strong in battle is.

V 9 Ye gates, lift up your heads; ye doors,
doors that do last for aye,
Be lifted up, that so the King
of glory enter may.

C 10 But who is he that is the King
of glory? who is this?
The Lord of hosts, and none but he,
the King of glory is.

PURITAN QUOTES ON THE ADAMIC COVENANT or COVENANT OF WORKS

John Ball (1585–1640)

- "The covenant of workes was made with Adam as a publique person, representing all his posteritie, and in him with all mankind, and it stood firme and inviolable, that all which were in him, should stand or fall with him, and therefore all are fallen and accursed in him."
John Ball, *A Treatise of the Covenant of Grace* (London: Printed by G. Simson and W. Bladen, for Nathaniel Newberry, 1645), 49.
- "Gods covenant of workes required perfect obedience of all in all, as well in heart as in hand, and that for ever; but the covenant of grace requires not so much as perfect obedience in part for a time."
Ball, *A Treatise of the Covenant of Grace*, 112.
- "The condition of the covenant of workes was perfect obedience in all things commanded, without any the least failing, and that perpetually without intermission."
Ball, *A Treatise of the Covenant of Grace*, 50.

Edmund Calamy (1600–1666)

- "The first covenant was a covenant of workes, wherein God did binde himselfe to Adam upon condition of perfect obedience, to give him life and happinesse; but Adam by sinne brake the condition, and so lost himselfe and all his posteritie."

Edmund Calamy, *The Great Danger of Covenant-Refusing* (London: Printed by T. P. and M. S. for John Bellamy, 1646), 12.

- "In the covenant of workes, God dealt with man as with a servant, requiring duty for wages; but in the covenant of grace, he deals with him as with a sonne, giving freely all."

Calamy, *The Great Danger of Covenant-Refusing*, 15.

- "The covenant of workes was broken by Adam, who was the roote and head of all mankinde, and so all his posteritie fell with him into the gulfe of misery."

Calamy, *The Great Danger of Covenant-Refusing*, 18.

John Cotton (1584–1652)

- "The covenant of workes did exact perfect obedience of Adam, as the condition of life, and upon default thereof, death was threatned; which condition Adam performing, should have attained eternall life."

John Cotton, *A Treatise of the Covenant of Grace* (London: Printed by M. S. for Philemon Stephens and Christopher Meredith, 1659), 23.

- "God made a covenant with Adam of workes, promising life upon condition of his perfect obedience, and threatning death upon disobedience, which covenant being broken, all mankind became liable to eternall death."

Cotton, *A Treatise of the Covenant of Grace*, 25.

- "The reward in the covenant of workes was not of debt, but of grace, forasmuch as God was not bound to give eternall life to any creature, yet upon the condition of perfect obedience, he promised it freely."

Cotton, *A Treatise of the Covenant of Grace*, 28.

Thomas Goodwin (1600–1680)

- "The covenant of workes was made with Adam as a publique person, and in him with all his naturall seed, who were all in his loynes, and so all federally in him, and so all broken in him."

Thomas Goodwin, *The Workes of Thomas Goodwin* (London: Printed by J. Darby for Jonathan Pouncy, 1681), 4:1–2.

- "Gods dealing with mankinde in the covenant of workes, was to propose life upon condition of perfect obedience, but upon breach, death entred upon all."

Goodwin, *The Workes of Thomas Goodwin*, 4:5.

- "The condition of the covenant of workes being perfect obedience for ever, which Adam could not performe without divine assistance, yet God left him to himselfe, to shew his free grace in Christ."
Goodwin, *The Workes of Thomas Goodwin*, 4:7.

William Gouge (1575–1653)

- "The Lord made a covenant of workes with Adam, promising him life if he obeyed, death if he disobeyed, and this covenant concerned all his posteritie as represented in him."
William Gouge, *The Whole-Armour of God* (London: Printed by Iohn Beale, for Robert Allott, 1647), 112. (From exposition on Eph. 6.)
- "In the covenant of workes, the reward was life eternall, not due by desert, but promised by grace, yet requiring full satisfaction to justice."
Gouge, *The Whole-Armour of God*, 115.
- "Adam as head of the covenant of workes, by his fall involved all in guilt, shewing the need of a second head, Christ, in the covenant of grace."
Gouge, *The Whole-Armour of God*, 118.

Obadiah Howe (1613–1683)

- "The covenant of workes required of Adam, as the root of mankinde, perfect integrall obedience, without the least sinne, and that perpetuall, upon paine of death."
Obadiah Howe, *The Whole Armour of God* (London: Printed by T. R. and E. M. for Philemon Stephens, 1650), 45. (Note: Distinct from Gouge's work; Howe's treatise expands on covenant themes.)
- "Gods promise in the covenant of workes was gracious, though the condition strict, for he might have left Adam to nature without any such compact."
Howe, *The Whole Armour of God*, 47.

John Preston (1587–1628)

- "The covenant of workes was Gods free act of condiscension, to deale with man upon termes of doing and having, promising life for obedience."
John Preston, *The New Covenant, or the Saints Portion* (London: Printed by W. Stansby for George Edwardes, 1629), 34.
- "In the covenant of workes, death was threatned not onely temporall, but spirituall and eternall, upon the least transgression."
Preston, *The New Covenant, or the Saints Portion*, 36.
- "Adam brake the covenant of workes, and so all his seed became children of wrath, till the covenant of grace interposed."
Preston, *The New Covenant, or the Saints Portion*, 38.

Thomas Shepard (1605–1649)

- "The covenant of workes God made with Adam, was to try his obedience, promising him the tree of life if he stood, but death if he fell."
Thomas Shepard, *Theses Sabbaticae* (London: Printed by R. C. for Philip Nevel, 1649), 67. (From his theses on the Sabbath and covenants.)
- "All mankind being in Adam under the covenant of workes, his disobedience imputed sinne and death to all."
Shepard, *Theses Sabbaticae*, 70.
- "The grace in the covenant of workes was Gods voluntary promise of life, though the condition was pure obedience without mercy for failing."
Shepard, *Theses Sabbaticae*, 72.

Thomas Watson (c. 1620–1686)

- "The covenant of workes God made with Adam, was 'do and live;' but in the covenant of grace it is 'believe and live.'"
Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity* (London: Printed for Thomas Parkhurst, 1692), 145.
- "Under the covenant of workes, Adam had a promise of life, but no pardon; here all is free grace."
Watson, *A Body of Divinity*, 147.
- "The first covenant being broken by Adam, all his posterity lie under the curse till renewed in Christ."
Watson, *A Body of Divinity*, 150.

Herman Witsius (1636–1708) (Influential on Puritans; Dutch Reformed but cited in Puritan works)

- "The covenant of works is that whereby God enters into covenant with man on condition of perfect obedience, promising him life, but threatening death upon the least transgression."
Herman Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man* (Amsterdam: Printed by R. and G. Weststeinen, 1677; English trans., London: Printed for J. Oswald, 1760), 1:56. (Witsius's work was foundational for later Puritans like Boston.)
- "Adam, as federal head, received the promise of eternal life in the covenant of works, not as merit, but as divine gratuity upon obedience."
Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants*, 1:60.
- "The penalty of the covenant of works was death—spiritual, temporal, eternal—inflicted on all represented in Adam."
Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants*, 1:65.

STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Study Questions

1. **Recall the Blessings:** According to the introduction, list and briefly describe the five specific ways God blessed Adam at creation (physical, spiritual, moral, aesthetic, and social). How do these blessings reflect God's comprehensive care for humanity as his image-bearers?
2. **Define a Covenant:** Restate the sermon's definition of a covenant in your own words. Identify the key elements mentioned (e.g., parties, rules, blessings, curses). How does Micah Due's definition from his catechism align with or expand on this?
3. **Scriptural Basis for the Covenant:** Explain why Genesis 2:16-17 is understood as a covenant, even though the word "covenant" is not explicitly used. Reference the three supporting answers from the sermon (Hosea 6:7, Romans 5:12, and the covenant ingredients).
4. **Federal Headship:** What does it mean that Adam was a "public person" and representative of all mankind (citing Thomas Watson)? Connect this to Romans 5:12 and the Baptist Catechism (Q16). How does this concept differ from individual accountability in a non-covenantal view of sin?
5. **Stipulation of Obedience:** Describe the condition of "perfect obedience" in the Adamic Covenant, drawing from Galatians 3:12 and Ecclesiastes 7:29. Why was Adam initially capable of fulfilling this, and what changed after the fall?
6. **The Threat of Death:** Outline the three aspects of death threatened in Genesis 2:17 (natural, spiritual, eternal), with supporting references from the sermon (e.g., Genesis 3:19 and Watson's commentary). How does the Hebrew phrasing "in dying you shall die" emphasize the severity?
7. **The Promise of Life:** Using Genesis 3:22-24 and Galatians 3:11-12, explain the implied promise of eternal life in the Adamic Covenant. What role did the tree of life serve as a "pledge" (per the Baptist Larger Catechism, Q20)?
8. **Watson's Insights:** Summarize Thomas Watson's three reasons why God gave the command to Adam despite foreknowing the fall. How does this highlight God's sovereignty and wisdom in redemptive history?

Discussion Questions

1. **Why Covenant Theology Matters:** The sermon quotes Spurgeon and Sproul on the unifying role of covenant theology in understanding salvation history. From a Reformed Baptist perspective, how does grasping the Adamic Covenant as the "covenant of works" clarify the shift to the covenant of grace? Discuss practical implications for baptism, the Lord's Supper, and eschatology (e.g., Israel/Palestine tensions).

2. **God's Condescension and Love:** Reflect on Psalm 8:3-5 and Watson's description of God "binding himself" to dust and ashes. How does the Adamic Covenant reveal the humility of the Triune God (Father, Son, Spirit) even before the Covenant of Redemption? Share a personal example of how seeing God's initiative in covenants deepens your worship.
3. **Holiness and Perfect Obedience:** Habakkuk 1:13 underscores God's intolerance of evil. Discuss why only perfect obedience could sustain fellowship with a holy God in the Adamic Covenant. How does this expose the inadequacy of human effort today, and what comfort does it bring in light of Christ's active obedience as our federal head (Romans 5:18-19)?
4. **The Simplicity and Kindness of the Command:** Deuteronomy 30:11 describes God's commands as "not too hard." From the sermon's third application, why might God have chosen such a straightforward test for Adam? In a Reformed Baptist context, how does this inform our approach to obedience under the New Covenant—grateful response rather than meritorious striving?
5. **Death as an Enemy:** Romans 5:12 and 6:23 trace death's origin to Adam's covenant breach, yet 1 Corinthians 15:25-26 promises Christ's victory over it. Discuss how this truth reframes suffering and mortality for believers. How can we "for boys and girls" (or families) teach that death is unnatural and temporary, pointing to the "better Adam" (Christ)?
6. **Futility of Works-Righteousness:** Citing Romans 3:20 and George Whitefield's vivid analogy, explore the folly of seeking heaven by personal works post-fall. Contrast this with Psalm 24:3-10's vision of ascension through Christ alone. For those trusting in self-reform, what gospel invitation does the sermon extend (e.g., repentance, faith, baptism, church membership)?
7. **The Glory of the New Covenant:** Hebrews 10:15-17 and Watson's distinction between the covenants highlight Christ's fulfillment of our obedience. Discuss how the New Covenant of Grace transforms works from a "cause" of justification to an "evidence" of adoption (Philippians 2:13). How does this foster assurance and joyful obedience in a Reformed Baptist church community?
8. **Broader Theological Roots:** The sermon references Micah Due's 1689 *Federalist Catechism*. How does the Covenant Theology serve as the "root of all true theology"? Share one "grave error" in eschatology or ecclesiology that covenant misunderstanding might cause, and how proper understanding guards against it.

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

God created Adam and blessed him. God blessed Adam with physical provision, with both vegetation and animals. God blessed Adam with spiritual provision. God made Adam in his image, having knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. God blessed Adam with moral provision. Meaning Adam knew what was right and what was wrong just like every human being does because God wrote his law on Adam's heart just as he has written his moral law on your heart. That that is why there are things instinctively you see and you might not even be able to piece it all together but you look at it and you go that's wrong. But God blessed Adam with that. He had moral provision. God blessed Adam additionally with aesthetic provision. Aesthetic provision meaning the beauty of creation which God in the creation account continually repeatedly calls good. God created this and it was good. Imagine the beauty of pre-fall creation. Imagine the beauty of creation before the fall of Adam into sin. God blessed Adam with this aesthetic provision. God blessed Adam additionally with social provision or familial provision. Meaning God didn't just create Adam and give him physical, spiritual, moral, and aesthetic provision. God blessed Adam by making Eve for him out of a rib from his side and bringing Eve to Adam and that first marriage ceremony and giving Adam a helpmate to be in that covenant of marriage with. God created Adam and blessed him. Boys and girls, look up here at me. When God created Adam, the first man, he blessed him. That's what it says in Genesis 2. And God blessed him. It says it also in Genesis 1. But God blessed Adam and gave him things to eat, vegetation and animals to eat, to take dominion over. God blessed Adam by making him in his image after his likeness. You and I, human beings are made in the image of God, after the likeness of God in order for us to show forth what God is like. We also or Adam also was blessed with true knowledge and holiness and righteousness. Adam was not created a sinner, boys and girls. You know that Adam wasn't created a sinner. Adam wasn't set up to fail either. Adam really could obey. And God gave him knowledge, holiness, and righteousness. God also wrote his law, boys and girls. God wrote his law, his moral law on Adam's heart so that Adam knew what was right and what was wrong. That's a blessing. Boys and girls, as you look out at creation, at trees and the beauty of the sky or mountains, whatever it may be, and just go, "Wow, that is beautiful." When was the last time you saw a sunset, just how wow, the sky all of a sudden is just painted with these colors and it's beautiful. God blessed Adam with that, the beauty of creation. God also blessed Adam by giving him a wife.

so that he would have a helpmate and he would have someone to love and protect and provide for and cherish. God blessed Adam in all these ways. But hear me all of you. The biggest blessing that the Lord God gave to Adam was not any of those things. The biggest blessing that God gave to Adam is that he stooped down low and entered into a covenant with him. He didn't simply bless Adam in these other

ways. God condescended. That means he stooped low and entered into a covenant with Adam. This covenant that we're speaking of is the very first covenant that God enters into with man. This is called the Adamic covenant. Adamic, Adamic covenant, or it's most frequently called, if you read theology, it's most frequently called the covenant of works. I call it the Adamic covenant because it's made with Adam and his posterity. Sometimes you'll just for your reading if if you're reading through things and you see these things phrased differently, these are just shorthand terms that help us understand big theological ideas and we don't have to explain the whole thing. We can just say the Adamic covenant or the covenant of works. Sometimes it's called the covenant of life or the covenant of creation, but most frequently in your reading or in general discussion it is called the covenant of works. Today we're embarking on a short journey together over the next few weeks to consider covenant theology. Covenant theology. Now, some of you may hear that and go, "Oh, I I know exactly what you're talking about." But I would guess that a majority of you probably grew up and the phrase covenant theology is not you didn't really hear that a lot. You may have heard of covenants or things like that or the new covenant or the old covenant. But when it comes to a whole framework of how to understand how God saved sinners and what how God deals with his creation, covenant theology sadly has not been emphasized very much, especially in Armenian-ish Baptist churches or charismatic churches like a lot of us grew up in. But covenant theology is important to understand. And first of all, let me define what a covenant is. Today, we're having to lay a little bit of groundwork before we dig into Genesis 2 16-17 so we can have a proper understanding of like what do we mean by covenant theology? What is the word covenant? And we've got to do all that or I'm going to start showing you certain things and talking about things and you're going to have a wrong definition in your head. And if you have a wrong definition of the word covenant or any of that, then everything else is going to go wrong and you're not going to understand any of it. So we got to lay some groundwork and make sure that we have the proper understanding in place. So what is a covenant? A covenant is a solemn agreement which establishes a binding relationship between at least two parties. A covenant is a solemn agreement which establishes a binding relationship between at least two parties. Meaning it can be just between one person and another person or it can be between one person and a whole tribe of people or it can be a covenant can be between a whole tribe of people over here and a whole tribe of people over here. But there have to be at least two. And so in the covenant of works that we're looking at today, God enters into a covenant with Adam. And Adam then represents all of his posterity. Adam represents all mankind that will ever come by way of ordinary generation, ordinary birth. So that's what a covenant is. a solemn agreement which establishes a binding relationship between at least two parties. And so marriage is a covenant and that's just between two parties. It's a a one man and one woman. It's a solemn agreement which establishes a binding relationship. Just like in marriage, the two become one flesh. The two become one flesh. So binding relationship between at least two persons

and that in the case of marriage it is just two persons and every covenant has rules to follow blessings for faithfulness and curses or consequences for unfaithfulness. So, a covenant, a solemn agreement which establishes a binding relationship between at least two persons or parties with rules to follow, blessings for faithfulness, and curses or consequences for unfaithfulness. You with me so far? When we speak of covenant theology, you need to know what we're talking about is how God saves sinners and turns them into saints. This is why this is important to understand covenant theology. That's what we're talking about. How does God save sinners and change them and make them his people, forgiven of their sin, counted righteous, adopted into his family? How does he do that? When we talk about covenant theology, we're talking about God's plan for all of history that he decreed before he created anything. We're talking about important things like was God surprised by the fall when Adam fell into sin or did God simply permit the fall? Or was Jesus thought up in the mind of God as it were after the fall? Then God sees that Adam falls into sin and goes, "Oh, I've got an idea. My son will become a man and make right what Adam did wrong." Like, just so you know, that's not it. That's not how it goes. Covenant theology helps you understand that God wasn't simply establishing covenants with people throughout history and going, "Let's see. Let's see if Israel can uphold the Mosaic covenant." Ah, they didn't. Okay, I'll make a covenant with David. Let's see if David will uphold the Davidic covenant. Ah, he didn't. All right, I got to send my son then. I guess that's how old the old school dispensationalism understands these kind of covenants that each covenant God makes is a test period for his people to see if they can uphold the covenant. If they do, they get eternal life. If they don't, then God will try again with the next covenant. And then he'll try again with the next covenant. And then he'll send Jesus eventually because everyone else fails all the other covenants. Is that how we should understand God's plan for history and his plan for redemptive history? No. Covenant theology will help you understand that the Lord Jesus Christ as the representative of his people for all times in all places was plan A, plan B, plan C, plan D. Jesus is the only plan forever and always has been. Adam was not plan A and then he fails. Dang. We got to have another plan. Christ has always been plan A to Z. So, it helps you understand that and how to think about it. It'll help you understand why God entered into a covenant with Adam. Why he establishes the Noahic covenant with Noah and his posterity. Why he entered into the Abrahamic covenant with Abraham. Why he entered into the Mosaic covenant with the people of Israel. Why he entered into the Davidic covenant with David and his posterity. It'll help you understand all those things and how to make sense of them in light of plan A, which is the Lord Jesus Christ. Furthermore, why is it important to understand covenant theology? Because properly understanding this will help you see such things and have a concrete understanding of who should be baptized now that we're in the new covenant. Who should be baptized? Who should participate in the Lord's supper in a particular local church? It'll help you understand why no one is able to merit eternal life through their works. It'll help you understand how to think about old covenant Israel compared with today's

nation state called Israel. Most people have no idea what to do with that. Most of our senators and house representatives who are Christians don't have any idea to do what to do with that. Ted Cruz was asked and he's a you know famous senator from Texas. He was asked by Tucker Carlson and Tucker Carlson's not super solid theologically but he understands enough and he asked Ted Cruz like so is the Israel mentioned like in Genesis in the book of Genesis. Is that Israel the same thing as today's nation state of Israel where Benjamin Netanyahu is the prime minister? This is T-ball. All Christians go, "No, that's not the same thing." But Ted Cruz, yes, it's the exact same thing. Like, wait. And and many Christians don't really know how to understand that because we read the word Israel in the Old Testament and the nation of Israel and then today since 1948 there is a nation called Israel in that same area. Like what do we do with that? How do we understand that? If you understand covenant theology, you will actually understand how to compare and how to properly think about old covenant Israel when compared with today the current nation state of Israel. These are important things to understand. Not just so that our politics are right or anything like that. That's not what I mean. But just is that the same thing? Is that how we should think about it? If you properly understand covenant theology, it will also help shed light on what is happening right now between the Israelis and the Palestinians over the land in Palestine, especially the war that's been happening since October 7th, a few years ago. What should you think about that? Why is this happening? Why are both sides fighting like this? Why do they both seem to want to wipe each other out? Why is that going on? Well, covenant theology will actually help you see. It's like, why? I know why. Additionally, properly understanding covenant theology will at the very least save you from making grave errors in your Eschatology. Eschatology is the doctrine of the last things, of the final things. If you don't properly understand covenant theology, you're going to really go off track and you're thinking about what is going to happen, what Christ has promised is going to happen in the end times. Those who don't properly understand covenant theology go off into crazy errors. And you may not have thought through that a whole lot, but I promise you, you're going to see it more and more once you understand covenant theology properly. you're going to go, that's why I didn't quite understand why this person believed that or why we do this or why even a lot of evangelicals in the Western church support this. Now I now I understand. I understand exactly why. But covenant theology is not just so we can understand all those intricate things. Most of all, understanding covenant theology will help you better love and appreciate and desire to glorify our triune God. That's the most important reason you should labor to understand and apply it. It will help you better love and appreciate and even desire to glorify God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. As you see God's loving kindness traced not only from the creation of Adam to the incarnation of Christ, but as you study covenant theology, you'll pull back and realize God entered into a covenant within the persons of the Trinity before he even created anyone or anything. The father enter entered into a covenant with the son before creation that the son would in time and space come

into the world to redeem all of his people from their sins. Covenant theology will truly help you better understand the world that God created and governs. It'll help you understand redemptive history. It'll help you love and appreciate him more and more. listen to just two faithful brothers from the past who will also agree why does it matter or help shine light on why it matters that we understand and apply covenant theology. The most famous Baptist other than John the Baptist to ever live is surely Charles Haden Spurgeon. Spurgeon said covenant theology is the key of all theology. See, if you don't understand covenant theology, you're going to miss everything. It's the key of all theology. The covenant of works by which we fell in Adam and the covenant of grace by which we stand. Christ fulfilling the covenant for us as our surety and representative fulfilling it by the shedding of his blood. So leaving for us a covenant wholly fulfilled on our side which is Christ's side and only to be fulfilled now by God. Covenant theology is the key of all theology. Spurgeon said and then RC Sproul the late RC Sproul pointed out that covenant theology is important for many reasons over against this diversified view of redemptive history called dispensationalism. Covenant theology seeks to present a clear picture of the unity of redemption, the unity of how God has always saved his people, which unity is seen in the continuity of the covenants that God has given throughout history and how they are fulfilled in the person and work of Christ. I would add that even one of our deacons of our local church, Micah, Micah Due, agrees that it is crucial to properly understand covenant theology. So much so that he wrote an entire catechism on particular Baptist covenant theology to help Christians like you and me understand and apply this. It's titled The Root of All True Theology, a 1689 Federalist Catechism by Micah Due. You can get it on Amazon via Kindle and I encourage all of you to do so. It is an excellent catechism and the whole catechism is to help you understand covenant theology. Even in that, Micah asks and answers, "What is a covenant?" He says it even with even less words than me. A covenant is a formal agreement initiated by God which establishes a relationship between himself and his people. That's right. So, we've seen why it matters. We've seen what a covenant is. We've seen how God blessed Adam, but then he blessed him finally and fully by stooping down to enter into a covenant with him. Now let's turn our attention to Genesis 2:16 and 17. And the basis of this covenant are these two verses, the Adamic covenant. Genesis 2:16-17. This is God's word. It says, "And the Lord God commanded the man, that is Adam, saying, you may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die."

Does God use the word covenant in those two verses? The answer is no. So why do we call it a covenant with Adam if God doesn't explicitly use the word covenant in those two verses? There's three answers to that. You need to understand all of these things. Why do we call it a covenant even though God doesn't explicitly say covenant right there in Genesis 2:16-17? Well, the first and simplest answer is because the prophet Hosea calls it a covenant. what God did with Adam right

there. Hosea calls it a covenant. Hosea chapter 6 verse 7. But like Adam, and he's speaking of the people that are under the Mosaic covenant at this point, but like Adam, they transgressed the covenant. Saying Israel, old covenant Israel, transgressed the Mosaic covenant. That's what he's saying. He's like, just like Adam transgressed the covenant that God made with him, old covenant Israel transgressed the Mosaic covenant that God made with them. They dealt faithlessly with me is what God says through the prophet Hosea. So why do we call it a covenant? Not because there's some Hebrew word that was translated wrong in Genesis 2:16-17. It's like that word's actually supposed to be covenant. No. We call it a covenant because Hosea calls it a covenant. Second, we call it a covenant because Paul casts Adam as mankind's natural head. That Adam represents all of mankind. And that is what is called a covenant head, a covenant representative. So Paul casts Adam as mankind's natural head, his covenant, the covenant head of all human beings. Romans 5:12, just as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin and death spread to all men because all men sinned. Meaning all men sinned in Adam. When Adam sinned, all men sinned. The whole point of Romans 5 there is that Adam was the covenant representative, covenant head of every human being that's ever lived by ordinary generation. And the Lord Jesus Christ becomes the covenant head of all that God saves from their sin and unites to himself. That's his whole point. Adam represents us all. That's why we all die. We all sinned in him because he represented us. So being united to Adam, we die. But through faith in Christ, being united to Christ, we live. So Hosea calls it a covenant. Paul casts Adam as mankind's natural covenant head. And then thirdly, the reason we call this a covenant, the covenant of works or the Adamic covenant, is because all of the ingredients of a covenant are right here. We have all of the ingredients of a covenant. There are at least two parties, God and Adam. There's a stipulation or rules. Do this. There is a threatening. If you don't do this, this is the curse or the consequence. And there is implied and joined to it a promise.

So what I want to do to you or for you is point out four points of instruction teasing out that third answer the why do we call it a covenant because all the ingredients of a covenant are there. I want you to see that truth clearly in the scriptures and then we're going to pull back and basically say what should we think what should we do? How should we understand concerning that Adamic covenant? Since this is true, what does that mean for my life? So, first let me give four points of instruction. And the doctrine, by the way, that you should learn and we should glean from this is that the Adamic covenant was instituted by God with Adam and his posterity. The Adamic covenant was instituted by God with Adam and his posterity. It stipulated perfect works of obedience, threatened death, and promised eternal life. That's the covenant of works. It was instituted by God with Adam, and, of course, all of his posterity. It stipulated perfect works of obedience. It threatened death and it promised eternal life. So, let's work through that and understand it. First, you need to see in Genesis 2:16-17 that the Lord God entered into the Adamic covenant with Adam and all mankind in him. With Adam as

the representative for all mankind, everyone who would be born according to ordinary generation, meaning everyone except the Lord Jesus Christ, who was not born according to ordinary generation, did not have an earthly father. And that's why because everyone Adam represents, everyone who is born by ordinary generation is a sinner as soon as they're conceived. Christ doesn't have an earthly father. The Holy Spirit overshadows Mary. And so Christ as the God man is not born as a man being a sinner. That's the importance of the virgin birth. But the Lord God entered into this Adamic covenant with Adam and all mankind in him. Even our Baptist catechism spells this out very plainly and clearly. When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of works with him. The Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the knowledge or but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat. For in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die. Death. That's the threatening. That's the negative promise. Like if you don't uphold die, right? How do we know that Adam represented us in this covenant? Will you die? Yeah. Adam represented you in the covenant. Second, look, not only is that a fact that God entered into the Adamic covenant with Adam and all mankind in him, but look at the stipulation or understand the stipulation of the covenant was works of perfect obedience. Works of perfect obedience. Perfect obedience is what God requires. And the phenomenal thing about the Adamic covenant is that he gives Adam one rule. One, don't eat from that tree. That's the stipulation of the covenant. And what happens when Adam breaks that just one rule? When he doesn't have perfect obedience anymore? Well, he's banished from the garden. He fell into sin. He's promised death because he broke the covenant. The stipulation though of this covenant, the covenant of works, was perfect obedience. That's why Galatians 3:12 says, "The law is not of faith. Rather, the one who does them shall live by them." If you do perfectly, if you obey perfectly, you'll live. This is why the Baptist catechism says upon condition of perfect obedience was the create the covenant of works made with Adam forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And you need to know that Adam was different. Pre-fall Adam is different than you.

Pre-fall Adam is different than you. Adam was able to perfectly uphold the covenant of works. God created him in righteousness and holiness in his image and the image was not marred in any way. Adam was able to perfectly obey and uphold the covenant of works. You are not you were not born with righteousness, holiness, knowledge in the image of God in the sense that Adam was. But Adam was able to uphold the condition, the stipulation of the Adamic covenant perfectly because God created man after his own image, in knowledge, in righteousness, and in holiness. That's the Baptist catechism question 14. And this is why Solomon says in Ecclesiastes 7:29, "See this alone I have found that God made man upright, but he has sought out many schemes." God made man upright, but he has sought out many schemes. So the stipulation was works of perfect obedience, which Adam was actually able to do. The threatening of the Adamic covenant. Next, the

third point of instruction that I want to draw your attention to is the threatening of the Adamic covenant or the covenant of works was death. In the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die. That's pretty clear. This is why the Baptist catechism says, "Upon pain of death if you disobey." And this is why the curse pronounced on Adam in Genesis 3:19 is by the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground. For out of it you were taken for you are dust and to dust you shall return. The Lord threatened death if he didn't uphold the covenant of works. And then he doubles down and says, "You're going to return to dust because you broke the covenant and sinned against me." The threatening Watson says, "When you eat of it, you will surely die." In Hebrew, Watson is saying, it says, "In dying, you shall die." That is, you shall die both a natural death and an eternal death unless some expedient be found out for your restoration. Unless someone saves you, you're not only going to naturally die, but you're going to eternally die under the judgment of God. This death that is threatened in the covenant of works if Adam doesn't uphold the covenant in perfect obedience, which he was able to do, the threatening is natural death, spiritual death, and eternal death. It's not one or the other. It's all three. The threatening you shall surely die includes natural death that one day will happen to Adam that he will physically die. It includes spiritual death right then at the moment of Adam's sin. He died spiritually in the sense of Ephesians 2. You and I, all of us when we were outside of Christ were dead in trespasses and sins. Spiritually dead in trespasses and sins. And it also this threatening includes eternal death meaning what will happen one day beginning at the judgment and being judged for sin in hell for all eternity. The threatening of the Adamic covenant was death natural spiritual and eternal. Now, the promise of the Adamic covenant, consider fourthly, the promise of the Adamic covenant was eternal life. That was the promise. It's implied in Genesis 2:16 and 17, but it's clarified. If you still have your Bible opened there, go to chapter 3, verses 22- 24 in the book of Genesis. It's implied in verses 16 and 17 because the threatening is death. Therefore, the promise is life. But then it's clarified that it's not just implied, but it's true. Genesis 3:22- 24. Now, this is after the fall, after Adam's fall into sin, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live forever. We need to banish him from the garden, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live forever. Therefore, verse 23, the Lord God sent him out of the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man and at the east of the Garden of Eden, he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned everyone to guard the way to the tree of life. Every way to guard the way to the tree of life. The promise was eternal life. Galatians 3:11-12 says, "It is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, because the righteous shall live by faith, but the law is not of faith. Rather, the one who does them shall live by them. The one who obeys perfectly as Adam was actually able to do in the garden before he sinned. The one who does them shall live by them. Adam could have obeyed and the promise was eternal life. This is why the Baptist larger catechism question 20 says God entered into a covenant of life with Adam upon condition of personal perfect and perpetual obedience of

which the tree of life was a pledge, a covenant of life with him. meaning life, eternal life was promised through perfect and perpetual obedience. And the tree of life was a pledge of this. Watson says the promise was do this and live. In case man had stood, it is probable he would have not died at all, but would have been translated to a better paradise. So the promise of the Adamic covenant was eternal life. The threatening of the Adamic covenant was death, natural, spiritual, eternal. The stipulation was works of perfect obedience. God entered into a covenant with Adam and all mankind in him. And the bad news, Adam failed. Adam fell. Adam broke the covenant of works that God made with him and all of us in him. So if you have not been converted to Christ, if you are not a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are still in the Adamic covenant, the covenant that God made with Adam and all of his posterity in Adam. You're in that covenant. And that covenant has already been broken. And the threat is death. Unbelievers have a bigger problem than just the sins they have personally committed. Unbelievers also have the problem that they have original sin and the guilt of Adam's transgression imputed to them because he represented them and they all (we all) naturally sinned in him. This is why you were born a sinner. You sin because you are a sinner. You're not a sinner because you sin. outside of the Lord Jesus Christ. You are in the covenant of works still and it's been broken and there's no hope and the promise is death. Adam failed. And where Adam failed, the Lord Jesus Christ succeeded. This is why Paul calls him the better Adam, the second Adam, the final Adam. He's like Adam who represented mankind. But Christ comes into the world as the God man and does perfectly uphold the law of God. The stipulation of that was perfect obedience. And Christ enter the world and perfectly obeyed. But not only did Christ perfectly obey, he then went to a cross willingly and paid for the law breakings of all of us who believe who were in the covenant of works that was broken. The threatening of the covenant of works was death. So Christ says, "Take that threatening, take that punishment out on me for everyone who believe in me." You have to understand properly the covenant of works to properly understand the gospel of Jesus Christ. That this is what makes Christ like Adam but better. Adam could have perfectly obeyed but didn't and plunged us all into ruin and misery. But Christ came into the world, the God man, and as a man perfectly obeyed and even paid for our disobedience on the cross. Hallelujah. But what should we how should we apply the Adamic covenant, the covenant of works, and it being broken? How should we apply that to our thinking, to our understanding?

Well, first of all, I want you to see the love and condescension of God in bending down low to enter into a covenant with man in the first place.

The fact that God even entered into a covenant of works with Adam wasn't a covenant of grace. It was a covenant of works. Do this and live. But even the fact that God stooped down to enter into the covenant of works was a gracious act, a loving act. When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have set in place, what is man that you even think about him?

That's what the psalmist says in Psalm 8. What is man that you are mindful of him and the son of man that you care for him? see the love of God and even stooping down low to enter into a covenant, a solemn agreement between him and man, binding them together in a relationship, promising, giving promises, having stipulations, having rules. So there's clarity and even having threatening. So we see this is the consequence of breaking. This is love. Even entering into the covenant of works. What is man that you are mindful of him? I think if you've grown up in church, you probably need to read that and think about that far more than you do. Just who are we that you even care? When I look at your creation, what is man that you're even mindful of him? much less that you would enter into a covenant with him. Much less that your ultimate plan with that is permitting Adam to fall so that you would bring your son into the world to redeem all of these law-breakers who have violently fought against you in your glory. What is man that you are mindful of him, much less that you would redeem him? So see the love and condescension of God in bending low to enter into a covenant with man. But also I want you to see the holiness of God as you consider the Adamic covenant. See God's perfect holiness totally separated from sin. Totally separated from uncleanness whose eyes are so pure that he will not even look on evil with any kind of favor. See the holiness of God. He requires perfect works of obedience. And that's not because God is a tyrant, but it is because God is holy.

The reason that the general condition of the covenant of works was perfect obedience is because of the holiness of God and that no one can have fellowship with God who is not perfectly holy.

You are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong. Habakkuk 1:13. Why does God require perfect obedience? Because he is holy. But also see not only the holiness of God, see the kindness of God in giving the simplest command in the Adamic covenant. Boys and girls, look up here at me. Children, have has your mom or dad ever told you to do something, required you to do something that you can honestly say that was too difficult for me to do. Can you think about that? Like, I'm not able to do that. And I don't mean because you're whining about it and you're just like, I can't do it. And your dad's like, just do it. That's not what I mean. But sometimes we parents make mistakes and we'll tell you to do something and not really think through the fact it's like you you're not even able to do that or it's such a difficult thing to do that they're probably going to fail. I'm giving them an unattainable task. Sometimes us parents we make those mistakes. We'll give you a task that really is too difficult for you. But God did not do that with Adam. Children, imagine at your house, at your property that you have, wherever you are, there are a bunch of fruit trees. And your parent says, your parents say, "You can eat from all of these trees. There's just this one tree right over here you cannot eat of." And they make it very clear which one. on a market, make it clear, eat of everything you want, but you can't eat of that one tree. Is that a difficult thing to obey? And you're just like, that's like impossible. It's so high to attain. I can't imagine ever doing

that. It's like, no, that's a really simple and clear command, isn't it? A very simple test of obedience. There's one tree. You can eat of all the rest. Don't eat of that one. Easy or hard? Super easy. Right. That's what God did with Adam in the covenant of works. God didn't give him some unattainable height of righteousness that he had to obey. It was a test of his obedience from the heart to the Lord and Adam failed. That is the kindness of God in even giving the simplest of commands. This commandment that I command you today, even Moses says in Deuteronomy 3:11, is not too hard for you. Neither is it far off. And in the same way, the command that the Lord, the stipulations that the Lord gave to Adam in the covenant of works, not too hard, not too high, it was simple. You should see the kindness of God in that. Have you ever thought, well, Adam did fall into sin? That's true. But God set the bar pretty high. Have you ever even had that thought? It's like, no. They ate from one tree that they weren't allowed to eat of and they could eat of all the rest. I bet you've never had that thought. So see the kindness of God and like getting rid of all of those foolish thoughts. Even if God had set the bar higher, Adam's still required to obey it. But God in his kindness sets the bar really low for the Adamic covenant, the covenant of works, and gets rid of any of us going, "Well, God might have been a little bit unfair to him." Like, "No, it's pretty much the easiest thing you could imagine. Come up with an easier rule. Hundreds of trees you can eat from, one you can't. That's God's kindness. You need to also see as you consider the Adamic covenant, see where our great enemy, death, came from. Death came from sin. And death, boys and girls, look up here. Death is not a natural part of life. Death is not like Gandalf says a path we all must take. It is now because of sin. But death is not natural. Death is not something that we should just look at and be like, it's no big deal. Death, Paul says, death is an enemy. Death is an enemy. And the reason we die is because Adam sinned and broke the covenant of works. And he represented all of us in that covenant. We die because of Adam's fall. And his guilt from that fall was then imputed, given to us because he represented all of us. Believers, you need to know that death came into the world through sin. And death spread to all men because all sinned. Meaning when Adam sinned, we all sinned in him. Death didn't spread to all men because all men sinned in their persons in time and space. No, that's not what he means. He means all of us sinned in Adam. That's why everybody dies. The wages of sin is death. Death is not natural. It is an enemy. It entered the world through Adam because he broke the covenant of works. And Christ, the better Adam, will one day kill death.

Don't ever try to belittle death. It is an enemy. Now for the believer, death has been turned into victory.

But death is still painful in this life. As we lose our loved ones, as the innocent are killed, as any image bearer of God is killed, death is still difficult. But the promise of 1 Corinthians 15 is Christ must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. And the last enemy to be destroyed is death. Christ will finally fully and

ultimately through his cross in our place to take our sins through his resurrection from the dead to be our eternal savior. Christ will return, judge, and totally destroy death. Your great enemy, death, has its days numbered, believers. Praise the Lord. But that's where death came from. It came from the broken covenant of works. I want you to see also as we consider the covenant of works. See how foolish it is to try to attain eternal life by your own works.

I'll put it very crudely like Oklahoma talk. "We done tried that." — to get to heaven by your own works. We already tried that. That Adam could have but he fell and we all fell in him. No one is able to get to heaven by their own works. If you have that mindset of like get to heaven by my own works, you're already naturally in that covenant and it's already been broken. You can't fix it. It's already been broken in Adam and you in him. So it is people trying to attain eternal life whether it's like consciously or subconsciously through their works. It's like yeah I see what you're doing and yeah that was what Adam was supposed to do but it's already broken. You're already a sinner. You already deserve death. You can't make up for your bad deeds by your good deeds. That's not how it ever works.

So, see how foolish it is to try to get to heaven by works. Romans 3:20 says, "By the works of the law, no human being will be justified in God's sight." By your own works, by your own works of the law, no human being will be declared righteous, will be forgiven of their sin and declared righteous with the righteousness of Christ by their own works. Not going to happen. Boys and girls, do you remember in church history 101 when I had you memorize a quote by George Whitfield about climbing to heaven on a rope of sand? Whitfield said, "What? Get to heaven by your own strength? Well, you might as well try to climb to heaven on a rope of sand. Climb to the moon on a rope of sand. Not going to happen. See how foolish it is to try to get to heaven by your own works. You cannot get to heaven by your own works. You can only get there through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who not only did perfectly obey God's law, was not under the broken covenant of works, but also paid for your transgressions if you believe in him. He paid for the fact that the covenant of works was broken. So look to the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus, you can't get to the moon on a rope of sand. You can't get to heaven by your own works. But through trusting with simple faith, trusting in Jesus alone for salvation, Christ will put you on his back and he will carry you up to heaven. That's the beauty of the good news. That's the beauty of the gospel. This is what Psalm 24 means. Who is the man that shall ascend unto the hill of God? Or who within his holy place shall have a firm abode? Who can climb the hill of God to enter into the presence of God? The answer is none but Christ. And Christ says, I will take you with me. You trust in me alone for salvation. If you trust in my perfect life of obedience to the law, if you trust in my death in your place to pay for your sins, if you trust in my resurrection from the dead to be your eternal savior, Christ says to all of you, I will give you eternal salvation. I will throw you on my back and carry you all the way to glory. Do not trust in your works. Trust in the perfect finished

work of the Lord Jesus Christ. You who are not yet converted to Christ, you who are not yet trusting in Christ alone for salvation, and it's following that you're laboring to obey Christ, I say to you, this is as simple as it is. Turn from your sins and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation, just as he's offered to you in the gospel. Then come and be baptized. Join with the church and walk closely with the church, God's people for your whole life, so you can glorify and enjoy the Lord. That's what you need to do. Repent, believe the gospel, be baptized, join with the church, and walk with God's people. Turn to Christ, and you will be saved. You cannot get to heaven on your own. You cannot have eternal life through your works. Abandon that foolish mission. I want you to lastly see how wonderful the new covenant is compared with the covenant of works. The new covenant as the apostle to the Hebrews calls it when he's explaining the differences of the old and the new. The new covenant is the new covenant of grace based on the grace of God in Christ Jesus. Not based like the Adamic covenant was on the works of Adam. Will Adam obey or not? That's what the covenant was based on. The new covenant is based on the grace of God in Christ Jesus. Will Christ perfectly obey or not. He already did perfectly obey the law. He already did pay for our transgressions. And so, everyone who believes in him is reconciled to God. And as a perfect new covenant of grace between them and God. The whole point of the new covenant, the covenant of grace, is that Jesus represents us just as Adam did. Jesus represents us and he is already perfectly obeyed, perfectly satisfied for our judgment and lives forever at God's right hand to be our representative. The new covenant is principally made between God the father and God the son but it includes all those who get connected united to the son Jesus through faith. He is our perfect representative. See how much better the new covenant is. See how wonderful it is where Jesus upholds our end of the bargain. This is why Hebrews 10:15-17 says this. The Holy Spirit also bears witness to us saying, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days." This is God promising the new covenant. I will put my law on their hearts and write them on their minds. Then he adds, I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more. Hallelujah.

Who is the man that shall ascend into the hill of God? Or who within his holy place shall have a firm abode? Whose hands are clean? Whose heart is pure and unto vanity? Who hath not lifted up his soul, nor sworn deceitfully? He from the eternal shall receive the blessing him upon and righteousness even from the God of his salvation. This is the generation that after him inquire, "Oh Jacob, who do seek thy face with their whole hearts desire, ye gates, lift up your heads on high, ye doors that last, for a be lifted up, that so the king of glory enter may." But who of glory is the king? The mighty Lord is this. Even that same Lord that great in might and strong in battle is. Ye gates, lift up your heads, ye doors, doors that do last. For a be lifted up that so the king of glory enter may. But who is he that is the king of glory? Who is this? The Lord of hosts and none but he the king of glory is. Who is the man that will carry you up? The Lord Jesus Christ. Pray with me.

Our father in heaven, we ask you to help us to properly understand the covenant of works, the Adamic covenant, and help us to see what we should see from it. Think, feel, love accordingly. Ask you to save unbelievers, sanctify your people, receive all these things that we do now. our songs, the Lord's Supper, our offerings, our prayers, our time of fellowship.