



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Divine Purpose

TRANSCRIPT

“The Fall of Man and the Messianic Promise, or The Covenant of Grace - II”

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the privilege of the study of the Scriptures again, and we ask especially that, as we consider the divine purpose, that we may be by Thy grace enabled to understand and to profit, and to grow in the knowledge of the Scriptures and in the practice of them in our daily lives. Enable us to think clearly, and enable us Lord to grasp the plans and purposes that Thou hast for this creation of Thine and for the people that Thou hast placed upon this globe. We especially give Thee thanks for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and for all that he has accomplished for us. How blessed we are.

And we thank Thee in His name. Amen.

[Message] Now, we are studying for any who may be here for the first time the “Divine Purpose”; a study of the ages, and the nations, and the Covenants. One of the purposes of our study is to give you an understanding of two primary approaches to Christian theology, and Christian thinking, with a view to the reading of the Bible. You know, when John Calvin wrote his “Institutes,” which is obviously one of the greatest of the theological works, he wrote that work, not that it should be primarily a work of theology, but he wrote it as a *wa de makum*; that is, something that was to go with us so

that we could read the Scriptures more intelligently. In other words, it was a handbook. It was a handbook to understanding the Bible. Now, of course, after it had gone through many, many editions, instead of being a relatively small book, it turned out to be a book that now is usually published in two volumes. But that's what he intended it to be. He intended it to be a guide to the study of the Scriptures, and when we think of the divine purpose as a subject, that's what we're really thinking about too. We're looking for something that will help us in the reading of the Bible, in our daily reading of the Bible, so that we can read it with more understanding and be able, therefore, to apply it to our lives in a much better way. So we are studying covenant theology, because this is an approach that has been given to the study of the Scriptures by a vast number of important Christian people and Christian movements.

Covenantal theology, we have been studying, and over against that, a relatively recent system of theology, dispensational theology. We will launch into a study of that next Wednesday, the Lord willing. These two particular viewpoints have captured the attention of a great deal of evangelicalism, and there's quite a bit of conflict between them; some friendly conflict, and some not so friendly. And what we're trying to do is to give you an understanding of both of these systems of approach to the Scriptures, and then as we continue our study to be able to critically evaluate both of them and, therefore, come to an understanding of what the Scriptures teach regarding the divine purpose in a more accurate and truly Scriptural way.

I know that most of us tend to in something like this, we tend to come with presuppositions, the kinds of presuppositions that it's very difficult for us to shed ourselves of them, and obviously I come with presuppositions too. We all like to think that we're neutral, but we're not. No one is ever neutral in anything. That's one thing that you learn when you study history. There's no such thing as the simple facts of any event that has taken place, because every one of them is described in a way that interprets the significance of them. So we're bearing all of that in mind, and trying to

remember that we all come with our presuppositions to these matters and I come with mine. You probably already know what they are, but you probably don't know all of them.

Now, we've looked at covenant theology in its essential structure, because essentially, covenant theology is built around the Covenant of Redemption made between the persons of the Trinity in eternity, the Covenant of Grace made between the persons of the Trinity sometimes set out simply as a Covenant between our Lord and not the Trinity and the elect, also made in eternity in the sense that it was made before the creation of the world, and before the creation of man. And then the Covenant of Works; the Covenant which God entered into with Adam in the Garden of Eden. These three Covenants are the essential structure of the Covenants of covenantal theology, but as one reads covenantal theology, it becomes evident that the primary Covenant for understanding the text of the Bible in the development of the history of salvation is the Covenant of Grace, the Covenant of Redemption, the Covenant in eternity past between the persons of the Trinity is fundamental to that, as we'll point out in just a moment, but it's the Covenant of Grace that becomes significant, because it's that Covenant between the persons of the Trinity and the elect which governs the outworking of the plan and purpose of God in human history; what we call the progressive development of divine salvation.

Now, tonight, we're going to use the same outline that we used last week, because that was an outline for lectures 5 and 6. When we touch on Roman IV, which we will be dealing with tonight, we will deal with some details that are not listed in the outline, but I will give you a word concerning them when we get to them.

I'd like to begin tonight with a few words by way of introduction. The Covenant of Grace was made in eternity between the Trinity and the elect. I say, there have been minor differences of opinions. Some like to think of this as a Covenant between our Lord, second person of the Trinity, and the elect, but we will use the terminology of “a

Covenant between the Trinity and the elect.” Now, these things can be said with regard to this Covenant. First of all, Christ’s ministry is a condition of the Covenant of Redemption made between the persons of the Trinity. In other words, each of the persons of the Trinity covenant to do certain things, and our Lord’s part of that Covenant is a condition for the accomplishment of the Covenant of Redemption. That Covenant is a conditional covenant. Now, because it’s a conditional covenant between the divine persons, there is a certainty of accomplishment of the terms of the Covenant bound up in the nature and being of the divine persons of the Trinity. So what the Trinity, and what the persons of the Trinity take upon themselves to do, they are able to do, and they do do, because they are sovereign persons. The sovereign Father. The sovereign Son. The sovereign Spirit. And so they are fully able to accomplish all of the conditions, and they accomplish all of the conditions that they set upon themselves. The Covenant of Grace, however, is a Covenant in which a promise is made between the Trinity, and made by the Trinity with the elect. So Christ’s ministry is a condition of the Covenant of Redemption, but it’s a promise in the Covenant of Grace.

In the Covenant of Grace, the justice that must be done to sinners, with all their obligations to that justice, lies upon Christ. So he takes upon himself the responsibility of the payment of the penalty for their sin, and also for the accomplishment of all of the benefits that flow from his successful work as the Son of God in the Covenant of Grace. For example, in Isaiah chapter 53 in verse 6, we read, “All we like sheep have gone astray. We’ve turned everyone to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” In the Covenant of Grace, that is what our Lord takes upon himself to accomplish; that is, to die for the sins of sinners, and to accomplish his promise of eternal life, and all of the benefits of this Covenant by his successful mediatorial work.

A second thing; the Covenant of Grace then is anchored in the Covenant of Redemption. In other words, because of the arrangement that has been made between the persons of the Trinity, each to carry out the responsibilities that they have, the

Covenant of Grace, which is a covenant between our Lord, or the persons of the Trinity and the elect, has its validity by virtue of those promises made between the persons of the Trinity. So the Covenant of Grace is anchored in the Covenant of Redemption.

Now, let me say this again as an aside. I know that there are often people who say, “Well, I don’t find the term ‘Covenant of Redemption’ in the Bible. I don’t find the Covenant of Grace in the Bible.” We don’t contend as a covenant theologian, I’m speaking as if I were one. We don’t contend that, that is found in Scripture. We don’t contend that the term “Covenant of Redemption” is found or the term “Covenant of Grace” is found. We contend that the things that are set out by that terminology are found in Scripture. In other words, when our Lord says, “He comes to accomplish the will of the Father,” it’s obvious that there is an arrangement between them; the Father setting out certain things that the Son is to do, and the Son saying that he is accomplishing those things. We do have statements, such as those that Paul makes in 1 Timothy chapter 1, and in Titus in which, in connection with divine election, reference is made to the promise of life. So there is such a thing as the promise of life through the work of the redeemer, and so these terms we must not fight over. I must confess, that as far as the terms are concerned, they are valid terms if we understand the terms to refer to spiritual realities.

For example, Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, who was a dispensational theologian, in his “Systematic Theology” acknowledges that there is such a thing as the Covenant of Redemption, although he says, “There’s not much in the Scriptures concerning it,” and, I think, actually he did not realize how much there was in Scripture about the arrangement between the persons of the Trinity, and the statements of our Lord with reference to his doing of the will of the Father.

Faith on the part of man gives entrance to the Covenant of Grace, but the faith that man exercises flows from the stipulations of the Covenant of Redemption between the persons of the Trinity. In other words, the Holy Spirit promises within the Covenant

of Redemption to bring regeneration, and faith, and other blessings by his own application of the benefits that our Lord has accomplished through his death on the Cross. So faith gives entrance to the Covenant, but the faith comes from the stipulations of the Covenant of Redemption between the persons of the Trinity, and faith is a gift that is secured by Christ's work for his people. That's plainly stated in Ephesians 2:8 and 9, and one of these times we'll stop, and we'll deal in detail with the exegesis of that text, because there's a whole lot of misunderstanding of that text by people that ought to know better; that is, who know a little Greek, and some who know quite a bit of Greek, but still have not understood that text, in my opinion, properly.

A third thing; it's clear that without the Covenant of Redemption, there could be no Covenant of Grace. In other words, there can be no promise of the Son to do the work that is done of bringing men to the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and all of the facets of it, if there were not a previous chronologically, well, we cannot speak of that, but logically, a previous arrangement among the persons of the Trinity. So the Covenant of Redemption is the foundation of the Covenant of Grace, and it should also be clear that without the Covenant of Grace, the Covenant of Redemption would be a futile mirage, as far as salvation is concerned. For example, if the persons of the Trinity should make agreements among themselves, each to do what they were to do, but if there was no Covenant of Grace by which the benefits were actually brought to the people of God then, of course, we would have lovely talk between the persons of the Trinity, and lovely plan of salvation, but no plan to effectually apply its benefits. So the Covenant of Grace is essential to the Covenant of Redemption, and that's extremely important, but we won't labor the point right now.

The Covenant of Grace begins the historical outworking in the creation of the universe and man; the probation, the fall, and in the first preaching of the Gospel. So the Covenant of Grace begins, I should say, its historical outworking, in the things that we find in the early chapters of the Book of Genesis. We all know in reading the Bible, we

begin with, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” and then we read of the creation of Adam, and we read of the creation of Eve, and we read of Adam and Eve being set in the Garden of Eden. And we read of the stipulations of the Covenant that God gave to Adam as the federal head, and Eve, of course, his wife in her particular place. Then we read in Genesis chapter 3, of the fall of man, and now the question of the future of man is at stake, because if we were looking at this simply from what we might imagine, we might imagine that the Lord God, now that Adam has disobeyed him in the Garden of Eden, and is become subject to death, that God would simply execute his judgment and start over again with someone else, and call that someone else “Lewis.” Well of course, no, that’s not going to happen, because that’d be probably a faster fall than Adam’s if that were true. But God had certain purposes that he was going to carry out, and he was going to demonstrate his grace, and he would demonstrate his justice also and other plans as well.

So in simple terms, the Bible claims that man was created holy. He was put on probation. He failed it by disobedience. He became a being in spiritual wreck and ruin, and what is true of the best of men, is also true of the least of men. Robert South, the well-known Anglican clergyman who lived in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and who had a penchant for memorable statements once said, “An Aristotle is but the wreck of an Adam, and Athens but the rubbish of an Eden.” And Pascal spoke of man as, quote, “The glory and the shame of the universe,” unquote. “The problem then with modern man is his unregenerosity; name, rendering his thoughts about God, about sin and redemption. Perverse; he cannot see the fall as the explanation of modern man’s dilemma. His ideas about sin prove it. Unfortunately, Rienhold Niebuhr is right when he affirms that modern man has an essentially “easy conscience.” Well, that is one of the things that must become known before it can be overthrown.

Instead of the true attitude to our condition, we try to cover up our sin. We look at sin under the outward appearance of good or *sub specie boni*, wrapping ourselves by

our religion in the vesture of the apostles. And, finally, ultimately, “man shall in the man of sin, seek to put on the mantle of the Messiah himself,” as Paul says in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 in verse 4. That’s the epitome of the cunning hypocrisy of the evil one. If you have any question about human sin, you need Anselm’s *Ancient Rebuke*. You have not yet considered what a heavy weight sin is. Now, tonight, what I’d like to do in the time that we have is to read Genesis 3:14 through 19, because this is the beginning of the outworking in history of the Covenant of Grace. And we’ll talk about that, and the significance of it. Now, I realize we’re going over some things that a number of you have already gone over a number of times, and so we’ll just hit the high spots, and then conclude with some comments concerning the relationship of the Covenant of Grace to the progress of divine revelation.

Now, you know the story of the Fall, and in verse 14, we read, “And the Lord God said unto the serpent; because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle and above every beast of the field. Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said; I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception. In sorrow, thou shalt bring forth children, and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said; because thou hast hearkened unto thy voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee saying; Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground, for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.”

Now, if you have the outline, you’ll notice this is Roman IV: The Relationship of the Covenant of Grace to the *protevangelium* of Genesis 3: 14 through 19. Now, *protevangelium* is a Latin expression which means, “the first preaching of the gospel.”

Now, “first preaching of the gospel” means simply, that this is the first messianic promise. That’s why it’s called the *protevangelium*. And capital A: The Meaning of the Protevangelium. Now, I have three divisions under this, and you can put them in your notes if you like. It’s Arabic 1: The Sentence Upon the Serpent, verses 14 and 15. And then Arabic 2: The Sentence Upon the Woman, verse 16. And then Arabic 3: The Sentence Upon the Man. That will be verses 17 through 19. And then we will close with the relationship, set out in the outline under capital B.

So now, let’s think for just a brief moment about the sentence upon the serpent. After the Fall, Adam and Eve had run in the age-old path of self-vindication, and God brings all of the talk to an end with his three-fold judgment; judgment upon Satan or the serpent, judgment upon Eve, and then judgment upon the man. The order of the address to the parties in the Garden, first, the man in the words above, then the woman, and then the serpent may indicate his view of the responsibility in guilt; that is, it’s Adam who stands particularly guilty, because he’s the federal head. The fault of both Adam and Eve is that they do not at once, upon the appearance of the Lord God in convicting power, smite their breasts in deep repentance, and cry out for the remission of their sins. But they didn’t do that, and so judgment must fall, and it falls first upon the serpent. Now, it’s rather striking that the prose of the preceding verses in Hebrew text gives way to rhythmic Hebrew poetry again, and rhythmic Hebrew poetry is found right at the end of chapter 2, in the words that are spoken by Adam, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” Here again, Hebrew poetry takes place, and we’re probably to understand by this, that it has some special significance.

To summarize the judgment, we can say this; the serpent is cursed, and Satan who stands behind the serpent is to be crushed. Now, in order to spend as little time as possible, because I know you’ve considered this, I want to go on to the fifteenth verse, and discuss the promise of the one who is to come, the woman’s seed, particularly. Verse

15, contains what has been for centuries called, “the first preaching of the Gospel.”

Contained within the words, “He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel,” is the essence of that which finds its fulfillment in the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is no trivial statement, incidentally, of enmity between man and snakes.

I have a friend and former student who teaches at a theological seminary, who has an interesting way sometimes of teaching theology. What he likes to do, is shock his students, and make ridiculous statements, and that’s designed to cause the students to argue with him. And after they’ve argued with him for a lengthy period of time, they’re supposed to come to the truth. Well, that would work with a Socrates, but sometimes it doesn’t work, and particularly if a person’s not as skilled theologically as he might be. This individual, I must confess on this point, has a view problems because he doesn’t like to think of this as being a messianic promise at all. He says that all this is, is a text that has to do with snakes and people; just snakes and people. Now, it would be simple, I think, if you thought about this for a moment, to see that that is not true. In the first place, in the New Testament, the Apostle Paul refers to this instant, and in fact, even refers to the judgment upon the serpent in Romans chapter 16 in verse 20. And he speaks of it as being something that will be carried out in the future and, furthermore, if this were a prophecy that had to do simply with snakes and people, there’s nothing in the Scripture that we could point to that would be the fulfillment of this. Almost all orthodox people have, therefore, seen in Genesis 3:15, more than a word about the fact, that snakes are not going to be popular with men and women. That’s obviously a truth, but that’s designed to teach us some spiritual truth too, so that every time you see a little snake you ought to think about Genesis 3, and you ought to think also about the condition of men, and you ought to think also about the part that Satan plays in sin in human beings; things like this. But, at any rate, the text is a very interesting one that has to do with the messianic promises.

A great deal of discussion has raged around the meaning of the word “seed.” “I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed.” Without entering into a lengthy treatment of this, let me suggest that the term “seed” is used in the sense that it is used of Abraham and his seed later on. In other words, the term *zara* that’s the Hebrew expression. *Zara* is a collective noun. Being a collective noun, it may refer to “seed” in the plural sense, but it also may refer to “seed” in the singular sense. You’ll find in the Old Testament, if you’ll just take a Concordance and look up the term “seed” *zara* and you can find it in your Concordance, your English Concordances; a “Young’s” for example, or a “Strong’s” and you can find the occurrences of this particular word. And you’ll discover that frequently, the term “seed” comprehends a whole succession of people who are descendants of one person, but at other times it refers to one particular person. So it actually is a term that is chosen extremely well. It is both collective in its general significance, but it also may refer to a singular person. Now, that’s very suitable for the fact that flowing out of the promises of God, there comes a seed, a spiritual seed, but that spiritual seed finds its highlight, I should say, in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the federal head of that seed. So if we just remember that, then we will get over one of our difficulties.

Now, he says, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed.” In other words, we may expect then that there shall be, both on the physical and the spiritual level, conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. Now he says, “It shall bruise thy head.” Now, that’s the Authorized Version’s rendering, and that’s a possible rendering, because the Hebrew term can refer to this seed in a neuter sense, but it’s not necessarily so. The “he” of the New American Standard Bible and the New International Version in this instance, I think, is surely right. *Huw*, the Hebrew expression probably is to be given that sense. In other words, when we read here in verse 16, “between thy seed and her seed,” we should follow with, “He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” Now, that is, I think, required by the

interpretation of the Hebrew text. It also is supported by the fact, that the Greek translation of the Old Testament, this part of which was made before the time of the coming of Christ, has the masculine pronoun “outaus”, so that’s further confirmation with regard to how it was understood before the time of the writing of the New Testament. It was understood as a reference to a person, “he”.

Now, the question that might immediately come is, “Is this a reference to a collective body or is it a reference to an individual?” Now, I want to suggest to you some reasons why we must give this an individual sense. In the first place, the “you” in “he shall bruise you” is obviously personal. He’s talking to the serpent, and he’s talking to the one who stands behind the serpent, and that’s a reference to personalities, and so since the “you” in the “he shall bruise you”, is personal. That surely implies that the “him” is personal as well. You notice the narrowing down of the reference as well. In the first clause, the seed of the serpent is opposed to the seed of the woman, but in the second, it is not over the seed of the serpent, but over the serpent itself that the victory is to be won. In other words, “he shall bruise thee” not thy seed, but “thee”, as to the head. One of the better Old Testament commentators on the Hebrew text writes, “It; that is, the seed of the woman will crush thy head, and thou” not thy seed “wilt crush its heel.”

In the second place, think about the terms “head” and “heel.” Those two terms individualize the concept of seed. If you have a collective seed, you could hardly be said to have a “head” and a “heel” of a collective seed. In other words, a collective seed does not go with “head” and “heel,” so the use of the terms “head” and “heel” suggest that what we have here, is a reference not to the line, but rather to an individual who is significant in each of the lines. In the case of the line of the people of God, the Lord Jesus Christ the mediator, and in the case of the line of the serpent, it’s Satan himself who ultimately will be overcome by Satan by the Lord Jesus in the work on the Cross. The fact that the seed is called the “seed of the woman” does not prove a reference to the virgin birth. Sometimes we try to prove more from the Scripture than the Scripture really states,

but let me say this; it's thoroughly in harmony with the idea of the virgin birth; that this seed, who is referred to here as an individual, is called the “seed of the woman” is contrary to what you might expect in Jewish thinking, because in Jewish thinking, it's the male that stands out with great significance. And the fact that the seed is called the “seed of the woman” and not the seed of the man is of some significance. In other words, there seems to be implicit, we know this from the New Testament, seems to be implicit, something in the background of the seed that causes the term “seed of the woman” to be used, but we cannot say we've proved the doctrine of the virgin birth from something like that. We can only say, “It's in harmony with the doctrine of the virgin birth.”

Now, the word rendered “bruise” here means “to crush”. In fact, in the New Testament when Paul cites this passage, refers to it in Romans 16:20, he uses a Greek verb *soontripō*, which means “to crush together,” so the idea of crushing is involved. “He shall crush thee as to thy head, and thou shalt crush him as to his heel.” Now, you can see that we have here, a reference to a conflict, and you also can see from this, that we have an indication of how the conflict is going to come out. When you crush someone, or bruise someone as to their heel, that's ordinarily not a fatal wound. In fact, that's the implication that you get. It's a wound. It may be a serious wound, but it's not a fatal wound. But when you crush the head of a person, that's a fatal wound, and so when we read here, “He shall bruise thee as to thy head,” a reference to the serpent, and Satan who stands behind him; that's a fatal wound. But “Thou shalt bruise his heel.” That of course, is clearly a reference to the fact, that the Lord Jesus Christ, ultimately, by the work that he accomplishes on the cross, and the wounds that he suffers there, is the one through whom the victory over Satan is to come.

We often, when we think about atonement, we think of the theories of the atonement that have been offered. Most of the theories of the atonement can be subsumed under these heads; atonements that ultimately terminate upon man, or terminate upon God, or terminate upon Satan. Theories of the atonement that terminate

upon man are exemplary theories of the atonement; that is, the Lord Jesus gave us such a great exhibition of love that, that's to be an example to us, and that accomplishes atonement. It makes us better by virtue of the example of our Lord; exemplary theories of the atonement, or moral influence theories of the atonement. These are very closely related, but they actually go back to different people; one back to Abelard, and one to Socinus and others, because they've gathered around them a number of followers. So in the case of moral influence, it's a similar kind of thing. The love of God is manifested in the gift of the Son, and the love of God changes people, so the atonement terminates upon a man. Now, you can see immediately that, that atonement is not a Christian doctrine of the atonement, because it does not deal with the question of the punishment of our sin. There must be punishment of sin, otherwise the God who says that he's a just God, is not a just God if he overlooks human sin.

Now, other theories of the atonement terminate upon God; that is to give you a simple one when we think of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, we think of it as a work by which he engages himself to satisfy the holiness and righteousness of the Lord God in heaven. And in satisfying the claims of divine holiness and divine justice, he makes it possible for the gift of eternal life to be given to the people of God. So theories in which the atonement terminates upon the Lord God have generally, by orthodox theologians, been regarded as containing obviously, biblical truth.

Another theory of the atonement or other theories of the atonement also terminate upon Satan; that is, that the work of the Lord Jesus Christ had special reference to Satan. That may surprise you, but in the early Church, these understandings of atonement were very widely expressed, sometimes falsely, such as in “Ransom to Satan” theories, as if the Lord Jesus came, and made it possible by offering his sacrifice, to ransom individuals from the power of Satan by what he did, as if God had to pay some ransom to Satan. The early church father had lots of things by which they spoke about the atonement; some very good, some very interesting, some very strange. Some of them spoke about the

atonement as a fish hook, in which a person would like Satan would take hold of the Lord Jesus Christ, and put him to death, but discover the fish hook, and discover that he had been caught by what Christ had done. So they referred to the atonement in all those figures of speech.

Now, it's interesting that in the New Testament, the atonement of the Lord Jesus is related to Satan, and strikingly, in a very wide way. John says, “The Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil.” The Apostle Paul in Ephesians chapter two says essentially the same thing. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews in chapter 2, verse 14 and verse 15, says the same thing, so here we have John, we have Paul, we have also the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, all saying that the work of Christ has special reference to Satan himself. And right here in Genesis 3, the first preaching of the gospel lays stress upon that aspect of the atonement, so any understanding of the atonement must bear that in mind.

Well, the sentence upon the woman is given, and I will be nice to the woman, and not say anything much about that tonight and then there follows the sentence upon the man. The sentence upon the man is a sentence of physical judgment in verse 17 and 18, and then there is a sentence that is given, well mentioned sentence upon Satan, sentence upon the woman, now sentence upon the man, and this sentence is one of physical judgment, and then also one of moral judgment.

Now, we are familiar with this, and I'm just going to take the view that you understand most of these things, and not go over this again. As you can see from verse 17 and 18, this curse that is put upon man, incidentally, seems to be more a curse upon man's realm than upon the man himself, but it follows. The cursing of the ground leads to a life of toil and weakness. An autonomous man is shown that he has limits. He thought that he was going to be like God, and he discovers that he's a slave, and furthermore, he's under the Lord God. What happens is described here in a way that would make a scientist feel that the writers of Scripture have anticipated what they

discovered later on, because we have a beautiful illustration of the Second Law of Thermal Dynamics; that everything tends to work toward a disordered state, just as you know in your own house.

Isaac Asimov, the well known Jewish popularizer of various ideas, writing about the Second Law of Thermal Dynamics said, “Anybody who can understand what a room becomes if you don’t pay any attention to it, understands the essential nature of the Second Law of Thermal Dynamics, expressed by scientists under that $s=d/t$, or energy tends toward entropy.” What it means simply, is that everything in this universe tends to disorder if left that way, and so just like your room upstairs or your bedroom, or whatever, I know all of you keep a well ordered room, you never have anything lying around, but if you’ve got some children, you understand exactly what we are talking about. You can clean up that room, and if you just leave that room alone, it will be in a disordered state before long. That’s just the way things work in this universe.

In the 18th verse, it’s evident that man is never going to subdue the earth in its present condition. Nature is always untamed and encroaching. “Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herb of the field.” And so you go out in your nice little garden that you have managed to put in such beautiful shape last week, and you discover now as you look at it, weeds are springing up all over everywhere, and that’s just the way this creation is. In other words, if you don’t understand sin, you have no hope of understanding Scripture. That’s the thing that just so puzzles me; that we are so blind to what seems so obvious to a person who reads the Bible.

Listen to a nice lady from Duncanville, Texas who writes to the editor of the Dallas Morning News yesterday. She’s talking about AIDS, and she’s not really for the homosexuals, so don’t misunderstand the nature of these first paragraphs, but listen to what she says. This is so common I think. “To the editors. When I hear preachers proclaim that AIDS is the means by which God is punishing homosexuals for their sinful ways, I sympathize with homosexuals.” Now, incidentally, it’s difficult for anyone in my

opinion, to say that AIDS is God’s punishing for homosexuality. Now, if you were to ask me what, I think, I would say; Well, I think, that’s involved, but it’s difficult to prove that specifically, except in the general sense; when men sin, they suffer, and there’s no question about homosexuality being contrary to the word of God. It’s an abomination in the Old Testament. It’s contrary to the will of God in the New Testament, and you can be sure, that if you do that which is contrary to the teaching of the word of God, you suffer consequences of it, but it’s hard to be specific. But anyway, she goes on to say, “That God would use disease as punishment is abhorrent to me.” What a lovely lady. It’s so good. And the God that she has is a God who doesn’t punish by disease. Now, just quickly in your mind, Paul speaking to the Christians in Corinth said, “Because of the disorders of the Lord’s Table, for this cause some weak, some sickly, and some have fallen asleep.” Far less reason than the kinds of things suggested by AIDS but listen. Listen to what follows. “That God would use disease as punishment is abhorrent to me. Judging by the sizes and numbers of hospitals in Dallas, we would have to conclude that this is a city of sinners.” Well, as Martha said when I said that to her, “Right on. That’s exactly what we have in Dallas. We have a city of sinners.” And we all know that death and disease come from our sin, ultimately.

Now, one final word or two before we stop. I want to say just a word about the messianic promises in the Covenant of Grace, and I really didn’t have much to say about this, because I want to have a few moments to answer questions. What we have in Genesis 3 then, is the first of the promises concerning the redeemer to come. Now, I think, you can see it’s such a broad, general promise. All that is stated is that someone from the human race shall bring about the fatal suffering of the serpent and the one who stands behind the serpent. That’s all that’s stated. We don’t have the details that Scripture unfolds, as Scripture is written, so what we have is the most general purpose, the most general telling of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and we just have to look at it as a broad, general promise. But what flows out of that are the details of the fulfillment of the

Covenant of Grace, according to covenant theologians. This great promise is the first of the historical statements that unfold the meaning of the Covenant of Grace and its plan of salvation. In fact, the Covenant of Grace is expressed in history then, by the messianic promises. So the Covenant of Grace then is a covenant made between the Trinity and the elect sinners and the unfolding of all of the promises which our Lord will accomplish by his saving work, are the details of the Covenant of Grace, grounded in the eternal Covenant of Redemption. Those promises contain the revelation contained in the work of the godhead in the salvation of the people of God.

Now, we have, since we started a little late, we have five or six minutes, and I'd like to try to answer a few questions that you may have, so feel free to ask your question, but please speak loud enough for two reasons; so everybody can hear, and particularly so I can hear.

Yes, sir.

[Question inaudible]

You're going to have to speak louder. Come up a little closer if you don't mind or speak.

[Question inaudible]

On what?

[Question inaudible]

The question is, I'm repeating this for the tape, the question is, "What books or literature would I recommend for covenant theology? Correct?" The theologies of Professor Lewis Burkhof; that is a very accurate statement of covenant theological thinking. The theology of Charles Hodge called "Systematic Theology." Both of them are called "Systematic Theology." The theology of William G. T. Shedd. Some recent literature would be literature like Palmer Robertson's, "The Christ of the Covenants." That's an attempt to present a little different twist in covenant theology. But I would

suggest, for a simple beginning, go to Burkhof because Burkhof is a committed covenant theologian, and he has chapters on most of these things we’ve been talking about.

Yes, Wilford.

[Question inaudible]

Well you see, the aspect of the atonement as terminating upon God himself, takes a secondary place here. I think, you can show that it is involved, but as Scripture unfolds, it becomes quite evident from passages like Romans 3, particularly, that it’s proper to say, that the atonement does terminate upon God. It also terminates upon Satan, because they are bound up together in this word, but, I think, that the stress of Genesis 3, is probably more accurately placed on its termination upon Satan. But that does not mean that God is not involved because, of course, in the accomplishment of the work that must be done with reference to Satan, there are the things that must be in harmony with the nature of God as well.

[Question inaudible]

Uh, huh. The question is, “If we think of the term ‘seed’ as a collective term, and also an individual term if I may add that then what is represented by the collective sense of the term ‘seed?’ I presume you mean both and by the individual sense. So far as the unfolding of Scripture is concerned, of course, here this is a very broad, general statements, and so it’s difficult to prove their reference from this passage. It’s best proved by the unfolding of the plan of salvation in the word of God. It becomes evident that the term “seed” is a reference to our Lord preeminently as Paul says in Galatians 3:16. “He saith not, and to seeds, as of many, but and to thy seed as of one who is Christ.” But then he goes on to say, “Those who are Christ’s are the seed of Abraham,” so in the case of the seed of the woman it’s Christ, but all who belong to Christ. So in the case of Satan, it is Satan who is the seed, and all who belong to him.

And the reason I’m hesitating Wilford, is because the question you raised is a bit of an exegetical question. The Lord Jesus, however, does make a statement that suggests

that the seed collectively is the seed of Satan. For example, just to give you one passage in the Gospel of John we have something of the same thing, but in John chapter 8 in verse 44, the Lord is speaking to unbelieving Jewish people and he says, “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of it.” So one might think and you know why I think you can make a case for saying, that the seed of Satan encompasses those who don’t belong to the family of God. That is a debated point, however.

[Question inaudible]

Yes, and, of course, it fits with what the rest of the Bible unfolds, because you do have as the New Testament plainly says, “enmity, but not simply between the world and Satan, but I mean, the world and Christ, but the world and those who belong to Christ.” In fact, the Lord Jesus said, “They hated me. They are going to hate you,” so the hostility and the offense that the world feels with reference to Christians, and the true Church of Christ, is simply the continuation of the quarrel that they have had with our Lord.

Maybe one other question. Yes, Randy.

[Question inaudible]

The question is, “I made statements to the effect that people did have ransom from Satan theories of the atonement or the paying of a ransom to Satan, often called ‘Ransom to Satan Theories of the Atonement’, how would I distinguish what I would say about Satan’s part in the atoning work of Christ as over against that?” My own feeling with reference to this is that Satan does have authority over individuals gained by virtue of their submission to him in the Fall in the Garden of Eden, and he holds them by virtue of their sin and the penalty of it. So Satan, to use a figure of speech, is very much like a jailer who will not release anyone until the proper papers are presented to him. If you want to release someone from the jail here in Dallas or wherever so I understand, I’ve

never been involved in this process you have to have a legal document or a release to give to the person. Well, I think, that is what our Lord has accomplished. He's accomplished by his saving work, the release, and that delivered to Satan, who evidently still has some authority because remember in discipline Paul speaks about, “delivering to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus,” he has certain delegated responsibilities which he still has. So, I think, it's along those lines, but that's a good question, and I don't have the final word on that, as on many other questions too.

One more. Yes, Edwin.

[Question inaudible]

The question is, “Is faith meritorious, according to the Bible?” According to the Bible, the faith is not meritorious. Faith is an instrumentality; a means by which benefits become ours, and it is a gift of God. It is not meritorious. Now, there are a few expressions in Paul's writings that might lead you to think that faith is. Romans 4:5, is one illustration. I don't have time to exegete the text for you, but that text cannot mean that that some have sought to have it mean. So no, faith is not meritorious. Well, our time is really up.

Let's close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the privilege of the study of the word of God, and we pray that the things that we have considered, that among those things, the things that are true, the Holy Spirit may. [End of Tape]