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NEWSLETTER

INTRODUCTION TO THE COVENANT OF WORKS
Camden Bucey explains the basic features and various names given to the covenant between God and Adam in the garden of Eden. p. 3

THE TREE OF LIFE AND SABBATH REST
The tree of life in the garden of Eden is organically connected to the glorious future believers possess in Jesus Christ. p. 6

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Introducing a new book by Lane Tipton. This biblical-theological study of Genesis 1–3 serves as a companion to our video series. p. 7

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Jeff Waddington demonstrates how God's covenant with Adam provides the necessary background to Christ's atoning work. p. 5



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Camden Bucey
Executive Director

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INTRODUCING THE COVENANT OF WORKS

CAMDEN M. BUCEY

The Reformed tradition has spoken of the relationship between God and Adam as a covenantal relationship. This is found throughout the Westminster Standards, though Presbyterians are certainly not the only ones to hold to such a doctrine. The Reformed scholastics, for example, developed much of the federal theology that we rely upon today. This covenant has been known by several different names: the covenant of works, the covenant of life, the covenant of creation, and even the covenant of nature. The covenant of works is an important theological principle no matter what you call it. Without it, we cannot rightly understand man's relationship to God in the garden. Neither can we understand the gospel, because the work of our Lord Jesus was a redeeming work necessitated by the fall into sin as a result of transgressing the covenant of works.

The covenant of works is an important theological principle no matter what you call it. Without it, we cannot rightly understand man's relationship to God in the garden. Neither can we understand the gospel, because the work of our Lord Jesus was a redeeming work necessitated by the fall into sin as a result of transgressing the covenant.

The covenant structure organizes all of God's relations to man. Let us consider several introductory passages that establish the foundation for the doctrine of the covenant of works. The first is Gen. 2:16–17 which states, "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." Another significant passage is Hos. 6:7, "But like Adam, they transgressed the covenant there, they dealt faithlessly with me." There are biblical references to that time under Adam as a covenant. Consider how Paul describes this in terms of federal representation in Rom. 5:12–20,

> 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—for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.

Paul compares and contrasts Adam and Christ as covenant or federal heads. We examine this passage in greater detail in the *Introduction to Covenant Theology* course available for free through Reformed Academy, yet it should already be clear that what goes for the federal head goes for all whom that person represents. It follows that if Christ is the ultimate representative and mediator of the new covenant administration of the covenant of grace, Adam likewise serves as a representative and a federal head of another covenant: the covenant of works. The trespass underlying the need for redemption arises from the Lord's command in Gen. 2:17, "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."

Let us consider some of the confessional support specifically from the Westminster Standards, which explicate a system of doctrine that is contained in Scripture. The Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q. 12 asks, "What special act of providence did God exercise toward man in the estate wherein he was created?" The answer:

> When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death.

The Westminster Larger Catechism also addresses this issue in Q. 20: "What was the providence of God toward man in the estate in which he was created?" It answers,

> The providence of God toward man in the estate in which he was created, was the placing him in paradise, appointing him to dress it, giving him liberty to eat of the fruit of the earth; putting the creatures under his dominion, and ordaining marriage for his help; affording him communion with himself; instituting the Sabbath; entering into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience, of which the tree of life was a pledge; and forbidding to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death.

Finally, the Westminster Confession of Faith, 7.2 states, "the first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam; and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience." If Adam obeyed, he and his posterity would receive life, but if he disobeyed, they would all likewise die.

Basic Features of the Covenant of Works

To gain a grasp of the nature of this covenantal relationship we must recognize several basic features. First, we need to recognize the relationship between Adam and God. This is a bilateral bond between two parties. In other words, it goes both ways. God and his creatures are not equal, but the relationship is bilateral in terms of union and communion. God always remains sovereign at all points, but he desires a reciprocal relationship of union and communion with his people.

Second, within this arrangement, God imposes stipulations upon Adam. The Westminster Standards describe these as perfect and personal obedience. We may be tempted to think such stipulations would compromise a bilateral bond of union and communion, but nothing could be further from the truth. Adam's relationship to God is circumscribed by God's authority, and by obeying God, he loves him (see John 14:15; 1 John 5:3).

Third, there is a reward that is promised. In the covenant of works, God promises life as a reward for obedience. This is not merely life in general but eschatological life, that is, final, consummate life. This original offer of consummate life is evident in part from the eschatology inherent in the image of God (1 Cor. 15:44b), and in the *Introduction to Covenant Theology* course available through Reformed Academy, we study this more closely in conjunction with the symbolism of the tree of life. It helps to remember that God has a plan and purpose for his people—that they would be brought into a higher, more glorious, consummate, final, everlasting life with him and heavenly places. Covenants organize and mediate the trajectory toward that life.

Adam was created very good (Gen. 1:31), yet we also should note that he was not created perfect. Certainly, there was no defect in Adam, but he was not yet in his consummate state. He was still subject to death, for example. And Adam would have received eschatological glorious life upon the proper achievement of the stipulations of perfect and perpetual obedience. This life would be characterized by confirmed knowledge, righteousness, and holiness beyond probation. It would have been a heightened and perfected union and communion with God.

Fourth, punishment was threatened for violating the stipulations. The wrath and curse of God are the punishment warranted, earned, and deserved for disobedience. This is an eschatological death, coordinate with the offer of eschatological life. The punishment is proportionate to the offense against a perfect and infinite, holy and righteous God.

Fifth, this covenantal relationship establishes a bond not only between God and Adam, but also between Adam and those whom he represents. Adam is, in other words, a public person. His actions stand not merely for himself, but also for those whom he represents. In God's plan for humanity, Adam represents all who descend from him by ordinary generation. Quite simply, Adam represents every single person that has been born except our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who was not ordinarily generated from Adam. Though he was born of a woman, he was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Names and Comprehensiveness of the Covenant of Works

Several different names have been given for the specific covenant that God established with Adam in the garden of Eden. The name that is most common is "covenant of works." This name emphasizes the *principle* according to which Adam was to pass from probation and gain his reward. He was commanded to offer works unto God. This covenant has also been called the "covenant of life," which is a name that emphasizes the *reward* that was offered for obedience. Adam already had life so to speak, but the life God offered to him through the covenant was even greater. It was a higher quality of life that was offered to him as a reward. He would move from the mutable, the losable, the temporary and the earthly unto a life that would be immutable, unlosable, eternal and heavenly. Sometimes this covenant is called the covenant of creation or the covenant of nature. These titles emphasize that this arrangement occurred in the original state of nature before the fall into sin. Each of these names describe the same covenantal relationship between God and Adam in the garden while emphasizing different aspects or perspectives on that arrangement.

Adam was the representative in the garden, and God dealt with him while simultaneously dealing with all the people he represents. This is clearly described in Rom. 5:12–21. God continues to deal with his people through a federal head. But these are the only two. Adam is the federal head in the covenant of works; Jesus Christ is the second and last Adam, the federal head in the covenant of grace.

Adam was made in the image of God, and God required perfect obedience from him. If we pause to contemplate this relationship, it should seem fitting. Adam was created in God's image and likeness, and in the natural course of living as that image-likeness, he would live like God. He would reflect God's character to the greatest extent as a creature, without ever becoming God. Adam was created very good and without sin. He was called to perfect obedience, because that is the nature of God's righteousness. God does not make mistakes. He does not slip up or cease to be good and righteous even for a moment. If Adam was to move from probation to confirmation and consummation, he would need to demonstrate perfect, personal, exact and entire obedience. This is complete conformity to God's standard. The covenant of works is comprehensive of our relationship to God. There is no part of our lives that is not encompassed by it.

Of course, Adam sinned by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. On this account, we all have fallen into an estate of sin and misery. As a direct result of this covenant arrangement in history, we have become totally depraved and subject to death as the wages of sin (Rom. 6:23). No one is excluded. If we are to attain the glorious life originally promised to Adam, we need someone to save us from the punishment of the first covenant and then grant to us the perfect obedience Adam failed to demonstrate. We need a redeemer who will grant to us to eat of the tree of life in the paradise of God (Rev. 2:7). ❋

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Camden Bucey is Executive Director of Reformed Forum.

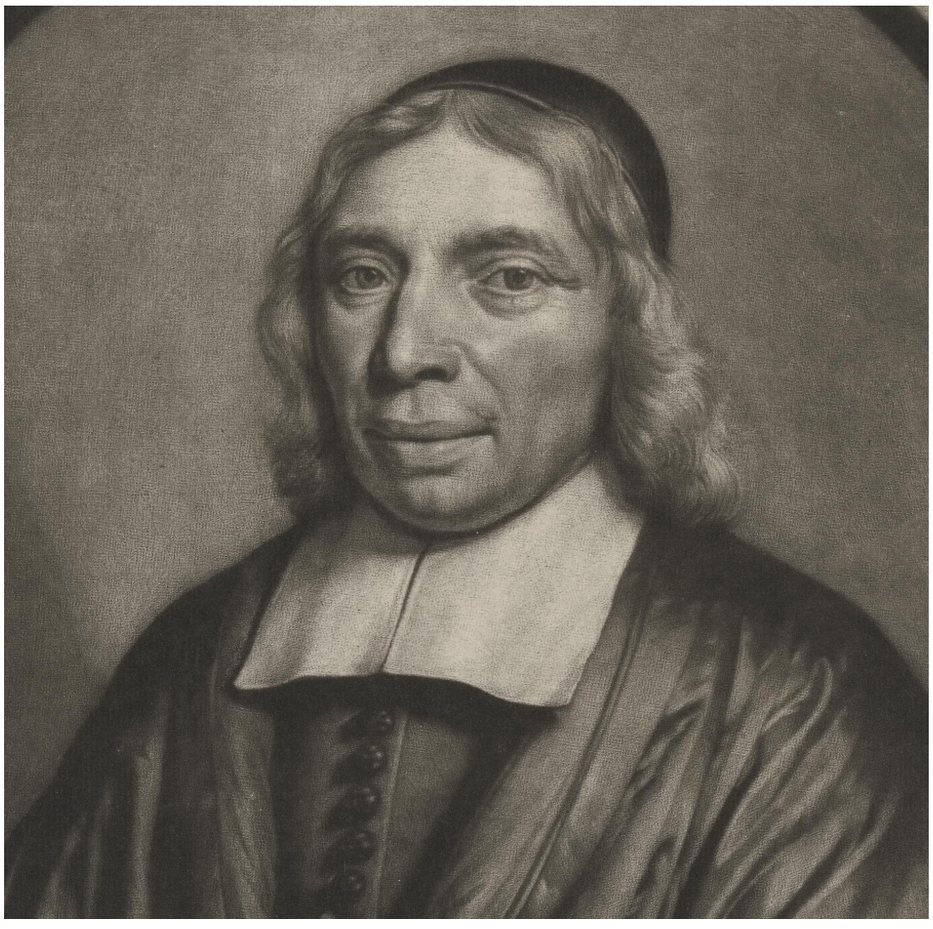
THE NECESSITY OF AFFIRMING THE COVENANT OF WORKS

JEFFREY C. WADDINGTON

The covenant of works and the covenant of grace are integrally connected. Together (along with the covenant of redemption) they form one whole piece of cloth.

There are few more crucial doctrines to understand and affirm in Christian theology than the covenant of works. Dutch *Further Reformation* theologian Wilhelmus à Brakel (1635–1711) said this many years ago, and it is just as true now as when he penned these words:

> In the eighth chapter we have depicted Adam in his eminent, holy, and glorious nature. We shall now speak of him as being in covenant with God—the covenant of works. Acquaintance with this covenant is of the greatest importance, for whoever errs here or denies the existence of the covenant of works, will not understand the covenant of grace, and will readily err concerning the mediatorship of the Lord Jesus. Such a person will very readily deny that Christ by His active obedience has merited a right to eternal life for the elect. This is to be observed with several parties who, because they err concerning the covenant of grace, also deny the covenant of works. Conversely, whoever denies the covenant of works, must rightly be suspected to be in error concerning the covenant of grace as well.[1]



Brakel's overarching concern is that a failure to understand and affirm the covenant of works will also create a failure to properly understand the covenant of grace. This failure can work in either direction. It is a potential bi-directional error to be avoided at all costs. If one's understanding of the covenant of grace is erroneous, it is quite likely that he has gone off track in his awareness and hearty endorsement of the covenant of works.

More precisely, the theologian's understanding and embrace of a biblical and confessional doctrine of man's salvation will go astray in his doctrine of the person and work of Jesus Christ, the Mediator and surety of the covenant of grace.

In this brief article, I want to consider Brakel's point because it remains a valid concern in our day. First, I will look at the assertion that a failure to properly understand the covenant of works wreaks havoc on a proper covenant of grace. Second, I will examine the mediatorship of Jesus Christ within the bi-covenantal structure of a Reformed biblical and confessional theology. Not surprisingly, our conclusion will be that Brakel was spot on with his warning.

The covenant of works and the covenant of grace are integrally connected. Together (along with the covenant of redemption made between the Father and the Son in eternity) they form one whole piece of cloth. Another way to think about their connection is to recognize that the covenant of grace is *remedial* or corrective. The covenant of works between God and Adam *(Continued on p. 9)*

[1] Wilhelmus à Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1993), 1:355.



THE TREE OF LIFE AND SABBATH REST

LANE G. TIPTON

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was a probationary test that brought Adam face to face with the fundamental religious question of whether or not he would love and glorify God for God's sake alone. We now want to think about Adam's role as God's priest-king according to Gen. 2:15–17. By virtue of his creation, Adam was the image of God; by virtue of the covenant, Adam was ordained as a priest-king, tasked with speaking the word of God and guarding the Edenic temple. Adam was not first and foremost a farmer, but an image-bearing guardian of the holiness of Eden.

Work and Guard (Genesis 2:15–17)

In Gen. 1:26–28, Adam is commissioned by God to take dominion over all things. The specific focus of this dominion mandate is narrowed with the probationary test. Will Adam be obedient and take dominion as the priest-king of God?

> The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and guard [*šamar*] it. 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." (Gen. 2:15–17)

Adam was to "guard" the Edenic sanctuary of God from defilement. He was a king who was to rule and a priest who was to be totally consecrated in service to God. The same verb translated "to guard" (*šamar*) is used later in Scripture to refer to the function of the high priest under the Mosaic law. The way in which the high priest was to deal with unholy and unauthorized intruders in the holy place helps illumine the role of Adam as protectorate of Eden.

> They [the tribe of Levi] shall keep [*šamar*] guard over him [Aaron the priest] and over the whole congregation before the tent of meeting, as they minister at the tabernacle. They shall guard [*šamar*] all the furnishings of the tent of meeting, and keep guard over the people of Israel as they minister at the tabernacle. And you shall give the Levites to Aaron and his sons; they are wholly given to him from among the people of Israel. And you shall appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall guard [*šamar*] their priesthood. But if any outsider comes near, he shall be put to death. (Num. 3:7–10)

The priest's responsibility of keeping the tabernacle involved a guardianship of what was holy to the Lord (see also Num. 18:1–6). If an intruder tried to enter and profane the holy place, the high priest was to engage in a form of *ḥērem* warfare, destroying the adversary of the Lord who bears the image of the serpent (Jn. 8:44; 1 Jn. 3:8).

By analogy, what the high priest was to do in the tabernacle under the Mosaic covenant, Adam was to do in Eden under the covenant of works as a priest-king. Adam was tasked with guarding the holy garden-sanctuary from the desecration of that unholy intruder, the serpent. Adam was to engage in combat with him as a priest-king, living not by bread alone but by every word that came from the mouth of the great Creator-King. He was to plunge his sword into the belly of any crea-

ture that would speak blasphemous words against the glory of God.

The Tree of Life (Genesis 2:9)

If Adam had successfully carried out his mandate in full obedience to God by not eating of the probation tree, he would have dealt a deathblow to the devil and then stretched out his hand to eat of the tree of life. This tree sacramentally represented the promise of advancement beyond earthly probation in conflict with the serpent to the highest heavens where God is enthroned in Sabbath rest. In other words, the life offered in the tree of life was not the continuation of life in Eden (the Lutheran view that is contrary to the Reformed view and the teaching of Scripture), but the advancement of life on earth into the Sabbath rest of God in heaven. The tree held out to Adam the prospect of a higher life beyond probation. Adam's conflict with the serpent in Eden was not intended to be unending, for he had been made for something beyond it. The tree of life signified and sealed eschatological life in the heavenly realm of rest where angels worship the triune God without ceasing.

Sabbath Rest: Descriptive and Prescriptive (Genesis 2:1–3)

God rested on the seventh day not from a sense of fatigue but as the great Creator-King who saw all that he had made and said, "It is very good."

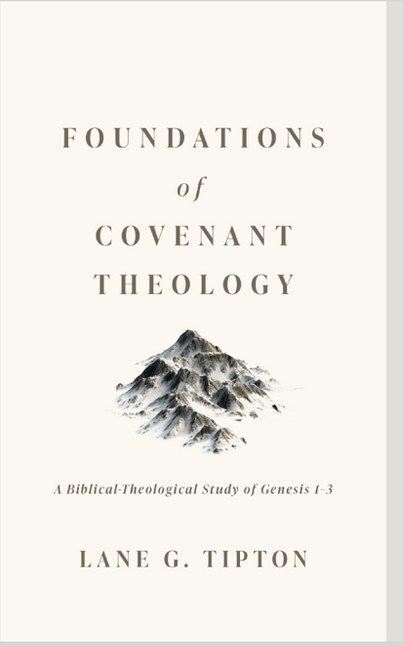
> Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation. (Gen. 2:1–3)

In the language of Heb. 4:9, this rest into which God entered is his "Sabbath rest." It is important to recognize that Sabbath rest is both *descriptive* of what God entered into at the end of the creation week and *prescriptive* for Adam and his posterity. As descriptive, Sabbath rest is a fact for God. As prescriptive, it is a commandment for Adam to one day enter by way of covenant.

The highest heavens that were created in the absolute beginning and filled with the glory of the Spirit constitute the resting realm of the triune God. When God entered into his Sabbath rest, the angels praised him not only for the glory of his presence but

NEW BOOK: FOUNDATIONS OF COVENANT THEOLOGY

Drawing from Genesis 1:1 and subsequent biblical revelation, Lane Tipton argues that before creating the visible world, the immutable triune God created a heavenly temple dwelling, filled that heavenly dwelling with the unchanging glory of his Spirit, and sanctified that heavenly dwelling as the realm of everlasting Sabbath Rest. Adam, as the created image of God and federal head of his posterity, could have advanced through perfect covenantal obedience beyond probation on the mountain of God in earthly Eden into the heavenly dwelling of God in Sabbath rest. This God-centered and heaven-focused theological backdrop enriches our understanding of the person and work of Jesus Christ, as the second and last Adam in the covenant of grace, who in his humiliation and exaltation has opened the gates of heavenly paradise for his church.



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This book is a companion to our twelve-week series in which Dr. Tipton skillfully unfolds God's plan and purpose to reveal his glory in all of creation and bring his image bearers into his presence that they would worship him forever. The course is now available free to stream through Reformed Academy.

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also for being the great Creator-King—"the whole earth is full of his glory." Thus, when God entered into his Sabbath rest, his glory took on a permanent Sabbath form. It was forevermore the glory of the Creator-King that filled the highest heavens.

It was to this resting realm of the Creator-King that Adam was to aspire in his obedience as a priest-king under the covenant of works. The tree of life symbolized this movement and constrained him upward and forward to enter into God's Sabbath rest. As prescriptive, then, it had religious significance for Adam, which the author of the letter to the Hebrews explains:

> Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, "As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest,'" although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all his works." And again in this passage he said, "They shall not enter my rest." Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, again he appoints a certain day, "Today," saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts. For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience." (Heb. 4:1–11)

Interpreting and applying Gen. 2:1–3, Hebrews confirms that Sabbath rest is *descriptive* for God and, at the same time, *prescriptive* for the people of God, including the church today. The church is commanded to enter into that rest by faith. The Sabbath rest offered under Joshua in Canaan was a type of the Sabbath rest that God himself entered into on the seventh day (Heb. 4:4). Thus, Heb. 4:3, citing Ps. 95:11, teaches that the first generation out of Egypt did not enter into God's ultimate rest in the land of Canaan (Heb. 4:8; Josh. 1:13). Israel was to enter a land flowing with milk and honey, a resting place for weary pilgrims. But it was only an earthly type of the heavenly rest of God that continues forever without end.

Sabbath rest is at the heart of the covenant of works. Geerhardus Vos writes,

> The tree [of life] was associated with the higher, the unchangeable, the eternal life to be secured by obedience throughout his [Adam's] probation. . . . After man should have been made sure of the attainment of the highest life, the tree would appropriately have been the sacramental means for communicating the highest life. After the fall God attributes to man the inclination of snatching the fruit against the divine purpose. But this very desire implies the understanding that it somehow was the specific life-sacrament for the time after probation.[1]

In a manner analogous to the Lord's Supper, which signifies and seals our union and communion with Christ by faith, the tree of life was the sacramental means through which God would confer Sabbath rest on Adam. The consummation of the covenant was found in Sabbath rest. The presence of the tree, therefore, tells us that even before the fall, Adam was called through perfect, personal, entire, and exact obedience as a priest-king under covenant to enter into Sabbath rest, the resting realm of God where his glory permanently abided and where man will find fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore (Ps. 16:11).

The Tree of Life in the Paradise of God (Revelation 2:7; 21:3; 22:14–15)

The above view of the tree of life and its connection with Sabbath rest also comes into focus in the book of Revelation. There is, as Vos observes,

> the recurrence of this piece of symbolism [the tree of life] in eschatological form at the end of history, where there can be no doubt concerning the principle of paradise being the habitation of God, where He dwells in order to make man dwell with Himself.[2]

In his letter to the angel of the church of Ephesus, Jesus Christ writes, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7).

The tree of life is located in the paradise of God, which is where Christ himself is. When he ascended, Christ entered into the Sabbath rest of the heavenly paradise. Therefore, whoever trusts in him and follows him by the grace he gives by his Word and Spirit, will arrive where he is to eat of the tree of life. This prophetic idiom is used here to express the consummation of all that Jesus as the second and last Adam confers upon his church.

Revelation 21:3 further describes the consummate life in the dwelling place of God:

> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God." (Rev. 21:3)

The dwelling place of God is the paradise of God. In it there is no curse for it is full of the glorious and comforting presence of the triune God. The right of entrance to eat of the tree of life belongs to those who in Christ have washed their robes and so moved beyond probation in union with him.

> Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. (Rev. 22:14–15)

Prior to the fall of man into sin, which brought about his need for an incarnate mediator to suffer and to enter into his glory, life beyond probation was held out to Adam in promissory form in the tree of life. Had he slayed the serpent, he would have eaten of the tree of life and been translated into the everlasting Sabbath rest of God in the highest heavens. However, the failed outcome of Adam's probation reveals our need for one greater than Adam, which the remaining chapters of *Foundations of Covenant Theology* will unfold. ❋



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[1] Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Banner of Truth, 1975), 28.
[2] Vos, 28.

(Continued from p. 5) in the garden of Eden involved God offering to Adam consummate, uninterrupted fellowship and communion if he would be obedient to God. While Adam was created upright, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, he was able to fall. Indeed, he did fall. Adam not only *lost* his knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, he also *forfeited* the awesome privilege of the proffered consummate and unlosable fellowship.

The covenant of grace which extends from Gen. 3:14 to the end of Revelation, is a *remediation*. It is because Adam fell from the estate in which he was originally created and brought all mankind (save one) into an estate of sin and misery that God eventually sent his Son in the fullness of time as our Mediator and covenant surety. The history of God's work of redemption in all its various dispensations is a means to save sinners and restore the twisted and tarnished divine image in man and to bring them into eternal fellowship with the Triune God of Scripture. That eternal fellowship begins at the moment the sinner exercises Holy Spirit enabled faith in Jesus Christ. The believing sinner transfers from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God's dearly beloved Son and is constituted a saint.

Another way to think about this is to realize that if Adam had been obedient to the command of God to refrain from eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he would have transitioned from an estate of probation to one of unending and unlosable consummate fellowship and communion with God. But in fact, Adam did not obey God. He transgressed the command and brought he and Eve and his whole posterity (save one) into a state of death, guilt, and corruption and all the concomitant misery that always attends sin.

Another way to consider the nature of the covenant of grace and Jesus Christ's place within it, which was entered into by God, is to recognize that the second covenant is entered into so as to get man back on track. The covenant of grace was initiated in order to bring sinners into the consummate fellowship and communion with God which had been offered to Adam on condition of personal, exact and entire obedience. Jesus Christ came so that he could bring many sons to glory. This was the same glory offered to Adam in the garden.

Now we can look at the role of Jesus Christ in particular. The eternal Son of God, coequal with the Father and the Spirit as to his divine majesty and glory, took to himself a true body and reasonable soul to save fallen sinners and to bring them into eternal friendship with the Triune God. To put it another way, the Son of God would not have become incarnate without the fall. It was to reverse the effects of the fall for the elect that the Son became incarnate at one point in time and space.

We noted earlier that the result of the disobedience of Adam was guilt and corruption along with death and the miseries of this life. The work of redemption through Jesus Christ perfectly matches the need of mankind. Jesus Christ's work addresses the guilt and corruption we have inherited from Adam. And it establishes eternal life (i.e., consummate fellowship and communion with the Triune God for eternity) for those who look to Christ in faith.

Jesus Christ lived a life in perfect conformity to the law of God revealed in nature and Scripture (particularly in the law mediated through Moses at Sinai). Jesus was without sin in all its aspects even as he lived in a sin-ravaged world with all its miseries and death. Jesus had no sinful nature nor did he ever commit any sinful acts in thought, word, or deed. Theologians often refer to this aspect of Christ's work, premised on his person, as his *active* obedience. Christ's active obedience not only fitted him as a perfect unblemished sacrifice, but it also fulfilled the expectation placed on us of personal, exact and entire obedience which did not evaporate with the broken covenant of works. However, Brakel specifically notes that some in his day denied the imputation of Christ's active obedience to the believer.

Almost no Christian theologian in Brakel's day would deny the imputation of Christ's *passive* obedience to the believer. That is, the value of his death to pay for the sins of those who believe on him. Christ's atonement was readily recognized as beneficial for the one who trusted for his salvation in Christ. Christ's death on the cross paid for our sins and satisfied the wrath of God against us for sin. And his whole life leading up to the ultimate act obedience of death on a cross, which was the culmination and capstone of his obedience, was imputed to the account of believing sinners. Without that imputation of the whole of Christ's obedience (the passive and active elements being aspects of one whole obedience), sinners could not inherit eternal life. Access to eternal life, entering into that consummate fellowship and communion with the Triune God originally offered to Adam in the garden of Eden during the period of probation, is now ours through faith in the obedient Christ.

In this brief essay we have barely scratched the surface of the importance of understanding and affirming, indeed in glorying in, the covenant of works and how it relates to the covenant of grace. More could and should be said. But this much we can clearly see. Wilhelmus à Brakel was correct to point out in his day that a failure to properly understand and appreciate and affirm the covenant of works actually interferes with the proper understanding and appreciation and affirmation of the covenant of grace. The covenant of works is not a vestigial theological organ. Indeed, the covenant of grace brings to the saint the eternal life proffered to Adam in Eden and forfeited by his disobedience. That eternal life begins here and now for the believer and will continue on in the new heavens and earth. As J. Gresham Machen telegrammed to John Murray on the day of his death, "So thankful for the active obedience of Christ. No hope without it." Indeed. ❋



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THE SON OF GOD TEMPTED IN OUR PLACE (LUKE 3:21–4:13)

DANIEL RAGUSA

It is all too common for people to read events in Jesus's life as mere examples from which to draw principles for similar life experiences, rather than as once-for-all accomplishments that he underwent in our place as our covenant representative. In other words, there's a tendency to interpret Jesus's actions moralistically, according to a What-Would-Jesus-Do? hermeneutic, rather than covenantally as good news of him standing and succeeding where we have fallen and failed. Perhaps no gospel story demonstrates this more clearly than Jesus's wilderness temptations (Lk. 4:1-13). Did Luke include this story because he primarily wanted us to know certain principles on how to stand against temptation in our own lives? Or does Luke want to tell us something about the once-for-all accomplishment of Jesus as our covenant head? Let's take a look at Luke's account to see why we should affirm the latter.

Have you ever wondered why between Jesus's baptism (3:21–22) and temptations (4:1–13) Luke inserts a genealogy (3:23–38) that traces Jesus's ancestry all the way back to Adam? While it might seem random at first and we may want to skip over it, it's actually playing an important role in disclosing Jesus's identity before he is led by the Spirit in the wilderness.

At Jesus's baptism the voice of the Father breaks out from heaven, declaring, "You are my beloved *Son*. . ." (3:22). Jesus's identity is that of the Son of God. When we hear this title, we may immediately see a claim to his divinity: he is the second person of the Trinity, eternally begotten of the Father (which is, of course, true). But Luke wants us to see something more about this title, and that's where the genealogy comes into play. Zooming past David and Abraham, Luke concludes, "the son of Adam, the *son of God*" (3:38). Here the first man, Adam, is also given the title, "son of God." Why? Because he was created in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:27) and was tasked with ruling over the created order as God's covenant representative (Gen. 1:28). The one formed in the image and likeness of God is the son of God. In Gen. 5:1–3, we read, "God made [man] in the *likeness* of God." It follows that "[Adam] fathered a *son* in his own *likeness*, after his *image*, and named him Seth." Because sonship and image go hand-in-hand, Adam was, in this sense, the son of God.

How does this help us to understand Jesus's identity in Luke as he heads into the wilderness? It reveals that Jesus as the son of God heads into the wilderness as the second and last Adam (see 1 Cor. 15:45). In the Garden, Adam represented all of mankind in the covenant of works. When he fell, he plunged all of his posterity into condemnation and death with him. That's the big point of Rom. 5:12–21. Adam was the covenant head of all mankind, so that his actions affected all born of him. As Paul says, "[Adam's] *one* trespass led to condemnation for *all* men" (Rom. 5:18). Jesus, then, emerges on the scene in Luke as the representative of a new humanity in the covenant of grace. If he is to secure for us "justification and life" (Rom. 5:18), then he must stand where the first Adam fell.

Jesus has stood where we have fallen and resisted the fork-tongued lies of the serpent where we have been deceived, and in so doing has obtained for us salvation.

Luke wants us to see that Jesus's wilderness temptations were truly a redemptive *rerun* of Eden, a *rematch* with the serpent. As the serpent sped his fiery arrows at Eve, whom Adam was called to guard, tempting her to doubt the goodness of God and the authority of his word, so he reached into his quiver again, desirous of destroying Jesus, the son of God. But unlike Adam who was in the midst of a bountiful garden, Jesus endured the barrage in a barren wilderness after having fasted for forty days. The serpent had infiltrated the domain of Adam where he was to reign as God's representative, but now Jesus wages a counterattack by infiltrating the domain of Satan. He has entered the house of the strongman to bind him, so that he might plunder his goods and reclaim those whom he had taken captive for the glory of his Father.

Jesus undergoes this not primarily to provide us with principles to overcome temptation, but as our covenant representative. Luke's account is truly gospel, that is, good news: Jesus has stood where we have fallen and resisted the fork-tongued lies of the serpent where we have been deceived, and in so doing has obtained for us salvation. The account is not first and foremost about what we need to do, but about what Christ has done *for us, in our place, on our behalf!* Christ has stood in our place with his unwavering commitment to God's word. In him the truth of God has triumphed once-for-all over the deceptive lies of the evil one.

Does this mean I need not make any effort to resist the serpent's lies since Jesus has resisted for me? Certainly not. From the indicative of Christ's triumphant stand flows the imperative to his people to stand in the strength of their glorified mediator. Because of what Christ has accomplished as my covenant head, I *can* stand when temptations array themselves against me and doubts rise up in me. I *can* stand in the power of the same Spirit who led Jesus in the wilderness and now has been poured out on the church. I *can* stand in Christ for his heel has crushed the head of the serpent who must crawl away in defeat until his final execution (Rom. 16:20). ❋



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THE LORD'S DAY AND RESURRECTION LIFE

GLEN CLARY

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul compares and contrasts Adam and Christ. "In Adam all die . . . in Christ all will be made alive" (v. 22). Paul also refers to Christ as "the second man" and "the last Adam" (vv. 45, 47). The first Adam is the first man of God's first creation. The last Adam is the beginning of God's new creation. The first man was "of the earth, a man of dust"; the second man is "of heaven" (v. 47).

To the first Adam, God gave a special day, the Sabbath day (Gen. 2:2–3). To the last Adam, God gave a special day, the Lord's Day (Rev. 1:10). The relationship between the Sabbath and the Lord's Day is like the relationship between Adam and Christ. The relationship between them is one of shadow and reality or type and fulfillment. As Adam is a type of Christ, so too, the Sabbath is a type that points forward to and is fulfilled in the Lord's Day. But the Lord's Day is only a partial fulfillment of the Sabbath; its ultimate fulfillment is the consummate Sabbath of the eschaton.

When God created Adam, he gave him the Sabbath day to remind him of his identity and of his destination. As the image of God, he imitated God by working six days and resting on the seventh. Thus, the Sabbath day reminded him of his identity. It also reminded him of where he was going. It pointed forward to his destination: the eternal Sabbath; that is, the heavenly, unceasing rest in the age to come.

The weekly day of rest was the earthly counterpart or type of the heavenly rest that Adam would have entered had he been obedient to God. The earthly Sabbath was a temporary ordinance that would end at the consummation, when the shadow would give way to the reality. The weekly Sabbath would give way to the ultimate Sabbath. It would end because the reality of what it represented would be possessed.

When Christ, the new Adam, rose from the dead, he entered into that eternal, heavenly rest. By his personal, exact, and entire obedience, he attained what the first Adam would have attained had he been obedient. Christ, in his resurrection from the dead, received eternal life and glorification, which the first Adam never had. He entered a state of glory, the same state that we will enter when Christ returns.

However, believers are already "a new creation" because we have been united to the risen Christ, the beginning of God's new creation. "The old [what we were in Adam] has passed away; behold the new [what we are in Christ] has come" (2 Cor. 5:17). We are no longer dead in our sins; we have been made alive together with Christ (Eph. 2:1–10). Hence, we no longer live according to the old, sinful nature, but according to the resurrection life of the new nature.

And that's why the Lord's Day is so significant for the Christian. It's the day of resurrection; it's the day of new creation. The saints in the Old Testament worshiped on Saturday because the new creation had not dawned. They worshiped on the Sabbath of the first creation, the Sabbath of the first Adam. We, however, worship on the first day of the week because it's the day of the new creation, which emerged with the resurrection of Christ, the last Adam.

The Lord's Day reminds us of our new identity in Christ, and worshiping on the Lord's Day reorders our life in light of our new identity. It also points us forward to what we will become when Christ returns and gathers us to himself. When we gather for worship on the Lord's Day, we experience a foretaste of what's going to happen at the end of the world. Thus, the Lord's Day orients our life toward the world to come. It teaches us to live as strangers and aliens on earth, to live as pilgrims seeking a better country, a heavenly one. It teaches us not to set our hopes on attaining paradise on earth but to fix our eyes on the risen and ascended Christ (Col. 3:1–4).

Thus, worship on the Lord's Day is absolutely essential to the spiritual health and well-being of the church and of every believer. It reorders our life in light of our union to Christ. It reorients our life away from earthly and temporary things toward the heavenly and eternal. And it redirects our steps away from the old order and toward the new order, the age of Christ and the Holy Spirit by whom and in whom we live. ❋

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