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KINGDOM PROLOGUE

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GENESIS FOUNDATIONS
FOR A COVENANTAL WORLDVIEW

Meredith G. Kline

TWO AGE PRESS

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PREFACE

For several decades, at some half a dozen theological schools, I have taught a course whose mixed curricular genre is reflected in the diverse names it has borne, like Old Testament Hermeneutics, Old Testament Redemptive History, Old Testament Biblical Theology. A lecture-syllabus emerged volume by volume until there were three, which then were combined into one, entitled *Kingdom Prologue* (see the Introduction below for an explanation of this name). Slight revisions accompanied repeated reprintings of the privately produced version and more extensive but still minor revisions were involved in the present published edition.

As intimated by the subtitle, *Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*, the immediate literary focus of this study is the book of Genesis and its account of the formative ages in the eschatological movement of the kingdom of God from creation to consummation. As also indicated by the subtitle, our biblical-theological commentary on Genesis is designed to uncover the foundations of God's covenantally administered kingdom with its major historical developments and its institutional structures and functions. In this way *Kingdom Prologue* seeks to provide an introductory sketch of the over-all shape of the biblical worldview and the character of biblical religion.

The lecture-syllabus origin of this work accounts for its no-footnote, no-bibliography format. One controlling factor in the selection of themes and issues for special attention has of course been a concern for relevance to the state of theological discussion and controversy in the schools where the lectures represented by *Kingdom Prologue* were given, these being in one case eclectically evangelical but for the most part confessionally Reformed.

I would express my appreciation to John Anderson of the Gordon College Printing Services for his repeated kindnesses in the course of the private production and reprinting of this work. The appearing of the present publication is due to a truly remarkable labor of love on the part of multi-talented, great-hearted friends at the Park Woods Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Overland Park, Kansas, creators of Two Age Press. And to Jonathan B. Kline, my grandfatherly gratitude for lending the aid of his computer expertise and literary sensibility and for his all-around brightening of the hours of editing.

Kingdom Prologue, born in the classroom, is dedicated to the hundreds and hundreds of students who have taken that course of many names, the joy of my professorial life, and so played a midwifery role in the book's protracted parturition.

Meredith G. Kline

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Part I: The Kingdom in the World That Then Was.....	8
Section A: Creational Covenant.....	14
Chapter One: Lord of the Covenant Kingdom.....	22
I. God, the Alpha-Author.....	23
A. Creator of All.....	23
B. Sovereign Architect-Builder.....	26
C. Glory-Spirit Archetype.....	30
II. God, the Omega-Consummator.....	33
A. Sabbath and Consummation.....	33
B. Sabbath and Enthronement.....	34
C. Sabbath and Consecration.....	38
Chapter Two: Holy Theocratic Kingdom.....	42
I. Royal Investment as Image-Son.....	42
A. Spirit-Paradigm of the Image.....	42
B. The Glory of the Imago Dei.....	43
C. Image of God and Son of God.....	45
II. Kingdom Endowment.....	46
A. The Kingdom as Sanctuary.....	47
1. Site of God's Throne-Presence.....	47
2. Theocracy.....	49
B. The Kingdom as Divine Protectorate.....	52
1. Consecration-Sacrifice-Death in Paradise.....	52
2. Death, Blessing, and Curse.....	54
3. Divine Shield.....	57
Chapter Three: Law of the Creation Theocracy.....	62
I. Law of the Image-Son of God.....	62
A. The Imitation of God.....	62
B. Service of Love.....	63
II. Theocratic Kingdom Commission.....	66
Introduction.....	66
A. Cultural Commission.....	68
1. Construction of the Kingdom City.....	68
2. Community Polity.....	70
3. Culture and the Imitation of God.....	74
4. Culture's Sabbatical Form.....	78
B. Cultic Ministry.....	83
1. Adoration and Consecration.....	83
2. Guardianship of the Sanctuary.....	85
3. Primacy of Priesthood.....	87
Chapter Four: Eschatological Sanctions.....	91
I. The Dual Sanctions.....	92
A. The Promised Blessing.....	92
1. Eschatology of the Image.....	92
2. The Sacramental Tree.....	93
3. Consummation of Glory.....	96

B.	The Threatened Curse	101
II.	Probation	103
A.	The Probation Tree.....	103
B.	Covenant of Works	107
Chapter Five:	Covenant Judgment	118
I.	The Breaking of the Covenant.....	119
A.	Advent of the Antilord.....	119
B.	The Temptation and Fall	122
II.	Judgment Day.....	128
A.	Parousia of the Glory-Spirit	128
1.	The Spirit of the Day.....	128
2.	The Exposure	129
B.	The Curse on the Serpent.....	131
C.	The Judgment on Man	134
1.	The Common Curse.....	134
2.	Expulsion from the Sanctuary.....	136
Section B:	Redemptive Covenant in the Old World.....	138
Chapter One:	Inauguration of Redemptive Covenant	143
I.	Renewal of the Covenant.....	143
A.	Gospel of Redemptive Judgment.....	143
1.	Messiah.....	143
2.	Grace	145
3.	Election	148
B.	A Seal of the New Covenant.....	149
I.	Redemptive Eschatology and Common Grace	153
A.	Common Grace and Common Curse	153
B.	The Holy and the Common	155
Chapter Two:	Prophetic Cult in the City of Man.....	161
I.	Interim World Structure	162
A.	The City as Divine Ordinance	162
1.	Promulgation of the Ordinance	162
2.	Remedial Benefits of the City	165
3.	Common Grace City and the Kingdoms of God and Satan	168
a.	Bestial but Legitimate.....	168
b.	Legitimacy not Sanctity.....	169
4.	State Functions and Limitations.....	172
a.	Complementarity of Family and State	172
b.	Social Duty and Utopian Delusion	174
c.	Transgression of Cultic Boundary.....	179
B.	Apostate Malformation of the City.....	180
1.	City of Man.....	180
2.	Dynasty of Cain.....	182
3.	Cult of Divine Kings	185
II.	The Redemptive Community	189
A.	Identification as People of Yahweh	190
B.	Covenantal Polity.....	194
1.	Cultic Community.....	194
2.	Familial Form.....	195

3.	Nontheocratic Community	197
C.	Mission of the Covenant People	199
1.	Priestly Function	200
a.	Sanctification of Culture.....	200
b.	Confessional Witness	203
2.	Prophetic Function	204
a.	Prophet Figures	204
b.	Divine Lawsuit	207
Chapter Three:	Sign of Kingdom Consummation	212
Introduction		212
I.	Redemptive Judgment.....	214
A.	Antichrist Crisis	214
B.	Judicial Ordeal.....	216
1.	Dual Verdicts	216
2.	Redeemed Remnant.....	217
C.	Day of the Lord.....	218
1.	Parousia.....	218
2.	Gathering of the Elect	219
II.	Re-Creation	220
A.	Literary Parallels.....	221
B.	Cosmological Correspondence	223
III.	Kingdom Consummation	225
A.	The Ark as Cosmic House of God	225
B.	The Ark Occupants as Glorified Mankind.....	227
C.	Sabbath Consecration of the Kingdom	228
IV.	Covenantal Grant.....	230
A.	The Covenant of Genesis 6:18	230
B.	Noah, Grantee of the Covenant.....	234
1.	Covenantal Grant for Faithful Service.....	234
2.	Type of the Messianic Servant.....	236
3.	Surety, Mediator, Savior.....	239
Part II:	The Kingdom in the World That Now Is	242
Chapter One:	Covenantal Resumption of Common Grace	244
I.	Covenant Confirmation.....	244
II.	The Order of Nature.....	247
III.	The Cultural Program	250
A.	General Regulations	250
B.	Special Regulations for God's People	253
1.	Discontinuance of Clean/Unclean Distinction	254
2.	Continuance of Restriction on Blood	256
Chapter Two:	Redemptive Covenant in the New World	263
I.	Oracle of Kingdom Judgment.....	263
A.	Noah's Oracle and Genesis 3:14,15.....	263
B.	Canaan Cursed	265
C.	Shem Blessed.....	266
D.	Japheth Blessed.....	268
II.	The Kingdoms of This World.....	269
A.	Focus and Fullness	270
B.	City of Man as Pseudo-Focus	272

1.	Diaspora of the Nations	272
2.	Babel's Ascent to Heaven.....	272
3.	Heaven's Descent on Babel	276
III.	The Community of the Blessing.....	279
A.	Noah's Oracle and Genesis 10:1-11:26	279
B.	The Sons of Japheth	281
C.	The Sons of Ham	281
D.	The Sons of Shem	283
1.	Shem and the Sons of Eber	283
2.	Peleg.....	283
3.	The Hebrews.....	285
E.	Covenant Community: From Shem to Abraham.....	287
F.	A Mosaic Postscript	289
Chapter Three:	The Kingdom Promised in the Abrahamic Covenant.....	292
I.	Covenant of Promise	293
A.	Divine Promise and Oath	294
1.	Promise as Gospel-Grace.....	294
2.	Ratification Oath.....	295
3.	Confirmatory Oaths	300
A.	Divine Promise and Divine Sovereignty.....	302
1.	Sovereign Election	302
2.	Supernatural Execution.....	307
B.	Sovereign Grace and Human Obligation	309
1.	Stipulated Demands.....	309
2.	Vows of Consecration.....	311
3.	Circumcision Oath.....	312
4.	Compatibility of Promise and Obligation	318
5.	The Works Principle and the Typal Kingdom.....	320
II.	Promises of the Covenant.....	326
A.	Résumé of Roots	327
B.	Blessed and Blessing	329
C.	Promised Kingdom on Two Levels.....	332
1.	The Promised King.....	332
2.	The Promised Kingdom-People	334
3.	The Promised Kingdom-Land	336
D.	Typal and Antitypal Kingdom	340
1.	Covenantal and Dispensational Hermeneutics	340
2.	Typological Unity and Succession	341
3.	Dispensationalism at Odds with the Gospel	346
4.	Evolving Dispensationalism	347
5.	Antitype Kingdom and the Millennium	350
6.	Design of the Typal Kingdom.....	352
Chapter Four:	Pre-Kingdom Abrahamic Community.....	356
I.	Pilgrim Politics and Polity	356
A.	Pre-Kingdom Politics	356
B.	Family Polity.....	361
1.	Family and Covenant Congregation.....	361
2.	Family and Covenant Government	365
a.	Father Abraham	365

b. Patriarchal Authority	367
II. Pre-Parousia Presence	369
A. Pre-Kingdom Cultus	369
1. Angel Theophany	369
2. Prophetic Altars	372
a. Altar and Kingdom Focus	372
b. Altar and Kingdom Fullness	375
B. Re-creating Spirit Presence	379
Index of Biblical References	383

INTRODUCTION

Kingdom Prologue engages in a biblico-theological analysis of the foundational revelation contained in the book of Genesis. Taking the kingdom of God as our central, organizing theme, we inevitably find ourselves fully involved with the subject of the divine covenants of Scripture; for to follow the course of the kingdom is to trace the series of covenants by which the Lord administers his kingdom.

The early chapters of Genesis report two occasions in the history of “the world that then was” when God’s people were organized as an earthly kingdom, one in Eden and another in the Noahic era. But the title of the present work assumes a later stance at the Abrahamic Covenant, and the kingdom as promised in that covenant was not established even in its preliminary, prototypal form until the mediatorial mission of Moses inaugurating the old covenant, as narrated in Exodus. From that perspective – and in view of the fact that the book of Genesis as a whole performs the function of historical preamble in the canonical documentation of the old covenant – *Kingdom Prologue* is an appropriate designation for the Genesis history.

Because the subject of biblical covenants and ancient treaties has been under intensive investigation and lively dispute, some introductory observations are in order here about the nature of those biblical arrangements we call “covenants.” Our chief interest in these comments is in those covenantal arrangements in which God was one party.

Of the biblical words usually rendered “covenant” the primary one in the Old Testament is the Hebrew *berith*, for which the Greek *diatheke* was the translation choice of the New Testament writers. What is it that constitutes the peculiar *berith*-character of that which is so denominated?

Repeatedly we read of a *berith* being “made.” The *berith*-making is accomplished through a solemn process of ratification. Characteristically this transaction centers in the swearing of an oath, with its sanctioning curse. Clearly a *berith* is a legal kind of arrangement, a formal disposition of a binding nature. At the heart of a *berith* is an act of commitment and the customary oath-form of this commitment reveals the religious nature of the transaction. The *berith* arrangement is no mere secular contract but rather belongs to the sacred sphere of divine witness and enforcement.

The kind of legal disposition called *berith* consists then in a divinely sanctioned commitment. In the case of divine-human covenants the divine sanctioning is entailed in God's participation either as the one who himself makes the commitment or as the divine witness of the human commitment made in his name and presence.

A good indication that the act of commitment with the obligations thus undertaken is basic to the meaning of *berith* is provided by the numerous statements about keeping and remembering the *berith* or being false to it and transgressing it. In fact, the two possible ways of treating a *berith*, by observing or violating it, are the most conspicuous and pervasive ideas found in immediate association with that term in the Bible. Also, a common synonym for *berith* is *chesed* with its connotation, if not primary force, of loyalty and fidelity, underscored at times by its combination with the term, *'emeth*, "truth."

Further, pointing to the centrality of commitment and specifically oath-commitment in the *berith* arrangement is the common use of words for oath (or curse) as synonyms for *berith*. For example, Moses instructs Israel assembled in the plains of Moab: "(You stand here) to enter into the covenant of Yahweh your God and into his oath-curse which Yahweh your God is making with you this day" (Deut 29:12[11]). In the marriage allegory of the Sinaitic Covenant in Ezekiel 16 the Lord says: "I swear unto you and entered into a covenant with you" (v. 8). *Berith* may also be the direct object of the verb of swearing (cf. Deut 4:31; 7:12; 8:18). See also Genesis 26:28.

So much was oath-commitment definitive of the *berith* that the act of making a *berith* was denoted by the imagery of the oath ritual performed when ratifying a *berith*. Thus, since the characteristic ratification rite was one of slaying and cutting up animals to symbolize the curse that would befall the breaker of the oath, "cut a *berith*" became the idiom for this transaction.

Etymology possibly affords another indication of the oath-commitment significance of *berith*, for its original meaning may well be "bond". Use of this term for the Old Testament covenants would then have in view the binding obligation undertaken in the ratificatory oath. For the idea of the oath as a bond see, for example, Numbers 30:2ff. (3ff.), especially the expression "binding oath" (v. 13[14]). And for the association of bond and

berith note the phrase “bond of the covenant” (Ezek 20:37; cf. Jer 27:2; Dan 6:8). But whatever the etymology of *berith* (and this is still under debate), the proper meaning of the word used to translate it in the New Testament is clear. *Diatheke* means a disposition, especially (in extra-biblical usage) a testament, and its use as a rendering for *berith* points to an understanding of the latter as a solemnly transacted commitment.

This understanding of the meaning of *berith* is confirmed by the extra-biblical evidence of analogous phenomena in the ancient world, particularly certain political arrangements whose formal equivalence to the divine covenants in the Bible is established by striking and extensive parallels in their ratificatory rituals and documents and in their administrative procedures. For these similar covenantal arrangements are regularly called “bonds (i.e., obligations) and oaths.” Moreover, the making of these covenants too is referred to as a cutting of the covenant, or it is denoted by some expression descriptive of a particular oath-curse ritual consisting in the dismemberment of some specific animal.

The evidence for *berith* as an obligation solemnly undertaken or imposed has increasingly impressed investigators of the matter and a vigorous case has been made opposing as unwarranted the translating of *berith* by “covenant,” with its connotation of relationship. It is even suggested that “command” would be a suitable rendering, and in support of that is the fact that “law” and various terms for commandment are employed as synonyms for *berith* (cf. Jer 33:25). Those who defend the continued use of the translation “covenant” have to acknowledge that *berith* is in the first instance a matter of commitment (given or exacted). They contend, however, that *berith*-arrangements are bilateral in that they involve negotiations (even if one party sovereignly proclaims or imposes the terms) and that the *berith*-making occurs in the context of an existing relationship or mutual understanding, often a cordial relationship, which the *berith* then further defines. It should be observed, too, that *berith* is not always used in its simple primary and proper sense and that some justification for rendering it by “covenant” can be found in the secondary extensions of its meaning. For the idea of the act of oath-commitment, which may be obvious enough in passages that deal with *berith*-making or ratification, shades off in other passages into the idea of the contents of the commitment. And we can think of those contents *per se*, or as written down as the text of a *berith*-document (we find references in the Bible to the “words of the covenant,” “the tables of the covenant,” “the book of the

covenant”) or as embodied in the order of life or the relationship that they promise or stipulate. These nuances are so interrelated that it is difficult to say which one is dominant in some passages. For possible examples of *berith* referring to the contents, whether promissory or obligatory, see Exodus 31:16; Numbers 25:13 (cf. Neh 13:29; Mal 2:8); 2 Samuel 23:5 (cf. Ps 89:39); 1 Kings 20:34; and Psalm 50:16. For possible examples of *berith* used for the resultant alliance or relationship or order, see Genesis 17:4; Exodus 23:32; Job 5:23; Psalm 83:5(6); Isaiah 28:15, 18; Ezekiel 30:5 and Hosea 12:1. In view of these secondary uses of *berith* and because of the long and firmly established place of the word “covenant” in English versions of the Bible and in theological formulations it would seem expedient to continue to make use of “covenant” in translating *berith* and *diatheke*.

It was stated earlier that there is a close connection between divine covenant and divine kingdom. Viewed as commitment transactions with their rituals, documents, and stipulated terms and procedures, covenants function as administrative instruments of God’s kingly rule. Indeed, the connection is sometimes closer than this. As we have observed, *berith* in some passages denotes the actual historical realization of the arrangement defined in the covenantal stipulations and sanctions. Covenant thus becomes a particular administration of God’s kingship, whether in the bestowal of his holy kingdom as a royal grant on a special covenant people as their peculiar inheritance or in the sovereign government of a temporal world order whose benefits are common to all alike (as in the postdiluvian common grace covenant of Gen 9). It is in this sense that covenant is used to designate the major divisions of covenant theology.

Converging lines of evidence have indicated that what is designated *berith* is primarily a legal disposition, characteristically established by oath and defined by the terms specified in oath-bound, divinely sanctioned commitments. We have also found that there is a functional aspect common to the divine *berith* transactions which provides warrant for those engaged in theological analysis to employ the term covenant in the sense of kingdom administration.

In adopting these conclusions we are rejecting certain counterproposals in which the covenant concept gets unduly restricted. These would make essential to the definition of covenant as a biblical theological category features that are not present in all *berith* arrangements, features pertaining to

the substance of the covenantal commitment or to the resultant covenantal order.

Thus, with respect to the substance of the covenant commitment it has been held that nothing is properly called covenant except sovereign administration of grace and promise. However, as will be argued below, there are *berith* arrangements in the Bible that are informed by the principle of works, the opposite of grace. One of these is the original order in Eden. In postlapsarian history, where we encounter covenants both of works and grace, the identity of the party who takes the ratification oath is an indicator of which kind of covenant it is in a particular case. It must be noted here that not all oaths of covenantal commitment function as ratification oaths. For example, the role played by the oath ritual of circumcision (Gen 17) is that of a supplementary seal added to the Abrahamic Covenant, which had been ratified by God's oath on an earlier occasion (Gen 15). More precisely, in the situation after the Fall it is the presence or absence of a human oath of ratification that provides the clue as to the governing principle, for divine oath is at least implicit in the ratification of all divine-human covenants, whether of works or grace. If the covenant is ratified by divine oath alone, it is a covenant of grace, either saving or common. But when the covenant-making includes a human oath of ratification, as in the case of Israel's oath in the Sinaitic Covenant (Exod 24), the arrangement is informed by the works principle. (On the complex relation of works and grace in the old covenant, see further below.) Man's ratificatory oath is a commitment to perform the obligations imposed by his Lord, while the divine oath in such a works covenant is a commitment to enforce the sanctions appropriately, rewarding obedience with the promised blessing and recompensing disobedience with the threatened curse. But our immediate concern is simply to observe that in view of the data indicating that some biblical covenants are of the works variety, the fundamental feature of divinely sanctioned commitment in our definition of covenant may not be restricted to commitment of sovereign grace and promise.

Improper restriction of the biblical theological definition of the *berith* concept has also occurred by inclusion of what is effected by the covenantal transaction. Some suggest that the main component in this definition should be the effecting of a religious relationship, more specifically, a holy fellowship in love between God and a chosen people. If we were limiting our analysis to those covenants in which God bestows his holy kingdom on a sanctified community, we might properly include in an expanded

definition of covenant this feature of the union and communion of God and man in recognition that this is the acme of blessedness secured in these covenants and the chief end in view, under the glory of God. However, if our definition is intended to cover all the divine covenants in Scripture, this feature of special relationship must be omitted, for there is also the common grace covenant (cf. Gen 9) in which God commits himself to maintain a certain order of life but does not therein bestow his holy kingdom and communion on an elect people.

Once we are satisfied that we have arrived at a proper concept of covenant and have in mind employing the succession of divine covenants as a general scheme for a biblical theology, the question arises whether we should classify as covenants various arrangements that are not specifically labelled *berith* or *diatheke* in the Bible. This problem takes a couple of different forms. One involves the traditional procedure of covenant theology whereby the individual *berith-diatheke* transactions of redemptive history are combined into ever more comprehensive “covenant” entities, culminating in what is usually called the Covenant of Grace, which encompasses all the redemptive administrations from the Fall to the Consummation. If it is recognized that there is a fundamental unity among all the individual covenants brought under the overarching Covenant of Grace, the process of identifying higher levels of covenantal unity is surely proper, for the biblical authors themselves already did that kind of systematizing of the covenants. For example, in Psalm 105:9,10 (cf. 2 Kgs 13:23; 1 Chr 16:16,17) there is a virtual identifying of God’s separate covenantal transactions with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And the separate covenants enacted by Moses at Sinai and in Moab and the later renewals of this arrangement in Joshua 24 and elsewhere in the Old Testament are repeatedly spoken of by later Old Testament authors and by New Testament authors as one covenant of the Lord with Israel, which the Book of Hebrews refers to as the “first” over against the “new” or “second” covenant (Heb 8:6-8). In principle then there is biblical precedent for the systematic organizer of the covenants to identify the over-all unity of the redemptive covenants by some such term as the Covenant of Grace.

Another form of the problem is involved in the original order produced at creation. In this case, covenant theology applies the term covenant to the situation even though the Bible (at least in the immediate record of Gen 1-3) does not use the term *berith* to describe it. We shall take up this matter in the introductory comments of Part I, Section A.

In the foregoing, *Kingdom Prologue* has been referred to as a biblico-theological study. Biblical theology is an exegetical discipline that processes biblical revelation in a way that contributes directly to the church's task of theological formulation, a task undertaken in the interests of covenantal instruction and discipline and world witness. More specifically, biblical theology in the classic tradition of Geerhardus Vos has as its distinctive feature a concern with the historical progress of special revelation as disclosed in the Bible. That history is divided into its significant periods, determined from the biblical account, and the contents of revelation are described epoch by epoch, being so set forth as to reflect the peculiar revelatory emphases of each period. The result is a diachronic display of a series of synchronic summaries of special revelation in its successive stages.

As it turns out, the significant eras of special revelation are coordinated with the sequence of the Lord's covenant enactments and his epochal acts of creation and redemption associated with them. The best example of this is the Bible itself with its major divisions into Old and New Testaments, the covenantal constitutions for the old and new covenants respectively. For Vos, then, delineating the progress of special revelation is broadly the same as expounding the contents of the several divine covenants.

The present work, in that it traces the course of the successive covenantal administrations (within the Genesis limits), is doing something similar. It differs, however, in that it makes the kingdom of God rather than special revelation the central theme. Our main focus is on the historical drama of the covenantal kingdom with its epochal events of covenant transaction and kingdom establishment. What is in Vos's *Biblical Theology* the infrastructure, the particular historical pattern in which the periodicity principle gets applied, becomes here the surface structure. By unfolding and developing that infrastructure, *Kingdom Prologue* performs, in part, a prolegomenon function for the program of biblical theology, while also serving the enterprise of systematic theology by contributing very directly to the formulations of covenant theology.

PART I
THE KINGDOM IN THE WORLD THAT THEN WAS

Beyond the prologue (Gen 1:1-2:3), Genesis is divided by its superscription formula, “these are the generations of...,” into ten sections beginning successively at the following verses: 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 11:27; 25:12; 25:19; 36:1 (cf. v. 9); and 37:2. What follows the formula is always an account of the descendants of the person named. This is a genealogical record or, more broadly, an historical narrative of the developments associated with the family in view. In the introductions to such accounts there may be allusions to the origins of the person named in the formula (see Gen 2:4; 5:1; cf. 25:12,19), but it is not to those origins that the term “generations” in the superscription refers. Not ancestry, not the past, but posterity and the future is in view in that term.

An attempt has been made to construe the formula in question not as a superscription for what follows it, but as belonging to the material which precedes it. That preceding material is then regarded as an originally independent document for which the formula is thought to serve as a colophon. For several quite decisive reasons, however, that interpretation of the data must be rejected. It is unable to understand the formula in any consistent, uniform way. Sometimes it must take the person named as the principal subject of the preceding narrative or as the one whose origins are presented there, but at other times as the one who wrote or possessed the preceding “document.” Actually, there are cases where neither sense suggested by the colophon view is at all suitable (see, e.g., 25:12,13; 25:19; 36:1; 37:2). For example, on this view it would have been Esau who preserved the record about Isaac and Jacob (36:1); and Jacob, the record of Esau’s descendants, Edomite king list and all (37:2). Also, removing the formula from the section following it in some cases leaves the following section (or supposed tablet) beginning in a most abrupt manner (see, e.g., 2:5; 5:3) and it has the further effect, of course, of leaving the last section of Genesis (37:2b-50:26) without either heading or concluding colophon. Moreover, the more generally accepted view of the generations-formula as a superscription is the interpretation obviously required when that formula is used in contexts outside the Book of Genesis: see Numbers 3:1; Ruth 4:18; and Matthew 1:1 (which reflects the variation on the formula found in Gen 5:1).

The first occurrence of the generations-formula in Genesis 2:4 requires further examination. This superscription to the first of the ten sections of “generations” consists not just of Genesis 2:4a but of the fourth verse in its entirety: “These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made earth and heaven.” The chiasmic form of this verse taken as a whole argues against a major break after verse 4a. The generations-formula of verse 4a is expanded in verse 4b just as it is in Numbers 3:1, where the expansion (v. 1b) once again begins “in the day that...”

In keeping with the consistent meaning of the generations-formula throughout the book of Genesis, Genesis 2:4 must be understood as the superscription not for an account of the origins of the heaven and the earth, but rather for an account of their subsequent “family” history. Genesis 2:4 is not the heading for a second creation story *per se*, but for the sequel to the story of the origins of the heaven and earth and all their hosts – a sequel which continues up to the Flood (2:4-4:26).

But if the Genesis 2:4 heading refers to the whole prediluvian period, what are we to make of verse 4b: “in the day that the Lord God made earth and heaven”? How can the world-age extending from Adam to the Noachic flood be identified as belonging to the day of creation? The use of this same idiom in Leviticus 6:20(13) is illuminating. There the Lord directs that “in the day” that Aaron is anointed he shall present a certain offering, which in fact was offered not during the seven-day period of the anointing-consecration but subsequently and indeed as a perpetual offering thereafter. What the priest did afterwards is said to be done “in the day of” his anointing in the sense that the anointing event marked a turning point and gave a distinctive character to his subsequent life and ministry. In the usage of an equivalent idiom (consisting of the preposition “in” plus the infinitive) we similarly find that an introductory event is used to identify an era, so that what happens later is said to happen “when” the founding event occurred. For example, in Deuteronomy 4:46 Israel’s victories in the Transjordan area some forty years after the exodus are described as happening “in their going forth from Egypt.” (Compare too Gen 33:18; 35:9; Deut 23:4[5]; 27:4,12; Josh 5:4.) In this same way, Genesis 2:4, the heading for a survey of the entire prediluvian history, views that whole age under the horizon of its great founding event, the original creation, and thus classifies that whole time as belonging to “the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.”

The scope of the family history of heaven and earth as related in the first section of Genesis (2:4-4:26) is panoramic. It develops the theme of the entrance of sin and its escalation in the apostate line of Cain through the entire prediluvian age. Then we find that the second section of Genesis (5:1-6:8) matches the vast sweep of the first section, its narrative once again covering the whole era extending from creation to the great deluge, now from the viewpoint of the covenant line, whose history it traces through Adam's son Seth down to Noah.

It would indeed appear that by far the largest part of the many millennia of all human history is covered in the brief record contained in roughly chapters 2 through 6 of the book of Genesis (or through chapter 8, if we include the Deluge episode). And, measuring again simply in terms of the passage of time, considerably more than half of the history from the Flood to the present is dealt with in Genesis 9 through 11.

The reader of Genesis may fail to appreciate the vastness of this historical span from Adam to Abraham because it is presented in such an extremely condensed form, while all the rest of the Bible from Genesis 12 on to the end is devoted to the relatively short span of about two thousand years from Abraham to Christ and the apostolic age. But both the brevity of the biblical account of the long pre-Abrahamic ages and the extended treatment given to the subsequent era introduced by the patriarchs are explained by the particular purpose and nature of the Scriptures. The Old and New Testaments are designed to serve as constitutions respectively for the kingdom of Israel and for the church of the new covenant. And, of course, the Bible's concentration on the climactic advent of Christ and the Israelite epoch of revelation immediately preparatory to it also reflects the supreme significance of this focal period of history with its decisive redemptive events.

It is not only because of the brevity of the Genesis treatment that there is not a more general awareness of how large a proportion of man's time on earth falls within the pre-Abrahamic or even prediluvian history. Some readers of the Bible find themselves unable to attribute so great a duration to that history because they misconstrue the Adam-to-Noah genealogy in Genesis 5 and the Noah-to-Abraham genealogy in Genesis 11. If these genealogies are (mistakenly) taken as an unbroken line of descent, the result is a division of all history from Adam to the present into three fairly equal and all relatively short parts: the first, from Adam to the Flood (or to

Abraham, who, on this exegesis, would come only some three centuries after the Flood); the second, from the Flood (or Abraham) to Christ; and the third, from Christ to the present.

Actually, however, the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 must be understood as a selective listing of only the more significant (presumably) names, which allows for indefinitely lengthy gaps here and there between the individuals who are selected for inclusion in the list. The selective interpretation is not only completely compatible with the idiom of the genealogical genre, but it is clearly signaled by the symmetrical composition of the two genealogies with their pattern of conventional numbers – ten names each, following the LXX in Genesis 11:12,13 (cf. Luke 3:36), with three sons for the last individual in each case. The validity of this interpretation is made completely certain by historical considerations, some inner-biblical and some arising from the integration of biblical and other evidence, both archaeological and literary. As an example of the latter we may mention the epic tradition that in the days of Gilgamesh, several centuries before Abraham, the Flood was already viewed as an event of remote antiquity. One is, therefore, left free by the biblical representations in Genesis 5 and 11 to date the Flood no more recently than the close of the most recent ice age, at the latest, and to allow to the prediluvian history of Genesis 2 through 6 all the millennia that may be shown by further investigation to have elapsed.

An intimation of the true dimensions of the times so briefly surveyed in Genesis 4 through 6 is given in 2 Peter 3:5-7. There, all of man's history on earth is divided in two at the Flood, and the prediluvian times are viewed not merely as an early stage in the present course of events but virtually as a separate world history by themselves, the history of another world that preceded the present world. The apostle speaks of "the world that then was," the original heavens and earth created by the word of God, a world that perished in the judgment of the Flood, and he sets that prediluvian world over against the present heaven and earth, the world produced at the Flood, which is also moving towards a destiny of divine judgment.

This cosmic interpretation of the prediluvian age was derived by Peter from the book of Genesis itself. He was adopting the perspective that informs each of the first two generations-sections of Genesis when he viewed the whole course of events from the beginning to the Deluge as comprising a single coherent age, the first major era in man's history. If we consider how

this way of organizing the history submerges the distinction made by the Fall into prelapsarian and postlapsarian history, the distinction that is of such tremendous theological import, we will appreciate more fully the peculiarity of this cosmic perspective and the directness of Peter's dependence on the Genesis historiography as his source for it. And all the more so, when we further notice how the apostle follows the lead of Genesis 2:4 in its identification of the prediluvian world as a world characterized by the founding event of creation. Obviously reflecting the portrayal of the origin of the earth and heavens in the Genesis creation-prologue, Peter characterizes "the world that then was" as a world formed by the word of God out of the water (v. 5).

This perspective on the prediluvian world-age is then reinforced and sharpened as Peter goes on to set "the heavens and the earth which are now" (v. 7a) over against the world that then was. He thereby makes the Flood episode in which the old world perished (v. 6) to be at the same time an act of re-creation. We are thus instructed to see in the Deluge not only a kind of return to the not-yet-habitable state of Genesis 1:2, but a virtual re-enactment of Genesis 1:3-2:3 as well, a restructuring by which the present habitable world was brought forth out of the chaotic waters. The effect of this radical cosmic reading of the Flood as a creation event and of the postdiluvian stage of the world as a virtual new heavens and earth is that the prediluvian world stands out sharply as a separate world that has come and gone, a world that began in the waters of the original creation and ended in the waters of deluge-judgment. The picture conveyed by Peter is that of a world that had a total history, that had its beginning, developed its culture and witnessed the course of the great conflict of heaven and hell to a final climax, had its eschaton, and made way for a new world.

What makes all this of special importance to Peter's Christian readers is that he also presents that overall, complete world-history from the creation to the Flood as a paradigm that is being followed again in the history of the present world. Peter appeals to this ancient pattern as instructive for our understanding of the eschatological course of our present world, in particular, as affording warning of cosmic divine judgment to come (v. 7). This insight into the nature of the prediluvian world was acquired by Peter from his Lord (cf. Matt 24:37-39; Luke 17:26,27). "As the days of Noah were," Jesus had said, "so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matt 24:37).

For our analysis of Genesis, Peter's overall division of human history into two cosmic eras provides a principle of organization by which our study is divided into two major Parts. But as was noted earlier, another two-part division of human history, which is of fundamental importance in biblical theology, is hidden under Peter's cosmic perspective. For his broad category of the world that then was spans the two eras that are separated by the Fall of man. This division marked by the Fall has even more radical significance for humanity than that produced by the Noahic deluge. For as basic a distinction as that between the order of creation and the order of redemption is what differentiates between these two eras separated by the Fall. This great divide in history is brought out in the organization of our material here by subdividing Part I (The Kingdom in the World That Then Was) into two Sections. Section A will deal with the pre-Fall age and the creational covenant and Section B will begin the analysis of the post-Fall age and the administrations of redemptive covenant, in the period up to the Flood.

Section A

CREATIONAL COVENANT

Covenant theologians have generally taken the position that the covenant concept can accommodate the entire history of the kingdom of God. Thus, the original creational stage of the kingdom and the entire subsequent redemptive phase have been comprehended under the headings of Covenant of Works and Covenant of Grace. Since here in Section A of our study we will be dealing with the data of Genesis 1-3 under a covenantal heading, this is the place to discuss the biblical warrant that exists for regarding the pre-Fall kingdom as a covenantal affair.

It is to be observed in the first place that even though the term *berith* does not appear in the immediate biblical record of the creational kingdom, the substance of covenant is the stuff that forms the contents of Genesis 1-3. It is, therefore, altogether appropriate to give the covenantal phenomena that are found here the label that identifies them elsewhere. That, by the way, is what covenant theology does elsewhere when, for example, it extends the category of Covenant of Grace to the redemptive situation before the days of Noah (although the term *berith* does not appear until Gen 6:18) or when it subsumes the Abrahamic history in Genesis 12-14 under the category of the Abrahamic Covenant (although the term *berith* does not appear in that history until the Gen 15 transaction).

Actually, it is possible that the Bible itself, in later references back to Genesis 1-3, applies the term *berith* to the situation there, just as 2 Samuel 23:5 and Psalm 89:3 refer to God's covenantal revelation to David as a *berith*, though that term is not employed in the account of it in 2 Samuel 7. Isaiah 24:5 and Hosea 6:7 have been suggested as instances of this. Although the meaning of both passages is disputed, the everlasting covenant of Isaiah 24:5 definitely appears to refer to the creational arrangements and Hosea 6:7 probably refers to Adam as the breaker of a covenant. Also, comparison of Jeremiah 33:20,25 and Jeremiah 31:35-37 suggests that the former applies the term *berith* to God's ordering of the world of nature as described in Genesis 1, though the use of the term *berith* here possibly reflects the use of *berith* in Genesis 9 for the postdiluvian reestablishing of the order of nature according to the measure of common grace. Even though the Jeremianic reference would not be to the Genesis

1-3 arrangement precisely, it would nevertheless show that covenants may be found in historical narratives from which the term *berith* is absent.

Certainly the substance of *berith* was present in the kingdom order described in Genesis 1-3. It was characterized by precisely those elements that constitute a covenant, for it was produced through divine words and acts of commitment and it was subject to the sanctions of ultimate divine blessing and curse.

The words and acts that expressed God's creational commitments had the character of oaths and bonds. Of God it can truly be said that his word is his bond. The author of Hebrews says that when God added his oath to his promise to Abraham there were then two immutable things on which Abraham's faith could rest – "two" because God's previous simple word of promise was itself the equivalent of an immutable oath (Heb 6:13-18). Similarly, God's making of promises to David in 2 Samuel 7 is referred to in Psalm 89:3 as the swearing of an oath. Since, when God is the speaker, the truth character of a simple word of commitment is guaranteed as by oath, to identify the speaker as God is to identify the word as an oath. Hence, the divine self-identification, "I am Yahweh," may be understood as an introductory oath-formula. Thus, in Ezekiel 20:5, God's swearing (literally, lifting up his hand) to Israel is explained as an act of making himself known to them, saying "I am the Lord your God." God's spoken self-identification is here regarded as an equivalent of the physical oath-gesture of raising the hand to heaven, a verbal counterpart to a theophanic appearance in the oath-stance. In the Exodus 6 passage, which is apparently the one chiefly in view in Ezekiel 20:5, God's words of commitment are bracketed within the introductory and concluding oath-formula: "I am Yahweh" (vv. 2 and 8). This means that the ancient treaty-form as adopted by the Lord God when making covenant with his people was tantamount to a divine oath document, for the customary self-identification of the suzerain in the preamble was now a divine self-identification and so a virtual oath-formula (see Exod 20:2a; cf. Gen 17:1ff.; 26:24; 28:13; 35:11). Accordingly, the Sinaitic Covenant could be interpreted as a divine pledging of troth (see Ezek. 16).

In the beginning God's covenanting bond-words took the form of creative fiat. By these fiat God dictated into existence a covenantal kingdom order and implicit in the structuring-defining words spoken by the beneficent Creator was his oath commitment to maintain by faithful

providential oversight the good world he had made and given its meaning. As noted above, Jeremiah interprets the establishment of the order of heavenly luminaries with their control of the day-night cycle as a divine covenantal commitment (Jer 31:35-37 and 33:20,21), with the implicitly covenantal character of the original creation process becoming explicit in the postdiluvian reestablishment of that order. The divine creation fiats were then covenant fiats too.

Before the first creative fiat is heard in Genesis 1:3, the divine speaker is portrayed in Genesis 1:2 as God the Spirit overshadowing the deep-and-darkness. As we shall be observing further below, this form of divine presence is to be identified with the Glory-cloud epiphany. At the ratification of the old covenant at Sinai, this cloud-pillar form of theophany represented God standing as witness to his covenant with Israel. Once again at the ratification of the new covenant at Pentecost, it was God the Spirit, appearing in phenomena that are to be seen as a New Testament version of the Glory-fire, who provided the confirmatory divine testimony. And the book of Revelation pictures the consummation of creation's history as involving a reappearance of the Glory-Spirit of Genesis 1:2, now enveloping the incarnate Son, his hand lifted in oath to heaven as he swears by himself, the Creator, that the mystery of God was to be completed (Rev 10:1,5-7; cf. Rev 1:15; 2:18).

As I have written elsewhere: "In the interpretive light of such redemptive reproductions of the Genesis 1:2 scene, we see that the Spirit at the beginning overarched creation as a divine witness to the Covenant of Creation, as a sign that creation existed under the aegis of his covenant lordship. Here is the background for the later use of the rainbow as a sign of God's covenant with the earth (Gen 9:12ff.). And this appointment of the rainbow as covenant sign in turn corroborates the interpretation of the corresponding supernatural light-and-clouds phenomenon of the Glory (the rainbow character of which is explicit in some instances) as a sign of the Covenant of Creation." (*Images of the Spirit*, pp. 19f.) The effect of the Genesis 1:2 portrayal of the Creator in oath-stance is to reinforce powerfully the commitment character of his ensuing words of creative fiat recorded in Genesis 1:3ff.

Another act of the Glory-Spirit with special covenantal significance appears at the sixth day climax of the creation narrative, namely, the forming of man in the image of God. Elsewhere in the Bible this creative act is

interpreted as a marriage, as a covenantal pledging of truth by the Creator. (Here only a brief summary is presented of my review of the biblical data in *Images of the Spirit*, chapter 2).

One of the biblical figures for the bestowing of the divine image on man is that of covering him with a robe emblematic of God's Glory. The outstanding instance of this symbolism in the Old Testament is found in the placing of the sacred vestments on the high priest of Israel. Now in the allegory of Ezekiel 16 such an act of investiture with the image of God is used as a symbol for an act of covenant ratification. Presenting the Sinaitic covenant-making in nuptial imagery, Ezekiel depicts the divine pledging of the marriage truth as God's act of adorning the bride-Israel with the sacred vestments of his Glory-likeness. The prophet thus interpreted the Sinai covenant-making as a redemptive re-creation event culminating (as did the original creation) in the production of a covenant people fashioned in God's image, and he interpreted that climactic episode of investiture with the divine image as an act of divine commitment, sealing the marriage covenant. The specific historical reality behind Ezekiel's portrayal of the covering of the bride with her divine husband's robe of glory was the bringing of Israel at Sinai under the overshadowing canopy of the Glory-cloud. And that was, of course, the counterpart in the exodus re-creation to the Glory-Spirit's overarching of the deep-and-darkness in the original creation, preparatory to his creating of mankind in his Glory-likeness on the sixth day. Thus, for the Creator to adorn mankind with his image in the beginning, was, from the biblical perspective, to create mankind in a covenant of marriage, as bride of the Maker-Lord, with all the commitment of promise and obligation inherent in such an alliance.

In a special sense then the particular divine fiat to create man as one invested with the Glory-image of God was a covenantal fiat. Right here it is, of course, patent that the covenantal relationship of God and man had its origin in the very act of creating man. It is not the case, as some theological reconstructions would have it, that the covenant was superimposed on a temporally or logically prior noncovenantal human state. The covenantal character of the original kingdom order as a whole and of man's status in particular was given along with existence itself. For the Creator of Genesis 1 gave name and existence simultaneously in his creative fiat – and his creative fiat-names were covenantal fiat-names of divine commitment, especially so the fiat-name that called man into being in the divine image.

By investing man with the divine image, God appointed him to privileged status over the rest of creation (Gen 1:26-30). This sovereign determination of the relationship between man and the world can be viewed as an instance of God acting as third party or mediator in the arranging of a covenant between two parties. (Such mediation of covenants by a third party is attested in ancient international diplomacy.) In the account in Jeremiah 27:2-8, God's giving of dominion over the nations to Nebuchadnezzar is portrayed in symbolic act and word as the imposing of the yoke of a vassal treaty upon those nations, obliging them to serve the Babylonian suzerain. Nebuchadnezzar's position is described in terms evocative of the narrative of man's original dignity in Eden. (Reflection of the primal situation of man is still clearer in the picture of Nebuchadnezzar's suzerainty in Dan 2:38.) Accordingly, the Creator's giving of the earth and its creatures into man's hands in Eden may be viewed as the placing of the covenantal yoke of man's lordship upon the earth.

Such authoritative mediating of a covenantal order by the Creator clearly involved commitment on his part to supervise and enforce that covenant. In fact, divine arranging of a kingdom order wherein nature serves man's well-being is at times in the Bible expounded as a covenant that God makes between himself and man, God committing himself therein to secure man in a state of peace (see Ezek 34:25; Hos 2:18[20]). Viewed in these terms, the Lord's assignment of dominion to man over the world under conditions of Edenic beatitude (Gen 1:28) can be seen as signaling a covenantal relationship between God and man. Indeed, it is likely that the later identification of episodes of subordination of nature to the service of man in terms of a covenant of God with man reflect an understanding of the original order with its similar relationship of man and nature as such a covenant.

Conspicuous among the stipulated terms of the original divine-human relationship were the paired divine sanctions of life and death, the curse of death threatened against any breach of fealty and the blessing of life promised for loyal obedience. Now divine sanctioning is an essential element in covenants. Moreover, in a divine covenant the divine sanctions coalesce with the commitments made by God as one party to the covenant, for here, uniquely, the covenant suzerain is himself the divine witness and enforcer of the sanctions of the covenant. Thus, in pointing to the notable role of the dual sanctions in Eden, we are also adducing further evidence of

the presence there of the feature of commitment, which is the hallmark of covenants.

In part, the blessing sanction of the Edenic arrangement was expressed in the sign of the Sabbath, and this may be singled out as of particular interest for the covenantal identity of the original kingdom order. (We assume here conclusions that will be reached in our discussion of God's Sabbath below.)

For one thing, the setting of man's kingdom labors in a sabbatical framework imitative of the pattern of God's work of creation was an expression of man's identity as image of God and as such the sabbatical ordinance also served to identify man as a creature in covenant with God. By the Sabbath ordinance God made covenantal commitment that man with his God-like endowment would move on in the way of obedience to a consummation of rest, indeed, to the glory of God's own Sabbath.

Also, the Sabbath ordinance appointed for man's observance celebrated the reality of the archetypal Sabbath of the Creator's seventh day, and in doing so highlighted aspects of the creation order that were distinctly covenantal. God's entrance upon his Sabbath rest was an enthronement of the Creator, an assumption by him of his rightful position as Lord of the world, of all lands and peoples. The Sabbath ordinance thus called upon all earthly kingship to acknowledge itself to be a vassal kingship under the heavenly Suzerain. Now such a relationship is the kind of covenantal relationship that was defined by the ancient suzerain-vassal treaties. Agreeably, when God later made covenant with Israel, adopting for this purpose the form of these ancient political covenants, he appointed the Sabbath ordinance as a seal of this covenant (Exod 20:8-11; 31:16,17), signifying thereby that the people and the land belonged to him (cf., e.g., Lev 25:2-4). The Sabbath declared that Yahweh was covenant Lord of the kingdom of Israel. And if the Sabbath ordinance serves as a symbolic sign of God's covenantal lordship in the holy kingdom of Israel, it is surely because the original divine Sabbath represented the Creator's covenantal lordship over the world. Indeed, this connection is conspicuous in the appointing of the Sabbath to Israel. For this later Sabbath observance is explained as a remembering of God's creation acts, a celebrating of the glory of his covenantal kingship first established by his work of creation and now being reestablished through the redemptive sanctifying of a covenantal people renewed in God's image under God's lordship (Exod 20:8-11). In short then, the Sabbath ordinance in Eden was a sign of the covenant of God

with man already in effect there. The very fact that the Genesis creation prologue is cast in sabbatical form tells us that the creation of the world was a covenant-making process.

Further, there is the familiar fact that the biblical accounts of redemptive covenants, the old and the new covenants, depict these covenant histories as divine works of re-creation. The point here is much the same as we were making about the appointing of the Sabbath ordinance as a sign of the covenant to Israel, but with our view extended now to include all the creation motifs that are used in the Scriptures to set forth the nature of God's covenantal action through Moses and Jesus Christ, the mediators of the old and new covenants. In interpreting these later covenants as creational, the biblical authors reflect their understanding of the creation as covenantal.

It is especially significant for our present thesis that in the Mosaic economy there was a reproduction of the creational order as a whole (within the limitations of the fallen situation and with the adjustments resulting from the redemptive process), including specifically the nature of the original Edenic order as a holy paradise-kingdom and as a probationary-works arrangement. The covenant identity of the reproduction points compellingly to the covenantal nature of the original.

Another such parallel is found in the Bible's use of the two-Adams scheme in its comprehensive analysis of God's government through history. If the role of Christ as the second Adam is recognized as covenantal, this scheme provides further clear warrant for classifying the arrangement made with the first Adam as covenantal.

Our conclusion is, therefore, that Genesis 1-3 teems with evidences of the covenantal character of the kingdom in Eden. We have in fact seen that the covenantal identity of this creation order was given to it with its very existence, particularly in the creation of man, its head, in the image of God. The creational covenant will here be called "The Creator's Covenant of Works with Adam." By continuing the use of the term "works" we preserve an important advantage that the traditional name, "Covenant of Works," has when combined with use of "Covenant of Grace" for redemptive covenant – the advantage of underscoring the fundamental law-gospel contrast. And our additional terms, "Creator's" and "with Adam," will serve to bring out the parallelism between this covenant of works and

what we shall be calling “The Father’s Covenant of Works with the Son” (i.e., the eternal intratrinitarian covenant), namely, the parallelism of the two Adams scheme, each of these covenants involving, as it does, an Adam figure, a federal representative under probation in a covenant of works.

As the analysis of this covenantal administration of God’s kingdom lordship with its dual sanctions unfolds in the following chapters, we will see that it involves not only the bestowal of the kingdom on a holy people of God but an offer to make the kingdom given in creation a permanent possession on a glorified level of existence. Described in terms of varieties of international covenants familiar at the time of the writing of the book of Genesis, the original covenant with Adam was thus a suzerain-vassal covenant plus the proposal of a special grant to the vassal for loyal service.

Within the Scriptures are treaty texts (like the Decalogue) produced for particular covenant ratification transactions and displaying the literary-legal form attested in the contemporary ancient international treaties. The several standard sections of this treaty-form provide serviceable categories for analysis of the creational covenant. The first two chapters of the following analysis include data that would be found in the preamble and historical prologue, the opening sections of the treaty form. Chapter Three corresponds to the section of treaty stipulations or law; Chapter Four, to the sanctions section. Finally, Chapter Five will trace the history of the creational covenant, with the tragic failure of the first man to obtain the proposed grant of the eternal kingdom. Our use of the standard sections of the ancient treaty-form in this way should not be misunderstood as suggesting that the earliest chapters of Genesis have the literary form of a treaty. However, the fact that these treaty sections serve as satisfactorily as they do as an analytical framework for describing the sum and substance of these chapters does support illuminatingly the identification of the creation order as a covenantal arrangement.

Chapter One

LORD OF THE COVENANT-KINGDOM

Ancient vassal treaties opened with two sections setting forth the claims of the great king upon the vassal's allegiance and service. They stated who he was and what he had done. The first section identified him by his name and titles; the second, by a historical survey of his previous dealings with the vassal. Our concern in this chapter is to draw out of the biblical account of God's covenant with Adam a revelation of the names of God contained there and to indicate the lordly claims of those names upon the life and devotion of man. In the second chapter we shall be considering the further claims of God on man that were made by the gift of kingship and the bountiful blessings of the garden-kingdom of God.

A preoccupation with the question of God's name-identity is evident in the Pentateuch, the Mosaic documentary witness to the old covenant. This interest in the name(s) of God emerges from the very outset in the book of Genesis, where the self-disclosure of Israel's covenant Lord is traced back through the centuries of patriarchal promise to the distant Deluge and prediluvian ages, and yet farther back to man's beginnings and the dawn of history.

In connection with the record of those beginnings an especially effective answer to the question of Yahweh's identity is given by arranging the divine names in a striking pattern. In the creation account proper (Gen 1:1-2:3) only the generic term for God, Elohim, is used for the Creator. In the narrative of man's history in the garden (2:4-3:24) the compound designation, Yahweh-Elohim, predominates. In fact, this compound divine name is used as often within this brief compass as it is in all the rest of the Old Testament. Then, beginning with chapter 4, Yahweh and Elohim are both used singly, with the choice of one or the other determined in each instance by various theological and literary considerations. Clearly, the remarkable combination of the name Yahweh with Elohim in the account of the pre-Fall history in Genesis 2 and 3 is designed as a pointed declaration that Yahweh, the Lord of redemptive history, is Elohim, the Creator-God of Genesis 1.

Yahweh, Israel's Lord, is thus identified in Genesis 2 and 3 as Elohim, and Elohim in turn is identified in the creation account of Genesis 1:1ff.

Elohim appears there as the subject of the series of mighty verbs of creative action, as the dominant central figure of the vast creative drama exalted absolutely above everything else in the cosmic scene. While the account is indeed a revelation concerning the actual origins of the world, it is primarily a self-disclosure of the Creator himself, an apocalypse of Elohim. Unveiling the cosmic beginnings, it reveals there the glory of the eternal Elohim, the almighty Maker of the heavens and the earth.

As was intimated above, this hymnic celebration of the Creator placed at the opening of the canonical revelation of the old covenant thus serves the same purpose for which the preamble was designed in the international treaties current at the time the book of Genesis was written. The overlord, dictating the treaty to his vassals, named himself in this opening section, and along with his name he identified himself by an assortment of grandiose titles. The reading of the preamble was intended to instill in the vassal a dread of the great king of the treaty. Similarly, Yahweh, Lord of Israel, begins his covenant Word by identifying himself, and he does so not for the purpose of satisfying the noncommittal curiosity of philosophical speculators but to inspire in his servant people the fear of their Lord, and so impart to them the secret of covenant life.

I. GOD, THE ALPHA-AUTHOR

A. Creator of All

“For of him and through him and to him are all things” (Rom 11:36a). That all things are of God is affirmed in grand simplicity in the Genesis prologue (Gen 1:1-2:3). Summarizing the creative work of Elohim, the record states: “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all the host of them” (Gen 2:1). All the visible creation is meant and the invisible realm of angelic beings besides. Such seems to be the understanding of the statement reflected in the confessional prayer of Nehemiah 9:5ff. For Genesis 2:1 is evidently in view in the acknowledgment made there of the Lord as Creator of “heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein,” and this “host of heaven,” described as worshipping God (v. 6), would be the invisible spiritual hosts of heaven (cf. 2 Chr 18:18; Pss 103:20,21; 148:2).

There is an echo of this reading of the Genesis revelation of creation in the Pauline confession of the Son: “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers” (Col 1:16; cf. John 1:1-3). And in Revelation 10 the same perspective informs the oath of Christ, portrayed in this vision as the Glory-Angel, who swears “by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are therein, and the earth and the things that are therein, and the sea and the things that are therein” (10:6). On the lips of the One who has just been described as coming down from heaven (10:1) and as lifting up his hand in oath to God in heaven (10:5), the words “heaven and the things therein” would surely seem to refer to the invisible realm of God’s presence among his angels.

Given this understanding of Genesis 2:1, a referent must then be found in the preceding account for the mention of the creation of angels in the Genesis 2:1 summary statement and the only possible such referent is Genesis 1:1. According to its idiomatic force, the phrase “the heaven and the earth” in that verse denotes a totality and in the light of the kind of biblical data mentioned above it is not just the totality of the visible creation but of creation visible and invisible that is meant. The terms “heaven” and “earth” have the meanings here that they have, for example, in the prayer petition: “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

Another line of evidence confirms the interpretation of the “heaven” of Genesis 1:1 as the invisible heaven. From the treatment of the creation theme in Proverbs 8 it appears that Genesis 1:1 is the record of an event at a “beginning” time that preceded the episodes delineated in verses 2ff. (rather than a summary of the total creation history). For as picked up in Proverbs 8:22,23, that “beginning” is explicitly equated with a time before the waters of the earth’s vast deep (cf. Gen 1:2) were divided vertically or bounded horizontally and before any of the other achievements of the creation “week” (Prov 8:22-30). Therefore, according to Genesis 1:1, a “heaven” existed in distinction from an “earth” at a time prior to developments described in the following verses. Then as the “earth” from which the “heaven” is distinguished in verse 1 is singled out in verse 2 and becomes the exclusive subject of the subsequent narrative, a decisive fact emerges for the identification of the “heaven” of verse 1. For from this “earth” of verses 1 and 2 eventually is derived not only the land and seas but the *visible* heavens. Thus, on day two (Gen 1:6-8) the separation of the waters above from those below involves the appearance of the firmament

of heaven, the vault of the sky, while the waters above are themselves the heavenly sea of the clouds (perhaps paralleled in Ps 148:4 by “the heaven of heavens,” though that phrase seems to denote the invisible celestial realm in Deut 10:14; 1 Kgs 8:27; Neh 9:6; and Ps 115:16). All the visible heavens are thereby accounted for as byproducts of the structuring of the “earth.” Sun, moon, and stars do not come into consideration here for in terms of Genesis 1 they are not the heavens but the luminaries that are placed in the heavenly vault; they are the host of (the visible) heaven. (They too owe their existence to God’s creative fiat [Gen 1:14-18]. In actual fact, they existed at the time the earth was in its deep-and-darkness stage [Gen 1:2] – the Genesis 1 narrative being arranged thematically rather than by chronological sequence – but there is no specific mention of them in the first two verses.) We conclude then that the “earth” referred to in Genesis 1:2 included within it, though not yet separate from it, all that constitutes the visible heavens (in the biblical vocabulary). This means that the “heaven” that is distinguished from that “earth” at the prior point in view in Genesis 1:1 can only be the invisible heaven, the realm of angels.

Recognition that the “heaven” of Genesis 1:1 is the invisible heavens corroborates the conclusion that this verse is not a heading that summarizes the creation process narrated in verses 2 ff., for that process does not include the production of the invisible heavens. Also, the Proverbs 8 interpretation of the “beginning” in Genesis 1:1 as a time prior to and not overlapping developments described in verses 2ff. rules out the exegesis that would relativize the “beginning” by treating verse 1 as a dependent statement, coordinate with verse 2 and subordinate to verse 3. On either this approach or the view of verse 1 as a summary heading, Genesis 1 would no longer contain a direct declaration of the original absolute creation. Over against such conclusions we maintain that Genesis 1:1 is an independent statement, not however one that summarizes what follows but rather one that refers to the “beginning” time which preceded the history recorded in verses 2 ff. So understood, Genesis 1:1 affirms that this beginning time witnessed the origins of the cosmos as a whole, visible and invisible, and in particular the absolute act of origination, creation *ex nihilo* and *in nihilum*, that is, without a context of prior created reality (cf. Heb 11:3).

Genesis 1:1 sets the Creator at the beginning in holy majesty above and apart from all creation visible and invisible as the One eternally before all things. According to Proverbs 8, the divine Wisdom was present at the

earliest creation of God, and God, the One to whom Wisdom relates before the primeval beginning, is simply there, unquestioned, presupposed, the Eternal, the Lord and there is none else (cf. Isa 40:21,28; 43:10). Similarly, in Paul's Christological exposition of the Genesis 1 event, conjoined to the declaration that all things in heaven and earth were created by the Son is the statement: "and he is before all things" (Col 1:17; cf. John 1:1f.).

In sum, Elohim is revealed in the Genesis prologue as God alone, the Eternal, the Creator of all things visible and invisible.

B. Sovereign Architect-Builder

Creation as described in the Genesis prologue is strictly a constructive process, without any undercurrent of conflict. Elohim, the Creator, is portrayed not as a mighty warrior but as an omnipotent artisan, not as a cunning conqueror but as an omniscient architect. There is no sense of the tumult of war in the account; everything proceeds in orderly and stately fashion according to architectonic plan.

A major building motif is the dividing of the world structure into compartments suitable for habitation by various types of creatures. For God "created it not to be empty but formed it as a place to live" (Isa 45:18). Overhead, as a sheltering cover for the earthlings, was spread the sky, called "the firmament" with reference to its canopy-like appearance. In it were installed heavenly lamps to illumine the darkness of the dwelling-place by day and night. What is thus barely suggested of architectural imagery in Genesis 1 is carried out in more picturesque detail in other biblical reflections on the creation account. The Lord himself in his challenging disclosure to his servant Job pictures himself in the process of creation with measuring line in hand, defining the spaces, determining the dimensions according to specifications, setting the building on foundations and laying the cornerstone, enclosing the living areas by boundary-walls with their doors and bars (Job 38:4ff.). In the version of the creation days from the wisdom perspective given in Proverbs 8:22ff., the divine wisdom that directs and delights in the founding and bounding of the world-habitation is personified as a master-builder. (Or, as otherwise interpreted, it is the Lord himself, rather than his wisdom, who is designated the master-builder.) Elsewhere too in the Old Testament in poetic cosmological allusions the world is imaged as an architectural structure with the earth as one four-

cornered floor and the heavens an upper story, its chambers supported by beams and having windows, with the mountains as the columns on which this heavenly story is raised, while the earth is founded on pillars with bases in the depths. All this needs no demythologizing by us, for in its biblical form it is not mythopoeic in the first place. What is required for a proper assessment of this kind of cosmology is simply an appreciation of the figurative quality of the poetic treatment.

Another architectural dimension of creation comes to view in the course of biblical revelation. Creation was designed to serve a far more exalted function than the housing of a variety of creature-beings in the several distinctive areas of the earth. The cosmic structure was built as a habitation for the Creator himself. Heaven and earth were erected as a house of God, a palace of the Great King, the seat of sovereignty of the Lord of the covenant.

“Thus says Yahweh: heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool” (Isa 66:1a; cf. Matt 5:34,35). Creation was royal construction. The establishing of the world order was the establishing of the throne room of the King of kings. From the heights of his holy cosmic house God rules, robed in heaven’s majesty (Ps 93). The lyric exposition of Genesis 1 in Psalm 104 similarly views the creation as God’s residence-garment (vv. 1-3). From the creation of the world, God sits as king above the circle of the world within the heavenly curtains (Isa 40:21-23). “Yahweh is in his holy temple, his throne is in the heavens” (Ps 11:4; cf. 103:19; Mic 1:2,3).

In ancient mythological cosmogony the theme of a house for the god occupies a climactic place. Thus, in the Canaanite version, when Baal emerges from the conflict as the conqueror of the dragon-power of chaos and thereby as the stabilizer of world-order, he has a house built for his enthronement. The mythological “creation” process thus culminates in the celebration of the hero-god’s exaltation as king in a palace which is an archetype of the actual temples where the god was worshipped, the latter also being representational of the cosmic world of the god.

As observed above, the creation as described in the Genesis prologue is a work of construction without trace of struggle. The Genesis account itself does not make even a poetic use of the conflict theme current in extra-biblical cosmogony, the theme of the slaying of the chaos monster by the hero-god as the means of founding the world order.

Elsewhere in the Bible that theme and imagery are used, usually to portray God's redemptive triumph over the powers of Hell. Sometimes it is used to describe the Creator's government of the world of nature, particularly his control of the more tempestuous phenomena and especially the raging waters of the sea (Job 9:13, cf. 8[RSV]; 26:12,13; cf. 3:8; Pss 65:7; 89:10). The latter instances might well include the divine providential rule and ordering of forces of nature operative during as well as after the creation era (notice the clear allusions to creation in Job 9:8,9 and 26:10) and in this qualified sense it might then be said that the Bible does on occasion make a literary use of the conflict motif with reference to God's activity during creation. In such passages (cf. too Pss 74 and 89) the distinction between the unique, closed era of the "six days," marked by the series of supernatural acts of origination, and the postcreation era is allowed to fade while the broader theme of God's providential control and direction of nature, which overlaps both eras, is brought into focus. However, even in this limited sense that God's providential activity during the creation "week" is at times described in terms of a conflict with chaotic forces it is purely a matter of poetic literary idiom, not a theological adoption of the cosmogonic myth, either whole or piecemeal.

The pagan cosmogonic myth, a garbled, apostate version, a perversion, of pristine traditions of primordial historical realities, could not pass through the conceptual grid that forms the consistent framework of the teachings of Scripture except as already demythologized poetic idiom. Even among the ancient myth-makers themselves the practice is attested of redacting earlier cosmogonic myth with polemic intent. In order to propagandize for some new development in the cult, they would so adapt the myth that the old god who was to be eclipsed would be replaced by his rival, the current favorite, in the role of heroic conqueror of the chaos monster in the mythopoeic drama of cosmic origins. The adoption of the earlier myth was thus for the purpose of rejecting its message, if not at the conceptual level of its mythological cosmogony as such, at least at the political level of rival cultic claimants. The Bible's use of the cosmogonic conflict myth is with similar, but incomparably more radical, polemical intent. When the biblical revelation identifies Yahweh, the living and true God, as the Creator who slays the dragon, it is not a mere matter of substituting one deity for another while maintaining the essence of the myth. In its adaptation of the myth the Bible demythologizes the myth as such. It demythologizes the hero-god, it demythologizes the dragon (whether identifying him as Satan

or as tempestuous nature), it rejects the mythical cosmogony and cosmology root and branch.

There is no serious suggestion in Scripture of the existence of divine adversaries with whom the creating God had to contend. Indeed, while the conflict motif is used in the Bible as a literary figure for the kind of general ordering of nature whose beginnings reach back into the creation era, such as God's bounding of the seas, that motif is apparently not used in any way whatsoever with reference to God's acts of absolute creation. Theomachy is not used in the Bible even in poetic idiom as providing the pre-material for the creation of the world. Not even in figurative imagery is there a suggestion of the use of the vast carcass of a vanquished deity as the material for man's world, as in the case of Marduk's cosmogonic conquest of Tiamat in the Mesopotamian tradition. Even where the Sea-monster might appear in a creation context, it is not there as a pre-existing thing but as (the symbol of) a creature made by God. The biblical revelation of world origins by divine creation in the strict sense thus remains unobscured.

Certainly in the Genesis prologue itself, the creation fiats are not battle cries but architectural directives. According to Genesis 1, creation is a purely production process. The goal in view is not to struggle through to a precarious victory but to complete a building. The biblical account thus stands apart from the Canaanite cosmogony of the Baal epic, and other ancient cosmogonies of that type. The right of the latter to be called creation accounts has been challenged because they do not include the concept of world creation in the strict sense but only the idea of an ordering of chaos. Even the other major ancient type of cosmogony, which began with the theme of theogony, did not understand creation as absolute origination *ex nihilo* or *in nihilum*, but as a birth process issuing from original binary deity. If we judge from the biblical concept of creation, neither of these major types of ancient pagan cosmogonies falls properly in the category of creation. Both rather represent mythologically distorted reinterpretations of aspects of the primeval revelation of creation which lies behind and is faithfully represented in the Genesis creation account.

God has no adversary in his original creating. He does not build with trowel in one hand and sword in the other. There is no need for the sword. More than that, there is no need for the trowel. This builder does not use tools. He does not really work with his hands. The word of his will is his all-effective instrument. Further still, he does not need even materials.

There is no theogony in Genesis 1, and no theomachy as a means to provide the raw material of creation. The world order is not explained there in terms of a tension between interacting forces of staticism and flux as represented in the theogonic and cultic deities of the Near Eastern cosmogonic myths or as propounded in more abstractly dialectical principles in Greek philosophy. God's almighty fiat not only shapes the world-material to his purpose; that simple sovereign word actually brings the material itself into being.

“Thus says Yahweh ... I, Yahweh, am the Maker of all things, who stretched out the heavens, I alone, and spread out the earth – who was with me?” (Isa 44:24; cf. 45:18). There was no strange god with him, no other as hindrance or helper. Elohim, alone in the beginning, created heaven and earth.

C. Glory-Spirit Archetype

God's name-nature was revealed not only in the process and the products of his sovereign creative action but through an epiphanic Presence. Genesis 1:2b refers to this divine reality: “The Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.” [I have treated this subject in some detail in *Images of the Spirit*, chapter 1, and present a summary of that discussion here.]

An interpretation of this “Spirit” hovering as on wings above the dark watery waste (cf. Gen 1:2a) is provided in the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32. The use in Deuteronomy 32:10,11 of two rare words found nowhere else in the five books of Moses except in Genesis 1:2 (where one describes the Spirit's bird-like action and the other denotes the inchoate state of deep-and-darkness) points to the parallel circumstances in the situations depicted in the two passages. Deuteronomy 32 refers to God's work of redemptive re-creation in the exodus event. The song recalls how God was present with Israel in the desolate wilderness wasteland, hovering like an eagle over his people as he fashioned for himself anew a holy sanctuary. And the form of his overshadowing presence there was, of course, that of the Shekinah cloud of glory. Elsewhere in the Bible this Glory-cloud is at times called simply “the Spirit” (Neh 9:19f.; Isa 63:11-14; Hag 2:5). The usage in Genesis 1:2 is similar, though the Spirit here is probably best understood as the heavenly reality, the invisible cosmos-filling glory of the divine Presence, of which the Glory-cloud was a localized manifestation.

The Glory-Spirit was a visible divine signature. It is frequently referred to as God's "name" and at times it is even viewed as a divine name-banner lifted on high over the land and people. In the introduction to Section A, we noted that the Glory-cloud was sometimes viewed as a divine witness pillar, as the Lord standing in oath-stance on occasions of covenant ratification. This witness pillar function and the identity of the Glory-Spirit as a divine name-signature are obviously closely related.

All that the Glory-cloud represented would constitute the meaning of this "name." It represented God's personal presence and it was therefore called the face or presence. In it God was present in power to act and therefore it was also called his arm or hand. Bright luminosity characterized the visible appearance of the Shekinah; hence, it was designated by the word glory and other terms suggesting its radiant beauty. This glory was a royal splendor for the epiphanic cloud formation as a whole was the throne-room of God, his heavenly court or palace-temple within which he sat in majesty amid the angelic hosts as King of Glory. This cloud was indeed the invisible Glory-temple of heaven appearing in a veiled visibility in the midst of earthly creatures. And since it represented a presence of God in power for action (often for judgment) the cloud, though a royal sanctuary-structure, was also a vehicle; it was the chariot God rode in stormy terror through the skies. Multiple aspects of God's nature were thus revealed in the Glory-Spirit-Name. In sum, this Name-theophany declared God to be heavenly Lord and Judge of all the earth, "glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders" (Exod 15:11).

Hovering over the face of the waters in the beginning, the Glory-Spirit was the Creator-King present in almighty power, poised to fashion deep-and-darkness into a heaven on earth and promising to transform the death realm into a realm of abundant life.

More than that, the Glory-Spirit provided a preview of the finished creation-structure, for this theophanic Spirit-formation was a divine paradigm as well as a divine power for the work of creation. Cosmos and man alike were to be formed after this archetypal temple pattern. The Creator-Word who was in the beginning and made all things (John 1:1-3) would articulate this heavenly temple pattern in creative fiat and the world that came into being at his behest would be a cosmic replica of the royal sanctuary of the Glory-Spirit. So God identified it by way of comparative contrast with another temple replica constructed by Israel: "Heaven is my

throne and earth is my footstool. What manner of house will you build for me?” (Isa 66:1). At the climax of creation history the Creator-Word replicated the Spirit-paradigm in man. Thus man too is a temple of God, a living temple fashioned in the image of the archetypal Glory-Spirit.

The Spirit-Glory manifests the divine presence at creation’s origins and signifies that God’s name is Alpha and the First and the Beginning. As the overshadowing Glory was present at the beginning of the first creation, so it was again present at epochal beginnings in the history of re-creation in both old and new covenants – at Sinai, at the incarnation, baptism, and transfiguration of the Son of God, and at Pentecost. And because the Spirit’s presence in redemptive re-creation is once more both as power and as paradigm, the consummation of redemptive history witnesses the appearing of the eternal cosmic-human temple of God. Accordingly, in the Glory-Spirit of Genesis 1:2 we see an earnest not only of the finished creation as described at the close of the Genesis prologue but of creation at the end of all history as revealed in the prophetic visions of the Revelation. We behold in the Spirit-Presence hovering over the world at its beginning the shape of the world to come.

Inherent in God’s name-identity as Creator of all things visible and invisible, the Alpha-Author, is the lordly claim of ownership and absolute authority. Such is the reasoning of the Psalms when they confess: “The earth and its fullness belong to Yahweh, the world with all who live on it; for it is he who founded it on the seas, who established it above the oceans” (Ps 24:1,2) ... “to him belongs the sea, for he made it; and the dry land, which his hands formed” (Ps 95:5) ... “Acknowledge that Yahweh is our God, for he has made us – made us who were not his people to be the sheep of his pasture” (Ps 100:3). As the signature of the Creator-Author, the Glory-Spirit of Genesis 1:2 was the sign of God’s sovereign claim to ownership of all the world. At the beginning the creation existed under the insignia of God’s covenant lordship. The Glory-Spirit of Genesis 1:2 is thus another evidence that the creation record of the Genesis prologue is at the same time the record of the making of a divine covenant with man.

Each of the opening two verses of Genesis 1 speaks of both the visible and invisible realms. The latter is referred to in verse 1 as “the heavens.” And the “Spirit” of verse 2 evokes that same invisible heavenly court of the Lord with its celestial hosts. The name of God thereby revealed was therefore not only covenant Lord of the visible world of men, but Lord of hosts –

King of the heavenly temple, Lord of the angelic hosts. Together the opening two verses, along with the entire creation account, affirm that all things are “of him,” that he is Lord of all.

II. GOD, THE OMEGA-CONSUMMATOR

Elohim is the First – he is also the Last. Witness is given in the Genesis prologue to the truth that all things are *unto* him. The force of this truth as a compelling witness to his covenantal lordship and as a constraining claim upon man’s service is equal to that of the affirmation that all things are of him. It is particularly through the overall form of the creation narrative that this aspect of his sovereignty is expressed. God sets forth his creative acts within the pictorial framework of a Sabbath-crowned week and by this sabbatical pattern he identifies himself as Omega, the One for whom all things are and were created, the Lord worthy to receive glory and honor and praise (cf. Rev 4:11).

It is the seventh day of the creation week, the climactic Sabbath to which the course of creative events moves, that gives to the pattern of the week of days as a whole its distinctive sabbatical character, and it is then in the unfolding of the significance of the Sabbath day that the disclosure of the Omega name of God will be found.

A. Sabbath and Consummation

First and most obvious, the Sabbath marks the completion of God’s work of creation. As a celebration of the finishing of the world-temple, the Sabbath proclaims the name of the Creator to be Consummator. To be the builder who arrives at the seventh day of completion, to be the Sabbath attaining Creator, is to bear the name “the Last” along with the name “the First.”

From the outset it was evident by the very mode of his working that the divine worker would complete his cosmic enterprise. He who can speak an effective “Let there be” must inevitably arrive at his Sabbath and say, “It is finished.” None could resist or deny or silence his fiat. Such effortless authoring by omnipotent words was an infallible presage that this worker would prove to be a Sabbatarian Creator.

With each successive fiat the cosmic house took shape in progressive fulfillment of the divine architect's unfathomably vast conception. Hence the work process of the six days is marked by the judicial refrain of divine approbation: "God saw that it was good." This succession of judgments expressing the builder's pleasure in the work of each day led to the final verdict of delighted satisfaction: "God saw everything that he had made and behold it was very good" (Gen 1:31a; cf. Exod 39:43). The work of Elohim eventuated in the completion of the cosmic masterpiece and in the Sabbath that proclaimed the name of this Lord of the covenant to be not only Author but Finisher.

At the beginning stood the Glory-theophany, the divine Alpha. By virtue of its nature as an archetypal pattern it was a prophetic sign of creation's goal. And the Sabbath at the completion of creation answers to that paradigm-promise of the Glory-Spirit (Gen 2:2; cf. 1Kgs 6:38). The Glory is the Sabbath reality present beforehand; it is the earnest and archetype that guarantees the Sabbath's coming. The Sabbath is the Glory come to expression as the consummation of history. Pneumatology is the realm of eschatology. Together, the Spirit and the Sabbath revealed that Elohim is Alpha and Omega.

B. Sabbath and Enthronement

A corollary of the completion of work is the resting of the worker – that is another meaning of God's Sabbath. The effortless fiat character of the work of the six days forestalls any misconception of the Creator as a wearied workman who must recoup his spent strength on the seventh day. (The highly anthropomorphic "was refreshed" of Exod 31:17 certainly does not intend to suggest otherwise, nor does "he rested" in Exod 20:11.) The Creator's Sabbath rest is much more a matter of taking satisfaction and delight in his consummated building. So it is with the Wisdom-figure in the architectural delineation of creation in Proverbs 8 (see vv. 30f.).

But this rest of God may be more specifically understood as a royal kind of resting. The royal nature of the rest follows from the royal nature of the work. God created the heaven and the earth to be his cosmic palace and accordingly his resting is an occupying of his palace, a royal session. The dawning of the Sabbath witnesses a new enthronement of Elohim.

The Scriptures in effect interpret God's Sabbath rest at the completion of his cosmic house as an enthronement when they present the converse of this idea by portraying God's enthronement above the ark in earthly replicas of his cosmic house as a Sabbath rest. Thus, after identifying heaven and earth as his throne-house (Isa 66:1a) the Lord asks Israel: "What manner of house will ye build unto me and what shall be the place of my rest?" (Isa 66:1b; cf. 2 Chr 6:18,41f.; Acts 7:49). And David spoke of his intention "to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord and for the footstool of our God" (1 Chr 28:2), while Psalm 132 exhorts: "Let us go to his dwelling place; let us worship at his footstool. Rise up, Yahweh, from your resting place; arise from the ark of your strength" (vv.7,8; cf. Num 10:35,36) ... "for Yahweh has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his dwelling [or seat]. This is my resting place forever; here I will dwell [or sit enthroned]" (vv.13,14). When God's seventh day resting is referred to in the Sabbath commandment in the Decalogue (Exod 20:11), the verbal root of *menuchah*, "rest," the term used for God's temple enthronement in these passages, is employed in the place of the verb *shabath* used in Genesis 2:2.

Another indication of the royal nature of God's Sabbath rest is afforded when the Bible interprets the entrance of God's covenant people Israel upon their royal inheritance as the securing of a Sabbath rest. Thus, Israel's occupation of the promised land is described as God's gift of "rest" (*menuchah*) to them (Deut 3:20; 12:9; 1 Kgs 8:56). In fact, in Hebrews 4, Israel's dominion-rest in Canaan (viewed as forfeited by the generation in the wilderness but typologically achieved through Joshua's conquest of Canaan) is expressly interpreted in terms of the Creator's seventh day rest (vv. 3f.), while the corresponding antitypical experience of God's people in the new covenant is called a *sabbatismos*, "a Sabbath rest" (v. 9), a participation in the divine rest of the ongoing seventh day of creation (v. 10; cf. vv. 3-5). The identification of Israel's kingdom inheritance as a Sabbath experience is also evident in the fact that the sabbatical years and especially the Jubilee Sabbath were occasions for the restoration of the people of God to the possession of their allotted land. This means then that God's own Sabbath, the archetype of Israel's sabbatical occupation of the kingdom in Canaan, must also be seen as a royal resting in kingdom sovereignty.

Inasmuch as the final attainment of Sabbath rest by the people of God will be a participation in God's seventh day of creation, his everlasting Sabbath, what is revealed of the eternal state of rest following upon the re-creation of heaven and earth will also illuminate the divine Sabbath rest of Genesis

2:2. And surely the quintessence of the eternal City in which God's people find their rest is the enthronement of the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb (Rev 21:5,22f.; 22:1-3). The figure of the Lamb reminds us that this is the consummation of a history of redemption and all the features of this picture cannot be projected back into Genesis 2:2. But beyond doubt, the enthronement of the divine Glory belongs to and is indeed the heart of the continuity between the original stage of the creation's seventh day and that later stage in which the redeemed participate.

A feature of redemptive Sabbath that underscores its royal character is that it is rest from battle, a victory celebration. During the wilderness march the ark was said to rest when it resumed a stationary position in the midst of Israel after leading an advance heralded by Moses' call: "Rise up, O Yahweh, and let thine enemies be scattered" (Num 10:35,36). Also, the establishing of God's house of rest in the days of David and Solomon was the sequel to attainment of rest (through royal conquest) from all foes of the theocracy (2 Sam 7:1,10,11; cf. Deut 12:10; 1 Chr 22:9f.). So too, the eternal Sabbath of the New Jerusalem follows upon God's victory in the final judgment over the Satanic hordes (Rev 19 and 20). It is in the treatment of this theme of redemptive re-creation that the Scriptures make their most striking use of imagery drawn from the pagan cosmogonic myth – the slaying of the dragon by the hero-god, followed by celebration of his glory in a royal residence built as a sequel to his victory. Thus, in the New Testament Apocalypse it is by vanquishing dragon and beast that the Lord prepares for the final scene of the appearance of his temple-throne (Rev 20:2,10). By gaining rest from all his enemies round about, Christ secures the throne of the consummated temple in the realm of the eternal Sabbath. This figurative utilization by the Bible of a cosmogonic pattern that has as its climax the building of a throne-house for the victorious god-king gives dramatic emphasis to the message that the production of a house for God's enthronement as cosmic King is the ultimate objective of the work of re-creation.

Even in these redemptive re-creation accounts that portray God's victory as an overcoming of monstrous powers, the idea conveyed is not at all that God was obliged to wrest world dominion as the spoils of battle from the clutches of eternal rivals. The absolute lordship of God is the presupposition and explanation of his triumph, not its sequel. The battle, therefore, is not the means by which God acquires the throne, but is rather a sovereign exercise of that imperium which belongs to him as the Creator

who sits enthroned from the Flood, yea from everlasting (Ps 29:10). The battle and the conquest are in fact acts of divine judgment against transgressing subjects.

Since, in the case of the original creation, Sabbath enthronement was not preceded by conflict with rebel adversaries but came at the completion of a purely constructive process, there could be no question of an initiation of God's world dominion by defeat of another god who previously possessed sovereignty. Neither is there any suggestion of the Creator's attaining at some point to a sovereignty he had formerly lacked. To predicate an enthronement of God on the seventh day of creation history is not to deny that the creative activity of God is from the beginning an exercise of an ultimate and absolute sovereignty which he enjoys as an original and everlasting prerogative of his very godhood. It is simply saying that creation produced a new theater for the manifestation of God's eternal majesty, and when the heavenly throne and earthly footstool had been prepared, God assumed his rightful royal place in that new sphere.

Nor was the Sabbath enthronement of the seventh day the first expression of the reality of divine enthronement within creation history. For according to Genesis 1:2, as we have seen, the Glory of the Lord stood over the creation while yet the earth was without form and void, and that Glory is the manifestation of God enthroned in the midst of the heavenly hosts. Here again we encounter the paradigmatic nature of the Spirit-Glory. As a revelation of the God of the throne it was archetypal of God's Sabbath enthronement. [See further my *Images of the Spirit*, chapter 4, for a discussion of the relationship of the Glory-Spirit and the Sabbath in redemptive eschatology, particularly in the prophecy of Isaiah. The immediately following comments echo the treatment of the theme of the Sabbath and the day of the Lord in that same context.]

Another aspect of the Sabbath closely related to its character as a royal resting or enthronement is its identity as the day of the Lord. The divine Sabbath, that seventh day of the enthroned Creator-King, whose dawning marked the completion of creation history, is the heavenly reality that breaks into history in subsequent judicial episodes known as the day of the Lord, and ultimately in the *parousia*-day of the Lord Christ which inaugurates the eternal participation of the entire new mankind in the divine Sabbath. Like the later occurrences of the day of the Lord and especially the last one, the divine Sabbath of the creation history was a time of God's

pronouncing judicial verdict (his self-glorifying approbation of his creative handiwork), a day of his consummating of a creation of heaven and earth, and a celebration of the perfecting of a temple of God, the Omega manifestation of the Alpha archetype of the Glory-Spirit. As the inception of the day of the Lord, the divine Sabbath of the Genesis creation prologue is a revelation of the Creator reigning from his heavenly throne as the Judge of all the world.

In summary then, the Sabbath, or day of the Lord, and the Spirit-Glory, which is the archetypal earnest of the divine Sabbath, are exponential of divine enthronement. By portraying Elohim as the cosmic builder who attained to the royal rest of the Sabbath day, the Genesis prologue identifies him as Great King of the world, the one enthroned as eternal Judge over the cosmic temple and as sovereign Lord over the covenant community.

C. Sabbath and Consecration

A hierarchical pattern of dominion can be traced through the creational record, a pattern of ascending consecration with the Sabbath as its capstone. In the topically arranged narrative, the several elements of creation's history are distributed within the figurative chronological schema of days so as to bring out this hierarchical order in strong relief. Within the first three day-frames is described the origin of three vast spheres over which rule is to be exercised. Then in day-frames four through six the rulers of each of these spheres is presented in proper turn, each arising at the divine behest and ruling by divine appointment. But the rising chain of command does not stop with the six days; it ascends to the seventh day, to the supreme dominion of him who is Lord of the Sabbath.

The fourth day-frame depicts the creation of the sun and moon and their royal appointment "to rule over" the day and night, the realms described in the parallel first day-frame. Their rule is expressed in their defining of the boundaries of their realm, as they "separate" the light and darkness (Gen 1:16-18). Then the fish and the birds of day five, the lords of the waters below and the sky above, the realms of the parallel second day-frame, are given the blessing-commission to enter into possession of their domains to their utmost limits. The terms that describe their commission – to be fruitful, to multiply and fill (Gen 1:22) – anticipate the royal mandate that was to be given to man. The sixth day-frame introduces those who are to rule over the dry land of the parallel third day: land animals and man. The

lordly beasts are authorized to serve themselves of the natural tributary produce of their land-realm (Gen 1:30), a prerogative they share with man (Gen 1:29). The investiture of man with kingship (Gen 1:26-29) brings the lines of authority to their apex within the six days. The scheme of the parallel days proves too restrictive here. For the scope of man's lordship is not confined to the dry-land realm of day three but extends over all the earth. Moreover, man's dominion extends not only over all the subject-realms of earth defined in days one to three but over all those rulers whose dominions are described in days four through six. The series of terms that describes man's royal functions and prerogatives also points to the supremacy of his kingship. Those concepts that were used singly to indicate the dominion of the other rulers are all included in the account of man's royal appointment. He rules, indeed subdues; he multiplies and fills; he appropriates the tributary produce.

But all this pomp and majesty of the six days simply subserves the revelation of the ultimate and absolute dominion celebrated in the seventh day. Even during the pageant of the creature-kings in the narrative of days four through six, their royal splendor is paled by the surpassing glory of the Creator-King who commands them into existence, identifies them in his fiat-naming of them, and invests them with their subordinate dominions. And then when the creation apocalypse has reached the vicegerency of the God-like creature-king of the sixth day, and moves beyond it, we observe the glory of all the creature-kingdoms of all six days being carried along as a tributary offering within the gates of the Sabbath day to be laid at the feet of the Creator-King, now beheld in the brilliance of his epiphany as Sabbath Lord.

The meaning of the original Sabbath (Gen 2:2) is mirrored in the Sabbath ordinance (Gen 2:3), the record of which emphasizes that the Sabbath is set apart as sacred to the Creator. It belongs to the Lord of the covenant and it witnesses to God's ultimate proprietorship of the land and to his lordship over the total life of man. Observance of the Sabbath by man is thus a confession that Yahweh is his Lord and Lord of all lords. Sabbath-keeping expresses man's commitment to the service of his Lord.

All the creation of the six days is consecrated to man as the one set over all the works of God's hand, as the hierarchical structure of Genesis 1 shows, but man himself in turn is consecrated to the One who set all things under his feet. Man is king over creation, but he is a vassal-king, he reigns as one

under the Creator's authority, obligated to devote his kingdom to the Great King. And through that consecration of man to the Creator which is required in the Sabbath stipulation, all that belongs to the six days is consecrated to the Sabbath-Lord. In the Sabbath sanctified unto God all the works of the six workdays leading to and issuing in the Sabbath are hallowed unto God.

The pattern of ascending dominion in the creation record is thus designed to teach the ultimate truth that all created reality is under the Creator's lordship, that God's kingdom embraces all creation.

The several aspects of the revelation of Elohim conveyed through the sabbatical form of the Genesis prologue interlock. The consummation of the cosmic palace issues in the Creator's cosmic enthronement, and to the King enthroned in the Sabbath-Glory all creation owes allegiance. Read in this perspective, the Genesis prologue is seen to be so constructed that at the same time it is declaring that all things are of God, it is declaring that all things are unto God, "to whom be glory forever" (Rom 11:36). Genesis 1:1-2:3 is therefore at once history and law, both covenantal, and these two witnesses together attest to the exalted name of God as Lord over all.

Conclusion

As part of the Old Testament Scripture given to Israel as its covenant canon, the Genesis prologue performed for them the essential function of a treaty preamble. It answered the question "Who is Yahweh?", identifying Israel's Redeemer-God with Elohim the Creator. And manifestly the God who in the beginning bounded the vast seas by lordly fiat and the God who made the dry path through the sea in the exodus salvation-act were one and the same. Indeed, it was only because Yahweh was Elohim, the Lord of nature, that he had been in a position to save his people, making the darkness light before fleeing Israel and bringing the waters thundering over the chariots of Egypt. So too in the future, Yahweh, Lord of the covenant, King of creation, would be able to use nature to execute the sanctions of his covenant. He would be able to unleash chaos as an agent of his judgments and he would be able also to accomplish a re-creation of nature that complemented the personal renewal of his people and perfected the beatitude promised in his covenant.

It may be assumed that the general substance of the revelation of the Genesis prologue identifying God as the Sabbatarian Consummator of

creation formed part of God's special preredemptive revelation to man in the garden. At least, that assumption seems justifiable if one regards the Sabbath ordinance as a creation ordinance (on this see further below). And in that case the original of the sabbatical creation tradition represented by the prologue to Genesis will have performed for the creational covenant at the beginning the function for which treaty preambles were later designed. It will have made known to the man-vassal at once that his covenant Lord was to be revered with godly fear and served with all the heart – for his name was Author-and-Finisher, King of heaven and earth.

Indeed, quite apart from such a disclosure to man of the sabbatically structured history of creation, all natural and supernatural revelation in Eden joined in chorus clearly proclaiming to Adam the meaning of his world as a covenantal order under the sceptre and protection of its Creator. Beholding the revelation of God as Creator, the man-vassal was confronted with God's claims, calling for confession, commitment, doxology. The personified divine Wisdom in Proverbs 8:22-9:6 appeals to her participation in the work of creation as the basis of her summons to men to heed her voice, come to the covenant banquet in the cosmic house she has built, and follow the covenant way of wisdom and life. That, refracted through the medium of wisdom literature, is the point of the claims of God's names revealed to man in the Creator's covenant with Adam.