



Introduction...

Genesis 15:1-21

He was restless.

He was an old man, somewhere around eighty five or eight six years old and sleep was evading him¹. But he was used to that. He was eighty-five years old and he was a long way from home.

There wasn't really anything remarkable about him. He was an old man. He was tired and he was a long way from home. He traveled with a large band of men, women and children and an even larger band of sheep and goats². But four thousand years ago, most people with livestock were nomadic...always on the move, always searching for better grazing land and for water.

Because of that, he and his people were always moving. Still, when they moved, they moved slowly. The press of the people and the livestock made hurrying difficult. But that was all right, he had stopped being in a hurry a long time ago. He no longer rushed. Now he only...what was the word...plodded. Still, he kept moving onward...relentlessly onward, one foot in front of another...toward an unsure destination and destiny.

He had already come a long, long way.

He had been born in Ur of the Chaldeans³. When he was in his sixties, he and his family had packed up and moved 700 arduous miles to Haran, where he lived until his father until his father died⁴.

As I said earlier, there was really nothing remarkable about him, except...except that he had heard the Voice of God. It had spoken to him directly. The first time was at Haran. He was seventy-five years old at the time but he remembered it like it was yesterday. The voice had spoken to him and said:

^{ESV} Genesis 12:1... "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

They were not promises that were easy to forget. They were, in fact, extraordinary: He would become a nation. His name would be made great. He would be a blessing both to his family and to the world. The promises were so staggering in their scope that he could scarce believe that they had been directed toward him. Still, he had believed them and had set off with his flocks and with his family.

This time they moved some 400 miles down to the land of Canaan.

The land of Canaan wasn't quite what he had expected. It was a godless place; it was filled with wickedness, with human sacrifice and with all sorts of unimaginable deviant behavior. And to make matters even worse it was a land

locked in the throes of famine. So, he pushed his family and his flocks further and further south. He knew this land...this godless, reprobate land had been promised to him and yet he knew he had to find grass and water for his family and his flocks so he passed on and through the land of promise. He kept moving south...all the way down to Egypt. Still he admired the land as he passed though it. Even in the midst of famine, he was able to discern the beauty of the place. He could see its potential. Surely, when God supplied rain this land flowed with milk and honey. But back then there hadn't been any rain and because there wasn't any rain there wasn't any milk and honey and so he and his band of sojourners ever onward...ever downward...to Egypt.

Ah...Egypt.

He had made mistakes in Egypt. He had lost sight of the promises that the voice had made and he had run afoul of the king there. Pharaoh, the king, had caught a glimpse of his wife and had tried to make her a part of his harem. To his shame, he had made up a ridiculous story about her being his sister but Pharaoh had caught him in his lie. Had the voice not intervened and moved Pharaoh's heart he would have lost her there. His heart ached at the thought of that...at the thought of losing her ...because he loved her and...and because she was so beautiful. He knew and he knew everyone else knew that in spite her age she was still one of the most beautiful women in the land.

When the voice had delivered him and his wife he and his band rushed back as fast as they could to the security of the land of Canaan. He laughed out loud at that idea...security in the land of Canaan...whatever security he felt...he felt because of the voice and not because of Canaan.

But trouble had his scent now and was following hard on his heels.

When they got back to Canaan, he and his nephew's herdsmen began to squabble over who would graze where. He hadn't counted on that. He hadn't counted on them coming apart. So to keep the peace he and his nephew decided to separate their flocks. And because he didn't know where the voice wanted his to go, he left the choice of who went where up to his nephew. He nephew followed the grass and the water and he was left to wander the barren hills for sustenance, but that was alright because no sooner had they separated than the voice came to him again.⁵

ESV Genesis 13:14..."Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, ¹⁵ for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. ¹⁶ I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted. ¹⁷ Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you."

He was speechless. To the remarkable promises already made to him, God had now added the promise of the land...and the promise of descendants. He laughed at the thought. Now with the drought broken, the land had become beautiful. He could see it. He could smell its richness. He could drink from its flowing streams; he could eat of its produce. That part he believed. That part was easy to believe.

But the other part...the part about the descendants... that part was harder. He was eight five; his wife was seventy five and the time of child bearing had long since passed them by. He had come to accept the fact that his wife was barren. They had tried; they had prayed but the heavens were brass. And now after his

dreams had faded away there was this promise...a promise of descendents and not just descendents but descendents as numerous...how had the voice put it?...as the dust of the earth.

And then, disaster struck.

A consortium of marauding kings had marched down on the valley of grass and water that had drawn his nephew and had taken many of the inhabitants there captive. They had taken his nephew captive as well. He knew what that meant...sure and certain slavery or death.

That the voice had let that happen perplexed him. On the one hand, he had received such wonderfully gracious promises from Him. On the other hand, his blood-kin had fallen captive to a terrible band of godless marauders. That had caused him to wonder whether the voice, the voice he had already followed so far, was really able to bring to bring about the wonderful things he had promised... if He was unable to protect his nephew was He still able to keep His other promises.

The old man wasn't sure what to do; he mustered his servants.

With three hundred and eighteen of his own men and a handful of other friends, he staged a daring night attack against a much larger army...the combined forces of four kings⁶. But the Voice was with him and he routed the larger army...causing them to flee all the way back to Damascus. It was an impossible feat and yet he routed their army and recovered his nephew and all the wealth that the marauders had stolen. He could have made himself rich with all the

goods he recovered there but he had already decided not to do that. Instead, he had made a vow to the voice that if he would go with him he would not keep one single thing recovered. And he knew from the nature of his success, that He was with him. He knew that his God was a trustworthy God.

On the way back, they had passed near Salem and God's great priest there came out to meet him with bread and with wine and he blessed him there and they communed together.⁷ His heart swelled with such gratitude and joy that he gave God's priest there a tenth of everything he had recovered but he kept nothing for himself.

And then a few days later, reality began to set in. For all the wonderful certainty and exhilaration he had felt just a few days before, the tedium of waiting he had had taken its toll. He was restless. He was wandering around in a strange and beautiful land...waiting.

His name was Abram and he was eighty-five years old and he had no children.

He had just pulled off a daring raid against a vastly superior army and now he knew that they knew his name. His heart began to race and then in the darkness of his tent, as he lay not far from the wife of his youth, the Voice came to him again.

^{ESV} **Genesis 15:1**...After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "**Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.**"

Abram's fears vanished. He knew, in a moment, that God was with him. He could see clearly the way God had preserved him down in Egypt. He could see the hand of God in the deliverance of his nephew. He could see everything, everything except the child that did not exist. He believed that God was his shield. There was no denying it. He had been preserved; he had been protected. He could see the land. But the child, the child that did not exist, troubled him. He gathered all his courage and he did something he had never done before. He spoke back to the voice.

^{ESV} **Genesis 15:2...But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"**

Abram was, you see, asking about the reward. He wasn't asking about the land. He was asking about the reward and to him that meant a child. He knew that God knew the custom of the day. He knew that God knew that a man's property went to his chief servant if he had no heirs.

But God spoke back.

^{ESV} **Genesis 15:4...And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." ⁵ And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."**

God drew Abram from his bed and pulled him out into the dark, moonless, wilderness night. The stars loomed before him, vast and infinite in number. And he believed God and God accepted his faith as righteousness. He could see now that God was indeed with him. He knew all that God said was true. But God

brought to his mind the fullness of all the promises that He had made. And God said:

^{ESV} Genesis 15:7...And he said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess."

When Abram asked his next question, it was not a question of doubt but rather one of expectation and anticipation. It was not; **"Oh God is it really true?"** Rather, it was **"Oh God, such things are too wonderful for me. How will you do such a thing?"**

Look at how the text says what it says in Genesis 15:8.

^{ESV} Genesis 15:8...But he said, "O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?"

And God's answer was strange and wonderful.

^{ESV} Genesis 15:9...He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon."⁸

¹⁰ And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half. ¹¹ And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

Abram knew the ritual. It was the ritual of the blood covenant. It was rarely practiced. It was such an awesome and solemn ritual that one hardly ever saw it done. When two men, usually a king and his servant, made promises to each other, they sometimes took an animal and killed it to confirm their promises. When they killed it, they cut the animals in two and walked through the dismembered pieces. The ceremony was intended to demonstrate their commitment to each other. What they were promising to each other was fidelity

and faithfulness. They were saying to each other, **“Let it be to me as it is to these animals, if I do not fulfill all that I have sworn to do.”**

It was a violent ritual. It was filled with blood and gore and it was never made lightly. Usually the men making the contract were of different social orders. But it was always an agreement of enormous significance. The higher-ranking man sometimes promised land or protection and the more common man promised obedience and loyalty. The implications of the covenant were dreadfully serious.

Abram killed and arranged the animals. He cut the larger animals in half and arranged the parts across from each other. He killed the birds but did not divide them. The blood pooled around the animals and it was only a matter of minutes before the vultures appeared. Abram drove them away till darkness came and waited. And then he slumped down near the slaughtered animals overcome by exhaustion. And Abram was covered with the terror of night and blackness, which was just as well because God came down in the darkness.

^{ESV} **Genesis 15:12...As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. ¹³ Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. ¹⁴ But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵ As for yourself, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. ¹⁶ And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."**

As Abram lay there in deep sleep, the voice of God drew near and told him everything. He told him again that he would indeed have descendents but he told him more. God told Abram that his descendents would be oppressed and be

slaves for four hundred years. Apparently, the four rows of animals represented the four hundred years of slavery they would endure. Each row represented a generation or a hundred years. But then God gave Abram assurance that at the end of that time, his descendents would not only come out of slavery and fly away with great wealth and many possessions. God told Abram that he would judge the nation that oppressed them.

But God did not stop there. He told Abram that he would live to a ripe old age. God told him that his life would be one of peace. He also told Abram that when his descendents returned to the land that it would be because the iniquity of the Amorites had reached full measure. God intended to use his descendents to judge the people of the land of Canaan.

^{ESV} **Genesis 15:17**...When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces.⁹

And to confirm all that God had told him, God came down and passed between the dismembered animals. The smoking fire pot and flaming torch were like the two pillars of God's legs walking through the severed pieces. God was making the covenant with Abram...a self-maledictory oath that he would bring on Himself the implications of the curse were he ever to break His promise to Abram. It was a unilateral and unconditional covenant. God would indeed bring it to pass. Abram was not passing through the pieces; God was passing through alone.¹⁰ So the certainty of the covenant was not dependent on Abram or his descendents but was solely dependent on the faithfulness of God. Of course, Abram and his descendents had an obligation to be obedient to all the stipulations God demanded but the basis of the covenant was not their

obedience. The basis of the covenant was God's sovereign kindness and God's faithful, covenantal love.

And we know that God faithfully kept his covenant with Abram. We know that because the human instrument God used to record this story was the very man God used to bring his covenant people out of slavery in Egypt. Moses wrote this story to give the children of Israel of sense of God's covenant faithfulness. All that God had promised Abraham had come to pass. The four hundred years of slavery had passed. God's people had flown out of Egypt on the wings of God's deliverance bringing the wealth of Egypt with them.

All that remained was for them to take possession of the land. And there it was right in front of them. All that God had promised to give them lay before them. Moses was reminding the Israelites that they had a reason to believe that God would be faithful to all that He had promised. That is why he made the point again that:

^{ESV} **Genesis 15:18**...On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, **"To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates,**

Just as Abram had fended off the birds of prey from devouring the animal carcasses, so now the covenant God had made with Abram fended off the enemies of God's people. God viewed Abram as his great friend and He had promised to defend his seed. He had promised to see his promises through.

This morning we are beginning a study to explain the basis for the Reformed and Presbyterian understanding of something called covenant theology. Over the

next several weeks, I will be discussing what we mean when we use the words covenant theology. I will be looking at a number of passages and I will be discussing why our understanding of covenant theology comes up from the Scripture itself and causes us to look at things the way we do.

I will also be discussing some of the internal debates going on in the midst of Reformed people who, while holding to covenant theology themselves, have different understandings of how the covenant of grace is worked out by God. For example, I'll have one lesson in which I discuss the historical difference between the way northern and southern Presbyterians view children in the covenant.

Related to that I will also be discussing the New Perspective on Paul and something called Federal Vision theology not because I want to hammer anyone or really vindicate our own confessional understanding but rather because I want you to understand something of the underlying debate going on.

Eventually, and I know this is something everyone is interested in, I will be discussing the issue of sacraments including why we baptize infants and why we think frequent observance of the Lord's Supper is not only a good idea but thoroughly biblical idea. But all that in due course. Those things are tied to our understanding of the covenant...so first the courting and then the kissing.

Right now I would like to take just a minute to discuss how we define the word "**covenant**" and I should tell you it is not an easy word to define. The Hebrew word we translate as "covenant" is word בְּרִית. The New Testament Greek word is διαθήκη.

The Hebrew word typically identifies a “pact”, “agreement” or “contract”.¹¹ The Greek word means pretty much the same thing although it can sometimes carries the idea of “testament” as in last will and testament. We’ll talk about that later too,

Typically, the word “**covenant**” it means something like pact or agreement. In fact, the children’s catechism defines a covenant as “**an agreement between two parties**”. But there are other definitions and there should be other definitions because we ought to take into account the fact that God Himself is often one of the parties involved when the word is used in the Bible. One important writer has defined a covenant as “**the friendship of God**”¹². By that, I think the writer meant that any covenant with God is a sign of the graciousness of God. That is certainly true. God had no obligation to relate to His creatures before the fall or after. But He chose to do so. Of course, God is so far transcendent over His creatures that any relationship He makes with His creatures is an act of condescension on His part.

Even at the beginning with Adam, when God came down into the garden to walk with Adam, it was a wonderful act of grace on God’s part to communicate with Adam. But, it was much more so for God to meet with Adam after the fall? When He did, He did so in a relationship mediated through blood.

That is why such a simple definition won’t really do. We need something a little more comprehensive. I very much like O. Palmer Robertson’s definition, “**A covenant is a bond in blood that is sovereignly administered.**”¹³ However, because there are different kinds of covenants mentioned in the Bible not even that, as good as it is, adequately touches on all that can be said.

One thing seems sure. The modern Federal Vision tendency to define a covenant simply as “**a relationship**” is woefully inadequate. We’ll talk in due course about why they like to use it and what using it gains them.¹⁴

For now we’ll start with short definition. A covenant is an “**oath-bound promise**”.¹⁵

You see covenant theology involves all that our great covenant-keeping God did to bring about our great redemption in Christ. In that regard it touches on the mind and thought and plan of God in eternity past when the Father and the Son and Spirit covenanted together to bring about the redemption of mankind when it fell. It also touches the relationship that God had with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden before the Fall. And finally it touches on the final covenant of God to graciously secure the redemption of the Elect in Jesus Christ.

Those three covenants are often referred to as: (1.) the Covenant of Redemption, (2.) the Covenant of Works, and, of course (3.) the Covenant of Grace.¹⁶ They are not usually taken in that order but that’s alright for now. In the next few months we’ll talk about each of those covenants and just how strong the biblical warrant for each is and where the support and idea for each came from. We’ll talk about what parts are controversial and what aspects different people dislike. We’ll also talk, and we’ll do this right away, about the different administrations the Covenant of Grace. That is, we’ll talk about how the Abrahamic Covenant, the Mosaic Covenant, the David Covenant and the New Covenant are integrally related...how they build on each other and culminate in Christ.

Now I don't expect that all of you will agree with everything I say. I hope you will but I won't take it personal if you don't. And I will certainly give you opportunity along the way to ask questions and even to challenge what I say. Still, what I hope you will see is that this historic covenantal view that I will be presenting is consistent and well-reasoned from Scripture and that it focuses on the great and wondrous truth of redemption.

Nowhere is that more important than when we consider what was lost in the covenant of works in Adam and what was regained in the covenant of grace in Christ. Let me illustrate what I mean by reading something I wrote years ago when teaching through the Book of Romans.

Just after midnight on March 24, 1989, an oil tanker called the Exxon Valdez hit Bligh Reef, ripped open its hull and subsequently dumped eleven million gallons of Alaskan crude oil into the crystal blue waters of Prince William Sound. Observers said the oil dumped on the still ocean with such force it created wave of oil three foot high which spread into a gigantic oil slick over five hundred miles long polluting some 1,500 miles of shoreline. The slick killed 5,000 sea otters, 300 bald eagles, 13 killer whales, 1,000 sea lions, 500,000 sea birds, a whole generation of salmon fry and an untold number of herrings, crabs, ducks, and even bears. The ecological system in Prince William Sound has not yet recovered even after some 14 years. The Exxon Oil Company, along with the EPA, led the effort to clean up the oil and that effort took over five years and cost \$1.9 billion dollars. In 1994, a Federal jury ordered the Exxon Company to pay \$5 billion dollars in punitive damages and other settlements are still ongoing. In the end, the whole affair will probably cost some \$10 billion dollars.

Now I wanted set your mind thinking in concrete terms about the losses incurred in connection with the Exxon Valdez only to start you thinking about the losses incurred in Adam's sin. Let me help by just mentioning a few things. Adam's sin has led to the death of every person that has ever died. It has led to the sickness and malnourishment of every poor, impoverished child in the history of the world. It has led to every act of violence, every disease, every divorce, every war. It has led to every injury, every abusive act of husbands against their wives, parents against their children, and children against their parents. It has led to every estrangement, every broken heart and the alienation of every sinner before a just and holy God. And the wonder of all wonders is that Christ's justifying work is greater than all that. He has turned death into life and sorrow into rejoicing and has given to us this wonderful message of reclamation and reconciliation. You see, **"All people stand in relationship to one of two men and the actions of those two men determine the eternal destiny of all who belong to them. You are either in Adam or in Christ. Praise be God we are in Christ."**

That's the great underlying hope and comfort of covenant theology.

Let's pray.

¹ Abram was 75 years old when called. Cf. ^{ESV} **Genesis 12:4**...So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. In chapter 16, the text says he had lived in the land for 10 years. Cf. ^{ESV} **Genesis 16:3**...So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife.

² Cf. ^{ESV} **Genesis 12:5**...And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan... See also, ^{ESV} **Genesis 13:5**...And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, ⁶ so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they

could not dwell together, ⁷ and there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock.

³ **ESV Genesis 11:31**...Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan, but when they came to Haran, they settled there.

⁴ **ESV Genesis 11:32**...The days of Terah were 205 years, and Terah died in Haran.

⁵ **ESV Genesis 13:10**...And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw that the Jordan Valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, in the direction of Zoar. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) ¹¹ So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley, and Lot journeyed east. Thus they separated from each other.

⁶ The four kings mentioned in verse 13:9 did combat with five kings from the region. After they battle they raided the cities of the five kings and took their possessions and took captives...presumably to sell into slavery.

Cf. **ESV Genesis 14:5**...In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him came and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim, ⁶ and the Horites in their hill country of Seir as far as El-paran on the border of the wilderness. ⁷ Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh) and defeated all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who were dwelling in Hazazon-tamar. ⁸ Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out, and they joined battle in the Valley of Siddim ⁹ with Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of Goiim, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar, four kings against five. ¹⁰ Now the Valley of Siddim was full of bitumen pits, and as the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into them, and the rest fled to the hill country. ¹¹ So the enemy took all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. ¹² They also took Lot, the son of Abram's brother, who was dwelling in Sodom, and his possessions, and went their way.

⁷ **ESV Genesis 14:17**...After his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). ¹⁸ And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) ¹⁹ And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; ²⁰ and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

⁸ Gordon J. Wenham, "The Symbolism of the Animal rite in Genesis 15: A Response to G F Hasel" in *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* no 22 F 1982, p 135. Wenham writes, "On these premises the rite described in Genesis 15 appears quite straight-forward - oxen, sheep, goats, turtledoves and young pigeons are the standard types of sacrificial animal. They represent the nation of Israel, "a kingdom of priests" (Exod. 19:6). It might be supposed that sacrificial animals should symbolize only priests; in some situations this is so (e.g. Lev. 21:18-20; 22:20-24), but there is a fluidity in biblical symbolism. Just as the priest represents Israel before God, so the sacrificial

animals may do too. The sacrificial animal rather represents the ideal Israelite. The use of five different kinds of sacrificial animal on this occasion underlines the solemnity of the occasion.”

⁹ Ibid, p.136. Wenham continues, “Indeed the description of the theophany. as a furnace of smoke and "a torch of fire" invites comparison with the pillar of cloud and fire that was a feature of the wilderness wanderings, and especially with the smoke, fire and torches (Exod. 19:18; 20:18) that marked the law-giving at Sinai. These were visible tokens of God's presence with his people, that he was walking among them and that they were his people (Lev. 26:12).”

Cf. ^{ESV} **Exodus 13:22**...The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people.

^{ESV} **Revelation 10:1**...Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire. ² He had a little scroll open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land, ³ and called out with a loud voice, like a lion roaring. When he called out, the seven thunders sounded.

¹⁰ James Montgomery Boice, *Genesis: A New Beginning Chs. 12-36* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006), 562.

¹¹ See HALOT under **בְּרִית**

¹² Herman Hoeksema, “The Reunion of the Christian Reformed and Protestant Reformed Churches: Is It Demanded, Possible, Desired?” in the *The Standard Bearer* Volume 77 - Issue 3. He writes, “We proceed from the scriptural idea that all creatures are one. God did not create in the beginning an aggregate of creatures, loose, independent of one another, but a world, a cosmos, a harmonic, organic whole. God is one. The world is also one. In the midst of the earthly creation stood man. God had formed him after His own image, so that in a creaturely sense he resembled God in true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. This man stood at the head of creation as king over the earthly world. And he stood in **God's covenant of friendship** from the beginning. In that covenant-relation God would be his sovereign Friend and would cause him to taste the blessedness of the communion of His friendship, in which is life. In that covenant-relation man stood as friend-servant of the Most High, to represent Him in the earthly creation and take up in his own heart the praise and honor of all creatures, to interpret and express that praise and honor before the face of God, love the Lord his God with all his heart, and in the name of and according to the will of God rule over all creatures. He was officebearer, prophet, priest, and king, with the commission, the command and also the right, the power but also the authority, to subject creation unto himself and to cultivate it. In his heart lay the spiritual-ethical center of God's creation.”

¹³ O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants*, (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishers, 1980), 4.

¹⁴ Guy Prentiss Waters, *The Federal Vision and Covenant Theology*, (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishers, 2006), 10ff.

¹⁵ Thanks to Lee Irons and his series on covenant theology especially “The Abrahamic Covenant Pt. 2 (Genesis 15)” available at <http://www.upper-register.com/mp3s.html>.

¹⁶ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1941, reprint 1992), 265-289.