

Dr. Meredith Kline, Kingdom Prologue, Lecture 3

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Analysis of Names and Genealogical Lists

It's been suggested that this is a reflection of a certain schematization or a pattern called the apocalypse of weeks where it is thought of that there were 12 weeks, 12 sevens, that were involved that were involved in an eschatological process leading up to the consummation. So that once again seventy seven would be eleven weeks leading up to Christ and then the coming of Christ introduces the twelfth week beyond the 77. But again there are certain numbers that both Mathew and Luke were interested in that were totals. So that is a nice clear signal that their intention is not just a list of names but they have other interests in mind.

Now is there any evidence of that going on, an interest in symmetry, an interest in certain conventional numbers in Genesis 5 and 11? The answer is, of course, that there is because in each case there are ten names and the last name in each case has three sons. The first list leads up to Noah. Noah has three sons. The Genesis 11 list had 10 names leading up to Terah, the father Abraham, and Terah has three sons. So again you know you should be able to recognize that this is what the biblical narrator is trying to achieve. He is not trying to give you a complete list of names. He's giving you genealogies that are balanced and have these significant numbers.

In other words, what is going on in Genesis 5 and 11 exhibits the same interests as the full structure of the book of Genesis. What do you find in the structure of the book of Genesis? He is interested into dividing things into ten sections. The Prologue and 10 sections. That's the number he's after. When we analyze the 10 sections we found he had a big interest in triads. There is the first three and the second three with their balancing structure. So on a larger scale of the whole book of Genesis it is going on. Now that same thing is going on in a smaller focus in Genesis 5 and 11. This is the kind of feeling that we should be trying develop. If you see it that should stop you in your tracks. If you take this as literal, these signals should be telling you that you are on the wrong track when taking it literally.

The confirmation of the selective view

Some of what I would like to argue in the interest of time. However, let me just go on and sum up what I have done so far. What I have said so far is the selective view is one that I would say is not only possible, but in terms of these clear signals, at least probable, and more than probable, the right view.

Problems with the complete view

But now in addition to that, to nail down that case, I would like to add some of the impossible problems that attach to you if you try to adopt the complete view. There are some inner biblical problems and some external-biblical problems that make life very difficult and that really do you drive you to this third view, the selective view, as the one you have to hold to.

Just to mention some of those inner biblical problems. If you hold that these genealogy's are complete, I'm thinking now especially of chapter 11. The result is that when you come to chapter 12 and the figure of Abraham, did you ever think of it this way? When you open to Genesis 12, Abraham, did you think that Noah was still alive and their children were still alive? As a matter of fact in the complete view just about everyone who was in that genealogy in Genesis 11 would still be alive. Several of them out live Abraham. Shem would still be on the scene in the days of Abraham. This is simply not the impression you get when you come to Genesis 12. These characters are not still floating around the scene, especially when you read how remarkable it was that Abraham is going on 100 years old and too old to have kids and sure it takes a miracle for him to have a child. Meanwhile his contemporary Shem would be, according this view, a contemporary of Abraham who is 600 years old and is still having children and that is nothing remarkable. These things don't fit together. They are living in different ages different times rather clearly so. So you run into these inner biblical tensions that just don't seem to hold together.

You have the 300 years on the complete view between the days of the flood and the days of Abraham. These 300 years in which the life span, now here's Noah and Shem

and so on, the life span of man is being reduced to from 600-700 years that's probably how long these guys lasted. 600 years is going down beyond Abraham with something about 100 years even 175 years for Abraham which is a very long life span. Now how are we to conceive of that within the very same physical environmental situations that the life span of man reduces let's say about 400 or 500 years from 600 to 200 years but within a time span of only 300 years. This does not work. Those are some of the inner biblical problems.

Archaeological difficulties with the complete view: Gilgamesh

Then when you examine some of the archaeology what was going on in the ancient world then there was no way you could have 300 years between the flood and the days of Abraham. Look at the genealogy in Genesis 10, the table of nations. Now here the three sons of Noah come out of the ark and they are covering the earth again, but within 300 years? All of this development, all of these different ethnic developments, not just geographical, but ethnic, political, linguistic differences producing that world map which is itself only a partial map of all of this in 300 years. This is not going to happen. In fact 2300-2400-2500 B.C. can't be the days of the flood in Mesopotamia. In Egypt this would be the period of the Old Kingdom or the Pre-dynastic period or even earlier than that in Egypt. You can't fit the civilizations such that the histories of the Near East and there are great river valleys of Mesopotamia and Egypt into 300 years like that, it doesn't at all fit.

Cultural developments mentioned in 2300 B.C. in terms of literature from the period. Let's say here is the Gilgamesh epic. You have heard of Gilgamesh, and the Gilgamesh epic embellishes the historical story but he was a historical king. He was king of Ur around 2600 B.C. So here is an actual king named Gilgamesh. He reigned from 2600 B.C. Now you remember the story of Gilgamesh in the Gilgamesh epic? In the story of Gilgamesh he goes on the quest for the secret of immortality. His good friend dies, this sets him off on this quest and has to all kinds of marvelous adventures. Finally, in order to learn the secret of immortality and overcome death he bethinks himself of that ancient

flood hero. So the Gilgamesh epic in the eleventh tablet of it you have the account of the flood that is in many remarkable ways reflective of the biblical account which is an interesting story in itself with that kind of parallel. The thing which we are interested in then is that Gilgamesh, the king in 2600 B.C., thinks of the flood as something that belongs to the remote past. He makes his way on an adventure and crosses the sea of death and in order to come to the figure who in the Babylonian narrative is not called Noah, he's called Utnapishtim. But the same concept of the coming through the flood. He comes to this Babylonian Noah and hears the whole story of the flood and he gets the secret of immortality from him. It is this plant in the depths of the earth and the depths of the sea. The story goes on from there. How he gets it but a snake comes and he loses it and finally makes it back to his home city. But what we are interested in is from the perspective of this figure of Gilgamesh who lived in the third millennium century B.C. the flood belonged to the ancient past. But according to the complete view, the flood was after Gilgamesh.

Problems to the complete view from Ebla and Jericho

To the north of Palestine there at the site of Ebla, within the last 10 years or so and a whole set of texts have been found with a whole culture that wasn't known before including flood narratives. These texts come from the middle of the third millennium. They come from the very times that on the complete view the flood would have taken place. Once again, in these texts from that time, you have flood stories indicating that the flood belonged to the remote past. There is just solid absolute evidence, including documentary evidence that that view is just unacceptable.

Then if you look at broader archeological investigations, you take a site like Jericho, from about 7000 B.C. on. One site after another, you know how these tells are built up, one culture on top of another as the early ones are destroyed. But at the site of Jericho there is evidence of walled cities going back to 7000 B.C., continuously right on with no evidence interrupting that sequence back to 7000 B.C. There is no evidence of anything that could be compared to the biblical flood.

Now, if you want to say that the biblical flood was so small and so narrow that it reduces to a big puddle outside of Babylon over there someplace, then that's it and it didn't affect Palestine and Jericho. I don't think the flood was that small. I don't know if the flood was global, but it was large enough that it covered, I would think, the Near East. The Near East had to be repopulated after the flood and parts of Europe had to be repopulated, and Africa too. So apparently the flood was rather extensive if it wasn't global. It would have involved sites like Jericho and others. Yet we have evidence of these city cultures going back for thousands of years before the middle of the third millennium with no evidence of something that could be identified with the biblical flood.

Summary of the evidence supporting the selective view.

Now, there are other problems that certainly could be mentioned. Here we'll give a summary that the selective view is shown to be solidly warranted by biblical usage and indeed by these signals of symmetrical structure and theological numbers and so on. The scriptures are driving to that conclusion. When you add to that all these impossible obstacles in the way of accepting the complete view, I think that's where the Bible leads us. Happily the bonus that comes from it. We don't start with the fact that here's the scientific evidence, now we're going to wring the neck of the biblical chicken until it squawks out the message that we want it to squawk. No, that's not the method. We've tried to see what the biblical evidence points to as a valid interpretation. We have done that. I hope we've tried to do that honestly.

Now that we've done it, we find ourselves, however, in a happy position. We have this bonus now that we don't have to be afraid of wondering what fossils are going to be found and where they date the antiquity of human beings. We should be as fascinated as anyone else with this evidence and try to come to proper conclusions about it. So as I say, if mankind goes back 50,000 years, Genesis 5 and 11 don't get in my way of accepting that. I don't know where the flood is, as I said, but I would think that it is somewhere either in connection with the phenomenon connected with the end of the ice age around

10,000 B.C. or somewhere prior to that, I don't know where, but I'm ready to remain open to this.

The historicity of Genesis 1-11

Just incidentally and while I'm at that, we were going to discuss the historicity of Genesis 1 through 11. Right at this point I might just say this, there are some friends of ours involved in seminaries that we're interested in and churches that we're interested in, I'm thinking particularly of Calvin Seminary and College and some of the people who are involved there, who have certain views of Genesis 1 through 11 in which they take the view that these are not real historical events. But these are teaching models that present certain truths. It's not about real individuals and real events.

So when they come to this point — let's see if I can reconstruct this — from what I've just been saying now, that we have in Genesis 4, what was the story of the City of Man, and how things developed and the cultures that developed there. There were the arts and the crafts and the sound of music and the sound of the forge and metallurgy and the development of cities and everything, way back in Genesis 4. Then there comes, later on, the flood, and so forth.

But now here is a history of developments, that the Bible presents, and here's the scientific evidence. Now the scientific evidence tells us that somewhere on this side of the flood, we have the agricultural revolution of 10,000 B.C., as we said, in which you get the domestication of animals, the movement from nomadic culture, food-gathering culture to settled culture, and the development of crops. With the different ages that you go through, the Neo-lithic Age and the different early Bronze Ages leading on to the Iron Age and all of that business and the development of cities. From about 10,000 B.C., post-flood, you have this particular development going on.

Our friends at Calvin I'm thinking of people like Howard Van Til, the astronomer; and John Stek, the Old Testament theologian; David Young, the son of the famous E. J. Young conservative who is the geologist in the picture. These people are all taking this type of approach. This development that starts sometime after the flood, wherever the

flood was, took place. There is no evidence of anything of that sort after 10,000 B.C.

Now what are we going to do with Genesis 4, because the picture that, evidently, science gives us of developments long after or sometime after the flood, the Bible is already putting us to back from the Garden of Eden on. Now how are we going to handle that? My position is then I don't know where the flood took place and so on. But the biblical evidence about Genesis 4, according to the analogy of Scripture, is that this is talking about real individuals. There was an Adam, there was an Eve, these events took place. There was a Cain and Abel, the rest of the Bible refers to them as historical people. There was a Noah, there was an ark, there was a flood – Jesus refers to the days of Noah as we've talked about it. The rest of the Bible plainly indicates that these are real individuals, that these events really happened. So my stance is, alright, the authority of the scriptures says that kind of a development took place before the flood, sometime along the way, the flood wiped it out. What science now reveals to us is how that all began to happen all over again because it would have to happen all over again if the race was thus reduced to just this one family. They would have to go through that same sort of development. They might go through it more rapidly in terms of the race memory of past achievements, but nevertheless they would have to go through that.

So I'm ready to wait until Jesus comes, or longer, if necessary, for the evidence to show up that what Genesis 4 says happened before the flood actually did. The physical evidence is not there now. People from Calvin say the evidence is all in. So now what do you do in that case? The Question is where are you coming from? I'd say you'd have to have the patience of faith, here, and wait for the scriptures to be proven true. But in your reading and in our own church and seminary circles this kind of view is propounded and it is tolerated. So that's a particular issue then that emerges out of our discussion of the genealogies. But I'm prepared, on the other side, to accept, as I said, the scientific evidence for the antiquity of man going way back. Well, I've tried to cover some of that.

Let's see how we're doing for time. A brief discussion of just one other thing. In terms of our outline, I'm trying to play a little catch-up football here tonight. Now let's see, there were two weeks, and the second week, was how does that go? I did the other

one but in the first two weeks—no, we were also going to have done creation chronology and an overview of covenant. We're not going to do all that. If I may make full use of the time that we have left until ten o'clock, which is about fifteen minutes, maybe at least we can get an introduction to the subject of the creation chronology, and the next time see how we can move through the overview of the covenants and on into the rest of the picture. Yes sir?

Leader's comment: "We'll start sharply at seven next Thursday."

Okay, that will help there too. Okay, everyone here sharp at seven; the boss said so.

The antiquity of the cosmos

All right, let's move then back a ways. We started with the question of the antiquity of man, and now there's the question of the antiquity of the cosmos. There's the young earth//old earth debate over the meaning of the first chapter of Genesis—the creation prologue. This is the subject of a raging debate within the PCA and the OPC and other conservative Presbyterian groups. You need not be told as some of you have encountered particular difficulty in ordination, or at some kind of exam or other in a presbytery precisely over this particular subject. So it's a very unhappy thing to have to deal with. Among Christians on the one extreme I think there are those who are insisting on a literalist view, not only as being the right view, but as a test of orthodoxy. I think this is a very divisive thing, unnecessarily divisive in the church. On the other hand, you have a looseness of view with regard to the Scripture by people on subjects that I was just talking about. So we want to avoid both of those extremes. We don't want to fall into the left-wing view that would accommodate the notion that the origin of man was a matter of evolution, and on the other hand, I would want to be opposing, of course, the rigid kind of literalist view.

What I'm attempting to do then is once again simply to show, by the analogy of Scripture, by comparing Scripture with Scripture, that no one is in a position to insist that there is only one reasonable, valid exegetical option, namely the literalist one. I simply

want to produce evidence that I think is overwhelming. At the very least it grants the recognition that there are other views. I would say there is much more for it, that they are possible, that they are probable. In fact, I will get off the fence on this thing, and say that there is another view that the scripture demands. My own view is that you can't believe in the authority of Scripture and hold to the literalist view, because the analogy of Scripture contradicts the literalist view. But at the very least, what I'm trying to say—demonstrate—is that no one is in a position to say that the literalist view is so clearly and absolutely the right view that it must become a test of orthodoxy. That is not true; it is not true. I want to show the Scriptures, that's what I'm up to.

I think that we should be willing to tolerate the literalists within the church. They don't want to tolerate me; however, but I'm ready to tolerate them. It is not something that affects the system of doctrine that we should be concerned about. There are lots of real theological issues in the church that we should be concerned about that you can't get anyone to be concerned about. Meanwhile our attention is being distracted with this thing, which is of a peripheral concern. I let my rhetoric get away from me; it's a diabolical evil that's infecting the church, and driving it apart over this particular issue. So you can see that I'm emotionally very calm about the whole thing.

The age of the cosmos from Genesis 1: 3 views

Let's try to be exegetically calm, and just to see what the biblical evidence is. Then the little bit that we have, maybe I can just outline a case. There we are! Let's see; I won't look for the notes, let me just wing the argument.

First, we should describe, obviously, at least the three most prominent views that are being batted around these days. And of course, you know that the one is that the **“week of days”** in Genesis is to be understood in terms of a week of solar days, twenty-four hour days. So since, of course, man is created within that period, the date that you would assign for man—and most of the people who would take this literalistic view of Genesis 1 would also take a complete view of the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11. So they would have dated Adam about 4000 B.C. Since you only have one more week to deal with, Creation's also 4000 B.C. All right, so that's where you end up with that

particular view.

Then just to describe them, the second view is the one that has long been popular in the church. It is not a literal view, it's a figurative view because the days are taken as the equivalent of ages. So you have the "**day-age view.**" Instead, therefore, of speaking of seven solar days, you are speaking about seven ages, and in connection with that, an attempt is often made to coordinate those seven days with seven geological ages, whether that works or not is another question, but in any case, that's the view. You could, I suppose, adopt an age of the universe as twelve billion years old or whatever the current big bang theory is on that.

Then the third view is the one that usually has been called the "**framework interpretation.**" It's often called the "framework hypothesis," but that's a pejorative term. Why should it be called an hypothesis? They're all hypotheses; no, they're all interpretations. So let's call it the "framework interpretation." Now, this is the one that isn't as familiar, necessarily, to all of us. So it might be about all I have time to do really is to describe the third option, which of course, is the one the Bible demands.

Support for the framework interpretation

But, what it is saying then ties in—and I've been trying to set you up for this all along by what I've been saying about thematic arrangements of material rather than straightforward chronological—with the way Moses wrote history, in terms of themes with chronological recapitulation, and arriving at nice total numbers like sevens and tens and threes and so on. That's what's going on in Genesis 1. So just to describe what's going on there, we're going to try to show that the picture that you get of God working and coming to his consummation rest in the course of seven days is a figure of speech. Now, mind you, we're not saying that everything in the narrative is figurative; that's not the case. We're simply saying that the chronological data in the narrative, the ones that speak about "day one, morning and evening; day two, morning and evening," that pattern of a week of days is divided into morning and evening. That pattern we're saying is a figurative pattern. The story of the Creation has been placed within that, and the way it

works out is that the arrangement is one that is thematic.

Now the day-age view, was figurative in that it said the duration of the days was not literal but could be stretched out. The framework view also says that it's figurative but says that the figurative principle affected not just the length of the days but it affects even the sequence of the narrative. So that on this third view we are saying that the narrative sequence is not intended to be an actual chronological sequence any more than in the whole book of Genesis the narrative sequence is not straightforward chronological sequence but you take a certain theme and develop it and then back up again.

So now what are the themes that are developed in the book of Genesis prologue. The first triad, notice again that this is a triad and the tenfold section of Genesis. Here again are the triads and the seven. The first triad deals with the subject of various kingdoms that God created. By the time we're done, you're going to be seeing, and this is part of the real importance of it, how long the thing lasted isn't really that important. What you should be getting out of Genesis is what is it saying about who is God, and what is God's relationship to the world. In a big magnificent way, the chapter is screaming out that everything is of God, and everything is unto God. That's what you should get out of reading Genesis 1. Not the mischief of all this debate. No one is getting what Genesis 1 is really saying: everything is of God and everything is unto God. That's got to be the ultimate message. He is the great King. He is the Kings of Kings. He is the Creator of all things for his own glory. Everything is to be made as a tribute before his Sabbath throne. That's what is going on here.

Description of the framework interpretation

So there are kingdoms within this creation. Under God the Great King, there are various kings. The second triad deals with that theme. There is the kingdom of light and darkness--day 1 deals with it. The kingdom of light and darkness is day and night. Day two deals with the theme of the sky and the sea. At the beginning of the story, you are confronted with a situation of the deep and the darkness. As the creation unfolds, you see that the deep is being bounded and the darkness is being bounded so that on day 1 the

darkness is bounded by the introduction of light and the cycle of day and night. On day 2, the deep begins to be bounded vertically between the upper waters and the lower waters through the introduction of the *raqia* furthering of sky and sea and those realms. The third day, there is the further bounding of the deep horizontally by the emergence of the dry land and the vegetation that covers it.

All right, those are the kingdoms. That's one theme. So you deal with those just as you deal with Genesis 4 and so on with the theme of the City of Man. Now that you've dealt with that, then you back up. Now you deal with another theme. The theme now is the kings. Who were the kings who ruled over the light and darkness?--the sun, moon, and the stars, that cycle of day 4. Who were the kings who ruled over the sky and the sea?--the birds and the fish that are the subject of day 5. Who were the kings who ruled the land and vegetation?--the animals and man. So it is a thematic treatment.

Kingdoms and kings in Genesis 1

This language of kings-kingdoms is not forced on the text, it's taken out of the text because when you read here up to the fourth day and the text tells us that God put these luminaries there after he created them. Don't let anyone tell you that the text is telling you anything less than this point that he is creating them. He creates them, and then puts them there. The Hebrew says *Lamemshellet* in order to rule over--to be kings over the day and the night--the light and the darkness. The Bible's own imagery is that of kingship, to rule over. Of course, the imagery of the birds and the fish exploiting these domains of the water and the sky is again the kind of language that God uses when he mandates man to be a king to exercise dominion, to exploit these areas. So it's a language of rulership. Most clearly, of course, when you come to man himself here, he's given dominion over all the works of God's hands. So what you have here is sort of a pattern of authority with the one over the other. You have the consecration of the lower to the higher. So that the picture you get is, of course, a portrait of man too. That's a big picture of who God is. But it's also then a picture of who man is and how he fits into the whole scheme of things.

How does man fit into the scheme of things? He is a king. He is a king not just over the kingdom immediately opposite him, but he is over all the works of God's hands. So the pattern breaks out all over the place. He's a king not only over these kingdoms, but he's a king over the other kings.

That's not the end of the story because there's a seventh day. The seventh day is a story of the great King. The King of the Kings of whom all of the kingdoms have come including all the kings including man himself. Why have they come from him? Why does he do it all? In order to manifest his glory and to have an echo back from his worshipping creatures of his glory because everything should be unto him.

Man and his dominion as king under the great king

So the picture then is that man, the king of the seventh day, made in the image of God had dominion over all these things. When he has exercised dominion over all these things and he has culturally formed a self-ruling cosmos then he is not to do what these characters did, these antichrist figures, exalting their own name above God's name.

But this king then should humble himself before God and recognize that he is also a priest. What the first Adam failed to do it, the second Adam does do. And 1 Corinthians 15--And when he has put all things under his feet, he subdues all things as a king, then he delivers over the kingdom to the Father so that the Father might be all in all. He is a priest. Christ is a king. He is a priest. That's what man should have been. Man should have taken this world subdued it and passed through the gates of the Sabbath day and laid the world subdued at the feet of the throne of his creator to whom all things belong unto God. That's the pattern. That's the message of Genesis 1.

Genesis 1 organized thematically not sequentially

In terms of chronology, what we're saying is this chapter has been organized thematically. We will try to show a whole bunch of arguments to show that thematic arrangement which is a big signal. It's a signal like we found in Genesis 5 and 11 because the chapters were not complete. Here is a big signal. This strong thematic pattern is a big signal that the arrangement isn't necessarily a chronological sequence. But that just raises

a certain probability in that direction.

What I want to do and what I hope to do next time would be to present some decisive evidence. There's no two ways about it. It's not just that this is a probable thing but it's absolutely necessary that Genesis 1 has got to agree with the rest of the Bible that this narrative sequence is not intended to be sequential. If the narrative sequence isn't intended to correspond to the chronological sequence, it's just another way again of saying that the narrative is not a literal account of days it is a figurative sequence.

Sorry but we have to break it off at this point.

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