

Dr. Meredith Kline, Prologue, Lecture 16

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Summary and Review

As I said, I have arranged things by taking the categories that you would find in one of the ancient treaties and we are using those categories to set things up chapter by chapter. So the first part of the treaties was the business of the **preamble** the “I am” section where the great King told who he was. And so we studied in chapter 1 how in Genesis 1 through 3 we have the disclosure of God’s great names especially as the Alpha and the Omega. The treaties went on to the second section – you remember the historical prologue to give another claim of the Lord upon the servant’s obedience along with the claim of his great name, fear and so on. There was the claim of gratitude in terms of the good things he had done for them. That is where we are now, in our analysis of Genesis 1 through 3.

What great things has God done for Adam there already, even in the process of creation that would constitute a claim on covenantal loving and fidelity on Adam’s part. The first thing that we spent a good deal of time on last week was the marvelous way in which the Lord had created man in his own image. We noted that there was tremendous difference between the biblical concept of man as made in the image of God and the kind of thing that we found in that so-called Babylonian Genesis, the Enuma Elish, where you come to the point of the creation of man – man is created out of the blood of the evil, sort of devil-god, Kingu. He is created to just pick up and to do menial type chores that the defeated gods didn’t want to do. It is a completely different concept. But here marvelously, the LORD forms man in his own image.

We analyzed that in terms of the three components of the glory of God, the glory Spirit: the glory of his dominion, the glory of his moral excellence and the glory of his visual brilliance. We saw how the biblical data then supported the thesis that those three components are the kind of thing that the Bible has in view

when it says that we are made in the image of God. So we dealt with that.

Genesis 2 and the Garden of God domain

Now the second claim dealt with in chapter 2 and we are now on page 30, if you have your *Kingdom Prologues*. It is that here too, these image bearers who were made to be kings, like the great King, a kingdom was bestowed, a domain was granted over which he might rule, so now we want to analyze what was the nature of this domain. So our question is now of trying to understand what the Bible says about the nature of the pre-fall world and what it was like in terms of God's original creative activity.

Tonight, I'm trying to play a catch-up here with the schedule of the course, and I'm more likely to fall behind farther than advance. But in an attempt to catch up I might be following *Images of the Spirit* more closely than I have been in the past. If I don't follow it then I might tend to roam all over the world, whereas if I follow it, it might actually have the consequence of moving along faster. So we'll see how this works out.

But on pages 30 and following, what I'm trying to do is to develop two ideas, both of which are involved in the biblical phraseology that we find referring to this domain as the garden of God or the garden of the LORD. It was a garden, that brings out the concept of it was a Paradise, herbal, wonderful place. In terms of God's relationship to the situation, the garden brings out the thought that here was a protectorate, God is the great King and here is this vassal servant community and they are under his shield and they are under the shadow of his wings. They are under his protectorate and everything evidences his goodness. That actually is the second point that we'll be coming to.

The other point is the one that is brought out if we emphasize the garden of God that this is a paradise. But it is a paradise that belongs to God in a peculiar way, which is his dwelling place and as such, it is therefore, a holy place. It is a sanctuary, it is a paradise-sanctuary combination. So we want to take those two features now and analyze them one at a time, starting with the second one. The

fact that this place where Adam and Eve are placed to live and to serve, is a holy place. It is a temple domain. It is a sanctuary. What makes a sanctuary, of course, what makes a place holy, is the presence of the Lord. It is God's presence that sanctifies the place. Where the angel of the Lord is standing there, the command goes forth to "take off your sandals because this is holy ground..." because God is here. Well, God was there. Adam's native home, he was a guest in God's house because this was God's domain.

Presence of God in the Garden

Now the presence of God is attested by a whole series of verses several of which we had to look at when we were developing the thought of how man was made in the image of God. We were developing the idea that in particular man is made in the likeness of God as God is manifested in this theophanic form of the glory Spirit, the heavenly glory then, which on the earth takes the form of the shekinah glory. So already in Genesis 1:2, we interpreted that in terms of the presence of God in the creation processes - the Spirit of God hovering over the waters.

As we moved along in Genesis 1: 26, 27, where you have the actual creation of man "Let us create man in our image...", we argued for the understanding of that as a word that comes from the throne of God as he stands in the midst of the heavenly council. That whole heavenly reality is the reality of this glory Spirit of God.

Likewise in Genesis 2:7, that active divine breathing was further evidence of the presence of God in the form of his glory revelation as Jesus expounds this act of creative breathing as a imparting of the Spirit. So, Genesis 2:7 further attests to that, that the Lord was there. He was there in Eden.

Now, the next verse we appeal to is in chapter 3:8 and this one you would not recognize, that the presence of God here, if you read the 8th verse, we find it in most versions. I don't know if anyone has the translation for us here that will be better than average, but the NIV that I have here is one that represents a common

mistranslation. It is the episode right after the Fall, and the Lord is coming in judgment, of course. It speaks about “the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden, in the cool of the day.” Now that’s the expression that needs to be challenged is the expression “in the cool of the day.” But already, you get the thought that, here they are in the garden, and God is present there. So that as soon as they are fallen, his presence shows itself in a particular way, namely as he comes to interrogate them and to pronounce judgment and so on.

How would you expect him to come, how does God come on days of judgment when there is a parousia event that takes place? You think of Sinai, you think of the return of our Lord, how does God come? He comes of course with a thunderous noise and with flashes of consuming fire and so on. It’s an awesome fearful theophany, the coming of the Lord when he comes for judgment, as obviously he was doing on this occasion. This is a day of judgment that takes place. The Hebrew expression in this case, which is mistranslated “in the cool of the day,” is *ruah hayyom*. The right translation of it is, he came in his capacity as, now the word *ruah* means *Spirit*, among other things. It can mean “breath,” it can mean “wind.” It can mean various things. They have seized upon the idea that it can refer to some breeze or wind and as such that “the wind part of the day.” Then the traditional image of this verses that God came, it was the evening time, it was during the cool of the day. It was the time of the day for the Lord to take his daily constitutional. As he was threading his way through the garden, they hear the pitter-patter of the divine footsteps.

This doesn’t make sense of the passage. That’s not the way God would come. Their responses are that they are scared out of their wits and they are hiding. It’s all pointing to different directions, and the word we are referring to this *ruah* should be understood not as just some wind. It’s the Spirit capital S. It’s the Spirit we’ve been talking about. The glory-parousia-Spirit of God who comes in judgment. The day is the Lord’s day. It is the day of judgment. As often as the

word “day” would be substituted in the New Testament for the day of Christ, the parousia of Christ. They are synonyms for one another and that’s what the “day” is here.

So what happened then when they sinned, is that God comes for judgment and he comes in the way you’d expect him to come, not with a soft pitter-patter but with a thunderous noise and he comes in his capacity as the Spirit of the judgment day. So, that’s the whole story.

In *Images of the Spirit* which that I guess you have, the last chapter in that book is a sort of a detailed exegesis of what I just summarized for you here. So I went through that quickly, but if you want further details and defense of it, you can find it in the *Images of the Spirit*. But moving along now to 3:8, we point to just another evidence that God was present here in the garden at this particular time.

Now looking beyond the immediate context in Genesis to reflections back on this, you find elsewhere in the Bible, as you read along, you will see I appeal to Ezekiel 28:13ff. Ezekiel is referring to the situation in Eden and says that the cherub attended glory, this glory presence of God was there on the holy mountain of God. Now we are interested in that concept too. Ezekiel assigns the presence of a holy mountain, the Armageddon mountain that we were talking about, the mountain of the divine council, the projection on earth of the heavenly reality of the glory Spirit, with God enthroned in the midst of the angels. Ezekiel now speaks of that reality as having been there. So that the picture that is emerging there in Eden is that there is a cultic focus crowned by the glory of God. Here is man living on earth, and this mountain is the vertical access between earth and the top of the mountain which represents the heaven and that involves then, the presence of this glory-Spirit. So from his throne, when they have sinned, and now he manifests his glory presence in judgment and he comes down to deal with them, as Genesis 3:8 pointed out.

Prophetic interpretation of the loss of presence, redemption and Zion

Moving on agreeably, I say, when the prophets depict the redemptive restoration here, this original wonderful situation of the presence of God is lost at the fall. But in the process of redemption, it is restored again, and so biblical prophecy points us to that new heaven and new earth, new paradise that new Jerusalem. When they do so, they not only speak about the restoration of the river of life and the trees of life, that kind of imagery, but they also speak, of course, about the restoration of the presence of the Lord himself the glory-Spirit there. The glory-cloud, the spring source of the life-giving river, the crowning beauty of the glorious Edenic scene. By positioning his glory upon the holy mountain of Eden's garden, God placed there the claim of his name. So God is there, he is present in a revelation of glory on the mountain top.

As we'll see later on, Zion will reproduce this. Zion is a redemptive restoration and there is the glory on the temple, so Zion points back to what that was like. Of course, Zion points ahead to what heaven is like and therefore becomes, the image for the heavenly Zion - the real one.

So this presence of God there, amounts to a placing of his name. He identifies with this particular location. The glory-Spirit in Eden was therefore a divine name banner hovering on high over the domain of Eden. This being thus identified, claimed and consecrated by God's name was a holy land. It was holy, "Take off your sandals, God is here".

Garden as Sanctuary

So man's home site then, was hallowed ground. The garden of Eden was not only a land flowing with milk and honey, it was not only the original paradise land, but it was also the original sanctuary. As we noted in Ezekiel, he was the one who calls it a garden, Isaiah calls it the garden of the Lord. So it is God's garden, it is the Lord's garden, he is there, therefore it is a holy place.

Now some other indications besides the verses we've pointed to indicate

that this should be conceived of as a holy place, as a sanctuary. One of the clearest is the fact that right after man falls, and you know the story well there in Genesis 3. He is regarded as no longer in a proper state. He is defiled, he can no longer function as a holy priest in God's holy garden. So he is driven out from this place. That doesn't make any sense at all, unless that was holy place. So he is driven out from the holy because he himself had become unholy and could no longer stay there. But that's what he was telling us that all the while, Eden was indeed a holy place.

Then the other points I make in p. 32, concerning some of the features of the garden, the religious symbols that are there. It's the place where you have the cultic focus. The tree of life is there and the tree of knowledge. This is the place where God's Spirit is present and it's the place of oracular revelation. This is where God speaks. Now God's revelation comes at his house at his temple, so the fact that we have God's special revelation coming here tells us again that this is a holy place, the place of divine oracle.

Another detail then you can read on page 3, all making the case that when you picture the garden of Eden, this is one component you do not want to lose. This is the sight of the original Zion, the mountain of God's enthroned presence. Chosen then, as the focal throne sight of the glory Spirit, the garden of Eden was a microcosmic earthly version of the cosmic temple. It was the site of a visible local projection of the heavenly temple. Up here in heaven is the realm of the Spirit. There is the heavenly archetype of the thing that Moses sees when he goes up to look at the original so he can make a replica of the tabernacle. There's the original up there. Right from the beginning, God was reproducing the heavenly reality, he was projecting it down with a sort of condensed version of it that man could handle at this point. At this point, Adam couldn't see into heaven, he couldn't handle the invisible upper register. So, God reproduces that in a local scene that man can experience. That's what we have here--a local projection of the heavenly temple.

At the first then, man's native dwelling place, coincided with God's earthly dwelling. This local sanctuary was designed to be a medium whereby man might experience the joy of the presence of God in a way and on a scale that was suited to this stage in his experience before he is finally glorified. When he is finally glorified, he doesn't need this miniaturized version of heaven, he sees the whole reality of a new cosmos with all of its dimensions of heavenly glory. All right, so it's a sanctuary.

Eden as Kingdom and Theocracy

Now, remembering that this is a King we are talking about too. He is God, and so in terms of his being God, we think, in terms of the concept of holiness and sanctuary, but he is also a king. In terms of his being King, this is a kingdom. It's a holy kingdom. It's a holy kingdom because its ruler is the holy Lord--God himself. God's temple is a palace. So his sanctuary on earth is also his kingdom.

Now the word theocracy comes in. **Theocracy** then, is a concept that we want to get hold of, because it plays an important part as we bring up various topics along the way. A little later on, we will deal with subjects like: the nature of the state, and the differences between the civil magistrate and the regular secular state and the kingdom of Israel, and the bearing of that difference and how we handle the question of hermeneutics. Let's say we are dealing with theonomy or something. If we are aware then of these distinctions, we won't just attempt to apply what's going on in a theocracy to the situation outside of a theocracy. So questions like that is what we'll be talking about as the weeks go by here more and more. It depends on your having some clear idea of what theocracy is. So I tried to develop that just a little bit here, in this next few pages. Let's see what I can do by way of just condensing that.

The peculiar kind of kingdom that was established in Eden at the beginning differs radically from the kind of world's kingdoms that arose after the Fall. So they cannot be simply identified with the secular state. This distinctive form of kingdom we call theocracy. Now what is theocracy then? Theocracy implies for

one thing, an external realm. It's a geophysical reality. It involves an external realm. If you have, let's make a point right now, we don't have a theocracy on earth. The Church on earth is not a theocracy. If we take in to account the invisible realm with Christ, seated on the heavenly throne, and we are describing that whole reality involving the invisible aspect of it, we can speak of it as a theocracy or a christocracy. But if we're just looking at the earthly organization of the Church, then the Church is not a theocracy. What's going on in the Church is that Christ, the King, is reigning indeed, but he is reigning within our hearts, by his Holy Spirit. He is exercising a spiritual reign within our hearts. But the Church is not identifiable with earthly turf, with earthly geography. The Church is not an external domain on earth. But theocracy then does involve that ingredient. Not just the spiritual inward reign of the Spirit in people's hearts, but actually the identification of a particular chunk of real estate or what have you, as God's own holy kingdom. We don't have that now. But that is one essential ingredient in theocracy.

Now, let's take the idea that God rules over the whole earth. All right, here's the whole planet Earth. This is an external domain. God in his general providence, under common grace, let's say now, rules over that. That doesn't add up to theocracy either because God in his general rule and governance of the earth, is still not identifying any particular part of the earth, or the earth as whole, as his holy kingdom. He after the Fall, sets up in Israel, a localized holy place, but that is in contrast to all the rest of the world which is not holy. So God's general providential rule over the external domain of the earth doesn't add up to theocracy. What you need is, not just an external realm, but one that God identifies with and claims by his special presence--the thing that we've been talking about here. It is the special, supernatural presence of God and his defining of it. I'll take the example of the nation of Israel, the Israelite theocracy, where God identified this particular stretch of land, from the Euphrates down to the brook of Egypt and so on. "This is Mine. Out of the whole kingdoms of the earth, I now by eminent

domain claim this land as mine. I come and put my name upon it by my glory-Spirit being present there, and having my temple built there, my palace,” and so forth. It is by covenant, you see that God defines a theocratic reality. You don’t vote this in.

Theonomic reconstruction of the theocracy

Again referring to the theonomic reconstructionist approach to things, their attempt, their whole thrust and goal they feel as demanded by their interpretation of the law is that they should be theocratising all the kingdoms of the earth--Christianizing them, theocraticising them. They recognize that they can’t necessarily do that right away. But if only you could get enough people to vote that way, then of course, they think that is what we should be trying to do. Getting enough people to feel this way about it so that we should exercise our political influence in such a way as to get the nations to which we belong to become Christian, to become theocratised. In other words then, they feel that we can vote in theocracies. You can’t vote in theocracies. It’s not a democracy process. God decides if there’s going to be a theocracy. He decides whether he is going to identify with a particular domain and set it apart from the rest of the non-holy world as his own. How does he do that? He reveals his purpose by special covenants. That’s the way it has been. God has not disclosed and is not about to disclose his purpose that the United States of America or any other nation is one now that he wants to be his holy domain. He is not about to appear personally and set up residence in Washington D.C. or anywhere else.

So theocracy then, involves an external domain, but it also involves this specific appointment of it covenantally defined in order to have a theocracy. It is therefore something which is holy, that is its character. It is a holy kingdom, because God is there and God is the King who is enthroned in the midst, who is entempled in the midst of the situation. Now, everything within a theocracy is holy. It’s not just the cult, it’s not just the worship center, or the worship function that is holy, but all cultural activity is holy.

As we move along in chapter 3, we'll be discussing the commands of this covenant of creation. We'll be seeing how they fall into the functions of the kingly office of man and the priestly office of man. As a priest, man is involved in the worship of that God of glory. As a king, he goes out from this cultic center, and he's thrust out into all the world, and he is told to go out and fill this place and to subdue it. So he has cultural activities, he has a cultural mandate, he has a kingdom commission, as well as a priestly cultic role to play.

Now, what we are saying is that in a theocracy, it's not just the cult that is holy, but everything is holy. It's a holy people, you see, God separates a people, to bear his name, they are holy. The land is holy, the people are holy, the functions of the people are holy, whether it's cultic or culture. Everything in a theocracy is now holy. So that you might define a theocracy therefore as a holy institutional integration of cult and culture, which is a mouthful, but I'm just trying to say what I was just saying. A **theocracy** then is a holy institution because it is where God lives and dwells. It's a holy institutional integration of cult and culture. It involves everything. It involves worship activities. It involves cultural activities. Everything is part of this one holy kingdom.

Eden is a theocracy

So as seen in the original form of the kingdom of God in Eden, a theocracy is a cultic kingdom through and through. God is King in the entire realm. All of it has a character of a holy God. I'm reading from page 33 now, about the third paragraph, "A theocratic kingdom is a holy nation..." Now there is that quotation, see later on, God sets up a theocracy in Israel, and in Exodus 19 then you get this classic definition of the Israelite theocracy: it's a holy nation, it's a kingdom of priests, cult, culture, and everything is holy. Membership in the kingdom involves participation in the sanctuary of God, for the kingdom is God's sanctuary. To break the covenant by unfaithfulness to the God of the sanctuary, is to be cut off from the kingdom of God. There is no separating sanctuary and kingdom, they are all one. As the world was first created, that's all there is. In Eden, that's theocracy,

with the mandate given to expand this theocratic domain to global proportions-- "fill the earth and subdue it." So theocracy then is the one where God reigns. Now on earth, subordinate to this ultimate divine reign, there can be an earthly form of government where man is set up as the vice-regent of God, representing God on earth and so on. So there can be an earthly government but all of it is subservient to confession of the fact that God is the great King. Then I tried to develop a little bit on the bottom of page 33 and 34. Now in the last paragraph on the top of page 34, I make the point that a theocracy is a distinct thing. We'll ultimately be talking about the state, we'll be talking about the church, now we're talking here about theocracy. Each of these is quite distinct.

Theocracy, State, and the Church

In terms of theocracy, you don't define theocracy by saying that it's a state church or the church state. You can't build a theocracy out of the building blocks of state and church. Theocracy, is *sui generis*, it is a unique thing, it's a third thing. It is altogether distinct from them. When have there been theocracies on earth? We've been intimating something along that line. Here at the beginning, before the Fall, we have a theocracy. That's a holy institution. Alas the Fall did take place, and as we said, man is driven out. He's driven out of the holy place into a world outside the bounds which are being protected by the cherubim with the flaming sword. Clearly, what lies outside of this place is no longer holy. It is non-holy. It is profane, it is secular. That's the nature of the world outside of Eden. This new world order, outside of the holy place, this non-holy world order is the one that is defined by the principle of common grace which ultimately, and there right after the flood, it gets its covenantal expression.

So you have the covenant of common grace. That's the nature of the world out there. My problem here tonight is going to be where and when to talk about common grace and how much to say at any particular point. As we move along here, we're actually going to come to the passages in Genesis 3:16-19 and Genesis 8:20-9:17 where it actually talks about this covenant of common grace. I want to

get there, and do that but meanwhile, you can't really understand clearly what theocracy is except you see it over against the opposites--the holy and the non-holy. So I have to say a little bit about the common grace business here.

Common Grace

So in the world in general then where culture is now no longer holy. It is just profane. It's non-holy and it's common, common in that particular sense. Quite specifically then, it is indeed, in a realm of culture that is assigned to two undefined in terms of the principle of common grace, so that along the way, the state gets set up here. It is not a holy institution. It's just a common institution. Even the family, apart from the redemptive impact of the family whereby the relationship is a complex one we'll be dealing with. In general, the family just as a procreative institution in the world is not a holy institution, it too is common. So this whole area of common grace, is one of common culture and you don't have theocracies.

However, the goal of history is that the second Adam, should fulfill and realize the original theocratic purposes. The world was a theocracy from the beginning, and yet, of course, there will still be a history in terms of which one man would advance in terms of a successful probation to a state of glorification. So the original theocracy was on the move towards a Sabbath consummation but that was aborted then, in terms of the failure of the first Adam, the second Adam picks up the original eschatological goal and realizes it. So, of course, heaven at the end of the story is, not just paradise restored, it is that, but it is more than that, it's paradise consummated. It is a theocracy, it is not just a theocracy in Eden or even on planet Earth, it's a cosmic theocracy. That's the goal.

Now, what about in-between, at the consummation of the world. What about in-between the Fall and the consummation? Have we had theocracies? Have we had anything holy in the world? The world as a general order is not holy, it's common. Of course, so what we have is that whole redemptive program as one whereby the principle of holiness is reintroduced. So here, it's Christ, in terms of

his redemptive work. Now, holiness is being redemptively introduced into the world. It comes to expression then in those people whom he sanctifies and sets aside unto himself and who are organized now in that series of covenants that we call the Covenant of Grace. So as Christ fulfills the eternal covenant with the Father, and now he has earned for himself the right to be the Lord of the Covenant of Grace. He is the mediator of that covenant. He proceeds to administer it. Indeed, from the very beginning he has been doing so. It was out of his Holy Spirit, that he breathes the Holy Spirit into the world, and so there is now a holy community on earth today, of course, the Church, the place of the saints, of the sanctified. It's a holy institution, and in fact, all the way through this history, we have a hold in this, not only subjective individual sanctification but the very institution is regarded as having institutional holiness.

So here is a holy community on earth, represented by the Church today. For the most part however it is not in theocratic form. We have a community of holy people, but not organized in theocratic form. But it is organized in ecclesiastical form today. Back in the days of the patriarchs, it was organized in terms of a patriarchal community that was not however identified with the possession of an earthly land. Yes, Abraham had the promise of a land, but only the promise. Meanwhile, he was a pilgrim in the earth, you didn't have an external dimension, an external domain to the covenant community except at two points along this line.

The Ark (flood) as symbolic of theocracy

So you come to the end of the world that then was, and the story of the flood. Here we have another one of these theocratic holy squares. In paradise at the beginning, in heaven at the end, and anticipating and reflecting the original one you have in the kingdom in the ark, a symbolic theocracy. So the ark structure represents the holy cosmic temple of God in an external domain. The ark being symbolic of the cosmos, the account of which then is, later on in the *Kingdom Prologue*, in fact in the term paper that we were talking about last week, I

suggested that you analyze this ark-kingdom situation. I was giving you some clues as to how to analyze the Exodus later on as well. But here then, you have a theocracy.

Moses and Israel as Theocracy

That's the end of the world that then was, and yet, history continues. And now you come past the patriarchal age and you come to Moses and Israel. Here you have another one. So, definitely in that particular period, that's what's distinctive of it, that's what produces that second layer where the works principle is operating, that whole thing we talked about, along with the grace principle of individual salvation. We said there was a second layer there, that you had to do with the typological kingdom, the national election of Israel to this typological kingdom with tenure based on the principle of works. That reality was involved in this thing that we are talking about, theocracy, that here God by covenant did come, and his special presence was revealed here. The glory-cloud, the glory-Spirit revealed himself at the process of the exodus and took up residence there in the tabernacle. The tabernacle was located on the new mountain of God, that restored the one that was in Eden there in Zion. The whole territory was holy. It wasn't just the activity of the priests that was holy activity, but the activity that went on in the court of the king. The kings were holy representatives of God and not just the kings, but all the people were God's holy people. The whole land was holy. This reality of Israel fits our definition of theocracy.

So it's at these particular points along the line that you have an exception, to the idea that there is no holy place on earth, that everything is common. Here the kingdom of God is set up as an earthly domain, and as a theocracy, but these things then are exceptional. What goes on in a theocracy is not normative for non-theocratic situations whether you are talking about the patriarchal situation that preceded it or whether you are talking to the present church age, which follows it. Theocratic procedures are not necessarily normative for non-theocratic situations.

Theocracy and its application and the secular state

In a theocracy, for example, you get guarantees. God's name is at stake here, these are his people, this is a picture of heaven, what's going on here is a picture of heaven. In heaven is where piety and prosperity go hand in hand. So if you have a holy people there in heaven, they are the ones who are blessed of God. So God is trying to provide pedagogically, a picture of what it's all about. So here, he presents the guarantees that if you fulfill the picture of the holiness of the inhabitants of heaven, then, I will guarantee to you that you will be attended by the prosperity that is granted to those who occupy heaven. God guarantees it because it's part of this whole package.

Now if you as teachers and preachers come up to your people and you say, "Bring your tithes into the storehouse and you can count on that the windows of heaven will be open and God will pour out a great blessing upon you and that you will be healthy, wealthy and wise, if you are good Christians." Then you are breaking their hearts, because it isn't so. It doesn't work that way. It works that way in a theocracy, but you're not in a theocracy.

Problems with theonomy

What you can more count on now, is that if you're a good Christian, you're going to suffer for righteousness sake and maybe be a martyr and not that you are going to be a billionaire. So this is the bad hermeneutics of it. This is what is wrong among other things about theonomy, when you take a theocratic situation with its special arrangements and guarantees, and you try to enforce them somewhere else, then, there is total confusion. Then, as I said, you break the heart of God's people, and then, maybe the most sanctified of the saints, the ones who are suffering and dying of cancer or what have you, and what are they to make of that? It must be then that they are sinners above others. You see, in the name of God, you are telling them lies and confusing them and then destroying their faith because you haven't got your hermeneutics straightened out--that's theocracy. It is a unique kind of thing.

What a kingdom of Israel does, by way of supporting the religion of the temple and, of course, he was obliged to do that, is not a pattern for what the king or president of one nation or another, or whether civil magistrate is supposed to do. He is functioning in a secular state under common grace, and it's one of the things we hope to come to eventually here--to analyze this whole thing about the state and how it must not violate the cultic boundaries and so on by involving itself in cultic activities and theological confessions. So when you are trying to figure out what is the function of the state and so on, you can't appeal to a holy theocracy and what a holy king and a holy theocracy will do. So this is something of vital importance for all kinds of big issues.

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