

## **Dr. Meredith Kline, Prologue, Lecture 23**

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### **Christ and the Covenant of Works**

He has earned the Covenant of Works. He will have earned it by his active and passive obedience. So there is the exaltation, and it begins with the resurrection from the grave. The resurrection—the cross is a victory over Satan, as the accuser of the brethren. The resurrection is a victory over Satan, as the one who, according to the book of Hebrews, has the power of death. So here, Christ wins the victory over the one who has the power of death. To that extent, there is already something of a judgment on Satan even though the final judgment is going to be over here.

But meanwhile, here at the cross, there is an act of final judgment. Not Satan's final judgment or someone else's, but yours and mine. Here is where Christ has experienced the final judgment for his people. So final judgment now is going to be spread out under the Covenant of Creation. There was to be that one act of final judgment, Satan and his demonic hordes there at the beginning. Mankind wouldn't have been involved, but now things are more complex. Now there is a judgment of the elect that takes place at the cross. Later on there will be a final judgment of the reprobate, along with Satan and his demonic hosts at the end of history. But already there has been an anticipation of final judgment on the cross in the final judgment, just as there is an anticipation of the final resurrection experience in the resurrection of our Lord.

But meanwhile then, he has been obedient: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"—the word of approbation that Adam would have heard if he had passed his probation. The Son hears that word of approbation from the Father, "You have fulfilled our eternal covenant of works. Well-done, good and faithful servant. And now I give to you the kingdom that was part of our covenant from eternity. Come and sit with me at my right hand." So there is the exultation now of Christ.

### **From probation to conferral stage**

So he enters into now the conferral stage. He's past his probation, and he moves

into his conferral stage where the kingdom is being conferred on him as the incarnate Son exalted into heaven. His reward is very much, the promise of Father. He receives the Holy Spirit, and with the Spirit of glory, the heavenly reality. The Holy Spirit who will be the one who will effect his spiritual victories in the hearts of his people. So here's the fall, but already there in the Garden of Eden, Christ, in anticipation of his victory later on, is already winning the victory in the heart of Eve and the heart of Adam. So there they are giving the evidence of faith already in Genesis 3 and throughout history then. Christ is reaping the rewards of his obedience by the Father's grant to him of the honors of heaven and the power of heaven to gather together as his bride that people for whom he has come and lived and died and won the victory.

### **Covenant Community: Confirmation**

So the Holy Spirit is present working in the earth as a result of which there is now a covenant community. There is this, as these people of faith come together and begin to call upon the name of the Lord and so on, God defines how they should organize themselves in various ways throughout history. But here is this covenant community then that continues. As a result of Christ receiving the words of approbation, they now hear it as by faith. They unite with him and receive it as a gift of grace. So the people of Christ experience approbation, justification; and not just that their sins are pardoned and they are forgiven, but that they are told that they have earned the reward of heaven, that they are beyond probation because Christ has done it for them. All this is imputed to them by faith so that they now experience that approbation.

They also experience that confirmation in righteousness that Adam and others would have experienced if he had passed his original probation. Now with a difference of course, Adam, had he passed his probation, would not have been involved in any sins at all. Here's a people that have been dead in sins. They're made alive. They are confirmed in righteousness, and they are being sanctified. But nevertheless there is sin remaining in them and with an ongoing battle against it. But nevertheless they are confirmed in eternal life in Christ. So there is this confirmation. It's spiritual life that

they have.

There's ongoing sanctification. There is the gift of perseverance that they will indeed continue on to the heavenly reward. All of this is a manifestation of the reward that Christ is receiving. He is receiving them as his people as his perfect bride. That whole process is going forward with new expressions when at last Christ will have come into history and done this and the Holy Spirit is poured out and there are new evidences then of the presence of the Holy Spirit doing distinctive things. What I want to emphasize at this point is the continuity, however, of the work of Christ by his spirit and the life of the elect all the way through the Old Testament phase as well as New. The fundamental soteric experience of regeneration with ongoing sanctification and so on. That basic soteric experience Christ has been bestowing upon his people by his spirit throughout this whole period until this day.

### **Consummation**

Now meanwhile then, the kingdom of God is not taking on earth apart from some typological exceptions (the ark and Israel), but here in this present church age. We have a spiritual reign of Christ by his Spirit within the lives of his people. But the kingdom of God is not yet taking an outward form and his people are still in earthly bodies, in fact now, in earthly bodies that are mortal and subject to corruption. Christ is engaged in a spiritual reign within their hearts, transforming them. But then with the view to the perfecting of his reward, when it will be given to him to appear in the glory of the Father with all of the angels, we have power over sin. We have the consummation. We have the coming of the eternal Sabbath kingdom, metapolis, the new Jerusalem. The new heavens and the new earth and a spiritual realm we're talking here about is a spiritual reign. We're talking about an external realm. Not something invisible that Christ is doing by his spirit only within the hearts of his people, but beyond that now the kingdom of God manifests itself as an external geophysical reality as a new heaven and a new earth. It then falls to the people of God then as we have been saying not just confirmation inwardly but glorification.

So all of those features that we found on our pattern of the Covenant of

Creation, we find are emerging again here but in a different configuration. With final judgment over here and now again we have final judgment over there--the final judgment of Satan, the final judgment of the reprobate, then Satan and all his hosts at this point. The glorified people now constitute the new Jerusalem, and so on. In other words, here is the eschatology of redemption and the fundamental components that have been there from the beginning. The eschatology of creation is still here but with a different sort of shape along the way.

Now then what has been provided is this line, and this is the one that we want to then be examining in the detail from Genesis 3 and 4 on, but we should see it as part of this overall view. We should see it in terms of this being a messianic accomplishment all along the way. Any questions just on this overview?

#### **Kline's interaction with student questions**

[Someone from audience asks question].

[Kline's response] The Kingdom has certainly come from teaching of John, the forerunner of Jesus, and Jesus' own teaching certainly. The fact that the Kingdom was coming in such a special way is already true. I would see that as finding expression especially in the kingship of Christ which is in heaven. But then the kingdom has something extra. It simply does not exist on earth. Yes, it exists as an institution, but not as a territorial domain, an earthly hunk of turf that is holy.

[Audience member speaks].

[Kline's response] This is the old classical dispensationist type of distinction that is discredited. So we're not making distinctions like that. I'm just trying to distinguish here between the spiritual realities of this present world apart from the kind of external theocratic expressions that you have in Israel, which was an external realm. The church today is not that, and yet the ultimate goal is that it should be external, although not cosmic rather than just local Canaanite. So yes, kingdom of God in the sense that invisibly Christ the king is reigning. In terms of planet Earth, the history that you and I are involved with isn't manifested outwardly except in perversions which would be going off if God's people attempted to set up a theocracy in the realm.

[Audience member speaks].

[Kline's response] Yeah, that's right, that's interesting that it's the extreme opposite of so much that is hermeneutically in common.

I don't know how much more we should do. Let's try to do a bit more because time's flying away. We notice only three more sessions. Let's see what we can do here.

Yes, what is remarkable is how these themes—the continuity of the themes over centuries prior. What evidence this is of the primary authorship of the spirit of the whole thing otherwise you would never have these kinds of continuities that you are pointing out.

#### **Next toledoth sections and themes: Gen. 2:4ff**

Well, now then we have dealt with the inauguration of the Covenant of Redemption, we find, remember in our structure of Genesis after the prologue, then we have the three *toledoth* sections leading up to the flood covenant. The first of them from Genesis 2:4 on deals with the escalation of sin. After the fall there is an escalation of sin in the world, and that centers very much on the theme of the city of man.

Then in chapter 5 it backtracks taking us from the flood up to the fall virtually there then it backtracks to the beginning. In Genesis chapter 5 and following it now deals with the theme of that covenant community. We were just talking about where Christ is at work by his Holy Spirit winning his people for himself. So there is the covenant community of faith. Once again the story goes from Adam up to the flood, and the third section, the climactic one, deals with the disposition, the breaking of the tension that has developed between the seed of the serpent who would take over and pervert the city of man, and the seed of the woman, and how God settles by a heavenly judgment ordeal in the blood arranged by a covenant with Noah. He brings to an end the history of the world that then was. Then you go on with the history of the world that now is.

But the biblical text itself now starts this story of redemptive history is very

much interested just in the general world setting which is one that is controlled by this principle as we've seen of commonness. So we emphasize the common curse but said that correlative with it is the common theme of common grace. So that's again is something that we now want to look at here as we proceed to follow the biblical narrative and try to catch its emphasis.

It is very much concerned with the setting in which the people of God have to work out their historical role. The one I'll analyze as time allows is what the historical role of the covenant community is. They are the martyr people; martyr in the sense of the witness community. But as it turns out because of this enmity, this hostility, this antithesis, they are also the martyr people in terms of those who are experiencing suffering and death and the diminution of their ranks. So that there are only eight of them left by the time this great covenant of judgment comes.

#### **Genesis 4: the city of man and common grace**

But meanwhile there is this whole theme now especially in Genesis 4 and picked up again in the opening verses of Genesis 6 which treats of the theme of how God's common grace arrangements are working themselves out in the world as mankind now works out now not **the** original covenant, not the cultural mandate but **a** cultural mandate as they begin to build **a** city which is no longer **the** city of God but a city of man which becomes a very perverted thing.

So here we are with the business of the concept of common grace once again. We've already seen how in Genesis 3:16-19 there are intimations of common grace along with the curse. As we've said along with the special difficulties that a man and a woman would have there still will be the family with the children, the genealogy. There still will be the book of the generations of Adam that exist by the virtue of the common grace of God. There will be a certain degree of success and fruitfulness in the cultural enterprise. There still will be the actual city that is developed and so God's common grace will be evidenced and very remarkably this is pretty much exclusive to the line of Cain.

This is the line of Seth. Rather remarkably, the main cultural achievements that

are described in terms of God's common grace here are associated with the general city of man which is dominated by the unbelievers. That sort of emphasizes the commonness of this area. So here we come back again to our concept of common grace as an area which is one of shared blessings between believers and unbelievers. But also is one that has to do not with the holy sphere here. Now the covenant community is an intrusion once again of holiness in to the picture. But the world as a whole in so far as it is common in coexistence, pragmatic coexistence of believers and unbelievers is no longer a holy realm. But common in the sense of profane and non-holy as well as being common in the sense of shared.

So here then is this phenomenon and the basic purpose of it that we can understand is that it is not in itself working toward a holy city of God. It's just a non-holy city of man but although it is not a holy enterprise and its goal is not the holy city of God. What it does do is provide an historical space in which the holy redemptive enterprise can work itself out. So common grace is subserving its ultimate purpose of redemptive grace even though it in itself is not producing this. So that's what the nature of common grace is.

#### **Institutional features of common grace: family, state....**

Now this next thing that we want to emphasize is some of the institutional features of common grace. The family obviously is one of them as we have already seen. Implicit in the idea that we are going to have trouble in bearing children is the thought that family institution in the bearing of children will be provided again. Then in addition to the family institution, when we come to chapter 4 verse 15, we find another common grace institution namely, the state. The rest of this thing is a development then on that idea. How the state works itself out, how the city of man worked itself out, that's what chapter 4 is all about.

Chapter 5 goes back to the covenant community and deals with them. But as soon as it's done with that, in chapter 6 more city of man. Chapter 5 is the covenant community, but chapter 6 following picks up the theme of the state once again--the city of man. So compare chapter 6 with that.

In addition to that, the history of the world after the flood when God makes a covenant with all the world, then we have to throw that into the picture, Genesis 9, or more specifically Genesis 8:20-9:17. This cluster of passages that we want to look at to examine the biblical teaching on the institution of the state. It's obviously a big important one in all of our thinking. The functions of the state along with that the functions of the church and keeping these distinct from one another and to have a long discussion of that. It's too late to get started on that tonight. But we want to do a little bit at least with that next time.

### **Inauguration of the State**

Maybe just tonight to make the one point here about the inauguration of the state, that it did exist before the flood in the world that then was in the covenant that's made after the flood. It's organized in the form of a covenant. It becomes quite an explicit: "Those who shed man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." So the institution of the state is there in 9:6, but already in 4:15.

In closing just look at that passage there in Gen. 4:15 which I see as the charter of this common grace institution of the state. It says, "And the Lord says to Cain"—Cain has just been complaining about the God's judgment on him. He says, "Now I've been driven off from the face of the ground"—and you get the Hebrew word "face" used twice here. "I've been driven out from the face of the ground, and I've been hidden from your face, O God." How does he put that? Cain said, "My punishment is more than I can bear today you are driving me out from the face of the land, and I will be hidden from your face. I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me." Now that's his complaint that he's going to be a fugitive on the earth. He's been expelled from Eden not only, but he's now a fugitive on the face of the earth. Also, he is hidden from God's face, which means in the Scripture that he doesn't receive God's judicial oversight. In a word, Cain is complaining that the planet Earth is going to be a place of complete anarchy where all hell is breaking loose. There's no law or order. Moreover he's afraid that having killed Abel, that all the rest of mankind sympathetic with Able and hating him for what he's done will be out to kill him. So



he's a fugitive on the face of the earth he's fleeing from the avenging community of mankind. So that's what he's afraid of.

He's complaining to God this is too much to have this complete anarchy here and I'm exposed to all of this. People with impunity will be killing me. Well, it's what you deserve. But nevertheless God comes to him and he says, "Yes, you're going to be a fugitive alright, but it's not going to be complete anarchy. There will be a system of law and order in the world and what God says to him is not so. You're complaint isn't all together sound. As a matter of fact now if anyone kills you Cain, you will suffer vengeance seven times over."

Now as I try to develop in an original article some place in the condensed *Kingdom Prologue*, what's being said here is a reference to a divine arrangement of justice, the sevenfold vengeance is the divine arrangement. It's the divine provision of judgment in the world. So if someone kills you Cain—now, mind you he doesn't guarantee that no one ever will kill Cain, why should he get that guarantee? But what God is saying is that nevertheless, it's not the way you think that anyone can do it with impunity. As a matter of fact I'm going to set up a system of law and order. In other words, I'm going to set up the state, the city of man, which will wield the sword of God as a minister of God's friend. I'm going to set that up and so not everyone will be so ready to kill you, because there will be the deterrent power of this system of sevenfold divine vengeance.

Then the text goes on to say something—and this is what has misled everyone through the ages--it says, in this translation unfortunately, "Then the Lord put a mark on Cain, so that no one who found him would kill him." Here the Hebrew word for "mark" is the Hebrew word *'oth*. The curious thing is that the Hebrew word *'oth* finds its proper translation in the English, word "oath." So what is actually being stated here is not that God put some sort of a brand mark on Cain, what in the word that would be or what good it would do has never been very clear to anyone in the first place. But that's not really what it's saying. It's saying simply in the first part, that God gave a solemn affirmation to Cain that things would not be complete anarchy, but that there

would be a divine order of justice. Now the second part of the verse, simply summarizes that and restates it again. Yes, God gave a solemn oath, he made a solemn affirmation. It has nothing to do with some visible sign. It is an oral, verbal affirmation that God gave Cain. So thus, the Lord gave this oath to Cain to the effect that not everyone who followed him would be out to kill it. It wouldn't be complete anarchy.

So Cain went out in the Lord's presence and he lived in such and such a place. Verse 17 speaks about him having a son and building a city. So verse 15 is actually then the charter of the city. That God comes to Cain in answer to his original complaint that there was no law and order. He says, "Ah no, I am going to establish the state, I am going to establish the system of law, justice and order." Yes, and the Lord solemnly gave his commitment to Cain that that would be the case. Cain understood it. Two verses later it says he took advantage of it, and proceeded to build a city, which is the embodiment of such a system of law and order. So there's the beginning of the state already in that early generation, long before the flood. So things went along and Genesis 4 tells us how this good institution—and it is good, it is legitimate. It is a gift of God's common grace—how he then took it and he perverted it.

### **City of Man (state) elsewhere in Scripture**

So the rest of the Bible is then describing this two-sidedness, the concept of the city and the concept of man. So that you come to Romans 13 and Revelation 13. In Revelation 13 the state has become the great beast and in Romans 13, nevertheless Paul says it is the minister of God. So there are the two things: as an institution it is instituted by God it is legitimate and good. As perverted by man, it takes the form of a beast that persecutes the saints. But then nevertheless it maintains its legitimacy and we as God's people with the Bible open before us, should know enough to respect the state. I Timothy 2, I Peter 2, Jeremiah 29 and Romans 13 all tell us to respect the state. It is legitimate. Nevertheless we shouldn't be naïve even and be expecting that this city of man is going to develop into the kingdom of God on earth in a utopia or something. We should have our eyes alerted to this hostility that's going on that's

underneath it, the beastlike character that when it gets its opportunity it's going to persecute the daylight out of the saints if it can. But that's the balanced kind of picture the Bible gives us to live with and struggle with in our relationship with the state.

So we'll try to do something more with that when we have time. Next time I'll say something about the proper functions of the state. That will be leaving us soon enough then to proper functions of the church over well against these others. Our thesis will be that the church should be the church and stick to its cultic functions. Let the state be the state and stick to its cultural functions. That would be biblical, but most of the evangelical world doesn't want to do it that way. It wants to give cultural functions to the church, and it wants to give cultic functions instead to the state and that's all wrong.

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