

## **Dr. Meredith Kline, Prologue, Lecture 26**

© 2012, Dr. Meredith Kline and Ted Hildebrandt

### **Functions of the state**

The function of the state and that's what we should be trying get the state to do. We know that's its function because our standard of what the state should be doing and the function of the church is the Bible. So from the Bible we know that's what the state should be doing. Therefore we should not try to be promoting these other things...abortion etc.

Along with that the state should be supplementing what the family proper can do. Now here let's say you have a common territorial jurisdiction that we call the state with family units occupying pieces here and there. But then there's that common network or tissue that combines these separate family units in that public domain. That public domain falls then under the oversight and direction of the state to take care of that. Then there are the relationships between these individual family units that might have their squabbles and so on. So we need then this governmental structure to supplement what the individual families themselves can or cannot do to supplement that. Here's then where the judicial process and so on enters into the picture and all kinds of details can fall there.

So the state is to support the family and supplement it. Then, of course, the whole business of policing and capital punishment. Cain right there at the beginning, why was Cain not executed? Later on now we get the principle, "if you shed man's blood, by man shall your blood shall be shed." Why wasn't Cain's blood then shed for having shed Abel's blood? Because you have only the family unit at that point. It's not appropriate in God's wisdom at within the family unit that you should have penal sanctions such as capital punishment. It waits until you have this other arrangement involving multiplicity of family units under this over-arching state. Then it becomes appropriate for that unifying judicial authority to exercise capital punishment as something supplemental to the function of an individual family.

### **Role of the Family**

The state is the surrogate, the substitute, but the primary responsibility for the care of the individuals is the family itself and right on into the New Testament. If you don't take care of your own family you're worse than the heretic. So this is a primary function of the family, it has this responsibility.

We will be talking eventually about the function of the church and the diaconal thing. What I will be saying among other things is that although the church has a diaconal ministry that it's only within the family of Jesus. It's not a diaconal ministry to the whole world outside the family of Jesus. Even there within the covenant community, within the church, the diaconal benefits are administered in a way that involves church discipline so that the widows who have been busy bodies and so on and aren't behaving properly are not proper recipients of this covenantal diaconal ministry.

So that all the way through Scripture the primary response is for the family. In Timothy where he has to deal with this problem, he distinguishes what the church should be doing and what the family should be doing. If the family can be taking care of those who are in need, then let the family do it and not put the burden on the church. So that everywhere throughout Scripture recognizes that the family is the one with the primary responsibility to do this. So it's not the state. So the whole concept of the welfare state that takes over this thing in two huge ways that is not a scriptural point of view.

### **Role of the state as surrogate to those bereft of family**

Nevertheless, I try to make out at least a minimal case the thought that in an emergency situation where, to use the classic biblical illustrations of the widow and the orphan, the individuals are bereft of a functional family unit that can attend to their needs. So within the city of man, within the state, there are individuals here who are suffering deprivation and degradation from the oppressors in society and they have no normal family or competent people to take care of them, there I think you can make out a biblical case where it is appropriate for the state to provide a safety net for that type of emergency. Now it's a far cry from that and to say then that it becomes now the function

of the state to take over the primary responsibility that would undercut the family and again you see it destroys God's family and its particular function. Especially if you go to the extreme of saying that it's the function of the state to promote an egalitarian distribution of all of the wealth or at least the resources and means of attaining wealth. There is no biblical warrant for that. You'd think there would be biblical evidence for this kind of thing but yet when I find myself trying to make out even this minimal case, I find there aren't that many biblical passages I can appeal to. You can read *Kingdom Prologue*, a little bit, of case to try to sort that out.

But nevertheless here are three areas where we should have some understanding of how the state relates to the family. If it does it properly then it is certainly deserving of our respect and understanding and our prayers. So there is the state vis-a-vis the family.

### **State should not be harnessed with utopian dreams**

In connection especially with this last point of the state as a surrogate for the functioning of the family, I have a section called "Social duty and utopian delusion." Of course, the point is here that we shouldn't expect too much from the state. We shouldn't expand the role of the state beyond what God has assigned to it as we understand the scriptures. This becomes a problem when the state just takes over everything and the family doesn't function at all. Not just in the area of education but all over the place. Then even Christian people are projecting utopian expectations upon the state. In general, what do we expect of the United Nations or of the course of history in our day? What can the nations of the world be doing by their cooperation to bring in world peace? It's not about to happen. All the utopian projections of the old social gospel, that is not the way history is going to go. The mystery of iniquity is working, it will get worse not better. There will be the crisis of the man of sin. The solution to the world problems comes with the consummation and the return of Christ and not in terms of what several states of the world might do.

So we should have more insight, we should have a world and life view that is not reductionistic like the old fundamentalist approach where we have no understanding or

appreciation of anything beyond the passing out tracks to get people converted. We should be interested in all of these institutions and our role. So we should have a broad of world view but we should also have a depth of insight as Christians into the eschatological structure of things and what's really going on in this world. From Genesis 3:15 and on there is enmity between Satan, his seed and Christ and his people and that is there beneath the surface beyond the nice veneer of goody goodies and society getting along with one another. There is this fundamental hatred that is there. There is this basic warfare that's going on, we can't forget it. So we should live then not with expectations without foundation that things are going to be constantly improving in there.

### **Common grace in the eschaton**

Incidentally however, the other side of that is common grace is going to continue as long as the world endures. There is a wonderful assurance for all of us because with all of this hatred that is expressed religiously. And also the usual rising of kingdom against kingdom that's going on all the time and with the development of technology so that the very existence of humanity is put in jeopardy at the touch of a button somewhere, with all of that going on, and we're all shivering in our boots, and the hearts of men fainting at those things that are coming to pass to use biblical language, we shouldn't forget common grace. Common grace, God's keeping the common curse and the worst of these things under control. God guarantees that as long as the earth endures.

When Jesus comes back common grace will be functioning, they will be marrying and giving in marriage. They will be working in the field planting in the fields and so on. One will be taken, but they will still be functioning. Christ is not going to return to an incinerated planet. There is not going to be a nuclear destruction of this world before Christ returns. God's common grace is going to be there. So don't have utopian expectations of where it's going to go before Christ's coming, but don't have extreme terror of what might happen on the other side. God's common grace is really a wonderful benefit and a concept that all of us in our own thinking for ourselves and our teaching with God's people we need try to emphasize more.

### **State and the covenant community (church)**

So much for utopian delusion but then finally along with the relationship of the state to the family, what's the relationship now with the functioning of the state to the covenant community, to the church. Now here on page 111 what I'm urging is that the state must not transgress the cultic boundary. So simplifying this whole thing again, here's the holy covenant community and wherever there are covenants that tell us what our job is. Our job is the cult, the worship of God and his word. So here's the common grace institution and wherever the biblical revelation tells us what its function is, its culture. So the functions of the state as part of this deal are strictly cultural. The state must not transgress the cultic boundary and involve itself in that area which God has given to his own people which is a holy area. The state is non-holy. This is an area for God's own people up there and here the state is an area which involves the coexistence common to both believer and non-believers.

So the state and negatively we say must not transgress that cultic boundary and involve itself in anything culticly. Anything cultic such as religious ceremonies or in theological confessional statements. That is not the sphere that God has assigned as a function of the state. Now that's of course where you can get yourself in a big argument with all kinds of conservative people these days who are so concerned that the state should be involving itself in cultic things and make that a primary item on their agenda. What they would like to get the state to do would be to have public prayers in public schools and so on which is why they're wanting the state to do exactly what the Bible says the state shouldn't do which is to transgress the cultic boundary.

### **Covenant Community**

So right at the beginning of this section, it is also to be observed that the cultic function of original city family, indeed, the very identity of that institution is the holy covenant people of God, has been assumed since the fall by still another distinct institution. This one is not another common grace institution but the holy covenant community. This is the organizational embodiment of the covenant of redemption. Here

then further bound has been set limiting the province of the state. Religious confession, cultic activity in general, appertains to the sphere of this holy covenant institution the church, not the state. The common grace institution of the state was designed to provide for a pragmatic cooperation in the political task between the woman's seed and the seed of the serpent. To fulfill that purpose the state has to be non-confessional. It has to be an a-religious institution. There can be no institutional integration of cult and culture here—that's theocracy in other words. In terms of common grace the institution of the state, there is to be no institutional integration of culture with cult.

Every form of state participation and religious confession whether through constitutional affirmation, official pronouncement, public ceremony, or the like is a transgression of the boundaries set in the divine ordering of the distribution of cultural and cultic functions among the institutions of the postlapsarian world. God has given the cultic functions to the church. He has given cultural functions to state.

Such cultic activity in the part of the state if it is not in confession of the living God is, of course, idolatrous. But even if it is acknowledgment of the Christian faith it is guilty of a monstrous confusion of the holy kingdom of God in the common profane city of man. To post a few theses on the wall of the door which is the right time of year to do something like that, the state should not, as we just said, be trying to put religion in public schools. Granted that you can make a case for the state to be involved in public education, I'm ready to make out a case for that. No that it's preferable, but you can make such a case then that's what it is. It's a state public institution that's going on there. Then there shouldn't be any public common exercises of religion.

Why in the world would we as conservatives want that to be going on which is promoting the idea that one way is as good as another. That all these little kids religious faiths and non-faiths get together and pray somehow, what difference does it make to whom or how since Jesus isn't the only way. Why should we be concerned that. That's the logic of what we're trying to do when we're urging common prayers in which we tell our children that Jesus is the only way. Then we want them to be in the school situation

that is promoting the thought that they don't have to believe in Jesus, they can go any other route in their prayers. This is a complete contradiction of our faith in the first place but what we're talking about now it is a violation on the part of the state. Of course, you can't stop the kids from praying, they can't pass any laws that are going to stop our Christian kids from praying. So that is one thing.

### **On oaths and ordeals: state and church**

You shouldn't take oath in a public court. What is an oath? An oath is a confession. Putting your hand on the Bible, it's a confession then of the God of the Bible, not just that he exists but you're saying that he is in a position to hear and to witness and to enforce this oath. So if you're lying he can visit sanctions upon you. If that's not what's going on the whole thing is a farce which, of course, is what it is in the way we conduct it. So an oath is a religious confession in the name of what god. You're not going to have it in the name of any god. No, our practice we do it with the God of the Bible. So what we are doing is the power of the state and the sword is to exact an oath for the God of the Bible out of these people who make a joke of it.

Now in the ancient world you know, what is an oath? An oath is a trial by ordeal. Where the evidence isn't sufficient for the human judges to settle the thing in the ancient world then you invoke the principle of trial by ordeal. We can't settle it, "O God our God so you act." So we arrange some kind of ordeal. There were all kinds of ordeals that were used. It was thought that the God would render a verdict in this ordeal situation where the individual might be pitted against some ordeal element like fire or water where the disputants in the case might be against one another in some sort physical contest. Wrestling, by the way, was one of the ways in which actual judicial procedure was accomplished for a couple who disagreed as to a particular inheritance. They would engage in a wrestling thing and whoever won the gods had settled it. When you can't settle the thing yourself you appeal to God, and that's what an oath is.

By the way in the Bible you have trials by ordeals. There is the jealousy ordeal in Numbers 5, where the woman's suspected of unfaithfulness and so she subjected to a

physical ordeal with a potion of the dust from the floor. She swallows it. The physical bad effects prove she's guilty and so on. In that case that was a trial by ordeal which wasn't just superstitious because God himself really did make that ordeal practice of work. So trial by ordeal then is a procedure in the extra-biblical world and the Bible and an oath is a form of that. Where you can't settle the thing, you take an oath and God is the one who can tell if you're lying or not. Let him settle the thing. Now that's the legal principle that's involved in an oath. You are no longer conducting an investigation, you have now appealed to God to settle the matter.

Of course, we don't believe for a minute that that's what's going on so as soon as we've said hello to God and tipped our hat to him with the oath we turn around and set up 12 good peers from among us and they're the ones who are really going to do the thing so what was the oath all about in the first place.

All it was was a violation of the fact that the state shouldn't be involved in exacting religious confessions from people. Therefore when you are in court you should take advantage of the provision that is made to take a solid affirmation but to refuse to take an oath. There is a proper place to take an oath and a place to confess God which is a cultic act within a church. So you can take an oath and become a member of a church, you take an oath and pledge allegiance to King Jesus alright or other solemn appropriate cases. That's the context for religious confessions and not here in the state. So there should not be any acknowledgements of God or whatever gods on our coins, in our salute to the flag, etc., etc., etc. There shouldn't be prayers or chaplains in the Senate and elsewhere mouthing pagan prayers in the name of us all and on and on.

### **Religious statements in the constitution**

These are all violations in the constitution. Some among us would want to go so far to rewrite the constitution so that there should be an acknowledgement they think it's our solemn duty as Christians to try to achieve this. They think to honor the Lord Jesus Christ that our constitution should have a statement right from the beginning making such an acknowledgement. No it should not. To produce such a theological professional



statement is a violation of what God has said. It is really simple and plain. Why is most of the conservative Christian community just bound to go in the other direction. It's due to the influence of perverse movements like Christian Reconstructionism and Dominion theology and so on. They don't see that the state is a common grace institution but who think that the state should be a theocracy and you and I should be doing our utmost to get the state to become a theocracy. Maybe we'll say a bit more about that in a second.

[Student question] When does perjury become perjury without an oath?

[Kline's response] I don't know what would happen to the concept of perjury. Define it for us. It definitely exists only in context of an oath. If an oath is not required you would no longer have perjury. Then the question would be; if you were caught lying it wouldn't necessarily be perjury. If you hadn't taken an oath but you would certainly be still be caught and have false statements and there could be penalties for that I suppose.

[Student question]

[Kline's response] I'm saying you shouldn't be swearing by anyone. That is a question of definition that's why I was asking for a definition.

[Student comment] I think part of what's going on there is people using the same word for different meanings. I think generally what the court means is you're making it a declaration that what you're about to tell is the truth that is all they mean by it.

[Kline's response] You mean even when they had the oath on the Bible and all the rest do you think that's all they're saying?

[Student comment] Well I think that at least the way the court behaves that seems to be all they're saying. There are many theonomic principles infused into our state. So there is confusion and it has been codified that way. Today we could remove the oath.

[Kline's response] Now which stand. It is making a farce of the whole thing, to use the sacred scriptures and everything in such a demeaning way is to trample it under. So we don't want that to go on. Well we haven't had even a five minute break and I don't want it to become ten or fifteen minutes but can we take five?

### **Common grace and millennialism**

Let's do something related that will take us back into the same sort of points we've been coming to. We've be dealing with common grace and the institution of the state and its functions. Now the next topic I have jotted down here to say something about was common grace and millennialism. What's the relationship now between what the doctrine of common grace tells us and your understanding of the millennium? Eschatology and common grace is there any connection between them? So just for your own meditation let me suggest that this doctrine of common grace really speaks very decisively of about what view of the millennium is the right one. So let's just sketch out the different millennial views first.

#### **Premillennial view**

So here are the pre-mills. The essentials of what we have to set up here to make our point can simply be that they see the history then as the history of church at this particular point and then the coming of our Lord--the parousia there. By the way with a crisis which for them is crisis number one--the anti-Christ. The premil. view is that the coming of our Lord is in response to an anti-Christ crisis but since on their view what the Bible, as I understand it, presents as one crisis they divide as two separate episodes. We'll call it for them crisis number one and then comes the parousia. Then comes the kingdom by which we mean the millennium on their view of the thing. The kingdom in the sense of the kingdom coming in power and glory. The fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies that the day was coming when God's kingdom would come, not just as a spiritual reign in the hearts of his people. But when the kingdom was going to come as an outward geopolitical kingdom in great power and glory and dominating the whole globe. So on a pre-mill view those kingdom prophecies are fulfilled in the thousand years which they see as coming after the parousia for which reason therefore they are called pre-mills. Because the parousia comes before the millennium.

Then of course, the biblical passage that does talk about the millennium-- Revelation 20 tells us that it terminates with the losing of Satan and a great crisis which is

depicted there in terms the Gog/Magog of Ezekiel 38 and 39. So for them that's crisis number two. Lord willing when we offer a course in the prophets here next year or whenever this is a passage then that we will deal a lot with. Did I handout that article on Gog in "Armageddon the end of the millennium." In that article I tried to work this out showing that Gog is the man of sin. So there's only one crisis. One of the problems with pre-millennialism that it takes that one crisis and divides it into two parts. Then comes the consummation of the world.

Now the main point we're trying to establish in all of this thing we're trying to discover on each view is where you get the coming of the kingdom and power and glory. Do you get it before the consummation or after the consummation? That's the key thing to be looking for. Then what is the theological relationship of that to what we've just seen about the common grace as an institution which God has established and guaranteed as long as the earth endures which means up until the consummation. That's going to be the point of this just as one particular variety of pre-millennialism. Of course, there is dispensational premillennialism.

We were describing classical pre-millennialism there. But dispensationalist pre-millennialism would, of course, have been working in terms of a Jewish kingdom, the Old Testament. With the church conceived of as a parenthetical development whereas classical pre-millennialism would see the church as an outgrowth of the old kingdom and not as a parenthesis. But dispensationalism would see the church now as a parenthesis with the church age ending, this all involves the seven weeks of Daniel passage and their misunderstanding of that and so forth. But after this so called great tribulation of the seventieth week, as they misunderstand it. So it's a crisis of that kind. Then they also have the kingdom come in power and glory only now it's a distinctively Jewish kingdom on the Old Testament order, but it does come here. Then they too, of course, would have to recognize that the thousand years ends with a crisis and a consummation and so on. But meanwhile the main point is that the kingdom has come in power and glory before the consummation.

### **Postmillennial position**

Now then there are post-mills they see the present church age now here's the consummation. They do not make the mistake of the pre-mills of dividing or separating the parousia from the consummation. They do not make the mistake of dividing the one crisis into two crisis. They don't make that mistake. But they do agree with these premil. views in that they place the coming of the kingdom and power and glory before the consummation.

Now they identify the coming of our Lord the parousia with the consummation. Whereas the premil's put the kingdom after the parousia, the post-mills put it after the parousia after the power of the kingdom. But there's still the coming of the kingdom before the consummation. In fact, some of them understand this millennium is covering the whole church age rather than just being a phase of the church age towards which we are moving. So you have that difference of opinion that you encounter when you're dealing with post-mils. But all of them agree at sooner or later before the consummation of the world, in their case that's associated with our Lord's return, the kingdom comes in power and glory. The only one of the views that disagrees with that is the amil view. So the amil view, of course, agrees this is the present church age, it agrees with the post-mil view that the parousia and consummation the coming of our Lord and consummation are one and the same time.

### **Amillennial view**

But the distinctive of amillennial view is that it is only with the return of our Lord and then the consummation that the kingdom comes in power and glory. Up until that time the church is seen as the Bible presents it as the church in the wilderness, the pilgrim church, and the martyr church. So that in discussing the millennium, that's the feature you should be looking for in distinguishing among them. Where do they see the fulfillment of the prophecies of the kingdom coming? The only one that sees it coming after the consummation is the amil, the other have it before.

Now what's wrong with having it before? If the kingdom comes in power and

glory that's the end of common grace. With the coming of the kingdom of power and glory, the unbelievers no longer have equal rights to co-exist politically or any other way. They are suppressed. In fact post-mills and their literature tell us that before that time the unbelievers are going to be put under and that it will be the duty of the Christian community to suppress them forcibly. If they will not publicly acknowledge King Jesus then they are to be eliminated. In other words, intrusion ethics destroyed them, suppressed them. It is to be practiced here before the Lord returns, that's what they are working for, that's the way they interpret prophecies and that's what they expect to happen. It's only the amillennial view that recognizes the biblical character of the church throughout this whole age is we are praying for those who despitefully use us, we are evangelizing them, we are ambassadors of Christ to be saved. We are suffering at their hands.

More specifically now that we are existing in an age of common grace. In common grace you don't suppress people for their religious beliefs. You give them equal political rights with yourself. How long now according to God's own guarantee, here God makes a covenant with all the earth, Genesis 8:20- 9:17. Here is the Lord of truth, the judge of all the earth covenantally committing himself to all mankind and guaranteeing to them this common grace arrangement as long as the earth endures until the consummation.

So what all these other views are proposing is that God is going to break his own covenantal commitments and that he is going to arrange it so that the common grace order ceases a thousand years if taken literally or however long they think it is. But for some big chunk of time this distinctive ethic is going to take place while the earth is still enduring during which God's common grace guarantees to unbelievers are abrogated, annulled and not honored. So I think here is a basic theological flaw in any one of these views that discredits them and apart from all other considerations if this was the only thing going should settle the whole question of millennialism.

## **The Church Age**

What is really involved is important and practical is our understanding of the church age, what the expectations are and so forth. What we should be up to? We should be up to for fulfilling our martyr identity as those who are witnesses to Christ even though it means at the same time undergoing martyrdom. The church age is the age of two great things. The church age is the great commission being martyrs in the sense of witnesses. But the church age is secondly the age of the great tribulations that is the age of being martyrs in the sense of being persecuted. If you're looking for the great tribulation it isn't some phony little seven year period that dispensationalist have falsified as the seventieth week of Daniel and plugged in here somewhere between the church age and Jewish, that's no great tribulation. The biblical picture of great tribulation is the whole present New Testament church age. This is the age when which God's people are undergoing the great tribulation. In Revelation 7 there's a great multitude but out of all the nations, out of the great tribulation they are redeemed. That's this present age. That should be the way you and I think about what's going on in the world and where we fit into the picture, what we should be expecting. We should be fulfilling our witness function in the world, as long as the world endures and so forth. In terms of common grace and millennialism to think about in your eschatology.

### **World-wide kingdom and absence of common grace**

Now the next thing I wanted to note was when you have the kingdom coming on a global scale, not just some local area. But in each of these cases the kingdom is a world-wide kingdom then there's no room for common grace left anymore. Now on the view that we're developing, here's the kingdom of God. It finally comes into consummation, but we have also recognized that the kingdom of God comes by way of intrusion typologically in Israel and then in the ark. We'll use the Israel example for a moment. In our view the kingdom of God comes with power and glory at that particular junction and then the phenomenon of the Old Covenant. So are we contradicting, or does our view

involve an abrogation of the whole common grace guarantee that God gave? No, because it's not a global thing, it is a local limited thing. Outside the bounds of this typological confined limited intrusion, of course, the common grace arrangement continues to control the situation of all of the other nations of the world. So that this is not an abrogation of the common grace principle, whereas the other one involving the whole globe is a total abrogation of it. So just defending the consistency of our recognition of limited theocracies with what we're saying.

We have mentioned dominion theology a moment ago as something which doesn't see things the same way that we've been suggesting here. I assume that all of you are somewhat familiar with the economic reconstructionism and dominion theology. Just quickly dominion theology would go this way. Before the fall you have the kingdom of God established there in the beginning with the cultural mandate as we saw to procreate and fill the earth. So there's the cultural mandate, which was a mandate we saw to build the city of God. So far so good, that's the view that we've taken too.

Now however our point was with the fall that original holy situation disappears and now you get the non-holy common grace arrangement and with theocracy as just an occasional typological intrusion until you finally come to the consummation of things. Meanwhile the common grace involves a cultural task but not the cultural mandate to establish the holy kingdom of God. Now that was our view. But, dominion theology says...