

Dr. Meredith Kline, Prologue, Lecture 28

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The introduction of the state in the first *toledoth* section with Cain

Picking up from where we were, we're tracing the developments in terms of the structure of the book of Genesis. We had discussed then the general structures of the holy covenant of redemption and of the common grace program. We had in the development of a common grace program examined especially the last time at some length the concept of the state and how it fits within all of this. Now we took the position that the founding of the state was within this first *toledoth* section of the book of Genesis because it's in Genesis 4:15 already that God, in dealing with Cain's complaints, gives to him the charter of the city, assuring him that things will not be complete anarchy, but that there will be this institution for law and order of seven whole divine vengeance that the Lord Himself is going to institute. So that is already in place. We are told about it in this first section. The general theme of which that you remember, when we discussed the start to the book of Genesis, was that here we have to do with the entrance and the escalation of sin in the world so that of course is the story of the fall is unfolded here. Then the escalation of sin in the world and the postlapsarian world of Eden is pretty much the story of the development of the state, the city of man, which is originated here. So that's the theme.

We tried then to see what the proper function of the state would be. We emphasized that it was a legitimate thing. That it was a good gift of God's common grace alone with the family and other institutions of common grace. Now what remains here would just be to see how this actually worked out in history.

Introduction of tonight's class: Sections 4-6 in Genesis

Tonight we want to make our way hopefully then up to the account of the flood, which will terminate this first period of the history of the "world that then was" and to move on to sections 4, 5, and 6, which will bring us then to the third section, bringing us to the great covenantal episode that closes out the history of the world that then was.

Then the 6th of the 10 sections in Genesis, leading us to the next great covenantal

episode with Abraham. I would like to get then to that tonight and deal with some features of it. It is a covenant of promise over against the law that came later and also to deal with the question of the constituency of this covenant and the sign of incorporation into it, which is the sign of circumcision. At the same time that we are looking at that, of course, we want to raise the question of how that relates then to the New Covenant sign of baptism. Then next week, Lord willing, we will continue with the analysis of the Abrahamic covenant and try to say something in the last three hours but the Abrahamic covenant with its kingdom promises as understood in terms of a typological hermeneutic which I trust we all share as over against a non-typological dispensationalist hermeneutic. Then we also want to deal somewhat with our kind of reformed of typological hermeneutic as over against a theonomic or reconstructionist type of hermeneutic. So next week we will try to do those two things. Hopefully tonight we can get that far. It's probably too much to expect but that's what we're aiming at.

So meanwhile here at this first section which extended then from Genesis 2:4 down through the end of chapter 4. The second section beginning with 5:1. We have the story of how this all worked out, so we saw what the state was a legitimate gift of God and what it's proper functioning would be. How it should be careful not to undercut the basic institution of the family but rather be cooperative with them. On the other hand, how it should not be undercutting the institution of the redemptive covenant and so on. How it should refrain from taking over the functions of the redemptive covenant community, the cultic functions. How the state should stick to its own particular cultural realm. So we got on some discussion of that.

Perversion of the good gift of the state: Cain making a name for himself

Now there was then this good gift of the state that was a popular thing but pretty quickly it comes perverted. The very fact that the founder of the first city, verse 15, tells us that God gave the charter of the city to them. By verse 17, Cain, we noted, had already taken advantage of this and had built the first city and he names it after his son. So remember when earlier we were talking about things. We saw how important the concept of the name was and the contrast between the covenant community and the world outside

there was that the world in general was seeking to make a great name for itself. The covenant people were calling upon the name of the Lord. Right away the theme of the name, making a name for yourself, emerges as Cain names this whole city of man enterprise after himself, naming it after his son, in whom he has this future, so that's what's going on there.

In my judgment this is a very long history that is compressed into these few verses here. Chapter four the whole story from Adam and the line of Cain here, up until the flood because, as a matter of fact, by the time you come to the end of this first *toldeoth* section you have already covered the first span. When you come to the second section it recapitulates and comes to back to the creation of Adam and takes you to the flood again. The third section deals with the flood. So in a very short compass here, we have a very vast history sketched for us in terms of the cultural. The city of man developments in the line of Cain and we come very quickly to the climax of that with the figure of Lamech. I guess some of this will be repeating what we said in the very first hour when, as a matter of fact, we went through this whole structure and so we can abbreviate it hopefully here.

Lamech

We come to the figure of Lamech and he is the one then you remember who despises all the divine institutions of common grace of the family because he is practicing bigamy and the state because he's practicing tyranny. Here's this institution of justice, "an eye if an eye and a tooth for a tooth" that would be justice, but he is imposing death for a slight offense against him. So he is trampling on the institution that the Lord had provided for justice in the earth.

But worst of all is his arrogance, the blasphemy, of the divine kingship ideology which comes to expression here because he assumes that he is more competent for avenging himself than the Lord God would have been then to avenge Cain. According to the traditions of the line that Lamech points back, "we hear stories that Lamech is going to avenge Cain sevenfold back there that ancestor of mine. I don't need him. I can avenge myself sevenfold." In other words, "I am super-god." That is the real sin that the city of man leads to something which becomes the cult of man, where God is defied and man is

deified. That's what happens here. Man sets himself up as a god-king in the city of man and that's the sin of Lamech. It can't get worse than that. God's not going to tolerate it anymore.

Introduction to the Flood: anti-christ stage

Now the flood judgment is going to come and deal with it, now we're in the anti-Christ stage of history. In fact, that's what we have here, not the history of the "world that then was," I guess we discussed this along these lines that first hour remember we found that here we have an eschatological paradigm. Jesus treats it that way as it was in the days of Noah that repeats this history, so it will be in the days of the Son of Man. So that if you're looking at, trying to discover the fundamental structure of the shape of things to come for us in the New Testament era, looking to the days of the Son of Man, according to Jesus pointing back here, here we can see the fundamental shape of history developing. Here in the ancient city of man with the covenant people who will be described in the next section in Gen. 5:1 and following. A community there is giving its witness but nevertheless with the city of man and a community of those who have this anti-Christ approach of defying God, trampling upon his institutions, rejecting the good gifts of his common grace, and going their own perverse way.

So you have this tension developing between the two communities. To whom does the world belong? The wicked claim it for themselves, the righteousness are claiming it for themselves because they are the children of the One to whom it really belongs and so on. Who will settle this? Alas, God will settle it with a great trial by ordeal in the flood. So meanwhile things develop and they develop to this crisis point. I'd say is a sort of beginning with Lamech you come into the crisis, the anti-Christ stage then God intervenes. That's the shape of history. That's the shape of our New Covenant history too. It's the tension between the witnesses of Jesus in the midst of a world that still has God's good common grace institutions of the state but which are being perverted here and there. According to the testimony of biblical prophecy it will come to a crisis, anti-Christ, the man of sin stage, which will again require in that day of the Son of Man which is like the days of Noah according to Jesus. This will then lead again to equivalent of the

flood judgment, only now will be the judgment that Peter tells us is by fire when as the Lord Jesus comes. So here's the shape of history in the shape of the "world that then was." So that's what's going on here.

Genesis 4:25-26 transitional from city of man to the covenant community

There is that history. With Lamech we are almost at the end of the first section. There's a couple more verses, two verses 25 and 26 which are transitional you remember. They lead us from the theme of the city of man over to the theme of the covenant community, or the city of God, starting with the second section by telling us what was going on while the city of man people, Lamech and company, were making a big name for themselves. Chapter 4:25 and 26 tells us that the Sethite community was a community characterized by calling on the name of the Lord, by people who are concerned that God's name should be hallowed and glorified. They identify themselves as his children. He is their protector and so on. He is their creator and owner of the world.

So we are advised at once that there is along with this unhappy development still God's sovereign preservation of a people. His purposes are not going to fail in spite of the entrance and escalation of sin even up to the antichrist stage in spite of that. God's redemptive purposes will prevail. The original goal that he set under the covenant of creation at the beginning that there should be that great global city of God, "metapolis" as we have called it, the city of heaven, the Sabbath, and so on. That goal's still going to be reached and the remnant is there already during all of this time.

The remnant is in the earth. Of course, the book of Genesis is going to trace that remnant in sections 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, and 10. All the way through that remnant is going to be there. There will be defections here but there is still that elect remnant that is there that will lead up to Israel. Israel will lead up to the Messiah. Messiah is the body of the church. Already that's what the second section is telling us here.

Transition from section two to section three

Now just bypassing that for the moment at least we come to the end of section two, which is dealing then with the line of Seth in the covenant community. Once again that feature of transition, come to the end of section one and you have a transition leading

to section two, come to the end of section two there is a transition into section three. Section three is judgment.

What is the transition? The transition is in chapter 6:1 and following. Here then it backs up, picks up the story where it left it with Lamech in section one. We got up to climax of history then we went back to creation of Adam and the image of God. It comes to Seth and takes us up virtually to flood again. Then this transition, as I say, picks up the story of the antichrist theme, the Lamech theme, the divine kingship ideology theme and it tells us that story again and gives us the general picture of things that precipitates the flood judgment. This is described in the third section in terms of its being a covenant for salvation that God made with Noah. So that takes us to this little section of verses at the beginning of chapter 6. Again, in interest of time, I don't have enough time to spend on it. It's in *Kingdom Prologue*.

Approaches to the “sons of God” and “daughters of men” (Gen. 6)

The traditional understanding of it among critics of the Bible is that these sons of god take the daughters of men and marry them and have *Nephilim* and *Giborim*. The critical view of the thing is then that it is a bit of raw mythology that's taken over from a rather well know Near Eastern mythology of divine beings that take human women and have some monstrous breed of offspring. That's a bit of raw mythology that snuck into the Bible here and there it is.

That's a view, which gets sort of baptized into orthodox Christianity in a form of these pagan deities now being understood as angels. So there is the view that these are angels and there are a couple of verses or so that probably come to your mind in the New Testament that are alleged to evoke such an interpretation of these angelic beings who left a proper state and had relationships with human women that produced some sort of gigantic beings. Well, there are problems with that such as when God pronounces a judgment on this thing the judgment is strictly on man. On this particular interpretation a more conservative version of it where they are angels you'd think that angels who would be a primary culprit of the thing. Yet God's verdict doesn't say anything about that.

In the church the dominant view has been not that the sons of god or gods were

not angels but rather that they are the godly line. So that they think that there is a picking up of the thought that we have the line of Cain and line of Seth. They feel in this particular episode in Genesis 6:1 and following that the line of Cain is picked up in terms of the daughters of men. The sons of god are supposed to be a term for the Sethites in terms of the spiritual nature of the sons of God. So that is probably the most common view generally in conservative circles. The problems with that is that the offspring of these religiously mixed marriages, according to the text, would be consistently some sort of, it depends on how you understand the Nephilim/Giborim, but the evidence is to the effect that they have to be understood in terms of military prowess, which would involve then the physical stature and strength. Here is a particular line of those who qualify by virtue of physical stature, strength, and what not to be most competent in terms of warfare and so on.

A problem with this is why religiously mixed marriages would produce a particular physical type of strain and that's not at all clear. That problem is actually felt so keenly that someone like John Murray, who advocates this traditional view in his book, "Principles of Conduct," in the appendix to the thing. Actually tried to make out that the offspring who are mentioned of the offspring of Nephilim and Giborim are not really the offspring of these marriages but they just happen to exist in this world at that time. That just won't do folks. The text says that: "when the sons of god went into the daughters of men and they had these children." So here they are. I think that Murray's view should admit to the gravity of the problem.

Sons of gods as deified kings with their harems

What I think really fits into the Bible best and whole Near Eastern background and fits context best is to see that what's being described is simply a development, a resumption as we said, of the Lamech theme. The proof of the putting is those three sins associated with Lamech: the trampling of family, trampling on the state, and the blasphemous assumption of divine status. Those same three themes are encountered here precisely from what is being said in Genesis 6. Here again they are trampling on family. Lamech practiced bigamy, these people are developing harems. What we have here is the

picture of the ancient king, that's the city of man. What happened to the city of man? The kings in the city of man ran away with things and then they abused the institution and one of the major abuses of the ancient institution of royalty, including in the Bible unhappily, I think of Solomon and so on, was the development of the great oriental harem, the taking of many wives. That's exactly what the text says. It says when mankind became numerous on the face of the earth that these characters, the sons of god, from what I understand is human kings, took for themselves wives as many as they pleased. That's the picture so they are traveling as Lamech did on a big scale now with an institution of the family. The whole text brings out more over of the corruption and the violence that was in the earth by the virtue of their presence. So God looks on the situation, he can't put up with it anymore. So here is the violence that they were practicing in the state in the name of justice, the perversion of it.

The key point in the whole thing is the very designation of them as *bene Elohim*-- "the sons of the gods." What has happened here was that the author has taken out of their own mouths their own claim to deity, "we are the sons of God." So he calls them, he labels them, that which they claim for themselves. That is their great antichrist that is similar to Lamech and more can be said and I try to say it in *Kingdom Prologue* in the original prologue.

So there then in the end of section two in this transitional thing we have this eschatological paradigm brought up to its antichrist crisis with these who are claiming to be God in the world. As I say this fits in with the extra-biblical data that we get from the ancient world were in fact the ideology of divine kingship was prevalent in Egypt and elsewhere and all around.

Now then this calls for judgment. So the third section will describe that flood judgment that ended that history and the way that was cast in the form of the covenant that we want to look at.

Covenant Community

Now meanwhile there is then the picture of the covenant community. The covenant community characterized in that traditional section up there was those who

were calling upon the name of the Lord. My problem is how much to deal with tonight I think that is maybe a section then that we can just thumb through quickly here. In *Kingdom Prologue* it would be page 117 and following. What was it like? Here's the church to use that term which I usually save for the New Testament form of the covenant community. But here is the people of God. What was the nature of their togetherness and of their functioning of the world in that time? The people of God were, of course, not absent from the city of man. The city of man is a common grace institution, common means common to believers and non-believers. So what's going on in the city of man the general cultural activity out there is that something only unbelievers are involved in believers are there too. So the people of God wear their two hats. They are involved in the common grace culture in the city of man but then they also have something distinctive of what's going on which is the same as the situation today. You and I are involved in the world outside the church in our families and in our marriages. Our families are not the church. So we are involved in the common grace functions that were described from the beginning in terms of procreation, dominion over the world, labor, and so on. What is distinctive of us as over against this common area? What's distinctive of us is our calling to be the people of God. To be those who are calling upon his name. So that's what's described here in the second section. It isn't that detailed a description. In fact, it's basically just a genealogy of the line of Seth with a few extra details here and there that clue us in as to what they were doing as the people of God. The fact that it is in the form of a genealogy, a covenant line, as we have noted that's significant because that shows us principle of polity in God's organization of the covenant community.

In fact, then that becomes a key point if we get to that hopefully here tonight in the story of circumcision and baptism and whom should the covenant be administered. The key point would be the one I'm making now, mainly that the covenant line is one that is identifiable with family continuity generation after generation. So the story of covenant can be told as genealogical story--the ongoing line of the covenant. So it is here from Seth down to Noah.

Now then what characterizes them? So we try to indicate on page 117 and

following the identification as the people of the Lord, as those calling on the Lord's name. They are identifying themselves with God confessing him and naming themselves after him, depending upon him, witnessing of him to the world.

In page 119, in terms of covenant polity, what's the nature of this community. It's a cultic community. It's the altar. They are an altar community right from the beginning. At the beginning of this story there's Seth. It's at the altar you know that this hatred breaks out between Seth and earlier than that already with Cain and Able of course. We have then the altar scene at the beginning of this story. Then at the end of it we come up to Noah and this covenant line is still engaged with the altar now. That is their identity, that they are a people of God and that they're distinctive life has its focus at the altar, the place of calling on God's name, a place of worship. So as a distinctive people they are a worshiping congregation.

The altar and the people of God

They are an altar people. This visible altar remains as a distinctive marker of the people of God throughout their whole history then until we come to our Lord. He fulfills the reality of the altar of heaven so that today the only altar is the real altar in heaven. There are some interesting things that develop there in that one-generation overlap when you come to the end of that Old Covenant and then the New Covenant is introduced and then cross is made obsolete. The true altar is now in heaven. Well for one generation until 70 A.D. the old community continues on with it's altar. But nevertheless in principle it is obsolete. Even though the apostles continue to honor the altar and temple until God destroys that in 70 A.D. They did continue to honor it but nevertheless it was thought to fade away. It is just about obsolete and from that point on the altar is the heavenly one.

That effects the dynamics of missions and everything else throughout this whole history where you have the visible earthly altar. It is the centripetal focus of the life and witness of God's people so that they are not involved in a centrifugal missionary outreach, such as characterizes the New Covenant period by reason of the great commission and by reason of the persecution the apostles are forced out of Jerusalem into Judea and Sumerian and the ends of the earth. In opposition to that centrifugal missionary

dynamic up until that point the dynamics of mission are determined by the visible central altar. So that's what God's people are doing is setting up a visible witness in midst of the earth. Attracting magnetically the attention of those around to this witness. So it's a coming into the focus of time rather than going out and bringing people to a focus in the heavenly altar above. So the presence of the altar then is a significant characterizing feature of God's people.

Ingestion of Blood

Another aspect of it we won't stop and deal with, for example, when we were talking about common grace and we talked about the covenant of common grace in Genesis 9 and one of the questions had to do with the ingestion of blood being forbidden. How long that that continues and why? That whole thing has to do with the presence of the visible altar among them. As long as there is the visible altar among their midst, blood has sacrificial significance. The concept isn't that all life is sacred. That's some pagan animistic notion that all life is sacred and that's why you don't ingest blood. That's utter nonsense. What it is that at the altar blood has the significance of that which has been forfeited, the life of man has been forfeited and belongs to God. That's been brought out by the presence of the altar in their midst and because the blood belongs to God and is forfeited to him it is not to be ingested then by human beings which would seem to trample on the thought that it belongs to God as forfeited it to him. So as long as you have the altar, the influence of the altar, that prohibition applies.

Now within Israel it applied. It did not apply to others outside the sphere of the altar. The altar was within Israel. This was not something for the Gentiles that they had to refrain from ingesting blood. This was something for the altar community to be aware of. As I say, in this overlap generation in which the apostles find themselves and this problem comes up in Acts 15, as to how to handle this business of, among other things there, the ingestion of blood. The way they settle on it, is that well as I see it, within the Jerusalem-Antioch axis, where the influence of the altar was still present, after the cross until 70 A.D., there was still the altar. As I say, the apostles still honored it and the temple. So as long as that was true, there were those then of the Jews who still had all of

those scruples within that more approximate area, which I say you might describe in terms of the Jerusalem-Antioch axis, for them the Acts 15 decision is let's avoid the ingestion of blood. But then you can see as soon as Paul gets himself beyond that immediate context where the altar still has some of its influence and control and as soon as you get into Paul's dealings and those Greek cities and so on beyond that, where the altar is no longer significant, he then no longer enforces the injunctions of the Acts 15 decision.

Well then I'm just trying to suggest the whole other ways in which the presence of the altar must be taken into account of and various problems that appear. So the altar is there.

The Covenant Community

They are a priestly community you see therefore. They are a worshipping community. There is no particular cast or specialized priesthood. There is the universal priesthood at this altar. Just as now when there is no longer an altar on earth, but the altar is in heaven. There are no altars on earth. There are no special priests on earth either.

Now the universal priesthood is there all the time. All of God's people then have access to him individually at all times but you don't until you come to Israel, have a specialized order of priests who are typological of Christ, the mediator Priest. So there is the universal office priest that we have at all times, Old Testament, New Testament it doesn't change. In fact since its universal, I think maybe it's a contradiction to call it an "office." Maybe we should save the word "office" for special things but there is a universal privilege of a priesthood let's say.

But then Christ is a different sort of one in that he is one who is a mediator, which shows us that we don't have access to God in ourselves but only through him. So as types of that special meditorial priesthood in the Old Testament God sets up the Levitical Aaronic Priesthood and that continues until the real priest comes. So with the coming of Christ the real priest with the real altar, the real sacrifice, and the real temple. The reality all moves up to heaven and on earth there are none of these things anymore. We see this one overlap generation creating some ambiguities along the way but the basic reality is

that from this point on clearly from 70 A.D. the only holy places are the heavenly ones. There are no holy places on earth and therefore no the altars on earth. We shouldn't be talking about altars.

Not holy places any more: in spirit and truth we worship

So any who in their ecclesiastical polity speak about a special priesthood, which is something distinctive from the universal priestly privilege of everybody, speak about a special order of clergy priests then. This is anachronistically carrying on the notion of a special kind of typological priesthood after the antitype priest has come. It is an effective denial of the fact that the real anti-typical priest has come. There is no need anymore for these prototypes, the type special mediatorial priests are all around. So that kind of church polity just as a total contradiction of the advance that we have come to in Christ in the New Covenant and that we are beyond that typological stage. We are in the fullness of time. So let's not talk about altars or special priests. Let's not talk about sanctuaries like on the other side of the wall there because this is an anachronism, which in principle, denies that Christ has done it. Now we worship spirit and truth. Not on that mountain over there, you women from Samaria, not on that mountain, nor in Jerusalem. There is no earthly place. Neither Gerizim nor Jerusalem is holy anymore.

There are no holy places on earth anymore; only in heaven is there the true sanctuary. Therefore from now on we worship God "in spirit and in truth." How that gets diluted. Its meaning we use "in spirit and in truth," but it doesn't mean that from now on we worship God sincerely. What, did we worship God insincerely before? That's not what it's talking about, it's talking about in heaven in the Johannine vocabulary, in spirit and truth describe the heavenly realm. The bread from heaven, the true bread, the manna, that's what true means, it's the heavenly reality. "Spirit" as we had occasion see over again, spirit is heaven. So by "in spirit and in truth," Jesus is setting up the contrast between worshipping at some symbolic typological earthly altar and worshipping in terms of the heavenly where Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father up there. So we've got to be true to the eschatology of the Bible and not to deny it even with this kind of innocent loose usage which we applied to our church meeting places. So this is a

favorite theme of mine. Now we got our ten-cents worth in on that. Now there was a new dictionary of architecture. Now what can we do there?

That's another one like the two tables of the covenant. They can't get it out of the vocabulary of the people. They'll always use it that way. "Sanctuary," I'm afraid is going to be used forever. But when it becomes official in the polity and liturgical practice of any group, they talk about a priestly order and they talk about altars and so on, then it is highly objectionable and we have to speak out against it.

[Student comment] In terms of worshipping in spirit and truth would another application be, for example, under the Old Covenant the law was written on tablets of stone not in the hearts but at that time were people still, not covenant people, but they were considered spiritually dead because Christ had not risen yet so he could dwell them with his spirit?

[Kline's response] I didn't think you want to put it that way. They are regenerate. If they are God's people they are true believers. It is only because they have been regenerate and the spirit has already worked in them.

[Student comment] In terms of what they are looking forward to, the promise. It was like in Romans Paul talks about how he worships God with his spirit rather than an outward form of the Old Covenant and how he was born again by the Spirit would that not be an application of this.

[Kline's response] I'm not sure if that's the way Paul would be putting the difference between the two things. He would be identifying his spirit as the opposite of the letter. For example, when he talks about the law being written no longer with letters on stone but by the spirit on the heart, what he is contrasting I think is the principle of works and the principle of grace because in the whole context then he identifies with the Spirit that this is the covenant of life and justification. Whereas the "letter" correspond to justification of works and death. So what Paul's doing is there is he is describing the difference between the Old Covenant and the works arrangement and the New Covenant as an arrangement of grace.

But what Paul would do, and I think what we have to do, when we were talking

about the way in which Christ enters into the world and fulfills the eternal covenant with the Father and that he should do such and such and as a result of that then the Father would glorify him. So there is the ascension that takes place. We made the point that although what Christ does is very late in history over against the fall back here. It is very late in history when the legal basis, the cross. It is the legal basis for the gift of the Spirit and these other blessings, in spite of the fact that that comes so late in history. It is so certain that Christ was going to do it over against the first Adam, remember that we put it this was for all time, that already the Holy Spirit is being given from early on so that in Israel and as well as before that, the Holy Spirit is at work. So that fundamental process subjectively of salvation is the same in the Old Testament as in the New. Even though they are looking in terms of their faith apprehension of Christ as something that is to come inwardly they already have the same benefits of that. The same way we do, namely in the presence of the Spirit who regenerates and gives them true the spiritual life and so on.

[Student comment] “In terms of truth Vos deals with that briefly in *Biblical Theology* for anybody it’s on page...”

[Kline’s response] Does it deal with the Johannine terminology That would be the last part of it.

Transcribed by Rebecca Corshia

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