

## **Dr. Meredith Kline, Prologue, Lecture 30**

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### **Flood as an example of intrusion**

So Gog and Magog gather together all the wicked of the world to besiege the saints. God intervenes and he gathers all of his saints to heaven and he destroys all of the armies of Gog and so on. But the gathering together which is augmented by the theme even of the gathering of all the animals so that there will be a complete representation of God's creation with man over the animals and over the vegetable kingdom. The whole thing is gathered together by God redemptively into the ark which is his eternal kingdom. So it's a terrific example of intrusion into the common grace history an intrusion of God's holy kingdom, of God's holy judgment with clear lines of distinction between the non-covenant people and the people within the covenant.

It's not quite the same as final judgment. Final judgment will be a clear cut distinction between the elect and the reprobate. We're still within the ambiguities of history here where all who are in the covenant are not elect. Among the eight souls in that ark, there's that one man Canaan who will receive the curse afterwards and who obviously does not behave as a true child of the covenant. But it is a clear example of the way in which God's judgment discriminates between those who bear his name in history within the ranks of the covenant and those who are outside. And to that extent, it's a clear picture of the separation of the sheep and the goats, the elect and the reprobate at the final judgment.

### **Theme of recreation**

Along with redemptive judgment there's the theme we've seen of recreation. The whole thing is told in the form of another creation story whether you analyze it from the literary point of view, or whether you look at it from the point of view in which the physical phenomenon of this event reflects the original creation of the world from that chaotic combination of waters to the separating of waters and to the emerging of the dry land and the coming forth of the people and the animals and with a Sabbath theme and so on. Details are found in the *Kingdom Prologue*. So from the point of view of literary

parallelism, from the point of view of physical or cosmological correspondences, clearly the flood episode is told as a recreation event.

### **Time of consummation of God's kingdom**

The third category we use here is that the prophetic symbolism includes the idea that when the final redemptive judgment takes place it is an event of a new heaven and a new earth and their recreation. It is likewise the time of consummation. The consummation of God's kingdom. The city of man will be destroyed and when the city of God will be perfected, it will be consummated. The kingdom will be consummated and it will be a cosmic temple of God, the people of God inhabiting the cosmos. They constitute the temple of God. So that symbolism is very much there.

The ark itself is an architectural representation of a cosmos conceptualized as a three story universe as it often is in the Bible--the heavens and the earth, and the waters under the earth. So you have the three stories in the ark. In the Bible where you get that poetic figurative imagery of the cosmos as a three storied universe. You also have the details that there is a window of heaven, this is a beautiful poetic figure. The rain cycle is described as though there are the reservoirs of water stored up in God's chambers. There's a window there, and he opens the window and the rain comes down. So that's one of the details which is actually reflected in the narrative of the flood itself, "the windows of heaven were opened," and that thing.

The other detail that you get in the biblical, poetic description of the cosmos is that the deeps, the waters that are below, that God has set bounds, and he says a door with a bar and everything. But the window of heaven, and the door, the windows are holding in the waters above at bay, the door of the deep holding them at check. Now in the course of the flood that precisely the window was open and the door was open and the flood waters come from both places. But that imagery of the cosmos, the window of heaven and the door of the deep are both reflected in the architectural detailing of the ark. Not many details are given, you see. But these are. So clearly what's being pictured here in the ark is the world, the whole creation of God, heaven, earth and under the earth. So here is the kingdom of God, and here is the kingdom of God in its final consummated stage.

The people who have been in there are prototypes of the people who will be in the consummated kingdom. They are the ones who have overcome death. The ones who are the ultimate overcomers, the ones who will experience resurrection and so on. That's depicted as we were just noting, in the ark.

Then finally, the idea of kingdom consummation is expressed in various ways in the Sabbath theme. You would expect it as part of creation anyway, the Sabbath theme, and it's there, not only in the seven fold structure, but in other details as well. It's in the seventh month that the ark comes to rest and ends the prevailing of the waters over the mountain. Then there are other Sabbath details, please read *Kingdom Prologue*. So it is a magnificent portrayal then of the ultimate purposes of God redemptively in Christ. This is what he is to do, the day is coming when God will do that for his church and he will deliver it.

### **Covenant of Grace with Noah**

Now this whole arrangement is cast in the form of a covenant, and we're especially interested, of course, in the series of covenants in the Bible. So here's one of them. Here is an administration of that covenant of grace. Christ is the one who fulfills the eternal covenant with the Father. This reward now is the Lord of the covenant of grace and he administers various particular covenants and here's one that he makes with Noah. There will be others, with Abraham and so on. It's actually here that the word *berith* (covenant) is used for the first time in reference to this experience that we just described: the salvation in the ark. There was a covenant that defined that particular arrangement and the point that I develop, well again, we'll pass over page 109 and following. It is quite a lengthy description of the language of the covenant and so on there.

We'll just skip through to the figure of Noah, the way Noah figures within this whole episode himself as a sort of a Christ figure, a type of Christ. The whole episode is typological of the messianic salvation. Noah himself functions as sort of a prototype savior figure, comparable to Christ. The whole arrangement, can be regarded as sort of a "covenant of grant" that God gives to Noah, because of his faithful obedience. Now just

as God gives to Christ the honor and the glory and dominion over the whole world, for his faithful covenant obedience, that eternal covenant of the Father and the Son can be conceived of as a “covenant of grant.” A kingdom glory that the Father grants to the Son on the condition of the Son’s faithful obedience.

So now, in the case of Noah, the language seems to indicate that Noah is righteous in his generation. “Noah found grace in eyes of the Lord,” which doesn’t mean that despite of his ill deserts God gave him something good. That’s not what the expression “grace” means here. It’s the expression that when the servant serves faithfully, then the master approves. “Well done, good and faithful servant.” That’s what the biblical expression of finding grace in someone’s eyes means. God approves of him. Noah has been found faithful. He’s been a faithful prophet of the Lord. He’s been faithful moreover in obeying all God’s commands to build the ark and so on. He has obeyed and, now, of course, he’s a simple fallen son of Adam, the same as all the rest of us, and the same as anyone else in his own day. If you’re asking about how does Noah get to heaven, he doesn’t get to heaven because of his obedience. He gets to heaven because of Christ’s obedience.

Meanwhile, however, here is a typological situation. This wasn’t a real salvation. This wasn’t real heaven that we’re talking about in this big episode. It was only a typological episode. So Noah, then in terms of that, doesn’t have to have the perfection of Christ’s obedience, but God endows Noah’s exemplary obedience with this quality that he therefore can stand as the sort of typological representative of what Christ will do later on. It’s because you were obedient now that I grant you this arrangement whereby you will save yourself and also your own people. So Noah here can be thought of then as sort of a type of Messiah as the faithful servant.

As the mediator of the covenant in the sense that the revelation of this whole covenantal arrangement is mediated through Noah to the others who participated in it. The book of Hebrews speaks about Noah building the ark to the saving of his family and the condemnation of the rest of the world. So in that sense Noah also is like Christ, that he is a savior figure whose obedience results in the saving of his family and the

condemnation of the rest of the world. So we have some messianic typology present here in the figure of Noah in this covenant of grace. Which then also I think that about covers it.

On that end, it's now time to take a break before we go on. Let's try to keep it down to five minutes.

### **Habiru and Egypt**

The pharaoh is asking for help, but meanwhile the Hebrews themselves would have been in the land and would also have been pestered by these Habiru mercenaries from the north. As I see it as a matter of fact, what we have in the Amarna letters is a picture of troubles that are identifiable with the first oppression of the Israelites rather than being the Hebrews themselves, these Habiru are the first oppressors of the Israelites who came from the area of Syria. So it's a long story, some of which is reflected in *Kingdom Prologue*, and the whole larger story I spell out in my doctoral dissertation a thousand years ago when it got reprinted and it's available as some off print. But these are my conclusions but the dominant modern opinion is that the Habiru, they reject the biblical idea that it has anything to do with Shem with Eber, with any of that. They repudiate historicity of that. They simply say that the dominant view is that these Habiru are some social outcasts, lower cast people and that they are identifiable with the Hebrews. That's who the Hebrews are, not as the Bible says that they were descendants of Abraham who were all down in Egypt and who experienced the exodus and who came as one great people in the name of Yahweh and conquered the land. Critics reject that whole thing. They say that the twelve tribes of Israel emerge largely as a result of some peasants revolt, that they were part of the population of Canaan. They revolt against the dominant tyrannical rulers of the city-states. So the Hebrews are these lower societal folk who are engaged in an attempt to throw off their tyrants and to establish a sort of egalitarian community and so on. In other words, a completely Marxist interpretation is given to the origins of the Hebrews, the Israelites in the land of Canaan.

The biblical view of redemptive conquest in the name of God is rejected. So there's a lot of stuff going on there involving massive reconstructions of the biblical

picture that you will read. You will encounter it if you read the literature and I'm sorry we can't spend more time right now on it. I tried to give some hint of it in *Kingdom Prologue* if you read through that.

Alright, back of all this by the way is one other big episode that I wish we had time to discuss more. But before you come to the end in chapter nine here... oh yeah, way back here, even before we came to the end of that third section, which had the story of the flood, which goes through in chapter nine, before you came to the end of that, is a very important passage there. There was the covenant of common grace. There was the Ark Salvation Covenant. We discussed that. Then there was the Covenant of Common Grace, which is dealt with in the beginning of chapter nine and in the previous weeks we discussed that. Then in the final episode here, before you even come to the end of that third section is the oracle of Noah in chapter 9 verses 24-27.

All I'll say about it now let's say we hope next, what is this, next fall term, Lord willing what we hope to do is to teach a course on prophets, all right? Is this right? In the course of the prophets then, one passage I always like to deal with on the basis of the Hebrew text, and you will have become Hebrew experts by that time, by taking Hebrew this next term. Then you can deal with prophets which will be based on Hebrew next year and also then with Psalms and wisdom literature when that comes along. So when we've got the Hebrew to work on that and we'll work on that and discuss at length this passage of Noah's oracle as one of the messianic prophecies.

But just quickly, so you know what it is. Noah pronounces curses and blessings on his sons. He pronounces curses on Ham, which will be realized through the branch of Canaan, and is fulfilled obviously in the dispossession of the Canaanites, the judgment on the Canaanites. Then he deals with Shem and he pronounces a blessing on Shem. That's what I had in mind, that when Abraham is called a Hebrew, it means that he is one of this line that goes back to Shem, on whom Noah pronounced the blessing that Shem, which means "name"--"you will be the bearer of God's name." Here's that theme of "the name" again, you see. Here's the people that call on the name of the Lord. So the Shem ("name") that's your blessing. In other words the promise of covenant relationship to

God is the blessing on Shem that is pronounced.

### **Jepheth's Blessing**

Then it goes on to Japheth and on his name too and it says, "may God open it for Japheth." The imagery is that of the tent and the blessing of the covenant had been pronounced on Shem, he occupied the covenant tent. But then the days are going to come, the New Covenant, when the Gentiles come in, the descendants of Japheth come in. So the promise, the blessing on Japheth that Noah pronounces is after the covenant, the law that Moses, the Old Testament arrangement, then may the day come when the tent doors will be thrown open. Isaiah described it especially that the day is coming when God's purposes will explode all over the place, and the Old Testament tent won't be big enough and you have to expand it and open it up so that all of these others can come in. So that's what the blessing is on Japheth, it's a messianic promise in terms of its anticipating the messianic days and the flowing in of the Gentiles especially by the mission of Paul to the descendants of Japheth, which were the Greeks and so on.

So there's that wonderful oracle of Noah which sets the stage for the whole history on this side of the flood. Just as Genesis 3:15, at the beginning, was a programmatic statement for all the rest of history, so now after the flood, in the world that now is, God gives another prophetic revelation on a big scale through the mouth of Noah. So there's all that that takes place and here it begins to unfold.

But it's especially the blessing on Shem that is going to be bestowed on Abram. Shem means "name" and the blessing is that you are going to be the people of the name of God, the people with whom God identifies, that he is known as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. See his name is associated with them, they call on him and so on. That's what we come to now then with Abraham.

### **Abrahamic Covenant**

So in the history of the covenants, now we have this whole series of the administrations of the covenant of grace. The ark covenant was one of them. And there was the covenant with the Sethites and there's the covenant with the descendants of Shem. Leading up now to this huge arrangement, this Abrahamic covenant and all the

rest of the Bible is really a development now of what we find here in Genesis 12 and following, God's covenant with Abraham. As we will be studying, and next time we'll be dealing with the promises of the kingdom, God makes a covenant with Abraham in which he gives him various promises which are to be fulfilled and granted in terms of what the seed of Abraham, the messianic seed, will do for them. All the nations of the earth will be blessed in him which is simply an extension of what Noah said. Noah said that the Japhethites will come into the covenant. Well then the Abrahamic promise that's expanded, not just the Japhethites, all the Gentiles will find their representatives coming into the Abrahamic covenant and being blessed in the seed of Abraham.

So that the kingdom promises then, looks forward, beyond the book of Genesis which is the Kingdom Prologue, to Kingdom Come. Kingdom Come in the Mosaic covenant, but then the Kingdom Come in the messianic covenant, the New Covenant. In the New Covenant there are the two stages A and B.--first coming of Christ, second coming of Christ. Stage A, the kingdom comes in terms of Christ's spiritual reign with his Holy Spirit in our hearts. Stage B, second coming of Christ, the kingdom now comes as an external reality corresponding to the Old Testament external reality. But in other words the Abrahamic promise then encompasses all the rest of history, all the rest of the Bible, all the rest of the biblical covenants, the Old Covenant, New Covenant, and so on as the Covenant of Grace marches along here to the consummation.

Alright, so now then we are concerned with various aspects of the Abrahamic covenant, and I'll pass over for the moment the obvious facts of it being a covenant of promise and there's that whole subject, of it being as Paul insists, promise as over against law and the fact that it is a covenant of promise as over against that second layer of the Mosaic Covenant where works reign. It is brought out by the fact that this covenant with Abraham is ratified by a divine oath. After the fall, if a covenant is ratified just by divine oath, then it's a grace arrangement, not a works arrangement. Now when you come to the Mosaic Covenant, that covenant at Sinai it is ratified by a human oath. So the human oath signals the fact that that this is a works arrangement. But the Abrahamic covenant is not ratified by a human oath, it's ratified in Genesis 15 by God taking an oath, and that



whole episode is one we would like to spend some time on. *Kingdom Prologue* does spend some time on it and maybe next week we can come back and say something about that.

### **Elect and the Covenant**

But with whatever time we have left tonight I wanted to do then this one other thing. So here God arranges his people on earth throughout the covenant of grace. This is an intrusion then of redemptive holiness into the world. God's eternal purposes to save an elect people are being worked out, the Holy Spirit, as we said, is already present in the world gathering out a people for the Lord, those who are the ones for whom Christ will come and preform his mission of active and passive obedience. These are the ones who will be the citizens of heaven forever.

But meanwhile here they are on planet Earth in the midst of this history of common grace and ambiguities and so on, and the question is then the relationship between the election and the covenant. What we observe is constantly then what I keep representing in terms of this little two circle business that the covenant is the institution of the covenant community--the outward institution. It is something that is broader than election. So yes, the elect are there, that faithful true remnant of God, the ones who are truly the people of the Lord, believers, Christ's bride. They are there, they are part of it, the remnant is always there. But they don't constitute the whole covenant community, election and covenant are not coextensive. By reason of one thing and another, there are more within the covenant than the elect. This comes up over and again in the Bible on a big scale, of course, in Israel where Paul is looking back and asks have God's promises failed. No, they haven't failed because they're not all Israel (elect) who are of Israel (covenant). So the thesis that we're trying to establish here is right on the surface of the Bible and that text for one brings it out. Our going back to the patriarchal times and that will get us more right into our subject of circumcision and baptism.

Going back to patriarchal times there's Jacob, and there's Esau. Both of them are in the covenant. Esau is in the covenant too, but "Esau have I hated." Esau is reprobate, he is not elect. Covenant includes more than election. Alright, so that is the thing that we

have to face all the way through and in today's terms everyone who is in the institutional church is not the elect. There are those who are hypocrites within the church along, of course, with always the true people of God. There is the remnant.

### **Sign of the Covenant: circumcision and baptism**

So that is the basic reality we're dealing with. The question of who belongs within the covenant. Because now we come to a place where in his covenant the revelation, God institutes a sign of membership in the covenant. God gives to Abraham in Genesis 17, a sign of incorporation in the covenant. What's the meaning of that sign? Who is to receive it is the question. So we face it in those terms. Then as those who are ministers of the New Covenant, believers in the New Covenant. We want to know what is the relationship, what kind of continuity or discontinuity is there between the Old Covenant and, mind you, not just the Old Covenant in the sense of Israel, but it goes back to Abraham. What's the continuity or discontinuity between circumcision as instituted with Abraham and the patriarchal age and baptism in the New? Our thesis will be, that in terms of the symbolism of circumcision and baptism, there's parallelism between the two. They both symbolize the same thing. In terms of the theological significance of this rite, there is correspondence between circumcision and baptism.

Then also in terms of the function of this rite, namely as a sign of consecration in each case, or membership within the covenant, the holy covenant community, there is parallelism. Then finally, the question will come up as to the proper recipients of the sign. So here is the sign, what it symbolizes, what it conveys theologically, how it functions within the life of the covenant institution. Then who is to use this particular sign? Here again we'll be saying that just as there is parallelism between circumcision and baptism in respect to its meaning and so on, so there is again continuity in terms of the proper recipients.

So in doing this obviously I'm going to be arguing for the traditional Presbyterian view of this matter over against the baptistic approach. Then, on the other hand, I'm going to be repudiating the usual Presbyterian argument for their position because I don't think it's defensible. Then I'll argue for a non-traditional view. So that in practice, what

I'm maintaining is a Presbyterian position, but in terms of biblical explanation for the practice, I think that the traditional Presbyterian position and the language used in our usual liturgy for the rite also needs correction. So okay, I make enemies then both with the Baptists and the Presbyterians in the process. Now, we do arrive at the truth which is what we're after.

Now the first question then is: what does circumcision symbolize? Let me direct you to where we are in the *Kingdom Prologue* p. 191. Toward the end that I make some progress then should we skip a bunch and get to the end? So 191, you can look on and I'll just try to convey the main ideas. What is happening in *Kingdom Prologue* is a condensed version of what was in my book *By Oath Consigned*. I don't get *By Oath Consigned* reprinted in spite of a lot of pressure because I would like to revise some things in it because I wrote this 20, 30 years ago. I've been battling this battle of law and grace through the ages, and I've had opponents on this flank and that flank. If I had had them there, thinking of them when I wrote this, I would have phrased things differently. Now in the light of a couple of decades or so of working through this thing I would like to rephrase things clearly here to ward off various errors that I have seen since then. In *Kingdom Prologue* then, although it's condensed, more strictly the way I would want to present the matters today. Both with respect to these matters and also to the matters of the proper recipients which, by the way, comes in a little later in *Kingdom Prologue* around page 220. If you want to it is on p. 191 and following for the meaning of the rite, and then around page 220 and following for the administration of the rite. So what I'm about to discuss you can check me out for yourself there.

### **Genesis 17: circumcision a cutting ritual**

What does circumcision symbolize? Genesis 17 is where God comes and institutes this rite. It could well be understood in terms of the background of Genesis 15 and also of Genesis 22. Circumcision is obviously a cutting ritual. It is a rite, R-I-T-E that involves the knife. It's a knife rite or instead of speaking of a knife, it's the sword. It's a cutting ritual. It is a sword judgment ritual if you will. Now back in Genesis 15, we have the episode that I was referring to when I said that the Abrahamic covenant is ratified by

a divine oath. You remember that very dramatic episode where Abraham is commanded to take the different animals and it's a knife rite. It's a sword of the Lord that he must apply to these animals in judgment. He kills them and he cuts them in half and he lays the parts over against each other, creating a passageway of death.

Then we are told that there is a theophany scene. This is sort of anticipatory of the later theophany of the glory cloud and the pillar of fire because you have a furnace, with the smoke of the furnace going up and you have a torch with the leaping flame of the torch. So you have a column of smoke and a column of fire. It is an embryonic anticipation of the later glory cloud columns. So in this form of presence, God walks and the pillars, as we said earlier, are called in the Hebrew the *ammadim*, standing things. They represent anthropomorphically the legs of God sometimes as he stands there to take an oath.

Here as he walks the oath because the picture then here is the death passage represented by these animals that have been circumcised, they have been cut into two parts here. Now God walks the death passage between them and what's he saying? He's saying: may God do so to me and all more also Abraham. See Abraham's wondering will the promises ever be fulfilled? Yes, Abraham, they will be fulfilled. I, God, tell you so. If I don't fulfill these promises to you Abraham, may it happen to me what is illustrated by these animals that you have just killed and laid in a path.

So God takes an oath which he dramatizes the curse of the oath that will befall him if he were to break his covenant to Abraham. Of course, he won't break his covenant to Abraham, but then of course, the remarkable redemptive gospel irony of the thing is that in order to be true to his covenant with Abraham God must walk the death passage. In Christ he must walk the passage of Golgotha which is the ultimate circumcision cutting off of course. It's a wonderful passage, the condescension of God, in taking an oath upon himself by which he ratifies the covenant a note to the effect that may he be circumcised to death, may he be cut off, like these animals, if he breaks the covenant. Christ must undergo precisely that crucifixion cutting off in order for God to keep the covenant. So

the whole wonderful story is involved there. But what we have is the context of cutting rituals and so against that background.

### **Genesis 22: Akedah**

Genesis 22 later on is that other one where God again takes an oath to Abraham and says “Abraham because you’ve done this then I swear that I will fulfill my covenant promises to you. And then that whole episode takes the form of God sealing the arrangement by providing the substitutionary ram, Christ who will be crucified, to be the sacrifice on the altar. So that before and after Genesis 17, we have these cutting ceremonies, which in each case, clearly, they symbolize death. It’s a death judgment. The blow of the sword, the cutting of the sword, the cutting off, the execution from life from God, from everything. Death is what is symbolized from circumcision.

So it’s the sword of judgment. It’s nothing short of that. It is not just some hygienic operation or anything of that sort. It is definitely this sign of the terrible judgment of God, of the sword of the Lord cutting off in death.

Of course, when we come to baptism we will want to argue that that’s precisely the meaning of baptism, and that baptism is not, at least not primarily, a washing away. It’s not primarily a bath, a washing. It is a flood. I mean baptism is a flood. What’s a flood? A flood is a judgment. In fact in the flood episode, the waters, which the New Testament refers to as a baptism, the waters are described as “cutting off.”-- the same language, as “cutting off.” That’s used in circumcision. It has already been used in the flood, the cutting off, which represents what? It represents the cutting off of the wicked world in death, by the waters of the flood. So the waters of the flood are a fluid knife. A fluid knife that God used to cut off in death the wicked of the world.

So the flood was both the original baptism and the original circumcision. It was the original water ritual ordeal, and at the same time the original circumcision cutting off, all cutting off combined in one. The subsequent covenant rites then just elaborate on one of the aspects of that. So we’ll come to that, the evidence for taking baptism as also primarily a sign of death afterwards.

Meanwhile, here then is a sign, which we’ll see as a sign of entrance into the

covenant, which symbolizes death. You undergo circumcision nowadays when you undergo baptism, what you are doing is recognizing that your life is being put at the disposal of, and under the judgment of the Lord for his final disposition of the thing. So you enter into the covenant with a realization that there's going to be a day of accountability in which then the Lord of the covenant will pronounce judgment on you.

### **Circumcision and Deaths**

Moreover, we are all covenant breakers from the word go. So we all know that what we deserve from the word go is the curse of God and not the blessing of God. We all deserve to undergo this judgment as something in which we perish. But that's not the whole story. It symbolizes death, but it comes as part of the message of the gospel, it comes as part of the administration of a Covenant of Redemption. So in the theological significance of this symbolism, death let's say is the generic meaning of the sign. Generically it's death. But now, the way things work out, in terms of the gospel and so on, there are two specific ways in which that circumcision, death, can be experienced. This then brings out the theological significance of the two possibilities. You can experience death in yourself, in other words, apart from Christ, and if you do, death will be the last word on the subject. It will, if in your experience, you never connect with Christ genuinely, even though you are a member of the covenant, but you are not an elect and don't have genuine faith and are not identified with Christ. Then you are going to stand on your own when the day comes when this circumcision ordeal must overtake you. In that day, if you are not in the ark, if you are not in Christ, if you are floating around there out with the rest of the world outside the ark, then the death ordeal will overtake you and slay you, and death will be the ultimate word in your experience.

But the gospel comes in here. This is an administration of redemption and it comes with an invitation. So you enter into the covenant, receiving this sign knowing that you must undergo death, but being invited, look--enter the ark, enter into Christ, who undergoes that circumcision for you. Colossians 2, Paul uses the language of circumcision for the crucifixion of Jesus. So Jesus undergoes this circumcision judgment for his people. If you identify by faith with Jesus, if you undergo this ordeal of death in

him, then death will not be the ultimate word but only the penultimate word that beyond that there will be the word of resurrection. Because in Christ, death is experienced in the crucifixion but it is overcome in resurrection unto the justification of Christ's people. So death is what is symbolized, but death you can experience either apart from Christ, and that's the end of you, or you can experience in Christ, identifying by faith with him, in which case, his death will serve as yours. God will raise you up by the power of the same spirit by which he raised Jesus.

So there are these two specific ways in which the circumcision death can be experienced. Of the two, it isn't just take it or leave it, one or the other, you don't present this matter to God's people that way--take it or leave it. This is part of the administration of the gospel. You come to them, urging them, with the invitation. This is what's going to happen to you apart from Christ, accept Christ, come to Christ, get into the ark. By faith, get into Christ in which case you will emerge from the ark on the other side of the death passage with Christ and so on. So that's the invitation and therefore this is the proper meaning. So there are two possible meanings, two possible applications, but this is part of redemptive history and therefore the proper purpose of redemptive history is to save people. Just as, let's say you have these general statements about why did Jesus come into the world. Of course, if you want to tell the whole story the effect of Jesus coming into the world is this. I mean he's a savior of death unto death and he's the savior of life unto life. He comes into the world not to bring peace, he calls us to a sword, separating parents from children and so on in the world. In terms of those who reject him, he comes to bring condemnation into the world but when it's talking about what's the proper purpose of his coming at the same time the Bible will say he came into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. So it depends on whether you're trying to give a total picture of the effects of Christ's coming or whether you want to concentrate on the proper purpose for which he came into the world. Then you have to say both of them, not just the one.

Now the tendency in analyzing both circumcision and baptism is to come down on the side only of its proper meaning but to miss the total picture and what I think I'm

trying to do is be true to all the evidence in the Bible and to try to accommodate it all in this particular way. Yet I'm wanting to emphasize that this is after all the proper meaning of it.

### **Circumcision as a sign of inclusion into the covenant**

Now, so here is this ritual, this is what it means, these are the possible outcomes, its function. What are you doing when you undergo this rite? So here is the function. Clearly what it's functioning as is a sign of being incorporated into this holy covenant. So here is the common world out there all around and out of that common world, God is bringing people into this holy covenant this institution that we've just been talking about in Genesis 5 with the Sethites and Genesis 11 there toward the end with the Semites. They are the people that bear God's name. These are being gathered out of the world into a recognizable objective organization and institution.

Not just the invisible mystical body, but there is an actual visible institution on earth, that's the covenant we're talking about and here's a sign of your membership in it. So the function then of circumcision is to signalize your right to and your membership within the covenant. It's a mark of your status as a member of the holy covenant. Obviously not necessarily indicating that you are elect. Not necessarily indicating that you are elect, not necessarily indicating that you are presumptively regenerate or anything of that sort. But nevertheless indicating that you are in the covenant.

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