

# Law, Grace, and Citizenship

## Labor Day Conference—2012

### Session #6 (3 Sep): "Christian Cultural Influence--Part 1"

#### **I. REVIEW & TRANSITION**

Major principle: grace always satisfies justice (**Rom 3:26**); can't let go of the high standards of justice expressed in the law and have a high view of grace

#### **II. THE NEW THING: THE CHURCH, THE BODY OF CHRIST**

Image #1: a body

**Rom 12:4-5; 1 Cor 10:17; 12:12-27; Eph 1:22-23; 2:16; 3:6; Col 1:18-24**

Image #2: a temple

Major concept #7 Presence of God = "sacred space" so in this age by the indwelling His "sacred space" is the Church of the truly regenerate (**1 Cor 3:16-17; Eph 2:21**).

Instead of \_[nation]\_ -ethics, in the NT we get "\_[Body]\_ -ethics".

#### **Difference from Millennial Kingdom (Christ as King):**

Nation-ethics will be corrected to righteous standards when Jesus comes to reign "with a rod of iron" (**Ps 2; Rev 12:5**).

The millennial state will have a significantly-altered environment spiritually

Millennial state will have a significantly different political structure:

Millennial state will have a catastrophically-altered geophysical environment

Heretical liberal-Progressive "millennium"

Major concept #9: high-jacking civil authority to use lethal force to transform the institution of state (preservative) into a redemptive institution of social salvation by works of law created by the socio-politically strongest group

*These conditions establish an upper bound on Christian cultural influence today.*

#### **Difference from Tribulation (Christ as Conquering Judge):**

Transition between the Church age and the Millennial Kingdom is a time of judgments and provocation of Israel to recognize its Messiah and ask him as a nation to return (**Matt 23:39; Rom 11:12,25-26**); Man of Sin restrained (**2 Th 2:7-9**)

**Rev 2:13-Pergamos. . . . . (Rev 3:8-Philadelphia)**

*These conditions establish a lower bound on Christian cultural influence today.*

### III. HISTORIC CHURCH BODY INFLUENCE

Example of Jesus: **1 John 2:6** "He who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk just as He walked"

His mission "to save His people from their sins"**(Matt 1:21)**

"to seek and to save that which was lost" **(Luke 19:10)**

His demeanor: one of humility rather than hubris **(Phil 2:5-8)**

His legacy: cultural transformation unmatched by anyone else.

Politically powerless believers but indwelt by Holy Spirit as His Body; cultural influence via ordinary daily interaction with people! (1 Pet 3:1-2,14-16)

- verbal communication reliable, gracious
- labor & economic choices **(Acts 19:23-27)**
- marriage & family stability (cheaper, better character of children)
- ideas have consequences: political theory, value and responsibility of man, social welfare, education

The gospel (#1 priority) has no reference to socio-political action **(John 20:31; 1 Cor 15:3-8)**. But in order to communicate the gospel, we necessarily have to challenge pagan notions of reality, truth, and ethics. *Therefore we unavoidably influence culture just be the act of sharing the gospel (if done clearly)!! Moreover if our gospel is clear, it affects the invisible world because it immunizes the resulting actions from forensic challenges and results in rejoicing among the elect angels (Luke 15:7,10).*

### IV. CONCLUSION

Looked at the Church as a new work of God different from Israel and a "surprise" result from Israel's rejection of Christ.

Church not a nation but a Body/Temple in union with the Son of Man as Head who sits above all creatures in the visible and invisible worlds, good and evil.

Different relationship with Christ from that of millennial kingdom (Christ = King)

Different relationship with Christ from that of tribulation (Christ = Conquering Judge)

Our relationship with Christ (Christ = Head & Savior)

Therefore: we live in between upper and lower bounds on righteous cultural influence--neither triumphalists nor pessimists but realists who know about the complexity of the real world.

Priority is a clear gospel in order to give the Holy Spirit something to work with and to do business in a way that will survive forensic challenges in the invisible world.