

Some Thoughts
on
Incarnation, Covenants and Eschatology

Boyd Murrah, 9/3/2007; revised 8/8/2008, 9/9/2008, 12 Dec 2009.

The thesis of this set of notes is:

The state and destiny of man by his original creation and translation to eternal life
via the Covenant of Works/Creation

is not the state and destiny of man
as seen in Christ.

The essence of the proof of this thesis is this:

The original creation did not include the Incarnation of God the Son, or of any union with God that is revealed. However, the destiny of man in Christ partakes of union with the God-Man, and His destiny. The destinies infinitely differ in glory. Therefore, the destiny of man by original creation (only) is not the destiny of man in Christ.

NOTE: That “the destinies infinitely differ in glory” is the essential point in the argument.

Outline of Proof (that the destinies are different):

Jesus Christ is called the “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” Therefore the destiny of man was never other than to be in union with Christ who was slain for him. The creation of man is one step along the way toward that final destiny in Christ. Therefore, the destiny of man had he not fallen in Adam, as described in the “Covenant of Works/Creation,” is mistaken in founding an eschatology on Creation. It is also mistaken to assert that the redemption in Christ simply restores the state of Creation (so that the Covenant of Creation can finally find its fulfillment). Eschatology is only to be founded on the nature and destiny of the Incarnate Christ who died and rose again.

The Incarnation of Christ, by God the Son assuming our human nature, has brought Man into union with God, and has done infinitely more both for the glory of God and for the glory of our own eternal destiny in union with Him, than was made present or promised as a fruit of the original Creation of Man. In union with the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, the human race is taken into a higher destiny of union with God through the incarnate Son – a destiny ordained in eternity past, but also a destiny infinitely beyond the state of the original creation, however glorious that hypothetical destiny could have been.

The argument outlined above requires that the Scripture be taken Redemptive-historically.

Consequences:

1. Biblical and exegetical

- a. We have to deal with the fact that revelation is organized into the Old and New Testaments, with a progress in the revelation both of God, his nature, his works, the composition of his people, his one plan of redemption, and his worship.
- b. This concept of revelatory and redemptive progress is to be maintained without losing the applicability of the Old Testament to our edification, as it is ordained to be used in the total redemptive-historical picture. It's all edifying and not all fulfilled yet!

2. Covenantal

- a. There really is a difference between the Covenant of Creation (and the reflection of it in the moral law of the Mosaic Covenant narrowly considered), and the New Covenant – all this within the bounds of the unity of God's Elect People and the single Plan of Redemption. The duality of covenants is exegetically necessary.
- b. The duality of the covenants is also practically necessary, since it influences the practical form of the religion.

3. Trinitarian and Christological

- a. The redemptive-historical progress in the revelation of the Trinity is exegetically and historically meaningful.
- b. Within the bounds of Trinitarian and Christological Orthodoxy, the nature of our worship and theology is heavily Christocentric, because the incarnate Second Person is the supreme revealer of the Persons of the Godhead to us.

4. Ecclesiological

- a. The use of the Word and Sacraments is conditioned by the terms of the New Covenant.
- b. Law and Gospel need to be used in the New Testament sense.

5. Eschatological

- a. The eschatology of the Kingdom of God is determined redemptive-historically.
- b. The eschatology of the New Testament must guide the total interpretation of Scripture for eschatology.
- c. The eschatology of the New Testament is clearly oriented to resurrection.
- d. Resurrection is clearly not simply a restoration of the state of creation, however matured and perfected.