

GENESIS 3:14, 15 (THE PROMISED ONE)

When we look around at the state of the world, the state of our lives, and the troubles which hem us in, it's often hard to imagine that God has got everything figured out. Imagine what Habakkuk thought when he saw the armies of Babylon coming against his people –

² O LORD, how long shall I cry, And You will not hear? Even cry out to You, Violence!" And You will not save. ³ Why do You show me iniquity, And cause *me* to see trouble? For plundering and violence *are* before me; There is strife, and contention arises. ⁴ Therefore the law is powerless, And justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; Therefore perverse judgment proceeds. Habakkuk 1:2-4

The horrifying things which have happened in history can really cause us to question God's goodness and His ability to keep things under control, but that's the furthest thing from the truth.

Why should God interfere in our free will when He isn't wanted around most of the time? As humans, we normally only seek Him when things are going poorly, but when all is ok, we figure we can do whatever we want.

I email and post on line a Bible devotional every morning. I started with Romans 1:1 and am now up to Revelation chapter 4... one verse a day with analysis and a prayer. This has taken many years and I've noticed a trend...

When I post a verse that is happy and uplifting, people sign on for the devotional, but as soon as I post one that mentions God's judgment in it, numbers drop and people accuse me of not being like Jesus,,,,, when Jesus is the One who wrote the book.

The same thing has happened in my Bible classes and sermons. If I speak on judgment, people get offended and leave. But this is a problem with misunderstanding the nature of evil and the consequences of sin – be it individual, within a church, or on a national level.

If judgment bothers you, take it up with God. He will tell you that it will all work out in the end. First though, the devil needs to be dealt with and sin needs to be dealt with. Judgment begins at the house of God and with God's people. If you struggle with this, you have to spend more time in your Bible.

Introduction: The two verses we're going to look at today begin the long process of dealing with the devil and conquering sin. The first verse details the curse of Satan and the restrictions placed on him and the second details in veiled terms his final defeat.

Genesis 3:15 is known as the *Protoevangelium* or the "first gospel" because it is the first explicit reference in the Bible to the coming Christ. All things will be made right when the devil is destroyed by the Promised One – who we know to be our Lord and Savior, Jesus.

Text Verse: Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him.
Zechariah 3:1

May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Defining the Curse

**¹⁴ So the LORD God said to the serpent:
"Because you have done this,
You *are* cursed more than all cattle,
And more than every beast of the field;
On your belly you shall go,
And you shall eat dust
All the days of your life.**

With this pronouncement and the verse which will follow, defeat of the devil is assured. The LORD God didn't even bother to interrogate the serpent like He did with Adam and the woman. He knew what He heard was true and simply pronounced judgment.

And the judgment gets progressively worse as the LORD speaks. As He does, there is both a physical and a spiritual element to what He says. The pronouncement is upon the serpent as the physical vehicle which was used by the devil, but it is also a spiritual pronouncement upon the devil himself.

The physical pronouncement of the serpent starts with “You are cursed more than all the cattle.” In other words, “even dumb oxen will be ahead of you. They are unreasoning animals and brute beasts, but you are less than they are.”

The ox is so stupid that they have to be prodded along with poking rods to wherever they are going, but a serpent can’t even reason that far.

The most they can do is be charmed out of a basket just as the devil charmed the man out of the Garden. And just as the charmer is able to put the serpent back into his basket, the Lord is able to again put the man in the Garden. Baskets are for the wicked, paradise is for the righteous.

In Zechariah 5:6-8 we read this nifty parallel – “So I asked, “What *is* it?” And he said, “It *is* a basket that is going forth.” He also said, “This *is* their resemblance throughout the earth: Here *is* a lead disc lifted up, and this *is* a woman sitting inside the basket”; then he said, “This *is* Wickedness!” And he thrust her down into the basket, and threw the lead cover over its mouth.”

Just as wickedness was shut up in the ephah basket, so will Satan be shut up eternally in the Lake of Fire which was prepared especially for him and the fallen angels.

Next in our verse, the LORD says the serpent is cursed “more than every beast of the field.” This doesn’t mean that the other animals are cursed, but that the curse on the serpent would make them lower than the other animals.

“Not only are you lower than the cattle, every animal is above you. You are the lowest of the low and the vilest of the vile. You are exceeded by platypuses, wombats, badgers, and squirrels. Everything will be ahead of

you. Even swine which eat the refuse of the world, my fat little walking garbage cans, will be ahead of you.”

The curse continues with “On your belly you shall go.” This particular phrase really has to be taken literally, or we will rob the very meaning of the Bible. In other words, the serpent was physically altered from what it originally looked like to what it looks like now. And now he is a slithering slimy slippery serpent.

“Just as you slithered into the lives of my humans and brought them to the state where they will return to dust, so you will live your existence in the very dust that you have condemned them to.”

“From the dust they came and to the dust they shall return, but you will be united with the dust from beginning to end. You have your kingdom and you have rule and authority, but it is from the lowest position. Other rulers sit above their dominion, but you reign from below it as you lay on your belly.”

Let’s continue on with the LORD’s curse of this vile serpent – “And you shall eat dust all the days of your life.” The defeat is decided. “Just as the slain warrior’s future is in to lay the dust he walked on, so you, serpent, will be like him. You will eat the dust and it will sustain you.”

In this case, it’s possible that the earthworm is included in the overall picture.

The earthworm really does eat the earth and everything that returns to it. As man dissolves back into the earth, so the earthworm finds its food. The serpent destroyed the man in the garden and he would continue to destroy fallen man outside the garden.

But what may appear as a victory for him in this sense is really a condemnation of the devil’s deeds. The only food he would have is that of the death and corruption of his fallen creatures, not of the wellspring of life.

This curse is by far worse than the death mandated for the other animals because it's of an eternal nature as we'll see when we get to the book of Revelation many long years from now...

The theme of the Bible's curse on the serpent carries through every dispensation as well. In the millennial reign of Christ after the tribulation period and when the devil is bound in chains, Isaiah makes this prophesy –

The wolf and the lamb shall feed together,
The lion shall eat straw like the ox,
And dust *shall be* the serpent's food.
They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,"
Says the LORD. –Isa 65:25

When the creation is restored to idyllic conditions for the other animals, the serpent will still be licking the dust.

As I said earlier though, there is a spiritual pronouncement as well. This curse is laid on the devil or Satan who filled the serpent. Satan was an angelic being and even in the book of Job it relates that he could freely enter the Lord's presence, but in Luke 17 we read this account –

And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

The curse upon the devil then means that he would never again enjoy the riches of heaven or his angelic position. The food of angel's is replaced with the souls of fallen men and the degradation of them through impurity and wickedness.

Instead of a marvelous witness to God's majesty in creation, he would be reduced to being "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience."

Elsewhere in the Bible, unreasoning animals that injure or kill man are put to death for their actions. But unlike them, what the serpent and devil did was of a moral, not a physical nature and so instead of extermination, a curse is the result.

This pattern isn't unique to the devil either. When we get to Chapter 9 of Genesis, we'll come across the morally offensive sin of Ham, the son of Noah. There, the result is also a curse –

So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him. ²⁵ Then he said:

“Cursed *be* Canaan;
A servant of servants
He shall be to his brethren.” Vss. 9:24-25

A moral transgression requires a substantial moral curse. This is a lesson we all need to pay heed to.

On your belly you shall go you slithering snake
Your rule will be from the dust of the earth
From corruption and death souls you will take
And to the sons of hell you shall give birth

The world of wickedness is your domain
And every vile thing you shall rule
Your army will be the sons of Cain
The disobedient, the vile, and yes also the fool

But you and your kingdom will have its end
And all the evil that you brought into my creation
To the Lake of Fire all of it I shall send
And there you will receive eternal destruction

Now that we've looked at this verse and it's repercussions for both the serpent and the devil, let's see how they actually become a veiled picture of the atonement provided by the coming Christ.

Satan went from being the beautiful angel of God's creation to a serpent – the cunning and loathsome reptile. On the other hand there is an interesting use of the serpent in the book of Numbers –

And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For *there is* no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." ⁶ So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.

⁷ Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

⁸ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery *serpent*, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live." ⁹ So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived. 21:5-9

In John Chapter 3, we read what this bronze serpent symbolized. Jesus Himself explains it to us –

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. 14, 15

One other time this particular bronze serpent is mentioned is in the books of 2 Kings. There we see how it degraded into an idol and also what its name was.

He removed the high places and broke the *sacred* pillars, cut down the wooden image and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan. 2 Kings 18:4

One important lesson here is that even God's mode of saving can become an idol. When we look to the cross, we need to remember that it is only a symbol of the greater Person and work of Jesus and not a talisman that

replaces Him. We need to be on guard even in the things we think on and boast about most. As Paul said in Galatians 6:14

But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

Yes we boast in the cross, but only because of what it signifies which is the great deliverance of humanity from sin at the expense of the life of the Lord Jesus. We need to be careful not to make the error that we use the cross as a good luck charm.

This bronze snake we're talking about was called *Nehustan* in Hebrew. This word sounds like three different words – “snake,” “bronze,” and “unclean thing.” All of which point to the work of Christ.

The snake – Just as the snake was lifted up in the wilderness, so was Christ lifted up on the cross.

The word bronze – Bronze speaks of judgment. The altar of sacrifice was made of bronze and it was the spot in the temple where sin received its judgment. This like Jesus' sacrifice on the cross as our final judgment on sin. And one more aspect of bronze comes from the book of Revelation where Jesus is said to have feet resembling burnished bronze indicating His authority to judge.

And as an unclean thing – 2 Corinthians 5:21 says this, “For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” Jesus Christ became our unclean thing that we could be cleansed and purified in the presence of an infinitely holy Creator. He was crucified outside the walls of Jerusalem just as the unclean bodies of the sacrificial animals were burned outside the camp.

As you can see, everything eventually points to Jesus Christ and what He did for us, even an obscure passage about a bronze snake from the Old Testament and even the curse upon the serpent.

II. Enmity with the Woman

**¹⁵ And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her Seed;
He shall bruise your head,
And you shall bruise His heel.”**

This first half of verse 15 is directed solely to the relationship between the devil and the woman. The question is, “Who is the woman?” Is it speaking of Eve only, or of all women who come after Eve, or is it speaking of a spiritual woman? I would prefer the third option here.

Throughout the Bible there is a distinction made between the sons of men and the sons of God. The sons of God are the chosen line which leads from Adam, through his son Seth, down to Noah, then Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. This line continues to the coming Christ, who is Jesus, and encompasses the nation of Israel.

On the other hand, there is the line of Cain and all of those outside of the Messianic line who are the seed of the devil. This pattern is unmistakable and carries all the way through the Bible.

In 1 John 3, we read about those who belong to the devil – “For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, ¹² not as Cain *who* was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother’s righteous.”

In the same book 2 chapters later, John tells us that the whole world is under the sway of the wicked one. Paul says the same thing in 1 Corinthians 15 when he makes the contrast between those in Adam and those in Christ. If you are in Adam, you are under the devil’s control and headship.

Therefore, the woman is the godly line whom the devil is at enmity with. And this is fully confirmed in the awesome apocalyptic words recorded in the book of Revelation –

Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. ² Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. ³ And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. ⁴ His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. ⁵ She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. ⁶ Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days. ... Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male *Child*. ¹⁴ But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. ¹⁵ So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. ¹⁶ But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. ¹⁷ And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. Revelation 12:12-6 & 13-17

The woman depicted in these astonishing verses is specifically the nation of Israel “who gave birth to the male Child.” And her offspring, as it clearly states, are those “who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

If you’re a Christian and you wonder why life can get so hard, the answer is right here. The devil is out to destroy you and to rob you of your joy.

The devil doesn’t need to spend his time attacking the rest of the world – he already owns them! And so he can spend his time directing his demons to tear at you, fight against you, and make your life miserable. The rest of the world makes their own life miserable because they belong to the author of misery.

Do you wonder why I so constantly nag people to read their Bibles? It's because this is the only way to know God's will, to stay in fellowship with Him, and to prevail over the devil's attacks. Without knowing your Bible, you're totally exposed to the enmity which came about in Genesis 3:15.

Paul asks you to do the same thing in Ephesians chapter 6... to prepare yourself for the battle which is going on all around us –

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

After saying this, he spends 7 more verses explaining how to win in this battle. Please read your Bible and learn what the devil doesn't want you to know!

III. The Protoevangelium

**¹⁵ And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her Seed;
He shall bruise your head,
And you shall bruise His heel."**

Like I said at the start of our talk today, *Protoevangelium* means the "First Gospel."

This particular verse is translated differently in different Bibles. The Latin Vulgate and Douay Rheims Bibles, both of which are Roman Catholic say "she" shall crush your head. The King James Version says "it" shall bruise your head. And others say, "He" shall bruise, or crush your head. The neutral nature of the personal pronoun in Hebrew could render all these possibilities correct.

A. Minto says this, "The second sentence begins with a personal pronoun. The word may refer either to the "woman", or may refer to the offspring or seed of the woman. Thus the beginning of the second part of Genesis 3:15 is translated primarily in two ways. ... In view of the epicene personal pronoun (one form to indicate both male and female sex) as described above, both are correct!

If it is the woman, then it is Eve and her line which leads to the Messiah, and if it is the Seed, then it is specifically referring to the Messiah.

In arguing for "she," we can note that in Genesis 3:20, Adam calls her "woman" but eventually names her Eve or *Khavah* which means the "mother of all the living."

No matter what, the Protoevangelium is prophetic in nature because there is a promise in the future of redemption and that someone will crush the head of the serpent. This judgment on the serpent contains a promise of ultimate victory through the woman by her Offspring, Jesus and so either "He" or "she" is acceptable.

I would still argue for "He" because, the general rule of language is that personal pronouns normally refer to the nearest antecedent, in this case, the nearest antecedent is the word "Seed." And secondly, the rest of the Bible bears out that it is Christ Jesus who accomplished the work for us.

Paul confirms this in Galatians 3:16 –

Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ.

Because the Bible allows both possibilities and because both are confirmed elsewhere in Scripture, both must be considered acceptable translations – He or she. However, only one can be used in a translation and so the preferable one is "He." Although the Seed, Jesus came through the woman, it was He who did the work on our behalf at the cross. "He," therefore, is by far the better choice.

This verse then not only points to Jesus as the One who would defeat the devil, but it also is the first hint of His incarnation. Throughout the Bible, it is always the man who is highlighted and the promises are made to men and to their seed. With a few exceptions where women are introduced into biblical narratives, the focus is almost entirely on men and their seed such as in Genesis 22:17, 18 –

...blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which *is* on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. ¹⁸ In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”

This one verse, however, never speaks of the seed of man. The most wonderful event to occur in human history, the Christmas Story, is given right here, 4000 years before the coming of Christ.

In Isaiah 7:14, we read this parallel thought –

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

The Seed of the woman is defined and refined here. A virgin shall conceive and bear a Son. This Child has no earthly father, but His Father will be God Himself. Thus His name will be *Immanuel* – “God with us.” Matthew uses this same verse in His gospel and assures us that Jesus is the One who fulfilled the prophecy.

Elsewhere in Jeremiah we read this most difficult of verses –

How long will you gad about,
O you backsliding daughter?
For the LORD has created a new thing in the earth—
A woman shall encompass a man.” 31:22

This verse has been used for the concept of the virgin birth while other scholars deny that. If we’re to take it plainly and in its literal sense, no other

explanation seems plausible. Israel was lost in waywardness, not following the Lord or His commandments, but Jeremiah said the LORD would create a new thing. The term for “create” is *bara* and is used specifically for the creative effort in Genesis 1.

He would again do a miraculous work by bringing about the life of a man without using a man. The Holy Spirit would overshadow Mary. The Child who would come from her would be the Son of God. This coming One then would be the Seed of the woman.

When we arrive at the gospel accounts, the writers like Matthew as we already noted, state this is Jesus. But Jesus Himself uses terminology which certainly supports that He is the Seed of the woman prophesied so long ago.

Before performing His first miracle and while hanging on the cross, we have two separate statements of Jesus that reveal His fulfillment of God’s promise –

1. On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ² Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. ³ And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, “They have no wine.” ⁴ Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.” John 2:1-4

2. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold your son!” ²⁷ Then He said to the disciple, “Behold your mother!” And from that hour that disciple took her to his own *home*. John 19:26, 27

In both cases, Jesus refers to Mary as “woman” even though this wasn’t the normal Semitic way of addressing His mother. Because of this, it is certainly His way of identifying Himself as the promised Seed of the woman.

How wonderful to read these verses as spoken from the Lord’s own mouth and to know with all certainty that He is the One to bring us out of the devil’s grasp and to restore us to our Creator, His Almighty Father.

On the cross, the serpent surely “bruised His heel” when the nails were driven into them. The lowly serpent attacked at the heel of the Man, but the Man was like none other. After a short sleep like death, He rose victorious from the grave and crushed the serpent’s head, meaning his authority.

Jesus Christ regained what had been lost many thousands of years earlier and today we can too stand victorious over the work of the devil if we will only, by faith, put our hope and our trust in His glorious work.

Albert Barnes relates his thoughts to us on the matter – “It is singular to find that this simple phrase, coming in naturally and incidentally in a sentence uttered four thousand years, and penned at least fifteen hundred years, before the Christian era, describes exactly and literally Him who was made of woman without the intervention of man, that He might destroy the works of the devil. This clause in the sentence of the tempter is the first dawn of hope for the human family after the fall. We cannot tell whether to admire more the simplicity of its terms, the breadth and comprehensiveness of its meaning, or the minuteness of its application to the far-distant event which it mainly contemplates.”

The most astonishing concept ever penned is that which tells of the work of Jesus Christ as revealed to us in the pages of the Holy Bible – God’s love letter of restoration, grace, and mercy.

From these earliest verses of Genesis, all the way through the book of Revelation, we see the wondrous works of an infinitely wise God telling us about the plan of the ages. In John Chapter 19, we see the highest point of that plan when Jesus died on the cross –

After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, “I thirst!”²⁹ Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put *it* on hyssop, and put *it* to His mouth.³⁰ So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit. John 19:28-30

“It is finished” – Paid in full. The victory promised in the Protoevangelium was consummated in the death of a Man in a backwater part of the Roman Empire on a Friday afternoon in the year AD32. The glories which came then and are yet to come will reach into eternity and forever we will sing the song of the Lamb.

The Promised One

In the garden the serpent received his curse
On your belly you shall go, licking up the dust
The words were direct and they were terse
But the sentence was completely fair and just

Cursed are you more than the cattle
And more than every beast of the field
Your existence will be as the heat of battle
But in the end it is you who will yield

Of the dust you shall eat
For all the days of your life
Never shall you taste the sweet
But only the fruits of death and strife

I shall put enmity between you and the woman
An on-going battle through lengths of ages
You seed, the unregenerate human
Who against me reviles and rages

But there shall come One, a Promised Seed
Who will crush your head for what you have done
Your days are numbered so take you heed
In my mind the battle is already won

Jesus is coming to make all things new
This word is faithful and it is true

In the cross, a victory you will assume

A victory – yes – but not for you
After His cross and after His tomb
He will arise and make all things new

Man's redemption will have been wrought
By the Seed of the woman, my own Son
With His blood He will have bought
The right to man's soul, the victory won.

For eternity my Son's redeemed will sing
They will walk in the glorious light of life
From the cross of Jesus He will bring
Out of the sea of troubles a radiant wife

All hail the splendid name of Jesus!
Our King sits at the right hand of God on high
Great and wondrous things He has done for us
And we will exalt Him as eternal years pass by

Hallelujah and amen!

Next week we will be talking about Genesis 3:16-24. I hope you'll take time to read those verses, think on them, and get ready for a delightfully delicious sermon entitled "Introducing Donuts – The End of the Garden of God."