

“Hope for the Future”

Genesis 3:15

November 29, 2020

Today we come to the final message in our series “Beginning Again: Second thoughts about first things.” We’ve been looking at the first three chapters of Genesis and we have found some amazing truths, truths that are baked into the cake of creation! Unchanging truths for our unstable changing times!

Last week we took our first look at the third chapter of Genesis, a passage that describes for us the fall of human beings into sin. This chapter of the Bible tells us how we as precious human beings loved by God can simultaneously be alienated, alone, broken, and undone. We described what takes place in Gen. 3 as basically:

A declaration of independence from God

The serpent’s word to the woman was designed to make her think that God cannot be trusted.

Genesis 3:1 (ESV)

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?”

What is going on here? Subversion!

You must not take God at His Word! He is a cosmic killjoy. He does not have your best interests at heart. In fact, to the woman the serpent essentially said:

You need to see, experience, and interpret life *by yourself for yourself!*

This is the libertarian siren song! The enticement was to figure out life for oneself apart from God's wisdom and knowledge. When I myself choose something, my independent judgment, my reason, my assessment will make it right. I can be **autonomous—a law unto myself!**

It's a little bit like the person who says, "I can fix it all by watching a U-tube video!" I'm the anti handyman. Grandpa could fix anything—got none of his genes! U-tubed how a specific box-cutter came apart! You may fix your sink that way, but you won't fix your sin.

The declaration of independence brought:

Sinful Self-Consciousness

Alienation from God and one another

Desperate attempt at self-justification

You gave me the woman, she gave me the fruit—God, you are responsible for all of this!

Another tack we take is to try to obtain self-righteousness by putting others in categories that make us look good. You are a racist, misogynist, misanthrope etc., but putting others

down does not makes us right—none righteous—all we like sheep have gone astray, each turning to his or her own way)

And at the very root, this unrighteousness that is such a problem for us is a matter of the heart. Let's see why this is so. Have you thought of this?

Prior to actually eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the woman had already elevated her own independent judgment!

Genesis 3:6 (NASB95)

⁶ When the woman saw that the tree was good...

This tree is good! No matter what God says, this tree is good. Is this not a judgment? Yes! And God never said the tree wasn't good—after all, it's the tree of life! What God said in so many words was that it is never good to assume that our judgments are better than His!

...for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

Bad thoughts are always the prelude to bad acts.

Just think about this; here, thousands of years before Jesus ever enters this world and delivers his Sermon on the Mount we see that sinful acts of rebellion are always preceded by sinful thoughts of rebellion. In a famous passage from the sermon

Matthew 5:27–28 (NASB95)

²⁷ “You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY’; ²⁸ but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Reaching for the fruit, not just eating it locates sin at a place where even a good Pharisee like Paul could not measure up! (Romans 7 coveting! A desire he could not deny the law of God revealed in his heart.)

So this is what we struggle with—these sinful, selfish, I-know-better-than-God attitudes. This is our fundamental problem. And it puts all of us in a terrible place with unresolved guilt and shame. Shame is the gap that exists between what I want you to know about me and what is really true about me. It gets increasingly hard to keep that whole charade up! What is the solution? What is our relief? Where is our hope? Of all places, it

comes right in the middle of the curse. Right smack dab in the middle of the passage which describes the consequences of disobedience we see an unmistakable glimmer of hope! Oh thank God—in the midst of the darkness the light shines.

In verse 14 the serpent is cursed with a fitting consequence. Having elevated the notion of independent judgment he will be lowered to eat dust—interestingly the man and woman are NOT cursed—woman will experience pain in childbirth, a desire for her husband and he will rule over her. Adam is not cursed, but the ground is—they may have been able to eat with little effort in the garden, but now it will take toil to self-sustain.

But now we want to focus on verse 15. It is the second part of what God says to the serpent:

Genesis 3:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

This verse has been called the first gospel—good news, and it is good news because it is an announcement that evil will not prevail; evil will

not overcome the good; evil will in fact be defeated—God will see to it!

Let's just take Genesis 3:15 line by line.

I will put enmity between you and the woman...

I want you to notice that hostility, antagonism, fierce battles between good and evil, are not unpredicted accidental random outbreaks we have to worry about! Notice, God says—*I will put enmity between you and the woman!* God establishes the antagonism and He will not allow evil to go unchallenged! When we see increasing manifestations of lawlessness and then a push-back against it and back and forth it goes, and we long for peace; I want you to see from this passage—God set it up this way! It's not all bad that there are colossal battles going on—we just need to be mindful of the fact that at the very root of all this it is a spiritual warfare which will not ultimately be settled by science or politics or education or international treaties.

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring...

Here things get interesting! The word “offspring” is a translation of the Hebrew word for seed. The word “seed” like our English word “sheep” can be

used for a singular or collective plural. I can speak of a single sheep or multiple sheep. So it shouldn't be surprising that in the history of the interpretation of this passage there is a variety of opinions. It is undeniable that throughout the record of the Bible we see both individual antagonisms as well as collective antagonisms. No sooner do we leave Genesis chapter 3, and we see Cain in a fit of envy slaughtering his brother Abel. From there we see Noah a righteous man in his age relatively standing out from a thoroughly corrupted society. We then see God choosing Abraham and the patriarchs separating out a special people for himself, the people who will be persecuted, displaced, and finally enslaved until God delivers them through the blood of the lamb. We see prophets confronting evil kings, and God's people so often failing to be faithful to the agreements or covenants God made for them. But then at last we see the fulfillment of a prophecy given 700 years before Jesus was born (Micah 5:2). Jesus is born in Bethlehem! House of bread. How fitting that Jesus the Bread of Life, the one who said "I am the life" would be born in the house of bread-Bethlehem.

Not only this, look at Galatians 4:4-5 in light of Genesis 3:

Galatians 4:4–5 (ESV)

⁴ But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

Paul the Apostle, the one who said that the law of God uncovered his sin was inspired to write these words—telling us the Messiah was born of a woman.

Let’s go back to Genesis now and look at the whole verse in the middle of the curse!

Genesis 3:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

Remember, God is talking to the serpent here! And God says “he” (referring to the offspring of the woman) shall bruise your head (some translations say strike and some say crush)—and you (serpent) shall bruise his heel. Please notice the Hebrew word translated strike or bruise is the same; it’s the location of the strike that makes the

difference! The serpent takes it on the head (rosh) the serpent's enemy takes it on the heel (aqave)

Romans 16:20 (ESV)

²⁰ The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

It's a long life and death struggle, but there is no doubt about the outcome.

God does not leave us without hope. Out of the curse—in the middle of the curse—hope peeks out at us. It will not be denied. Here, it is but a faint whisper, but this whisper builds to a powerful shout in the prophets and a glorious song from the heavenly hosts. Hope is born in Jesus Christ and it is signed, sealed, and delivered on the cross when he cries out, “It is finished!” Sin is dealt with forever. It took God—born of a woman, born under the law, to do it. And He did!

The “seed of the woman” is not as specific as some would make it out to be. Technically it is not a prophecy, but rather a sign that hope is on the way. Do you like the sound of that? I sure do! Life without hope is miserable. God does not leave us without hope. Out of the curse—in the middle of the curse—hope peeks

out at us. It will not be denied. Here, it is but a faint whisper, but this whisper builds to a powerful shout in the prophets and a glorious song from the heavenly hosts. Hope is born in Jesus Christ and it is signed, sealed, and delivered on the cross when he cries out, "It is finished!" Sin is dealt with forever. It took God—born of a woman, born under the law, to do it. And He did!