



Early Glimpses Of The Savior

Genesis 3:15

by Jim Osman

Pastor/Teacher

Kootenai Community Church

kootenaichurch.org

It is likely that as the Christmas cards begin to roll in this month, many of them will contain Scripture quotations from either the birth narrative of our Lord or from one of the Old Testament prophesies concerning His birth.

Most likely you will see the words of Isaiah the prophet more than once, **“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.” (7:14)** Or perhaps the familiar words two chapters later, **“For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.” (9:6)**

I want to turn you to a text that will likely not appear in too many of your Christmas cards. It is, in fact, the very first prophecy ever given concerning the coming of Jesus Christ. **Genesis 3:15: “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise Him on the heel.”**

Setting Up The Context

Take a moment to read Genesis 3 again. The words in verse 15 are spoken by God after the fall of man.

After the temptation of the woman by the serpent and then Adam’s subsequent taking of the forbidden fruit, the Lord confronted Adam with his disobedience and said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” Adam responded those words that have been spoken by every married man since the garden of

Eden: “It was the woman that Thou gavest me, Lord.”

What a coward! He is responsible for corrupting creation with his sin, plunging his whole race into death, misery, and depravity. He has ruined creation and ruined himself. He blames his wife. Eve is no better. She was deceived by the serpent and then gave the fruit to her husband. She blames the serpent.

That brings us to verse 14, where God curses them for their disobedience. You’ll notice the order. The Lord first addresses Adam. Adam blames Eve. The Lord addresses Eve. Eve blames the serpent, so the Lord addresses the serpent. The curses are doled out in the reverse order. First the serpent, then Eve, lastly Adam.

In verses 14 and 15 we read the curse on the serpent and on Satan, who used the serpent for his deceptive ends. It is in the midst of these curses to the serpent that this promise of a redeemer is given in verse 15.

Verse 14 seems to be directed at the serpent. The serpent is cursed with crawling in the dust of the ground and being a vile, detested creature. Verse 15 is directed not only to the serpent, but to Satan who used the serpent. These words contain the first promise of the Messiah we find in Scripture or human history. This is the beginning of the gospel.

Notice that this promise comes in the context of a *cursing*. What a picture of God’s grace, mercy, and compassion. They had rebelled against Him, affronted His holiness, and ruined their whole race. They introduced death, destruction, disease, depravity, and a curse into a creation that was an otherwise perfect creation.

If the Lord had destroyed the serpent, struck Adam and Eve dead, and cast them into eternal torment with

the devil so that all three of them could suffer for ever and ever and ever, God would have been just to do so. That was not His plan. Rather His plan was to demonstrate the goodness of His redeeming love by coming as a Redeemer and dying for His creation.

When our first parents were ripe for justice and judgment and curse, God cursed their disobedience, but in the midst of that curse, promised a blessing. What grace! He didn't have to promise anything. God gave them a promise of a redeemer.

And this promise of a Savior comes *immediately* on the heels of the fall of man. Very soon after Adam and Eve's sin, the Lord gives this promise of a sin-bearer. The Lord did not need a few months to sit around and devise a plan of redemption. That plan of redemption was devised before the Lord ever spoke the worlds into existence.

Before God pronounced the curse on the woman or the man, He issues the promise. In other words, the words of Hope are spoken before the curse. That is grace! If the Lord had only given the curse and not any hope, it would have been too much to bear. Here are the words of hope, love, grace, blessing, and promise spoken before the curse is given. What grace that is!

Let's see what verse 15 says about our Savior. We can see from this promise three key things about the then-coming Savior.

The Virgin Birth

The first thing that I want you to notice is the promise of enmity. There would be hostility between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. That is not speaking of some fear of snakes. The Lord is not talking about a snake in the garden. The Lord is talking to and about the one who used the serpent for his deception—that is, the devil, Satan.

The seed of the woman is this One who would come and crush the serpent's head and the One whose heel would be bruised by the serpent. The word *seed* is a word that was used refer to a descendant or descendants. It was used of the children or the offspring of someone.

Satan doesn't have literal seed, though he does have spiritual children. The majority of Adam's race are his spiritual offspring. They are of their father the Devil, and the desires of their father, they do. (**John 8:44**) Those

who belong to Satan and are part of the kingdom of darkness, sin, and rebellion are his seed. They belong to him and do his desires.

The woman has a seed in two senses. First, all humanity comes from Eve. All mankind, beginning with Cain and Abel, are her offspring. In a specific sense, she has one Seed in particular who is Christ. It is He who would crush the serpent's head. Immediately after talking about her seed, the Lord speaks of One in particular, "He" who would crush the devil.

Beginning here in **Genesis 3:15**, a perpetual war is commenced between the kingdom of Satan, his seed, and the Kingdom of God, which is bound up in this One who is the Seed of the woman, namely Christ. There has been, since the garden, a war between the children of God and the kingdom of Satan. Nothing is going to keep that war from being waged. By divine decree, this war exists. We have enemies. We are to love them for Christ's sake. But we have to understand they are at war with us in an attempt to overthrow the rule and reign of God, and the only thing that will stop this war is when the enemy is totally defeated. When His enemies become His footstool, then there shall be peace.

What is very significant to notice in this prophecy is that Christ is called the "seed of the woman" and not "the seed of the man." Do you see that? That is odd to talk like that. The seed of the woman. The woman doesn't produce seed. The man does. We see Scripture speak of Abraham's seed, Isaac's seed, Jacob's seed, David's seed. It is odd, out of place, to speak of this One who would come as being a descendent of Eve and not the physical descendent of Adam.

The promise was that this One, the Seed of the woman, would be from a woman, a descendent of Eve, but would not be the physical offspring of Adam. The Lord is careful to make that distinction here in this very first promise of the Redeemer.

The angel said to Joseph in **Matthew 1:20**, "**the Child conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.**" **Galatians 4:4**, "**But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law.**"

Christ could not properly be said to be the "Seed of the man," because Adam was not His Father. Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit.

The Savior would be a man, born of a woman. He

would be the offspring of Eve, but not of Adam. The One who is promised to Adam and Eve was going to be a man. Genesis promises he would be born as the offspring of a woman. He would not suddenly appear like an angelic messenger or an alien. He wouldn't descend from heaven (at His first coming) and suddenly appear as if from another world. He would simply be born into humanity. Although part of humanity, he would not be a descendant of Adam.

The first thing we see is that, back in the garden, a virgin birth was revealed.

His Vicarious Suffering

Vicarious means *substitutionary*. I choose the word *vicarious* to remind you again that this suffering is for those who are His and not just a pointless suffering.

In other words, there is this enmity between the two kingdoms. You cannot understand His suffering unless you understand that there are those who are His, and He suffered for them, in their place, as their substitute.

Now the prophecy does not explicitly speak of a substitutionary suffering. That would be developed later in Scripture. But we know that the suffering spoken of here in **Genesis 3:15** is a substitution.

Where is the suffering spoken of? It is at the end of the verse, "*You shall bruise Him on the heel.*" Those words are addressed not to Eve, not to Adam, but to Satan. "He shall crush your head, you shall bruise His heel."

Satan would bruise this One who is the Seed of the woman. This enmity that exists would result in the Seed of the woman—that is, Christ—being bruised. He would be injured. The Hebrew word translated as "bruised" means "to crush, to break, to bruise."

Satan would crush the heel of the seed of the woman. Indeed Christ did suffer. Satan tempted Him, thwarted Him, attacked Him, sought His destruction, and finally, Satan was behind and orchestrated the whole crucifixion of our Lord.

Isaiah would later reveal that He was bruised for us. **Isaiah 53:5: "But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed."** Satan succeeded in bruising the seed of the woman. He succeeded in crushing Christ. Christ suffered. He

attacked, he took his swipe at God, he nailed the Son of God, the Seed of the woman, to the cross. Which action of nailing in crucifixion, by the way, literally crushed the heel. The nails in crucifixion went right through the heel.

Here in **Genesis 3:15**, the suffering of the seed of the woman is mentioned. He would be bruised, He would be crushed, but it would not be final, nor would it succeed in what the devil intended. There is one last thing about the coming Redeemer that is here revealed.

His Victory over Satan.

You can see this clearly in the text in the words, "*He shall bruise you on the head.*" Satan would crush the Redeemer's heel, but in the process, Satan's head would be crushed.

If two people fight, and the result of the fight is that the heel of one is crushed and the head of the other is crushed, who would you say is the victor? In this action that would result in the bruising/crushing of a heel, Satan would receive the fatal, final, victorious blow.

The Lord is taking this opportunity with the serpent there, crawling in the dust, to give us a vivid prophetic picture of what would happen as a result of this enmity that started in the garden. As a snake might bite or strike out at the heel of a man, so Satan would crush the Redeemer's heel. But as a man would with that heel crush the snake's head, so Christ would deliver a fatal, final, victorious blow to the devil and his kingdom.

The word *head* has more than one meaning. It can be used to refer to a physical body part, or it can mean "authority, chief, power, ruler." We use the English word for "head" in the same way—for example, "the Head of State."

The picture given here by the Lord is one of the Redeemer utterly destroying Satan and His Kingdom by demolishing his power, his authority. Friends that is exactly what happened at the cross.

Colossians 2:13-15 says that Christ "**canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.**"

The irony of the ages is this: that in the crucifixion of the Son of God, Satan actually ended up accomplishing

his own defeat. He thought he had won. He thought he was victorious. God sent His Son into the world and Satan orchestrated His death. Yet the prophecy stated that the Redeemer would be bruised, but Satan would be destroyed. In accordance with **Genesis 3:15**, Satan's moment of triumph was turned to defeat.

John Gerstner writes, "*Satan was majestically triumphant in this. . . battle. He had nailed Jesus to the cross. The prime object of all his striving through all the ages was achieved. But he failed. For the prophecy which had said that he would indeed bruise the seed of the woman had also said that his head would be crushed by Christ's heel. Thus, while Satan was celebrating his triumph in battle over the Son of God, the full weight of the Atonement accomplished by the Crucifixion (which the devil had effected) came down on him and he realized that all this time, so far from successfully battling against the Almighty, he had actually been carrying out the purposes of the all-wise God.*"

Back in the garden, the Lord said to the tempter, to Lucifer: "There will be a war for all history between your kingdom and mine. I will send someone through the woman, not of the man. The result of this enmity will be your downfall and destruction. He will, with his heel, crush your head, and in the process, He will be bruised."

What a glorious salvation that God has wrought! Right when Adam, Eve, and Satan ruined creation, God promised a redeemer who would set it right again. That was the eternal plan. In the midst of that sin, curse, and judgment was given the promise of Christ.

In that promise we can see the virgin birth, His vicarious sufferings, and His victory over the devil. This history of the universe is summed up in one verse in the garden. Marvelous!

Without Wax-



Spurgeon on the Incarnation of Christ

"Our Lord Jesus Christ is, in some senses, more completely man than Adam ever was. Adam was not born; he was created as a man. Adam never had to struggle through the risks and weaknesses of infancy; he knew not the littlenesses of childhood, - he was full-grown at once. Father Adam could not sympathize with me as a babe and a child. But how man-like is Jesus! He does not begin with us in mid-life, as Adam did; but He is cradled with us, He accompanies us in the pains, and feebleness, and infirmities of infancy, and He continues with us even to the grave."

"If God loves us so much as to become man, then the blessings which he intends to bestow must be incalculable."

"He that made man was made man."