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Genesis 3:15 “The First Birth Announcement”

Intro. There was a certain professor of a great law school who used to begin his first class every year by putting two numbers on the blackboard - a 4, and then out beside it a 2. Then he would ask this question: “What is the solution?” Well one student would immediately call out “6.” Another would cry out “2.” Then several would shout out “8!” But at each answer the teacher would always shake his head in the negative. Then the professor would point out their one fatal error. He would say, “The reason why you people cannot find the solution is because you have all failed to ask the key question: “What is the problem?”

Now unless you know what the problem is, you cannot possibly find the solution. We are living in a world frantically trying to find solutions when it hasn't even identified the real problem. This world is in a mess. It is in a mess spiritually. Atheism, agnosticism, humanism, secularism, & false religion now dominate the world scene. Two out three people in this world either have no religion or are involved in a false religion. Islam has captivated about 1 billion people, and the more radical elements of Islam are perpetrating death and destruction in the name of their god, Allah. It is in a mess morally. Immorality, abortions, divorce, alcoholism, drug use, and crime is at an all time high. This world is in a mess politically. Riots, revolts, and revolutions are taking place on practically every continent. There are ongoing threats of wars and terrorism. This world is in a mess economically. Entire nations are defaulting on hundreds of billions of dollars worth of loans. For the first time in our history, we are a debtor nation, and in some countries around the world, the inflation rate has climbed to double and even triple digits. Millions go to be hungry every day.

Now we will never find the solution until we understand the problem. That is what Christmas is all about. It is about both the problem and the solution. Christmas is that time of year when we celebrate the birth of God's Son about 2,000 years ago. But that raises a question. *Why* did God have to send His Son to begin with? Well, you can sum up Christmas in two words - a problem and a promise. Now in the first word you are going to see why this world is in a mess. In the second word, you are going to see how God will get this world out of this mess.

Our first parents really messed up! They lived in a paradise, but they disobeyed the one, all-important command of God. As a result, sin entered the world. Immediately, they experienced the consequences of sin: a guilty conscience (vv. 7, 11), shame (vv.7-8), fear (v.10), separation from God (2:17, 23-24; 3:19b), sorrow (vv. 16-17), conflict (vv. 15a, 16b), a cursed ground (vv.17b-18), and ultimately physical death. But at the same time God told of all of these consequences of sin, He also promised to save us from our sin, and the terrible consequences of sin. Our great and gracious God pronounced a solution immediately after Adam and Eve created the greatest problem on earth. V. 15 says, “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 is the first promise and the first prophecy found in the Bible. You might call it the first Christmas sermon. And notice that the focus of this promise is upon the coming seed of the woman. The focus of Christmas should be upon this person, the long-promised Savior of man. You can have Christmas without toys, trees, or trinkets, but you cannot have Christmas without Jesus. What a fantastic promise we find here. It is a promise that the rest of the Bible will go on to explain. This promise has three parts that we will look at today:

I. A STRUGGLE IS PROPHESED

God foretold of a struggle between the woman and the serpent, and between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. He says in v.15, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed...” “Put” is an imperfect tense, it predicts an ongoing struggle. Now the word “enmity” means “conflict that arises out of animosity or hatred.” It refers to the intensity of hostility that results in war and murder. The language of the passage indicates a life and death struggle between combatants. In the physical realm, this reflects the universal enmity people have for such reptiles, and snakes in particular. This predicted conflict is reflected in the legends and mythologies of the ancients, filled as they are with tales of heroes engaged in life-and-death struggles with serpents and dragons and other monsters. These and many similar representations in the ancient myths are most likely merely faint remembrances of this great primeval prophecy. We recently commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of Pearl Harbor. When the Japanese dropped their deadly bombs unexpectedly on a sleeping harbor, President Franklin Roosevelt declared war with those famous words saying, “This is a day which will live in infamy.” Well there was another day eons ago when Satan dropped his sinful bomb on that Edenic Harbor, and God said, “This is the day that will live in infamy.” For it was on that day that God declared war on the one who has been behind all wars, and there has been an ongoing struggle ever since.

Now in just a moment we will talk more about who “seed of the woman” is. But who, or what, is meant by the “seed of the serpent”? The term “seed” normally has a biological connotation, but this is not strictly possible here. Satan, who is a spirit, is not able to produce actual physical seed. So this must refer to spiritual offspring. The prophecy forecasts the age-long conflict between the children of God and the children of the wicked one. This hostility found immediate expression between wicked Cain and his brother Abel. 1 John 3:12 informs us that Cain was “of that wicked one”—a child of the devil. Satan wins the first battle when Cain yields to sin and murders the woman’s seed, Abel. Later, this hostility came to full fury when Egypt instigated a purge of Hebrew children, from which baby Moses was delivered. Sadly, Satan made inroad into the Jewish people, and the children of Satan were found even among the Jewish leaders. In fact, both John the Baptist and Jesus referred to many of the religious leaders of Israel as an offspring of vipers (Mt. 3:7; 23:33), a clear reference to Genesis 3:15. Jesus even bluntly said to them in John 8:44, “You are of your father the devil...” In the Parable of the Tares in Matt. 13, Jesus shows that Satan has children just as God does (Matthew 13:38). Specifically, it appears that Satan’s seed consists of those who knowingly and willfully set themselves at enmity with the seed of the woman. From that time until now everything that has occurred in human history, and everything you see today is a result of the battle between the Spirit of Christ and the spirit of antichrist. There is a war going on. It is an unseen war. But it is ultimately the cause of all conflict in the universe. Paul identified this war in Eph. 6:12, “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.”

It was the spiritual seed of Satan who sought to kill Jesus Christ through crucifixion. There was indeed enmity between them. At first there is seen an apparent victory on the part of the serpent, who is able to “bruise the heel” of the woman’s seed. Satan, working through them, thought that he had succeeded in killing Jesus.

This struggle continues to this day between the children of God and the children of the devil. 1 John 3:10 says, “In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest:

Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.” This struggle will continue to the very end of the age, according to Rev. 12:17. The ultimate seed of the devil will be the antichrist. There is going to be a satanic incarnation. The devil is going to give to this world a counterfeit christ. The son of Satan and the Son of God are going to fight the “mother of all battles,” the battle of Armageddon.

So our text reveals to us that sin and Satan will bring conflict, animosity, hatred, and war to this world. There will be a great spiritual struggle between Satan & his spiritual seed, and those who seek to follow God and the right way. At this point the picture is not very good. But in this same verse we have good news. Not only is an ongoing struggle prophesied, but also:

II. A SAVIOR IS PROMISED

God gives hope that Satan & sin will not have the final victory. And the hope rests in the “seed of the woman.” This hope for the appointed seed is unveiled progressively by the offspring of Eve through Seth (“another seed” in 4:25), through Noah’s offspring (9:9), and the seed of Abraham first described in 12:7. God kept narrowing down who the seed would be. Paul identified Christ as the “seed” ultimately intended in the promissory blessing to Abraham (Gal. 3:16). In fact, God sent His Son specifically to defeat and to destroy the devil and his demons. Listen to I John 3:8, “He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” Now that raises a question. How is this going to take place? Actually, the first question is this: How will the seed of the woman become our Savior?

A. Through a Miraculous Conception - One main point is that salvation will come through the seed of the woman. That is one of the most mysterious phrases in all of the Bible. Over two hundred times that word seed is used, but when the word refers to human seed, everywhere else it is used to describe the seed of a man. You see, technically and medically speaking, a woman does not have a seed. The woman has the egg. It is the man that provides the seed. But why would God speak of the seed of a woman and how can a woman have seed? Well the answer is found in Isaiah 7:14, “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 definite article before “virgin” (*ha almah* in the Hebrew text) indicates one that was previously promised. And why was it important that the coming Savior be born of a virgin? The virgin birth was necessary, for the Messiah had to be sinless. No child of the seed of man could be sinless. Only the virgin born Son of God could be sinless. You need to understand today that your salvation is wrapped up in, and dependent upon, the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. If Jesus Christ had not been born of a virgin, He could not have been sinless. If Jesus was not sinless, He could not have been the Savior, for if He had sinned, He would have merely died for His own sin.

Now his is great: Though the woman was the instrument through whom sin entered into the world, she would be the means by which salvation would come to the world! No man had anything to do with the conception & birth of Jesus. The serpent was instrumental in the undoing of the woman, and in turn the woman will ultimately bring down the serpent through her offspring. There may be an allusion to our passage in Gal. 4:4, which speaks of God’s Son as “born of a woman.”

You see, that is what Christmas is all about. Jesus came to earth that we might go to heaven. Jesus was born of a virgin that we might be born again. Jesus became the son of man that we might become the sons of God. Jesus died *for* sin that we might die *to* sin. Jesus conquered the

grave that we might conquer death.

However, just because Jesus was born of a virgin, and lived a sinless life, that alone could not have saved us. Something else was required for Him to become our Savior, and that is hinted at in our text as well. Jesus also became Savior:

B. Through Suffering – Salvation and victory was to be won through suffering. In the last of v.15 God said to the serpent concerning the seed of the woman, “you shall bruise His heel.” “Bruise” is a mild translation. The word is stronger than that. The physical analogy is this: where does a snake usually strike at a person? His lower leg or heel. Often such a wound is deadly. Even so, Christ, as Son of Man, was wounded, bruised, and chastised for us according to the prophecy in Isaiah 53:5. He wore the very thorns of the curse as His crown (Mark 15:17). I am sure that when the Lord Jesus was being crucified, and they drove that spike through his heels, He thought of Genesis 3:15. He thought of Isaiah 53:5. He knew “for this purpose I have come.”

Once again, on the surface the picture seems bleak. A great struggle is prophesied. At times Satan will appear to have the upper hand over the godly seed of the woman. Cain killed Abel. The seed of Satan succeeded in killing Jesus Christ on a cruel cross. The children of the devil lead many of God’s children astray. Is this how the conflict shall end? Shall Satan be victorious? No!!! For there is one more important aspect of the prophecy in Genesis 3:15:

III. A SUCCESSFUL CONQUEST IS ASSURED

You don’t have to wonder how this war is going to end. In this verse God also says to the serpent concerning the seed of the woman, “He shall bruise your head.” Again, “bruise” is too weak of a translation. Though the serpent strikes at the heel, the crushing blow against the head of the serpent will be a final & fatal blow. Praise God, the day is coming when Jesus is going to crush the head of Satan and do away with him for good. This is going to take place at the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now actually we know that the victory was won at Calvary. But this victory is going to be finalized, publicized, and actualized when Jesus comes again.

Now a heel wound is not necessarily mortal, but a head wound is. You know the key to killing a snake is his head. Dr. James Merritt told the story of when he was a teenage boy. He had a little dachshund that he kept out in a pen in the backyard. One morning as he was getting ready to go to school, he heard that dog barking. It was the kind of bark that let him know that something was wrong. He ran outside and there was a gigantic snake that looked to be about 5 ft. long and several inches thick that was coiled up, ready to attack his little dog. He ran into the house, got his 22 rifle, came out, got within about six feet of that snake, and he pumped about four bullets into the body of that snake. It looked like it didn’t even phase him one bit even though he was ripping holes right through his body. He was still coiled up ready to strike. Then he realized what he needed to do, and he got a little closer and shot that snake in the head and instantly killed him.

Well Satan’s head one day is going to be crushed once and for all. It is very interesting to see who is really going to do it. The fact is, we believers are going to participate in that event. Paul said in Rom. 16:20, “And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.” Notice the word “your.” Paul says that we are going to crush Satan. Now how can that be? Well friend, it is very simple. Because Jesus has the victory, we have the victory. Because we are in Him, and He is in us. John said in 1 John 4:4, “You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.”

There were some ladies who were talking about the fact that the Church is called the body

of Christ, and what part of His body they would like to be. One woman said, “I would like to be His heart, and love as He loved.” The second woman said, “I would love to be His eyes, so that I could see and understand as He sees and understands.” One lady said, “I would like to be His ears so that I could know and learn as He knows and learns.” Well one lady, who had had a hard time all of her life, a lady whom the devil had been after from day one of her Christian walk with God, said, “I just want to be one of his feet so that I can bruise the devil’s head.” One day those of us who know and love the Lord Jesus Christ are going to have that privilege and have that honor of grinding the head of this old serpent underneath our holy feet.

So in the great, ongoing struggle, whose side will you choose to be on? Will you follow the Savior, or will you follow sin and Satan? Before the outbreak of World War II, Hitler decided that he would conquer the world and by his scintillating ability to speak and his mesmerizing way with words, he actually inflamed a nation. Millions of people were deceived by this man Hitler. Millions of people followed him into the terrible, terrible World War II. But the end came for Hitler and he wound up in a bunker in Berlin where he committed suicide. Before he committed suicide, he sent a wire instructing that Goring, his second in command, was to be replaced by Grand Admiral Doenitz. Doenitz wired back these words, “My Fuhrer! My loyalty to you will be unconditional.” The fool didn't even know that by the time he sent these words, Hitler was already dead and defeated. He had chosen a loser and didn't even know it. That is exactly what happens when people chose the devil against the Lord Jesus Christ. You have chosen a loser. The battle is all but over. The prince of this world is judged. It's just a matter of time. You need to get off the losing side to the victory side. Get off the devil's side onto Jesus' side.

Conclusion: So in this context God pronounced the great curse, with all its aspects and implications. But He also gave the even greater promise of the coming Redeemer. When Adam and Eve heard His proclamation of this “first gospel,” promising salvation in spite of their sin and the resulting curse, this time they believed God’s Word, instead of doubting and rejecting it. Adam called his wife’s name Eve (meaning “life”) in v.20 because she was the “mother of all living.” He thus indicated his faith in God’s promises, not only that they would have children but also that through this means God would send the “seed of the woman” to bring salvation. So as far as we can tell, Adam believed this promise and was saved. God did not change the physical consequences of sin, but he did remit the eternal consequences—hell.

What will be your choice? Will you believe and be saved? Will you obey Jesus and be born again, and become a part of the family of God?

Sources: C. F. Keil & F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 1, Eerdmans Publishing Co.; George Henderson, *Studies in the Book of Genesis* (vv. 13-21); Kenneth Mathews, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996); J. Vernon McGee, *Thru The Bible*, Vol. 1, © 1981; Thru The Bible Radio, Box 7100, Pasadena, CA 91109; Dr. James Merritt (notes from his sermons on vv. 7-16 & 1-7, 15, 24); Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record*, © 1976 by the author, Baker Book House; Allan Moseley, *Leader’s Guide for the January Bible Study 2002: Genesis 1-12*, © 2001 LifeWay Press; Larry Pierce, *Online Bible 8.0 [CD-ROM]* (Ontario: Timnathserah Inc., 1996); Warren Wiersbe, *Expository Outlines on the Old Testament*, © 1968 by author. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982).

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