

Introduction

I trust that you genuinely had a wonderful Thanksgiving. Last week, we wrapped up our series entitled "Scheme & Victories." Today, I want to bridge that series into our Advent series, "Christmas in Unexpected Places."

As we reflect on the series we wrapped up and as we kick off the series leading up to Christmas, we want you to be sure of the victory we have in Jesus. I find great comfort in knowing that, as we discussed, "We fight from victory, not for victory." Our fighting is evidence of our belief in the gospel and the victory we have secured.

We hope that as we work through the Advent season, you will begin to see Christmas on all the pages of scripture. More specifically, you will know the gift of the gospel in places you have never seen it before.

As we prepare for Christmas, we can all agree that there is nothing better than a thoughtful gift. If you're familiar with the "5 Love Languages," then you will know that "gift-giving" is one of the languages mentioned by the author. My wife will hate me for saying this, but one of her love languages is "gift-giving." To my wife, finding a thoughtful gift means you paid careful attention to giving a gift that communicates your love.

As we approach this text, I want you to consider that the gospel gift was a plan that God our Father, in agreement with the Godhead, thought of long before he created the universe. If we examine this passage together more closely, I believe you will see more accurately the love of God for you. Will you stand with me for the reading of God's word?

"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." - **Genesis 3:15**

Building Anticipation

Context

In case you are thinking, "What kind of far-fetched Christmas message is this?" Consider that Christmas is all about building anticipation for the arrival of Eve's offspring. The one who will crush the head of the serpent. Before you get ahead of me and start connecting the dots, I want to ask you to slow down and consider these words from the perspective of someone waiting for the fulfillment of God's promise to Eve. I

argue that this is the intention of the author of Genesis. It is to put a spark of hope and anticipation in the mind of the reader.

Consequences and Implications

From the beginning of scripture, we are taught how the world got to be the way it is. Through the disobedience of Adam and Eve, death entered the world. Before you blame Adam and Eve or claim it's unfair that we should be punished for another's sin. I want you to consider that you have willfully disobeyed just as they did. Paul says it better in Romans 5:12, "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—." Had you been in the garden, we would've been reading your name instead because you, too, would have chosen to disobey God.

One more idea for consideration before we outline the passage. Why was the punishment so severe for such a seemingly insignificant action? The simple act of disobedience through eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil contained all the potential for the horrors we see today. In that decision, Adam and Eve, the creatures, defied their creator and said to him, "We know better; we will be our own God." The consequences of going beyond the boundaries of God's blessing is a curse found in the passage we are examining today.

Protoevangelium

There are hundreds of questions we could consider in this account that would slow us down, so I will leave it at that for today's message. What I want us to turn our attention to is sifting through this passage to look for traces of the gospel. The early church considered this to be the protoevangelium, rather, the "first gospel."

First Gospel

Promise

After God begins pronouncing the curse on the serpent in verse 14, he continues in verse 15, saying, "I will put enmity between you and the woman...." This is to say that there will be a war between the serpent and the woman, which we can see displayed throughout history up until today. God further clarifies his meaning by saying, "And between your offspring and her offspring..." That the generations to come will constantly be at war with the serpent, culminating in his final statement, "he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

Expectation

Before we jump ahead, we need to consider that when we read this text, we see the words "he" and "him" and immediately think of Jesus. While that is the correct

understanding of this passage, we must consider that this was not likely what the original readers had in mind. They likely thought in a very general sense that someday, the offspring of Eve would defeat the serpent, and good would triumph over evil. What is essential to understand is that the author introduces a sense of anticipation into the hearts of his readers. Only as the story continues to unfold, it is made clear that God is talking about an individual, namely, his son, Jesus. However, we're not there yet.

Hope

What was the anticipatory hope that was offered to Adam and Eve? It can be summarized in three parts: Destroy evil, Restore creation, and Allow God to dwell with his people.

When God says to the serpent that the offspring of Eve "will bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." That is to say, there will be a day when the future seed of Eve will deal a death blow to the serpent by crushing his head. In defeating the serpent, the influence of evil will also be defeated.

Not only will the serpent be defeated, but creation will be restored. Can't you see the good news just sitting on the surface of this text? It's ripe for the picking! He immediately offers a way back after defying the eternal and all-holy God.

Thirdly, and most importantly, we can once again walk with God as Adam did in the garden. Consider that it wasn't just Adam and Eve who were affected by their choice. Still, God lost His relationship with his most prized creation. To restore that, instead of starting over, he begins to roll out his plan from eternity to display his Glory through his son.

Gospel through the Generations

In the moment that Adam and Eve face the consequences of their choice to defy God, he meets them in their nakedness, clothes them, and fills their hearts with hope. They become, in essence, the very first Christians as they believe in God's promise. You could imagine then how excited they must've been when Eve gave birth to their first child, and she said in 4:1, "I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord." Naming him Cain, it wouldn't be long before she had another son and called him Abel. You can imagine the heartbreak when Cain, following the pattern set forth by his parents, makes the decision to murder his brother. Cain then being cursed by God leaves Adam and Eve without hope, that is, until God gives them another son (v25), Seth, and Eve says, "God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him."

Sadly, Cain's offspring would increase over and above Seth's. We read in Genesis 6:5-8, "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every

intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, which grieved him to his heart. So the Lord said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man, and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them." But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

God renewed his covenant with Noah, which you can read in Genesis 9. Still, after delivering Noah and his family from the flood, Noah made wine and lay uncovered in his tent. Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers. Shem and Japheth covered their father's nakedness, and as a result, Canaan, the son of Ham, was cursed, but Noah blessed Shem and Japheth.

From Shem, we are introduced to one of his descendants named Abram, with whom, once again, God would renew his covenant. After being without an heir we read in Genesis 15:5-6 "And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." And he believed the Lord and counted it to him as righteousness." God gave Abraham and Sarah a son at the ripe old age of 100, and they named him Isaac. He was the fulfillment of God's promise. Only for God to ask Abraham to sacrifice his son. Of course, we are familiar with how the story goes. God provides himself the lamb for the sacrifice. Sparing Issac's life and telling Abraham that in his offspring/seed, the nations of the world would be blessed. Are you starting to get the picture?

From Issac comes Jacob and Esau. We are told that the older will serve the younger, and sure enough, Jacob is named Israel, and he has twelve sons, who are preserved during a famine due to selling their brother Joseph into slavery; he turns to his brothers and says that what you meant for evil God meant for good, the saving of many lives. Preserving Judah, who from the line of Judah would come to King David, whom God promised in 2 Samuel 7:16, "Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever."

Around every turn, when all hope is lost, and the seed is about to be extinguished, God shows up, making good on his promise to Eve. From the lineage of David comes one known as the second Adam. Paul says, "For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness leading to eternal life through **Jesus Christ our Lord.**"

Jesus is the seed of Eve

Jesus is the "he" and the "him" mentioned in Genesis 3:15. He is the offspring and the seed of Eve who would crush the head of the serpent and, in doing so, have his heel bitten by the snake. Being rejected by the very people he came to save, being crucified, if he dies, the promise goes unfilled, but Jesus says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." John 12:24. Jesus is the seed who went into the heart of the earth and died. Being the perfect and sinless sacrifice, he is the better Adam, Seth, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob the Father raised him from the grave. He is the Messiah, the Christ, God's anointed one to whom he has given the name above every name, and in his resurrection, he crushed the head of Satan once and for all, eternally, securing the promise to Eve and our salvation. Indeed, all the promises of God find their yes in Him!

Conclusion

Hopefully, today, the Holy Spirit has placed in your mind and hearts that Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promise to Eve. If you understand that this world is not as it should be, then Jesus gives us the hope of salvation, he has overcome evil and will restore creation enabling God once again to dwell with his people.

If you are a part of His kingdom, we live in "the already, but not yet." Jesus promised to return, and we have every reason to believe he will make good on that promise. Till then, we lived as citizens of His kingdom as witnesses, evidencing the fulfillment of his promise to a world that groans for the children of God to be revealed.

Somehow, we oddly find ourselves in a very similar situation as the original hearers of this passage. Filled with anticipation, not for the coming of The Messiah, but for His return. Until then, let's be on the lookout for Christmas in Unexpected places.