

THE FIRST GOSPEL MESSAGE

Gen. 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Can you remember the first Gospel message you heard? Many of us were privileged from a very early age with the eternal truth that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour from sin ... the mediator between God and man (I Tim. 2:5). We have heard the Gospel preached in all kinds of places, - tent meetings, mission halls, church services, Sunday Schools, children's meetings, and others besides. This evening, - in preparation for coming to the Lord's Table, - we shall study the first Gospel message ever preached on earth. The Gospel Preacher was God Himself.

The words of our text were not directly spoken to Adam and Eve, but to the serpent for they were God's decree of punishment upon him because of how he had lured them into disobedience. Satan had succeeded in meddling in God's order. He introduced sin into God's new and perfect world. He had soiled the man and woman with his wickedness. He had introduced rebellion, and had corrupted creation. It was a day of cruel triumph as he indulged his hatred of God!

But now God calls him to account, and He causes the devil to be disgraced on the very battlefield where he had gained a temporary success. In no uncertain terms, He tells the serpent, *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ...* This was a promise relating to Jesus Christ! This was an announcement He would release the sinner from the bondage of sin ... At the immediate onset of total human depravity, God had already made preparation for salvation in the provision of the Lamb Who had been slain from before the foundation of the world! He had determined, *it [the promise of God to be fulfilled in Christ] shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* ... In the will of God, the evil one would be permitted to, - as it were, - 'bruise the heel' of the Saviour ... but the Saviour would deal the death blow, - eternal death, - upon the serpent's head. Christ would be wounded, but Satan would perish forever in God's eternal judgement. Jesus Christ was the "Amen" to God's plan. *What a Gospel message!*

This Gospel message spoke of the incarnation, - Christ who would be born of the seed of the woman. It spoke of Calvary (*thou shalt bruise his heel*), and Christ's triumph over the devil (*it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel*). It spoke of sacrifice, and how He would give His life a ransom for sinners. It spoke of those who would come to believe in God's saving power. Rather than bring about her immediate death, God graciously and mercifully kept the first woman and through the many generations that succeeded her the 'Seed' He promised would be born, - Christ the Redeemer. So then, this is the Gospel. Let's look at the background to **the first Gospel message**.

In accordance with the command of God to have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth (Gen. 1:26), Adam and Eve enjoyed great affinity with the animals (... that is where we get it from ... to talk to and enjoy the company of *our* animals!)

The woman and the serpent had previously been enjoying harmony in God's creation. The serpent was no danger. He was part of that which God declared was good (Gen. 1:25). The wolf lived with the lamb (cf. Is. 11), the leopard lay down with the young goat, the calf and the lion cub played together, the cow and the bear ate together, the lion fed on the straw along with the ox ... and if you wanted to you could put your hand into the place where the snakes lived. In fact, all of God's perfect creation was full of His glorious and wonderful knowledge. There was nothing to arouse fear, discord or alarm. Even the serpent was perfectly at one with all God had made ... What happened, then?

... Something occurred in Genesis three that started it all, when Satan entered and possessed the serpent. He secured that perfectly pleasant creature for his evil purposes. It could have been any of the creatures God had so perfectly formed ... but it was the serpent the devil chose. And Eve thought the serpent was her friend, for that was how it had been, ... and she was so much his friend she accepted what he communicated to her.

However, previously, God had given her and her husband the position of authority over all the creatures, **Gen. 1:26** And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. ... But here in Gen. 3, this serpent was going against God because it was showing its dominion over her by offering *her* advice and guidance. This was the wrong way round because she was not fulfilling the position of dominion God had given her over the animals! She was being slack in her duties before God.

Consequently, she heeded the serpent's advice, which was contrary and ate the forbidden fruit. Immediately, she sinned for she was prepared to give credence that perhaps God had not got it right (Gen. 3:4-6)! She discovered, - to her peril ... and too late, - the serpent was a liar, v.13 *The serpent beguiled [tricked, deceived] me, and I did eat.*

Where was Adam in all this?! Where was he when the serpent was cozying up to his wife Eve, and saying things that were blatantly erroneous ... and which he, - Adam, - knew to be wrong? ... He was standing beside her! The two went

everywhere together ... **Gen. 1:27** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he *them*. **28** And God blessed *them*, and God said unto *them* ... **2:18** And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him ... **3:8** And *they* heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves ... **9** And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him ... **12** And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. **13** And the LORD God said unto the woman ... And when the serpent was speaking to Eve, Adam was standing next to her, and he could hear everything the serpent was saying, **Gen. 3:1** Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And *he said unto the woman*, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? **2** And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: **3** But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. **4** And *the serpent said unto the woman*, Ye shall not surely die: **5** For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. **6** And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto *her husband with her*; and he did eat. ... Adam was there *with* Eve, and he heard it all, but he said nothing!

Eve usually gets the blame, and yet, *Adam* was the one who was told, **2:16** And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: **17** But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. ... That is before Eve was created, and since the Lord said it to Adam, it was *Adam's* responsibility to make sure the fruit from that tree was not eaten, - *he* was the one God told ... not Eve! Therefore, he And that is why Paul explained, **1 Tim. 2:13** For Adam was first formed, then Eve. **14** And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

... Adam was not deceived?! No, Adam was not deceived because Adam knew what the serpent was saying was wrong, but Adam kept quiet and said nothing, - therefore, it was *he* who sinned willfully. Both sinned, of course, but it was the woman who was deceived, - she obviously did not know, - Adam never told her. Did he not consider the Word of God important enough to tell her?!

... So Adam *did* know that what the serpent was saying was wrong, but he stood by listening and said nothing! *Therefore*, it was Adam who sinned willfully because God had specifically told *him* he should not eat of the tree. ... The serpent was enticing Eve to eat fruit her husband had been told ought not to have been eaten ... and Adam stood there quiet! The devil was getting at the man

through the woman, - he knew exactly what he was doing for he was cunning ... and when Eve ate the fruit, then she turned to Adam and said, "Here, it's good, taste it" ... Eve was still standing, - she hadn't died, as God had told him would happen, - so he ate also ... despite what God had clearly instructed! ... The serpent tempted his wife, - Eve, - with a lie, - Adam knew the truth, but Eve was not created when God gave Adam that truth so, the sin lies fairly and squarely at Adam's feet, and that is why the New Testament writers talk about the sin of Adam, rather than the sin of Eve.

The serpent, however, - or more correctly, Satan who had entered the serpent, - reckoned he had successfully destroyed forever man's relationship with God ... but the devil never works things out right, - he got it wrong because God would not allow it God would ultimately break up this sordid contract mankind had been lured into with the forces of Hell and He would raise up a seed which would war, - and win, - against the dominion of Satan!

This was God's first declaration He would establish His Kingdom. He would create in the hearts of His chosen seed an enmity against sin, and ultimately destroy the Prince of Darkness. This was not simply a matter of good versus evil ... This was a contest between God and the devil ... and God had already declared He would be victorious, *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

This, of course, is referring to a *spiritual* seed ... consisting of a people who would be born again of the Holy Spirit and whose sins would be cleansed by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. These point forward to the infinite number of saints who will one day gather in Heaven with the song on their lips, *Rev. 1:5 Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, 6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.* ... That was the purpose for which God would bruise irreparably the head of Satan ... to save out a *seed* to His glory and His honour!

He has been pursuing that goal since the declaration was first made in the Garden of Eden ... this Gospel *will* be triumphant. Repeatedly, - in the Old Testament, - the devil has been trying to destroy the nation from which Jesus would come ... and when the Saviour *did* come the devil tried every trick to thwart His act of atonement on the cross. But he failed for the cross was the final nail in the devil's coffin! He is going to put up a fight at the end of the age, but the outcome has already been decided, *Rev. 20:10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.* ... The deceiver will be destroyed!

Yes, the battle is raging, - we see it all around us, - but the victory has always been promised to the Lord, and it is ours too. When the devil tells us to survey the decline of the Church, the increase of evil, the confusion surrounding true faith ... we can tell him he has fooled himself into thinking he's winning ... when all the time *he is going to be the loser!* ... He is only fulfilling God's plan for his own eternal destruction. ... On the authority of the Word of God, beginning here with the first Gospel message, - at the start of Scripture, - *the devil has already lost!*

Every time Christ crucified is preached it shakes the gates of Hell ... Why do you think the devil has such a hatred for this message, and for the people who have been saved by it?! Throughout every period since God's declaration of war in the Garden, the devil has been consumed with hatred for the message we love, and the desire to destroy God's people ... but he will never do it! God has said He won't ... so *he won't!* He is going to lose all he ever he thought he had, **Rev. 20:10** *And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

This is the promise of God in Gen. 3:15, *it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* ... To 'bruise His heel', Satan would 'bruise' the human nature of Christ, ... which, of course, he was permitted to do at the cross, **Is. 53:4** *He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.* The Lord Jesus endured our shame and the pain of death by crucifixion. ... His 'heel was bruised' ... but it was in the will of God for, **Is. 53:10** *it pleased the LORD to bruise him.*

Terrible and all what they did to Him, in the plan of God, that was all they were able and allowed to do ... "bruise His heel" ... not His head, but His heel. The tomb could not keep Him! ... "He arose a Victor from the dark domain". ... That was how God had promised it would happen! Never to suffer again, to the glory of God, death and Hell were compelled to release the Saviour!

But the devil's judgment is waiting for him! ... And no matter what the devil tries to do, he will never be able to avoid it! He cannot escape Hell ... and He is judged and condemned! Already, he has felt defeat at the hand of God when Christ was raised from the dead and ascended into Glory ... but there is even more crushing judgment waiting for him. That will be the *final* defeat. Satan is not dead, - he is romping around seeking whom he may devour. While he still can, he continues to deceive the human race ... but he will never be able to steal even one of Christ's truly Redeemed!

There is coming a day when God will cleanse the earth from the serpent's filth ... as the psalmist prophesies, *Ps. 72:19* blessed *be* his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled *with* his glory; Amen, and Amen.

Satan is 'on the run!' You mightn't think it, but he is! He is busier today than ever because he senses he hasn't got long! He is 'running scared' of Jesus because he knows his time is shorter than ever it was before. He thought this world would be the arena for his victory over God, like the time he took Jesus *Mt. 4:8* up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; *9* And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. *10* Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan ... He thought he would ascend above the heights of the clouds and be like the most High (Is. 14). He thought he would rise into Heaven, and exalt his throne above the stars of God ... He thought the Church of Christ would simply crumble before him ... but instead, every plan he initiates ends in failure because God is still on the throne!

Even with the introduction of death in the Garden, Satan thought he had somehow upset God's plan ... but, in fact, God changed death in to the glorious gateway whereby the Redeemed would enter Heaven! *I Cor. 15:54* Death is swallowed up in victory. *55* O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory ... Instead of being a curse to the believer, it has become the entrance to Glory!

That is the message of victory coming from *Gen. 3:15*. Christ our Saviour, Whose heel was bruised, has risen from the dead and has granted His people the promise of everlasting life in His glorious presence. The promise began the moment we believed ... that promise He had already planned for in eternity.

As a consequence of all this, He has put enmity between us and the serpent. As God's people, we hate what the devil stands for. We hate the sins he dangles before our eyes because we are no longer interested. We have a new Master for, through the eternal covenant of grace, God included us in the woman's seed. We have experienced how Christ delivers from sin, and we are no longer under Satan.

And even when he tries to tell us, "I have brought you under the curse." We can tell him, "Aye, you brought us under the curse, but the Lord Jesus Christ has *freed* us *from* the curse, for *Ps. 32:1* Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." Satan, of course, is the great accuser, but he has nothing more to use against for, as Paul wrote, *Rom. 8:33* Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. *34* Who is he that condemneth?" "Here is a swinging blow for the old dragon's head, from such he will never recover!" (Spurgeon).

As we conclude our study, notice what Adam did, - he gave his wife a name. After God had told him, **Gen. 3:19** *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return ...* notice the name Adam gave his wife, **20** *And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.*

Eve means 'life'. In other words, Adam believed what God said, for despite the judgment which had been brought upon them, God promised she would bring forth children (v.16), - through her new life would come. Eve was not yet a mother, but Adam believed she would be by virtue of the promised Seed.

Adam is at this very moment in Heaven. Yes, he sinned but God redeemed him through grace, - He forgave him, for Adam's relationship with God was restored ... and Eve's also for from her, - in the plan and will of God, - the seed bore Christ. In the garden at that time, Eve wasn't even pregnant ... in fact, such a thing had not even been thought of. Nonetheless, they believed in the promises of God that Eve would be the mother of all living (v.20).

Just before He sent them from the Garden, God sent them out *covered* ... not in their own attempts to hide their shame, but He slew an animal, - perfect and flawless, - and He provided for our first parents to be covered in the garments of righteousness (v.21), - garments cut and sized to cover them perfectly.

This is the victory of salvation in which we are living and enjoying today. We're heading towards Heaven for Christ has defeated Satan on our behalf. And that is what we are celebrating as we come to remember our Saviour, - we have been blessed with the fruits of the first Gospel message, and we belong to His Seed. Amen.