

THE PROMISED STEP INTO TIME (Gen. 3:15)

The 'first step' God took towards saving His people was taken in eternity. Before any of us existed, ... before the worlds were created, ... before conflicts divided the nations ... before a single breath of air was taken ... God had already inaugurated His plan of salvation. That is how we can call it 'eternal', because it has no beginning and no end.

Before a single blade of grass came out of the ground, in the eternal mind of God the Lamb had already been slain [from the foundation of the world \(Rev. 13:8\)](#) and every aspect of our salvation had been sealed with His Divine approval and authority.

We now step out of eternity and into time. God created a perfect world and created within that perfect world two perfect people. There was nothing in that world with which God was ashamed or disappointed. There was nothing failing, nothing lacking, nothing out of place, nothing less than perfect. And God had a perfect relationship with the man and the woman, who also had a perfect relationship with each other. They enjoyed everything that surrounded them in this perfect world God made.

This was not a fanciful utopia, or idealistic 'dream world', or fairy land, or myth. This was the reality of God's creation and about which He speaks in the opening two chapters of His inspired and infallible Word.

It is comparable to the new heaven and the new earth the Bible speaks about in the final two chapters of Scripture and to which every born-again believer will be taken up and into, [Rev. 21:26 they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. 27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth.](#)

You see, God made us for Himself, - that was His sole purpose in creating us, [Ps. 100:3 it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.](#) It follows that our ultimate goal is within that purpose, - as John wrote, [I Jn. 5:11 God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.](#) And consequently, we enjoy Him Who has created us for Himself, as the psalmist declared, [Ps. 100:4 be thankful unto him, and bless his name. 5 For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.](#)

So what happened? Well, of course we know what happened ... *sin* happened ... Sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned (Rom. 5:12). How did the actual sin create such a devastating judgement on the world ... so devastating it destroyed the perfect relationship our first parents enjoyed with God?

Surely God could have overlooked something as simple as reaching out and taking what you were told not to take? Granted, they should not have done it but, - 'on the grand scale', - it was fairly minor. Perhaps, but that was not how God looked upon it. As far as He is concerned, *any* sin is serious. ... So yes, it looked simple ... but when you look deeper you see that where it matters is our first parents actually reached out to aspirations which had the intention of robbing God. Not content with enjoying the primary position in His creation, they wanted more ... They wanted to take God's place, - or at the very least, be on an equal par with Him ... so that time would have no bearing on them, and they would be as wise as God concerning good and evil. They also wanted this capability to limit God in their lives ... Obviously, such an arrangement was unacceptable for it would mean His position was restricted.

The perpetrator who prompted their intentions was no less than the devil, the enemy of God and God's people. His agenda was to take over from God, and he tried to use the man and woman in his evil endeavours.

Do you believe in the devil? Is there such a being? The Bible says there is! As true as there is a God, there is also a devil. It is not merely 'good' and 'evil' ... There is a Person called God and there is also a person the Bible calls the devil.

The devil took what was good. ... On the sixth day of creation, Gen. 1:25 God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that *it was good*. God made the serpent *good*. There is nothing wrong or evil about the serpents, the snakes ... in fact, the Lord Jesus commended their manner to His disciples when He was sending them out, Mt. 10:16 *be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves*. ... Also, Moses was told to lift a serpent up in the wilderness, which Jesus used to refer to Himself when He spoke with Nicodemus (Jn. 3:14). ... The serpent was created as perfect as everything else in God's creation.

Here is what Adam and Eve could have done, without any fear of being hurt ... They could have gone to where the cobra (the asp, Is. 11:8) lived, and touched it without any fear of being bitten. Similarly, they could have walked among where the viper's (the cockatrice, Is. 11:8) congregated, and they would have been safe. They would have had a close affinity with the animals ... and that is where we get it from also with ours.

However, the devil took the serpent and he used the beauty and the familiarity of the serpent to bluff his way into Eve's affections and to lure her into a conversation she ought to have avoided. She was entertained by his advances and he duped her into considering him as a friend. ... *No friend of God would have misled her into disobedience.*

After Adam and Eve had fallen for the greatest deception, God came looking for them. He found them for He knew exactly where they were, - there is no place God cannot see, - and He knew what they had done ... and they also knew He knew what they had done, for they were hiding (3:8). They firstly hid their nakedness ... which they had no need to do previously, and they crouched behind the trees for they knew they had sinned even before God confronted them ... As King Solomon was to write, **Prov. 16:9** *A man's heart deviseth his way.*

Where are you, Adam? Why are you hiding? ... And Adam blamed the woman (v.12), and he even blamed God too, *The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.* ... Lord, it is everybody else's fault, but it's not mine!

But this is simply only the background to our study this morning ... because we are looking at **the steps to the cradle**. The opening steps took place in eternity ... and here, - in the Garden of Eden, in the concept of time, - the plan of salvation takes another 'step' when God made His great announcement that echoes throughout the ages and which would ultimately be fulfilled in a little town called Nazareth and on a lonely hill called Calvary, v.15 *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.*

Let's consider what God said, in anticipation of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to the cradle.

THE PERSONAL ENMITY I will put enmity between thee and the woman

On a purely practical and simple level, John Calvin believed this statement introduced the hostility we have with the snake, “I interpret this simply to mean that there should always be the hostile strife between the human race and serpents, which is now apparent; for, by a secret feeling of nature, man abhors them.” ... He may have a valid point ... If a snake was to make its way into our church I would be in no doubt there would be a mass exodus at a tremendous speed! ... We naturally do not take very well to snakes.

The serpent was indeed cursed more than any other animal (Gen. 3:14), and he was told he would have to slither along the ground from then onwards (*upon thy belly shalt thou go* ... the verse actually suggests that was not the case at the beginning of creation, i.e. when first created he had some posture other than the one we associate with the serpent). ... Yes, on an ordinary level, - it's true, - God put enmity between the serpent and the woman.

But surely there is more to it than that. While God may be speaking about a natural strong dislike between the seed of the woman and the serpent ... there is more to it! The serpent was only the outward ‘skin’ the devil used to corrupt God’s creation, starting with Adam and Eve. These words, - *I will put enmity between thee and the woman*, - have a deeper meaning.

Step back a moment ... What has been happening here? Matthew Henry draws the picture for us. He speaks about the prisoners being found guilty by their own confession, and God proceeds to pass the sentence ... and He begins where the sin began, - with the serpent.

Now, notice God did not examine the serpent, - He did not ask the serpent, *v.9 Where art thou?* ... or *v.13 What is this that thou hast done?* That is because He did not need to, - the devil was already convicted of rebellion against God. He had already been judged and found guilty, *Is. 14:12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, ... 13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. 15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. ... Rev. 12:7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in*

heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. ... The sentence had already been passed on the devil, - the devil already knew it, and God had no need to repeat it.

God hates sin, and the penalty of sin is His rejection. *Hab. 1:13 Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.* God was at war with the devil ... and when the woman and the man chose to believe the deceit of the devil rather than the truth of God, the Bible tells us God decreed to the serpent, *Gen. 3:15 I will put enmity between thee and the woman.* And this enmity has since affected every generation and every person, *Rom. 3:23 all have sinned ... 8:7 the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8* So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. ... *James 4:4 the friendship of the world is enmity with God.*

Our first parents made the wrong decision ... and chose the losing side!
... **The personal enmity** ...

THE PERPETUAL ENEMY

... and between thy seed and her seed

... The constant, enduring and ongoing enemy. Since God spoke to the devil in Eden, there has never been a truce or a ceasefire. There has never been a cessation of conflict, - the battle has always raged ... and will continue to rage until Jesus comes back again ... and the closer to His Second Coming, the more the battle will rage. ... Sin turned that which was blessed of God in creation into a curse.

There was no undoing of the sin. Their lives were marked by spiritual death, *Rom. 5:12 as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* You see, the Divine order was ... *Gen. 1:26 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 instead, man lost his dominion.*

In the Garden of Eden neither the snake, or the lion, or the crocodile, or any of the animals we associate with being wicked would have caused any harm to our first parents because they had dominion over them. However, that dominion was lost. ... And it will only be restored in the new age when *Is. 11:6 The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling*

together; and a little child shall lead them. 7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. 8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. 9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

But until then, there will be no peace with the devil because God has allowed, - in His sovereign plan and purpose, - our adversary the devil to be I Pet. 5:8 as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. He is not roaming free ... In the same way that God displayed His authority over him in the Garden, the devil is not free to do whatever he likes, go where he wants, and do what he wants. He is under subjection to the authority of God. ... He has *always* been that way.

He is a powerful enemy, - one we must not speak with, for God's Word commands, Jas 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Yes, he is a powerful enemy but he is also a defeated enemy ... and he can only do that which God allows him to do.

And yes, God declared the seed of the woman and the seed of the devil would be in **perpetual enmity**, - as long as this world continues, there will never be peace between the two. The devil will never leave us alone! Until the last believer is taken out of this world, this enmity will continue. Jesus said, Mt. 24:9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. ... John wrote, I Jn. 3:13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. Yes, the world has time for everybody and everything else ... but it has no time for Christ and the people of God!

But God told the devil there is coming One Who would sound the death knell in this battle ... and He was telling the devil this conflict will unquestionably come to its conclusion to God's glory. The battle would linger throughout the Old Testament, and during that time the devil would try his worst to stop it happening, - to hinder what God had planned. ... The devil would be behind the rebellion of God's people in the wilderness and he would try to stop them from reaching the land of Canaan. He would tempt them and tease them with the gods of the other nations ... and he would allure them away off after these false gods. He

would bring upon them God's judgement in Babylon. He would pervert and pollute their worship ceremonies ... and he would carry out all manner of activities, - sometimes subtle, and at other times not subtle at all ... even convincing the Herod of the day to put to death every last baby boy so as to stop the Messiah being born! ... *But he couldn't stop the promised Seed of Eve from entering this world, as prophesied ...*
 ... **The Personal Enmity** ... **The Perpetual Enemy** ... and ...

THE PROMISED END *He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*
 The devil is defeated, - I'm not saying he is bound, for I don't believe that ... but I do believe he is defeated. ... Before he had even properly started, the devil is told of his ultimate defeat!

His defeat would not come in the form of a Moses or an Elijah, but his defeat would come in Jesus Christ, ... Phil. 2:6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

God's Word never fails. His promises are never broken. Every covenant He makes, He keeps. He promised the Seed of the woman would bruise the head of the devil, - a devastating and destructive blow, - ... while He promised also He would allow the devil to bruise the heel of His Son. ... Serious and painful as a 'heel wound' is ... it is not as serious as a 'head wound'.

And so, Jesus came into this world knowing exactly what lay before Him, - He knew He would be bruised, - *marred* more than any man (Is. 52:14), - Is. 53:2 he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. 3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities ... You see, Jesus Christ is the only Deliverer God has ever given to snatch us out of the grip of the enemy, the devil. Good works cannot do it. Church membership cannot do it. Baptism cannot do it. Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. Only through Jesus

Christ can we be saved from the sin that imprisons us ... which would eventually destroy us in the prison cell of unbelief.

Standing nearby, - as God cursed the trembling snake (... and I'm sure he *was* trembling with fear! ... and he *had* to stand listening to God) ... standing nearby was the man and the woman, and I'm sure they noticed a little piece of light when they heard the Seed of the woman will mortally bruise the head of the devil. ... It meant that God *still* had a purpose He was going to bring about through them for she was going to have a *seed*.

This was the dawning of the Gospel day. No sooner was the wound inflicted than the remedy was introduced. Here already was grace at work ... sovereign grace being extended because God was in charge. He had not handed over responsibility or authority. Here was the certainty the Light would shine in the darkness, but the darkness could never overcome it (Jn. 1:5).

God, - for His own purposes, - would allow the devil to go so far, but no further ... to bruise the heel of Jesus on the cross, but the Lord Jesus would deal the mortal bruise upon the head of the devil that would sound his everlasting defeat. ... **The Promised End** to the battle.

CONCLUSION

Stepping out of eternity and into time ... Stepping down from the throne of Heaven and into a manger ... Loved in Heaven, and loved in the cradle ... Promised in eternity and provided in time ... God's perfectly holy and righteous Son ... the Christ, - the Messiah, - of the cross, the Saviour of sinners, and the Redeemer of the Redeemed, the Lamb of God.

What a Saviour! *That's Jesus!* Is He *your* Saviour? Do you know Him as Lord? He is promised as far back as the opening chapters of the Bible. He is promised as God's only answer to man's rebellion. He is the only means God has provided by which His holy and righteous wrath can be appeased. ... He was promised in eternity so that even before the sin there was the Saviour. ... The wonderful plan of our redemption.

Philip P. Bliss wrote many hymns we enjoy singing today. One of those hymns was very close to his heart. Ira D. Sankey, - the friend and co-evangelist with D.L. Moody, - tells of the last occasion he heard P.P.

Bliss sing this hymn. It was in no less a place than the State Penitentiary in Jackson, Michigan ...

Man of Sorrows! what a name
 For the Son of God, who came
 Ruined sinners to reclaim.
 Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
 In my place condemned He stood;
 Sealed my pardon with His blood.
 Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

When He comes, our glorious King,
 All His ransomed home to bring,
 Then anew His song we'll sing:
 Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

The Seed of the woman was made sin and a curse for us. His sufferings and death were when the devil *attacked* Him and, - as it were, - 'bruised His heel'. ... Yes, the devil tempted Him in the wilderness, the devil lured Judas to betray Him, and Peter to deny Him ... but while 'the bruising of the heel', - painful and agonizing as it was, - it lasted only for a short time here on earth. ... The devil could only go so far ...his power was limited, restricted!

As the Gospel is preached, in many places, souls are saved and it is like when Satan fell as lightning from heaven (Lk. 10:18), and his final destination is to be cast into the burning lake of fire forever (Rev. 20:10). For the child of God, the way is 'up' ... but for the devil, the only direction is 'down'!

We are saved through the Gospel that renders us righteous before God through what Jesus did for us at Calvary ... Our Gospel is the solid Rock of faith upon which our Christmas season is built. It began before time, it was introduced in the Garden, it continued to the cradle and then to the cross ... and finally to its glorious and eternal pinnacle ... right into the throne room of our wonderful, saving and covenant-keeping God.

That is the plan God is working to, - when He sent His Son into this world to redeem His people. That was the start of it on earth ... the promised step into time when He made the first announcement in the Garden of Eden. Amen.