

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Curse on the Serpent, Part 1

Scripture: Genesis 3:14-15

Code: 90-241

Well, I have a daunting task in front of me, to some degree, to take you into the third chapter of Genesis and deal with one of the great portions of Scripture. But turn in your Bibles, if you will, to the third chapter of Genesis and we'll see how far we can go in this incredibly important portion of Scripture.

As I've said to you in the past in our study of Genesis chapter 3, for some people this is deemed the most important chapter in the Bible because it is the third chapter of Genesis which defines for us why the world is the way it is. It defines for us the problem of fallen civilization, of fallen society, of fallen humanity in a fallen universe. Not to understand the third chapter of Genesis is not to understand anything about the reality of the world in which we live and the people who are a part of it.

On the other hand, to grasp Genesis 3 is to have an appropriate world view. It is to understand, as I said at the concert a few nights ago, that all the problems that exist in the universe are a result of sin and that sin originates in the account of Genesis chapter 3.

Now we come in our study of Genesis chapter 3 to verses 14 and 15. Let me read them to you. "And the Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, more than every beast of the field; on your belly shall you go and dust shall you eat all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed. He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise Him on the heel.'"

Here is the beginning of the section of Genesis 3 in which we have the divine curse. We have a curse on the serpent. We have a curse on Satan. We have a curse also on the woman in verse 16. We have a curse on the man from verse 17 to 19. All of the principles involved in the Fall are cursed by God.

We have already studied the Fall itself. We have studied the divine confrontation that occurred after the Fall. The Fall is in verses 1 to 7, verses 8 to 13 is the divine confrontation when God comes to Adam and Eve in the garden and confronts them about their sin. And now you have, starting in verse 14, the curse. And here we find out why the world is the way it is.

I was reading again Irwin Lutzer's (???) book The Serpent of Paradise this week. And he begins one of his chapters of that book with an interesting account. He says there was a construction company

that had invited various contractors to submit bids for a major building complex. All things being equal, the contractor who submitted the lowest bid would get the job. Needless to say, the bids had to be submitted in secret.

On the last day the bids could be tendered, a contractor walked into the office of the president of the company with a Bid Application in his hand. To his surprise, the office of the president was empty. He stood alone, venturing a glance at the huge mahogany desk. Much to his surprise, he saw on the desk the bid of his major competitor lying there. The only problem was there was a can of pop sitting directly over the most important figure in the document, the final bid. If this contractor knew the amount that was written on that line, he could adjust his own bid to come in just beneath it and the multi-million dollar job would be his.

The contractor nervously paced the floor knowing full well what was at stake. He contemplated moving the can for just a second, reading the figure and then putting it back. He touched the can but found himself unable to do that. He glanced around the room one more time, now confident that no one was looking, he lifted the can quickly, intently glanced at the number and put the can back instantly. Much to his chagrin as he lifted the can from the desk, hundreds of BBs spilled onto the desk and rolled all over the floor.

This was a setup. That contractor experienced the law of unintended consequences. He thought he could control the fallout of his dishonesty, but discovered that unforsaken events had been built into the temptation. One single act had repercussions he could not have anticipated, the can of soda was not what it appeared to be.

And that's exactly what happened to Satan when he felt the law of unintended consequences at his own rebellion in heaven against God. And that is exactly what happened to Adam and Eve when they set in motion a spiritual avalanche as a result of their sin and they, too, experienced the law of unintended consequences. Lucifer had no idea of what would be set in motion over his rebellion in heaven. And neither did Adam and Eve have any idea of what would be the effect of them succumbing to the temptation.

The ultimate impact of that temptation comes in the form of a curse. And as I just read, the curse begins with the serpent and with Satan in verses 14 and 15. Now remember, this is a very, very important chapter. It defines for us why the world is the way it is, why man is the way he is. It also helps us to understand why there has to be a plan of salvation, why there has to be a sacrifice for sin. But it also defines for us Satan and how we are to view him for here in this curse we are given a condensed course in satanology. From the first part of the chapter where we saw the Fall, to a discussion of the meaning of depravity in verses 8 to 13, we now come to the curse

Going back to the discussion we had on depravity which was a long time ago, I want to remind you that depravity, I define, as a condition of the human soul in which there is disobedience to God, lack of fellowship with God, the sentence of death, unwillingness to acknowledge sin, concern only for the consequences of evil, not the evil itself, blame-shifting and constant effort to exonerate and exalt oneself. This condition is so comprehensive that even the sinner before God though afraid cannot honestly repent. That is the definition I gave you a few weeks ago. This is the condition of depravity. Man is evil and he cannot understand how evil. He has no fellowship with God and no matter how he tries he cannot earnestly repent. We saw that with Adam and Eve.

This condition is true of every person. It cannot in any way be altered by any sinner. We have not the power nor the will to do that.

So paradise was lost when man sinned. It was lost not only for Adam and Eve, but it was lost for all people who would follow them. The loss of blessing and the loss of goodness is presented to us then in these curses and by the curses we get the picture of the result of the sin that took place in Eden.

You will notice in your Bible, if you have a Bible that does this and it should, that this is poetry. There is a change in the prose. The verses don't run all the way to the margins, that is an indication that there is a rhythmical that's poetic. You have a similar situation back in chapter 2 verse 23, the first sort of love song was offered back there and that, too, is poetic. Well there's some poetry here. There's a rhythmical presentation of this, almost as if God was saying it in such a way that it could be easily remembered because of the meter that's incorporated into the Hebrew poetry. Here is the punishment section, if you will. The Fall comes in the first few verses, then man's depravity is defined. And here God's judicial penalty on the culprits is rendered. Absolute divine justice renders a perfect sentence.

Now I want to just make a comment at this point. There are natural consequences to sin in life. That is true. We understand that. There are processes we set in motion by our sin and we need to be reminded of that. For example, if you tell a lie and it's a very important lie because somehow you think it will extract you from a very difficult situation, it is very likely you will then enter into a process by which you will have to continue to lie and you will have to develop your lie even further as the search for the truth begins. You'll perhaps have to lie to other people and other circumstances and other situations to continue to cover your lie.

It is true that if you drink alcohol and become drunk, there are natural processes that will occur. You may become inebriated, out of control. You may behave yourself in a way that is wicked and sinful. You may find yourself becoming a drunkard, out of control. You may find yourself developing physical illnesses as well.

If you commit sins of unfaithfulness in a marriage, then you have catapulted yourself into a very difficult situation. And now you have to lie about your unfaithfulness. You have to deceive your spouse. You have to deceive your children. You have to deceive the people around you. And so the consequences go on.

If you engage in fornication, it may be that you acquire some...some disease, some disease that comes because of sexual sin. And those consequences may dog you all your life. If you get involved in homosexuality you may end up with AIDS. If you are a person filled with hate, your hate is going to cause venom to be spewed around, of course, of the person you hate and probably the people around you. And the natural processes that sets in motion are to alienate you from people and to make you an undesirable person. You'll find yourself lonely. You'll find yourself bitter.

If, on the other hand, you kill somebody, you take a life. You may find yourself the subject of criminal indictment. You may even find yourself the subject of personal vengeance by certain people. If you defraud people, you may wind up being sued. You may lose your property. In America you may lose everything you have because of damages.

So there is in the factor of sin certain natural processes that to one degree or another are set in motion. It's kind of the law of Galatians 6, the law of sowing and reaping. Whatever a man sows, he reaps. You plant a certain behavior and you reap a certain kind of process that comes out of that behavior.

We're not talking about that here. This is not what this curse is about. This is not a matter of the processes that are engaged when you sin. This is not a matter of the sequence of the consequence of sinful behavior. What we're looking at here is a far-greater reality than that. It is the reality of divine judgment. This is the Almighty God and judge of the universe stepping in to render a sentence. This is not any kind of natural process, or even any kind of spiritual process. This is a sentence by the divine judge.

And I want to add another footnote here because it's very important to remind you of it. Sin violated God's law. It violated God's nature. It violated God's glory. It violated and destroyed paradise. It ruined the heart of Adam and Eve, catapulted the whole human race into iniquity. It gave a certain...a certain power to the enemy, Satan, because now he had become, as it were, the god of this age, the ruler of this world who would now have a measure of control over these fallen people.

But in spite of all of those effects of sin, it's important to remind you that man's sin did not and does not threaten God's sovereignty. It only changes the paradigm in which that sovereignty operates. God is still sovereign and the immediate articulation of the curses demonstrate God's sovereignty. Is no less sovereign in a fallen world than He was in a unfallen world. He was no less the sovereign God over Lucifer after his fall than he was before his fall. No less sovereign over Adam and Eve after their

fall than before their fall. God is not a victim of Satan. He never will be a victim of Satan. God is still sovereign in His universe. The paradigm shifts but God is sovereign and the demonstration of that is in the curse.

It's important to say that because there are people today within the framework of quote/unquote evangelicalism who would do everything they could to convince you that Satan is now sovereign and that God, along with all the rest of us, is doing His very best to overcome the sovereign who is Satan. But we have no reason to assume that whatsoever because immediately upon the Fall, God takes His sovereign place and pronounces what amounts to sovereign curses on the serpent, on Satan, on the woman and on the man. And they extend to all humanity. So God has given up no sovereignty. It is a different paradigm that His sovereignty operates in. Now we see His sovereignty in ways that Adam and Eve wouldn't see them before the Fall, in ways that bring judgment on sin. But He is still the sovereign. He is the sovereign over Satan and all humanity.

Now in the curse here there are just two things to consider. Pretty easy to outline this. In verse 14 you have the curse of the natural serpent. In verse 15 you have the curse of the supernatural Satan.

Verse 14, "And the Lord God said to the serpent." He speaks to the animal, the instrument of Satan. And He says, "Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, more than every beast of the field; on your belly shall you go and dust shall you eat all the days of your life."

God actually curses the animal. The animal has no rational mind. The animal has no sense of sin. The animal was simply used by Lucifer, by Satan. But God curses the animal anyway, even though the animal is not necessarily a willing and rational partner. Quite the opposite, the animal is irrational and is literally usurped by Satan himself. Not a rational and not a willing tool. The snake knows nothing of the curse either. The snake knew nothing of the temptation. The snake knew nothing of the sin. And the snake actually knows nothing of the curse because it cannot personally, rationally grasp the curse. But cursing the serpent serves a purpose and I'll show you what that is.

"Cursed are you more than all cattle, more than every beast of the field." Now this might at first seem to indicate that God cursed all the animals. Well, He didn't. That is not what that is intending to say. Otherwise there would be no culpability for the tool that Satan used. The Hebrew text is not saying that God cursed all the animals and God cursed the serpent more than. In Hebrew it is not so much a comparative term as a selective term. One could wish that perhaps it was translated a little differently. The idea is not that all the cattle, which is the term referred to domestic animals in the creation account in Genesis 1, nor all of the beasts, the wild beasts which refers to those which are non-domesticated, those large animals, those wild beasts. The idea is not that all the cattle, domestic animals, all of the wild animals were also cursed but that the serpent was more cursed. The idea of the Hebrew here is rather that out of all the animals, out of all the domestic animals, indicated by cattle, out of all the non-domestic animals, indicated by the beasts the wild beasts, every beast of the

field, out of all of those the serpent was selected to be cursed. That's the idea. The idea of the Hebrew text is that the serpent alone is cursed.

Now it is true that all the animals feel the effects of the Fall. They all feel the effect of the earth. They all feel the effect of the fact that God has cursed the ground, which we will find out about when we get down to verse 17 and following. They feel the impact of sin in the world. All animals as a result of the Fall will decay. They will age. They will get diseases. And they will die. That's why Romans 8 says in very straightforward language that the whole creation groans. And that is true because all the created universe feels the effect of sin. It says the creation, verse 20 of Romans 8, was subjected to futility, not of its own will. It isn't the fault of the animals. It isn't the fault of the ground. It isn't the fault of the plants. It isn't the fault of the planet or the stars, the sun, the moon. It isn't their fault. They were not responsible or guilty, not of their own will. But they have been subjected to futility. And verse 22 says the whole creation groans and suffers the pains, or the birth pangs until now. It is true that the animals feel the curse. They get old, they get sick, and they die.

But that's not what it's talking about here. There is, obviously, on all that exists in a fallen universe a sort of general effect, a general impact that sin has brought into the universe. As...Jeremiah puts it this way, it's a great statement, Jeremiah 12:4, "How long is the land to mourn and the vegetation of the countryside to wither for the wickedness of those who dwell in it. Animals and birds have been snatched away." It is true that the animal world, like the plant world and the whole created universe, feels the effect of sin. But it is not the case that they were all specifically cursed. And so we could read this, "The Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, you have been the instrument of temptation, cursed are you out of all cattle and out of every beast of the field.'"

Now that brings up the question, since the animal itself was not responsible for its actions, was not willingly compliant, and was not rationally involved, it couldn't be rationally involved in the temptation, the sin or even the curse, what is the point of punishing the animal when the animal doesn't experience any of it? The animal doesn't know if it's alive or dead, it has no self-consciousness. What is the point of cursing a non-rational creature?

And the answer is very simple. Cursing the serpent turned it into a symbol, turned it into a constant reminder of the degradation of Satan. Satan was really synonymous with the serpent. Remember in Revelation 12:9 and Revelation 20:2, Satan is called there that dragon, that serpent. We know the serpent in the garden is Satan because of Revelation 12:9 and Revelation 20 and verse 2. God curses that serpent so that the serpent becomes a perpetual constant picture of the devastation and the reproach that Satan bears. The snakes of the world are symbols of the divine judgment on Satan.

Now what was it that Satan sought? Go back in to the pre-fall of Satan's time in the glories of God's heaven. And what did Lucifer want? Lucifer was the anointed cherub, according to the prophet, and he was the high,, maybe the highest ranking one, perhaps even the music director of heaven. But

that wasn't enough. He wanted to be higher and so he says, as the prophet records, "I will, I will, I will, I will, I will," five times, "raise myself above God, I will take over the throne of God, I'll exalt myself, I'll lift myself up." That's what he sought to do. And, of course, instead of being able to lift himself up, he was thrown down, he was cast out, as Revelation says. He was thrown out of heaven and he was cast down to the earth. He comes to the earth and he wants when he gets on the earth to sort of reassert that climbing kind of idea, he wants to exalt himself again and he wants to become the sovereign over man. So he leads Adam and Eve in a successful temptation and then imagines himself to be the sovereign now. Now he has caused the fall of Adam and Eve and now they are under his control, he is...as Hebrews 2 says...holds over them the fear of death all their life long. He is the god of this age, the ruler of this world.

So, having been thrown down to earth, he is now crawled up a little higher and he's elevated himself again where he sees himself as a kind of sovereign over a fallen humanity.

And then God throws him down again and this is symbolized by the statement in verse 14, "On your belly shall you go and the dust shall you eat all the days of your life."

"On your belly shall you go" in the Hebrew is the word "crawl." And every time you see a snake slithering and crawling around, it is a sign and a symbol of the humiliation of Satan. It is a reminder of the divine judgment on him for tempting Adam and Eve in sin. And it is not to say that snakes are ugly, they are, after all, the creation of God and certainly Lucifer was a brilliant and shining and glorious angel, his beauty described for us, as you remember, by the prophet Isaiah and even by Ezekiel. It is not that they are ugly, there are snakes that are beautiful in color and design. It is that they even in their beauty are symbols of something beautiful that sought to be high being cast down to the lowest level.

Leviticus 11:42 says, "Whatever crawls on its belly you shall not eat for they are detestable." It was an abomination, really, to eat a snake. They were unclean animals. And always, and I think even in modern times, always of all animals they are the most vile, the most hated and the most scorned and for the most part, the most feared. Rabbinic legend holds, and it's perhaps an accurate thing, that the serpent before the temptation was an upright creature. Perhaps that's why Revelation also refers to him as a dragon. Perhaps he had some feet, but no more. Now he is altered and he is cast down.

Snakes don't feel the curse but they do illustrate it. Every time you see a snake you are reminded of that serpent in the garden who sought to lift himself up and got thrown down again to ride in the dirt. And I think as Lufhold(?) writes, the fact that this beast still stands under a curse is apparent from the peculiar revulsion that it still rouses in most people. Its peculiarly sinuous movements, its silent glide as a form of locomotion, its sinister and fascinating look, its vibrant tongue, its peculiar rearing of the head all contribute to remind men of the peculiar history in which the serpent once shared.

Further humiliation, not only crawling on your belly, further humiliation, "And dust shall you eat." That doesn't mean that dust is the food of a snake. Most snakes eat insects, small rodents, things like that. They don't eat dirt, they just live in it. That's what it means. Dust shall you eat...not as a food but as a result of writhing on the ground.

If you go back into the Old Testament, there are a lot of interesting phrases in the Old Testament, one is "to lick the dust." We use that today when we say a certain team played a game but they licked the dust. What do we mean by that? They were...what?...were defeated. It is a sign of defeat. And that's exactly what it was in the Old Testament. When an enemy licked the dust, it literally meant they fell in battle to the ground. In Psalm 72 verse 9, "Let the nomads of the desert bow before Him and His enemies lick the dust." It's a symbol of being vanquished, a symbol of being totally defeated and brought low, down to the lowest level.

In Isaiah 49, also, verse 23, I think it's verse 23, "And kings will be your guardians, their princes your nurses, they will bow down to you with their faces to the earth and lick the dust of your feet." In this case, of course, again this is a promise that they're going to be people, high-ranking people who are going to finally in the end when God gives the Kingdom to Israel bow down in the dirt before them. The prophet Micah, chapter 7 and verse 17, also uses that expression.

So that's the idea that the serpent crawls on the ground and eats the dirt as a constant symbol of a degraded and defeated Satan. It's maybe a bizarre way to think about it but snakes are like a rainbow, every time you see a rainbow what are you to remember? That God promised...what?...He would never destroy the world by water. Every time you see a snake, you can remember that Satan who sought to lift himself up was cast down to earth and when he sought on earth to lift himself up again, he was cast down again and his being cast down is symbolized by snakes. They are constant reminders that Satan is a defeated enemy.

Now obviously for the snake, as I said, non-rational, without a soul, not self-conscious, this means nothing. But to us it becomes a very important symbol.

Then there's another statement as the Lord makes this very precise. "And you're going to be on your belly and you're going to eat dust all the days of your life." The curse will never be removed. That's very interesting. As long as there are snakes, they'll crawl on the ground. They'll be doomed to be visible symbols of a vanquished king of darkness. They are doomed to be perpetual symbols of the demolishing of Satan's ambitions. They are a perpetual symbol of the defeat of the devil.

Let me show you this. Turn to Isaiah 65...there are only 66 chapters there so chapter 65. As you come to the end of Isaiah, you come to discussions of the millennial kingdom, when the Lord removes the curse. There's going to come a time when the curse will be removed. And look at verse 25, at

that time during the millennial kingdom, the wolf and the lamb shall graze together. Now that can't happen today. Why? The lamb is dinner, that can't happen. But the curse is removed so that they are no longer natural enemies. Animals don't kill each other. The lion stops being carnivorous and goes back to the way he was before the Fall, they were all vegetarian, and he eats straw like an ox. So you have dramatic changes in the animal kingdom. Wolves and lambs who are natural enemies get along fine. And no more carnivorous animals, the most familiar of the carnivores would be the lion, he eats straw like an ox. But look at the next statement, "Dust shall be the serpents food." No matter what else changes in the Millennium, snakes don't change. They lose their poison, as Isaiah tells us, and a child will be able to come near them. They will no longer have the power to kill, but they will all crawl in the same way they've always crawled.

Well why would he even put that in there, "And dust shall be the serpents food," unless it was adversative, unless it was contractive, unless he was reiterating the point that had been made in the original curse. Now this does tell us, folks, hate to say this, there will be snakes in the Millennium. Some of you probably thought a millennial earth would be void of snakes. They'll be there, they won't be harmful, but they'll still be the same, crawling in the dirt because they will always be symbols of a vanquished Satan. And they still are the most hated of animals, the most feared of animals, and that's reasonable.

You know what I've noticed in the society today, I think you notice it too, there is a new interest in snakes. And it seems to me the further people get away from God, the deeper they go into drugs and sex and the occult and paganism, the more they become enamored with snakes. In the early days of the Christian church there was a sect and the sect was known as the Ophites, not a Christian sect. But as the name implies, one that worshiped the devil. Ophitis the Greek word for serpent. The Ophites worshiped the snake. They worshiped Satan. A symbol of that sect was a snake. But those people really didn't worship the snake, they worshiped the Satan who is symbolized in the snake.

In more recent times there is a group called the Yesadee(??), they're in the Druz(?) mountains of Syria. And the Yesadee are devil worshipers. They're very much like the Ophites. The Yesadee worship the devil and the emblem of their religion is the snake. And this is the perversion and the deep wickedness for calling good and calling God what God Himself has cursed.

So snakes are still associated with paganism. Still associated with the occult. Even the medical snake that's on the symbol of medicine comes from the cult of snake worship in Corinth. So God has permanently given us a symbol of a vanquished Satan.

So much for the natural serpent, how about the supernatural Satan, or the supernatural spirit. Verse 15, "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."

Here you have God speaking not to the snake but to Satan, not to the natural serpent but the supernatural spirit. From the symbol to the reality. The disgusting wretched Satan who may move around like a roaring lion, but is really a lowly snake. And by the way, he doesn't speak. He had a lot to say in the garden, he has nothing to say here. God is the sovereign, God alone speaks. His rebellion failed in heaven and it has failed on earth. And Satan is subject to God's judgment. And what you have in verse 15 is God's judgment on Satan.

And I don't have time to develop all of this, I want to do that next week because we want to come to the Lord's table. But I do want to give you the sense of what this is all about. Here's what Satan is thinking:

"I failed to a degree in heaven and yet I succeeded. I was thrown out of heaven but I took a third of the angels with me so I have my kingdom."

He came to earth cast down, as Revelation 12 says, and he goes into the garden and he's still trying to take over for God. He's trying to be a sovereign in his own right. And he is successful in capturing Adam and Eve. He's successful. And at this point Satan may well have felt that he had made a massive dent in the divine purpose, that God had gone to all of this wondrous effort to create a universe and place man and woman in His universe on the earth and it was so magnificent and it was a paradise like the original paradise of heaven before the angels were thrown out and Satan succeeded in wrecking paradise. He succeeded in gaining the devotion of Adam and Eve. And that is really essentially what happened.

Eve believed Satan instead of God and so did Adam. Adam wasn't deceived specifically by Satan, but he could see Eve and she wasn't dead and Satan had said, "You can eat of this tree and you'll be like God and God doesn't like people to be like Him because He doesn't like the competition. He's really trying to hold something back. He's trying to prevent you from getting something wonderful and good. He's trying to hold back the opportunity you have to be like Him. And I know He said in the day you eat you're going to die, but you won't die." And Eve ate and she didn't die. And Adam saw..."Wow, this could be great, she didn't die, she's still alive, I'll do this, I'll be like God," etc., etc.

They believed Satan and so Satan now realizes that he has engaged himself with man and become a kind of sovereign. Now Adam and Eve believe him instead of believing God. And it's very likely that Satan may well at this point have thought, "I have won the full devotion of humanity. I have won the mother of all living," as Eve is called down in verse 20. "I have one Adam to my side. He doubts God. He questions God and he believes me. And now...Satan may be saying...I have captured humanity and now they will aide me in my effort to overthrow the Almighty God. I now have a third of the angels and I know have all of the humans. There aren't many, just two, but it's a start." Satan may well have thought that he had become the sovereign of man, that he had become the sovereign

over the race and now he was in charge of them. And if Adam and Eve who were perfect fell so easily, what would imperfect sinners do before the onslaught of his temptation? You can see him beginning to lick his chops and rub his hands and think to himself, "I now have not only demons but I have men to fight my battle against Almighty God."

And that's why God says what He says. "I will put enmity between you and the woman...between your seed and her seed. He shall bruise you on the head and you shall bruise Him on the heel." Satan, you are absolutely wrong. Enmity means conflict. Enmity means hostility. Enmity means hatred. And God says to him, "Don't think too fast about your successes because I curse you, Satan, by making you the enemy of the woman and the enemy of the seed of the woman. And One will come who will crush your head."

Now that's a very direct answer to the assumption that must have been in the mind of Satan that he had just acquired some great power, pulled off a great coup and now had total control over the man and the woman. And immediately God says, "I will put enmity, conflict, hostility, hatred, you will not rule easily, you will not rule successfully. You will not have complete control. I will bring humanity into conflict with you."

Now listen. There was already enmity in the world, but the enmity was between man and whom? And God. There wasn't at this point any enmity between man and Satan. Adam and Eve had followed Satan, there was no hostility there. There was no enmity there. And you don't find them running around the garden after they sinned hiding from the serpent. Who are they hiding from? God. There was enmity there. Satan could see that or sense that, or know that. And that's why it's very likely that Satan concludes..."Aha, I've got them, now they're...now there is hostility between them and God and now there is conflict between them and God, there is a desire to run from God, to hide from God because they don't see God...listen...as their friend anymore. They see God as their enemy and they see me as their friend." So Satan is going to conclude this couldn't be any better.

God immediately steps in and says, "Guess again. The enmity I'm going to put between you and that woman. You're not going to have Eve and you're not going to have sovereignty over her seed. In fact, one of them is going to come and crush your head."

Well, we'll dig into that a little more next time. Suffice it to say, who was it that came to crush the serpent's head? It was the Lord Jesus Christ. And as we'll see next Sunday night, He did it on the cross. That was where He really rendered the blow. He pronounced His judgment in the garden, but the real death blow came at the cross. Satan thought man was now going to be the enemy of God, and God says you're wrong, man's going to be your enemy. I'm going to bring back man to be My friend and I'm going to make you his enemy.

Now that is the first glimmer...are you ready for this?...of the gospel. Did you get that? That's the first glimmer of the gospel, that man who is now the enemy of God, wrong enemy, will become the friend of God and the enemy of Satan. God is going to do that. He says, "I will put that enmity there, sovereignly." Again I say, God didn't lose any of His power, any of His sovereignty. The paradigm shifted and God has to recover paradise but He says to Satan, "Don't you think for a moment that you have now conquered all on this earth. I will make man My friend and your enemy." And I say it again, that is the first glimmer of the gospel, the good news that we who were enemies of God can become His friend again. More of that next time. Let's pray.

Father, we know that the way in which we have been made Your friends is through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank You that Satan is a degraded and destroyed enemy, that Satan is our enemy and You are our friend, whereas once with Adam and Eve You had become the enemy and Satan the friend. But, Lord, the world is so full of people who are still like Adam and Eve. You are their enemy and Satan is their friend. How tragic. But how wondrous is the gospel that helps us to have the right friend and the right enemy and You are our friend because of Jesus Christ and the great victory He won on the cross. And we celebrate tonight our friendship with You by remembering His cross where the death blow against Satan and sin and death and hell were struck and we thank You, O God, that it has been applied to us by faith alone in Christ alone through grace alone.

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