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

The Curse on the Serpent, Part 2
Scripture: Genesis 3:14-15
Code: 90-242

In our study of the origin of sin, we find ourselves now in the section of Genesis 3 in which we read the curses that God pronounces on all of the participants in the Fall. There was the serpent who was the instrument of Satan. There is Satan. There is the woman and there is the man. All four of the participants in the Fall are cursed in this section. In verse 14 the serpent is cursed. In verse 15 Satan is cursed. In verse 16 the woman is cursed. In verses 17 to 19 the man, Adam, is cursed.

Now as you know, in the first seven verses of chapter 3 you have the temptation where Satan comes to Eve, deceives her and then Adam joins in and they sin. Then in verses 8 to 13 you have the divine confrontation. Now that they have sinned, they're confronted by God. The temptation led to the Fall, the confrontation leads to the revelation of their depravity. So we learn about temptation and the Fall and then confrontation and depravity.

Summing it up, the paradise of God has been lost and the first couple, Adam and Eve, has been plunged into an unimagined new attitude toward God. They are disobedient to God. They lack fellowship with God. The sentence of death is on them from God. They are unwilling to acknowledge their sin to God. They are in a disposition of self-justification and exoneration and demonstrate an inability to honestly repent for what they have done. And that is the condition we call human depravity. They can't do anything to change it either. They will not desire or can they desire to repent. And they have no means in themselves to overcome their sin or its penalty.

And so, from Adam and Eve that has become the condition of all men and women who have ever lived. Their condition is fixed. Paradise was lost for everyone and everyone who has ever been born into the world, with the exception of Jesus Christ, the virgin-born son of God, has been born a sinner with the principle of sin operative in their nature. Rebellion against God, no desire to repent, only a desire to justify themselves, exonerate themselves and put the blame for their failures on somebody else and no ability to alter their sinful condition or do anything to bring about their own salvation, that is the curse on all humanity.

There is a particular series of curses then that are given, as I said, to the particulars in the Fall...the serpent verse 14, Satan verse 15, the woman verse 16, and the man verses 17 to 19. And these divine curses express the punishment of holy God, not, as I said last time, just the natural effect of the Fall which was sinfulness, but an absolute rendering of a divine sentence upon those who were involved.

Last time we looked initially at the natural serpent in verse 14. "The Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, because you have participated in this even though he was not a willing or rational participant, cursed are you more than all cattle...literally, cursed are you out of all cattle, that would be domestic animals...and out of all the beasts of the field...that would be the non-domesticated animals...on your belly you shall go...indicating that probably this animal was upright, maybe on all fours, and that could by why he's called a dragon as well as a serpent, he may first have been a dragon with legs and feet...but from now on you will go on your belly and dust shall you eat all the days of your life." And we went over that in detail last time. The curse on the serpent was to crawl on its belly. In Leviticus 11:42 in the Mosaic Law it says, "Whatever crawls on its belly you shall not eat for they are abominable, or detestable."

And as I said, the snake is not a willing compliant personality. The snake has no personality, it has no self-consciousness. It has no soul. A snake like every other animal doesn't know it exists. But snakes here then are not punished in some personal way, but really become a symbol of the punishment of Satan. Snakes are by Mosaic economy standards unclean of all the animals generally speaking in the world. They are the most repulsive, the most hated and the most despised. And though the serpent may have been upright, the serpent is no longer upright. His nature is somehow changed. His anatomy is altered. This, as I said, is no real punishment to the snake itself, since they're non-rational, non-self-conscious and since they don't know that they exist and they have no moral sense. They did not willingly offer themselves in the temptation but snakes become an illustration of Satan and every snake that crawls is a symbol of the Satan who's downcast, the tempter and the destroyer of paradise. They are all reminders that the one who sought to be above God was cast out of heaven. When he came to earth he sought again to elevate himself and was cast down and is literally symbolized in the snake that slides on its belly.

So, snakes then provide for us pictures, symbols of divine judgment on Satan who sought to be higher than God and was placed as low as possible. This then is not so much the punishment of the serpent as it is the statement of God's punishment of his great adversary, Satan himself. And it makes the seriousness of God's punishment of Satan more dramatic and more visible. Every time you see a snake, be reminded that God has vanquished Satan to the lowest level and symbolized in that crawling snake.

Even today, as we closed last time, I remind you that we look around our world and when we see snakes you see them often associated with pagan forms of worship. You see them associated with occult practices and particularly involved with Satan worship.

But secondly, and we come to verse 15, we come to the curse not on the animal but the curse on the supernatural spirit. Not the natural serpent, but the supernatural spirit. God moves His curse symbolized in the animal to Satan himself. And verse 15 says, "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."

Now this is a very important curse. It's important because it's in the Bible but it's important because it's very concise. It's the only time the curse is stated. And yet I can honestly say that I lived years and years of my Christian life without ever having somebody explain to me carefully and thoughtfully the details of this curse. And you can read a lot of books that never actually get down to the particulars of what is a very particular and specific curse. And so I want to give you an understanding of this curse because of its wonderful, wonderful importance.

Now the verse itself is a great, great verse. It's one that we need to go back to time and again as believers. Martin Luther said, "This text...verse 15...embraces and comprehends within itself everything noble and glorious that is to be found anywhere in the Scriptures." Quite an amazing statement. It is again one of those really astounding statements from the lips of God that demonstrate an economy of words that manifest a genius with which we are not humanly familiar. How is it that God can say everything in so few words. But He can. And He has a way of choosing words because of the greatness, the infinity of His own mind, words that are so perfect and so precise and so concise and so comprehensive as to say all that needs to be said in just a few words. The glorious truths of this verse are given in a form which for the Old Testament reader partly veiled the true meaning. Admittedly the Old Testament reader reading that verse wouldn't see everything that we see because we're on the New Testament side. It is the bright clarity of the New Testament that really shines back to illuminate that verse.

When it says here "He shall bruise you on the head," we understand that. We understand who "He" is. They didn't understand that as we understand it. When it talks about God putting enmity between you and the woman, it may not have been completely clear to the Old Testament person what that meant, and what it meant when it says "between your seed and her seed." It may not have been completely clear to them because they didn't understand the full revelation of the gospel as we do. And so we are the beneficiaries of the full light that can be cast back on this verse to give it its true meaning.

Theologians through the centuries have seen here the first glimmer of the gospel. And that was where I closed our discussion last Sunday night. Here in a curse, amazingly, in the curse that God gives against Satan, the first time He addresses a real personality, not just an animal that was symbolic, the first time God addresses a real personality, He addresses Satan. And He addresses Satan with a curse. But there's so much grace in the heart of God, forgiveness is so consistent with the nature of God, God who is by nature a Savior, God who desires to save sinners and forgive them, puts in the very first curse a glimmer of gospel truth. Grace shines through the curse on Satan.

Satan's curse is given by God whom he, Satan, had so eagerly offended. And as God gives that curse, He cannot restrain Himself from placing in that curse the essence of His grace. And I told you this last week, and I'll just pick it up at this point, Satan probably thought that his success with Adam and Eve was certainly equal to his success with the angels. You remember when he fell out of heaven, according to Revelation 12, a third of the angels came with him. So he got a third of the angels to join in his rebellion and they then were thrown out of heaven along with Satan who becomes Satan, the head of all the demons who ply their evil deeds against the purposes of God.

Satan was successful in his first rebellion. He brought a third of the angels and that would be millions of them by comparing the numbers of the book of Revelation of the holy angels that are still left. So he was very successful. In this case he only got two, but there was something different about people. Angels didn't procreate. You had to get them all at the first shot. People do. All you needed was the first two and you can have all the rest because they would procreate and out of their loins would come their own kind. And Satan must have felt that this was a great coup. He not only had the fallen angels, but now he had all of humanity and he must have thought that he had gained from Adam and Eve an allegiance to himself, that he had created an enmity with God, that he had literally turned man against God, that God had become the enemy of man and Satan had become the friend of man.

Now he having Adam and Eve would have all their offspring, so Satan must have been licking his chops and feeling the joys of his triumph guarantying victory, he thought, because he had garnered the affinity and the affection and the trust of Adam and Eve. He had therefore won the devotion of mankind of all humanity who would then join him in the overthrow of the Almighty One, an overthrow that he hasn't given up on yet. But as I told you last time, he was wrong. He was wrong. It is true that man was the friend of God and that in the temptation man distrusted God, disobeyed God, believed Satan, became the friend of Satan and therefore the enemy of God. And that is evidenced in verses 8 to 13, you find man and woman hiding from God...God they view as somebody who will invade them with negative impact. They see God as the enemy. They see Satan as the friend.

But God says, in verse 15, "And 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."

This is the reverse immediately of what Satan must have anticipated. God is still the sovereign judge. He is still the God of the universe. He is still in charge of Satan. And He says, "I will put enmity between you and the woman." I'm going to make you the enemy of the woman. You're not going to have your way with that woman. You're not going to have your way. She's not going to be the friend of Satan and the enemy of God. I'm going to change that. And I think "by the woman" He's encompassing man as well because when He says your seed and her seed, he has to incorporate the man with the woman to produce the seed.

So, He is saying you think the enmity is between me and God, I'm going to change that. I'm going to put enmity, ebahin the Hebrew, deep animosity is the term there, deep animosity between persons, between morally responsible persons. I'm going to put the enmity between you and the woman.

Now what is that? That is a promise that the woman who has become the enemy of God and a friend of Satan is going to turn and become the enemy of Satan and the friend of God, and this is what I called last week, the first glimmer of the gospel. This is the first indication of salvation. For the first time we find that this enmity won't last. So the curse on Satan is he's going to fail. The curse on Satan is he will not succeed in his effort to control all humanity for his evil purpose. God will bring conflict, God will bring deep animosity, God will bring hatred between Satan and the woman.

I began to tell you last time what I think is the amazing significance of this. Both Adam and Eve had chosen Satan's words over God's. They had chosen Satan's world's view over God's. They had chosen Satan's leadership over God's. They had chosen Satan's companionship over God's. And thus they had become the friend of Satan and the enemy of God. And they hid from God. And they didn't want fellowship with God. And they had rejected God for Satan.

But that was not forever fixed. That was going to be altered. Oh the angels who fell, they were forever fixed in their damnation. Maybe Satan thought it would be the same way here that just as there was no redemption for any angels, there would be no redemption for people either. The angels that fell were consigned literally, sentenced to the Lake of Fire. And there is no salvation of those fallen angels. Once they joined in Satan's rebellion, they were forever damned to be the friends of Lucifer and the enemies of God eternally. And Satan may have thought that the same thing was going to be true of mankind, but God immediately says to him...it will not be that way at all. Yes, man has hated. Yes, man has had animosity. But he's hated the wrong object. He's been at enmity with God but that's going to change...that's going to change. I'm going to put enmity between you and the woman.

You know what I think that first of all is saying? I think it's telling us that Eve was going to experience salvation. Do you see that? The only way that that can be interpreted is that way. If Eve who has become the enemy of God and the friend of Satan is going to become the friend of God and the enemy of Satan, she's going to have to be converted. You have a prophecy here of the salvation of Eve. And, you see, this throws a money wrench into Satan's whole plan because he thought, as with the angels, that once he captured humanity, he would get them all. But he didn't. Eve, according to verse 20, was called Eve because she was the mother of all living. But this...but this woman who was the mother of all living was not going to remain the friend of Satan and the enemy of God cause God was going to reverse all that.

This is quite wonderful, folks. This is a...this is really not only the first glimmer of the gospel, but may I suggest on the pages of Scripture, this is the first indication of the great doctrine of election because

God is actually saying who He's going to save. He's going to save Eve.

Now you never saw the doctrine of election in Genesis 3:15, did you? But it's there. And I believe that you can even gather Adam into that because their seed becomes the friend of God as well. Not all of their seed but a portion of their seed. God is going to enable then that couple to reverse that enmity with Him and to become the enemies of Satan and be restored to be the friends of God again.

This is going to take a radical change. It's going to take a dramatic change. To change somebody from being the enemy of God and the friend of Satan to being the friend of God and the enemy of Satan is a dramatic and total change. So you even have here the first indication of an altered nature. Something has to change down inside. Maybe here you even have what the New Testament calls "the new birth," or "regeneration." The old Adam and the old Eve are going to have to die and a new Adam and a new Eve are going to have to come into existence. They're going to have to have some dramatic change in their nature to begin to hate Satan and love God. It won't be as perfect as it once was when all they did was love God, but it will be the new desire of their hearts.

So, if there is going to be enmity between the woman and the serpent, the woman and Satan, it is going to come as a result of the change of their hearts. And God is demonstrating here that He's going to have the grace to do that. He's going to have the power to do that. He's going to provide the forgiveness necessary and the transformation that changes them from lovers of Satan, as it were, and enemies of God to lovers of God and haters of Satan. And when you go back in to verses 8 to 13 and you see the depravity of their hearts, there was nothing naturally in those people that sought to make things right with God. All they wanted to do was hide from God, try to make it so God couldn't get near them. They were committed to following the path that they had chosen to follow Satan instead of God, God was an unwelcomed intruder. They weren't anywhere near nor were they capable of honestly repenting of their sin and recognizing their true condition. And that was their depravity. And yet it says here that they're going to change, they're going to be turned around and they're going to become lovers of God and haters of Satan. And that speaks of the wondrous work of God in changing their nature, the new nature, regeneration, new birth, conversion, whatever term you would like to use.

So, now we're beginning to understand when Martin Luther was reading this verse and said that everything that can be comprehended in the purposes of God can somehow be found in some form in these verses, it starts to come clear. Great doctrines of regeneration, new birth, transformation, conversion, doctrines of forgiveness, expressions of grace, the wonderful truth of election is even found here in this statement. Amazingly the gospel with all of its saving purposes finds its entrance into the Bible in a curse on Satan. The gospel is first given then not in a promise to man, but in a judgment on Satan.

So, first of all, God is going to create enmity between Satan and the woman. Secondly, between your seed and her seed. I believe "the woman" is stated here because she was the one who was deceived. So she sort of stands for the couple at this particular point, both herself and Adam, I believe, are contained in this promise. And then secondly, not only is there the promise here of their salvation, but the salvation of those who would come from them. Her seed would be humanity. And, of course, Adam participates in the production of life that comes out of her loins. Between your seed, Satan's seed, and her seed.

So, what it tells us is not only is Eve going to start to hate Satan and love God, but children born to Adam and Eve, a redeemed humanity, will also hate Satan. Not only has Satan not captured permanently Adam and Eve, but he hasn't permanently captured humanity either. This describes the fact that there will be conflict between human beings and the kingdom of Satan.

Now when it says Satan's seed there, your seed, see it there? "Between your seed"--what's it referring to? Well, it simply maintains the metaphor here, it doesn't mean that Satan gives birth to demons or people, for that matter. What it does refer to is all of the depraved, all of the unconverted, all of the haters of God which would include demons, but particularly here includes human beings. And so what the Lord is saying is, you haven't won all of humanity, there are going to be human...people within the human race that can be called, like Jesus called them in John 8:44, children of Satan, of their father the devil. There are going to be those people, Ephesians 2 calls, "the subjects of the prince of the power of the air...the spirit that's working in the children of disobedience." They're going to be the devil's seed, primarily referring here to human beings who hate God and follow the prince of the power of the air, which all the unconverted do.

But God says, "Your seed is going to have enmity with her seed." In other words, out of the loins of the woman, from the man and the woman, are going to come people who are going to love God and hate you and there is going to be a permanent conflict going on. You're not going to just take over the world. You're not going to by virtue of successfully tempting Adam and Eve be able to just waltz your way through all of human history in total sovereignty and control. It's not how it will be. The whole human race does not belong to you. You will have your seed but the woman who will belong to God will have those born of her who will also belong to God, and they are her seed spiritually speaking because they follow the faith that will be true of Adam and Eve. And there will be tremendous conflict between the children of Satan and the children of God, between a redeemed humanity and an unredeemed humanity.

This conflict goes on all the time. Yesterday I spent some time reviewing the history of the covenantors in Scotland from about 1625 to about 1675. For a fifty-year period there were a people in Scotland who wanted to preserve the true reformed faith against the invasion of a monarchial Anglicanism from England. The king of England, Charles I in particular, wanted to impose upon the Scottish people the Anglo-Catholic system, sent up bishops to run the system. The Scottish people

protested because they wanted to hold on to the true and reformed faith, not that Anglo-Catholicism which its sacerdotal hierarchical approach, sacramentalism. And they fought...they fought viciously really to preserve their faith. And in the process of those 50 years the covenantors who signed a covenant and it was signed by people all throughout the land of Scotland, they signed that they would be true to the covenant which they believed was the proper expression of a biblical faith as defined by John Calvin and the Reformers and they would be true to that. They would take their stand there. And eventually the English came in and began to slaughter them for their faith.

They...they had sort of an interesting way of killing them. They would chop off their hands. One of the great leaders of the covenantors was Richard Cameron who received in a box one day the hands of his own beloved son. And he recognized immediately the son's hands and knew his son had been executed. This went on for fifty years, this kind of blood letting. If you were a woman, you didn't get shot or hanged or somehow chopped up. If you were a woman you were drowned and so they up in Edinburgh where the tide of the sea comes in, they would put posts in the sand and they would tie the person to the post and wait till the tide came in to drown them. There's an amazing story about two young girls, one 13 and one 18, along with their mother who were placed in such a way that the mother would drown first and then the older would drown second and the daughter who was the youngest would watch the mother and the sister be drowned and then herself be drowned. The father was able to collect enough money to redeem his 13-year-old daughter but his wife and 18-year-old were drowned. Now that is...that is one little piece of Scottish history that shows the conflict between your seed and her seed.

By the way, it was the covenantors who were marvelously true to the faith, who fought and shed their blood. And eventually these clerics, these pastors who stayed true to the covenant, for example, in one section there were 400 of them, and all of them were wiped out of there except 37 who remained. Many of them escaped and went into moors and the highlands and they held church in the open air which was amazing because it's so very cold and the people would walk miles to hear the teaching of the Word of God from these covenantor pastors who were being sought out in the hills and when found would be dragged into the city. And there's still a place where you can see the hanging place where they were hanged or where they were shot.

This has always gone on. It was the covenantors, for those of you going to northern Ireland, who came over to northern Ireland because they were escaping with their lives and planted the reformed faith in the north of Ireland. And that's why today northern Ireland is Protestant and largely evangelical, while all the rest of Ireland is Roman Catholic. And that's why the blood letting goes on over there because the Catholic part of Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, wants that piece in the north and they won't give in because they will not give up their faith.

Now the terrorists who kill each other are neither Catholic nor Christian, they're just terrorists. But it goes back to that very issue.

The conflict you can find similar to that all over the globe. And you can find it in our country. It hasn't come to blood letting, but there is a massive conflict in our society today, isn't there? Between the seed of the woman, those who are redeemed, those who are the spiritual progeny of Eve, and the seed of Satan, the unredeemed who are in incessant conflict over the social institutions of our land, trying to drive the Bible out, drive morality out, drive the Scripture's moral standards out of all public discussion.

So the curse is a promise and the curse on Satan is a promise of Satan's defeat. He is not going to succeed with Eve, and I think we can also assume Adam. He is not going to succeed with all humanity. He will have some who are spiritually his children. But there are going to be some who are the spiritual children of Eve, that is they are the believers and they will always hate the enemy and always be in conflict and deep animosity against him.

At this point, He goes even a step further. Amazing. In verse 15, there will be enmity that God is going to put between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed. Then it says this, "He..." Now wait a minute, nothing has been said about "He". God doesn't say "I"...God doesn't say "We"...God says "He". Who is "He" talking about?

"He shall bruise you on the head and you shall bruise Him on the heel." He is an individual within the line of Eve. Enmity between Eve and Satan, enmity between her seed, which would be those who believe in the true God and are friends of God and enemies of Satan. And within that seed, within the believing people there will be a He. At this point, it narrows down to an individual.

Now He...a special man...who is going not only to be the enemy of Satan, a lot of men have been the enemy of Satan, but who is going to deliver to Satan the fatal blow. He is going to bruise you on the head while you can do no more than bruise Him on the heel. The seed of the woman, those who love God and hate Satan, will culminate in one man, the He. In Him the hostility will reach its peak. Satan will go after that one man and he will effect on Him a bruise, a bruise which is temporary and will heal. But the man will inflect a death blow, literally crushing Satan's head. He...

And we know who He is, don't we? It's Jesus. He...He is part of her seed. He's part of the redeemed humanity. Uniquely He is the seed of the woman, and that may be why God stayed with the woman because when He gets to Jesus if He had been using Adam as His illustration, He would have said that Jesus was the seed of Adam, and although that is true genealogically, He couldn't have made the point of the virgin birth. Maybe that's why He chose to use Eve and to talk about Eve and to talk about her seed so that He could say her seed, a man, and in subtle ways indicate to us the virgin birth. No woman has really ever had a seed, but Eve would have a spiritual seed. Mary would have a seed planted in her womb by God. Some would see the indication of the virgin birth here in a very subtle way, although I don't think it's the primary point here. I think it certainly is a secondary point

that we can make that when God does say "her seed...He" this doesn't violate the idea of the virgin birth in which for the only time in all of human history a woman had a seed without a man. The man always otherwise being the source of the seed, the woman the source of the egg. But the woman will have a seed and out of her seed, her spiritual progeny, she will have a seed, a virgin-born man who will come to crush the head of Satan.

So what is Satan being told in this curse? You're not even going to be able to hang on to this first couple, nor have you managed to conquer all of humanity. You are going to go into conflict immediately with Eve. You're going to go into conflict with all of the godless people who followed you and are your children with all of the children of faith who believe in Me and it's always going to be that way throughout all of history. And there's going to come one man out of that seed of those who believe in the true and living God who love God and hate Satan, you will attempt to bruise His heel in a great struggle, and you will succeed in giving Him a temporary bruise that will heal, but He will crush your head.

Martin Luther who, by the way, loved this portion said, "God never told the devil who 'He' would be." And so he said, "The devil has lived in dread of every woman's son who was a believer, especially those in the covenant line because he never knew who 'He' would be." And if you study the history of Israel, you see how many times that Satan tried to destroy the godly in the line of the covenant.

In spite of Satan's efforts, He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise Him on the heel. That last statement indicates the attack on Jesus. The heel indicates an attack from the rear. And this is the pattern, this is MO for Satan. He comes from the rear, he's deceptive. He's a sneaky being. He comes up from behind and attacks from the rear and he does so with less than permanent damage. We just studied that, didn't we? He took Jesus into the...the Spirit of God took Jesus into the wilderness and then for 40 days He was tempted by Satan. I don't think that's particularly what he was talking about. There are other times in the life of Jesus when He was tempted. But I think Isaiah helps us with this. When did Satan bruise Him on the heel? Really it happened at the cross. It says in Isaiah 53, "He was bruised for our...what?...iniquities." He was...He was really bruised actually by God because our sins were placed upon HIm. The cross was the blow on His heel. That's why in John 13:27 at the Upper Room it says, remember, when Jesus...the night that Jesus was betrayed, it says that Satan, having entered into Judas, he left. He went out to sell Jesus to get it all started. Luke 22:52 and 53, Jesus says, "This is the hour of the power of darkness." This is the hour of the power of darkness.

It was at the cross that Jesus was bruised. Yes, it was in the purpose and plan of God. Yes, it was God letting His Son be punished for our sins. Yes, it was the just wrath of God. But at the same time it was Satan who was inflicting these bruises. The sufferings of Christ on the cross was His bruise. And as I said, it healed very fast, it only took how long? Well, it only took a few hours when Jesus said "It is finished and yielded up His Spirit." And in triumph gave His life up. Only a bruise served

the purpose of God.

Sure it was inflicted by Satan because Satan, you see, was the source of sin. Satan is the source of the corrupt world system. Satan was the tempter who plunged the whole human race into sin so in a great way Satan is responsible for all of this. Therefore he's responsible for the bruising of Jesus, even though it's within the framework of God's judicial purpose. It was there at the cross that Jesus was bruised, but it was also there at the cross where Satan's head was crushed. The actual word is "crushed." I wish they would translate it that way. Satan's head was crushed at the cross.

Why? Because Jesus conquered sin. Because Jesus conquered death. Jesus reconciled sinners to God on the cross. Jesus satisfied the justice of God. He paid the full debt for sin. He conquered death. He opened heaven. We can go into all of those things, I won't take the time to do that. I mean, everything that needed to happen redemptively happened at the cross. It was an absolutely crushing blow to Satan. Total defeat...total defeat. Jesus says in John 12:31, "Now judgment is upon this world and now the ruler of this world shall be cast out." Jesus was anticipating His cross as a triumph over Satan. And He says again in John 16:11, "The ruler of this world has been judged."

He could feel already the impact of His cross, that there He would reconcile sinners forever to God, having forgiven all their trespasses and transgressions, as Colossians 2:13 says. There He would satisfy the justice of God so that no further accusation from the accuser could ever stand, as Romans 8 says. There He paid the full debt to God. There He conquered death, according to Hebrews 2:14 and 15. There He opened heaven and paradise for all who believe.

In Romans 16, I think it's verse 20, if I remember right, "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet," Paul says. You know what he's saying there? He's saying you may be struggling, you people who are believers in Rome may be going through some difficult times, I just want to tell you, you participate already in crushing the head of Satan because you are the seed of the woman, you are in Christ and His victory is your victory. Satan...his head is crushed at the cross by Christ and all who are Christ's throughout all the era of redemption.

Now you say, "Well, isn't Satan still running around?" Sure, but he's already been sentenced, he just hasn't been executed. You ought to understand that. We live in a society where somebody gets sentenced and they stay in death row for decades. Satan's been sentenced. He's under complete constraint by God. He can't do one thing that isn't within the permanent purposes of God. He has been sentenced. His head has been crushed. He is vanquished. He is defeated. And he's under your feet as well. And, "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world." You are in a triumphant position. You join in the crushing of Satan. The devil has essentially no power in your life as a believer. You can fall victim to temptations but he cannot do anything fatal to you. He cannot do anything to take away what God has given you in Christ.

Now the time will come when his execution takes place. Turn for a closing thought or two to Revelation chapter 19. This is where the story ends and I'll just take a minute to point it out to you. Many of you are familiar with it. But at the end of the book of Revelation you come in to chapter 19 and 20, come to the end of human history, and at the end of human history Jesus Christ returns. And in chapter 19 verse 11 and following you have the return of Jesus Christ. He comes back riding on a white horse, is the imagery here. "He's called Faithful and True, in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire. On His head are many crowns, or diadems. He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. He's clothed with a robe dipped in blood...that's blood splattered because of all the battles He's engaged in...His name is called the Word of God. And here comes Jesus and with Him the armies, the saints and the believers already in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, and following on white horses. Out of His mouth a sharp sword..." You know the passage. He comes at the end of verse 15, "To tread the winepress of the fierce wrath of God the Almighty. On His robe...His thigh He has a name King of kings, Lord of lords," etc. And Jesus comes back and He destroys the ungodly.

He takes, according to verse 20, the beast who is the Antichrist and the false prophet who aides him and He throws them alive into the Lake of Fire which burns with brimstone. That is the Lake of Fire prepared for the devil and his angels. The beast and the false prophet go into the Lake of Fire.

You come in to chapter 20, He takes a great chain in His hand, verse 1, lays hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, the devil and Satan, bound him for a thousand years. So when Jesus comes back He sets up His thousand-year millennial Kingdom. He puts Satan in chains and holds him there. Verse 3, "Throws him into the abyss," which is not the final hell, "throws him into the abyss, shuts it, seals it over him that he shouldn't deceive the nations any longer till the thousand years are complete. After these things, he's released for a little time."

So, Jesus comes, takes Satan, ties him up in chains, sends him down into the abyss. That's all metaphoric chains because he's a spirit, but He binds him there so he can't move...he can't...he will not exist. He will not be moving through the world in the time of the Millennial Kingdom, the thousand years. At the end, however, he's released for a little time. He leads a brief rebellion. It doesn't last very long.

Verse 7, when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison. Comes out, deceives the nation, gathers the last group of unbelievers together and they will be destroyed. Then verse 10 says, after fire comes down and destroys all the ungodly who have been a part of the rebellion, "The devil who deceived them was thrown into the Lake of Fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are also and they'll be tormented day and night forever and ever."

Now that is how his demise is described in the book of Revelation. He has already had his head crushed. He is not sovereign in the world. He is a god only over the systems of evil that he works in the world, but he is under the authority and the sovereignty of God. He is no threat to the believer whatsoever because "Greater is He that is in us," namely the Spirit of Christ, "than he that is in the world," Satan. We participate literally in the crushing of the head of Satan who is under our feet because we are joined with Christ who has delivered to him the deadly blow. He is sentenced yet to await his execution at the end of the Millennial Kingdom.

And I think that's because God has a purpose for him and that is to be the catalyst to bring together all the final rebellion against God that He Himself will crush. So Satan serves God's purposes of collecting the world of unbelievers together so that they can be destroyed by God in the end. And as long as there are unbelievers in the world, Satan will have a place, a part to play to rally them in a final rebellion in which they will be destroyed and sent to eternal hell in the same Lake of Fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

We have no fear of Satan. He is a crushed...and that is the curse. The curse is this...Satan, you're not going to frighten anybody, not Eve, not her seed, and not the One who is going to come and crush your head. You don't threaten any of the godly, be it Eve, be it those who are spiritually her seed and that they love you and hate Satan, be it the Son Himself. You may assault Eve, you may assault her seed, her spiritual progeny, those who believe, that love Me, you may assault the Son, you will not succeed. You are crushed in the head. That is the curse on Satan. It's a devastating, crushing curse.

And in the midst of that crushing curse is this promise of salvation, the promise of election, the promise of transformation, regeneration, the new birth, conversion, the promise of forgiveness, the promise of a new nature, the promise of a redeemed humanity called her seed, the promise of a Messiah, a Savior who will come, a Savior who will come and crush the head of the serpent, a promise that ultimately in the end we are triumphant and He is triumphant. That's the curse on Satan.

Satan thought he could lead a successful rebellion in heaven. He couldn't. Thought he could lead a successful rebellion on earth. He couldn't.

You don't need to run around worrying about Satan. He's been crushed under your feet. You can enjoy your triumphant. That's why Martin Luther wrote this, and maybe he was thinking about this passage which he loved when he wrote it, "And though this world with devils filled should threaten to undo us, we will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumphant through us. The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not for him. His rage we can endure for lo, his doom is sure. One little word shall fell him."

We have no fear of Satan. So we say the amazing thing is the curse on Satan is a promise of salvation. In the midst of the sentence on Satan, hope appears along with mercy and grace and forgiveness and victory. The God of mercy shapes the curse to give hope to sinners. So even before God banishes Adam and Eve from the garden, which He does, they receive the hope of a paradise restored. Here is the first prophecy in Scripture, the first gospel promise in Scripture...man, the momentary enemy of God and friend of Satan, will become the enemy of Satan and the friend of God. And the whole humanity will come the friends of God. And out of that humanity, One will be chosen to crush the serpent's head for all the rest who will triumphant in that crushing.

By the woman came sin, by the woman will come the Savior of sinners. By the woman came the curse, by the woman will come the One who removes the curse. By the man paradise was lost, by a Man paradise will be restored. And as Paul puts it in Romans 5:20, "Where sin abounded...what?...grace much more abounded."

Father, we thank You again tonight for Your Word. How glorious it is, how stirring it is to our hearts. How we thrill and rejoice in its immense riches, its great truths. And thank You for giving this to us. It seems as though there's no end to the glories and the wonders of Your Word which are Your own glories and wonders manifest on the pages of Scripture. Just when we think we have heard it all, we go through another door into another treasure house and it really never ends. We thank You for the wonder of the Word and we do love You and adore You, we desire to worship You and to serve You and to honor You. We thank You for the Word which has been brought to us tonight, a word of salvation and hope in the midst of a curse that tells us You are a God who is by nature a Savior, who is by nature merciful, gracious, kind and forgiving to sinners. And we thank You that you have given us salvation through Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

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