

Biblical Theology, Lesson 5
The First Promise of Redemption

I. THE CONSEQUENCES OF BREAKING GOD’S COVENANT THROUGH SIN AND UNBELIEF

A. Broken Relationship Between Mankind and God

1. No Longer God’s People - though we are all still made in the Image of God, that image is distorted because we now all are born with a sin nature
2. No Longer in God’s Place - Mankind kicked out of GOD’s Place, the Garden of Eden, no longer living with God
3. No longer under the Covenant of Works - no longer able to obey and earn eternal life, but are born sinners under God’s wrath - because of our guilt, we all die - not only physically, but we are spiritually dead in sin and deserve God’s eternal wrath and judgment in Hell

B. Broken Relationship Between Man and Man

C. Broken Relationship Between Man and Creation

But, thankfully, the story doesn’t end there...

II. God’s Promise of Future Redemption from Sin and its Consequences

A. (Gen. 3:15) The first gospel promise

- Once again, we’re reminded that God is the main character of the story of the Bible, not us. Right after mankind falls into the clutches of sin, Satan, and Death, we see the glimmer of hope, foreshadowing the rest of the story: God is the hero who saves us from the foes we cannot defeat ourselves.
- Immediately, God gives a promise that sets up the rest of the Bible’s storyline: looking for a savior, the promised offspring, who will redeem God’s people, crush the serpent, and restore creation, bringing us back to God’s place
- Read Gen. 3:14-15 - God promises an *offspring* (Hebrew word: *zarah*) who will come from the line of Adam and Eve (the line of fallen humanity) who will *crush* the serpent (Satan), crushing his head, but to do so the serpent will also “bruise his heel.”
 - a. *Promises a coming savior* - This is a promise of a *messiah* - a savior who would come and save fallen humanity from sin, Satan, and death!
 - b. *Promises a new and better Adam* - Leaves us longing for a *new Adam* - a new head of humanity who *rightly images God*: 1. True Son of GOD; 2. Rightly rules

over creation, bringing all things under GOD's dominion; one who rightly represents God as a priest-king.

- c. *Promises a sacrificial death* - This offspring will accomplish victory over the serpent, crushing his head, but it will be a costly victory - his "heel" will be "bruised" in the process.
- d. *These promises will be fulfilled in Christ* - We know how the story unfolds - we know that this is talking about Jesus Christ. This leaves us longing for the Messiah - and we know, this is pointing us to Jesus Christ, who fulfills this very first gospel promise
 - i. Jesus is the true savior who comes to fulfill God's promises of salvation - indeed, He is God the Son himself!
 - ii. He is the new and better Adam who does not fail; Christ didn't sin, or listen to the lies and temptations of Satan, but He fully obeyed God, perfectly imaging and representing God as a Man, and He did what the first Adam should have done - he defeated Satan and perfectly obeyed God. As the true Adam, he paves the way for a *new humanity* to come about - a new people of God, who are restored to being truly human. Christ comes to restore the Image of God in humanity, restoring our relationship with GOD, so that we can live with God again, as His people, rightly representing, glorifying, and obeying Him as new creations in Christ. We saw that the image of God mean *rulership and sonship* - and so we will see that Christ is the true King and the true Son of God, and that in Christ, the new humanity (we who believe in the gospel) are restored to this full picture of what it means to be human, in the image of God: we become children of God; we even become priest-kings, a "royal priesthood," like Adam and Eve were, as we saw over the last few weeks. And so, this first gospel promise clues us in that Christ will restore what was lost in humanity, the image of God, and in the Garden of Eden, because of the Fall. Christ, the true Adam, King, Priest, and Son of God, will restore a new humanity to be God's people in God's place.

- iii. And he will do this by *going to the cross and dying as a substitutionary sacrifice*. His heel will be bruised as he crushes the serpent's head - he will die on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, paying the penalty of death we owe, bearing God's wrath on our behalf. But just as a bruised heel isn't a fatal wound, so Christ doesn't stay dead - He rises from the grave!

And we're also given a glimpse that this will be accomplished through substitutionary sacrifice even here in Genesis 3, in v.21.

B. (Gen. 3:21) The First Sacrifice

- a. Right after God curses Adam and Eve, showing the consequences for sin, he also shows them grace. Not only does he give the first promise of redemption, but he also *covers over their nakedness* by making "garments of skin" as He "clothed them" (Gen. 3:21).
- b. I argued last time that their nakedness and hiding from God is a symbol of their guilt and shame for their sin. And so, God clothing them here is a symbol of covering over sin - what we call *atonement*, which will be fleshed out later to include the payment of sin.
- c. The Bible will make clear that sin has to be paid for with blood; a death is required. This is emphasized in the sacrificial system - blood is shed to atone for sins. And so here, it's implied that an animal had to be killed as a sacrifice to take their skins and turn them into clothes to cover up Adam and Eve's nakedness - to cover over their guilt and shame. And so, we see a picture of sacrifice for the first time, right after the first sin and the first promise of salvation.
- d. And again, this points us to the ultimate substitutionary sacrifice for our sins - Christ's death on the cross. His blood would be shed to pay for our sins and take away our guilt and shame, so that we may live and be reconciled to God.
- e. But, that day is a long way off from Gen. 3. And here we see that the death of this animal isn't sufficient to fully save Adam and Eve (or any of us). We see this because right after God clothes them, he still sends them packing - they have to leave the Garden of Eden in vv.22-24. They still aren't God's People in the same way and can't live in God's place. The covenant has been broken.

And so, we begin looking for God's plan of redemption to unfold and be fulfilled...

III. God's Unfolding Plan of Redemption

In order to become good readers of the Bible, we have to rightly understand its storyline. And to do that, we need to understand that the rest of the Bible will gradually unfold these glimpses of the gospel promises that we see here in Genesis 3. The coming of Christ is a long way off from Gen. 3:15, however. In the meantime, it tells us that in order to rightly read the rest of Genesis (and Old Testament/Bible), we need to start looking for the Messiah. So, we can track this storyline by looking for these promises to be fulfilled:

- A. **Looking for a New People of God** - We need to be looking for how God will redeem humanity and bring about a people for Himself once more as this story unfolds. We'll see this happen with Abraham, and Israel, and eventually, the Church.
- B. **Looking for a Return to God's Place** - After the Fall, we're longing for a return to the Garden of Eden, where we can live with God in paradise and eternal life. So, as the story unfolds, we need to look for promises regarding *land* as a place where God and His people dwell together again. And, just as the Garden was the first temple, this means we're looking for a new temple, where God dwells among humanity once again, and we rightly know, obey, and worship Him.
- C. **Looking for God's Covenant Promises** - Just as the first covenant was broken, so we're looking for God to make new covenants to restore His people, God's place, and our salvation.
- D. **Looking for the *promised offspring*.**
 - We can begin to track the storyline as it progresses, and spot the flow of the Messianic promises and later fulfillment, by tracking this idea of the "promised offspring" throughout the book of Genesis.
 - Doesn't look good at first - Cain and Abel (chapter 4); one of the offspring kills the other; Cain's is cursed, his line is wicked, not the line where the promised offspring is going to come from
 - But the story resumes in chapter 5: we're told again that man was made in the image of God, and we're told of another offspring of Adam and Eve: Seth
 - a. On the one hand, this genealogy tells us that God's warning came true: since they broke the covenant and disobeyed God, death has indeed come into the world:

they surely died, and so do all of their descendants (the haunting refrain of Gen. 5: “And he died... And he died... And he died...”

- b. But this genealogy is also one of hope: this is the line through which the promised Messianic offspring will come; we see a glimmer of hope with Enoch; and it leads us to Noah - This is where we’ll begin to see these promises of redemption begin to unfold, beginning with a new covenant. So that’s where we’ll pick up the story next time.