

# (Genesis #5) First Foregleams of Gospel Light

by J. Glyn Owen

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*The sermon highlights the first foregleam of gospel light in Genesis 3:15, where God promises to send a Savior to crush Satan's head and bring salvation to humanity.*

**Duration:** 39:25

**Scripture:** Genesis 3:14-19, Matthew 4:10, Matthew 12:29, Revelation 20:10

**Topics:** "Gospel"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on two main themes: God's sovereign grace and its impact on faith, and the prefigurements of grace in the book of Genesis. The preacher highlights the miracle of God evoking faith in Adam and Eve despite the unpromising spiritual climate in the garden. The sermon also emphasizes the power of Jesus in overcoming Satan and his kingdom through his death and resurrection. The preacher emphasizes the importance of God's promises, particularly in the midst of darkness and sin, and highlights the prefigurements of grace seen in the early chapters of Genesis.

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## Transcript

It is a joy to welcome so many of you to our evening worship this evening. May I assure visiting believers among us that when we draw near to the table of our Lord at the close of the service, we welcome all who acknowledge Jesus Christ as personal Saviour and Lord. If therefore you would like to join those who will be partaking of the sacrament, you are invited, during the singing of the hymn following the sermon, to move into the centre of the sanctuary, and that will make it more convenient for those who serve.

We return once again this evening to the book of Genesis and to chapter three. In these Sunday evening services we have been attempting to let Genesis speak for itself. For the time being we have been evading, really, most of the criticisms levelled at it from various quarters, and we have been, as it were, inviting the book to tell us its own message, to declare its own theme.

And we want to pursue that thread again this evening. Now, I think you will agree with me, particularly those of you who were with us last Sunday evening, that Genesis chapter three must surely be one of the darkest chapters in the whole of the Bible. Last Sunday evening we were hearing the echo of God's curse upon Satan and upon the soil.

And then we were hearing the echo of God's sentence, first of all upon Eve, and then upon Adam. So that, all in all, this is a very sombre setting. This is a very dark, dark background.

But the light of God never shines brighter than in a dark place. We were not able to point very much to it last Sunday evening, but we want to do so tonight. Right here, in the thickest gloom of dismal Eden, where sin and condemnation and death have entered, there is the light of the promise of the good news of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and our Lord.

And I want to turn to that this evening, and briefly to notice two main things. I would like to read verse fifteen in the first place, and then verses twenty and twenty-one. And they bring before us two pictures of the grace of God.

First of all, the grace of God in promise, or the grace and its promise, and then the grace of God and its produce, or its prefigurements, if you prefer. First of all, verse fifteen. 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. And then verses twenty and twenty-one. And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and he clothed them. First of all, then, I want us to look at the grace of God and its promise. We have to take serious note of the promise that we have here in verse fifteen.

And I want to read it again. It says God, addressing himself, will you notice, not to Adam nor to Eve, but addressing himself rather to the serpent, to Satan, in the guise of a serpent. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between you and the seed, and your seed, I'm sorry, and between your seed and her seed.

He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel. Now let me summarize that before we come to analyze it. This is a context of judgment.

God is passing judgment upon the serpent. And what he's telling the serpent and Satan behind the serpent is this. You think you've got a victory that can never be retrieved.

God says, I want to assure you that however great your victory in this hour has been, I'm going to retrieve the situation. And what I'm going to do is this. I'm going to put enmity between you and the woman that you seduced, and between your seed and the seed of the woman.

And by thus placing enmity between you, I'm going to tear you asunder. And I'm going to break the unholy alliance between you. And I'm going to pursue the building of my own kingdom of righteousness and of holiness, despite your attempt to intervene.

And what is most significant, since I shall not be able to refer to it at any length later on, let me just do so now. God tells Satan that he's going to use the very woman, or the seed of the woman that he seduced, in order to turn things upside down. I'm going to use, he says, the very seed of the woman to crush your head.

God in sovereign grace and sufficiency addresses himself to the enemy of mankind and assures him that the ultimate victory is not with darkness, but with light. Now let's look at this. Let's examine it just a little.

First of all, let's look at this divinely placed enmity. I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed. You will remember that right at the beginning of chapter 3, Satan

secured his greatest victory by the propagation of a lie.

He always does. The lie that secured the great victory here was this, that God is not trustworthy. How often he's played that card.

God doesn't have your real interest at heart. He wants to keep you there, under his thumb. And it is because of that that God has said to you, don't you eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

If you did, of course, you'd have something exceedingly wonderful. And God doesn't want you to have that. Now that is the basic lie with which Satan won over first even then Adam.

And thereby he brought them into an unholy alliance with himself. As we have been at pains to indicate, what happened here is this. There is a new division of man and Satan against God.

There is a division of kingdoms here in embryo. Whereas at the very beginning of Genesis, God and man were together in unison and in fellowship, no longer so. Now man and his wife have moved over and have taken sides with Satan in this unholy alliance against God, and God is alone.

Now that's the picture. Into that picture of desolation and of death, God says, look, I still hold the keys of victory in my hand, and I'm going to do something. I'll put enmity between the woman and you and between the woman's seed and your seed, and this is the beginnings of salvation.

Now this word enmity is a term not applied to dumb beasts. I quote from one of our contemporary scholars, its scriptural use limits it like the verb which is at its root to enmity between persons or morally responsible agents. That means this.

God is not speaking to the serpent or of the serpent, purely as a serpent, and saying that there's going to be enmity between the serpent family and the human family. That's not what he's saying. He's addressing a responsible agent behind the guise of the serpent, namely Satan.

And what he's saying is that he is going to introduce an enmity between the two, the seed of the woman particularly and the seed of Satan. Now this is what salvation is all about. How do you distinguish a man who is a Christian? What is salvation? Viewed from one aspect, this is precisely what it is.

A Christian man, a man who has partaken of the divine salvation, is a person who knows what it is to have enmity placed in his heart towards evil and the source of evil. And this is nothing other than a miracle of divine grace. You see, by nature, we love evil.

As we come into this world as children of Adam and Eve, as members of the Adamic stock, we have a predisposition towards certain things that are evil. Not that we all like everything in exactly the same way, but nevertheless we have this predisposition, this bias towards evil. But what God says is this, I'll put enmity between you, woman, and the serpent on the one hand, and especially between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman.

And when that enmity comes in, what will eventuate is this, the alliance will be broken, the kingdom will be torn to pieces, the foundation of it will be severed into shreds. God promises to put enmity that will separate Satan and the members of his kingdom. Now notice, we turn from the person in whom victory will be gained to the pain by which victory will be secured.

God says, he, the seed of the woman, she will bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel. I'm going to put this enmity, says God, that will separate the two of you. This hatred of one another.

But this is going to be procured at a price. This is not something that is easy to bring into existence. And he who is the seed of the woman, he will bruise your heel.

I'm sorry, I'm getting it all mixed up. He will bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel. In other words, the emergence of salvation, as it is promised here, is going to cost.

There's going to be a bruising on both sides, between the seed of the woman and the serpent, or his seed. Now, what is God referring to here? Who is the person involved? Well, I think that is fairly clear from the rest of Having read through the Old Testament and the New, it becomes reasonably evident that the seed of the woman is essentially our Lord Jesus Christ. You remember how God refers to the Lord Jesus through the Apostle Paul when he writes to the Galatians? He says, in the fullness of the time, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman.

Have you wondered why that statement is found there, that he was made of a woman rather than just born into the world, or a human being, or something of that kind? Why did God refer to his Son, the Saviour, that was coming, already come, when Paul wrote? Why did he refer to him as the seed of the woman? Well, of course, if you are familiar with the New Testament and with the facts, the answer is clear. Jesus Christ was not the seed of a man and a woman. Jesus Christ was not the seed of Joseph and of Mary.

He was the seed of Mary. He was the seed of the woman. As in the morning hour we had occasion to refer to this, so let us refer to it again because it is so important.

Jesus Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit, but he was born of the Virgin Mary. He was the child of the woman, but he was not the child of the man. We can see how this fits in exactly with what God said way back here in Genesis.

Now, let me say something on the base of that. I am not suggesting for one single moment that Adam and Eve recognized all this, or realized all this. I don't suppose they did.

But in the mind of God, who knows the end from the beginning, who already had chosen to send forth his Son in the fullness of the times, in the mind of God, the reference must surely be to his Son. God's promises are invariably fuller than we realize, so then the person in whom the victory is to be gained is his Son. And then we notice the pain by which that victory is to be secured.

He will bruise your head, you shall bruise his heel. Contrary to popular opinion, it is amazing where one meets this, but you know the same word is used to describe both actions. The action of Satan in bruising the heel of the Saviour, and the action of the Saviour in bruising the head of the serpent, the same word is used exactly in the Hebrew.

The distinguishing thing is not in the word for bruising. The distinguishing thing is this. Satan will be able to bruise the heel of the Saviour, but the Saviour will bruise the head of the serpent.

To quote E. J. Young, what is meant is that the seed of the woman will deliver a capital blow, whereas the serpent for his part will deliver a lesser blow. In other words, when our Lord Jesus Christ puts his foot upon the head of Satan, it is veritably a crushing blow. It is on his head.

If the bruising of the heel of our Lord Jesus Christ by Satan involved the sorrows and the anguish of Calvary, then what devastation must be involved in the bruising of the serpent's head? We can understand what Paul meant when in writing to the Romans he said this, the God of peace will soon crush, that's the word he uses, crush Satan under your feet in a very short time. The Gospels record some of the things that Jesus did with Satan, how he spoiled him, baffled him in his temptations, rescued souls out of his hands, cast him out of people when they were demon-possessed, dispossessed the strong man armed and divided the spoil. By his death he gave a fatal and incurable blow to the devil's kingdom and wounded the head of the beast so that he can never be healed again.

So when his gospel gains ground, Satan falls and his kingdom receives a blow. He is bound by the prayers of his people, but by the grace of God the day is coming when he will be cast into the lake of fire. That's the message of the gospel.

God says then, I will put enmity between your two seeds so that from now on, as I choose, I will sever the link and the alliance will be broken and I will build my kingdom of righteousness and this I will do through the seed of the woman who has become your ally for a moment. Though it cost him, he will be victor. Grace and its promise.

Isn't it wonderful to have a promise such as this in a dark setting, such as this terrible third chapter in the book of Genesis, where all is dismal until God speaks. The other thing I want you to notice tonight is this, grace and its produce, or as I indicated earlier, I think we ought to say grace and its prefigurements, and you will see why in a moment. The grace which promises victory in the unspecified future is not impotent to do something now.

You always have that charge from unbelieving men. When we refer to the promises of God as they relate to the future, unbelieving men always tell us, oh yes, but it's all pie in the sky when you die. What about the here and now? Has not God something that he can do here and now, right now? Well, he can.

And I want to tell you that before Adam and Eve went out of that ancient, edemic garden, they had seen some miracles of grace. And we shall see them in just a moment. Two things only can take our attention tonight.

First of all, God in his sovereign grace produced faith in himself, faith in himself, confidence in his promises. Now, I think you will agree with me, if you are familiar with what we have here in Genesis chapter 3, that this surely must be one of the greatest miracles of all. It was a most unpromising spiritual climate in which to have faith, in which to generate faith.

If God can evoke faith in himself by Adam and Eve, after all that has taken place in this garden and in this setting, then there is hope that the tide shall be turned and Satan may yet be overcome. But can he? Can he break the alliance? He's talked about putting enmity between them, hatred between them, but can he generate faith? This is necessary to salvation. The paradise of man's innocence has long been destroyed by Satanic influence, so that man has believed the lie that God was not well disposed toward him, and therefore God could not be trusted.

Well, that lie has bred doubt unquestionably in God's goodness. Adam and Eve are both doubters now. And when they hear the curse and the condemnation upon Satan, upon the soil and upon themselves, probably there is further reason here for doubt, for doubting God, because they are doubters already.

And when once the seed of doubt is in your soul, doubts multiply. I want you to notice the unexpected confessions of faith that we have here. Did you notice Adam's confession of faith? I must say that this has been one of the great thrills for me as I've been brooding over these chapters again.

I don't think I'd ever seen this as clearly before. But it is something that brings a whole new dimension into this very somber situation. Look at verse 20.

The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. You say, where's the confession of faith there? You've surely made a blunder somewhere. Well, now take a look at it.

We've already indicated tonight that the background is a background of curse and of judgment. God's already expressed that, and I refer to it more than once. Not only that, but we are to understand that spiritually Adam and Eve have died already, and something has withered within them.

Their relationship with God has become strained. But now, despite the judgment, on the basis of the promise of the fifteenth verse, Adam gives a new name to his wife. He'd only called her woman before, the feminine of man.

But now he gives her a proper name, a different name altogether, a proper name. And what's he going to call her? And what he calls her is this, the living one, because she was the mother of all living. But there was no one else living.

Now, some of your commentators will say, well, the only way to explain that is Adam didn't really say that. But it's the person who wrote Genesis later on said she's the mother of all living. Well, there's another way of understanding it, too, that Adam believed the promises of God.

And he believed that God had promised a seed who would turn the tables and who would bruise Satan's head. And because he saw his wife as the mother of all who would live, and of that seed he changes her name. And I believe that it's something of that order that we must see here.

Because even if we leave out those words, because she was the mother of all living, the very seed of that thought is in the name that he gives her, the living one. In other words, the curse is upon them, judgment is upon them. But because of the promise of God, it's not all judgment.

There's light, there's promise, there's hope, there's good news. And therefore, he calls her the living one. Adam's confession of faith.

No, no, it's not the kind of confession of faith that you have in the light of all the truth that we have in the New Testament. It's not as full, it's not as vast, it's not as meaningful. But you come back into this context.

It is faith, all right. He could not have spoken of his wife in these terms if he still thought of judgment and of death and of curse. But he believes the promise.

And in principle, this is exactly what faith is. Faith is a response to the promises of God in terms of acceptance, in terms of confidence. It's the same here in Knox tonight as it was a way back here in the book of Genesis whenever this took place.

Adam's confession of faith. God then has evoked faith from the very Adam who doubted him. If you turn to chapter four and verse one, I pose a question here rather than make a statement.

And the question is this. Is not this Eve's confession of faith? And if you ask me, I believe it is. And let me read it.

Now Adam knew Eve, his wife, and she conceived and there came, saying, I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord. Now I pose the question, what does Eve want to say there? Is not this also a confession of faith? Following upon the sentence passed on her involving pain in childbirth, Eve has passed through the experience of pregnancy for the first time. And she's come out of it and she's got that little bundle of life in her hands and she says wistfully and gratefully, I have gotten a man, literally, with Jehovah.

What do you think was in her mind? Was it simply a statement that she'd got a child? Now it could be that. But I suggest to you that the very wording here indicates that it's probably more than that. That is, that Eve also believed the promise of chapter 3 and verse 15, that God would send the seed of a woman to do this remarkable work of salvation.

And she's asking the question, if not making the statement, isn't this the man that God had promised? I've got the child. Is this the seed who is to crush the tempter's power, the tempter's head? I hope that is not straining the text. Some would say it does, others would say it doesn't.

And there are some very renowned evangelical expositors who insist that this is so. Whether it is or not, we have Adam's confession of faith which is clear and crystal. And the point I want to make is this.

Right there, in the darkness and the dismal dreariness of Eden, God induces faith in the hearts of those who are turned away from Him. Now you know there is hope for the gospel in any circumstance. There is hope for the gospel and for the emergence of the church in any part of the world if God can produce faith like that in men that have so utterly turned their backs upon Him.

And then I turn to the one other thing that I want to mention tonight. The grace of God which produced faith in that dismal climate also provided a covering for Adam and Eve in their need before each other and before their Creator. Look at verse twenty-one.

And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them. A very simple statement that, and yet I suggest to you that there may be much more to it than meets the eye. Sin had made these two very self-conscious and guilt-ridden.

They were as uncomfortable in the presence of one another as they were in the presence of God. That's why they sewed fig leaves together to hide themselves one from the other. That's why they hid behind the tree of the garden a little earlier on.

And that's why they hid behind words and arguments when God spoke to them. Some of us don't hide behind trees anymore but we hide behind arguments. They did that too.

But it was all because they had a sense of guilt and a sense of shame before God. Now God provided them a covering at the cost of sacrifice. He provided for them garments of skins.

Whether Adam and Eve realized what was taking place we cannot dogmatize. But in the light of future developments, with a sacrificial system that God introduced into the history and into the religious life of Israel, surely we must see something very special here. You see, God knows the end from the beginning.

Whether Adam and Eve realized it or not is quite a different thing. But God, in intention, in taking away from them that apron of fig leaves, throwing it on one side and providing for them a garment that required a sacrifice, the slaying of an animal and of blood, first of all, is doing something which is most symbolic and suggestive in the light of later events. What is it doing? Well, let's put it in the form of the simplest principle.

What God is telling them is this. Look, you cannot cover yourselves, you cannot hide yourselves, you cannot dress yourselves properly in my sight. You, as sinners, cannot stand in my sight in anything that you bring yourselves.

I must dress you. I must provide something for you instead of those fig leaves. I must provide something and I can only do it by sacrificing by the death of something.

Now, let me repeat. I am not suggesting for one moment that Adam and Eve could see and understand all this, but in the mind of God, that's what he did. He's giving them a little prefiguring, a little portrait of future things, a bird's-eye view of something that is to come.

And in the light of Calvary and in the light of the New Testament, we, reading back into Genesis, can see how wonderful our God is, that the God who sent his Son to die, that his righteousness might be imputed to sinners and become thus their salvation. Right here, in the very dawn of human history, gave to Adam and Eve a garment that was to be symbolic of that great event yet to be. We've just sung, have we not? Jesus, thy robe of righteousness, my beauty is my glorious dress.

Misflaming worlds in these arrayed, with joy shall I lift up my head. This spotless robe the same appears when ruined nature sinks in years. No age can change its glorious hue, the robe of Christ is ever new.

What are we talking about? We're talking about the fulfillment of that blessed foreglim that we have right there in Genesis. When Jesus Christ tore away from men all their unrighteousness and self-righteousness and said, none of it avails. You can't come to my presence in your own righteousness.

All your righteousnesses are as filthy rags. Take them away. Well, how then can we approach God and stand in his presence? There's only one way.

By the imputed righteousness of his Son. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God. And justification is the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to the believing sinner.

God provided then a covering at the cost of sacrifice, and that covering was a covering that calmed the conscience. Adam and Eve were not simply comfortable in one another's presence, but they were at peace in the presence of God. You know, in Galatians chapter 3 and verse 27, Paul uses the little phrase about putting on Christ.

Have you put him on? It's a delightful picture. Paul brings it out in many other parts of the New Testament. I won't go after them tonight.

But it's the picture of Jesus Christ as a robe. A robe of righteousness. Now, I want to tell you that that's what a church is meant to be.

A robing robe. And I hope it doesn't upset you for me to put it like this as we conclude. I invite you to make the very seat on which you sit your robing robe.

By an act of will and by the grace of God, renounce your self-righteousness and cast away your sin. And say to yourself, I'm not attempting to come into the presence of God, nor to the table of my Lord, in the righteousness which I have spun myself. Because God doesn't accept it.

Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ. Put him on. So that henceforth you look upon yourself, not as a fellow or a girl, a man or a woman that's done an awful lot of good.

And the Almighty owes you such a lot. But rather as a sinner that deserves nothing but condemnation in yourself. But Christ is your righteousness.

And I'll tell you one thing. If Christ is your righteousness, your robe of righteousness, that's not only providing for you access to his table here upon earth, but to the heavenly Jerusalem. My good friend, have you put on Christ? If you haven't, do so now.

Let us pray. Our God and our Father, we turn to thee in Jesus' name. Realizing that in thy holy presence we can put nothing else on that makes us acceptable.

Nothing but the righteousness that was procured at the price of Calvary. Tear from us, we pray thee, everything else. Everything else that we might depend upon, whatever the fig leaves of the twentieth century may be.

We ask of thee to give to each and to all of us now a sense of the greatness of the grace that provides positive righteousness to link us with thee as well as an enmity that separates us from Satan. Work this twofold miracle in each of us tonight that we may find that there is a chasm that is opening up increasingly day by day which separates us from the source and author of sin and death and puts us more and more on the side of him who is our creator and our savior. These things we ask in his holy name.

Amen.

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