

(Genesis) 9 - the Sting of Death and the Seed of the Woman

by S. Lewis Johnson

The sermon explores the fall of man in Genesis 3, emphasizing the consequences of sin and the promise of redemption through the seed of the woman.

Duration: 51:29

Scripture: Genesis 3:8

Topics: "Death"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on Genesis chapter 3, specifically verses 8-19. He highlights the consequences of Adam and Eve's sin, including their awareness of their nakedness and their attempt to hide from God. The preacher emphasizes the need for individuals to come to Jesus for salvation and acknowledges the power of Christ's sacrifice to overcome sin. He concludes by urging listeners to acknowledge their sin, receive God's salvation, and pray for others to do the same.

Transcript

Will you turn with me to Genesis chapter 3 and listen as I read verses 8 through 19 for our scripture reading. Moses has recounted the probation and he has also now taken us through the fall of man and we read in verse 8 following the opening of the eyes of Adam and Eve and the fact that they now knew that they were naked and had sewed fig leaves together to make themselves coverings. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

Then the Lord God called to the man and said to him, where are you? And he said, I heard the voice of thee in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked so I hid myself. And he said, who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat? And the man said, the woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me from the tree and I ate. Then the Lord God said to the woman, what is this you have done? And the woman said, the serpent deceived me and I ate.

And the Lord God said to the serpent, you'll notice he does not ask him any questions, because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle and 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 and between your seed and her seed.

He shall bruise you on the head and you shall bruise him on the heel. Let me stop for just a moment and say a word about that translation. He shall bruise you on your head.

The pronoun is really a reference to the word seed and consequently it could be rendered either he or it. It's rather interesting that in the Latin Vulgate translation of the Old Testament, it is the feminine pronoun that is used here. And that large religious organization has made a great deal over this referring this text to the Virgin, the Virgin Mary.

As if it is through her that the victory shall come. She shall bruise you as to the head and you shall bruise him as to the heel or it. There is an older translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint version, the translation of the Old Testament in Greek made before the time of our Lord.

It reads masculine. It has the pronoun autos, which is the masculine form of the intensive pronoun. He shall bruise you on your head.

So there is an ancient interpretation of this particular pronoun that would make it masculine and referred to the individual seed. Now this is an interpretation in the New American Standard Bible. He shall bruise you on the head.

It's an interpretation in that it is masculine and also that it is individualized and not collective. I think it is correct, but I think we should understand that it is an interpretation. He shall bruise you on the head and you shall bruise him on the heel.

To the woman, he said, I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth. In pain you shall bring forth children. Yet your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you.

It seems to me rather interesting that in this, we won't comment very much on this this morning, we're saving part of this for next week, that Eve in her desire to be independent of Adam and acting independently of him, now is to be subjected to him in dependence upon him. True subordination has now become a form of subjection. Verse 17, Then to Adam he said, Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat from it.

Cursed is the ground because of you. In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you, and you shall eat the plants of the field.

By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken. For you are dust, and to dust you shall return. May the Lord bless this reading of his word.

Our subject for today in the exposition of the book of Genesis is the sting of death and the seed of the woman. We have learned, I hope, from our studies in the word of God that in simple terms the Bible claims that man was created holy, that he was put on probation in the Garden of Eden, that he failed his probation through disobedience, a disobedience that has as its root unbelief of the word of God, and that as a result of the fall in the Garden of Eden he became a being in spiritual wreck and ruin. This is not only true of the worst of men, it is true of the best of men.

Robert South, one of the older theologians, once said, An Aristotle is but the wreck of an atom, and Athens is but the rubbish of an Eden. Pascal commented concerning man that he was the glory and the shame of the universe. We know, of course, that this viewpoint is not held by modern man.

Evolutionary anthropologists and some philosophers do not hold these views. The former disagree among themselves. Some of them believe that man evolved into his violence while others follow the more well-traveled paths and believe that man evolved from brutality and savagery into the civilized being that we observe him to be today.

Now, you have to have a sense of humor to think of man as a civilized being today, but nevertheless there are people who think that that is true. We might illustrate these two views by using what one theologian has called a simple little contrast of the Roman Colosseum and a modern ranch house. Ranch houses, incidentally, are not so popular today in Texas as they used to be perhaps, but nevertheless we're all familiar with them.

The Colosseum, many of us have seen, and it is even in its ruins a spectacular, awe-inspiring building suggesting the greatness of Rome that was past, but it is a ruin. We look at it and we see the magnificence that characterized the Rome of the past, and in one sense that is a beautiful picture of man, at least from the biblical standpoint. On the other hand, there is the modern ranch house.

The modern ranch house is a very attractive building. It's neat, it's comfortable, it has one advantage that a Colosseum does not have. It's beautifully adapted for expansion and consequently additions to it may be made so that all of the fondest dreams of those that own them might be realized, providing they have the funds.

In a sense, these two models are two models of men. There is the Colosseum, this tremendous, awe-inspiring building that suggests the greatness of the past, but now it lies in ruins. And the modern ranch house, which grows as families grow and becomes larger and more significant as the years go by.

Shall we understand man by the model of the Colosseum or by the modern ranch house? Shall we understand it by Adam or shall we understand it by Pythacanthropus Erectus? The scriptures, of course, decide for the former. That is, the Colosseum is a beautiful picture of man because man does have an awe-inspiring, spectacular origin at the hands of God, a magnificent being intellectually, morally, in all aspects of his being, beautiful. He came from the hands of God and God himself said with reference to him that he was very good.

But man is now in ruin as a result of what happened in the Garden of Eden. Modern man keeps talking about his problems, but the problem with modern man is really his unregeneracy. It renders by virtue of the very fact that he is unregenerate.

It renders his thoughts about God perverse, his thoughts about sin perverse, his thoughts about redemption perverse. In fact, he cannot understand himself just because he does not understand that he is a fallen being. The Bible speaks very plainly on this point.

It's remarkable, really, that people who read the Bible should not see it. It only illustrates the fact that we do not understand any spiritual truth apart from divine illumination. It's possible for people to read the same sentences in the Word of God and some to understand and then others to misunderstand.

Listen to what Paul says about man. He says the mind of the flesh is hostile toward God. It does not subject itself to the law of God.

As a matter of fact, Paul says it cannot subject itself to the law of God. He adds, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. Now, when Paul says that the mind of the flesh is hostile towards God, he means that

man in his will is at enmity with God.

Man in his mind is blinded by his sin, and so he is ignorant of the sinfulness that characterizes his being. His emotions are corrupt, and consequently all of the issues of his life are contrary to the Word of God. Putting it in another way, the apostle says that men are darkened in their understanding.

They are excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them. Their hearts are hardened. They have become callous.

They've given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. Now, if man is really like that, then I think we can understand why he does not understand the solution to the dilemma, which he has somehow able to sense, the dilemma of his own existence. And his ideas about his own sin are the things that keep him from understanding the problem with his life.

One of the modern theologians who was never accused of being a conservative, Reinhold Niebuhr, has said that modern man has an essentially easy conscience. If man is to overthrow the bonds in which he finds himself, the first thing that he must come to understand is his own sin. We cannot be delivered from our sin unless we know that we are in bondage to that sin.

It is striking, too, I think, that instead of the true attitude to their sin suggested by the biblical revelation, men rather try to cover up. They would want to put their sin finally under the appearance of that which is good. And they wrap themselves in the vesture of the apostles and in the mantle of the Messiah himself in their sin.

Isn't it a striking thing that the Bible says that those who are most adept at deceiving others are those who are most religious in their attitudes? I can still remember when I was just a young Christian still in the insurance business in Birmingham, Alabama, when one of my teachers pointed out to me 2 Corinthians chapter 11 and verse 13 through verse 15, in which the apostle Paul says concerning false teachers, such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it's not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness whose end shall be according to their deeds.

That immediately struck home to me because I had grown up in churches in which there, in some of them at least, there was evidence of men who had prominent position in the church who did not really understand anything much about the biblical revelation. And I identified immediately with men who stood in the pulpit and opened the Bible and spoke about the scriptures in terms that seemed to be familiar to those who studied the scriptures but who invested those terms with different meanings. I can remember elders and I can remember ministers who were frankly not subject at all to the word of God and yet they attended a Christian church.

Why is it that men enter the pulpit, open the Bible, lead a congregation supposedly in Christian worship but who deny the very fundamentals of the Christian faith? Well, Paul says that these false teachers are false apostles. They are deceitful workers. They disguise themselves as apostles of Christ.

And the reason they do it is because they are led by Satan himself. And that's exactly what he does. He disguises himself as an angel of light rather than an angel of darkness.

So the true attitude to their sin, men do not understand. They seek to cover up the facts of their own failure and in fact engage in the epitome of cunning hypocrisy by pretending to be something that they are not. I

guess that the final manifestation of this will be when the man of sin himself appears and when he sets up the image in the temple of God, the image of himself as God and calls men to worship God.

Such men need Anselm's rebuke. You have not yet considered how great the weight of sin is. Modern man's dilemma finds its ultimate explanation right here in these verses that we are going to look at this morning.

And I do believe, I earnestly believe that if a person comes to understand Genesis chapter 3, the rest of the Bible will become very, very plain and clear to him. We turn to it now with the hope and anticipation that you will come to understand just exactly what God is saying to us through the experience of the man and his wife in the garden many, many centuries ago. Now we have read how Eve, having been tempted by the serpent who was the tool of Satan, finally when she saw that the tree was good for food, that it was a delight to the eyes and a tree to be desired to make one wise, took from its fruit and ate and gave also to her husband with her and he ate.

And immediately upon the eating of the fruit by Adam, man fell. For Adam was the representative man and the race fell in him. In Adam up until this time his own spirit had had control of his being.

Being directed by God, his spirit controlled his being. His soul, his body were under the dominion of his spirit. And in his spirit he maintained communion with the Lord.

But when he fell, sin began its work. And the laws of nature, the lower laws began to take over. And man now must walk in the way of pain, in the way of senility, and in the way of death.

As God finally says in his judgment upon Adam, you are dust and to dust you shall return. The spirit of man, which had been the means by which man maintained his contact with God and through which his life was directed by God, now becomes simply a lodger in the house. For the spirit is no longer in control of the man.

Though he possesses a spirit, it is by the spirit that we know. Man has become a spoiled species. His faculties are in bondage to his sin.

He is unable to do the will of God. They that are in the flesh cannot please God. Oh, if we just could understand that.

They that are in the flesh cannot please God. Incidentally, if we really understood that, we would not be Arminian in our theology. They that are in the flesh cannot please God.

So there must be some work of God by which a man is taken out of the flesh, placed in the spirit, before we can understand the things of God. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. They are foolishness to him.

Neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned. I sometimes, I must confess, am just startled to discover that there are individuals who sit in our congregation week after week, month after month, year after year, and after all of this time still make remarks that indicate they do not yet understand that they that are in the flesh cannot please God. Cannot please God.

There must be a previous work of God in the heart of fallen man before he can come to an understanding of God. It's amazing to me that people can listen and not grasp that point. Well, Adam is now fallen.

His mind is blind. His will is in rebellion against God. His emotions are corrupt.

Now we read in the eighth verse of the reaction of Adam to the presence of the Lord. Incidentally, you will notice that it says in the eighth verse that the Lord God came down into the garden in the cool of the day. It is likely that that is a specific reference to chapter 2, verse 17, where we read, But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.

In the day that you eat of it. So we read in verse 8, They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, the very day in which they had partaken of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden. In that very day the Lord God comes down into the garden, and it will be manifested that what the Lord said would happen has truly happened.

In the day that they ate of that fruit they died. Now they did not die physically, but they died in their spirit with reference to God. They are still living physically, but soon they will be dust.

In the meantime, however, the relationship that they enjoyed with God is broken. And when God comes down into the garden of Eden, Adam and Eve do the very thing that people do normally and naturally. When the subject of God comes up, or when there is any possibility of contact with God, what do men do? Do they rush that they might know Him? Do they seek after Him? No.

The Bible says there is none that seeketh after God. No, not one. And so when the Lord God, evidently in the form of a theophany, the Lord Jesus came down into the garden, when He comes down into the garden, Adam and Eve hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

The impulse to hide from God is natural to human nature. If you feel it, if it is in your heart at this present time, if there is something within you that is saying, I wish I didn't have to listen to this sermon by Dr. Johnson this morning, well it may be that it is something of that same innate impulse of man to flee from the presence of the Lord. Not that I'm the Lord, but here is the Word of God speaking, and we want to flee from it.

Because our minds, our hearts, our emotions are all opposed to the Word of God and the truth of God. They hid themselves. The innate sense of exposure to divine judgment climaxed in the last of the judgments of the book of Revelation, when men in the midst of those terrifying judgments, instead of fleeing in repentance and faith to the Lord God who is hurling His thunderbolts of judgment into the earth, they ask for the caves and the mountains to hide them from the presence of the Lord.

The ultimate manifestation of the reverse, of course, is when we finally enter into the presence of the Lord and sin has been eradicated fully from our lives, having been forgiven, and finally when the body itself and the sin principle is removed from that body and we're in the presence of the Lord, we read in the book of the Revelation, they shall see His face. Then we shall rejoice in the presence of the One who has been so good to us. Isn't it interesting too that sin is no barrier to sovereign grace? Adam and Eve are running to hide from the Lord amid the bushes of the garden, but the Lord God still comes down into the garden and calls out to the man, where are you? How different the Bible is from human reason.

We would never have thought it to be that way. We would have thought that God would have first judged man, but He comes seeking man. Bill Cosby's interpretation of the fall is the interpretation that man naturally puts upon it.

He says after the fall that God came down into the garden of Eden and said, all right, everybody out of the pool. But in the Word of God, it is where art thou? Sovereign grace seeks man in the midst of his sin. Now He doesn't, sovereign grace does not seek every man in this sense.

Although the opportunity to respond to the gospel is extended to all, it is sovereign grace directed toward those who are the objects of God's elective purposes. The whole of the scriptures reveal this. But God comes down into the garden of Eden and calls out to Adam, Adam, where are you? Now He's not asking for information.

He's asking for Adam to ponder and reflect upon the things that have happened to him. But Adam, as is characteristic of men in their sin, engages in the first cover-up in history. We read that he said, I heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid myself.

Incidentally, this is the first mention of fear in the Bible. And it is the fear of the man who has sinned against God. Now his explanation of why he is hiding is, of course, wrong.

He says that he's hiding because he was naked. But really, he doesn't really, he doesn't really turn to the real true cause that lies behind his fear. For it is his sin that has caused him to fear, and then it is his fear that has caused him to hide.

But Adam traces his problem to the symptoms rather than to the real cause. His fear is not the vital thing. It is the sin that has brought about the fear.

The fact is, of course, that everybody fears death. The writer of the epistle of the Hebrews speaks about those who, through all their lifetime, were in the fear of death. And they are in the fear of death not simply because of the experience of death, but of what follows death.

It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment. It is the judgment that men fear. And the judgment is brought about by sin.

It is sin and judgment that leads to fear, and the fear leads to hiding. But Adam, he's covered up, or at least he sought to cover up. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, in his first inaugural address, made the famous but nonsensical statement, we have nothing to fear but fear.

How foolish. How typical of a politician. The fact of the matter is we have a great deal more to fear than fear.

We have to fear the ultimate judgment from the hands of a holy God. That is what we have to fear. And it is good that God has implanted in the heart of every man fear.

It's His way of saying respond to the message. Fear is like pain. Pain is useful.

Pain is a warning to us of danger, imminent danger. The fact that we feel pain means that we don't put our hands in a fire. And the fear that God has implanted in the heart of every man, the fear of ultimate judgment, is a work of grace, in that it warns us to flee from the judgment to come.

Because of the fear that we feel, because of the fear of the presence of God, flee into the presence of God for sovereign mercy and grace. That is open for sinners. Well, God responds to Adam by saying, who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat? And now Adam will run in the age old path of self-vindication.

The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me from the tree and I ate. First of all, he blames it on the woman. But really, it's not so much a blame that he thinks attaches to the woman.

It's really something back of that. For notice how he words it. The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat.

Will Rogers used to say, American history may be divided into two eras. The era of the passing of the buffalo and the era of the passing of the buck. And so Adam, he lives in the era of the passing of the buck in spite of the chronological difference.

He wants to pass the buck to the woman and then ultimately to the man. Because really what he's thinking is that I'm really not to blame. It's because of the situation in which I find myself.

How true that is of us. We do not like to think that we are responsible. And so we like to put it, our responsibility on something else.

As one preacher has put it, this one cursed passion, this one appetite that I cannot control, this one blemish in my character, the fact that I am by nature envious, jealous, sexy, or furiously ambitious. This one thing lies in my heredity or in the environment in which I grew up or in the constitutional character given to me. It lies in my erotic disposition.

This one cursed faulty power that is constantly getting me down lies in all these things, not in my own self. Certainly in the last analysis, I didn't make myself what I am. I didn't choose my parents.

I didn't choose my genes. I didn't choose my blood. I complain against the unknown.

And if there is a God, then He is this unknown one who is responsible. But as for me, I wash my hands of it altogether. Have you ever felt like that? Have you ever felt that you have been made in a certain way and therefore you are not responsible for it? You may not say God's responsible for it.

You simply say, I was made that way and I'm not responsible. But really what you are doing is exactly what Adam and what Eve did. You are putting God in the dock, finally, and charging Him with your sin.

The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat. I've always said that women learn very fast. And Eve learned very fast from her husband.

Because when the Lord God said to her, what is this that you've done? She said, the serpent deceived me and I ate. I like that old preacher who said, Adam blamed Eve, Eve blamed the serpent, and the serpent hadn't a leg to stand on. Well, the Lord did not give the serpent a chance to reply.

He didn't ask the serpent any questions. You'll notice the order of the address now in the garden. It has been man first, it has then been the woman, and now He turns to the serpent, suggestive perhaps of the order of responsibility.

Adam, who sinned willfully, the greatest measure of responsibility, the representative man who had all of the incentives to obey that could have been given to him in God's gracious probation, the woman who was beguiled, and finally the serpent, the tool, the reptile, the tool of the wicked one. Now the sentences of guilt are given. The Lord speaks to the serpent and says, because you have done this, curse to you more than all cattle and more than every beast of the field, on your belly shall you go and dust shall you eat all the days of your life.

Self-vindication ends in a threefold judgment. Now if we were to summarize what is said here in these two verses, we would say that the serpent is cursed, but Satan is to be crushed. It is my opinion, there are different ways to interpret these two verses, but it is my opinion that this verse has to do both with the reptile, the tool of Satan, and then ultimately of Satan himself.

It is possible to see both of the verses as a reference only to the serpent, or on the other hand, both of the verses as a reference only to Satan. But I suggest to you, and I only suggest this to you, that the two verses do have to do with the serpent as a reptile and also primarily, and with greatest responsibility, directed to the old serpent, Satan, who uses the reptile as his tool. Now we read here, on your belly you shall go.

It's rather interesting, is it not, that the serpent, the snake, is the only reptile or only animal, for he was an animal. He is the only animal with a bony skeleton that goes upon his belly. It's almost as if God has left some biological evidence of the fall in the nature of the snake, the common snake.

Now he says, on your belly you shall go, and dust shall you eat all the days of your life. This one who wished to be the tool of the, or who was the tool of the serpent, the old serpent, is now confined to the place of degradation, where he shall eat dust all the days of his life. Incidentally, I think there is a principle implied in this, and that is that anyone who follows the advice of Satan and discounts the Word of God may expect to have some of the judgment that was passed upon the reptile.

It's rather interesting, too, to me that in the days of the millennial kingdom in the future, as Isaiah puts it, he describes how the animals are finally at harmony one with the other, but then he says, dust shall be the serpent's food. In Isaiah chapter 65 and verse 25, many young people fail to see that if we follow the advice of the evil one and turn from the Word of God into disobedience, we may expect often those sins to carry on in their effects throughout the whole of our lifetime. We particularly see this in the case of young people, young Christian men or young Christian women, who in a lack of wisdom and obedience to the Word of God marry a young man not in the faith, because certain promises are made before the marriage, which are not kept afterwards.

Very often they have to discover the sad experience of the serpent and eat some dust for the rest of their lives. It's a very serious and solemn thing to disobey the Word of God. Now the prophecy that is contained in the fifteenth verse is of striking significance, and I won't try to expound all of it in the few moments that we have.

We'll refer to it again next week. Let me just make a few comments that will help you to understand what we have here. This is probably the most comprehensive promise of the coming of the Lord Jesus that we find in the Bible, and essentially what it says is that the Redeemer, the one who will overcome, who will overthrow, who will restore creation to its intended goal, the one who will come and who will do that will be from the woman.

In other words, the Redeemer who will accomplish the redemption will be a member of the human race. That is the breadth of this great promise. But listen, he says, I will put enmity between you and the woman, and the very word enmity suggests now that there is a higher power behind the reptile.

I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed. So the enmity will not only be personal for a time, but will be of a lengthy period of time. As the seed unfolds with descendant after descendant, there will be enmity.

In other words, a long warfare is suggested by this, and even from this we would gather that the history of the human race will go on over a lengthy period of time, because there must be enmity between the seed of the serpent, his descendants, and the seed of the woman. This is evidently intended to be a reference to the warfare that exists between the seed of the woman in the elective purposes of God that finally reach our Lord Jesus Christ, and on the other hand, the seed of the serpent that our Lord Jesus speaks about when he comes, that seed of the unbelieving down through the years, those that are of their father the devil. Then we read, he shall bruise you as to the head, and you shall bruise him as to the heel.

This pronoun, which refers to the seed, makes it necessary for us to ask ourselves, is the seed a reference to the collective seed? In other words, is this just a warfare won by a great body of people? Or is the word seed here an individual seed? Is it a reference to an individual who belongs to the seed, to the two seeds, two individuals? Well, now our text renders this, he shall bruise you on the head, and it's evident that the translators believe that this he here is individual. Now the word seed is a word that is used collectively of a body of descendants, the head and the body of descendants, but it is also used individually of a particular descendant. We will see that later on as we go through the book of Genesis.

We will notice this particularly in the promises to Abraham, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. And the reference is ultimately to an individual who belongs to a body of descendants, but the individual is the one through whom the blessing shall come. This is no doubt a reference to our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is a reference to the seed of the woman who shall be the means of the crushing of the head of the serpent. So the climax of the struggle between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman will be an individual confrontation between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman individually. Incidentally, our Lord is called the seed of the woman.

We would have expected seed of the man, but it's seed of the woman. Now we do not say that this is a reference to the virgin birth. We only say this, that it is in harmony with the virgin birth.

For our Lord Jesus Christ was seed of the woman, not seed of Joseph. But look at the one final evidence here of the individualizing of the he and the you. We read here, he shall bruise you as to the head, head, and you, Satan, shall bruise him as to the heel.

Now these two words, head and heel, individualize the seed. A seed as a body does not have a head and a heel. But if we speak of head and heel, we must individualize the promise.

And so when the promise says, he shall bruise you as to the head, the reference is to the one individual seed of the woman who shall finally crush the serpent's head. And you shall bruise him as to the heel, the reference is to the one final seed of the woman that the serpent shall crush as to the heel. But notice, one is the crushing of the head and the other is the crushing of the heel.

Now to crush someone's head is a fatal wound. It also is a final wound. But to crush a heel is not a fatal wound.

In the case of the serpent, his head shall be crushed. In the case of the seed of the woman, that seed's heel shall be crushed. Now, of course, we do not have here a commentary on the cross.

But the cross explains the protoevangelium, this first preaching of the gospel, this most comprehensive of the messianic promises, because that is exactly what happened. When the Lord Jesus, the seed of the

woman, came, He went to the cross at Calvary, and there He accomplished the crushing of the head of the serpent, overthrowing him by virtue of the fact that He paid the penalty for the sins of the redeemed. And in so doing, He destroyed the hold that the serpent has over men, the men for whom our Lord Jesus Christ died.

And as a result of this, the serpent's head is crushed. The Apostle Paul says in Romans 16 that he shall bruise the serpent's head shortly. He means by that, that the final effects of the cross shall take place and the work of Satan shall come to its final, ultimate end.

But in the process of crushing the head of the serpent, our Lord Jesus Christ's heel is crushed. And it is necessary for Him to die, to go forth into death, burial, and come forth in resurrection as the seed of the woman who now has carried the giant's head in victory to the right hand of the throne of God as a sovereign, majestic Lord and Savior, seed of the woman who has crushed the serpent's head. But He does it through death.

I think it's rather interesting, too, that this first reference to the atoning work of the Lord Jesus relates the atonement to the hold that Satan has over men. John puts it this way. He was manifested to destroy the works of the devil.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews puts it this way. Inasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. The Apostle Paul puts it this way in Colossians chapter 2 and verse 15.

He says, having made a show of them openly, he has triumphed over them in it, overcoming by virtue of the blood of the cross. Now the sentence that is pronounced upon the woman, we'll just comment upon in a sentence. I want to spend a little time on this next time.

Motherhood is to be motherhood in pain. And the woman shall no longer be ruled by the word of God as originally given, but now by instinctive urges. She shall have those instinctive urges toward the man, but at the same time he shall rule over her.

And the sentence upon the man is summed up in sorrow, in sweat. I always thought down south that men perspired and animals sweated, but whoever translated this has disagreed with me. And we do read here that by the sweat of your face you shall eat bread.

I always thought that nice people perspired and those that weren't sweated. But perhaps sweat is good here. Sorrow, sweat, and dust tell the story, but there is time for repentance.

We read, you are dust, to dust you shall return. But in the meantime there is opportunity to return to the Lord by repentance and faith. But vanity, futility, and death shall be the things that characterize human existence.

The second law of thermodynamics will have its full operation in the intervening time, and everything shall tend to chaos and disorder. The things that God made are being unmade, and everything is proceeding finally to the time when God shall bring all things together ultimately through the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul writes, the sting of death is sin.

The sting is in sin. It's not in death. Death itself has for the Christian become the means of entrance into the presence of the Lord.

But the sting of death is sin. It is sin that has brought about death. And the death in unrepentance is truly entrance into separation from God.

The problem of modern man simply put comes down to this. He is a sinner. He lives in a disintegrating, chaotic order, which by virtue of the very fact that he is a sinner he cannot of himself understand until God illumines him, gives him understanding, opens his eyes so that he sees exactly what he is.

We live just like a person who lives in a city with a giant mountain overhanging it. I think of the city of Seattle with Mount Rainier on clear days, that majestic mountain. All life in Seattle is lived in the presence of Mount Rainier.

Or of places in the Canadian Rockies where little villages are there under these giant mountains and all life is lived in the presence of those mountains. All life is lived in the presence of the fall of man and the facts of it. We are a fallen race.

All the evidences of it are about us. If only our eyes have been opened in order that we may see. Our being is a being unto death, every one of us.

We are all dying from the little children to the older ones in our midst. We are all dead men and women in the way of perishing, leading ultimately out of this human existence. But the remedy for the sting is in the seed of the woman who has recovered by virtue of the blood of the cross, the history of the human race, the man of sorrows who had the crown of thorns upon his head has accomplished a victory that is available for all who will embrace him.

And so we invite you to come to him that you might experience the ultimate presence of the Lord where there is no curse because sin has been paid for. If you're here today and you have never believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, we remind you of your sin. Do not leave this auditorium without dealing with the God who has given the Lord Jesus Christ as our Redeemer, who has in the word of God told us about our condition, told us of the remedy, and who calls upon us.

To us, where art thou? Come, come to the Lord Jesus. Receive him as your own Savior by the grace of God. Respond to sovereign grace through the Lord Jesus.

May we stand for the benediction. How grateful we are, Lord, for the plain words of Holy Scripture that speak so certainly of the effects of sin, the fact of it, the extent of it, and also the remedy for it. We praise thee for the seed of the woman who has now come and who has, through the shedding of the precious blood, crushed the serpent's head.

And we thank thee that the sentence shall soon be executed and the saints of God shall become truly free. Lord, if there are some here who have never come to the seed of the woman for redemption, we pray at this very moment that they may lift their hearts to thee, acknowledge their sin, receive as a free gift the salvation of the Lord Jehovah. O God, touch hearts and bring them to Christ.

May grace, mercy, and peace go with us for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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