

Scripture Reading: Genesis 3:15,

“15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.” 20 And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. 21 Also for Adam and his wife Jehovah God made tunics of skin, and clothed them. 22 Then Jehovah God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, & live forever" -- 23 therefore Jehovah God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. 24 So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.”

"God's Response in the Garden"

Well as promised my goal this morning will be to take us out of the Garden as we prepare for the Advent season this year.

- **God is going to drive Adam from the Garden, but as He does so, we must see it is surrounded by God's love and mercy...**

I think it is always good to remember that God did not in His justice and righteousness immediately cast Adam and Eve into the Lake of Fire which had been prepared for Satan and his followers.

No, our Triune God made a covenant before the worlds began to show the Father's love and mercy by having the Spirit call out a people from the ravages of sin and death and to prepare them as a spotless Bride for His Son Jesus who would give His own life as the payment for their sins.

- **This is God's grand story of salvation and we see God laying the foundation for His story right here in the Garden.**

A few weeks ago we considered the great promise of the Gospel in verse 15 which I read again this morning:

- **The Seed of the Woman would crush the head of the serpent.**

Now before I proceed to look at the other acts of love and mercy that we see here in the Garden I want to quickly review our commitment to always see how what we find in the Book of Beginnings relates to Jesus! For example, when we look at verse 15:

- **How can I be certain that the seed of the woman is Jesus and not another one of the many children born in the history of mankind?**
- **How can I be sure that it is Satan's head that is crushed and not some literal snake?**

Let me quickly turn to the two portions of Scripture that show us the way...

In the Gospel according to John we see many discussions and debates between Jesus and the religious leaders of that day. Remember that they 'knew' their Bibles well [the Old Testament] having much of it memorized. They looked down on Jesus and His disciples as unlearned men from Galilee, not from the center of religion & knowledge in Jerusalem!

Listen carefully to what Jesus says to them in John chapter five:

“37 And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. 38 But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. 39 You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. 40 But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life. 41 I do not receive honor from men. 42 But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you...

45 Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you--Moses, in whom you trust. 46 For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. 47 But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

- They had searched and studied the Scriptures and missed the one the Scriptures were given to reveal!
- We must always be SO careful that we do not do the same when we have the whole Bible!

The other important passage comes near the end of Luke's Gospel where we have Jesus walking with the disciples on the road to Emmaus. They are troubled and saddened by what had just happened in Jerusalem so Jesus says to them:

"O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" 27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

Later Jesus meets with all the disciples save Thomas and after eating some fish and honeycomb He said to them:

"These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." 45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures."

Jesus said that the Scriptures speak of Him, Jesus expounded ALL the Scriptures and Jesus said again to the gathered disciples that the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms speak of Him!

- If we do not know our Scriptures including the Old Testament... Do we really know Jesus?
- Or on the other hand are we so proud or sure of our knowledge of the Scriptures that we miss Jesus?

Thus I can be sure that when God says that the Seed of the Woman will crush the head of the serpent I am supposed to think of all the ministry of Jesus and how His death burial and resurrection defeated Satan completely!

- Keeping those Scriptures in mind will also help us to see Jesus in the other actions that God takes here in the Garden.

So first we see Adam respond by calling his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

Adam calls her the mother of all living not because she is the mother of us all since he knew that was true when he first called her woman.

- He gives her a new name now because he has faith that she would bear the seed of woman, Jesus.
- A good example of what it means to see Jesus in the Scriptures!

It also helps us to make sense of one of those 'hard to understand' verses from the Apostle Paul that Peter made reference too:

"12 And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. 15 Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control."

This passage is not teaching us that women are stupid or that they must earn their salvation with works like child-birth or love or self-control.

Paul is reminding Timothy about the creational order of things and how much trouble Adam & Eve got into when they disrupted and rebelled against God's order.

- And yes, as we will celebrate in the season of Advent, the human race was saved through child-birth: The birth of Jesus in that manger.

Back in the garden, we next see Jehovah God making provision for his lost ones and pointing them to the Savior in a stunning way:

21 “Also for Adam and his wife Jehovah God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.”

- **We will speak a bit more about how God covers us as His Saints at the Table this morning but here I want to help us see the introduction of sacrifice!**

How was Jesus going to crush the head of Satan? On the cross giving Himself as THE sacrifice for the sins of His people. We know that Adam & Eve felt shame after the fall and in their own feeble attempts tried to cover themselves, even before God came into their presence! God comes and meets not only their temporal need for cloths but gives them the first of many reminders about how they will need the sacrifice of Jesus to be restored to a right relationship with God... The death of these animals was the first sacrifice and the first experience with death for Adam and Eve...

- **I am sure it was traumatic for them but also hopeful as we shall see more fully in the account of their boys Cain & Abel.**

The text does not say it was a sheep or lamb so we cannot be dogmatic but I think it could well have been.

We are given no details about how they killed the animals and made the clothing. Now I say ‘they’ because when it says that God made tunics of skin I am pretty sure He used Adam or Adam & Eve together as His means to kill the animals and make the cloths.

Even if one insists that God did it Himself they still had to observe what He did...

- **The point is that this is the first of many animal sacrifices that would be made to picture the coming of the Great Sacrifice.**

It is also where the errant and evil practice of human sacrifice would have begun as well, as men attempted to please God on their own as we shall see with Cain. Another one of those ugly effects of the fall that filled the earth until the time of Jesus which has now been almost completely eradicated.

- **That is why finding the sin of abortion is so abhorrent in a nation that has had the Light of the Gospel the way our country has had, but more on that in January!**

The important point for us to see is that this is the first of many sacrifices and we certainly don’t have time this morning for a complete survey of the almost 160 references to sacrifice in the just the Old Testament!

This brings the Scriptures that we reviewed earlier back to our minds: The importance of this first sacrifice and ALL the sacrifices that followed is that they instruct us about the one great Sacrifice that Jesus would make.

The Book of Hebrews show us how ALL of those regulations and instructions & practices that we find in the early years, then in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple point to Jesus!

Hebrews 9: “18 Therefore not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood. 19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people,

20 saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you." 21 Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. 22 And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission. 23 Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

24 For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; 25 not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another-- 26 He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.”

- **I commend the Book of Hebrews as your homework to better understand how we see Jesus in the Old Testament!**

And finally we see one more very important action by God as a response to the fall of man in the Garden:

- **God casts or drives the man and women out of the garden!**
- **That may not seem a loving or positive act, but it was essential.**

Just as the young child who must be taken aside for a Biblical correction does not see the wisdom of their parent’s actions at the time, I am sure that the Adam & Eve thought to themselves, this cannot be good. But the parents are acting in wisdom as they obey God and work to drive the wrong actions far from the child.

- **They are molding their character and preparing them for a life of service to their master in Heaven.**

In their daily acts of obedience in the area of discipline, the parents are demonstrating their grasp of the bigger picture and that is what we see here with God’s action regarding Adam & Eve.

- **God has promised them salvation with His own Son Jesus giving His life to defeat the one who brought forth their fall into sin.**

God has made provision for the coming of His son with Eve as the mother of all living and the sacrifices to instruct men about what to look for and believe. But now there is a danger and God takes the necessary action to remove the danger...

22 “Then Jehovah God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"-- 23 therefore Jehovah God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken.”

As we studied a few months ago, the Tree of Knowledge did not impart the sort of Godly wisdom that we are to properly seek, it was a grasping of knowledge in pride as Satan had done.

Partaking of that Tree cast man and woman into a state of sin and death just as God had promised and now if they were to partake of the Tree of Life they would live forever in that state, just as those who refuse to put their hope in Jesus will be cast into the Lake of Fire.”

Man will be returned to the Tree of Life but not until God has taken care of the problem of sin so He can be the just and the justifier of those who have faith in Jesus as Paul instructed the Romans.

God in His mercy has responded to the needs of His people as Adam cast the human race into sin...

- **They would need the death of His own Son to propitiate His righteous anger against their sin and that is what God promised.**

They would need constant reminders of what they were to look forward to and God provides that in sacrifices. And now God keeps man from messing things up further by preventing him from partaking of the Tree of Life prematurely while in his fallen state.

24 “So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.”

Now I know all you kids think I have finally gotten to the exciting part wanting to know all about these cherubim and the flaming sword!

- **Well you will have to wait a bit because I am going to hold my comments on them for my Advent sermon on the Angels!**

We should notice though that God drove man out to the east of Eden. Eden was God's sanctuary here on earth at that time and thus when we see the Tabernacle and Temple build later in history they were both entered from the East as they picture God's plan of salvation. When the wise men come looking for the Savior they come from the east.

- **When Jesus comes to be the great Sacrifice for sin He enters Jerusalem from the east!**

The early Church fathers took the admonitions we considered earlier about seeing Jesus in the Scriptures very seriously, especially here in the Book of Beginnings...

Ephrem the Syrian saw the fact that Jesus was pierced so we could return to God's presence past the flaming sword. Bede looked at the big picture declaring that here we see Adam and his wife cast out and defeated while in the New Testament we see Jesus and His Bride victorious and returning.

As I said last week the Book of Beginnings has laid the groundwork or foundation for all that will follow in the Scriptures...

- **We will see in the rest of Genesis and all of the Scriptures an expanding understand of the ravages of sin!**
- **We will see in the rest of Genesis & all of the Scriptures an expanded understanding & revelation of God's great plan of salvation!**

As we enter the Advent season and bring normal time to a close for this year I hope we will take away some very practical lessons from this morning...

- **We must be those who believe and know that Jesus is the hope of our salvation: We have life in Him and nowhere else.**

There was nothing that Adam and Eve could do to undo what they had done: They had opened Pandora's box:

Now only God could solve the problem of sin & death to avoid them being cast into the Lake of Fire on their own.

We must be those who know that God makes provision for our journey in this life as He has done for His people down through history. He has given us His Word and access to the throne of grace through prayer so we can draw close to him & understand what we are to be doing.

He has given us the Church where we gather for strength & encouragement, rightly worshipping God and allowing Him to make us into the living sacrifices that this world needs.

You young people should see that He has provided you with a family where you can be raised in the fear and admonition of the Lord!

- **And for those of you who are married or desire to be married He has given you, or will give you a relationship that allows you to demonstrate Christ's great love for His Church to a watching world.**

And finally we must not stiffen our necks when God comes to us as a loving parent providing the discipline that we need, even when from our perspective He is casting us out of a place we would really rather be:

- **Like the Garden of Eden!**

All of these lessons are beautifully summarized by the writher of Hebrews after he gives us the great hall of faith in chapter eleven.

At Chapter twelve verse one we read:

“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. 4 You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. 5 And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; 6 For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives. " 7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? 8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. 11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”

Communion Meditation: II Corinthians 5:1-

“For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, 3 if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. 4 For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. 5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. 6 So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. 7 For we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. 9 Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.”