

LESSONS ON PREDESTINATION #36
"The Serpent's Trail in History" (Part One)
(Scriptures from NKJV)

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." (Genesis 3:15)

Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days. (Revelation 12:1-6)

INTRODUCTION: In recent messages we have observed how, when, why, and where the sin of angels and men took place. We have watched as the moral creatures of God declared war against their God and announced their independence from Him. In return, God declared His immediate judgment upon them and announced His method of executing the punishment to which they were sentenced.

(1) While suffering immediate consequences for their rebellious acts, they would suffer ongoing punishments which would continue throughout time until the final judgment which would take place at the close of angelic and human history.

(2) Before the final judgment of angels and men takes place, God would set out on a course of action to bring His Christ into the world of mankind to redeem a chosen portion of Adam's race, and exalt them in rank of honor above that of the angels. This would prove that He had both the wisdom and ability to accomplish His foreordained purpose. But in the process, He must make a full display as to how He can elevate a fallen sinful creature to such a place of holy honor without sacrificing His holy justice.

(3) The world of angels and men would both be watching and inquiring as to how this could come about. The elect would welcome and support God's gospel plan, while the non-elect would oppose and reject it.

(4) During this time of redemptive history, God revealed He would allow a limited warfare against Himself to occur, while laying down the rules and boundaries under which sin would be permitted to exist.

(5) God explained that obedience to His revealed will could alone bring peace, and that all attempts to find happiness apart from Him would bring about certain negative consequences. If the creature was to be permitted to sin against God, then God Himself would establish certain spiritual and moral consequences which would produce sorrow, grief, affliction, fears, guilt, stress, anger, frustrations and calamities. Thus the wages of sin would bring about destruction, and not a utopia.

(6) Today, we want to retrace history and observe the ongoing invisible war:

- between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan,
- between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of anti-Christ,
- between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness,
- between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of this world,
- between the kingdom of humility and servanthood and the kingdom of pride and dominion.

In so doing, we will focus on the work of Satan, that old serpent, as he attempts to destroy the coming Seed of the woman, the Christ whom God has appointed to take the place of Satan as the Overseer or Bishop of the moral universe.

A. THE TRAIL OF THE SERPENT - Genesis 3:15

1. While Satan has succeeded in his plan to separate man from his dependence upon God, he is now stunned and amazed that God did not destroy man immediately. Instead, Eve is informed that she was to be the mother of all living humanity, and that a special Seed would come forth from her descendants that would render a certain defeat to Satan and his kingdom of pride and dominion. The question now emerges: Can God accomplish His purpose or can He yet be defeated by the wiles of the devil?

2. God has declared what He will do. Will He be able to do it? Satan must now regroup and set out to do battle with the Seed of the woman. His strategy is now two-fold: On one front he must prevent the Seed of the woman from appearing and accomplishing His mission. On the other front, he must insist that God reveal how He can take guilty sinners into His presence without defiling His holiness. Join with me as we now peer into the invisible realm of God and the angels in the "invisible war."

3. In Genesis 3:15 we have the mother of all of God's promises. The Seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent. A Savior shall come forth from the reproductive system of Eve who shall not only defeat the serpent's schemes, but in so doing, shall show how God can be both just and the Justifier of those who believe in His Gospel. In connection with this promise, we are told that Satan shall be permitted to seek to hinder this promise from being fulfilled. While he will not be able to destroy the Seed of

the woman, He shall be permitted to nip at its heel.

4. There is a parallel between Genesis 3:15 and Revelation 12:1-17. The latter text is an expanded commentary on Genesis 3:15. In verses 1-4, we have a description of the time period between Genesis 3:15 and the birth of Christ. In verses 5-6, we have the time period starting with the birth of Christ and the believers that would be saved after Christ's birth. Verses 7-12 describe the cleansing of the heavens of Satan and his angels who are no longer allowed to accuse the brethren in heaven of yet being unjustified sinners. In verses 13-17, we have the description of Satan's warfare with the believers on the earth and God's preservation of them. We will do a verse by verse exposition of this chapter in future lessons.

5. In Revelation twelve, we are given a description of three important personages which are critical to the understanding of the nature of the invisible war. They are:

a. A Beautiful Woman: who is pregnant with child. This woman represents all the elect spiritual seed of Adam's race, who in her pre-Christian era, labored in pain to deliver the Christ, and who in the post-Christian era, continues to bring forth more spiritual seed by evangelizing the nations.

b. A Great Red Dragon: This is the old serpent, the devil in his fallen state, who has now conquered fallen man, and has a kingdom of pride and dominion. NOTE: He was a beautiful serpent in Eden denoting that as of yet, he was unfallen! Now he is an ugly dragon. These two contrasting images confirm our position that Satan was yet unfallen when he first tempted Eve. Eve would have fled at the sight of Satan in the form of a red dragon!

c. A Male Child: This is none other than Jesus Christ, the Seed which was promised to Eve and her spiritual offspring.

6. Thus the serpent of Genesis 3 is the dragon of Revelation 12, and the woman's Seed of Genesis 3 is the Male Child and His spiritual brethren of Revelation 12. Thus in Genesis 3:15, the conflict between God's Christ and Satan's anti-Christ is announced.

7. Before we begin our survey, we must seek to answer another part of our "connect the dots" picture puzzle, that being: if Satan fell in the Garden, when did the rest of the angels fall? Revelation 12:1-4 gives us the answer. It supplies one of the last dots to complete our puzzle. Revelation 12:1,2 gives us the beginning of the warfare between Satan and the woman. The woman is pregnant with child. This means she has been made

aware of the Genesis 3:15 promise. Verses 3 and 4 follow in chronological order and describe the red dragon as having already achieved a victory in battle before the woman is informed of her role in bringing forth the male child. He has victory crowns on his head. He is now informed of the impending coming of the male child and is ready to murder the child when it is born. This is all set forth in Genesis 3:15. It is at this point that Satan, that old serpent, the great red dragon, persuades one-third of the stars (angels, cf vs. 7-9) to follow him in the warfare designed to prevent the male child from being elevated above that of the angels.

8. I maintain that it was highly improbable, if not impossible, for the angels which fell to know of their leader's plan to destroy man in the Garden. If they did, they would have all been in on the conspiracy, and you can't keep a conspiracy quiet! It would have leaked out somehow, and some lower ranking angel would have failed to keep the secret from Adam and Eve. This leaves us with only one place to place the fall of the rest of the angels. That being, when Satan announced his future plans in Genesis 3:15 or close thereafter. I believe it probably went like this. Satan says to the whole angelic host of heaven,

"God thinks He can yet defeat me, but I have already defeated the creature man. I believe I can yet defeat the Seed of the woman from reaching the throne as the Governor of the universe. All of you who want to join me in this warfare, come over into my kingdom of pride and dominion, and we will yet conquer the Most High God."

It is at this point that Satan recruits one-third of the angels to abandon the kingdom of heaven and join him. Now, as in Revelation 12:4, he has gathered a host of helpers to nibble at the heel of the woman with the hope of delivering a yet fatal blow. The full picture of the fall of angels has now emerged and all the dots are connected. We have used both explicit and implicit statements from the Bible, joined together in a logical pattern to disclose the mystery of Satan and the fall of the angels.

9. The 12th chapter of Revelation will not allow for the fall of the angels to take place prior to the announcement to Eve in Genesis 3:15. It must take place either at the time the promise is given to the woman or at some time thereafter. I remind us all that the traditional view of the fall of Satan and the angels makes no connection with the fall and the temptation of man in the Garden, nor with the promise given to Eve, the mother of the Seed to come. I rest my case!

10. From Adam to Cain and Abel - Genesis 4 verses 1, 16, 25, and 26. We now begin to follow the first stage of the serpent's trail from that of Adam and Eve to their children, Cain and Abel, as found in Genesis 4. In 4:1-2, we read, **"Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, 'I have acquired a man from the Lord.'**

Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. When Cain was born, Eve may have mistaken him for the Christ-child. This would prove to be false as Cain would prove to be a godless man. Also, Satan mistook Abel to be the woman's seed, because he obeyed God in offering up a blood sacrifice like God had done in clothing his parents' nakedness. Thus Satan either took possession of Cain, like he would later do with Judas, or he merely influenced him with his kingdom of pride and dominion. The outcome was that Cain killed his brother Abel over a religious quarrel as to how a sinful man becomes righteous in God's sight. Thus, we have the godly line contrasted with the ungodly line. John describes this contrast in I John 3:7-13 - ***"Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous. Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you."***

Eve gives birth to a third son as set forth in Genesis 4:25, ***"And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth, 'for God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed.'"*** Eve calls his name Seth meaning "appointed." NOTE: She considers him as belonging to the line of the Seed promised her. Meanwhile Cain renounces God and goes out to establish a godless society built on humanism. In response to Cain's apostasy, we read in Genesis 4:26, ***"And as for Seth, to him also a son was born; and he named him Enosh. Then men began to call on the name of the Lord."*** NOTE: The expression ***"that men begin to call on the name of the Lord"*** does not mean that men had never prayed prior to this before, but can be translated, ***"men began to call themselves by the name of the Lord."*** In essence, Seth's seed was made up of true believers while Cain's seed was composed of unbelievers. Satan's efforts fail, and the Seed of the woman moves on.

11. From Seth to Noah and the Flood - Genesis 5:6 and 6:1-8. Genesis 5:6 reads, ***"Seth lived one hundred and five years, and begot Enosh."*** And Genesis 6:1-8 reads, ***"Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose."***

And the Lord said, 'My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.' There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the Lord said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.' But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."

Satan's purpose at this stage of the warfare is to totally corrupt the race of Adam so God would have to destroy it. This would occur in one of two major understandings. They are:

a. The belief that the sons of God are the fallen angels, and the daughters of men are female humans. By the intermarriage of the two, a race of demon possessed humans would occur which God would be forced to destroy.

b. The second view holds that the sons of God are believers belonging to the line of Seth who began to marry the daughters of men belonging to the line of Cain which would eventually lead to a totally apostate race which God would be forced to destroy.

c. There are a couple of other minority views which I cannot take time to cover.

d. I must confess that in spite of studying the question for over fifty years, I am yet unsettled as to the meaning of the text. I have switched back and forth several times as to which view is correct. The preponderance of Biblical evidence favors the angelic view, while compelling logic favors the lines of Seth and Cain view. It will be a question which will continue to be debated until Jesus returns and clears up the matter.

e. What is overlooked in the discussion, is the purpose of Satan to force God to justly destroy the human race which would, in turn, destroy the Seed of the woman. Will Satan succeed this time? No, he is trumped again, for we read in Genesis 6:8, ***"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."*** This is election displayed again. Noah and his family will be the seed to repopulate the earth after the flood destroys the rest of Adam's race. How Satan hates the doctrine of Sovereign unconditional election. Even true believers, who do not understand the doctrine, may unknowingly oppose the doctrine as Peter opposed the revelation that Jesus was going to suffer and die. We read that when

Jesus told the disciples of His coming death that **"Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, 'far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!'"** (Matthew 16:22). Jesus, in return, rebukes Peter with these words in 16:23, **"Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."** NOTE that devoted believers can mistakenly teach a Satanic doctrine while believing they are stating the truth. Such occurs when some oppose the doctrine of sovereign election and promote the doctrine of man's free will. They are actually promoting a Satanic doctrine and do not realize what they are saying. If the wills of men and angels are free so as to be independent of God's will, there is no way the Seed of the woman could ever achieve victory.

f. Satan is again frustrated and the Seed of the woman marches on.

12. From Noah to Abraham - Genesis 9:18,19; 10:1; and 12:1-3.

a. Noah now has three sons, who, along with their wives, survive the flood. Their names are Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Genesis 9:18 and 19 - **"Now the sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And Ham was the father of Canaan. These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated."** Also we read in Genesis 10:1 - **"Now this is the genealogy of the sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And sons were born to them after the flood."**

b. Ham becomes the father of Cush, who has a son named Nimrod. Nimrod becomes a godless defiant rebel against God and His believing people. He belongs to the seed of the serpent, that is, the Devil or Satan. He will seek to exterminate the concept of God and His kingdom by unifying the human race under the principle of humanism. Humanism is the belief that man does not need God, but can bring about peace on the basis of human abilities. Nimrod built a kingdom of cities and a centralized government named Babel in the land of Shinar. They dedicated a large monument for their headquarters called the Tower of Babel. Nimrod was said to be a **"mighty hunter before the Lord."** This does not mean that he hunted animals, but men, to become his supporters. He did this to defy the Lord. The tower was a monument expressing man's hatred for God and a shaking of their fists unto heaven and saying, "Who are you to rule over us and hinder our freedoms which give us so many pleasures?"

c. This can be seen in the following verses. Genesis 10:8-12; and 11:1-9. **"Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord; therefore it is said, 'Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord.' And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in**

the land of Shinar. From that land he went to Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah (that is the principal city)."

Chapter 11:1-9 - ***"Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. Then they said to one another, 'Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly.' They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. And they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.' But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And the Lord said, 'Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.' So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth."***

d. All of these efforts were similar to the work of Cain in his attempts to blot out the presence of God from the minds of men. Nimrod's kingdom was an attempt by Satan and his seed to swallow up the Seed of the woman and prevent God from establishing His Son as the true King of a heavenly kingdom where humility and servanthood would reign.

e. But God defeated Satan's plan by confusing the language of the people requiring them to scatter out over the face of the earth and settle into regions where each group could understand its own language.

f. Satan is again frustrated and the Seed of the woman marches on. We must stop at this point of the warfare and take up where we have left off in the next lesson.

B. A PREVIEW OF COMING EVENTS

The trail of the serpent continues on:

1. From Abraham to Isaac and Jacob
2. From Jacob to Judah
3. From Judah to Moses
4. From Moses to David
5. From David to Queen Athaliah

6. From Athaliah to King Ahaz
7. From Ahaz to Queen Esther
8. From Esther to Bethlehem and Herod

This is exciting enough to make a movie about it. There is an invisible conspiracy going on, and we are being let in on it!

Paul says in Ephesians 6:10-13 - ***"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."***