

The Judgement On The Serpent

Genesis 3:14-15

Sunday March 7th 2010 Morning Service

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I. The Context: the Sovereign Word of God

The great refrain of Genesis 1 is 'God said..And so it was'. Yet in Genesis 3 God's word is defied. This is the root of all our evils. Many believe that what God may say is irrelevant. But in these verses we see the continuing & undiminished authority of what God says. God's word rules the present & future, the world of the creatures, of humans & supernatural forces of evil, and rules in judgement & in salvation.

II. The Contrast

Verses 14-19 are God's curses, passing sentence in response to what has happened. But the way God deals with the serpent is set apart from his dealings with man and woman

- 1. No dialogue.** No negotiation with the forces of evil.
- 2. He is cursed in his being:** see v14 'cursed are you'. Adam and Eve are not cursed as beings but the serpent himself is cursed.
- 3. This curse is our blessing:** The declaration of curse on the serpent is simultaneously a declaration of hope & blessing on humanity. A complete provision of our need is promised: God is not casting around as to what to do next. In condemning the serpent he declares our salvation on the very day of disaster.

III. The Curse

1) Relating to the Serpent himself

Physical dimension: READ v14. The serpent becomes an animal that now slithers on the ground.

Deeper dimension: behind the phys creature was a supernatural power: see Rev 12:9 'the great dragon... that ancient serpent called the devil or Satan who leads the whole world astray'. Here we read that of the serpent 'you will eat dust all the days of your life'. The phrase is an idiom in Hebrew to express doom. It

signifies utter defeat. See Isaiah 65:25 describing the new heavens & new earth where 'the wolf and the lamb will feed together & the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm or destroy on my holy mountain, says the LORD'. Satan cannot prevail. His days are numbered. His end is certain.

2) Relating to the Future of the Serpent and Humanity

i] Enmity: 'I will put enmity between you and the woman'. This enmity is an act of God. Enmity to forces of danger and evil is a very healthy thing. It is God's protection, frustrating Satan's purposes. And this enmity is not just a personal enmity between Eve and the serpent. That brings us to the second key word:

ii] Offspring: the enmity will travel down all the centuries. It will be 'between your offspring and hers'. The term 'offspring' has a **collective sense** v15. This language of the devil's offspring is used of ungodly human beings. So Jesus himself uses it of Jews disputing with him in John 8:44 'You belong to your father, the devil.' Also see Acts 13:10 and 1 John 3:8. Who then are the offspring of woman? Same language is used in Rev 12:17 which is about Satan & a woman, which most naturally refers to the church: and it concludes 'then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring- those who obey God's commandments and who hold to the testimony of Jesus'. The woman's offspring are the godly line of believers.

V15 is anticipating is the long history of persecution & enmity in this world between the true servants of God & the people of this world, who are in the grip of the evil one & part of his kingdom. This is both ancient history & contemporary experience. You cannot be a true Christian & live for ease & fit in in this world. 'Don't you know', James 4:4 says, 'that friendship with the world is hatred towards God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God'. We're in a spiritual battle. The key question is whose offspring are you? Which side of this divide are you?

iii] 'He' v15b. While earlier part of verse 15 'offspring' has collective sense, in the later part it speaks of an **individual**. A male offspring of the woman will deal a death blow to the serpent. Only in light of prophets & the NT do we see the fullness of where this promise takes us. Isaiah 7:14 'the virgin will be with child & will give birth to a son & will call him Immanuel'. This is what the New Testament says was fulfilled at the birth of Jesus: see Matt 1:20-23.

The specific person leads us to a **specific event**. 'He will crush your head & you will strike his heel'. That event is double edged. **Victory over the serpent:** words 'crush/strike' sound very similar in Hebrew but are different words. 'Crush/bruise' is stronger word: crushing its head is how to kill a snake. **At a cost:** word 'strike' can be translated 'snap at', yet even a slight snake bite from a poisonous snake on the heel is often fatal. When did this happen? At Calvary, the Cross when Jesus died. Heb 2:14 'He too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who has the power of death- that is the devil- and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by death'. At a great cost, he crushed the serpent's head. But ultimately the serpent's bite was just a snapping at the heel. Christ rose triumphant.

The serpent, Satan **was crushed**, a fatal blow: but Christ **was put to death**, death is the sentence of God on mankind, he took in our place. By this act & by this Saviour **we are delivered** from the grip of Gen 3, and so we are offered eternal life despite Genesis 3. Rev 20:10 assures us of what will happen to Satan because of the victory of Jesus Christ: 'the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of burning sulphur, where the beast & the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day & night for ever & ever'.

But it brings no benefit to us unless we run to the Deliverer. We cannot deliver ourselves from the serpent's grip. We cannot save ourselves from death. But there is one who can. Jesus Christ has triumphed. Have you run to him?