

## Genesis: Foundations of the Faith 6) The Promised Deliverer

Genesis 3:15 • 2020-07-12 • Series: Genesis - Foundations of the Christian Faith



Near the height of the Vietnam War a popular musician wrote a song that resonated with many. The lyrics invited listeners to imagine a world without any war, but with everyone living in peace as one. That is a great thought, but the song sought to achieve peace through an impossible route. It's prescribed route for getting all people peacefully together included doing away with all religion. It basically claimed, "Getting rid of all worship and religious beliefs is an important step in removing all hate, war and division."

There's a reason why that song could only invite listeners to imagine such a world. It has never happened in all of history and it never can happen. It is impossible for this world to live in peace as one. At least it is impossible without God and by mere human efforts. This morning we take our final part of our series on Genesis and see the only way that this war-torn and divided world can ever become one and at peace. It doesn't take all people working together to get rid of all killing and war. It takes just one man. And he brings such a peace that not only will war be gone; death and every evil will be conquered. We see another foundation of the Christian faith as we look at the first mention of the promised deliverer.

Adam and Eve were totally helpless to restore peace to the world which had been ruined by sin. Recall last week how we examined their helpless state. Instead of running to God for help, they hid from him in fear. Instead of answering God's loving call to repentance they tried to blame others for their wrongs. And instead of getting together as one we saw them turning against God and against one another.

This was the working of the serpent, who is the devil. He is a created angel who rebelled against the Creator. He lost his position but for a time retains some power and influence. He immediately sought to exercise that influence on God's creation. Initially he claimed success. "Imagine there's no religion," he told Adam and Eve. And they fell for it as they stopped trusting and obeying God and tried to make themselves into gods. He had Adam and Eve right where he wanted them: in a helpless and ruined state of rebellion against their Creator. He fooled the first man and woman into sin, and he brought all people into sin.

The devil continues to convince people that the real problem with the world is God. He gets people to doubt God's Word and to doubt God's goodness. Then he directs people to a new religion: trusting in their own strength and will. He convinces people that they don't need God but can restore the world by their own wisdom and ways. Any reliance on the goodness and mercy of God is replaced with self-sufficiency and pride. Any submission and love for the Creator is replaced with trust in mortal men or in self.

Such a world cannot stand. Despite thousands of years of people trying to imagine a world without God it has always failed. Empires claiming to bring order to the world come and go. Their peace comes at the price of war. Their strength falls. Their practices are a desperate attempt to attain paradise. But it will never work.

That's because the devil is constantly at work to ruin every work of God. He works to distract this world with dreams and ideas contrary to God. Every attempt to gain paradise is twisted by his cunning lies. His plan is to destroy the work of God by taking the people of this world captive to sin. We are no match for his schemes. He makes wars, selfish struggles for power, and all destructive behavior thrive. He's ultimately the one who convinces the world to perpetrate every evil from self-indulgence to slavery, sex-trafficking, stealing, and selling out your soul. He's daily working to convince us that we're dreamers for thinking there's a god who is good and loves us. He thrives on evil. We are born as slaves to sin and under his power, doomed to share in his fate as enemies of God.



But God steps in and puts the devil to a stop. Genesis 3 explains God's plan to destroy the devil and his works. In the garden, right after Adam and Eve slip into sin, God spoke to the serpent. The devil is not given the chance to confess like Adam and Eve had been. He is immediately under a curse. Shamefully he must acknowledge his defeat. Every time the offspring of Adam and Eve would see the serpent crawling on its belly, they would remember the curse on Satan.

The next words spoken by the Lord God are a promise that the devil will fail in the end. Note that his rescue plan only involves God's working. It does not require anything on the part of the man or woman. It is God acting on our behalf. He says, "I will... I will... and he will" act. This is a promise from God that he will destroy the work of the devil. Today we'll examine this three-fold promise.

His promise begins, "I will put hostility between you and the woman." Satan envisioned a world where Eve was separated from God and on his side. He had, after all, persuaded Eve to join his rebellion. But God would not leave it that way. By God's working Eve would be restored to God's camp and become an enemy of Satan. Eve would not serve Satan; she would be in combat with Satan. God would restore in her a heart of faith so that she loved and trusted in her Creator.

The second tier of the promise involves further division. "I will put hostility... between your seed and hers." Some will take this expression as merely an indication that people and snakes won't get along. But Scripture presents a bigger picture for us to hold to in faith. You can only belong to one of two camps. Either you are on God's side through faith or remain on

the devil's through unbelief. There is no in-between. The offspring of Satan reside in his camp. We read about that earlier in 1 John chapter 3. Scripture speaks of those who are children of God and those who are children of the devil. *"The one who commits sin is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning."* (1 John 3:8) Both Jesus and John the Baptist referred to their spiritual enemies as a "brood of vipers." When confronting his enemies Jesus told them, "You belong to your father, the devil." The devil opposes Christ. And all who reject Christ remain on the devil's side. They are in opposition to the offspring of Eve, who are all believers. These the Bible also calls, "sons of God" and "children of God." They are in opposition to "the daughters of men," namely, unbelievers. And the hostility does not arise from God's children. It is from Satan who always stands in opposition to God.

We see such hostility was already present in the first two children, Cain and Abel. Both knew about the Lord and outwardly offered their worship to the Lord. But one of them was opposed to the Lord and served Satan. The other worshipped in truth and in faith. They were in two opposing camps. And that opposition showed itself as Cain murdered his brother, Abel. Ever since that time hostility and spiritual warfare has raged on. All believers who trust in the Lord are opposed by unbelievers. Believers seek to spread the gospel and goodness of God. He has brought them to know and trust in him. The unbelieving world strives to silence and stop them. As it was with Cain, that division can occur even within families. And attacks can come from those who claim to worship the Lord. The unbelieving world slanders, strikes, and attacks. The offspring of Satan causes hostility as they fight each other and fight God and his children. The world remains at war as Satan incites continual rebellion and unbelief.

Finally, the last of these three expressions is the seed of hope. "He will crush your head and you will strike his heel." Once again, by faith we see a bigger picture than merely a man fighting a serpent. God promised that a deliverer, one man, would come to destroy the devil with a defeating blow. Note in the Hebrew this word is singular. The promise was clearly given at the start of time. A man would be born of woman who would defeat the devil and put an end to all the strife.

In human history the promise went on. The people of Israel, offspring of Abram and Sarah, carried the promise that through their offspring all nations would be blessed. King David held to the promise that one would be born from his line who would bring world peace, a deliverer. He would do that by defeating every enemy. He would bring an end to all war. One prophecy stated that when this man comes, *"They will beat their swords into plows and their spears into pruning knives. Nation will not take up the sword against nation, and they will never again train for war."* (Isaiah 2:4)

This deliverer was prophesied over and over to God's children. He was given the titles, "Redeemer, Savior, Holy One, Son of David, Son of Man, and Son of God, and Messiah (or Christ)." This was no mere man who would come to deliver us. Beyond all imagination God walked among us in the flesh. Jesus Christ, the only Son of God from eternity, took on human flesh and came to this war-ruined world.

Jesus fulfilled that prophecy of a serpent crusher. "The reason the Son of Man appeared was to destroy the devil's work." (1 John) Jesus, born of the virgin Mary, conceived by the Holy Spirit, fulfilled his purpose. The devil had seen it all with every son and daughter of Eve falling for the same tactics. But not this one, not Jesus. When Adam and Eve fell in the abundance of the garden, he did not fall in the wilderness when fasting for forty days. He faced the devil and did it all for us. He resisted every temptation. He never doubted the Father's goodness. The devil threw every scheme he had but to no avail. Jesus was born to crush him. Just as prophesied the devil struck his heel. He was pierced and hung on a tree. On the cross the poison of sin struck Jesus who was killed by those under the sway of the devil. Like the heel of a man taking the poison of serpent Jesus took the curse of sin.

But he did not fail in death. The victorious serpent crusher was lifted. He rose back to life in victory and proclaimed his triumph over the devil. And he lives to fulfill the rest of prophecy as he one day returns to end the hostility and forever do away with sin, death, and the devil. The hostility will be forever ended. That's what the deliverer, Jesus Christ, has promised. You don't have to imagine it; just look forward to it with the certain hope of faith.

This is a foundational truth of the Christian faith: the deliverer, Jesus Christ, is the one man that all Scripture centers on. All our hopes are placed on him. The world with all its dreams will perish and fail. But this man did not. He cannot fail. The serpent crusher defeated our enemy for us. His victory is ours! His peace will forever be ours!

I took my children to see a concert a while ago. Since they are so little, I had to remind them that whether they enjoyed the song or not the polite thing to do was to always clap for it at least a little while. But there was one song that gave them pause. They didn't clap. Despite being so young, and despite hearing hundreds of people singing along to the song, there was one song they just decided didn't deserve clapping. It was that old song about attaining world-peace without God. I didn't have to explain anything to them. They just decided all together from the youngest to oldest that it wasn't a song they wanted to clap for. That's because they recognized the devil's lies. They knew that there's only one way to attain world-peace. And it isn't done by human effort. It can't be. And it most certainly isn't attained by taking God out of the picture. He alone is the one who can bring the peace we need. He has planned it and promised it.