

Kingdom: Prophets

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[0 : 00] Well, if you'll open your Bibles to Genesis chapter 3 verse 15, and if you've been with us in this series, you're going to say to yourself, wait, wait, wait, we've already covered Genesis.

Well, let me just tell you just quickly what we're going to do. With Genesis 3.15, there's a promise. It's such an important promise. If you don't get this promise, you don't understand what this promise is saying, what it's doing, you want to understand the rest of the Bible.

And we're going to go to the prophets. We're going to look at Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel this morning. So we'll be here a little while. Okay, that was funny.

I don't care who you are, that was funny. And you just weren't awake yet. That's all right. So we're going to use Genesis 3.15 kind of as the springboard into the prophets because there is a consistent message from beginning to end of the Bible.

The Bible is not two books. The Bible is not two stories. The Bible is one story. And that one story is about the Lord Jesus Christ. So I want us to see Genesis 3.15. But I want us to see it in light of these prophets and the prophecies that they gave, the promises that were given.

[1 : 10] And so Genesis 3.15, this is how it reads. Go ahead, put it up there because I don't have it here. And I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed.

And he shall bruise you on the head and you shall bruise him on the heel. Let's pray. Father, thank you for the privilege it is to read your word, to understand your word.

I pray that you would give us a glimpse of who you are. Help us to see how this really is the most important thing in our life. Help us to understand.

And we pray this in Christ's name. Amen. I like to say, and I don't sometimes say it maybe as often as I should, but theology matters.

What you believe matters. It matters what you believe because what you believe always affects how you act. And I will even say it this way, that I believe a lot of people have a theology of their mind.

[2 : 17] Things that they say they believe, but then there's the things that they really deeply believe in their heart. That's why sometimes we say one thing but do something else.

Because there is a contradiction between our profession and what we're truly committed to. And this works in every area of life. It doesn't matter the area of life we're talking about.

You can get outside of theology and think to yourself about how things work politically or how things work in physics or how things work in mathematics or how things work financially.

What you believe affects what you do. Because if you truly deep down believe that jumping off of the building will not cause any harm to you, you'll do it.

You'll do it. What we believe. As a matter of fact, A.W. Tozer said this, that what we believe about God is the most important thing about us.

[3 : 25] And a lot of people don't like to talk about theology. They don't like to talk about doctrine because it sometimes gets talked about with lots of jargon.

And it's almost like you're sitting there with a lawyer talking to you and you can't understand anything that's being said because so many huge massive words are being used. And what I'm saying is not that your vocabulary is important.

What I'm saying is what you really believe about God is important. If you don't know the big fancy words, that's no big deal. The big deal is you look at God's word and you believe something true about God.

Now, I may use the big fancy words because, you know, that's my education. But I will do all I can to help you understand what this means so that you're not just left with some big fancy word that just sounds good.

If you walk into, you know, somebody's house and start talking big fancy words. I don't know. Do people do that? I don't know. Anyway. So the point is, is that here in Genesis 315, then we've got some great theology that's going to get right to where the rubber meets the road for us today.

[4 : 37] And we need to break this down into a couple of parts and see these promises that God has made because that really is promises made in the Old Testament or promises kept in the New Testament.

And that's the way to understand it. And there's three specific things we want to look at. Number one, we want to look at that God promises himself. In other words, not somebody else promised this, but God himself promised this.

The second thing, God promised a change. And the third thing is God promised a savior. So you'll notice that in Genesis 315, it starts with the words, I will put.

I will put. I will put. This is God obligating himself to do something about the serpent and the sin that has come into the world.

And that promise of God doing something about this is the backbone of all of the promises and all the covenants and all of the Bible. If you don't understand that as the backbone to everything, then you begin to pull covenants out by themselves and start thinking about things separate from one another.

[5 : 48] And so this idea that God says, I'm going to do something about this. I will put. I myself promise and will do this. You got to kind of think to yourself as that begins in Genesis 315 and goes all the way through the Old Testament.

When the Old Testament time is over, as the New Testament is coming into play, as that time period is about to come into play. What is the thought that sort of ends that period?

What was it that the Israelites, what was it that the Jews, what was it that as we read the Old Testament, we should come to a place and go like, this is how things sort of ended. No promise fulfilled yet, but yet this promise of I will kind of took on greater shape, but is still waiting.

And what I mean by that is this, that Jeremiah chapter 31, verse 31 through 34, we see God coming again saying, I will.

And we end the Old Testament era with this idea of God giving a promise. Let's take a look at this promise again. It was playing just a few minutes ago, but let's read through it.

[7 : 01] It says, behold, days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. The way you read that is house of Israel, house of Judah, people of God.

That's how you read that, the people of God. He's going to make a new covenant with them. All right. Then he goes on, verse 32, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt.

My covenant, which they broke, although I was a husband to them. Verse 33. And this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord.

I will put my law within them and on their hearts. I will write it and I will be their God and they shall be my people.

See, here's the thing. God is promising that he is going to have this new covenant with his people and it is primarily about internal things.

[8 : 02] The old covenant that we talked about some over the last couple of weeks, it was all external, including the tabernacle and everything. It was all external. This is why you can have someone like an Esau and a Jacob.

Okay. Esau and Jacob were both in the old covenant. But if you look into the New Testament, you will find Esau was not converted and not saved.

But Jacob was. Because in that old covenant, it didn't matter what happened in your heart. You were still a part of the covenant. Even though the covenant was constantly saying to you, fix your heart, fix your heart, fix your heart.

The promise now that God is making as he's coming to this new covenant, he's saying, listen, I'm going to make a new covenant. That's not like the old one. Matter of fact, I'm going to put my law within them, not outside of them.

I'm going to write it on their heart, not on stone tablets. It becomes internalized in us. Go on to verse 34.

[9 : 10] They will not teach again each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, know the Lord. For they will all know me from the least of them to the greatest of them, declares the Lord. One of the functions of the priest was to teach people to know God.

And what he's saying is that in this new covenant, everybody in the covenant will know God themselves in a saving way. Because he says, I will do this.

And listen to this last one. This is to me the biggest and most important thing for us to think about today. He says, for I will forgive their iniquity and their sin. I will remember no more.

He will forgive them. He will pardon their guilt. He will pardon their trespasses and their breaking of his law.

But he goes further than just pardoning them. He says, I won't remember it anymore. I will not bring it back up to my mind.

[10 : 16] You know what it's like. You have somebody who has said that they forgive you, but they remind you. God chooses not to remind us of our sin.

That's what's going on here is that God is promising himself what he's going to do about this sin problem. And the promise that he's making is that he will forgive and he will not remember their sins anymore.

And this is an important point because this is why we preach the gospel. This is why we meet together on a Sunday because sinners need forgiveness.

I mean, if God is, think about this. God, who's got everything in his power. He's got everything he could do in the universe. And the thing that he obligates himself to do is forgive sin.

Then the forgiveness of sin is one of the most important things we need to talk about. It is what sinners need. They need forgiveness in order to have this salvation that we would talk about.

[11 : 24] Because here's the problem. We've grown accustomed to how the world thinks and how the world operates. And so we think the way the world thinks sometimes even without realizing we're doing it.

I'll give you one example. You ever heard the phrase, to err is human? That is not a biblical thought.

It is not a biblical thought. Why is that? Because man was made upright. Sin is a violation and an absolute rebellion against a holy God who is to not be trifled with.

If he flooded the whole world over sin, what makes us think we can get off scot-free? As though it's just a little error in judgment or mistake.

Salvation, becoming a Christian, is having your sins forgiven. And if we can't say to someone, if we can't say, listen, you're living in sin.

[12 : 34] This sin is a violation of God's law. If you can't think that and hold on to that, then what hope do we have? Because that's what he came to do, is to forgive sins.

And you know, some of you, maybe you are still in your sin and you've never trusted Christ. I don't know. But you certainly can test yourself. You certainly can think about it. You can ask yourself, have you broken God's law?

Have you broken his commandments? And the answer is yes. Here's how you can see it very easily. Have you ever dishonored your parents? Have you ever murdered someone?

Most people be like, no, I've never murdered anybody. But you know what Jesus said? He said, if you're angry with your brother, then you have committed murder. Anger is the heart of murder.

So if you've ever gotten angry, you've broken this commandment. He goes on to say, have you ever looked with lust upon someone not to commit adultery, right? Jesus says, even just looking with lust is breaking that commandment.

[13 : 40] Have you ever stolen anything? Even if it's small. Have you ever used God's name as a cuss word or used his name thoughtlessly? That's called blasphemy.

And so here's the thing. You're standing before God. I want you to imagine you're standing before God. And all of your sin gets marshaled out right here. In that moment, what would you offer to God to pay him back for all of your sin?

There's a lot of people who would try to offer a lot of things. But the only payment that God is going to accept is going to be blood. Because life is in the blood. And it's either going to be your blood.

Or the good news is, it can be the blood of Jesus Christ. That's already been shed. And that's already paid the price. So as God promises himself to deal with this sin issue, as a lost person, you need to know that you can come to Christ and have your sin forgiven.

But as Christians, as Christians, we need to think about this idea that God is pardoning sin. Because it means then that if you are a Christian, you know that you have trusted Christ, you know if you were to die today, you would be in heaven with him forever.

[15 : 04] Then one of the things that you need to know is that you are free from your sin. God has pardoned you from your sin. You do not have to face another day in court over your sin.

You no longer have to do things to try to pay God back for your sin. God has paid himself back for your sin by the work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

So think about it this way. God has obligated himself to forgive sin, to remember it no more, and Jesus purchased those promises with his blood.

God has forgiven. How could God go back on his word? He can't. And so as a Christian, one of the things that so often I feel like Christians just don't get and don't understand, and this will set you free if you can understand it, all of your sin is forgiven.

All of your sin is forgiven. Tomorrow is a new day. None of us has been to the future yet, right? Has anybody already been to tomorrow and seen tomorrow?

[16 : 19] Okay, I'm just going to make a little prediction here. I'm not a prophet or the son of a prophet. But I guarantee you, every one of us in this room, myself included, we're going to sin tomorrow.

And what I'm saying is that that sin has already been pardoned in the blood of Christ. It's already been pardoned.

This is why we can say with John, in 1 John 1, verse 9, that if we confess our sins, he is faithful. He's faithful to forgive us.

We confess our sins. He's faithful to forgive us. Why is he faithful to forgive us? Because he promised to forgive, and Jesus' blood purchased that promise. So he's faithful to do that, but he's also righteous to do that.

How is he righteous to forgive us of our sins? Because he promised to forgive us, and Jesus' blood purchased that promise, and it would be unjust of him to not give us forgiveness.

[17 : 23] In other words, he puts himself on the line for you as a Christian to be able to go to him every day and say, Lord, I have sinned. He's faithful and just to forgive you of your sin.

So God promises himself. The second promise, then, we need to look at is the promise of change. The promise of change. You can see in Genesis 3.15, where he says, I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring.

God's making a promise to change the relationship between the offspring of the serpent and the offspring of the woman. Because here's what's happened. In the garden, Adam and Eve joined in an alliance with Satan.

They listened to his word instead of God's word. And so in that alliance, what God is promising is he's promising to put enmity, hostility between the two.

So he's going to make a change in the offspring of the woman in order to bring them away from the offspring of Satan so that they are now back with him. That's what's going on in this.

[18 : 34] And in the Old Testament, as you get through and you read the whole thing, you come to Ezekiel, and you see this same kind of promise in Ezekiel 36, verse 25 through 27.

It says this, Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. Now, one of the things about forgiveness of sin, I just was going to say, is that it's a cleansing.

There's forgiveness as a pardon being set free, but there's also a cleansing part of sin. And we don't have time to dive into that, but I just want you to know that. Verse 26, Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you, and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

In other words, because we're sinners, we have hard hearts. That's the image. That's the metaphor. Right? This hard heart, nothing can get into it. It doesn't love.

It doesn't do anything. And he's making a promise to change that heart of his people so that it's no longer a heart of stone, but a heart of flesh.

[19 : 43] This is why someone like Saul, who's a murderer, can become Paul the apostle. Right? This is why an uneducated fisherman like Peter can become a bold preacher of the gospel.

This is why the young girl possessed of a demon in the town of Philippi can be saved and turned into a follower of Jesus because of the removal of the heart of stone and then putting into them a heart of flesh.

Verse 27, he goes on, he says this, and I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and you'll be careful to observe my ordinances.

So here's the thing. How does that change come about? How does he, how does he take out the heart of stone, put in a heart of flesh? He does it by the power and the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit of God, a person, a person of the Godhead, dwells within us and removes from us that heart of stone and gives to us a heart of flesh, a heart that's tender to the Lord.

And you'll notice, you'll notice there in verse 27, I'll put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes. Okay, so hopefully I don't lose you here.

[21 : 03] So think hard for just a few minutes, okay? Think hard for just a few minutes. That promise is the promise of the presence of the spirit in order to have power for obedience.

I'll put my spirit within you so that you will walk in my statutes. In other words, to be obedient to God, I need the Holy Spirit.

And if I have the Holy Spirit of God, I have the power to be able to be obedient to the Lord. And so Christians, this is what we're talking about. If you're a Christian, then you have the Holy Spirit of God living in you who's brought about in you a radical change.

And this radical change is the Holy Spirit living in you, helping you to obey him. Now, let's see if I can lay this out for you from Ephesians chapter 5 for just a second, okay?

Because here's the thing. The meat and potatoes of the work of the Holy Spirit is to help you live a godly life. The meat and potatoes of the work of the Spirit is to help you live a godly life.

[22 : 12] So often, so many people want to say that the work of the Holy Spirit has something to do with feeling goosebumps and weird things, okay? Well, I'm not getting into that because that's weird, okay?

But I'm going to just talk to you about the meat and potatoes of what the Holy Spirit does. In Ephesians chapter 5, verse 18, he says, Do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.

His point is, nothing should control you except the Spirit of God. Verse 19, I want you to notice the I-N-G words. speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

Singing, making melody with your heart to the Lord. Okay, so, let's go on. Verse 20, always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.

Verse 21, and, I don't know why the NASB did this, but, and be subject, should be submitting. Submitting to one another in the fear of the Lord. So, here's what happened.

[23 : 18] There were five I-N-G words. So, he says, be filled with the Spirit, right? And if you're filled with the Spirit, it results in these five things. The first three have to do with corporate worship.

The next one has to do with your relationship with the Lord, giving thanks for all things. And the last one has to do with submitting to one another. They're in love. And then what happens is that the rest of chapter 5 through chapter 6 of Ephesians, Paul talks about husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and slaves.

And why does he do that? Because what he's telling us is that as a Christian, because of his promise to separate and put enmity between the offspring of the woman and the offspring of the serpent, he sends his Spirit in order to bring about a radical change in us that causes us to be able to obey what God has commanded.

And that obedience gets right down to the bedrock level of life. As we come in here to worship, as you thank God for difficult things in your life, and as you try to live out the relationships you have in your life.

In other words, husbands and wives, parents and children, cannot live the way they're supposed to according to God's word apart from the Holy Spirit of God. And so that's what we need.

[24 : 48] We need to have that radical change that comes by the power of the Holy Spirit. Well, let's get to the last promise then. The last promise is that of a Savior.

And again, you go back to Genesis 3.15, and it says, He shall bruise or crush you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the hill.

Now, let me just make this clear as to who this is by using proper nouns. Okay? Because there's a lot of pronouns in there, and I get lost in the pronouns sometimes. It's like, he, he, he, he, who, you, what?

It's like a Dr. Seuss book, right? So, Eve's offspring, Jesus, will crush Satan's head. And Satan will bruise Eve's offspring, Jesus, on the hill.

That's how you should always read that. And why should you read it that way? Because Jesus is going to crush the head of Satan. As a matter of fact, it says in 1 John that he is the one who comes to destroy the work of the devil.

[25 : 57] It says in Hebrews chapter 2, verse 14, that he's the one who came to destroy him who had the power of death. That is, the devil. He came to destroy Satan. And in his, in his birth, in his life, in his temptation, in his death, in his resurrection, in his ascension, he has destroyed Satan.

Already, and not yet. Satan bruises his heel in the crucifixion and all the times that he was persecuted.

And so, the point is, is that Genesis 3, 15 helps us say, hey, listen, somebody's coming. Somebody's coming to destroy Satan. Somebody's coming to be victorious.

And I know, I know that, that the Israelites had to be thinking as they go through that period between the Old and New Testament, remembering back to the promise of Isaiah. Isaiah chapter 9, verse 6, for a child will be born to us.

A son will be given to us. And the government will rest on his shoulders. And his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

[27 : 18] I mean, think about the ruler that's being promised to come. It will be a child who's a gift. This child who's a gift will be a wonderful counselor. Okay, that is not, he's going to be your therapist.

Okay? This wonderful counselor, someone who is a planner, someone who makes detailed plans of things, and he's going to be someone who makes wonderfully detailed plans of things, of wonderful things for us.

He's called the Mighty God. That's the Great God. He's called the Eternal or Everlasting Father. Listen, Jesus is called Father right here.

Okay? You don't need to let that trip you up. He's not the Father of Father, Son, Holy Spirit, but he is an Eternal Father, an Everlasting Father in the same way that Adam was the Father.

Adam was the Father of the human race, and all those physically born are then in Adam their father. Jesus is the new Adam, the second Adam, and all those who are born again are then his children and his offspring.

[28 : 33] But then he's also called the Prince of Peace. That is the Prince who brings peace with him. Now notice verse 7, and there will be no end to the increase of his government or of peace and on the throne of David and over his kingdom to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore the zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.

You see it's talking about his kingdom to come. That's why in this series I've called this section of this series kingdom because the one promised in Genesis 3.15 is coming to establish and set up his kingdom.

It's a kingdom that's characterized by peace. Peace between God and man. You know that's the most important peace is the peace you have with God.

That's what salvation is about that we were hostile towards him but we've been brought near and we're now at peace with him. Real justice is going to be a part of his kingdom. He will have a throne and when he is sitting upon his throne and as he sits upon his throne true justice will be done not like the fake justice of our world and genuine righteousness.

Righteousness is that right standing that we have before God. If you do not have that right standing then you cannot ever see God. So the promise then is of this Savior who's coming to bring these things to us and if you're not a Christian one of the things that I think is clear through scripture is that we're not trying to get you to hold to certain propositions but we're trying to get you to hold to a certain person.

[30 : 15] The propositions are important but the person is vital. And the psalmist says in Psalm 2 verse 12 do homage to the son.

I just want to pause there and say I don't like that translation. Some of the older translations say kiss the son. kiss the son so that he will not become angry and you perish in the way.

You see salvation my friend is this that you come to love Jesus. Salvation is this that you come to hold to Jesus.

Will you bow before Jesus as your king? will you bow to Jesus in submission?

Because if you want to be a Christian then you must submit to Christ Jesus as your king. You cannot be the boss of your own life and Jesus be the boss of your life.

[31 : 22] You can't call the shots and be the one who gets to decide how you're going to live in your life and Jesus also calling the shots. You must take him as your master your boss your king your ruler your lord your god your everything and when you do you will have the true peace the real justice and his genuine righteousness.

righteousness. And so Christians let me wrap this up coming down to think about this because if you were to take here's what I struggled with as I was writing the sermon when you take Isaiah and you take Ezekiel and you take Jeremiah and you take these promises and you put them together they're all kind of encapsulated in Genesis 3 15 you kind of get this moment where you feel like you're starting to say the same thing over and over again right because it you know let's just sort of end this with some real rubber meets the road kind of stuff and let me give you a summary of what everything I've just said okay and some of you are going to say why didn't you say that to start with it's like well because that's just the nature of it let me summarize it this way God has promised forgiveness of sin and radical change by the blood of Jesus the King God has promised forgiveness of sin radical change by the blood of

Jesus the King now I want to show you how that is the most important truth in your life and it will help you with everything in your life by giving you two examples first example when someone sins against you you can think back in your life and you can look at your history and you can think about times where somebody sinned against you maybe it was a very grievous sin or maybe you don't remember any grievous sins but you know when someone has sinned against you you know they've done something they ought not to do you know you can look at the Ten commandments and you can see you know that they're not supposed to murder and so they were really angry with you or they're not supposed to steal but maybe they took something from you and this is an experience that all of us have we all have people who sin against us all the time if you're married you've got a perpetrator in your house all the time who's sinning against you except for my wife but but we do we we all have someone sinning against us and the question is what is the natural way to respond when someone sins against you maybe you're the kind of person that flies off the handle maybe you're a yeller screamer or maybe you're a quiet get even type the point is is that none of those responses that we normally have are the kinds of things that we ought to have because the truth is that

God has promised forgiveness and radical change by the blood of Jesus the King means that when someone sins against me I need to live in that radical change brought about by the blood of Christ and the promise of God that helps me not respond sinfully to being sinned against and that's not a pull yourself up by your boot straps or become just a better person to be able to do that that comes about by the promise of God and the blood of Christ if someone were to lie about me which is one of the things that bothers me probably the most if they were to lie about me to everyone else my natural tendency of anyone and my natural tendency is to just get right in the face and just be belittling or angry or something like that but that is an ungodly response that the only way that

I can keep from doing that is because of the promise of God and the blood of Jesus and so what I have to do in that moment is I have to go back and remember I have been purchased by the blood of Christ therefore I have all that I need by his blood and God's promise to not respond sinfully to being sinned against but there's a second part of this because I do fail at times and I do respond sinfully to being sinned against and my only hope in that moment is that God has promised forgiveness of sin by the blood of Christ and that when I send back to somebody it's already paid for now if you thin your mind say well yeah I can do some sinning now like you totally missed the point you just missed it let me let me move on to the second example and then

[36 : 58] I'm going to wrap this up I promise we're going to land the plane when suffering comes think about when suffering comes when times get dark sickness strikes family members are doing evil things to one another how can you handle such things how many times have we in the middle of the dark times in the suffering grown bitter angry depressed despairing but the blood of Jesus is purchased for us the promise of God to take out our heart of stone and give us a heart of flesh empowered by the Holy Spirit of God to respond differently than the world Jesus through his apostles tell us that we ought to count it joy when we encounter trials of various kinds but how can that joy come does that joy come because

I've sort of worked myself up into a frenzy and said okay I'm going to be joyful no matter what does that joy come because like I'm just sort of biting my tongue just hoping I can be more joyful than I was last time is it something from internal inside of me some strength inside of me no if it comes from a strength inside of me it is still a work of flesh and there's going to come one day that I don't have that strength internally and when darkness comes I will not be able to respond to it the right way because I've not habituated myself to running to Jesus and so in that moment when darkness comes I've got to remember that God has promised a radical change by the blood of Christ and that radical change by his blood totally changes me takes out the heart of stone puts in a heart of flesh so that in that moment by his power by the strength of the Holy Spirit I can count it all joy when I encounter trials of various kinds I can't do that on my own and then sometimes the darkness comes and I don't respond the right way and it's in those moments that I'm so thankful to be able to look back and say

God has promised forgiveness by the blood of Jesus my king I don't know how someone who's not a Christian lives with any true deep abiding joy in this life because there's been so many moments of pain so many moments of darkness that it's so easy to just get swirled down in the middle of that and despair and my only hope is Jesus and what he's done for us my prayer is that God would lighten your soul as you turn towards his promises and what Christ has done let's pray together so so so so so!

so so so