

The First Gospel

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 08 December 2019

Preacher: Nigel Anderson

- [0 : 0 0] Well, if you turn back with me to Genesis chapter 3, and let's read from verse 14. Satan through the serpent has tempted Eve and Adam to take of the forbidden fruit.
- Sin has entered the human race through Adam and Eve, and God declares his verdict, as you see in verse 14.
- The Lord God said to the serpent, because you have done this, curse to you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field. Your belly you shall go and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.
- And then these words, these words that contain what we call the first gospel, the first message of gospel hope and gospel truth. As we'll see, I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring.
- And he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel. As we said just a few moments ago, I mean, this time of year is the time of year that so many thoughts turn towards the birth of the Lord Jesus.
- [1 : 1 0] And quite rightly, we use this opportunity to turn our hearts, turn our minds, turn our thoughts to the coming of the Lord Jesus to earth.
- As the one who would come to redeem his people from their sins. And we have to understand why. Why Jesus came. What's the connection between Jesus coming to earth and his action that he performed on the cross and saving his people.
- What's the connection between what we read here in Genesis 3, 15 and Jesus coming to earth. And of course we see in that passage that sin entered the human race.
- Sin marred the relationship between God and man. Sin broke that fellowship that man had with God there in Eden.
- The intimate fellowship and relationship that man had with God was broken. Because in eating the forbidden fruit, sin came into the human race.
- [2 : 1 6] And the inherited sin that we all have through Adam's sin had to be dealt with, of course. Had to be dealt with according to God's justice.
- Because man sinned. I mean, there in the garden, the garden of Eden, that garden that God had put man into work. The garden that man had been formed, created, Eve created.
- Man listened to Satan. Man listened to the deceitful voice of Satan. Rather than listening to the voice of God.
- Satan, as we saw there, through the serpent, deceiving the woman. Telling her, well, are you really going to die if you eat of that fruit that God said you mustn't eat?
- And as we read there, the fruit looked so appealing. The word of Satan sounded so appealing. And Eve takes the fruit of the tree. Gives some to Adam.
- [3 : 1 8] And we're told that their eyes are open. And they see themselves before God in their shame. And they realize that they've broken that fellowship with God. They've sinned.
- That relationship fractured by sin. And instead of that beautiful fellowship that God gave man and Adam and Eve with him, there's that fracturing of that fellowship.

There's now a breach. There's now a rupture. And man can't fill that gap, that breach. But another will come.

And fill that breach. Another will come. The Lord Jesus Christ. But the wonder it is that there, you know, even the garden, even in that chaos, even a sin has come into the world.

We notice and we'll see more clearly, I trust that when God pronounces his judgment, that there's grace.

[4 : 20] Grace within that judgment. Yes, there's going to be the consequence of man's sin. Yes, there will be that verdict given.

Man will be punished. But in that punishment, there's grace. Because, as we'll see, the first gospel message given in the words that the Lord gives, when he says that he, the one to come, will bruise the head of Satan, will crush, in fact, the head of Satan.

And you shall bruise his heel, even speaking of the cost that Jesus paid on the cross. So, we want to look at this verse in the context of the coming of the Lord Jesus to earth.

And as I say, we've got to understand why. And in understanding why, give glory to God that Jesus did come. That Jesus did come to rescue lost sinners and bring lost sinners, such as you and such as me, into his glorious kingdom.

So, what do we read? Let's focus in now on the passage, certainly from verse 8 to verse 13, just to get the drama, just to get the perspective on what's happened here.

[5 : 41] Because, you know, Adam and Eve, they know they've sinned against God. They know that they've broken that relationship with God, and they try and cover up their sin after they fall.

I mean, they're trying to cover their bodies with these fig leaves. It's a very futile attempt to hide their shame. And they're trying to hide from God.

I mean, see that in verse 8, they hear the sound of the Lord God in the garden. He's walking in the garden in the cool of the day. And it's certainly not a peaceful walk, you know, like you have maybe on a Sunday afternoon stroll.

No, this is God coming in judgment, because man has sinned. God has been disobeyed. Sins brought that destruction of the harmony of creation, and God is going to confront man, because man has sinned.

And what do we find in that passage? We find that Adam and Eve, they hear the sound of the Lord, and they hide. And as I said, there's a very strong emphasis here in the sound.

[6 : 49] It's not just a nice voice. It's not just, you know, like the sound of wind through the trees, and a very sort of gentle. It's a word that suggests power and strength and extreme loudness.

It's not the gentle whisper. It's powerful. It's voluminous, if you want to put it like that. I mean, in other parts of Scripture, that's why, for example, we sang in Psalm 29, about the voice of the Lord, the power of that voice, the majesty of that power.

It speaks of might and power and strength. Thunder. Loudness. In Psalm 29, as we said, we sang the whole psalm.

Deliberately so, because seven times in that whole psalm, the voice of the Lord has been compared to awesome might. The voice of the Lord is over the waters.

The glory of God's glory thunders. The Lord thunders over the mighty waters. And that's the suggestion here in Genesis 3. And Adam and Eve are hearing this thunderous voice of God.

[8 : 00] And that's what's causing them to hide. And you can just picture them trying to hide behind these trees in the garden. And it's a very futile attempt to cover up their sin.

Sin has brought alienation between man and God. Before man's sin, there was that joyful, perfect, peaceful harmony.

That joyful fellowship between man and God. And because of sin, man tries to hide from God. Man tries to keep himself apart from his Creator.

Because that's the effect of sin. When we try and hide from God. When we try and keep ourselves apart from God, our Lord and Creator. And that's exactly what we see here happening in Eden.

But try as man will hide from God. Try as Adam and Eve. Try and hide from God. God sees. And God knows. And God will judge.

[9 : 05] Because of sin. As we're told, the soul that sins will die. And that's the judgment of God, yes. But as we'll see in that judgment, there's grace.

But let's just keep to this alienation between man and God for a moment. Because even when you see the conversation between Adam and God, you see that man can't hide from God. God finds Adam.

And the most searching of all questions, God asks Adam, Where are you? Where are you? In other words, where are you in relation to me? It's the question that the judge of the earth is calling man to account.

I mean, God knows where Adam is. Of course he does. Adam's there trying to hide behind some trees. But Adam's trying to hide from the all-seeing, powerful God. God knows where Adam is.

God calls to Adam to explain why he's hiding from God. And Adam has to answer us. We all have to answer for our sin before God.

[10 : 13] And yet, you know, even yet, as you look at the conversation, you see at that moment, Adam immediately, he's not prepared immediately, and certainly not prepared outright to confess his sin.

And, yes, okay, Adam's showing his guilt, the guilt of sin. He's telling God that he was afraid. He's admitting that something's gone wrong.

Something terrible's happened. Because he's now afraid of God. When before, he had that fellowship with God. He knows he's done something to alienate himself from God.

Adam's never been afraid of God before, until the fall. But the same God whom Adam runs away from and admits that he's afraid of, well, there is that indirect admission of sin.

Adam's not yet, at that moment, willing to fully confess his sins, his transgression. And so God probes Adam more. Because God is bringing out from Adam a confession of sin.

[11 : 20] Adam, well, Adam's admitted his shame. God asks him, how do you know that you're ashamed? Have you eaten from the forbidden tree, the forbidden fruit?

Is that the cause of your shame? And God, of course, knows that's the cause of Adam's shame. God's judging God in his judgment is going to bring Adam to the point where Adam does confess his sin.

And you see that in verse 12, that he does. Verse 12, the man said, the woman whom you gave to me, when she gave me the fruit of the tree, and I ate.

I ate. And yet, even in that admission, he's actually accusing God of blame. You gave me Eve.

God's been blamed for putting the woman there with him. Eve's been blamed for, if you like, seducing Adam with the forbidden fruit. And you see the alienating effects of sin heard in Adam's confession.

[12 : 24] Man alienated from God. Accusing God of wrongdoing. And you might say, man even alienating himself from sin.

He's laid the blame even on his closest companion, Eve. Isn't that so often what we're like, you know, when we sin? When you shift the blame. Maybe you blame God.

Maybe you blame others. You excuse your sin by, maybe by finding fault with God and the circumstances that you find yourselves in. Maybe the circumstances of life.

Circumstances that you consider to be unfair. And you blame God. You can sometimes argue your case. Maybe you're saying, well Lord, you've placed me in this difficult situation.

You say, I can't be blamed for my sin in these difficult circumstances. But of course, we are to blame. I'm to blame for my sin. You're to blame for your sin. I do the sinning, not God.

[13 : 27] You do the sinning, not God. You're responsible. I'm responsible. Because we are, by nature, rebels against God. Other times, we blame other people for our sins.

Such and such a person made me do this as Adam blamed Eve. Listen to your own heart in the shifting of blame on others.

And so often, isn't that the case, so often, we shift the blame on a loved one. In the aftermath of World War II, you know, you listen to the trials that took place immediately after the war.

And those who perpetuated the Holocaust, for example, so often they would blame others. You know, they were only doing their duty. They were only carrying out orders. It wasn't really them that perpetrated the atrocities.

No, others are to blame, not me. You see, sin alienates man from God and sin alienates man from man. Sin also alienates man from creation.

[14 : 38] I mean, you see here, God asks Eve, what have you done? Eve blames the serpent. The serpent deceived me and I ate. And so, the harmony of creation is now destroyed. Before the fall, man and animals, together, no problem.

Man gave names to all the animals. But now that harmony and creation is destroyed. So, man by sin has caused alienation from God.

It's caused alienation between man and man and caused alienation between man and creation. How is God going to address that alienation? What will God do?

And we find the answer here, God will bring our promise redemption, as we see certainly in verse 15. God will redeem a people for salvation.

Despite the pollution of sin, despite what happened there in Eden, despite the sin being inherited through Adam and Eve, God will redeem a people for Himself.

[15 : 45] And, as we see here in verses 14 and 15, because as we said, there's both curse and there's gospel. What do we read there in 14? We curse on the serpent.

It's going to be cursed more than any other animal in humiliation because of the role of the serpent in the coming of sin into the world. The serpent will crawl.

The serpent is that instrument of Satan. Satan through the serpent. The serpent will bear the symbolism of defeat crawling in the ground. and even that crawling speaking of the ultimate defeat of the evil one.

But, you know, let's look at the bigger picture here. Sin affects man. Sin affects creation. The whole, we're told in Romans 8, the whole of creation groaning us in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

And so, yes, the creation itself groaning, waiting in expectation for God to redeem that creation. But, let's just focus on the hope that we have in the promise that God gives here in verse 15.

[17 : 01] As we said, sometimes this is referred as containing the first gospel. Look at verse 15. Here's, here's in a nutshell we might say the gospel of grace.

The great German reformer who once said about this verse, he said it contains everything noble and glorious that's to be found anywhere else in scripture. Martin Luther being Martin Luther was a bit bombastic in saying that.

But, we are seeing the heart of the gospel. This is the message of redemption. This is the reversal of all the alienation that sins brought into the world that man caused through sin.

So, we do have to look at this verse carefully. You might think, well, what has it got to do with God redeeming a people? I mean, you see the word enmity, we see the language of conflict.

conflict. But, what do we see? We see God taking the initiative. I will put enmity between you and the woman. Enmity.

[18 : 11] Enmity. We're told here of that struggle between God's people and Satan's people. God's people and Satan. The enemies, the enemies of God's people.

You know, sometimes I think we think enmity is maybe a bit too strong a word, but absolutely not. Not at all. All who are in Christ are at one time at enmity with God until God rescued you from that enmity until God brought you into his kingdom.

But, let's think of this enmity here. God curses Satan. And that cursing is going to happen through enmity, being an enemy, between Satan and the woman, between his offspring, her offspring, and the result being that we're told here Satan's head's going to be bruised, crushed.

And Satan bruising the heel of the offspring, the particular offspring of the woman who's at enmity with him. Now, let me explain this.

What's happening here? What's happening? Surely here, we're hearing here words of the first gospel, the first gospel message of salvation for mankind, the alienation, that separation is going to be reversed.

[19 : 36] An individual will come who will crush Satan, the crushing of head meaning destroying, will crush Satan even though the Saviour himself will be bruised, will be hurt, in that crushing.

In other words, there's going to be a struggle. There's going to be a struggle between Satan on the one hand and the woman on the other. And bring this, you know, to the coming of the Lord Jesus.

Redemption, the redeeming of God's people will happen, or should I say, is not going to be accomplished apart from the woman.

well, okay, the woman, Eve, had been deceived by Satan and it's going to be a woman who will give birth to the one who will deliver man from the forces of Satan.

What about this enmity between your offspring and her offspring? The older version said your seed and her seed. Aren't we seeing here words that tell us of the struggle, the conflict between God's children and Satan's followers?

[20 : 43] Okay, all human beings are born of a woman, all human beings are born with enmity towards God. But by God's grace, God chooses those who have been in enmity with Satan.

There are those, of course, who will not be saved by God's grace, who remain hardened to the gospel, who will not acknowledge God as Lord. So there's that struggle between those who are of God and those who are against him.

We see it in the world, we've seen it through the centuries of time. So the offspring of the seed of the woman, those who are in God and Christ, in enmity with the seed of Satan, and it'll be a long struggle, one generation after another, in enmity, one against the other.

Again, we're promised here a climax to that struggle, between, from the struggle of one group against another, there's going to come a time, there's going to come a moment, when one representative of the offspring of the woman will be involved in that supreme conflict with Satan.

The individual, the individual born of the woman, will crush Satan's head. As we said, Satan will bruise the heel of the one who will crush him.

[22 : 13] And you see how the gospel message is becoming clearer. Satan will have bruised the heel of the individual opponent. Satan will have, and by doing that will have tried to destroy his opponent, but that is only going to be a bruising.

But the one born of the woman, the individual who will strike the mortal blow on Satan's head, that death blow will be achieved and, as we know, was achieved on the cross and by Jesus' death.

He conquered sin and defeated Satan. And so this great passage here, this first gospel, points forward to the ultimate defeat of Satan by one man born of a woman.

And as we know from scripture, we know that the Lord Jesus was that one man. And Jesus came to save his people from their sins, the seed of the woman.

He fulfilled that promise. He came to redeem his people from their sins. He came to save his people from Satan's clutches.

[23 : 24] He came to save his people to bring them into that full relationship with God. And as Jesus said after his resurrection, when he spoke with these two on the Emmaus road, when everything must be fulfilled that's written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets and the Psalms, well, Jesus is referring even to the promise here.

And of course, this book of Genesis, the first book in the law of Moses, even in the horror of the fall of man, the promise of the Redeemer to come fulfilled in the Lord Jesus.

And doesn't that tell you about this time of year, any time of year, doesn't that tell you of the love of God? God is the God of all grace.

Yes, we all share in the sins of what we call our first parents, Adam and Eve. We all deserve God's wrath and God's curse. By our sins, we're alienated from God.

But God in His grace sent one to crush Satan's head. He's provided that Redeemer and He's done so through the seed of the woman.

[24 : 43] So that you who put your faith and trust in Him, you have that absolute assurance that you will not know the curse of God, that you will not die eternally. So look to the one who came as the fulfillment of that promise, who crushed Satan's head.

Trust in Him and know eternal life and that deliverance from alienation from God. So there's hope here even in the horror of the fall.

There's hope even amidst the tragedy of sin coming into the world. God in His mercy has redeemed a people.

We see His majesty, we see His glory in this truth and yes, enmity does exist and still exist and will exist until the Lord Jesus returns.

But we give thanks and we give glory to God that God's purposes have been carried out and are being carried out in the blessing of the coming of the Lord Jesus.

[25 : 55] And so, as the singer once sang, which side are you on, boys? Which side are you on? Are you on the side of the seed of the woman or the seed of Satan?

Do you love the Lord so that yes, that you know that you're His and He is yours eternally? Or do you know nothing of that glorious relationship that the Lord's people have with our Saviour?

Do you know the joy of the redeemed in God? Can you say and sing with your heart, praise the Lord, oh my soul? Can you sing the words that we sing of the joy of salvation?

Praise the Lord, the God of Israel because He's come and has redeemed His people. Can you sing that and say that with all your heart? Yes, we look forward to the rejoicing of Christmas, the rejoicing of Christ coming to earth.

But remember why He came. Remember He came to deliver His people. He came as Redeemer. He came to bring you into that glorious relationship with God, to deliver you from sin, to deliver you from Satan, to bring you into that saving knowledge and relationship with our great God and Saviour.

[27 : 27] Amen. Let us pray. O Lord, you give us much to contemplate, much to give you thanks and praise for. And while we know, Lord, that sin is ever-present, in our hearts, we know, Lord, that in Christ we are delivered from the power of sin because He came and He conquered and He redeemed.

So, Lord, we pray that truly you will receive and accept our thanksgiving for the coming of the Lord Jesus into earth, into this world, and that He did so because you so loved the world.

You gave your one and only Son. Whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. May these words ring true in the hearts of everyone here this day.

And we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Let's close in Psalm 130 and page 173.

A tune martyred and Lord, from the depths I call to you, Lord, hear me from on high and give attention to my voice. And for I for mercy cry.

[28 : 50] And then verse 7, Israel, put your hope in God for mercy is with them and full redemption from their sins as people healed, redeemed. Psalm 130 to God's praise.