Father, We are so thankful for your Word, that it is so sharp that it can divide even spirit and soul, \(^1\) that it is everlasting – not perishable or subject to eroding over time \(^2\) – but instead has its own life-giving force. \(^3\) We pray, Lord, that You would tune our hearts and rivet our spirits in direct attention upon the Son of God, for He is the One we want to see, the One Who is the Author and the Finisher of our Faith. \(^4\) We thank You, Father, for what You are going to do today, for the invitation that is ours in Christ to come into the Holy of Holies to eat of the Tree of Life and to join the victorious battle cry for the cause of the Gospel. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

We have been for a number of weeks in the opening chapters of Genesis, which are all about the beginnings, and we are discovering that from the very first page the Gospel is there, that in fact the whole Bible is about Jesus and the whole Book is good news.

**TODAY**, in a very powerful text we will see the joining together of the consequences of sin in the world, with the good news of God in Jesus Christ, that there is a way in which God’s justice and His mercy meet, and that only God can do this.

Let’s turn our hearts to the Word of God.

**GENESIS CHAPTER THREE**

Adam and Eve have eaten of the forbidden fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil because they were duped by the lying serpent, and sin, guilt and shame have entered into the world.

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\(^1\) Hebrews 4:12  
\(^2\) Ps 119:89; Isa 40:8; Mat 24:35; Luk 21:33; 1 Pet 1:25  
\(^3\) Isa 55:10-11, 59:21; Acts 7:38; Heb 4:12; 1 Pet 1:23  
\(^4\) Hebrews 12:2
I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; and The Seed of the Woman shall crush your head, and you shall strike at His heel.

Then the LORD God said to the woman, ‘What is this that you have done?’ The woman said, ‘The serpent deceived me, and I ate.’

The LORD God said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.’

To the woman he said, ‘I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.’

And to Adam he said, ‘Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.’

We will focus today on verse fifteen: I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring [literally, your seed and her seed]; and he, [that is, The Seed of the Woman], shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

The word for bruise, as we are going to see, can mean to bruise, to crush, or to strike at, and the New International Version is much more accurate when it says, and he – The Seed of the Woman – shall crush your head and you shall strike at his heel. I will explain why.

JUSTICE YET MERCY

I had a first-time experience this week. I was on a jury, an actual jury, and we handed down our verdict at 4:54 on Friday afternoon. It’s amazing how discerning a jury can be at ten minutes until five on Friday afternoon.

I have received notices for jury service at times in the past, only to be informed the day before that I did not need to report. One time I was instructed to report and I became part of the jury pool, but I wasn’t selected to be on the jury. So I spent a busy week with no concern about actually being called, because surely they were not going to put a preacher on the jury. Nobody would want that, would they? I was wrong. They were delighted to have me. When they asked me questions about myself, I made it very clear: I’m a minister, M-I-N-I-S-T-E-R, yes, minister, Reynolda Church, and then added, and we home school.

They selected me for the jury. The matter before the court was a drug case, and as a minister of the Gospel, my heart was torn because I know and understand the roots of addiction and the course it takes. I had a compassion for the defendant, but before we left the courtroom, the judge gave us these orders: Your responsibility is to weigh the evidence and declare the defendant guilty or not guilty.

The judge did not say: I want all of you to leave and pray about this. Then discern whether you think you ought to have mercy on this person or not.

That’s not what you do. In our system of justice, the jury members leave the courtroom, weigh the evidence of the testimonies they have heard and the exhibits they have seen, and then, based on that evidence, they decide if the person is guilty as charged or not guilty.

That left me in an odd place because on the one hand, my life is built around showing to people mercy and the love of God. I was scheduled at the
end of the week to preach at the prison; I love the men there; and there I was, a member of a jury whose decision might result in sending a man to prison. So on the other hand, I had to exercise justice.

It is very difficult for us to find a way to combine justice and mercy. We found the man guilty of one of the counts, and after the sentencing was over, I have to honestly admit that in my heart I wanted to go over and pray with him.

I do not know a way to integrate justice and mercy. But God does, and this is what makes the Gospel of Jesus Christ so marvelous.

The announcement of the Gospel comes in the midst of today’s text, which seems to be all about the consequences of sin, which are real, and the curses that are being placed upon the world. But in fact, theologians often call this text the Protoevangelium, the first announcement of the Gospel, because hidden in Genesis 3:15 is our Savior, The Seed of the Woman, Who would come and rescue us from the curse, and grant to us through His shed blood a victory so great that it is worthy of eternal praise.

George Whitefield, an eighteenth century revivalist, preached a message on this text and I love his words:

What reason can be given, why sentence of death should not be pronounced against the prisoners at the bar? ... He had threatened, that the day wherein they eat of the forbidden fruit, they should 'surely die,' and, if he did not execute this threatening, the devil might then slander the Almighty indeed. And yet mercy cries, spare these sinners, spare the work of thine own hands. Behold, then, wisdom contrives a scheme how God may be just, and yet be merciful; be faithful to his threatening, punish the offense, and at the same time spare the offender. An amazing scene of divine love here opens to our view, which had been from all eternity hid in the heart of God! Notwithstanding Adam and Eve were thus unhumbled, and did not so much as put up one single petition for pardon, God immediately passes sentence upon the serpent, and reveals to them a Savior.  

Hidden in Genesis 3:15 is our Savior, The Seed of the Woman, Who would come and rescue us from the curse and grant to us through His shed blood a victory so great that it is worthy of eternal praise.

Are you ready for some good news?

You and I are in a spiritual battle because God has put enmity—has made enemies—out of The Seed of the Woman and the seed of the serpent. We are in a fight. And praise be to God, through Jesus Christ He gives us the victory!

I have some news about spiritual warfare and about the victory that is ours through our Champion, The Seed of the Woman, the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

ONE STORY

Continuity Through the Holy Spirit

There are many ways that you could read your Bible, but I suggest that you read it as one big story. It is remarkable to me that so many different people were inspired by the Holy Spirit at different points in history to write down words that would be compiled together under the sovereign oversight of the Holy Spirit into what we call the Bible. It is astounding how the opening pages of the Bible, this Word of God, have an amazing fulfillment in the closing pages, and it is extraordinary how in one way or another, each and every page is pointing to Jesus. And so this Book has many different stories, but they all add up to one big story of redemption, and ultimately, to be grasped for all that it is worth, the Bible must be read as one incredible story.

Accessed 11/12/2011:
http://www.ccel.org/ccel/whitefield/sermons.iii.html#iii-p0.3.

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The Bible is a story of a fight, our fight, which is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. It is a real fight, BUT ...

the victory is absolutely yours.

A Theme of Love

A Story of Adoption

At times you might consider your Bible a love story, and that it is. It is a story of a Father Who adopts children unto Himself and sets His love upon them forever, of orphans that are adopted by a wealthy generous Father.

A Divine Romance

Your Bible is also a story of a divine romance, of a Father Who finds it is time for His Son to be wed and sends a matchmaker, His Spirit, into the world to woo unto His Son a bride. It is a divine romance, with the Church being the bride and Jesus the bridegroom.

A Theme of War

The Bible is also a story of war. It is one big story, and there are different themes and ways you could see it as one big story, but today we will see how it is one big story about a war.

THE STORY OF A WAR

The Bible is one big story about a battle, and it has one of the most exciting triumphant conclusions you could ever imagine. It runs from the beginning to the end that this is a story of a fight, our fight, which is not against flesh and blood, as Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:11-17.

... 11 Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 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 firm. 14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. 16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; 17 and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ...

Yes it is a fight, but it is not the kind of fight that most people think it is. It is not fought with traditional weapons, and most Christians either do not know how much of a fight the Christian life is, or they fight against the visible, the manifestation, or the shadow.

Essentials

There are two essentials to know about spiritual warfare. One is that according to Genesis 3:15, there is an enmity that exists between you and the forces of darkness, and the other is that the fight is very real.

God's Armor

We are not to become fascinated with the fight, but we are to know that the fight exists so that we can live our lives clothed in the armor of God. It is of primary importance that we understand it is His armor that we are instructed to put on because it is not by our own might or skill that we wage the war. It is God’s armor, the armor of God. It is His righteousness of that we wear as a breastplate; It is His saving power that we wear as a helmet of His salvation; It is His truth that is our belt; It is His shield of faith that we carry, because Jesus is the Author and Finisher of our faith; It is His gospel that makes our shoes readied with peace;
And it is with His sword, the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, that we are able to advance against the enemy and his work in our lives, just as Jesus did in the desert.6

And so you are in a fight and it is a real fight, BUT, the victory is absolutely yours.3

It was early in my first pastorate, and after the service one day a woman who was obviously vexed and troubled approached me after I had finished greeting everybody. It was a bright sunshiny day and I was looking forward to a restful afternoon, but I soon realized that I would be occupied with something else that afternoon, because she explained some things she was going through and then said, I am afflicted of a demon and the Lord has told me that you’re going to cast it out.

I was tempted to say, Let’s see if the Lord tells me that also. I was conflicted. I didn’t know how to cast out a demon – we had no seminary course about that – and yet, I was her pastor, and she needed help. So I heard the words come out of my mouth, I’ll come over this afternoon.

At lunch I told my wife about our appointment that afternoon and she asked, What do we do? I said, I don’t know, but the Bible says we have authority in Jesus’ name,8 so let’s go.

What followed is an odd but true story. As we were getting ready to get into the car to go and cast out our first demon, there curled up in my driveway was a big, huge snake. I had never seen one on our property until that day, and it might have been a friendly snake, but I’ve never been one of those who know which snakes are poisonous and which ones are not, and this one was between me and the car. Isn’t that weird? I think I was more afraid of that snake than I was of the demon we were going to face that day! But I killed the snake; I chopped off his head.

I was feeling pretty confident after that, and I said, Come on, Honey. Let’s go get the other snake!

I discovered that day that demons are subject to us in the name of Jesus Christ, and I have been fighting spiritual battles with and on behalf of others for the last two decades since that time. Great is our victory in Jesus, and every day of your life you are given the privilege of waking up in the morning and putting on God’s armor, wherein you are assured that no weapon formed against you can prosper9 because you have a Champion Who has secured the victory.

A Real Battle

Know that you are in a fight, for if you don’t know that you are in a fight, how can you fight back? Eve’s problem when she was tempted by the serpent was that she didn’t know the serpent was an enemy. If she had known the serpent was the enemy who wanted to destroy her, she wouldn’t have even talked to the serpent.

The great deception that we face is not even recognizing the fight that we’re in. So part of the good news in Genesis chapter three is when the Lord said, I will put enmity between you and The Seed of the Woman, for when you are a Christian, when you are the offspring of God and born again by the Spirit of God, part of the gift that He gives you is a discernment to realize that you have an enemy and you are going to fight. So you can get up every day and be ready for the fight. This doesn’t mean that we are “looking for a devil behind every bush,” and neither does it mean that we become a somber people. But it does mean that we are in a real battle, so let us not ever go through one single day of our life thinking that we are not. The battle is very real.

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7 Psalm 60:12
8 Mat 10:1; Mk 3:14, 6:7; 9:38; Lk 9:1, 49; 10:17-18
9 Isaiah 54:17

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November 6, 2011
In the Beginning, God’s Grace Was There
Part 9: Blessing Beyond the Curse:
God’s Promise to Eve of Triumph over Evil
In the Beginning, God’s Grace Was There

Part 9: Blessing Beyond the Curse: God’s Promise to Eve of Triumph over Evil

This is so important to everything you understand about the Gospel. Jesus was both fully God and fully man. He had to be. He was a representative of the people. He was fully one of them, but He was different because He was God; He was perfect.

THE WARRIOR

Seed of the Woman

As a Christian, once you know you are in a battle, there then becomes a quiet inward smile that grows often into a shout of praise that is just acknowledging that there is a Conqueror named Jesus Christ Who is come as The Seed of the Woman, born of a virgin. And though the enemy tried to kill Him over and over again, when the time was full, He laid down His own life, and in so doing, secured a victory so great that Genesis 3:15 is fulfilled: He crushed the head of the serpent.

Both God and Man

This is so important to everything you understand about the Gospel. The language of the warrior emerges from The Seed of the Woman. There is no mention of the Father here because this text is prefiguring the incarnation; God becoming flesh; the fact that Jesus will be both fully God and fully man.

He had to be truly human while also being fully God, so He was the seed of a woman. But when the angel Gabriel told Mary that she would conceive, he said: The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.

It is The Seed of the Woman, Mary, that is being described as fulfilling what was spoken of The Seed of the Woman, Eve. That Seed is both God and human.

Warrior

When Jesus came He made it clear—He came as a warrior. He came with love and tenderness, and He would not crush a bruised reed, but He most certainly did come to crush the works of the devil. In fact, He said, If you see that I by the finger of God cast out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you, meaning, you will recognize the Kingdom of God when you see me exercising my authority over the enemy.

Perfect Representative of the People

He was a representative of the people. He was fully one of them, but He was different because He was God; He was perfect.

Champion

What was being established in Genesis 3:15 is a battle of champions. It is a battle wherein there is a representative from each army, like when David fought Goliath. He did so on behalf of the rest of the people. And this is what is being drawn up here. The Seed of the Woman is going to be at enmity with the seed of the serpent. A battle will be fought and much is at stake.

RULES OF THE WAR

The good news about this battle is that all of the rules of war were announced by God, because He is God.

For the Serpent

14 The LORD God said to the serpent, ’Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your...
In the Beginning, God’s Grace Was There

Part 9: Blessing Beyond the Curse: God’s Promise to Eve of Triumph over Evil

belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.

- The serpent is not allowed to speak or negotiate
- The serpent must abide by the Lord’s word

In fact, the serpent had no choice but to abide by the Lord’s Word, because God is the Creator of the ends of the earth, and the serpent is a creature symbolizing satan, but satan and all the demons of hell are also creatures, and God is God alone. He has made everything gloriously. When God said this is the way it is going to be, the serpent didn’t speak back. The serpent didn’t say, I don’t think I like that plan and I’m not going to abide by that, because the Word of the Lord has precedence and power and it is permanent. The hymn says, One little word shall fell him, and that is why Jesus defeated satan in His wilderness temptation simply by the Word of God.

- The serpent is cursed with limitations
  There were severe limitations. These are pictured in what you see in a snake in the natural, but they are pictured also figuratively for the enemy of God. ... on your belly you shall go. You are limited. You cannot stand in the same way that the sons of Adam will be able to stand. ... and dust you shall eat...

- The curse on the serpent is permanent
  ... all the days of your life.
  Limitations were put upon the serpent and the curse was laid out as permanent.

For the Woman and the Man

Notice that although the woman suffers grave consequences from her sin, she does not suffer a curse wherein the blessing that had been promised to her was taken away. In the bearing of children, she might experience difficulties that were not originally intended, but God still allowed the woman to be fruitful and multiply.

The man, who was given the Garden to tend, was banished from the Garden, but he was still allowed to have a vocation, to still work the land and subdue it, but not without daily sweat and pain.

And God did not take away the gift of marriage from the couple, although they would have difficulties in their relationship because of sin.

So we see that both the severity and the nature of the curses that were spoken to the serpent were altogether different from the severity and the nature of those which were spoken to the man and to the woman.

For the Seed of the Woman

The interpretation of the text which says in the ESV, he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel, is dependent upon understanding that there are several different definitions of the word bruise and that each has been intentionally selected.

One idea is to crush, and it is the more powerful rendering. Another rendering of the word is to strike, like a serpent would strike, and it conveys a sense of lying in wait, looking to pounce. This is why I think the NIV is most accurate in saying, The Seed of the Woman will crush your head and you will strike at his heel, because the image is that The Seed of the Woman, the Messiah Who will come forth, will through whatever it is that He does in this battle, have a crushing effect upon the headship of the enemy. And, the serpent, satan, will do figuratively what a serpent does, and that will be to strike, but because of his limitations, he cannot strike at the headship because he is in the dust, so he will strike at the heel. Yet, in the strike there can be venom.

What is being said here is the prophecy that, I will put enmity between you, serpent, and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. God then

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16 Ps 19:7-11, 119:89, 160; Isa 40:8; Jer. 8:8-9; Mat 24:35; Lk 21:33; 2 Tim 3:16; Heb 4:12; 1 Pet 1:25
17 Martin Luther, A Mighty Fortress Is Our God, trans. Frederick H. Hedge (Germany, 1529/1528).
announced very plainly to satan that the Seed of that woman, her offspring, would one day crush his headship and he will only be able to strike at His heel.

**QUEST TO DESTROY THE SEED**

This begins a drama that unfolds little by little in story after agonizing story in the Scriptures.

**Cain and Abel**

*Genesis 4:1-10*

The first story is that of Cain and Abel. Abel made an offering to the Lord, the first of his flocks, and God was pleased with this blood offering. But God was not pleased with Cain’s offering from the produce of the ground. When Cain saw that God favored and blessed Abel, that He loved Abel in this way, it infuriated Cain, and he rose up and he killed his brother.

In this first story after the announcement of the curse, there was a natural drama that was unfolding, and there was a spiritual drama that was unfolding. I think the powers of hell were immediately trying find The Seed of the Woman that would crush the serpent’s head, and murderous hate, demonic hatred, filled Cain to kill Abel because hell thought Abel was that Seed.

But Abel was not The Seed of the Woman, yet the Bible says that Abel’s blood cried out from the ground.

**Pharaoh**

*Exodus 1:8-22*

The story continues and Pharaoh became consumed with the idea that the Hebrews were becoming too numerous, and he ordered the slaughter of all Hebrew boys. That is a natural scene, but I’m convinced that hell was looking for a way it could slaughter all the Hebrew boys and possibly eliminate that Seed of the Woman.

**Jacob and Esau**

*Genesis 25:19-34; 27:1-41*

When Israel was born and there were in one instance two babies, Jacob and Esau, jostling within their mother’s womb, it was prophesied that Jacob, the one who would be the recipient of unmerited favor and grace, would actually have the headship. And on the day that Jacob stole Esau’s rightful blessing as the firstborn, Esau saw that Jacob had been favored by his father, and he hated Jacob and conspired in his heart to kill him. It was the same murderous feeling that Cain had towards Abel.

**Joseph**

*Genesis 37:1-36*

When Jacob had his own sons, he showed favoritism towards Joseph, the youngest of those sons, because Joseph had been born to Jacob’s beloved Rachael. He made Joseph a highly-ornamented beautiful coat, and Joseph’s brothers despised him for the favor that he received. They didn’t even understand why they hated him so much, but they despised the grace that was being poured out on Joseph, and they sought to kill him.

That was occurring in the natural in their hearts, but I am convinced that hell thought perhaps Joseph was The Seed of the Woman, the One who had come to crush the serpent’s head. The brothers sold that boy into slavery and told their dad that he was dead.

**David**

*1 Samuel 6:13; 19; 21; 22; 23:7-29; 26*

The story just keeps growing in agonizing scene after agonizing scene. God chose a shepherd boy named David to be king. A shepherd. A shepherd! At the time when he was anointed with oil from Samuel’s flask, the Bible says the Spirit rushed upon him from that day forward, and there was much evidence that the Spirit of God had indeed inhabited David.

And I am convinced that hell stood at attention and thought that perhaps this one, this one who was anointed to be the new king, was The Seed of the Woman. And so, murderous demonized Saul wanted
to kill David, for he hated the favor that was being poured out on David’s life.

Herod
Matthew 2:1-18

On the stories went, until there came a time in which an angel announced to a peasant girl from Nazareth that she would conceive by the Holy Spirit and she would give birth to a child. Rumors of a new king had already been stirring in the land, and King Herod consulted with magi in an attempt to discover the identity of the newborn. He was jealous and fearful of a newborn king and wanted to destroy whoever it was, so he slaughtered all the innocent Hebrew baby boys. But the baby could not be found, for his parents had escaped with Him to Egypt.

THE SEED REVEALED

There would be in the Nazarene boy’s growing up an obscurity that left him hidden until he was baptized and the Holy Spirit descended like a dove upon Jesus. He then was taken out into the wilderness, and there the devil realized that Jesus Himself was The Seed of the Woman. He began tempting Him from that day forward, and he sought opportunities to fill people with murderous intent to stamp out the life of this Jesus of Nazareth.

On numerous occasions there were angry crowds that hated Jesus and wanted to kill Him, like the time they tried to push Him over a cliff, but supernaturally He would escape, until the time would come in which Jesus would lay down His life, by the Father’s set purpose and of His own accord – no one took His life from Him – the Bible says, because there was a redemptive plan was at work.

A CRUSHING VICTORY
Prefigured in Scripture

The serpent was told, Your head is going to be crushed, and there are many instances in the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scripture</th>
<th>Translation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Samuel 17:48-50</td>
<td>David let fly a stone from his sling and it went into the head of Goliath;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habakkuk 3:13</td>
<td>You crush the head of the wicked;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joshua 10:24</td>
<td>Joshua placed his feet on the necks of five defeated kings;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalm 68:21-22</td>
<td>God will crush the head of his enemies;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Samuel 22:39; Psalm 18:39</td>
<td>David proclaimed that his enemies fell under his feet;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psalm 91:2</td>
<td>He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you lest you strike your foot on the stone. Upon the lion and the venomous serpent you will tread and you will trample the young lion and the dragon. [This is figurative speech.]</td>
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Authority of the Believer

These Scriptures point to who we are in Jesus Christ, as Jesus Himself would proclaim in Luke 10:18-19:

I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.

Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy [who is at enmity with you], and nothing shall hurt you.

And Paul says in Romans 16:17-20:

I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.

See also: Judges 4:21, 9:53; Psalms 60:14, 110:6 (he will shatter chiefs could just as well be translated: he will crush the head on the broad land); Jeremiah 23:19; 30:23-24; Zechariah 10:3-4; Malachi 3:21.
The sin, the guilt and the shame of every thought, every deed, every plan, every crime that has ever been committed by every guilty man, woman, boy and girl—all of it—was taken into His body. He Who knew no sin became sin so that we might become the righteousness of God. Jesus took the punishment that a just God required for it all.

your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil. 20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

CELEBRATION OF THE PLAN

The story and the drama just keep growing until finally we come to the book of Revelation, where the plan that had been unveiled is celebrated. It is the revelation of Jesus Christ which was given to John while he was a prisoner on the Isle of Patmos, and it would be of profound encouragement to all those who were being persecuted by Rome.

Revelation 12

Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, 8 but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in Heaven. 9 And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent ... It is that ancient serpent of Genesis 3:15. John watched what was transpiring, recognized it as something that had taken place, and saw it in the spirit.

... who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. 10 And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, ‘Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. 11 And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. 12 Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!’

13 And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. 14 But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished...

The enmity that was promised in Genesis 3:15 is demonstrated then in Revelation 12:17 where John says: Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

WISDOM, JUSTICE, MERCY & LOVE

We are promised, Beloved, this extraordinary good news proclamation, that while Jesus Christ was on the cross, at that moment in which it appeared to all of hell that they had finally succeeded in killing The Seed of the Woman who had been prophesied to crush the head of the serpent, the unimaginable, unfathomable wisdom and mercy of God was unveiled. For on that cross, justice and mercy met, and wrath was co-mingled with love in the giving of God’s only begotten Son, Who was sinless and yet the seed of a woman.

A Strike at the Heel

When Jesus hung upon that cross, He was taking into His body the venom of sin with all of the guilt and the shame of the world. When He had prayed, Oh Father, I wish this cup could be passed from me; yet not my will, but yours be done, His body was
racked with the pain of the prospect of what He was about to encounter. He knew He was going to drink of the cup of the venom of the serpent. He knew that the serpent, who by the edict of God had been relegated for centuries and centuries and centuries to crawl on his belly and to have only the capacity to strike at the heel of The Seed of the Woman, would be allowed to do so.

Unimaginable Exchange

The serpent did strike, and the poison of the sin, the guilt and the shame of every thought, every deed, every plan, every crime that has ever been committed by every guilty man, woman, boy and girl – all of it – was taken into His body. He Who knew no sin became sin so that we might become the righteousness of God. Jesus took the punishment that a just God required for it all. The ultimate expression of the glory of God is seen here, not in His greatness alone; not in His love alone; but in the way that God’s love and mercy endure while in no way compromising His justice.

THE CHAMPION AND HIS ARMY

Offspring of God

At that same moment, God was setting free The Seed of the Woman and all her offspring who would be in Jesus Christ. For whoever trusts in Jesus Christ has the right to become a child of God, a child not born of natural decision or a husband’s will, but born of God. We have become the children of God. We are His offspring.

Fulfillment of the Curse

And also at that moment, the serpent’s head was being crushed. While the serpent thought he was killing Jesus, Jesus was crushing him, and as a result, we in Jesus Christ have become a victorious army. We cannot be held back; we cannot be defeated; because the cross is the finished work of Jesus! HALLELUJAH!

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HALLELUJAH!

A Victory Shout

Day after day, all of Saul’s army had been fearful of the Philistine giant, Goliath. They kept saying, Send us somebody to fight, but they kept at a distance. So David arrived and crushed the head of Goliath with a small stone from his slingshot, and on THAT day, the army rose up, the Bible says, with an incredible shout, and they routed the Philistines for miles and miles. By my count, they routed the Philistines for about ten to twelve miles, and they plundered them as they went.

So when you see that your Champion has won the decisive victory by sinking the stone into the skull of the enemy, you, too, can suddenly become quite brave. When we sing praise to God, it really is our victory shout, for He has conquered the devil. So let’s rout the enemy and let’s take back everything that has been stolen, for it has been restored to us in Jesus Christ!

And THAT is the Gospel!

Amen! HALLELUJAH!

22 Matthew 26:36-44; Mark 14:32-40; Luke 22:41-44; 2 Corinthians 5:21
23 John 1:12-13
24 Isaiah 53:10; Rom 8:16; Gal 4:7; 1 John 3:1, 5:1
25 John 19:30; Hebrews 9:11-28
26 Exodus 3:22;11:22, 12:36
Thank You, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus for coming and taking the sting of death and sin so that we can live as ones who have been reckoned fully righteous, and therefore made more than conquerors. Thank You, Jesus that through Your willing sacrifice we have been given confidence to know that no weapon formed against us shall be able to prosper. Cause our hearts to be filled with this confidence and with Your grace. Thank You, our General, our Champion, our Savior.

It is in Your name we pray. Amen.

Closing Remarks

The venom of the enemy is not that he can poison you unto death. He cannot do that. If he could, he would just kill all the Christians. His venom is the guilt, shame and condemnation that lead to despair, and he uses it in an effort to cause us to give up.

But there is a battle that we have to fight, and when I think about the spiritual victory that is ours through what Jesus Christ has accomplished, it makes me want to not grow weary, and it convinces me that we will reap in due season if we do not give up.

For some of you, that is exactly the message God has for you today, Don’t give up! His foot has crushed the enemy. The battle is still going on, but the victory has been decided. You might have been in David’s army. You might have been a coward. You might have been running for your life. You might have felt despair. But now you are in the Lord’s army. You are a co-laborer with Jesus and you have been given the same authority that Jesus had. You can lift up your eyes and see your Champion! He is the Author and the Finisher of your faith, so if you look at Him, you’ll have faith to claim the victory! HALLELUJAH!

May God bless you and keep you and be kind and gracious to you and make His face to shine upon you and give you His peace today and every day, forevermore.

Amen.

Sharing the Light Ministries

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