

Read •• for opening
Historical events to include. Yom Yerushalayim. Pentecost. MayDay.
Holidays this week or coming up. Sh'vuot.
Needs of congregation I've seen lately (doctrinal) or (personal)

Genesis 3b

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by Bob Mendelsohn

The Overcomer of Temptation

“He shall bruise you on the head”

For those who are with us for the first time today, we have been studying the book of Genesis. Each week we take a section or sections of the book and see if it has anything to say to us, as 21st century people.

We began our study of the book of Beginnings a couple weeks ago. We saw God had designed a place, and a people, and a purpose for that people. The purpose was to delight in God, or to have pleasure with the One who is eternally co-pleased in Himself. The people of course are Adam and Eve, and by implication you and me. The place was Eden, the Garden which being translated means 'delight'. Man and woman were created outside the Garden and moved into it by God's design, ushering them into a palace of pleasure.

Last week, we saw the classic diabolical element which makes every good story good, the Simon Legree of the Bible, the originally Bedazzling Faust character, the serpent himself. We read through the history of the Devil through Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, and began to understand the pains and great lengths to which he will go to undermine the work and the pleasure of God.

So we studied temptation. Last week we focused on the suffering, on Satan, on the fall of man and the resultant curse. This week we shall see the overcoming, the Saviour, the Messiah who is predicted from the very beginning as part of God's buy-back program.

Let's layout the study today in two parts: 1) the purpose of God in condemnation and 2) the purpose of God in cleansing. First the suffering and its purpose, secondly the overcomer of temptation and the cleansing we can and must receive from God Read Genesis 3

So we begin with condemnation. What a topic! Who wants that? The TV on Four Corners the other night condemned Ariel Sharon as a terrorist and sought to indict him on war crimes for incidents in 1982. They labeled him on par with Saddam Hussein and Adolph Hitler. What shame. Condemnation is always hard to prove, but easy to aver.

In the story today, God brings swift justice to the creation due to the activity which ran counter to His plan. Man ate, woman ate, God send justice on the serpent, on the man and the woman. Listen to these curses:

- 1) (verse 16) pain in childbearing (pregnancy), 2) greatly multiply (menstrual pain), 3) in pain (labor pains), 4) desire for husband (longing, suffering for him), 5) rule over you (family order)

The curse on the man is in verse 19. You "listened to your wife" What other crowd scene forced change in opinions? To dust 'you shall return,' thus proving Satan's commentary on the 'not eat, not touch' words were a lie. Man and woman are exiled from the Garden, thus living forever away from "pleasure' and away from God's plan for humanity.

Whether you like it or not, your first parents were born outside of Eden, moved in for a

short term contract, then were removed back outside it. Let me ask you, where were their children born: inside or outside Eden? And their grandchildren? Etc, ... you see, whether you agree or not, you were born outside God's pleasure. The reality is soon discovered, in the words of Bob Mumford, "when you try to climb back out."

I see the purpose of God in condemnation as threefold:

- 1) To demonstrate His authority
- 2) To establish those who come under His authority
- 3) To warn those who disregard His authority

God longs to reign on the earth. Satan as we discovered last week jumped ship, and ran aground. He left the plan; the authority of God was of no concern to him. As a result his shipwreck wrought havoc on himself, on the third of the angels who fell with him and on those who have subsequently followed his advisements. In all this God demonstrates His own authority to rule and to judge.

In saying this, he also establishes those who come under His authority. He fixes those who lead and who lead well by following Him. It's not politics that sets up righteous governments; it's God. He establishes His own right to rule and then extends this to others who walk with Him. This is awesome to consider. It's one thing for God to rule; it's quite another for a vice regent to step into His much larger shoes and attempt to rule with Him. Yet, though it might appear comic, it's absolutely His plan. A true leader is always looking for others to take his place. It's a right idea to take the place of your boss,

not just in your daydreaming fantasies, but a good leader always wants his followers to want his job. Shared responsibility is the key to growth of any firm, and this is God's idea from the beginning. He told Adam to be his regent; when Adam listened to Satan, that's when he got into trouble.

Thirdly, the purpose of God in condemnation was to warn those who disregard God's authority. As Satan fell under the weight of God's judgment, so will anyone who distorts or denies God's plan and Word. Clear and simple. Many in today's "she'll be right mate" world think quite another thing. Many think that your idea is as valid as my idea. It's a postmodern thought that your narrative is as valid as my narrative, but when you evaluate the world in postmodern terms, there is serious dilemma. God sent warnings through His direct word here in Genesis and through prophets through the ages to warn those outside of impending danger. He loves us all enough to warn us. Live for yourself, live in dismissal of God, and you will pay the penalty. Fair enough, isn't it?

So God declares His purposes in condemnation. Judgment is felt. But we don't get left there. Praise God! There is a purpose of God in cleansing as well. And today we hear the whisper of an event that will shock the world in 4000 years and will continue to shock us moderns 2000 years later. His purpose in cleansing is Relationship Restoration. Let's listen to the whisper.

In verse 15 we read the curse on the serpent. Read text

The hint is obvious to us who know Messiah, but it wasn't so then. A child will be born. OK, and that child will do something to the serpent and the serpent will do something to the child.

God says He will put enmity, that is, a war, a strife, a battle, between the woman and the serpent. That makes sense since it was the serpent who damaged the relationship between people and God, and especially the woman and God. And the battle will go long past the two of them, into their 'seed'. This is the Bible word for child. Zera. The battle will be multiple generational.

Then the word is bruise or pain, and the same word is used of the damage to the serpent as is done to the seed of the woman. Only the location is different. The boy will be bruised in the heel; the serpent in the head.

Those who remember later history will see a picture of territorial conquest here. A soldier or explorer will land on a distant shore and putting his foot down and his flag into the ground, claim this land for xxx whoever. King George or King Charles, etc. Putting your foot on the ground is a picture of conquest. And in World Wrestling Federation matches you see this all the time. The conquering dancing celebrity who triumphs over the damaged foe places his foot on the head of the defeated. Foot on head... that's the picture of winning. Here in this story, the serpent is beaten. The seed of the woman will conquer and put his foot on the bruised head of Satan. Victory is sure!

But wait, there is pain. The same conqueror will be beaten in his heel. The conquest will be costly. Genesis Rabbah, and Pesichta Rabbah, great talmudic texts, recorded for 2 thousand years tell us much about Messiah. Wait, did I mention Messiah? Does this text use that term? No, but throughout history, the Jewish people have awaited him who would be the Satan bruiser, who would lead us back to God's rule and who would be the redeemer. We see his tale told in these talmudic texts (read Patai)

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So, the Jewish people are close, aren't they? They see the redeemer, and they see the pain. But they don't see the other item in verse 15. Who is the Messiah, in relation to the parents? He is the 'seed of the woman." This is shocking! Ordinarily, as we read the entire record of Scripture, it is the man who sires the children. Abraham beget Isaac, thank you very much Sarah. Isaac begat Jacob, where was Rebecca. Obviously, the women were involved, but they are not part of the listing of the writers. But here and in one other verse in the Bible do we see the woman as the only one mentioned. The other verse is of course Isaiah 7 verse 14. (read).There we see another sign for the Jewish people, a woman, in fact a young woman, a virgin will have a baby. This is newsworthy indeed!

So whoever the child is of Genesis, and whoever the child is in Isaiah, they are the unusual children of the Bible, as no other child is from a woman only. Could they be the same child, and thus the same woman? I believe they are one and the same.

(we spent some time on Almah parthenos, bethulah)

The child born to Adam and Eve, the one to come is the Satan bruiser, who will be born of the woman only, and who will conquer and yet be pained by the serpent in the heel. Have any candidates? Those of you who watch "Catch Phrase" will understand this imagery. The Messianic photograph is hidden under some clues, and we have to unveil

them one at a time until we can guess the puzzle's answer. It's not so easy, certainly at this stage in the contest. Early on, you have to be very lucky to guess the answer. As more clues are unveiled, it's easier to solve the puzzle. In the same way, as we read more and more Bible, we learn who is the Messiah to come. But for now, we only have 3 clues. One, seed of woman, not man and woman; two, beaten and hurt, especially on the heel; and three, conqueror of the serpent.

Let's make some remarks about the restoration of the relationship, for that is the purpose of the messiah coming. This whisper is heard shouted after the day of Pentecost 2000 years ago, as the apostle Peter declares Jesus to be the one for whom we had been waiting. Next Thursday and Friday night (Friday and Saturday days) are Sh'vuot, the feast of Pentecost. It's the anniversary of Peter's declaration about Y'shua. It's the anniversary of 3000 Jewish people founding the first Beth Messiah in Jerusalem.

The relationship was broken by sin; it is restored by the Messiah. The rabbis make a point about Nachash and Mashiach. The serpent and the messiah. Each has the same numerical equivalent, meaning the work of the serpent will be overturned by someone in the same place, same number as him, the messiah. Although they come at it questionably, they certainly get the right answer. Not by a kinder and gentler hero, but by blood. Let's notice and compare verse 7 and 21. What do you see? The Fashion Week final catwalk ended yesterday here in Sydney. These two verses are noteworthy in the fashion industry. That is, in the first Adam and Eve covered themselves with fig leaves; in the second, God covered them with skins. If the issue was covering, God should have let them go on with the vegetation. But His malcontent and further desire to clothe them himself makes me wonder what was the difference. Can you see it?

