

97-11-09b

Okay, we're back now from our break, and we're still in Genesis 3 and verse 15, where God speaks to the serpent and, in reality, is addressing not simply this particular animal, but the conscious presence of Satan, which is present there. We established that last week in Revelation and some other passages that identify the serpent as Satan himself. And, of course, there would be a very limited amount of meaning in this passage if it were simply a snake involved, and that, well, this is why man and snakes typically don't get along very well.

This enmity between the serpent and the woman, and between the serpent's seed and her seed, and the wounds that each will inflict on the other, one which is painful but not fatal, and the other which is both painful and fatal, is declared by God in this curse on the serpent. But it's interesting, this came up during the break in verse 15, God doesn't say, there will be enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He says, I will put enmity between the two.

What is enmity? There's a good, if you have a Scofield or a new Scofield, there's a good note on this passage talking about the English word enmity coming from the same root as enemy, and that the same idea goes in the Greek translation. And they give you some passages there where Jesus talks about Satan as the enemy, Matthew 13, 25, and 28, and how men outside of Christ are called enemies of God in Romans 5, 10, and Colossians 1, 21, and in James 4, 4. The carnal mind is at enmity with God, Romans 8, 7. In our recent study of Romans, we have had occasion to study these passages in detail. And it is possible, even as a believer, to be an enemy of the cross of Christ, which this note also points out in Philippians 3, 18.

And so, what does it mean that God is going to put enemyship, or God is going to actively put conflict between the two? Was there not a conflict already? Didn't the serpent come in and trip up the woman and ultimately the man in the garden? In what sense is God going to put enmity between them? There initially is a separation between the human race in the person of Adam and Eve, and Satan and whatever angels are in company with him during the period of their innocence in the garden. Satan does not appear until we see the serpent. He is separate.

Whatever he represents, whatever he has done, whatever his status, whatever is going on between him and God is invisible to Adam and Eve, isn't it? They are completely unaware that there is anyone else in the universe besides the Lord God and the two of them. The serpent intrudes into the perfection and tranquility of the garden and presents a series of half-truths, which deceive the woman and ultimately provide the occasion for the disobedience that constitutes the fall of man. It might have been sufficient in Satan's mind to have disrupted the creation of God and to go his merry way, but that is not to be.

Now, Satan and his seed have their fate inextricably linked to that of the human race. It would be kind of like a neighborhood bully who goes over and... In fact, this happened. I don't know if it was a bully, but I went out to run early one morning out here just south of our house.

And in the early morning hours as I ran by this one particular house, someone had taken rolls of toilet paper and completely done this house and all of its trees and bushes in toilet paper. This anonymous person came and wrote messages in shaving cream on the sidewalk. It must have been a 12-pack of toilet paper that was just covered.

I don't know how they managed it, but it had to have taken some time because there was a lot of it. But once they have wreaked this havoc, they disappear. It's so frustrating when somebody... If you've ever been the victim of a theft, you know the frustration because there's nothing you can do.

The person has disappeared. There's no way to inflict any consequences. You can't call the police.

You can't do anything. As a believer, you just put it into the hands of God and pray that whatever their problems are that cause them to engage in this kind of behavior, that they'll be faced with the issue of God and not have those problems anymore. Or if you're in a really vindictive frame of mind, you just pray that God will rain down cursing and destruction on them and that whatever they took will be a great source of unhappiness and disappointment and that they'll realize that they were really screwed up when they messed with you.

But it's a frustrating thing when someone comes in and does a crime like this and then disappears and are not there to face the consequences. This is what Satan could have done. He can come in and mess up the human race and the relationship between man and God and then depart, go back to wherever it is he's been during the days of creation and the time of tranquility in the garden.

But God says, no, I'm going to put enmity between you and the regenerate in the human race, between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed. This is a relationship. It's not a happy relationship.

It's not a beneficial relationship. But it ties the human race and the fallen angels together. Specifically, it ties the regenerate, who are the seed of the woman, ultimately personified in Jesus Christ, and those who follow the way of rebellion and rejection together.

Remember our recent studies in the parables of the wheat and the tares and the good and bad fish God says, let them exist together, talking about the wheat and the tares. The servants come and say, should we go in and try to pull up the tares? And God says,

no, let them grow together until the time of the harvest. God ordains that the two of them stand side by side.

There is, in effect, a new tree standing in the experience of the human race. There is always the opportunity to choose against God. But we have here in verse 15, to resume, the relationship that God establishes.

There is going to be contact. There is going to be an issue that ties together the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. Satan can't disappear into the mist, leaving behind the havoc and the disruption that he has caused by deceiving the woman.

He is now not only going to experience the curse that God pronounces on him, having his head crushed, in the ultimate sense, by Jesus Christ, but he is going to experience enmity. He is going to be involved in enemyship. There is going to be a conflict.

There is going to be a war between the regenerate of the human race and Satan and his minions and what he represents. And this is our experience in life, isn't it? We are not simply here battling our own conscience. We are not here simply winning victory over our fallen, corrupt nature.

We also are in conflict with the seed of the serpent. And without going overboard into this, which I think a lot of Christianity today has done, in talking about, well, let's bind Satan and let's cast out demons and so forth, I was thinking about this the other day. You can listen to a discussion, if you ever have seen this program, which I've seen once or twice on TV called Politically Incorrect, where they get some people together and they'll pick a topic and discuss it.

And you'll have a couple of conservatives and a couple of liberal people. Any sort of discussion you have between people of opposing viewpoints, what is generally the nature of those discussions? One side is at the far right, the other side is at the far left. If you make a statement, they had Alan Keyes on there the other night.

And he expresses a lot of good, solid, moral, conservative viewpoint on racial issues, on moral issues, and so forth. And then they had your general sprinkling of Hollywood liberal people in there. And it was amazing because he would make a statement, which you just want to stand up and say, boy, I'm glad somebody said that.

And these people would just roll their eyes like, oh boy, haven't we gotten past this? What primitive, silly thinking. And you see that people are poles apart. And a lot of times the truth is not at either pole.

But each side will caricature the other. Each side will push the other side's view to an extreme. And conservatives have been just as guilty of this as liberals, or whatever two poles you want to talk about.

It's easy to try to point out the flaws in someone's argument by pushing their argument to an extreme and showing it to be ridiculous. And a lot of times the truth is in the middle. But people don't tend to be moderate in a discussion or in an argument.

They tend to be extreme. And you don't want to concede even a little bit to somebody. You don't want to say, well, you know, you're partially right.

But you want to say, you're totally wrong. It's much more satisfying. And here's the thing.

There are a lot of things in Christianity that are put forward that are not inherently bad. We have talked many times about the emphasis on evangelism and the emphasis on ministry that is in Christianity that is wrongly motivated, where it is used as a means of growth or a means of being a Christian rather than a result. But that is not to say, we would be wrong to say evangelism is a waste of time.

I mean, ministry misses the point. You just need to sit and think. And your thoughts constitute righteousness, and that's all you have to do.

Either one of those is an extreme, and you don't find the truth there. Most of the time when you hit upon and meditate on a truth of the Word of God, you find that there is a balance. I have said before and will say again that in my experience, any truth of the Word of God that you want to pick out a name, there is at least one other truth in the Word of God that balances and centers that first truth and keeps you from taking it to an extreme.

And that's the case here. We are not wild-eyed demon binders. We don't sit and think about satanic influence, and can I be possessed, can I be influenced, what is the nature of the unseen conflict and so forth.

There have been series taught on this where people wind up seeing a demon behind every bush. That's not true. Nor is it true that Satan and his minions are uninvolved in human history, or that they are uninvolved in our lives.

That's not true either. The truth is in the middle. And we need a balanced perspective on the role that Satan plays.

Jesus told Peter that Satan had asked for him personally to sift him like wheat. And Jesus didn't say, you know, Satan came up and asked for you by name, Peter, but the Father and I, we told him no. He says, Satan has asked for you that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for you, Jesus says, that your faith will not fail.

God allows this satanic incursion in Peter's life so that Peter can learn something about faith. God uses the opposition to strengthen Peter, and God uses satanic opposition, whatever form it takes. I seriously doubt that any of us rate Satan's personal attention.

But there may be some influence in our lives, whether it is from an actual personal demon, or it is simply the influence of the presence of the seed of the serpent on the earth. There are philosophies, there are opportunities, there are consequences of the presence of evil on the earth that impinge on our lives every day. We are unable to escape the presence of evil.

Dr. Alan Ross pointed this out when we were studying Leviticus. And he said, one of the things you learn in Leviticus is the absolute nature of the holiness of God. You have all of the rituals for purification and cleansing, the qualification of the priests, their need for sanctification and being set apart so that they can come into the presence of God.

He said, in a lot of Christianity today, we've lost reverence for the righteousness of God. We've lost our awe of His holiness and of the absolute majesty of His holy self. And the application that he made of that is, a lot of times, just going through our day, even if we have not necessarily committed personal sins, and we haven't violated God's command, we haven't rebelled against Him, we've tried to live our life that day to please God, and we come to the point of prayer to God.

Dr. Ross said, just the flow of our life, just our movement through a fallen world, it's like walking down a dusty road. Just driving past the billboards, just hearing or seeing the commercials, just rubbing elbows with the imperfect and corrupt world in which we live, should cause us to pause before we rush into the presence of God and be sure that we are clean, to cleanse ourselves even of the effect of our environment on us, to confess that we live in a fallen world, as well as confessing our personal failures and our bad decisions. To acknowledge before God the way the priests did and the way the people of Israel did, that we are inherently sinful and we live in a fallen world.

And this is where Satan and his seed have their sway. We are surrounded in the world of ideas with non-godly thinking, non-godly philosophies, non-godly priorities, and they influence us. We are inextricably bound in this conflict.

And until Jesus Christ returns, we are in a sense like that old fable about the Tar Baby. Remember, they don't tell that story much anymore because it's politically incorrect, but it's a wonderful story about how this, in fact I've even forgotten the details, you just remember the central part of the story where there's this Tar Baby and you grab a hold of it and you can't get loose. And the more you try to wrestle free, it's like struggling in quicksand.

The more you wrestle to be free, the more embroiled you get. And that's what it means when God says, I will put enmity. God puts these things in juxtaposition.

We have the influence of evil in the world and it's God's design. It isn't that God couldn't keep it out or God couldn't get rid of it once it got here. God put it here by design.

And the purpose is victory. God doesn't put it here so that it will defeat us. God puts it here so that it will have its head crushed.

And Satan and the angels learn something from this just as we do. The unfallen angels learn something from this just as we do. God says, okay, sin has entered the universe with Satan.

Sin has entered the world with Adam. God is going to turn cursing to blessing. God is going to turn it to advantage.

God is going to use it to teach. Use it to enable us to learn something about his character. And so God says, you have come down here and engaged in conversation with people, serpent.

Well, you're not leaving. You're going to stay here. And there's going to be a conflict between you and the seed of the woman.

Between you and those who return to me. Those who repent and acknowledge and have relationship with God. There is a conflict and a struggle that goes on throughout human history between these two seeds.

And it is God's divine design. It is the same as when he says, let the wheat and the tares grow up together until the time of the harvest. There's a purpose in leaving them together.

And God will separate them out at the end. And there is going to be a great victory in this conflict. And it is a victory that was won on the cross.

It's a victory that is won by the ultimate person to whom the phrase seed of the woman applies. And that's Jesus Christ himself. To the woman in verse 16 he said, I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception.

In pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you. Another one of the great Dead Seas of Ink passages.

Let me say that I don't think God intends for us to bog down and spend three or four weeks on these statements. There is a consequence here for the woman. And he does not say because you have done this thing you are cursed.

She is a part of that group called the seed of the woman that is in distinction to the serpent and his seed. She is regenerate. She is saved if you will.

But you see this throughout the Bible. You'll remember when we went through 2 Samuel. David committed some great wrongs.

And when David acknowledged his sin, what did God say? You will not die but there's

going to be strife within your own house. There are going to be consequences as a result of what you have done. It isn't that God loved David any less.

It isn't that David lost his salvation. But there are always consequences of disobedience. But God can turn those to blessing.

And that's what's happening here. God is talking to a believer and saying you are not cursed. But there is going to be a change in environment because of this.

There is going to be a change in relationship. The union of the man and the woman is now going to be something to struggle with and struggle over. God initially made the woman as the equal and opposite number as the benefit and the helpmate.

Now that's something that is going to have to be worked at. It's not going to be automatic. It's not going to be simply a result of God's action.

There is going to be tension that has to be overcome. We're going to see when we get to chapter 4 that this very same phrase, your desire shall be for your husband, is going to come up when God talks to Cain about sin. Sin desires you and you must overcome it.

Here your desire will be for your husband and he is going to overcome you essentially. And this is something that we will discuss in greater detail when we get to the episode of Cain because we find great light shed on this passage at that point. But the two great areas of relationship for the woman, her marriage and her children, are both potentially going to be sources of pain, of suffering.

There is, however, deliverance in these two areas, in regeneration. But it isn't automatic anymore, just as the ability to do good and please God is not automatic by being born anymore. You have to be regenerate.

You have to be in the plan of God. You have to be in relationship with God through faith in a productive way to return to a life that has meaning and approval from God. And the same is true here.

It doesn't mean that all marriages are going to be sources of pain, that the day-to-day life in marriage is going to be painful, or that being a mother and raising children is going to be inherently a source of pain. It means that that potential will always exist and that apart from regeneration, those are going to be the two great areas of sorrow. And the same is true for the man.

In verse 17, to Adam he said, Because you have heeded the voice of your wife. This doesn't mean that listening to your wife is a bad thing. It means that the idea that she suggested, that he responded to, is the problem here.

Because you have heeded the voice of your wife and have eaten from the tree of which I

commanded you, saying, You shall not eat of it. Cursed is the ground for your sake. What was the original task of man in the garden? What was it that occupied his time and was the source of his blessing and communion with God? It was tending the garden.

His occupation was to tend and to care for the garden, to care for the soil and the plants. And that was an area of fulfillment and enjoyment for him. He had something to do that was productive and that gave him great pleasure.

Now that central area of his life is going to also be a potential source of sorrow and pain. In toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field, and in the sweat of your face you shall eat bread.

Things that were, in a sense, you can't really talk about a birthright for Adam since he wasn't born, but they were his heritage, they were the gift of God in the garden, now come through toil. It's going to take work in the same way that marriage takes work and child raising takes work. There can be great fulfillment and great happiness and great blessing in marriage.

There's great fulfillment and happiness and blessing in raising children. But it comes through struggle. It takes work and work in the sense of spiritual growth and spiritual application and using the resources that God places at our disposal.

And without those things it is inevitably a source of pain and sorrow in marriage and with children. Apart from God, if you find yourself in the category seed of the serpent, these things are the major areas of disappointment and pain in life. Same thing for the man.

It's been often observed and it is a truth of life that generally speaking, despite women's live and so forth, women find their areas of fulfillment generally in relationships, especially family relationships. Men find their greatest areas of fulfillment in their occupation. It's just the way we're built.

And here in these pronouncements of consequences on God's part, we see that these areas that are central to our lives as men and women are the places of struggle. That to achieve fulfillment and blessing in those areas comes at a cost and it cannot be attained apart from relationship with God. So the man now, instead of taking pleasure in tilling the soil and having it as sort of a carefree occupation in the garden, now it is required, it is a necessity.

If you want to eat, you're going to have to work. You can't just walk by a tree and pluck the fruit. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you are taken, for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.

Isn't it interesting? What did God say about eating of the tree? In the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die. Now God is pronouncing the consequences of partaking of

that fruit. He explicitly says, because you have heeded the voice of your wife and have eaten from the tree, you would expect him to say, you are now going to surely die.

But what does he say instead? In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken, for dust you are, and to dust you shall return. It is probably the gentlest possible way of affirming that the consequence that God communicated initially of eating of the tree is going to take place physically. But throughout this you see a merciful and restrained and compassionate God who does not fly off the handle as it were, who doesn't rise up in wrath and fury.

He is gentle. He is compassionate. And why is that? Well, Adam and Eve are in position to receive the mercy of God because they have responded to the call of God in the garden.

They have acknowledged their sin before God. And you will notice that after Genesis 3, verse 19, God never again brings this up to Adam and Eve. He doesn't come by from time to time and say, boy, you really messed up in the garden.

Now, here's a few additional consequences. Thinking about this, it's really an affront to me that you ate of the fruit. I thought of some other things I'm going to do to you because it is a one-time transaction.

They have confessed it, and it is not brought up again by God in his relationship with Adam and Eve. You see this throughout Genesis in particular, which is the book we have in view. Abraham is going to fail, and God doesn't throw it up in his face.

Jacob is going to fail. God doesn't throw it up in his face. Because when they come back and acknowledge and confess, it is cleansed, forgiven, and forgotten, and they move forward.

And God never harks back and says, remember back when you did this sin? Well, here's a consequence. It's not the way God works. And it's one of the important things to remember in this passage.

God is a God of grace. God is a God of compassion. We have a very easy condition to meet, to receive that grace and to receive that compassion.

And it is simply to respond to the call of God and acknowledge before him our transgression. It's true at the point of salvation, and it's true every day of our lives as believers. Everything is done by God.

You will notice that God began by providing for man in the garden, providing him his food, providing him his occupation, providing him his relationship in life. And here, right on the heels of having to state the consequences of what they have done, God continues in the same vein. For Adam and his wife, the Lord God made tunics of skin and clothed

them.

This word for tunics is a Hebrew word that talks about a full-body garment. It is a *kaknat* in Hebrew, as near as I can figure out how to pronounce it. K-A-C-H-N-A-T This is not the same as what Adam and Eve sewed together for themselves out of fig leaves.

That was what has been translated a loincloth, but this is *kagrat* in Hebrew. The two words are sort of similar in their sound, but there is a contrast between them because this is literally a belt. It is not even a loincloth.

There is another Hebrew word that means loincloth, and the thing that Adam and Eve sewed together out of fig leaves didn't even really qualify. If you have ever seen fig leaves, you know that they are probably the largest leaves that were available, but they are not ideal to make a covering out of. They have got these deep indentations in them, and you would have to really work to get those to cover anything properly.

Actually, this is translated elsewhere in the Bible as belt. You can see this, for example, in 1 Kings 2, verse 5. This same word that is translated loincloth out of fig leaves. He talks about David on his deathbed here speaking and saying, You know what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, what he did to the two commanders of the armies of Israel, to Abner the son of Ner and Amasa the son of Jether whom he killed? And he shed the blood of war in peacetime, and put the blood of war on his belt that was around his waist, and on the sandals that were on his feet.

It is an identical same word as what Adam and Eve made out of fig leaves. It is a belt, like a sash or something. It may be sort of indelicate to say, but really the best translation of what Adam and Eve made out of the fig leaves is sort of like jockstrap.

It is a very minimal garment. Just the bare minimum to do the job there. This same word, you will find it also in 2 Kings 3.21. It is not a very common word in the Bible, but 2 Kings 3.21, when all the Moabites heard that the kings had come up to fight against them, all who were able to bear arms and older were gathered together as they stood at the border.

When it talks about those who were able to bear arms and so forth, it has the idea that they are girding on their belt for war. They are putting on their cartridge belt idea. You have the same thing over in Isaiah 3.24. Isaiah had to do some things with his girdle and so forth.

There is a contrast here because when God provides in the wake of this disobedience and in the wake of having to pronounce the change in circumstances, God is still compassionate and God is still initiating provision and care for Adam and Eve. So He makes for them this full body garment and He clothes them. The verb here to clothe is *lavash*, L-A-V or V-A-S-H in Hebrew.

A lot of times it is used to clothe oneself and so forth, but in the Hithiel, which is the causative stem in Hebrew, to cause someone to be clothed, this word was used mainly of a king who clothes a subject who is worthy of honor. Like when Saul clothes David over in 1 Samuel, tries to put his armor on him, clothes him in this garb. It was also used of the clothing of the priests.

We have seen throughout this Garden of Eden incident the similarity in vocabulary of the garden and the tabernacle. The gold that is there, the presence of God that is there, the precious stones that are there, match those that are found in the garments and the vestments of the high priest. Over and over again we have this link forward to the presence of God in the camp of Israel.

God walked in the garden and God walks in the camp of Israel, walks among His people. He is now going to clothe Adam and Eve and the phraseology is the same as when God clothes the priests. God qualifies the priests through these clothes to enter into His presence and to worship before Him and to function before Him.

There is more than just covering their nakedness involved here. God makes a way for them to renew approach and fellowship with Himself the way that He does for the priests. Of course it has often been pointed out and it is true that these clothing garments were made of skins which required the death of animals, sacrifices involved in order for them to be clothed.

But it adds meaning when we realize that these clothes are designed also to allow them to approach. Why were they ashamed in the garden? They didn't hide from each other in the garden, did they? They hid from God because they were naked. They hid together away from God because they were naked.

It isn't to achieve modesty in each other's presence that God clothes them. It is to be able to approach God that their nakedness is clothed. Approach to God is achieved through the death, through the sacrifice of animals.

They approach with the covering of the animal before God. Their own covering is now inadequate, but the covering of the animal is sufficient. It is a reminder to us that we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ who was sacrificed on our behalf.

It is the clothing of His righteousness that enables us to approach God. It is not our own righteousness. We are unworthy.

We are unable to approach God in our own steam and with our own efforts or our own good intentions. The only thing that qualifies us to approach God, the thing that we must be clothed with, is the righteousness of Christ. But God makes a way.

God initiates. God accomplishes the goal of restoration here, even on the heels of the consequences, even though they will be driven from the garden. And it doesn't say they

are asked to leave.

They are driven from the garden. The word that is used, we'll see next time, is the same word that God uses for the Israelites, driving the Canaanites out of the land of promise. This is a forcible exit.

But even in the face of that, God provides and God sustains. Adam and Eve at this point, though fallen, are believers and are in a position through their acknowledgement and their response to the call of God, they are qualified in God's eyes for that grace, for that forgiveness, for that provision. And even in the areas of conflict, even in the areas of marriage and child raising, you know that they are going to have sorrow when Abel dies.

They're going to have sorrow when Cain rebels. But they're also going to have great blessing through Seth. And great blessing in anticipating an eventual reunion with Abel, because they know a lot about salvation and they know a lot about the future that isn't necessarily recorded in our scriptures.

But the thing we should come away from this passage with is great impression of the compassion and the forgiveness of God. Unlike our initial impression that this is the place of cursing and this is the place of rejection, this is the big fall of man, it isn't the fall of man that's really in view. It's the grace of God.

He is long-suffering. He is gentle. He is forgiving.

He is anxious to restore a relationship with us, no matter what we have done. He will sustain us in the conflict with the seed of the serpent, and he will ultimately grant us victory, whether in this life or in the next, through faith and through responding to his call. So we have a wonderful hope in this passage, and we see the issues in our own lives reflected here, and we know that God does sustain, God does hear and answer, and God does vindicate those who respond to him.

Let's close in prayer. Father, we thank you for the truth that's contained in your word. We thank you for the many interesting and challenging ways that you have presented it.

We pray that these things will remain with us and will be the food of our meditation and our contemplation, and that as a result, God the Holy Spirit will use these things to strengthen us, to cleanse us, to purify our view of this world and of our place in it, and that we will live in a way that pleases you and that accomplishes your purpose and contributes to the victory that Jesus Christ has won on the cross on our behalf. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.