

## **The Plan Of Salvation In Genesis 3:15**

**An Early Glimpse of The Gospel**  
**Richard T. Ritenbaugh**  
**Given 23-Nov-13; Sermon #1186**

Take a moment to think about your childhood. I know, for some of you, that is a long time ago. You might have to have a drink or something to remember that far back. But think about those early years as far back as you can remember.

It is often a very blissful, carefree time for children. Most children are not aware of the things that are not going on around them in terms of the larger problems—things that their mom and dad may be going through. I am talking about very small children at this point.

Even though not everyone had a happy or maybe even a memorable childhood (some people may have just had a totally boring childhood, but I would say those are very few), for most of us it is probably not too difficult to recall a lot of fond memories of those times when we were little.

Maybe you can remember all the way back to when you were a toddler or just about ready to go into kindergarten; or those years in elementary school; or maybe you remember best your teenage years.

Perhaps you remember things like playing with your siblings, or running through the woods behind the house and just having a grand old time, or playing a ballgame of some sort, riding bikes down the back roads and feeling the wind in your hair; or maybe times like these: sledding down a hill and enjoying the snow and the cold, swinging in the park, teeter-tottering, climbing a rope, jumping rope, sliding down a slide, playing with your cars or your dolls or your toy soldiers or—maybe if you are really old—your jacks; or playing stickball or whatever in the street.

Maybe your fond memories have to do with spending time with grandparents, or a favorite uncle or aunt; maybe it was not just one, maybe it was having the whole extended family over and all the good times that came from playing with your cousins and talking about old times or whatever. Maybe it was an occasion with a special friend. Your memories are your own. Your childhood was unique to you.

I have several fond memories like this. A lot of mine have to do with playing baseball or playing with my baseball cards, collecting them. I was really quite into baseball when I was a kid. I got books about baseball players from a library. I was totally into baseball.

I also have memories of riding my bike when we lived down in Columbia, SC. I had a hand-me-down ten-speed bicycle. I remember riding around the neighborhood, which was not finished yet. We had some woods and fields around and I was able to bike not only on the streets, but in the woods. There were trails and we used to go about there and just bike all over the place.

But when I began to think about this fairly intently, I came to realize that a good majority of my fond memories had to do with one common theme. For me, many of my fond memories have to do with reading. I recall fairly well learning how to read.

My mother and I pored over a version of 'The Ugly Duckling.' I took to it pretty naturally and I guess I memorized the words in one afternoon, as far as I can recall (maybe I truncated it all down to one time). But I took to reading pretty naturally and I have been a prodigious reader ever since.

I remember my parents reading 'All Creatures Great and Small' by Daniel P. Mannix, which is very hard to find. But if you can find it, it is an excellent book of animal stories about his experiences with animals all over the world.

My sister, Virginia, back at the feast (I cannot remember if it was 1975 or 1976), bought me three James Michener novels of the 1000-page variety: *Hawaii*, *Centennial*, and *The Drifters*. I actually finished all three of those in fairly short order. I was either 9 or 10 or 11 by the time I finished!

Then, in the sixth grade, we were given the book, *The Hobbit*, to read as part of a class assignment. The rest is history. I have been a Tolkien fan ever since and have read *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* more than I can count on my two hands.

My father accused me one time of being fairly obsessed about it; he probably does not remember that. I was sitting there reading *The Lord of the Rings* again for the umpteenth time and he said, "If you only knew the Bible as well as you know *The Lord of the Rings*." I guess that must have spurred me on or something.

But it was not the physical act of reading that I enjoyed so much (it was not lying down on the couch or a being propped up on the bed or anything like that—I was not being lazy). Reading was great to me because I just loved the stories. The stories were everything. And I still love stories. I still love reading them for their plots and for the characters and just finding out what happened.

I was not one to ponder the great and deep meanings that the author was trying to get across, even though he might have been trying to do so. I was not out there to figure out the symbolic meanings of this or that object or this or that little vignette in the story. I did not really want to know what the themes were. That was not what was important. I did not think about what the story said about humanity, or our society today, or our government, or how we do things. That was not what I was interested in.

I simply enjoyed following the characters and the plot, finding out what came next. That was always just more interesting to me than anything. That is just what I liked. It was the story. So stories got me engaged. I wanted to see how it was all going to work out. I wanted to collect the clues to find the murderer in the mystery story. I wanted to make sure that by the time I got to the end of the book, the good guy won and the bad guy lost. I was just into the story. The story was all-important.

And all the dissection of the text that my teachers later demanded was way too much work. I did not like that at all, although later—because I love reading so much and I love the stories and because of what I am going to say next—I became fairly good at figuring out those things that took way too much work.

It turns out that my childhood of listening to and reading stories was actually quite an ideal one.

Those who study child learning and development are realizing that the moral mind is shaped not by lectures, not by lists, not by notes with 31 exclamation points at the end of them tacked by mom on

the refrigerator to take out the garbage or whatever. That is not how the moral mind is shaped in children. It is shaped most of all by stories—not just any old stories, but ones with good moral lessons. Those are the best kind of stories. Those are the ones that do the best shaping.

Why is this? It is an old thing we learned in Spokesman's Club—my father has told me this many dozens of times. He said, “Always have good illustrations because people remember illustrations.” It is the same thing with stories. Illustrations are just condensed stories.

The reason why they are so effective for a child especially is because even if he cannot remember the moral, the lesson (and most often they cannot), they will remember the story and subconsciously they will have begun working on the moral.

Even if you do not tell them, they will be drawing lessons from the story, and the story sticking in their minds will be stored there pretty much forever. It is there for them to access at any point in their lives, and they could then draw that story out of their minds and remember the moral.

“Oh yeah, Jack Sparrow did this in a similar situation and it got him into trouble. I'd better not do that myself.” That is a stupid illustration, but it is a good one from the standpoint of the fact that children keep these things in their minds' filing cabinet and they are there for them to access.

And if they keep hearing stories—hearing similar types of things having the same moral stories taught to them through other stories—these things get stored permanently as memories and they will retain them for the rest of their lives. So they can access these stories at any point and use them to draw lessons, even if they were never told what the moral lesson was.

Some educators have gone so far as to say that it is a parent's job to feed a child's mind with good stories, as it is to feed his body with good food.

We tend to dwell on the physical growth of children because we see their physical growth. We do not necessarily see their mental growth all the time. But we need to be feeding their minds good stories so that they can grow that part of their personality and character. We need to be doing both of course—feeding their bellies and their minds—so that they can be healthy physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Stories fire the child's imagination and they get him thinking. Whether you are aware of it or not, they might be staring somewhere and having a daydream, but they are probably thinking about a story or imagining something.

Stories allow them to think about people and places and situations that they have never considered before. It takes them out of their environment that is usually rather secure and closed and you do not let them wander too far away. Good stories allow them to travel, as it were, and meet other people and go to other places and experience situations that they would not normally experience. So it gives them an opportunity to learn things that they would not have access to without the story.

Usually what a child does is, he puts himself in the place of the protagonist of the story—the main character, the subject—and he then vicariously faces the obstacles that he faces in the story, especially if they are really into that story. They say “Well, I'm Frodo and I have to get from Hobbiton to Mordor. How am I going to do that? Do I want to really face all these Orcs? What would I do in this particular situation?” It is that sort of thing.

If the child is really engaged in these stories, he begins to have to think about some of these situations that are made in the story. So he then gets into the story, into the protagonist's mind, and he follows the character all the way to the concluding dilemma and its solution, and that gets stuck in there and he has access to it.

Another thing it does, he gets the opportunity to sample various emotions at a remove from them. He does not have to face the dragon, but he can consider in his mind and imagine how it would be to have to face a huge lizard of some sort. What would he do? Would he be scared? Would he run away? Would he pick up his shield and his sword and face it? Another silly illustration, but you get the idea: What you would do in this situation?

So through books, through good stories—even through good movies which present stories—he can begin to learn the rudiments of how to handle himself; or maybe even more importantly, how not to handle himself. Because oftentimes the characters in the stories make the wrong decisions. If the author is a good one, he will make sure that it becomes apparent that his wrong decision led to a bad result. The child is smart enough to understand these things. Maybe not fully, but he knows that stepping off the path and going through the woods was not the best idea. He should have stayed on the path this wise counselor had told him to stay on, instead of trying to take a shortcut. Another silly example, but of course it teaches a good lesson: Stay on the straight and narrow.

Now the stories, as you probably figured out already, can be true ones like *All Creatures Great and Small* by Daniel P. Mannix or they can be like Tolkien (fiction). *Alice in Wonderland* is fiction. *Robinson Crusoe* is fiction, but it has tremendous understanding in there—a lot of good lessons in that book. *Les Miserables*—more good lessons in that book, or *The Count of Monte Cristo*.

Of course, all the classics and Shakespeare—all fiction—teach wonderful lessons. They can be nature stories like *All Creatures Great and Small*; sport stories like you would get in *Sports Illustrated* or *The Sporting News* or some of the books about sports that teach good lessons; mysteries—Poirot, Miss Marple, and some of the others that are out there; adventures like *King Solomon's Mines*; rags-to-riches stories from the 1920s and the 1930s—there were a lot of those that were written at that point—even certain science fiction and fantasy. I used the science fiction series there at the feast to bring out some interesting lessons that tied in with the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day.

No matter what these kinds of stories are—what kind of books they are—the overriding factor is that they should be stories that have moral lessons. I do not mean that all the characters in the stories are moral people. Because you cannot have conflict without sin. Sin is the backbone of conflict. Someone is in the right, someone is in the wrong; something good has happened, something bad has happened.

Conflict, of course, is the essence of the story. There would not be a story without the conflict. You are going to have people committing sin in these stories. So if you are picking stories for your children to read or to hear, just because there are sinful characters in there it does not mean that they cannot teach a good lesson.

Look at the book that is on your lap. It contains stories about a lot of people who were very bad. But God teaches us, through their actions, good moral lessons. And that is the thing. The story has to teach a good moral lesson and that the author is good enough to craft his story to bring out an important life lesson.

Now it does not necessarily have to be like *Aesop's Fables* where the moral is at the end and it says "Moral: Don't trust the scorpion. It's his nature to sting." The story is probably enough. The child will figure out the lesson on his own even though a little bit of coaching might be helpful.

I mentioned the treasure trove of stories that you have on your lap. God's stories are the best stories. They are in the best Book. They are in the most moral Book. They are in the one that will teach the best and the most spiritual character to a person.

So make sure that you include plenty of Bible stories in your reading to your children. And when they get old enough to read, make sure they read them themselves. You can start with Basil Wolverton's Bible stories. Those are probably simple enough for first or second grades. But you can find others that are pretty good.

There was a man named Jesse Hurlbut who did a very good collection of Bible stories. They are Protestant. It is a rather thick book and you can go through one a night. Beth did that with our kids for a long time. They are really good and had questions at the end that you could ask. As a parent, you have to edit them for the trinity and that sort of thing. But Hurlbut's Bible stories are pretty good, especially if you get the older editions. The newer ones have been really protestantized and dumbed down. Make sure you put a lot of Bible reading and Bible stories in your children's fare.

Now a word to you, parents, as we wind this introduction up. The story that they will remember the most is the one that they will probably never read in a book—the ongoing story of you and your spouse.

Your children are watching everything you do. They hear every word you say. They notice your emotions and your reactions and they are even pretty keen on your body language. They can read you like a book.

They are looking to see how you face various situations; how you overcome problems; how you interact especially with each other; and how you interact with relatives and friends and contacts outside the home like the teacher or the principal, the mechanic, the baker, the banker, the policeman, and the grocery clerk. They want to know how you treat other people, those who can help you and those who have nothing to help you with—the high and the low. Those things—the way you act—are going to pretty much guide them along the way that they will act too. Because they are going to mimic you in every way. It is just how they do it.

We have the saying "The apple doesn't fall very far from the tree." It just depends on what they see in the home. So make sure that there is a good moral to your story, because they will pick it up and those good moral lessons will be passed along to them. We have also heard the saying "I would rather see a sermon than hear one any day." And that is what they are doing when they watch you.

A few moments ago I mentioned that God uses stories in His Book and He uses a lot of stories. He uses these stories for the same reasons that I have just mentioned. He is training His children to grow up into His own character. We learn deep spiritual lessons from the stories that are in the Bible. We learn them on many different levels and we learn them from many different angles. God knows that storytelling is an effective means of conveying and remembering truths that would be otherwise difficult to learn.

The greatest story of all is His plan of salvation. We are going to see that He introduces this story very early in the Book. As a matter of fact, He introduces the story of salvation in story form in the Garden of Eden.

Let us go to Matthew. This is after Jesus had just given the Parable of the Sower to the multitudes that were there to hear Him on the shore.

**Matthew 13:10-17** And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?” He answered and said to them, “Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: ‘Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; for the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.’ But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.”

**Matthew 13:34** All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them.

One of the many striking aspects of reading the four gospels is seeing how many stories Jesus actually told. There are stories everywhere. He used many metaphors. They are just strewn throughout His teaching. He used striking illustrations on almost every page in His teaching to get us to say “Hmm, never thought of it that way” or “Wow! That’s impressive.” Verse 34 tells us very clearly that He could not speak to the people without using a parable; it was just part of His nature. He just knew how to craft His instruction so that it would bring out very colorful pictures in people’s minds.

Sometimes He would tell a story. Sometimes it would be just one detail that painted an entire picture all on its own, using a certain word that brought up things in the people’s experience that they could really relate to.

A parable is a narrative that is taken from common life or from nature and it contains moral or spiritual meaning. It is a rather simple thing to define. It could be a long narrative, like the Parable of the Good Samaritan that goes on for many verses, or the Parable of the Talents, or the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats. They go on for a whole column or two and they are one continuous narrative that tell pretty much one story and have a lot of detail in them.

Or they could be a single line: “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.” That is a parable in just one sentence. People can think on that and get spiritual meaning from it.

So we can see from all of the gospels that Jesus knew how powerful, effective, and memorable a good story, a good illustration, a fitting word is that brings out deeper meaning than a common word.

His stories, as we find out from what He said here in Matthew 13, had so much depth to them and could be looked at from so many different angles that it would give a good spiritual lesson to those who were uninitiated to what He was actually trying to say.

But those who had been enlightened through the Holy Spirit and whom He was working with would get an entirely different meaning—a much deeper spiritual meaning—out of the same words. A lot of times it is not just the obvious meaning and the deep spiritual meaning, but there may be three or four other levels in between, depending on the perspective that you view the parable from. I think only the Son of God could construct things that marvelously.

Now what we need to understand, as we begin here (because we are eventually trying to find our way back to Genesis 3) is that Jesus of Nazareth—the One who gave these parables, the One who gave all these wonderful illustrations that stick so well in our brains—is that same personality, the One with the same character—as the One who was called Yahweh, the Lord and God of the Old Testament.

Do you think that the same person would teach differently in one part of the Bible than He does in another? We have two scriptures that we commonly go to—Hebrews 13:8 which says, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” and Malachi 3:6 which says, “I am the Lord. I do not change.” He is a very consistent God. If He were not consistent, we could not have faith in Him. We would not know how He was going to act. If He did not use the same patterns all the time, then we could not model our behavior after Him because there would be nothing to model after. It would be schizophrenic and all over the place.

But our God is the same. If He says one thing in one part of the Bible, it is going to be supported elsewhere in the Bible. He is the same. He teaches the same thing and He teaches the same way. His methods do not change all that much. So if He taught in parables and metaphors and stories during His ministry while He was here on earth, we are going to find similar things in other parts of the Bible. Because He says in Matthew 13 verse 34: “And without a parable He did not speak to them.”

That is our basis for what we are going to talk about today.

Let us go to Genesis 3, back into the Garden of Eden. We are going to review what the Protestants call ‘The Fall of Man.’ This is where Satan deceived Eve into sin, and then Eve gave to her husband, and he just lost it and ate without thinking.

**Genesis 3:1-8** Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden’?” And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’” Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they

knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

Here is a true story that we all know very well. We have heard it many times. We have read it many times. We have had many sermons. We have probably read commentaries on it.

It is the eight verses that tell the tale of the deception and turning of mankind by Satan the Devil as the serpent. And we see very clearly that Satan starts with a question, and immediately in questioning what God said, he begins to undermine God's instruction to Adam, which in my Bible is right across the page, in Genesis 2:16-17. So he starts to immediately tinker with the idea that God should be obeyed, that He is all-powerful and all-knowing.

First of all, he questions God's motives: "Why do you think God is doing this? Why do you think He forbids this fruit to you? He has probably got something—some goal, some plan—that He hasn't told you yet. So maybe you ought to think this thing through."

He starts accusing God of misleading them and withholding things from them: "Why should He keep back this tree from you? Don't you know that if you eat of that tree, it's going to make you wise? He wants to keep you stupid. He wants to keep you foolish. He wants to keep you down because He wants to be the big guy on campus. If you take of the fruit of the tree, then you're going to know as much as Him, and then you'll be His rival."

He does not say all this. He does not need to. All he has to do is start undermining the authority and start questioning, just laying these little time bombs in her mind, so that she will say: "We deserve more. Why's He doing this? We deserve the whole garden—not just everything but that one tree."

So he takes essentially their whole foundation out from under them by asking these very leading questions, and they fall for it completely.

Once they ate of the fruit of the tree, their innocence was gone. They had sinned. They had transgressed God's instruction which was very simple: "Don't eat of this one tree." And immediately they felt shame, which is visualized here in the fact that they were naked, and they noticed for the first time that they were naked and they should be ashamed about it.

But it was sin that was doing this to them. They felt shame. They felt guilty because they knew they had transgressed God's law. You could see from their running away from God and hiding that they felt guilty. And with that guilt, they felt fear; they feared what God would do because they had transgressed His simple commandment to stay away from that tree.

In the ensuing verses, verses 9-13, God sees that the situation before Him was a three-ring circus; that is, in each ring was one guilty party. There was the serpent, the woman, and the man.

He then decides to deal with each one in turn. The man blames the woman. The woman blames the snake. The snake knew full well what he had done, and he was sitting there very proud of what he had done.



It appears as though God was right there on the scene—there was Adam, there was Eve, there was God. There was Satan still hanging around as the serpent. He decided that he would stick around for the fireworks because this was going to be fun. Look at all the mess that he had caused.

It makes me think of those commercials where Mayhem is there. Have you ever seen those insurance commercials of Allstate and Mayhem? I think of Satan like the Mayhem guy. He is just there to make the biggest mess that he can and he is going to stay around and watch all the flipping cars and all the things burning and whatnot. The look on the man's face is there. He is just getting a big kick out of it. So that is how I think of Satan here, waiting for God to make His pronouncements. Maybe he was not like that, but it just seems from the fact that he stuck around for all the excitement. He was pretty pleased with his handiwork and he wanted to see firsthand how this was all going to turn out.

So what we have, in the verses after verse 14 down through verse 19, are God's curses on these three parties in this three-ring circus. He starts with the real perpetrator of the crime. He starts with the serpent.

**Genesis 3:14** So the Lord God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life."

God is not saying that the serpent had legs and now He was going to make him go on his belly. This is a Hebraic way of saying that he was going to be humiliated. He was going to be a symbol of humiliation. The Hebrews brought this out later on. The expression "eating the dust" became an expression of being humiliated and that is essentially what God is telling him here, that he is going to be brought down—his pride is going to be brought down—and the serpent would be a symbol of this.

**Genesis 3:15-19** "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." To the woman 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." Then to Adam He said, "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; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. 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."

I do not want to say very much about the curses on Eve and Adam here. They have been dealt with in other places. Even though they do add to the story that is being told here, I want to concentrate primarily on verse 15. But before we get to that, notice I have been calling these things the three curses that God put on Satan, Eve, and Adam. And they are certainly curses; I do not want to say that they are not curses. They are.

But I prefer to call this section 'The First Prophecy.' I wrote a series of articles many moons ago. I think there were three of them. I dealt with each one of the curses, not necessarily as a curse, but as a prophecy of how things were going to work out over time. So I prefer to call them prophecies because, the way I am, I prefer a much more positive way of looking at these things rather than thinking them as a litany of curses, which is rather negative.

God is not necessarily down on men. He is not down on women. He was very disappointed by Adam and Eve's sin, and that sin would have to be paid for. He tells Adam "You're going to return to dust," because death obviously is the wage of sin. So he was going to have to pay for that.

Women would also pay by that same way: Women would die just as men die. Of course, there were other things now. One of her main things was to bring forth children and now that was not going to be easy for her. There was going to be a lot of sorrow and heartbreak in all that.

And for men, their main activity is to go out and bring home the bacon. Their job is to support their children and their families and provide for them. God said, "Because you have sinned, this is going to be more difficult now too" and he was going to have to toil and toil until he basically fell in the traces and died. He would have to work all this life in very hard conditions to get food from the ground, to get wealth from the ground.

It would have been a whole lot better had they not sinned. God would have provided much more for them.

So that is the gist of those two prophecies. Their sin had made things a whole lot worse for them and they were going to have pay the price and ultimately die for these sins.

Obviously these are prophecies, but recently I have thought to study them as one long parable, or you could look at them as three individual parables and look at them in much greater detail. Doing so, I think, allows us to draw even more meaning from them—either as prophecies or as curses. There is more to it. God always has many layers, and looking at them as a parable brings out other things. So if we see them as very instructive stories rather than strictly as judgments, then we can see more of what God is doing with men, and with Satan, and trying to bring things around, so that we learn the right lessons and ultimately make it into His Kingdom.

But we are going to focus on God's pronouncement to the serpent—and specifically verse 15.

Now verse 15 is special and it has been noted by Bible scholars and theologians and preachers from very early on as what they called in Latin 'Protoevangelium.' It means 'The First Gospel.' What they recognize—and I recognize too here—is that in this one verse is a super-condensed story that functions both as prophecy and instruction to Adam and Eve and their first exposure to what would become the gospel—the one that Jesus preached.

Now, to us, looking at verse 15—which is essentially five clauses long, five lines of poetry, very small (27 words long)—there are eight significant details you can get out of this one verse that point directly at God's plan of salvation. And it is told in the story of the enmity between the serpent and the Seed of the woman—or you can even say 'the serpent and the woman' (it starts out with that, but it is mostly about the serpent and the Seed of the woman). And every word seems to be significant in this verse.

If we look at it very closely, we can then see how they could have had an inkling of what God was going to eventually do to bring about the salvation of mankind, to bring about the correction of this sin—and not only the sin, but the deception that led to the sin and the deceiver who set the deception that led to the sin. And it would all be worked out in time and it would be worked out with the representatives of the same players essentially—the man, the woman, and the serpent.

So you would say that at some point in the future, the serpent and the Seed who came from a woman—as the verse says—are going to all come together again and this thing is going to be settled.

Let us go to Genesis 4. I just want to give you an idea that Eve, especially, and probably Adam as well, keyed in on this instruction from Genesis 3:15. We can tell this because of what she named her firstborn son.

**Genesis 4:1** Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, “I have acquired a man from the Lord.”

It just seems rather innocuous to us that she would name her firstborn ‘acquired’ or ‘get’ or ‘gotten.’ But there is more to it than that. The important phrase in this entire meaning of the name is “from the Lord.” What she was assuming, by naming him Cain, is that he was the seed that was going to correct the problem. So her first seed, her first descendant, she thought would be the one to undo the curse and she then named him Cain because she had gotten the promised Seed from the Lord. But we know that that was not the case. He actually made it worse and became a byword for the rest of humanity. Now we know it as “the way of Cain.”

So you can tell that she was thinking about this: “Hey, Cain pops out. Here’s the Messiah! Here’s the one that’s going to solve the problem. I’ve gotten the Seed from the Lord.” And it did not work out that way. She was looking much too soon.

If she had really thought about what God had said, it should have been clear that He was foreseeing a long decline of humanity until the time when it would all be finished. So she at least understood this in part. She knew that God was trying to get across an important bit of information in this Protoevangelium. But she did not get it completely. I hope that by the end of the sermon today that we see as much as we can, as completely as we can, what is here in Genesis 3:15.

I do want to mention, even before we get into that, that we need to see there are aspects of the story here which make it into a parable.

First of all, the first thing that God says tells us is who the main actor in this story is. In verse 15, He says: “and I will put enmity.” So the main actor in the plan of salvation, we know, is the protagonist, God Himself. He is the One that is going to work things out.

We find out then, right after that, there is enmity. Immediately we see that there is conflict. There is hostility. There are two sides in this story and without conflict, as I mentioned before, there is no story.

Then we find out that not only is there antagonism between the serpent and the woman, but then it expands out to the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, which means that their descendants, as it were, would be at each others’ throats as well. There will be a future seed (I am talking plural here—many people, a group) of the woman and then there will be a group (many people) who are the seed of the serpent, and they are going to be at enmity with one another too, and this is divinely appointed by God (“I will put enmity between them”).

And then we should also realize that the conflict escalates to the point where we have a larger-than-life battle—a struggle to the death—between a singular Seed (because it mentions ‘He’) and the serpent. And the serpent is the one decisively defeated.

So you have beginning, middle, end. You have conflict, you have a main character, you have an antagonist. All the elements of a story are there. One verse tells the whole story and it is an amazing construct that God did here.

We are going to get into these eight details of the plan of salvation. But I did not put these in any particular order as how they appear in Genesis 3:15. I am just going to bring out these details one by one because they all go together and I think we can get a lot out of this.

1. The redeemer and the restorer of humanity is the Seed, the One that is called 'He' here.

The Seed is a descendant of the woman. So, because He is a descendant of a woman, He is a man. The Seed of the woman is a man. It is very clear on this point that the One—the Redeemer, the Savior—comes from a woman.

We are going to go through these verses. They are just texts that support this from the New Testament and I have a few from the Old Testament. Let us start in Luke 1, with the promise of the birth of Jesus Christ to Mary.

**Luke 1:26-31** Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS."

We will see this is not just the promise, but a culmination of the promise to Mary.

**Luke 2:4-7** Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Not only was He promised to be born of Mary, He was actually born of Mary.

Paul verifies this again in Galatians 4. He writes:

**Galatians 4:3-5** Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world [Paul is talking about bondage to Satan and his demons]. But when the fullness of the time had come [when the appointed time that God had said had come], God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

So Paul is essentially saying that He was born the Seed of the woman, and He came to save us from our sins and adopt us as sons into the God Family.

**Luke 3:23** Now Jesus Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, the son of Heli.

Now to verse 38. It goes all the way through the genealogy.

**Luke 3:38** the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

So Luke takes us all the way to Adam, and of course his wife Eve, to show He was the Seed of the woman.

That was the first point: the Redeemer—the restorer of humanity—is a man.

2. On that same note, but on the flip side, He must be, at the same time, a being somehow greater than a man and even greater than Satan, since He is to be the conqueror of that spirit of disobedience that overcame mankind. So He has to be a man-plus. He must therefore be divine.

**Philippians 2:5-8** Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

We find out from this verse that Jesus Christ—or the Word or Yahweh, as He was known—was with the Father in heaven and volunteered to humble Himself and become a sperm cell to be implanted into the womb of Mary and become a man. He was a man, but He had the nature of God, to some degree. There is no way you could really quantify it. He was Himself. He was the personality and character, but He did not have His glory. He did not have all the power. So He was a man and much greater than a man. I have heard my father describe Him before as a man with as much God that could be packed into Him.

Jesus Himself verifies this to His disciples in John chapter 17.

**John 17:3-5** And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

**John 17:24** Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

John 20. This is when Thomas realizes who Christ is.

**John 20:28** And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!”

**John 20:31** but these are written [John writes] that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

So the second point is He was a man, yes, but He—this Redeemer—was also divine.

3. The redemption of mankind involves a new nature, and this new nature is at enmity with this nature of Satan to which man became subject through sin.

The Redeemer can only deliver a sinful world by being sinless Himself. He had this other nature that was totally at enmity with Satan and He proved that by being sinless. He lived a life in opposition to Satan and his deceptions. He did exactly the opposite of Adam and Eve. He was not deceived. He did not succumb.

**I John 3:4-5** Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.

**Matthew 1:20-21** But while [Joseph] thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.”

He could only do that by being sinless Himself.

Finally, Paul writes in II Corinthians 5:

**II Corinthians 5:19** God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

**II Corinthians 5:21** For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in [or through] Him.

This Redeemer would have to be sinless. He would have to be in total opposition to the nature of Satan.

4. What can be extrapolated from what we just learned is that because God has to put enmity between the woman’s Seed and Satan, the regeneration that occurs (we would call it ‘being born-again’ when one is first called, and then using God’s Spirit throughout one’s life to have a new mind) has to be by divine power; that God would have to do this Himself.

God would have to change people’s minds because enmity to Satan is not a natural carnal human reaction. We are kind of wired because we are fleshly to listen to his appeals because we always want to satisfy our flesh. So our natural inclination leans toward following Satan, not being hostile to him. And just see how easily Eve succumbed to his deceptions. We do too. So this new mind—this enmity—has to be activated by God Himself.

In John 3:3-5 Jesus says that we must be born again. There must be a regeneration. We must be born by the water and by the Spirit in order for us to see the Kingdom of God.

**Titus 3:4-7** But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

So essentially, by saying that God would put enmity between the woman's Seed and Satan, this was an early indication that He would save us by grace by giving us a new nature by His own power and kindness.

I Peter 1:22 says a similar thing.

**I Peter 1:22** Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.

God opens our minds to the truth and we are then regenerated spiritually.

5. The redemption of mankind will be accomplished by vicarious suffering.

The Redeemer will have to suffer. While He is crushing the head of the Serpent, He is going to have His heel bruised. What it means is that He is going to have to go through an amount of suffering in order to accomplish this victory. We find out from Genesis 3:15 that the Redeemer is not going to come through this unscathed. He will have to suffer.

**Isaiah 53:3-5** He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him [which is an allusion back to Genesis 3]; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.

**Isaiah 53:10** Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin. . .

**Isaiah 53:11** He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities.

So by His vicarious suffering for us, our sins will be forgiven.

**Hebrews 5:7-9** who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.

I Peter 2 says that He suffered for our sins.

**I Peter 2:21** Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps.

**I Peter 2:24** who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.

That is what we see in Genesis 3:15. That because of His suffering the victory will be accomplished.

6. His work of redemption will involve the gathering of an elect seed.

There is a seed of the woman. They are not all mankind. They are a different people. They are, in some places, called “a peculiar people, a special people, a set-apart people.” Those are the ones (just that small group) who are at enmity with Satan and are also at enmity with those who are subject to Satan.

John 8:44 tells us that the Jews at that time who were opposing Christ were of their father, the Devil. They were part of Satan’s seed, the seed of the serpent.

Malachi 3:16-18 says that those who talk about God with one another are His special treasure.

Paul says in his doctrinal section of Romans:

**Romans 4:13** For the promise that he [meaning Abraham] would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

**Romans 4:16** Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.

So those who are of the seed of Abraham, as it says in Romans 9:6-8, are just not all Israel but those who are made the seed of Abraham through the blood of Christ.

Galatians 3:29 says that if you are the seed of Abraham, then you are heirs of God.

I Peter 2:9-10 says that we are a special people to God, being built up a holy nation and priesthood to Him.

That is the group that is mentioned here in Genesis 3:15 as the Seed of the woman—a whole group of people who are opposed to Satan.

7. The process of redemption will involve a perpetual conflict of the godly seed in order to bruise the head of the serpent.

The godly seed will all be involved (not just the One—Jesus Christ—but all of those who are His will all be involved) in an effort to destroy the works of the Devil. As my father has put it in his sermons, there *will* be a Christian fight. We are all being drafted, as part of God’s army, to oppose Satan the Devil and his works.

**Galatians 5:16-17** I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

He is showing that there is a conflict between those who follow their own carnal desires and Satan, and those who will follow the proddings of God’s Spirit.



In Ephesians 6:10-13, Paul says “Put on the armor of God so that you may be able to stand” because you fight against “principalities and powers and evil spirits and wickedness in high places” and you need to have all those spiritual attributes to guard you, as well as what God does.

**James 4:7** Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

**I Peter 5:8-9** Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

So we will all suffer with Christ in that same way fighting against Satan.

8. Salvation involves the ultimate triumph of both the Seed—Christ—and all humanity.

What we see at the end of Genesis 3:15 is that Satan is totally vanquished and death is conquered. Since he is the one that is leading to sin and sin leads to death, and if we conquer him we conquer sin, we are eventually going to conquer death and paradise is restored.

Please turn to John 12. This was just before Jesus’ last Passover.

**John 12:27-32** Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name. Then a voice came from heaven, saying, “I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.” Therefore the people who stood by and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to Him.” Jesus answered and said, “This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. [And then] And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself [ultimately].”

By the vanquishing of Satan by this point—overcoming him and making sure that He would ultimately win—would, in time, bring all people to Christ. It is just only a matter of living this out until the time is right.

As Paul is signing off to the Romans in chapter 16, he says:

**Romans 16:20** And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.

In I Corinthians 15:20-28, Paul says that Christ is the second Adam and He will ultimately conquer death and give the Kingdom up to the Father, and all will be restored to God.

So we have in this one little verse—Genesis 3:15—hints of God’s plan of salvation. It actually did not take much to pull them out. It is a precursor to the Gospel preached by Jesus Christ in all its fullness during His ministry. He said in Mark 1:

**Mark 1:14-15** Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

That began His exposition of all the details of God's plan and way of life that He wanted to give us so that we can do our parts in it.

After what we have seen today, Moses, who is the human author of Genesis, could have prefaced Genesis 3—maybe even verse 15—just as Mark prefaced his entire gospel (as he says in verse 1): “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”