

John 19:23-30

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[0:00] Turn with me in a copy of God's Word to Genesis chapter 3 and verses 14 and 15.

! Amen.

Amen. Genesis chapter 3 and verse 14 and 15. Let's hear the word of the Lord together. The Lord God said to the serpent, Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field.

On your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring.

He shall bruise your head, but you shall bruise his heel. The grass withers, the flowers fade, but the Word of our God endures forever.

[1:38] I have five one-word points this morning, each beginning with the letter S. Five one-word points each beginning with the letter S.

So boys and girls, you can count it on your fingers. I thought I'd keep it simple this morning so your parents can follow along. Okay? So five one-word points each beginning with the letter S.

Here's the first one. Seed. A seed. Reading the Bible is like watching a plant grow from seed to full flower.

Reading the Bible is like watching a plant grow from seed to full flower. A seed is actually a tiny plant encased in a hard shell.

Everything required for the plant to grow to full maturity and to full flower is in that seed. The DNA code is complete.

[2:39] And it's only a matter of time until that seed develops into a shoot, and then into a small plant, and then into a big tree in full flower. And that's a bit like reading the Bible.

The early chapters of Genesis are like that seed. They contain all of the key information for the rest of the Bible story to develop. And we could say that about Genesis 3.15.

It is the seed promise of the Old Testament. I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and her offspring.

He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel. This verse has been called in the Christian tradition the Proto-Euangelion, which is just a fancy way of saying the first announcement of the gospel in the Old Testament.

And I want to suggest that this Proto-Euangelion, this first announcement of the gospel, is like a seed that organically grows through the Scriptures until it comes to its full blossom in the coming of Jesus Christ, the one who defeats God's enemy and saves God's people.

[3:58] Now, what I want to do with this seed promise is treat it a bit like a sweet. So here's the second S, right? A seed and then a sweet, a boiled sweet.

Boys and girls, what do your parents say about boiled sweets? Okay? Put them in your mouth. Roll it around in your tongue. Don't crunch it because it's bad for your teeth.

It's bad for your teeth anyway. But roll it around. Suck all the goodness out of it. That's what I want us to do with this verse. I want us to squeeze all the goodness out of this one verse like a boiled sweet.

So notice with me, first of all, what God promises here. I will put enmity between you and the woman. Enmity between the serpent, a figure representing the devil, and the woman, Eve, the mother of all living.

The promise to put enmity between the serpent and the woman is surprising for the very simple reason that as God speaks these words, the serpent and the woman are on the same side, the same team.

[5:10] They're on team devil. You remember that the woman had joined the serpent's side when she ate from the forbidden tree? Yet here is God graciously bringing her back onto His side by forcing enmity between the serpent and the woman.

No sooner had the serpent forced enmity between God and the woman than God now forces enmity between the serpent and the woman.

And the enmity is not just between the serpent and the woman. Did you notice that in our passage in the second line of verse 15? It will continue between their respective offsprings, between your offspring and her offspring.

That is, God is going to maintain the enmity between the serpent and the woman in their respective offsprings. The enmity will not just last for one generation.

It will be for all generations until it climaxes in a final fight, a final battle between a descendant of the woman and the serpent himself.

[6:25] He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel. It will be a bloody battle. It will end in injury for the offspring of the woman and in death for the serpent.

This is how death is going to come to this serpent. By an offspring of the woman, a seed of the woman, a male seed, a he, not a she, a him, not a her.

And what do we call male descendants? Sons. There's our third S. Son. What is promised here is a son.

I said I wanted to treat Genesis 3.15 like a sweet and swirl it around and get all the goodness out of it. Well, the main piece of goodness of this seed promise is that God promises to send a son.

The whole of the Old Testament is the long search for a promised son. In the beginning, Adam was God's son, but he forfeited that right by his disobedience, and so God promised another son, the son here in Genesis 3.15.

[7:41] Abraham was promised a son through whom he would be made into a great nation. David was promised a son through whom his kingdom would be established forever.

The whole of the Old Testament is the long search for a promised son. And it begins with Genesis 3.15.

Sinclair Ferguson has put it well when he said that the whole of the Old Testament is really just a footnote to Genesis 3.15. Now, I think that there are seven things about this son that we can learn. That's right, I did just say seven. Boys and girls, what's five plus seven? Twelve. Okay? Don't tell your mums and dads this is a 12-point sermon.

Okay? So we've seen a seed, a sweet, a son, and now we've got seven things about the son.

Okay? So you can use your other hand and maybe your toes to count these.

[8:46] Okay? Seven things about the son. Now, you may be thinking, I mean, come on. It's just one verse. You're going to get seven things about this son. Sounds like that old ditty.

Wonderful things in the Bible I see. Some put there by God. Some put there by me. Okay? Well, I hope by the end you'll be convinced, actually, you didn't put them there, Johnny.

They can be reasonably deduced from this one verse. So you ready? Here's the first one. This son will descend from a woman with no mention of his father.

This son will descend from a woman with no mention of his father. Now, that's surprising because it's the man who holds the power of begetting descendants.

Basic biology tells us that the seed that produces offspring resides in the man, not the woman. Yet there is no mention of Adam here.

[9:48] The son will descend from the woman without mention or help of the man. Now, of course, in order for this woman, Eve, to have any offspring, Adam needs to be involved.

But the emphasis is on the son coming from a woman without mention of the father. And in this sense, we ought to read the Old Testament with an eye on the women of the Bible and not so much

the men.

What we have here, I think, is the faintest echoes of a virgin birth. An offspring of the woman will come without the help of a man.

Number two, he will be a representative son. He will be a representative son. He will represent all the offspring who descend from the woman.

This is seen in the singular collective sense of offspring. The Hebrew word for offspring here is *serah*. It only ever appears in the singular in Hebrew, never in the plural.

[10:52] Now, a singular noun like seed can refer to an individual person or a collective group. We have such words in English.

Fish or sheep. Boys and girls, when you see one fish, what do you say? You say, look, there's a fish. When you see a whole lot of fish, what do you say?

You say, look, look at the fish. Fish. You don't say, look at the fishies, as my Hannah says. You're more intelligent than my Hannah. Okay? It's just a single word. It's a single noun.

And it could refer to a single individual fish or it could refer to a group of fish. Well, that's a bit like the word offspring. It could, in one instance, refer to an individual like it does in the third line.

He shall bruise your head. You shall bruise his heel. There's the individual offspring. But it can also refer to a collective offspring. That's the second line.

[11:52] And between your offspring and her offspring. In other words, when this individual offspring comes, he will come as an offspring connected to all the other offspring who have come before him.

He will be their representative. So that when he goes into battle with the ancient serpent, he will be battling, fighting on behalf of all of the offspring.

So we have here a representative son. Number three, he will be a warrior son. A warrior son.

Because he's going to bring the enmity to a focal point with a serpent in a fight, he is a warrior son.

We might call him a serpent crushing son. That's the third thing. He's a warrior son. So he will descend from a woman with no mention of his father.

He will be a representative son. He will be a warrior son. Number four, he will be an obedient son. An obedient son.

[13:00] The mission of this offspring, the plan for his life, is that he come and fight the serpent. That's God's plan for his life. And if he's going to do it, then he must be obedient to God who sent him to do it.

He must be an obedient son. Now the reason I speak about his obedience is because it's not going to be easy. He's going to have to fight the serpent. And he's going to have to endure some injury as well.

It's going to involve sacrifice. So he's going to be an obedient son to his calling to fight the serpent. But it's going to involve sacrifice.

Which leads to the fifth thing about this son. He will descend from a woman without mention of his father. Be a representative son. A warrior son. An obedient son.

Are you ready for the fifth one? He will be a suffering son. A suffering son. He will crush the serpent in the head.

[14:00] But in that moment, he himself will be bruised in the heel. Now the anatomical part of the body is significant. Because the serpent is cursed in verse 14 to crawl on its belly all its days.

The heel of this man is really the only part that the serpent can bite and bruise. But we mustn't think that the serpent is going to take the son by surprise.

And sort of sneak up behind him. Bite him in the heel. Surprise him. Now notice the order of events in the third line of verse 15.

He, the offspring of the woman, the individual, he shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel.

The son goes looking for the serpent. In other words, it is in the act of the son first bruising the serpent in the head that the serpent grabs onto his heel.

[15:04] But it is the son who initiates the war. Who goes to war with the serpent. And the son will be bruised as a result.

He will have scars to prove it. Boys and girls, have you ever seen some of those programs on TV about snakes? And how when they bite, they stick their fangs into your skin.

Well, what do they leave? Scars. This son is going to fight that serpent. And he's going to come out of the battle with scars on his body to prove it.

So he will be a suffering son. He will descend from a woman with no mention of his father. He will be a representative son. A warrior son. An obedient son.

A suffering son. Number six. A triumphant son. A triumphant son. Yes, he's going to suffer. But he's also going to be victorious.

[16:06] We see this in two ways. First, notice the reversal in the order of references to the serpent and his opponent.

Look again at the first line of verse 15. The serpent is mentioned first, then the woman. See him in the second line of verse 15. The offspring of the serpent is mentioned first, then the offspring of the woman.

But now notice the third line. The order flips around. The individual offspring from the woman is mentioned first. He shall bruise your head.

And then the serpent himself is mentioned second. The flipping of the order shows the ultimate victory will belong to the seed of the woman.

In the end, the seed of the woman will become dominant over the serpent. But if you read your Old Testament, often throughout it, it is the offspring of the serpent that is dominant over the offspring of the woman.

[17:09] Egypt over Israel. Put them in slavery for 400 years. The Canaanites over Israel. They oppress them for 350 years during the book of Judges.

The Philistines over Israel. Assyria over Israel. Babylon over Israel. Assyria and Babylon take Israel and Judah into exile.

All through the Old Testament. It is like the offspring of the serpent gets the upper hand over the offspring of the woman. But when he comes.

When this individual of the woman comes. Then things will turn around. He will get the victory. This is the first way we see that he will be triumphant.

But the second way is more obvious. He shall bruise your head. And you shall bruise his heel. This son of the woman will crush the serpent in the head.

[18:13] He will inflict a blow to the head of the serpent. Which will ultimately end in the death of the serpent. What's striking in the rest of the Old Testament.

Is that when the fighting representative of God's people gets victory over their enemies. It often comes with a blow to the head. Just think about Joshua.

And the five Amorite kings. After he captures the kings. He gets his commanders to lie them down. And they stand on their necks. And then they hang them. In trees.

Deborah and Barak fight against Sisera. The representative of the king of Habor. And how does he die? With a tent peg in the head. In the book of Judges.

Abimelech gets a millstone in the head. And boys and girls. What's the main example in the Old Testament. Of some enemy of God dying with a blow to the head.

[19:15] Goliath. David slings his stone and kills the great giant in the head. In the Old Testament. God's people are rescued by a representative.

Who destroys God's enemy. With a deadly blow to the head. Excuse me. And all these fights in the Old Testament.

They're all mini dramas. They're all footnotes. To Genesis 3.15. Each of them pointing to the ultimate fight. Between the representative offspring of the woman.

And the serpent himself. And in the end. This offspring of the woman. Will be triumphant. That was the sixth thing we saw about this son.

He will descend from a woman. With no mention of his father. A representative son. A warrior son. An obedient son. Suffering son. Triumphant son. You ready for number seven? He will be a second and last Adam.

[20:20] A second and last Adam. Why do I say that? Well think about it. This son will do what the first Adam was supposed to do.

What was Adam supposed to do? He was supposed to crush the serpent in the head at a tree. But he didn't do it. But look what this son is going to do.

He's going to crush the serpent in the head. So he will be a second Adam. And precisely because he will be triumphant in his fight with the serpent.

We can say he'll be the last Adam. If he does what the first Adam should have done. Then he's a second Adam. And if he defeats the serpent.

Then there's no need for a third Adam. And so we can safely say. That this son. Will be a second. And last.

[21:16] Adam. So. Do you remember all the things about the son? Descend from a woman. Without mention of his father. Representative son. Warrior son. Obedient son.

Suffering son. Triumphant son. And a second. And last. Adam. That's what we know about the son. But I said there were five S's. And we're at number three. A seed. A sweet. A son. Number four. A skull. A skull.

A skull. In the New Testament. When Jesus. Is crucified. We read that they. Crucified him. At a place called Golgotha.

It is. A Greek. Transliteration. Of an Aramaic term. Which means. Place. Of a skull. Some people think. The place gets its name.

[22:11] From the shape of the hill. On which Jesus was crucified. They think it might have looked like a skull. Maybe. Maybe not. But in any case. We get the point.

It's the place of death. But isn't it interesting. That the anatomical part of the body. That symbolizes the death. Is a skull.

Where do you get skulls from? Heads. When a head is shot. Or killed. It rots. And it becomes. A skull.

Does that remind you of anything? From Genesis 3.15. He shall bruise your head. Death was what the serpent brought into the garden.

Death was what Jesus suffered in our place on the cross. And yet it is by that same death that the serpent is now bruised and crushed in the head. And so the New Testament shows us that the seed promise of the son in Genesis 3.15 finds its ultimate fulfillment.

[23:18] Its ultimate blossom. Do you remember that analogy of reading the Bible? Like watching a seed grow from seed to full flower. The ultimate blossom of the Genesis 3.15 promise is found in Jesus.

As he goes to war against the serpent, the devil, on the cross. At a place resembling a skull. And in that moment on the cross as Jesus suffers at the hand of the ancient serpent.

As the ancient serpent bruises him in the heel. Jesus is bruising him in the head. And again it's not like Satan snuck up on Jesus.

And caught him unawares and grabbed him and crucified him. And Jesus was struggling with that. No, Jesus went looking for the devil. And in his crucifixion.

In his self-sacrifice. He bruised him in the head. There are some lovely parallels between the first Adam and Jesus, the second and last Adam.

[24:24] The first Adam was supposed to crush the serpent in the head by a tree. Jesus, the second and last Adam, crushes the serpent in a head on a tree. Adam entered into battle with the serpent naked beside a tree.

Jesus goes into battle with the serpent naked on a tree. Adam brought the curse of thorns and thistles into the world by his disobedience.

Jesus, when he dies, what's on his head? A crown of thorns. As he takes the curse for Adam's disobedience. Adam didn't fight the serpent.

He wasn't willing to sacrifice himself for his bride in the battle with the serpent. Instead he capitulated to his temptation. Jesus resisted the devil's temptations.

He was willing to sacrifice for his bride at great cost to himself. He suffered death on a cross and has five scars to prove it.

[25:25] Remember boys and girls, we talked about how when a snake bites you it leaves the scar. Well Jesus went into battle with the devil and came out with scars. In his hands, in his feet, in his side.

But that was not the end. He didn't just remain dead on Golgotha's hill. Three days later, he rose from the dead. Which was his ultimate victory over this ancient serpent, the devil.

Here then is the son of Genesis 3.15. The representative, warrior, obedient, suffering but triumphant son. The second and last Adam.

Here's the offspring of the woman. If you noticed earlier, we read from John's gospel. I wonder if you were thinking, what's the connection between John chapter 19 and Genesis 3.15?

Well, have you ever wondered about the references to Jesus' mother at the cross in the four gospels? In each of the four gospels, we're told that Mary, his mother, was watching him as he dies.

[26:37] Now we Protestants get all nervous about Mary being too close to the cross. We don't like pictures of Jesus, never mind pictures of Mary at the cross interceding for him as he dies.

And that is an erroneous teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. She was not interceding for him when he died. He died alone. But let's not push her away.

She's there. What is she doing there? She's pointing to the cross, saying, the offspring of the woman.

So what we have here is the seed of the woman dying at the place of a skull.

So we've had four S's. You're counting on your fingers, boys and girls. A seed, a sweet, a son, a skull. You can tell your parents, sermon's nearly over.

[27:43] Okay? Number five, let me get it right. A shed, a shed. I want to take you to a tool shed in Oxford, England.

C.S. Lewis once wrote a beautiful little piece called Meditations in a Tool Shed. So I've shortened that to shed, because tool shed doesn't begin with S. Outside his house in Oxford, there was this tool shed.

And one day, C.S. Lewis was out working in the shed, and he noticed a beam of light coming in through the crack in the door. And he was standing outside of the light, and he saw this beam of light coming into the shed, and in it he saw these speckles of dust.

And he sort of stood there for a moment, fascinated by this beam of light and the speckles of dust. And then he thought to himself, I wonder what it would be like to step into the light and look along the light and see what I see.

So he stepped into the light, and he looked out, and there he could see the blue sky and the trees and the birds flying and singing. And he realized that it is one thing to stand outside the light and look across the light and see all these interesting things in the light, and it's quite another thing to step into the light and look along the light and see something else.

[29:12] Do you know, you can sit in church your whole life and only look across the light. You can see lots of really interesting things in the Bible.

And this morning, we've seen some interesting things, haven't we? Genesis 3.15 is one of the most interesting verses in the Bible. You can make all the connections through David and Goliath, all the way down to Jesus on the cross.

It's all very interesting. But let me ask you, have you ever stepped into the light? Or have you just been looking across the light?

It's one thing to look across the light, as C.S. Lewis said. It's quite another to step into the light. And when you step into the light of Genesis 3.15, what you see as you look along the light is Jesus on a cross fighting the devil for you.

So boys and girls, let me ask you, have you stepped into the light? What does that mean? Well, it means to say to God that you're sorry for your sin and you want to thank Him for sending Jesus to die for your sin on the cross and to rescue you from the devil.

[30:35] Moms and dads, adults, people who have been members of this church for years, let me ask you, are you looking across the light? Or have you stepped into the light and looked along the light to see Jesus, the one who crushed the devil in your place on the cross?

Let us pray. Father, we pray this morning that you would draw all of us into the light of this verse of Scripture so that we would see not just the fascinating connections, but so that we would see our Savior, Jesus Christ, dying in our place for our sins and defeating that ancient serpent, the devil. Grant to us all, we pray, repentance and faith. And if we are standing in the light, Father, we pray that you would give us a renewed appreciation, a new joy in our hearts for what Jesus has done for us.

And we ask this in His strong name. Amen.