



FEED MY SHEEP

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King Adam, before and after the Fall *Part 20—The Covenants of the Bible*

In this series concerning the covenants of the Bible, we are presently digging deep into the Adamic Covenant. We left off in the middle of Genesis 3:15.

Genesis 3:15 ...it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

In my Stone Kingdom Fellowship audience in the Atlanta area, we do not have many, if any, who are former Roman Catholics. But all my readers are probably aware that Catholic churches are full of statues of Jesus, Mary, her husband, Joseph, and other so-called saints. Well, when I was back in seminary high school in Ohio, I remember quite vividly the main altar had a huge image of Jesus on the cross hanging over it—typical of most Roman Catholic sanctuaries. Also, quite typical was that there was a secondary altar off to the side. At the seminary, this altar had a statue of the “Blessed Virgin Mary.” The thing that struck me as a young seminarian was that this statue portrayed Mary standing on the globe of planet earth and there was a snake which had coiled itself around the earth and Mary was standing on the head of the snake.

You see, in Catholic theology, the woman in Genesis 3:15 is Mary. They come up with that portrayal because in Jerome’s Latin Vulgate translation of the Bible, which came out in the early fifth century, he made a mistake in the translation. Frankly, the King James version here is not exactly correct either. Almost all other English translations say “He (not “it”) shall bruise (or crush) thy head.” Instead, Jerome had mistakenly used the Latin pronoun for *she*, but if that were correct then the last part would have read “and thou shalt bruise **her** heel.” But it is not. Jerome had the last part correct. It is an obvious error, but the Roman Catholic church was still using it in their Bibles and their statu-

ary back when I was in the seminary in the 1960’s. I don’t know if they still have those statues around or not. I don’t go into Catholic churches anymore except for funerals and weddings.

In any case, we note the contrast here between the heel and the head: He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. In both cases, the aim is to destroy the other because the word translated “bruise” also means to “crush.” A blow to the head can be fatal; but a blow to the heel is almost never fatal.

The serpent, having been cursed to crawl on its belly, can only strike at ground level. It cannot reach the head. He tried to. The devil tempted Jesus, the Head of the body, at the beginning of His ministry. But satan could not deliver a fatal blow. The serpent could not strike at the Head because Jesus resisted all the temptations.

However, later, just before He went to the cross, Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world. At that point, he became vulnerable. And so satan struck. Satan had already entered Judas just after the Last Supper, and so the wheels of our Lord’s execution were already in motion. By 3 p.m. on Good Friday, the devil, thinking he had crushed the Head by killing our Lord, realized only too late that he had only struck the heel—a non-fatal blow. How so? It was ultimately non-fatal because Jesus arose from the dead on the third day.

In rising from grave, Jesus thereby delivered the fatal blow to the devil. He crushed the head of the serpent. But there is a little more to it than that, I believe, because although it is a done deal, it still has to be played out in history. We have seen this principle of multiple fulfillments many times in the Bible. I believe

each generation of believers has their part to play in crushing the head of satan. And that is why I believe Paul wrote the following in his letter to the Christians at Rome.

Romans 16:20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan [most other translations say: *crush Satan*] **under your feet shortly. ...**

Alright, let's go on to verse 17. We will skip verse 16 for now because we will be giving it more extensive treatment later. So God, in pronouncing the curse, first addressed the adversary-satan; then the woman, and finally He addresses Adam.

17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat *of it* all the days of thy life;

18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return.

The first thing I want us to notice is that when God addressed the serpent, He said: "thou art cursed." But when He addressed Eve and then Adam, He did not curse them as He had the serpent. Instead, He cursed the ground. What does that signify? Well, I believe it implies that satan, the devil, the evil spirit was created for evil. It was evil from the beginning and it will be evil until the end, when it will exist no more.

That contrasts with man who was not created for the purpose of evil. Therefore, as God judged Adam—and along with him, all of us, all of mankind—that it bespeaks of judgment tempered by mercy. In that connection, we should also note that God assured Adam and Eve of ultimate victory—the woman's seed (Jesus) crushing the serpent's head—He told them the ultimate *good* news before He told them the bad news.

So neither Adam nor Eve were themselves cursed, but their punishment would consist, in general, of two parts: The first was that they would die, return to the dust. The second was that from this point on until their deaths, life was going to be much, much harder than it had been before they sinned.

Adam was the crown of God's creation. He was created to rule the earth. We discussed the dominion

mandate previously—the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, the cattle and beasts, etc. As long as Adam remained obedient, as long as he did not fall, superintending all of God's earthly creation would have been a relatively easy job for Adam. Easy? Why easy?

Because there was no sin; hence, no corruption, no decay; no thistles, thorns and briars; presumably nothing poisonous, no carnivorous animals. They all frolicked together in a way which reminds me of one of the scenes from Walt Disney's classic film, *Fantasia*. The lion lay down with the lamb and so forth. Why, even the water sprinkler system was automatic in the Garden of Eden because it says:

Genesis 2:6 But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.

Adam was created to be superior to all the other kingdoms: the mineral kingdom, the plant kingdom and the animal kingdom. Adam was king of it all. And all his subjects were 100 percent cooperative. No rebellion; no violence; no death!

But then the tempter arrived, right on time according to God's schedule, and we are now seeing the results. Because Adam had listened to his wife when she had been deceived by the serpent, Adam thereby renounced his superiority to the rest of creation. Think about it; he did! Because he essentially let himself be persuaded by a talking snake.

Non-believers can scoff all they want about a talking snake, but as I said before, I can see the possibility that the form of the animal which we now call a snake might have been quite different when it was talking to Eve. (See my comments in this regard in the immediately previous issue of FMS.) Moreover, I also believe the Bible when it says in...

Numbers 22:28 And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?

Look, whether animals have vocal chords or not is immaterial to me. If God determined that Balaam's ass would speak on that one occasion, then it is a divine intervention that we call a miracle. So whether a slithering snake actually spoke or if it was some *other* kind of enchanting creature—the Hebrew word is **נָחָשׁ** *nachash* {naw-khawsh'} which literally means an enchanter—whatever it was, it was communicating to Eve.

And so the point about Adam relinquishing his

superior position over all the rest of creation is that God would not let him off the hook. In essence, God told Adam, “Look, *man!* You are *still* going to do the job; *you* are in charge. I am not going to allow you to abdicate, just because you listened to the advice of the lower creation, the serpent; albeit, through your wife.”

Adam had disobeyed his Maker because he thought he knew better than his Maker and therefore, part of the punishment was going to be that the mineral kingdom, the plant kingdom, and the animal kingdom would now be very **uncooperative** with Adam’s rulership over them. All of that is included in the phrase “*cursed is the ground.*”

The Hebrew word for ground is *adamah*. You see, Adam was formed from the *adamah*, which in modern scientific terms, we would call the elements, the chemical elements: carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, even right down to dozens of trace minerals that make up our bodies.

So when God decreed “*cursed is the ground,*” it included all of creation—at least all of creation on planet earth—we simply do not know about the rest of creation beyond earth. But what I am telling you is confirmed by Paul when he said in

Romans 8:20 For the creature [creation] was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected *the same* in hope,

Before the Fall, the earth apparently brought forth perfectly on its own with very little labor on Adam’s part. Now, the labor required to produce food, shelter, clothing and other necessities would be both difficult and exhausting. God said:

17 *cursed is the ground for thy sake; ...*

Now this phrase, “for thy sake” is interesting because looking at the Hebrew, at first I did not see how the King James translators came up with it. What do we mean by the word “sake?” If I say: “Let’s do this for your sake,” what does that mean? What would be a synonym for “sake?” How about “for your benefit, for your good, for your advantage?” All of those would work. But can one make a case that the ground, that is, the entire earth-creation was cursed into sorrow, pain, suffering, sickness, violence, death, etc. *for the good* of Adam? For the benefit of mankind?

Well, the only way to make a case for the cursing of the earth being good for man is by looking at it from the ultimate Plan of God point of view; from the universal salvation point of view—which, of course,

we believe is God’s ultimate purpose. But leaving that aside, one would be hard pressed to persuade someone that the post-Fall conditions were better for man than the pre-Fall conditions. Do you see what I am saying?

But as I looked at the dictionary definition of the word “sake,” I discovered it comes from the Middle English where its primary meaning was “guilt!” So I will give the benefit of the doubt to the KJ translators in assuming that that is what they meant. And that fits more in line with the way Jay P. Green translates it in his *Hebrew Interlinear Bible*: “the ground shall be cursed because of you.” In other words, because of your *guilt*, Adam, the earth is cursed. Other translations echo that.

Genesis 3:18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return.

I could easily spend many pages on verses 18 & 19, but I shall instead refer you to the teaching done by our dear friend, Ron Oja, which we have available on DVD. (See p. 4, Resources.) The two titles are really one long teaching. The title of the first is *The Restoration of Adam* and the second is simply called *The Garden*.

But you see, the Garden is not only the Garden of Eden, but the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus, the last Adam, reversed the curse put upon the first Adam. As Ron points out, the curse involved thorns and just by chance, of course, Jesus was crowned with thorns, and He bled from His head.

Likewise, the curse involved the sweat of thy face and Jesus, while in agony in the Garden of Gethsemane did sweat, as it were, great drops of blood. Ron, as you might suspect, has only about three million more details to round out the picture. You’ll love it.

I will not take the time and space to relate this covenant to our General Outline of Covenants, (which we printed on the last page of the April 2019 issue of FMS), but you might wish to do that on your own.

But let me just make a few quick observations. You have the parties to the covenant. The words of the covenant are blessings and curses. The blessing is the promised seed of the woman. The curses were upon the serpent and the devil. But judgments, not curses were upon the woman, the man, and us, all their off-

spring, and all of earth-creation. The animal kingdom was cursed because some animals became wild and flesh-eating after the Fall. The primary result of Adam's breaking the Edenic Covenant was that through his sin, death came upon all.

Next on the General Outline of Covenants, guess where the blood of the Adamic Covenant is found? How about when God sacrificed one or more animals to make garments for Adam and Eve? That is the first shedding of innocent blood after the Fall. Let us now discuss the verse we skipped—verse 16, which reads:

16a Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children;

We will pause here to remark briefly concerning the obvious; namely, that childbirth is no easy job for the woman. I have been present at the birth of three of our four children and you will notice I did not say I was present and *assisted* at the births. I mean, she is the one in labor, and all we men can do is say: "breathe, honey! Blow, breathe, blow, breathe... Now...push! ...push!"

Women say those techniques help, but [*grinning*] I have to wonder if our wives don't just tell us men that so that we feel like we are really doing something. I don't know about you other husbands, but seeing your wife go through that tremendous pain and labor makes us feel about as useful as a screen door in a submarine. Most of us would gladly bear the pain for her; but there is not a solitary thing we can do about it as we hold her hand and go "exhale-inhale-exhale-inhale, etc."

The Fall happened, and so all we can do is speculate; but I would surmise that had the Fall not occurred, that bringing forth children would have been a painless and perhaps even a pleasurable experience for women. So much for the first half of the verse. The latter portion reads—

16b and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, [or "for thy husband"] and he shall rule over thee.

Here we are getting into the area of the relationship between husbands and wives. The Bible does not tell us how long a period of time it was from the creation of Eve until the Fall. Some believe it was a very short time, perhaps less than a week. Others speculate that it might have been considerably longer—perhaps years, or many, many years—we simply do not know. But for the sake of illustration, let us suppose that it was a period of years. Now let me pose this question to you. In those years before the Fall; that is, before

the entrance of sin, how would you describe their marriage? Let's make this a multiple choice, and I will allow you to say "other," and give me more feedback if you wish, but here are the choices:

- A. Was it a perfectly happy marriage? Or...
- B. Did they have some petty arguments from time to time? Or...
- C. Was it a bad marriage, where Adam and Eve were perhaps constantly arguing and bickering and threatening to walk out and file for divorce? Or...
- D. Other?

I wanted readers to think about that because it sets the stage for a letter I received from a woman who receives our monthly Bible study lectures on audio recordings. Before I read the pertinent parts to you, I want you to know that I have never met this woman, nor her husband, nor have I ever spoken to either of them on the phone, email or otherwise.

I am also going to change the names and any other detail which might tend to identify them because I would not want to cause them embarrassment in any degree. I also want you to know that this letter is not unique; I hear of these types of situations far too frequently.

(To be continued.)

Resources mentioned in this issue

Lectures by Ron Oja on two DVDs. They are really one long teaching.

- D-112 *The Restoration of Adam*
- D-113 *The Garden.*

\$12 for one DVD, plus \$6 s & h or \$30 ppd. for the pair.

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