

The First Gospel Promise

Dr. Nelson Were

The book of Genesis is the book of beginnings. In the creation story we have the beginning of earth, solar system, human life, marriage, etc.

In Genesis 3 we have the beginning of sin, and then the beginning of death, pain, and suffering. God's design was a peaceful, harmonious relationship in the garden, both between humanity and God and between the man and his wife.

But sin ruined this and affected every faculty of man and every area of his life.

In fact, Paul tells us that by this one man and his fall, “sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men” (Romans 5:12).

In Genesis 3, we also have the beginning of the Gospel, the first Gospel promise. In these verses the Lord gives us hope for redemption, a way out of death and destruction.

Salvation without human help God’s promise shows us that salvation will be accomplished without any contribution of man.

There are three parts to this promise:

1. The Destruction of Satan

God turned to the serpent, and without any question, dialogue, or debate (as he had with Adam and Eve), He cursed Satan, cast him down to go on his belly and eat dust (verse 14). The tempter

(Satan) is doomed to be defeated by the Redeemer.

2. The Birth of a Saviour

The promise of the “Seed of the woman” (Christ), is the first promise of the Messiah, and it points to the virgin birth of Christ. As Paul points out in Galatians 4, when the fullness of time was come, God sent his Son, born of the virgin (without the agency or contribution of man), to redeem men that were under the curse.

3. The Work of the Saviour

He will take on himself our human nature. The phrase “Seed of the woman” points to the incarnation of Christ (see John 1:14; Romans 1:3, Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:15-17, 22; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 2:14-15).

He will take on himself the punishment of our sin and suffer and die for us. The bruising of his heel points to the suffering and sacrifice of Christ (see also John 1:29-30, Philippians 2:5-11, 1 Peter 2:24-25 and 4:1-2).

He will defeat and conquer Satan as a human, in the flesh. The bruising of the serpent's head points to the victory of Christ. The wound inflicted on Satan will be fatal (see also Matthew 12:18-21, Hebrews 2:14, 1 John 3:8).

Salvation Anchored in God The second thing we learn from God's promise is that salvation is anchored in the nature and attributes of God (3:16-19).

The story of salvation displays both God's justice against sin and His mercy towards the sinner. God did not curse man, as He had cursed the serpent.

Instead, God cursed “the ground for man’s sake” (3:17).

Justice demands that humanity bears the consequences of sin, but in mercy there is a door open for redemption. Mercy shines out in the midst of judgement.

Adam continues with the work God had given him, but his work will be with toil and sweat all the days of his life (3:17-19). Eve too is to continue being a help to her husband (2:20), but she will conceive and bear children in pain, and her desire will be to her husband (3:16).

Let us praise God for His salvation. He has destroyed Satan; He has delivered us from destruction and given us life and immortality in the Gospel (1 Timothy 1:10).