

Christ in the Pentateuch

Christ taught His disciples that everything in the Old Testament points to Him (Cf. Luke 24:27, 44-49; John 5:39, 46, 47). This Advent season, we want to study our Old Testament from that perspective. Each week we shall examine how Christ is revealed in a particular section of the OT. Today we look at the Five Books of Moses, the Pentateuch. Today's text is found in the earliest pages of the Bible. It is the primeval story of humanity's great Fall, our descent into sin and misery in the Garden of Eden.

Genesis 3, with an outline:

I. The Fall of Humanity (vv.1-6)

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" 2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 3 but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" 4 But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

II. The Lord's Response (vv. 7-24)

a. God Seeks Out and Confronts (vv. 7-13)

7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. 8 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" 10 And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." 11 He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" 12 The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." 13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

b. God Pronounces Judgment (vv.14-19)

i. Upon the Serpent (vv. 14-15)

14 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. 15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

ii. Upon the Woman (v. 16)

16 To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

iii. Upon the Man (vv. 17-19)

17 And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; 18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

c. God Provides (vv. 20-24)

i. Hope for future offspring (v. 20)

20 The man called his wife’s name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

ii. Substantial covering for their shame (v. 21)

21 And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

iii. Protection from eternal misery (22-24)

22 Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—” 23 therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. 24 He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.”

Focusing on Genesis 3:15:

Throughout this chapter, we can see that in our worst moment—when we were caught red-handed in high-handed rebellion against the Lord God—even in His severe judgments, He has protected and provided for us. Note this especially in His judgment against Satan in verse 15. God has done two things to bless us in this verse:

I. God has put enmity between us and Satan (v. 15a)

15a I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring

We know that Satan hates humanity, but what God adds here is that, from now on, He will raise up a new humanity who hates Satan and who recognizes his scheming manner. Satan will no longer be allowed to manipulate all humanity into wholesale rebellion against God.

II. God has promised us a painful triumph over Satan (v. 15b)

a. The Woman's Seed Bruises Satan's Head

"...he shall bruise your head..."

We know that at the cross a mighty victory was won by our Savior. Consider these Scripture verses:

I John 3:8b: *"The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil."*

Hebrews 2:14,15: *"Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery."*

Colossians 2:15: *"He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him."*

b. Satan Bruises the Heel of the Woman's Seed

"...and you shall bruise his heel."

One day, we shall partake of the Tree of Life. John speaks of this in Revelation 22:1-2, when he describes the new heavens and the new earth:

"Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

This victory Jesus won for us, however, came at great cost to Himself. He was severely wounded. He was crucified. Satan "bruised His heel."

Read here what John R.W. Stott says about crucifixion in his book *The Cross of Christ*.

"It is probably the most cruel method of execution every practiced, for it deliberately delayed death until maximum torture had been inflicted. When the Romans adopted it, they reserved it for criminals convicted of murder, rebellion or armed robbery, provided that they were also slaves, foreigners or other non-persons. Romans citizens were exempt from crucifixion, except in extreme cases of treason. Cicero in one of his speeches condemned it as 'a most cruel and disgusting punishment.' A little later he declared: 'To bind a Roman citizen is a crime, to flog him is an abomination, to kill him is almost an act of murder: to crucify him is – What? There is no fitting word that can possible describe so horrible a deed.' In 63 BC, he declared... 'the very word cross should be far removed not only from the person of a Roman citizen, but from his thoughts, his eyes and his ears. ...Indeed the mere mention of them, that is unworthy of a Roman citizen and a free man.' If the Romans regarded crucifixion with horror, so did the Jews, though for a different reason. As Trypho the Jew put it to Justin, the Christian apologist, who engaged him in dialogue: 'I am exceedingly incredulous on this point.'"

Discussion Questions

1. Describe the essence of the Fall of humankind, as it is given in Genesis 3:1-7.
2. Describe the catastrophic consequences of human sin, as seen in Genesis 3:7-24.

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3. How well does Genesis 3 explain the moral and spiritual chaos of our own day? Why?

 4. How does God respond to human sin in Genesis 3? What do you observe in this text about God's graciousness?

 5. Why do you think God put enmity between the woman and the serpent?

 6. Explain the meaning of Genesis 3:15b. How is that promise fulfilled in Christ?

Going Deeper

1. Are you living in the light of God's extraordinary love for you—that when you were at your worst He still was faithful to you? What difference ought His love to make in your daily life?

2. Are you reading the Old Testament from the perspective taught by Christ?

