

December 9, 2007

“You Won’t Believe Who’s Coming for Christmas: A Descendant of Eve”
Genesis 3:15

FCF: Discouragement at Christmas

PROPOSITION: (magnet) Because God has sent a descendant of Eve,
(anchor) we should take heart.

SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION:

“*It’s the most wonderful time of the year. It’s the happiest season of all.*” Or so we’re told. But not always. And not for everyone. The realization you can’t get that gift you’ve had your eyes on. That could be a child thinking of themselves. Or it could be a parent thinking of a child. It’s unavailable. Or unaffordable. But perhaps it goes beyond things we can touch. Perhaps the reflection the season encourages is not so encouraging. Nothing’s changed. Or too much has changed. It may not be so wonderful or so happy.

When such thoughts come and take control, the reminder of the reason for the season needs to come and take its rightful place. As we go back to the very beginning...

SCRIPTURE READING: [Genesis 3:1-15](#)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SERMON INTRODUCTION:

“*This holiday season, show her how special she really is.*” Great ad campaign. Not because jewelry is the answer but because it taps into a simple truism. It’s not just the proposal. It’s the packaging. Private promises of devotion aren’t enough. Cheap declarations don’t convey a commitment worth considering. It needs careful planning and takes expense. He needs to woo her. Or, to put it another way, a wise suitor not only declares his love but convinces the object of his affections of her need and desire for him.

Well, believe it or not, that’s exactly what God has done with us. The Scriptures are an unfolding of His proposal, the wooing of the people of God with the love of God. When Jesus arrived on the scene in the New Testament era, the way had been well prepared by the Old Testament era. There had been a progressive revelation not just of who God is but of our need of Him, the cultivating of a growing longing and expectation of the coming Messiah. God is the wise suitor. And we see that from the very beginning.

All the way back as far as Genesis 3, the account of the Fall – the explanation as to how things got from the paradise of Genesis 1 and 2 to the aching brokenness in which we find ourselves today. But it’s not just an explanation. It’s a declaration, a promise, a proposal of sorts right here. From the very beginning God shows Himself a God of sovereign grace. John Stott puts it this way ([READ quote](#)): “*No sooner had Adam and Eve sinned than God announced his intention to save sinners and to do so through a descendant of the very person by whom sin had entered the world.*” Right from the start, God promised that, to address the predicament of the world, He would send a descendant of Eve. And in Jesus, that descendant has come. And in understanding what that means and its significance to us, we should then take heart. And what heart we should take!

I. TAKE HEART – LOOK AT WHAT GOD IS GOING TO DO

Think with me. Consider here what it is God says He is going to do ([READ Genesis 3:15](#)). This is the “protoevangelium” – the first announcement of the gospel.

A) A Declaration of War

And, odd as it may seem, it begins with a declaration of war.

1. What it means

A curse has been declared against Satan. And in that curse is our comfort. “Enmity” has been established. A hatred, a hostility, a battle, a war. With no room for a truce.

Illustration:

Christmas Eve 1871. It was the Franco-Prussian War. The fighting between the German and French armies had been fierce. But on that night, a French soldier suddenly jumped out of his muddy trench. Both sides stared at this seemingly crazed man. Boldly standing with no weapon in his hands or at his side, he lifted his eyes to the heavens and sang the first verses of “The First Noel.” When he was done, a German infantryman climbed out of his hiding place and answered with the first verses of Martin Luther’s “From Heaven to Earth I Come.” According to accounts, the fighting then stopped for the next twenty-four hours while the men on both sides observed a temporary truce, dramatically pointing towards and anticipating the greater deeper peace to come.

Great story. Here’s the rub. Fleeting and temporary as it was, a truce was still possible on that battlefield. Not here. Not here. For peace to come, there had to be war.

2. Why it’s needed

Why? Because mankind had aligned with the enemy and his lies.

It was an unholy alliance. And, given the enemy’s desires to work against the works of the Creator and our inability to extricate ourselves from this alliance and begin anew, God had to intervene. He is only One who could intervene. And He did.

Illustration:

Imagine a teenage girl trapped in an “unhealthy relationship” with an older man with less than admirable designs. And the girl can not disentangle herself. She needs someone coming in from the outside, ideally her father, strong and determined enough to pull her away and create some distance between these two. That’s what we have here.

Which is to say, spinning a phrase from a wedding benediction, “*What God hath put asunder let no man bring together.*” For this curse is our comfort.

B) *A Determination of Victory*

From the very beginning, we see enmity, a declaration of war. And not only that but a determination of victory as well. We’re not left to wonder, not left to guess.

1. Relentless struggle

A relentless struggle ensues. Two lines develop. Cain killed Abel; Pharaoh enslaved Israel; Israel is exiled; later, a near holocaust. What was behind this? Fast forward to Herod’s slaughter of the infants, Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness, His betrayal in the garden, His execution on a cross. Think of the events in the early church – nearly destroyed by persecution, corrupted by covetousness, and distracted from the mission. Little wonder Peter then wrote (READ 1 Peter 5:8-9). We live in a cosmic war zone.

2. Outcome assured

But this war’s outcome is assured (READ Genesis 3:15). Our enemy’s head will be bruised, crushed – a permanent fatal injury. Our champion’s heel bruised – a real but temporary injury – fatal not final. Paul writes (READ Romans 16:20; Ephesians 1:22).

Application:

We live in a cosmic war zone with two opposing forces – the kingdoms of God and Satan, of light and darkness. The seed of the woman and the serpent. And repeatedly, through history, the call goes out, “*Choose this day who you will serve!*” There is no neutral territory. These are warring sovereignties, two opposing regimes.

We live in a cosmic war zone. But Jesus has won (READ Ephesians 3:20-21). If we had but eyes to see this! Indeed, that’s the very thing Paul prays for (READ Ephesians 1:15-23). This is no flight of fancy, some fool’s tale! It’s desperately real!

And it can be brought to bear not only on how our eyes perceive the choices set before us but on how our hearts bear the burdens laid upon us. Who or what has stolen your hopes? What betrayals have you endured? What struggles rage within you? Know now that it has not always been this way. And it will not always be this way. It has not always been this way. And it will not always be this way. When you hear the carols this year, listen to their message and know that there is a change in the air. God has sent a descendant of Eve – just like He said He would. And so we can and should take heart.

II. TAKE HEART – LOOK AT HOW HE IS GOING TO DO IT

Genesis shows God’s sovereign power from the very beginning. And His sovereign grace as well. For the message, the encouragement we see here is not just the fact of what He is going to do – great as that is. It is also in the way He is going to do it.

A) *Through Eve*

How? Think with me. Through Eve (**READ Genesis 3:15**).

1. An individual

“Offspring” is an ambiguous term. On the one hand, it would seem a line of descendants is being referred to here. But clearly God has one particular descendant in mind.

2. A man

A man, clearly different from any other. Clearly different in the power He will have and the work He will do but yet still very much like us. After all, He will be Eve’s offspring.

Clearly unlike us. Yet still very much like us.

Illustration:

There’s an expression that gets carelessly kicked around these days, “*Been there, done that.*” Imagine it being said not in a callous way but with compassion. Imagine this descendant of Eve, Jesus, saying to us, “*Yes, I have been there. Yes, what you’re going through, I’ve done that too.*” You see, He’s like us. Yes, He’s fully God. But He’s fully man as well. For all the great dissimilarities there are great similarities as well.

Application:

We can understand something of His life – of what it was like for Him to grow and learn, hurt and love. We can understand Him. And even more – He can understand us. For He walked among us. Just as surely as we can know something of the struggles He faced He can know everything of the struggles we face. His is not a knowledge of our trials and hurts merely by observation. His is a knowledge of immersion, of incarnation.

And we can be assured of all this simply in that Jesus came through Eve.

B) *Despite Eve*

And yet we see Jesus not only came through Eve, He came despite her as well.

1. Despite what she’d done

Despite what she’d done. Despite listening to the serpent, taking him at his word. Despite spurning her Creator and the love lavished out upon her, spurning His Word.

2. Despite what she’d shown

Despite what she’d done. And despite what she’d shown – weakness in temptation. And worse, from here on out a bentness, a crookedness, a brokenness rooted down deep.

Despite all of that, God promises that Jesus would come through her still.

Illustration:

Martin Luther once speculated what conversations were like between Adam and Eve after the Fall. “*You ate the apple,*” Eve said. “*Well, you gave it to me!*” But imagine for a moment what Eve must have been thinking to herself after the reality of what she’d

done had come crashing in upon her. *“How could I have been so stupid? Listening to the serpent. Not believing, not trusting God. How could I think He would lie to us? How could I talk Adam into this? Here I am, the first woman. Adam and I were supposed to be the prototypes, the vice-regents. Some sorry queen I turned out to be. I guess God will have destroy it all and start over. Oh no, here He comes. I’ve got to hide.”*

Now imagine then the wonder of hearing what she heard. Imagine the expression upon her face. Imagine the shock, the relief, the joy, the anticipation, and hope.

Application:

Listen. God loves us enough to restore us. And He loves us enough to use us, to work through us, in the process. Despite all we’ve done, despite all we’ve left undone. Despite all we are, despite all we’re not. I don’t mean to belittle your struggles. But think with me. You think you’ve blown it? It can’t be that bad! At least you didn’t take the whole human race down into sin and misery and necessitate the coming of the Savior!

Last week, we were looking at Jesus’ family tree. Some were famous. Some were anonymous. Some were notorious – Rehoboam, Ahaz, Manasseh, Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba. And despite all of that, there they are. Despite all of this, here we are! And the lesson in all of this from the Garden to now is that God delights to do it this way. It all resonates all the louder to His glory. Sovereign grace o’er sin abounding! Take this message to heart. God really has sent a descendant of Eve! Jesus has come. Take heart!

CONCLUSION:

That’s the essence of the “protoevangelium” – the first gospel. He loves us enough to restore us. And He loves us enough, to work through us, to use us in the process. Grabbing hold of that, it’s little wonder we sing so much this time of year. We’ve got so much to sing about! (Which brings me to a shameless plug for our Sunday School classes and the mini-course starting next week on the background of the carols) One of the most beloved of them all is “Joy to the World!” by Isaac Watts. Watts was genius with languages. Yet it wasn’t just with languages he showed a flair. It was with lyrics as well. Biographers tell us that at 18, he complained to his father of what passed for poetry in the hymns of the day. And it was pretty poor. His father’s response? [\(READ quotes\)](#) *“Those hymns were good enough for your grandfather and your father, son, so they will have to be good enough for you.”* Isaac replied, *“They will never do for me, father, regardless of what you and your father thought of them.”* *“If you don’t like the hymns we sing, then write better ones!”* *“I have written better ones, father, and if you will relax and listen, I will read one for you.”* It was so good, the church sang it the next Sunday. And that went so well, they asked him to do it again, which he did, for the next 222 weeks. And out of that came a lyrical rephrasing of the Psalms of David. And out of that came a song stemming from Psalm 98, “Joy to the World.” *“He rules the world”* – with the determination and power to pull us away from Satan and his offspring. *“And makes the nations prove the glories of His righteousness and wonders of His love.”*

The wonders of His love. The wonders of His love. How we need that. And how we need to hear that. Our God is the wise suitor. Let His proposal melt and woo your soul. Hear the declaration of His love. See it in a manger laid, on a cross crucified, and with an empty tomb. Yes, His heel was bruised but the serpent’s head has been crushed! Take to heart these incredibly simple but incredibly shattering and comforting realities – the glorious fact He is restoring us and the wondrous way He is restoring us as well.

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