**‘A Curse and A Promise’**

***14The Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you will go, and dust you will eat All the days of your life; 15and I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.”*** Genesis 3:14-15

The man blamed God for the woman God had given him. The woman blamed the serpent who had deceived her. The serpent had no one to blame but himself. Now God declares His verdict on them all. He begins with the serpent because it was the serpent that’d begun the whole mess. In speaking to the serpent, God is giving a word against a physical serpent, a creature of the earth, **and** he is giving a word against satan,[[1]](http://yourbibleblog.com/2016/12/" \l "_ftn1) a supernatural being whose natural form is spiritual not physical.

First God speaks to the physical serpent. There He says, ***“Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you will go, and dust you will eat all the days of your life…”*** The serpent is cursed, but what does that mean?

When God uses the word “curse,” His intention is to diminish the stature of the person, nation, or thing He is cursing, even to the point of annihilating whatever He is cursing. If that is what He chooses to do. Whatever the stature the serpent had been before he participated in satan’s scheme, it is now going to be lower than all cattle and lower than every beast of the field. Some biblical scholars have concluded that the serpent originally had some kind of appendages or legs that kept its body off of the ground. We cannot know this for sure, but it’s possible. Regardless of whether the serpent had legs or not, it would never rise above the dust of the earth. It would always move upon its belly.

The Lord also tells the serpent that it would “eat” dust all of the days of its life. Was this meant to be literal, or are we to understand it in a more figurative sense? We know that serpents eat all kinds of things, but dust? Really? I couldn’t imagine such a thing UNTIL I did some research on the topic. Apparently, in a manner of speaking, snakes do eat dust. They have an organ in the roof their mouth known as the “Jacobson’s organ,” and it works in conjunction with the snake’s nose to smell their environment. So, as the snake moves along the ground and flicks its tongue in and out of its mouth, it “licks” the dust and brings the dust into its mouth and into contact with this organ. By doing this, it “smells” the dust and examines its environment. With lightning speed, it cleans the tip of its tongue and repeats the process over and over again.

God’s next words appear to have a dual function. He does appear to be talking to a physical serpent when He says, ***15“And I will put enmity between you and the woman…”*** The word enmity is defined as, ***“a feeling or condition of hostility; hatred; ill will; animosity; antagonism.”*** Surely this definition fits for physical snakes. It isn’t only about physical snakes that God is speaking. No, He’s also speaking to satan, the spiritual being who was working through the serpent to deceive the woman.

God says, ***15And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.”***

Here, in this moment which followed closely after the first sin, God makes a promise. The promise is not to the man or the woman but to satan. But how can God say ***“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed”*** and in the same breath/sentence say ***“he shall bruise you on the head”***? God can say such a thing because the one who will come to bruise/crush satan’s head is going to be God’s only-begotten Son Jesus. He will be God come down to earth in the flesh. As God’s only-begotten Son, he is God’s perfect agent to do the work of crushing satan because he is the perfect image of the Father. Here God tells satan exactly what He is going to do to him. As God’s agent, Jesus is going to bruise (some translations say “crush”) the head of satan. I like the word “crush” better than “bruise” simply because I know that Jesus dealt satan a crushing defeat. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus landed a death blow to satan’s head. Did satan “bruise” Jesus? Of course he did, but satan’s strike against Jesus only “bruised” him for a very brief time. It did not crush him with any degree of permanence. Little did satan know that the bruise he would inflict on Jesus would be exactly what God’s intention was all along to defeat him and restore mankind to Himself.

You may be wondering why God needed to have an “agent” of His to do the work of crushing satan’s head. Couldn’t He have done this Himself? Sure, God could have, but it wouldn’t have been legal for Him to do it. It may appear to be odd to read that God has rules and regulations which He must follow, and yet He does. The world God created is completely ordered by all kinds of rules and laws that He designed into it. There are physical laws, such as the laws of gravity and thermodynamics and there are spiritual laws as well. The spiritual law at work in Genesis 3:15 is this one: ***A man committed the first sin; therefore a man must bring the remedy for it.*** Since God is not a man, He couldn’t bring the remedy to sin. satan knew this and so he figured he had achieved his goal of spoiling God’s creation and specifically man, the crown of God’s creation. God knew the terms, conditions, and legalities He faced, and He knew what He would do long before He created anything. God’s answer was this: **God would become a man.** Isn’t God awesome! If God plays chess, the moves He plans to make are so far ahead of the enemy that the enemy can never figure them out, even when God tells him in advance what He is going to do. God, and no one else, is going to come into the world and bring the remedy for sin that the world needs!

So we know what God will ultimately do to bring the remedy we need for the sin and death which has now entered into the world. There is more to see in Genesis 3:15. God said, ***“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed.”***  We’ve already read that the word “enmity” means ***“a feeling or condition of hostility; hatred; ill will; animosity; antagonism.”*** We have also read what God is going to do to crush the head of satan. But let’s not think that satan will sit idly by and not respond in some awful way to what God plans to do to him. Being who satan is, it is no surprise to realize that much of the hostilities perpetrated against women throughout history must be seen as satan’s backlash against what God will do to him. God plans to crush satan, so satan will attack mankind by whatever means possible – but he will come against the woman, particularly in the area of the “Seed” she will bear. Of course, we know that satan will attempt to kill Jesus within two years of his birth, but he is openly hostile toward children in general. It is impossible for us to account for how many infants and children have been murdered over the course of the millennia by wombs being ripped open, children exposed to the elements after birth, and abortion. But the number is huge! Why target infants and children? He targets them because infants and children cannot defend themselves. Why target women? He targets them because they bear the ones who are made in the image and according to the likeness of God. All people bear the image of God and satan can’t stand this because he hates God. All people are born from women, so he specifically goes after women. Ultimately, his plan is to destroy all of God’s image-bearers. He’ll begin with those most unable to defend and protect themselves but make no mistake about it his plan is to destroy every single person on earth.

The last point I want to make is this: God not only states that He will put enmity between satan and the woman, but He also states that that enmity will extend beyond satan and the woman to include satan’s ***“seed”*** and the woman’s ***“seed.”*** Since we know that the reference to “seed” here means progeny or offspring, we’ve got to wonder what God means. We know human beings have progeny or offspring, but does satan? In a manner of speaking he does, but not as we might expect. To be sure, God has everything under control so we need not concern ourselves with anything. God has taking care of and is taken care of every single detail. Everything needed was prepared beforehand, before the foundation of the earth.

*Kathleen*

[[1]](http://yourbibleblog.com/2016/12/" \l "_ftnref1) It is my practice not to capitalize the “s” when referring to satan. It’s my way of diminishing him.