

Lesson 6

Hope in the Pentateuch

Introduction

From the earliest passages, we find glimpses of hope of God's plan of salvation. While at the time of their writing, the inspired men of the Bible may not have understood the fullest application of what was revealed, Christians have the advantage to look back on the completed revelation, seeing the unfolding of God's plan to redeem mankind. This foreshadowing began in the garden when God unveiled the consequences of Adam and Eve's sin, and continues throughout the Old Testament.

In this lesson we will take an in-depth look at three passages in Genesis and a brief look at other places in the first five books that serve as foreshadowing of what would happen through Jesus Christ.

Genesis 3.15

After Satan brought sin into the world, God pronounced a curse:

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."

– Genesis 3.15

Beginning Bible students may find this sentence difficult to understand.

- *The seed of the woman must bruise the head of the seed of the serpent?*
- *Who is the seed of woman?*
- *What is the difference between being bruised on the head verses on the heel?*

In commenting on this passage, one writer has said, "Now, as the oak with all its luxuriant branches is contained in the acorn, so was the whole of salvation, however copiously unfolded in subsequent revelations, comprehended in this one prophecy; which is, in fact, the sum and summary of the whole Bible."¹³

Genesis 3.15 is the first promise given to mankind after sin entered the world. It clearly says the seed of the woman would be the one who would overcome Satan. Hundreds of years in the future, Isaiah gave another clue as to how this would happen:

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel,

Isaiah 7.14

Isaiah's contemporary, Micah, tells us Jesus would be born in Bethlehem, Micah 5.2. And finally, Galatians 4.4-5 shows us how the birth of Jesus fulfilled these prophecies:

¹³ Simeon, C. (1836). *Horae Homileticae: Genesis to Leviticus (Vol. 1)*. London: Samuel Holdsworth.

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

Robert Harkrider¹⁴ gives us some very good insight on Genesis 3.15 and how it is unsurpassed in importance to Christian doctrine. From the earliest of time, God planned that Jesus Christ would be born of a woman. Mary, a virgin, conceived by the Holy Spirit and gave birth to the Son of God. This child came in the flesh for the purpose to bruise the head of the serpent. **A bruise to the head is a death blow.** A bruise to the heel is painful, but not deadly. When Jesus died on the cross, He suffered as if it were a bruise to the heel, but He dealt a death blow to the words of Satan. Think of how the following two passages confirm Jesus' purpose while on earth:

Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. **The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil,**

1 John 3.8

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,

Hebrews 2.14-15

While the original writer and his audience may not have seen a reference to a messiah in this passage, it seems quite appropriate for Christians who have read the back of the book to see the anticipation of, if not the specific prediction of the work of Christ in defeating the devil.¹⁵

So, if Genesis 3.15 is the first unveiling of God's great plan to redeem mankind from sin, and, if Jesus is *the seed of the woman* being referred to there, how can we prove Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the one who would *bruise the head of Satan*? The next clue comes in Genesis 12.

Genesis 12.1-3

A quick reading of Matthew and Luke's gospel's finds a genealogical listing in the early sections. *They are not there by accident.* Their purpose is to trace the ancestors of Jesus of Nazareth all the way back to Abraham. Abraham was regarded as the greatest in the Jewish religion and the gospel writers wanted to prove that Jesus was the one God was referring to in Genesis 12. Harkrider has written:

"Had Jesus just appeared on the scene, there would have been no physical evidence to prove He is the One, nor would there be any way to expose the many impostors who had preceded Him. It was not a matter of happenstance that Jesus was a Jew. The history recorded in the Old Testament provided qualifications that only Jesus of Nazareth could fulfill."¹⁶

Many Old Testament prophecies find their fulfillment in Matthew 1.1-17 and Luke 3.23-38.

A quick reading of Genesis 12.1-3 finds a brief outline of the most significant importance:

¹⁴ Harkrider, R. F. (2003). *The Gospel in the Old Testament*. In D. W. Petty (Ed.), *The Gospel in the Old Testament*. Temple Terrace, FL: Florida College Bookstore.

¹⁵ Kissling, P. J. (2004-). *Genesis*. Joplin, MO: College Press Pub. Co.

¹⁶ Harkrider, R. F., p. 12.

Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the **land** that I will show you. And I will make of you a great **nation**, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and **in you** all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

The first two promises summarize the Old Testament. Abraham was directed to Canaan, which became the home of Israel. Israel was the *great nation* promised in 12.2. Verse 3 summarizes the New Testament. The seed of Abraham would provide the means of a spiritual blessing for all people of the earth. From here, the Old Testament traces the development of this family and how it eventually became a great nation, Israel. One by one the generations pass. Isaac, Jacob, Judah, and so on...until we get to Jesus.

Why is the genealogy so important? Jesus had to be of the exact family line if He is to reign on David’s throne. “The lineage is so critical that, frankly, *there can never be another legitimate claim to the Messiah.*”¹⁷ As you read it, it is amazing to see how God chose how the progression would proceed. While it had to come from Abraham and through David, the lineage included two Gentile women, Ruth and Rahab. God chose the lineage, and He did it in a way different from the way man would have done it. He blessed them; He brought them together as a people and made them a great nation. But for what purpose? *To bless all families of the earth*, Genesis 12.3.

Genesis 49.10

A few weeks ago, we touched on this passage. It reads:

The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

This passage is set in the context of events that take place shortly before the death of Jacob. He is blessing his sons. Notice that *Judah* is the one through whom the lineage of the Messiah would pass. Reuben, the eldest, was not chosen. Joseph, his favorite son, was not chosen. Judah was, and notice what is said in this verse: *the scepter shall not depart.*

Judah is portrayed as being in possession of a *scepter*. The scepter was a symbol of power and symbolizes the monarchy that will be Judah’s inheritance. See Numbers 24.17; Psalm 2.9; and 45.6-7. Notice how the kingdom would not depart from Judah. This was further promised in 2 Samuel 7.15 and Psalm 89.33-37. Twice, the Psalmists refer to Judah himself as God’s *scepter*, Psalm 60.7; 108.8. The other expression in the first part of 49.10, *ruler’s staff*, refers to an authoritative leader.

What about the second half of the verse? Some Bible translations render 49.10 differently from the ESV. Here is how the NASU reads:

The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, **Until Shiloh comes**, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

¹⁷ Harkrider, R. F., p. 15.

The difference between the ESV and the NASU comes from the difficult interpretation of the Hebrew language in this place. The meaning of the word *Shiloh* is uncertain. There are a number of differing views on how this should be translated. We will look at two.

First, some view *Shiloh* here as referring to the literal place in Ephraim that was the religious center where the tabernacle resided until 1050 BC. Thus, the idea is that the blessing in Genesis 49.10 points to Judah's leadership role in the settlement of the land, Judges 1.1-2, or Judah's dominion over the northern tribes during the times of the monarch. This viewpoint is problematic in that in Hebrew, *Shiloh* is spelled differently than the town listed in Joshua 18 and 1 Samuel 1-4. By the time of David, Shiloh had become unimportant as the tabernacle was no longer located there. So, of the two positions we will deal with in this lesson, this one seems to have less weight.

The second viewpoint is that *Shiloh* means "the one who brings peace." Some see an application in David here. And I believe that fits. But, the ultimate fulfillment of this passage is seen in Jesus, the "bringer of peace." See John 14.27. Jesus has brought us peace by redeeming us from our sins and reconciling us to God. Because of Him, we have the hope of heaven.

"The coming of King David follows the template in part and cannot be denied its place as a partial fulfillment of the blessing. But the intimation of an idealized permanent, universal reign must also look to the perfect eschatological figure, David's Greater Son. The Christian interpreter, who identifies the king of our passage explicitly as Jesus of Nazareth, therefore can agree with the historian that the Davidic monarchy must be initially in view and also can agree with ancient Jewish interpretation that our text requires a messianic fulfillment."¹⁸

Other Passages

Genesis 22: Here, Abraham is told to offer up Isaac as a sacrifice. It took them three days to arrive at the place of sacrifice. Isaac was dead in Abraham's mind for three long days! Isaac carried the wood for his death and Christ carried His own cross. Isaac was spared after the three-day journey. Christ rose from the dead after three days.

Exodus 12: Here, we find the lamb slain and its blood sprinkled upon the houses as a shelter for men who are facing the judgment of God. The blood of the slain lamb is a type of the future blood of the Lamb of God. Each individual family member was required to receive a part of the lamb (12.4)—a picture of how every individual must accept the sacrifice of Christ for themselves—it is a personal decision. No one was saved because of being in the right house. Today no one is a child of God because they have Christian parents or live in a "Christian nation." The fire (12.8-9) represented judgment which is still ahead for those of us living today. Bread made without yeast (yeast symbolizes sin) represents Christ, the bread of life. It is important to note that no one was saved because of "doing good" or "doing the best they can."

Leviticus 16: This chapter presents the ordinances of the Day of Atonement, which is a type of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament God did not remove sin but covered it, waiting for the only truly acceptable sacrifice—Jesus Christ. Only the high priest could provide this atonement and in

¹⁸ Mathews, K. A. (2005). Genesis 11:27–50:26 (Vol. 1B). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

doing so he laid aside his beautiful garments. Christ our great high priest laid aside His glory in heaven to come to earth to provide a sacrifice for us.

Numbers 21: Here, the serpent of brass which was lifted up for all to see. This is a picture of Jesus Christ who would be lifted up on the Cross of Calvary for all to see. To be saved they were required to look up at the serpent in faith just like today we must look up to the Cross in faith. To be saved one must begin by acknowledging their need if a Savior because of their sin

For Thought and Reflection

1. Who is the *seed of woman*?
2. Explain the difference between being bruised on the head versus the heel.
3. What was Jesus' mission while on earth? See 1 John 3.8 and Hebrews 2.14-15.
4. How do the first two promises in Genesis 12.1-3 summarize the Old Testament?
5. How does the last promise of Genesis 12.1-3 summarize the New Testament?
6. Why is the genealogy of Jesus Christ so important?
7. What does *scepter* mean in Genesis 49.10? *The rulers staff?*

