



A BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE END TIMES

Week 2: The First Prophecy

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I. LET'S TALK ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE of a PROPER START

- A. When most people think of Bible Prophecy, they think about the end of all things
 - 1. They think about the Book of Revelation, they think about the future and the things to come.
 - 2. They might think about the Book of Daniel or Zechariah (or other parts of the Old Testament) – and this would be proper to do so.
 - 3. However - most people simply think about the end of time, the future and the things that have yet to happen.

- B. What is seldom the case is that anyone thinks about the very beginning.
 - 1. Insofar as the Bible is concerned, that means the book of Genesis.
 - 2. If the Book of Revelation is the future, then Genesis is the past - - the ancient past.
 - 3. Few people think about the beginning of all things when it comes to Bible Prophecy, however it is where we must turn our attention if we want to get the proper start.
 - 4. In this class, we will follow a loose trajectory from the front of the Bible to the back of the Bible.

II. THE SITUATION IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

- A. God said seven times in **chapter 1 of Genesis** that everything He had created was **“good.”**
 - 1. After He had created man, God then declared things to be **“very good.”**
 - 2. Everything had a design and purpose in God’s sovereign mind – and it all met with His approval.

- B. However, that doesn’t mean everything in the entire created order of things at this time was perfect.
 - 1. For example, we learn in **Genesis 2:20** that it was not an ideal situation for Adam to be alone – so Eve was created.
 - 2. Now - it may bother some of you to consider this fact, but evil was already present by this point
 - 3. Evil, by now, was already entrenched within the created order of things
 - 4. This fact does not take away from the truth of **Romans 5:12** which says:
 - *“Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—”*

5. To be sure, it was through one man – Adam – that sin first entered into the world. As a result, sin entered into the world’s system and into the physical order of things. The Bible is clear.
6. However, evil had already expressed itself before this point, and it was alive and well in the Garden of Eden.

III. MEET THE SERPENT

Genesis 3:1. “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’?”

- A. Various Bible translations describe the serpent here as more subtle, shrewd, crafty, and cunning “THAN any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.”
 1. So right off the bat, we need to ask ourselves several questions:
 - “Was this really a talking snake?”
 - “If it was a vocal viper, then why was Eve not surprised to have a conversation with it?”
 - “Did all the other animals talk as well? Or was this snake just the smartest one in the crowd? Is that what the Bible is really saying?”

- B. What becomes obvious if we apply any degree of common sense to this matter is this is no ordinary snake - - in fact, it’s not a snake at all.
 1. Nearly every translation calls it a serpent, and so naturally we all tend to think ‘snake’ here.
 - It doesn’t help that virtually every artistic illustration of this occasion shows Eve having a little chat with a tree snake.
 2. But here’s where we need to remember the three proper rules of Biblical interpretation from last week’s lesson:
 - Rule #1: “Passages must be understood in light of their original Biblical meaning.”
 - Rule #2: “Passages must be in harmony with other passages on the same subject,” and...
 - Rule #3: “Passages must be in compliance with the development of the context.”

- C. Let’s apply Rule #1: Let’s figure out the original Biblical meaning.
 - A. We get the word “serpent” from the Hebrew word (נָחָשׁ) “nachash”
 - a. It is used to mean a serpent – that much is true, but it also holds two other important meanings when we evaluate what the Hebrew is claiming:
 - The first of those is: “to use divinations, to deceive or to give omens”
 - The second of those is: “bronze, brazen, luminous or shining”

- (NOTE: In fact, the International Standard Version translation renders **Genesis 3:1** to say: “Now the Shining One was more clever than any animal of the field...”) > much better; no mention of ‘snake’
 - b. So, the takeaway here is this creature – this serpentine-like “nachash”, was some sort of shining or luminous entity who was deceptive and capable of giving dark spiritual insights or divinations.
 - c. It was also an evil entity since it was urging disobedience to God’s command to not eat from the tree in the middle of the garden.
 - d. Also, while the garden and the new earth were all “good” as God had declared them to be, it is clear that evil, in the form of this “nachash” was already present and active in the bigger picture behind the scenes.
- D. Let’s now apply Rule #2 concerning proper interpretation. Let’s see if this whole “shining, evil, serpentine-like entity that possesses spiritual insights and powers,” is a definition that is in harmony with what other passages say on this same issue.
1. First, divine beings (angels, etc.) are often referred to as “shining.”
 - a. (**Cf. Dan. 10:6** – Daniel sees an angel who is described as “gleaming like burnished bronze.” It’s a derivation of the word “nachash.”)
 - b. (**Cf. Ezek. 1:7** – Ezekiel sees, in his vision, angelic creatures who “sparkles like polished bronze.” Again, we have the derivation of “nachash.”)
 2. Second, the serpentine-like description of angelic or divine beings is also mentioned in Scripture
 - a. (**Cf. Isaiah Ch. 6**) – Isaiah receives a vision of the heavenly throne room where God is in company with Seraphim – NOTE: the word literally means “fiery” or “to burn.”
 - b. The root word “seraph” is also a root word for “snake.”
 - In several places in Scripture, the word “seraph” is used, in fact, to describe “snakes” or even “fiery snakes” (**Cf. Numbers 21:6** when the Israelites complained against God and Moses).
 - Isaiah’s vision saw God being praised by winged serpentine beings – we will be studying angels, types of angelic beings, and the hierarchy of angels later on in this series.
 - But suffice it for now to understand that above God’s throne, Isaiah saw fiery, glowing, divine beings of a serpent-like nature - - and they each had six wings...
 - If this somehow rubs you the wrong way, and you’d rather stick with your notions of angels being fat little bare-bottomed babies with stubby wings, or ‘model-esque’ beautiful women with powerful feathered wings – neither of those representations are supported in Scripture. (Again – much more on this later...)

- This suggests that the “serpent” in **Genesis 3:1** was likely a rebellious divine being, having some attributes in common with the order of divine beings that Isaiah saw in his vision.
3. And third - still concerning Rule #2 - we have to consider two slam-dunk verses found in **Revelation 12:9 and 20:2**
 1. **(12:9)** “*And the great dragon was hurled down--that ancient serpent called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.*”
 2. Here, the term ‘ancient serpent’ is associated with the phrase “his angels” – so, a clear association is present between this great dragon or serpent and angels.
 3. **(20:2)** “*He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.*”
 4. In both of verses, a direct connection is made between “the devil or Satan” – AND – the “great dragon” which is also known as “that ancient serpent.”
 5. The logic presented by passages being in harmony with each other is quite apparent.

NOTE: By this point – and even though we’ve not exhaustively looked at all the applicable texts, the picture is already clear.

4. Here’s what’s NOT true:

- a. The “serpent” in the Garden of Eden was not a snake of the modern scientific *reptilia serpentes* classification that had a chat with a female *Homo sapiens*.
- b. It was not any animal that had a special ability to talk in a fashion that all the other animals did not have, and....
- c. It was not an ordinary snake that was demonically-possessed such as some so-called experts claim (In fact, demons didn’t exist at this point in time as we will later learn).

5. Here is what IS true:

- a. The “serpent” in the **Genesis 3:1** account was Satan himself – who appeared as an ‘intelligent shining being.’ This also conforms to **2 Cor. 11:14** where we learn that “Satan masquerades as an angel of light.”
- b. The Bible makes the case that Satan appeared to Eve in his angelic state: a serpentine-like divine creature who, after his own fall, was deceitful and evil, and had the ability to understand spiritual matters.
- c. The Bible calls Satan “that ancient serpent” and also a “great dragon.” In light of all the Biblical evidence, these terms must be understood as accurate physical descriptions

NOTE: That was the introduction. Now we need to move forward a few verses to “the first prophecy” in the Bible (**Cf. Genesis 3:14-15**). Given what we’ve just learned – I trust this will make sense.

IV. THE SCENE

- A. The serpent (AKA Satan) was successful in getting Eve to disobey God
- B. Eve, in turn, got Adam to do the same
- C. Now sin has entered the world and it has moved from the confines of the spiritual realm and from Satan’s fall > into the physical realm and the fall of man
- D. Adam and Eve have suddenly come down with an acute body image disorder, and they hide from God.
- E. So, God calls a meeting. He’s looking at Adam, and Eve, and Satan. They’re all present.
- F. Adam blames Eve, and Eve blames the serpent. A basic symptom of sin is not seeing yourself as having the problem.
- G. The fig leaves are starting to curl and dry, and Adam and Eve are feeling desperate and fearful. It’s the oppressive guilt of sin.
- H. God pronounces curses on each party present.
 1. We won’t focus on what God says to Adam or to Eve as those are mostly tangents to our primary concern.
- I. We’ll focus instead on what God says to Satan – and that’s what we read in these two verses:
 - a. First God says to Satan, “Cursed are you above all livestock and wild animals.”
 - a. Again - this doesn’t mean the villain here was a talking snake – just another animal.
 - b. That view – as we’ve seen - doesn’t conform at all to Rules #1 and #2 of proper Biblical interpretation.
 - c. It DOES mean that God is underscoring the severity of Satan’s fate.
 - d. It’ll be of greater consequence and lasting significance than all other created creatures by comparison.
 - b. Then God tells Satan that he’ll crawl on his belly and eat dust.
 - This doesn’t mean the snakes we see today once had legs or wings. Again – this is not about running reptiles.
 - God is instead stating that Satan is being condemned to an extreme subordinate or lowly fate.
 - Remember, Satan was once Lucifer (“Star of the Morning”) and he was second only to God Himself.
 - Nor was Satan going to physically eat dust. No ordinary snake, by the way, does that. This is not a diet-related curse.
 - Think of it as God punishing Satan by saying, “You will end up being the lowest of the low.”
 - We might say in today’s vernacular, “Satan bit the dust.”
 - From God’s perspective, Satan was cast down to the most humiliating part and destiny within the cosmos.

J. AND THEN GOD PRONOUNCES A BOMBSHELL PROPHECY – AND THIS IS THE ONE THAT SETS THE TONE FOR ALL OTHER PROPHECIES TO FOLLOW

1. NOTE: The details of this stunning prophecy are in **vs. 15** – and there are essentially five important predictions that God makes AS HE TALKS TO SATAN:
 - a. There will be a physical seed lineage from both Satan and the woman
 - b. There will exist an enmity (“hostility”) between the offspring (or ‘seed’) of Satan and the offspring (or ‘seed’) of the woman
 - c. The offspring of the woman will deal to Satan a terminal or fatal blow (“*crush your head*”)
 - d. Conversely, Satan (God says “you”) will deal to the woman’s offspring a minor flesh wound by comparison (“*strike*” or “*bruise his heel*”)
 - e. (Lastly, this is an easy one to miss) – the offspring of the woman is identified as a singular individual – a “He” in fact

K. UNPACKING THESE FIVE IMPORTANT PREDICTIONS (We have to get this correct!)

1. The Hebrew word that is rendered ‘offspring,’ or ‘descendants,’ or ‘seed’ in our English translations is “**zera**,”
 - a. God uses the very same term when He refers to Satan and the woman – He doesn’t use one term for the devil and a different one for the woman
 - **He uses the SAME term to refer to both...**
 - b. Important: The Hebrew term ‘zera’ has been used several times in **Genesis** up to this point (Ex.)
 - **Genesis 1:11** – “...plants yielding seed...”
 - **Genesis 1:12** – “...plants and trees yielding seed after their kind...”
 - c. It’s also used many places in **Genesis** AFTER this point (Ex.)
 - When God made a promise to Abram in **Genesis 12:7** – “...to your seed, I will give land...”
 - When God later reaffirmed His promises to Abraham concerning the latter’s descendants, He said these promises were “...between Me and you and your seed forever...”
2. We need to ask an important question at this point: “What specifically is meant by the Hebrew term, ‘zera?’”
 - a. **The term ‘zera’ means physical seed.**
 - It is used to refer to genetic lineage, generations, offspring.
 - It is used to describe the way any living, physical organism reproduces and creates a subsequent generation.
 - It’s true for elephants, monkeys, coconuts, and minnows - - anything physical that has a genetic signature.
 - This is very clear when the Scriptures specify plants that produce ‘zera’ AFTER THEIR OWN KIND.

- Despite deceptive progressive agendas in our time, the truth is women contribute ovum to the creation of another human, and men produce sperm.
 - The resulting child has physical genetic markers from each parent. The child is the product of both (this is the genetic 'seed' or 'zera' that the Bible is speaking about).
 - And it is this genetic / physical 'seed' or 'zera' that God specifies when He pronounces this prophecy to Satan.
3. Here is where quite a few so-called 'scholars' and 'experts' get it wrong.
- a. They look at **Genesis 3:15** and they say something like, "This means physical descendants for the woman, but it means 'spiritual descendants' for Satan."
- NO! - - it does not! (poppycock)
 - You cannot take a word that is divinely inspired to mean something very specific, and then arrogantly claim it 'doesn't mean what it says'
 - That is irresponsible treatment of God's Word, and it amounts to a dangerous irreverence – it is doubting its Divine Author
 - Remember Rule #1 of proper Biblical interpretation: "figure out the original meaning and stick with it"
 - In **Gen. 3:15**, God tells Satan, "YOU are going to have physical descendants, and there will be ongoing hostilities between YOUR physical descendants and the woman's physical descendants."
- b. As I stated last week, there is the temptation among many pastors, teachers, and Christian leaders to manipulate the Scriptures – especially when they encounter something that conflicts with personal preference
- It's why pastors all over this nation today are desperately shoe-horning a Gospel message into a Bible passage that has nothing to do with the Gospel
 - It's why pastors all over this nation today are skipping over or past important truths in God's Word as they seek to promote a seeker-friendly agenda
 - It's why churches all over this nation today are leapfrogging **Romans Chapters 9-11** in their "expositional study" of the book of **Romans**. They don't like what those chapters have to say.
 - It's why churches all over this nation today are promoting the errant notion that "Israel means the church," that God's promises to the Jews are now forfeited, and that the nation of Israel no longer holds any Biblical significance.
 - It's why various denominations today doubt the virgin birth, claim Jesus was a good man but not God, that Jesus died but didn't rise again, or that there really won't be a physical 1,000 year Millennial Kingdom with Jesus Christ sitting on His throne in Jerusalem.

- It's why sin is no longer called sin, why secularists argue that there are dozens of gender types, and why human life is not sacred anymore.
- c. When we begin to march down the path of stating, "The Bible doesn't really mean what it's saying," or when we ignore the truths we most need to embrace, the consequences are profound, and humanity spirals down a tragic and depraved descent.
- d. That's why **Galations 6:7** says, "*Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that will he also reap.*"
- e. There are always adverse consequences to not taking Scripture literally and at face value. The bottom line is the Bible means what it says.

4. In Summary

NOTE: We unpacked the first of the five prophecies in **Genesis 3:15** – which was God's revelation that both Satan and the woman would have physical descendants conforming to the genetic order of things

- a. The next – and related – prophecy is one we touched on a few moments ago, and that is there would be ongoing enmity or hostility between the two sides
 1. This is an important issue to consider, because God doesn't put a second bookend on this issue. The matter is not closed.
 2. We're going to see in the lessons just ahead that this hostility between the two "seeds" flared up dramatically in times past – but it still lingers and manifests today, and it will flare up dramatically again in the future
- b. The third prophetic element in this text is that the woman's 'seed' or 'zera' or offspring will be a singular individual – a "He"

NOTE: (I'm taking these five prophecies a little out of order here to make things easier to understand)

1. It's no surprise here that this "He" that God speaks of, this future individual that will "crush" Satan's head is Jesus Christ
 2. Jesus was born from a virgin (this was an OT prophecy that was made in **Isaiah 7:14** – "...the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son...")
 3. That **Isaiah** passage is the main text we point to when we talk about the prophetic virgin birth
 4. But here in **Genesis 3:15**, the same issue is alluded to. It is the 'seed of the woman' that is specified. No human man is involved.
 5. It is in **Genesis 3:15** that the foundation for the virgin birth prophecy is established, as well as the arrival of Jesus Christ, the Messiah.
 6. The 'seed' or 'genetic lineage' of both sides are presented here by God, but on the woman's side, it is then narrowed down to one individual – Jesus Christ
- c. The fourth prophetic element in **Genesis 3:15** is the fact that Jesus Christ will "crush" Satan's head. (NOTE – I want to make a couple of comments here...)
 1. This is language of fatal or terminal dimension. Nobody survives with their head crushed.

2. The main idea is this: a point is coming when Satan is fully and finally defeated.
 3. It doesn't mean he dies; it means he's finished. Kaput! He has no more role or influence anymore.
 4. It's here that many uninformed Christians smile blandly and say – or sing! (plenty of shallow worship songs make this same point) – “Jesus crushed Satan's head at the cross.”
 5. NO! Jesus did not crush Satan's head at the cross! That is incorrect theology.
 6. People gained salvation by faith BEFORE the cross, and people gained salvation by faith AFTER the cross.
 7. I'm not diminishing the critical importance of Christ's crucifixion at all here, nor am I diluting the fact that Jesus Christ's sacrifice was “once for all.” I'm simply stating a greater point that God's Word makes plain.
 8. On the OT side, those who demonstrated their faith looked forward in time. On the NT side, those who demonstrated their faith looked back in time. The book of **Hebrews** makes this clear.
 9. Furthermore, Satan, according to **1 Peter 5:8** is still alive and well! The verse reads, *“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”*
 10. That's a post-cross instruction, and one that in no way suggests Satan is now crushed.
 11. In fact, Paul is VERY clear that Satan is NOT crushed AFTER the cross. In **Romans**, Paul is writing to the church at Rome.
 - He signs off on this powerful book in **Chapter 16:20**, and he says, “The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.”
 - The point is Satan, AFTER the cross is still ‘uncrushed’ if you will.
 - Satan will not be fully crushed till AFTER the 1,000-year Millennial Kingdom (**Revelation Ch. 20** makes this very clear).
 - That is a point still future to you and me.
- d. The fifth and final point of this “first prophecy in the Bible” in **Genesis 3:15** is this: Satan will ultimately accomplish little more than bruising the heel of Jesus Christ.
1. This is language of contrast. It is figurative.
 - As I said last week, a literal reading of the Scriptures allows for the use of figures of speech. And so....
 - Jesus Christ will “crush” Satan's head. Satan will be finished. That's what it means.
 - By contrast, Satan will accomplish little more than nip at Jesus' heel. He'll bruise it. It does no damage to Jesus Christ at all – or to the sovereign plan of salvation.
 2. Make no mistake. At the cross itself, Satan and his fallen angelic hordes thought they had won the battle – the lingering enmity - that **Genesis 3:15** spells out.

3. It was not until after that point – when Satan realized what had been achieved with Christ’s death and resurrection – that Satan realized he’d made a tactical error.
4. This one was a BIG error! If Satan had really known what was going to happen as a result of that event, he wouldn’t have crucified Jesus
 - ***(Cf. 1 Cor. 2:8)*** – *“None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”*