

Heralds of the King

The Promise to Eve: Hope in The Shadow of Death

INTRO

As we enter the Holiday Season, we are beginning a new series this week in which we are looking through the Old Testament at the promises of the coming Messiah: The birth of Jesus.

What was it like?

I think what happens to us as modern Christians, is that sometimes, we lose the wonder and excitement of how amazing it must have been. From the moment of the fall, until Christ's birth, God's people hoped for one thing: A savior.

A promise traced through history

This promise the theme of the entire Bible.

- Creation
- Fall
- Redemption
- Restoration

Creation and the Fall, these hugely important events, happen in the first 3 chapters of the Bible. The rest of the story is our redemption, and God's work of restoration.

The Next 6 Weeks

The plan for this series, is to trace that story through the Old Testament, as it was revealed to the original hearers. We're going to be looking at 5 of the major promises of the coming messiah, and then finally, on the last week, his arrival.

Which brings us to today.



Today we are looking at the first of these 5 promises.

The promise made to Eve, the Promise of Hope, even in the shadow of death.

Within this promise I want to talk about three things

1. The Enemy
2. The Shadow
3. The Promise

Let's pickup the story in Genesis 3

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" **2** The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, **3** but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or **you will die.**'" **4** "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. **5** "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." **6** When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. **7** Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. **8** Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. **9** But the Lord God called to the man, "**Where are you?**" **10** He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." **11** And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" **12** The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." **13** Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." **14** So the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this,

"Cursed are you above all livestock
and all wild animals!

You will crawl on your belly
and you will eat dust
all the days of your life.

15 And I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will crush your head,
and you will strike his heel."

THE ENEMY

It's hard for us in the modern age to really understand the horror of what just happened. Imagine that Death wasn't a reality that you'd ever faced. Life was peaceful. Then in one fell swoop, pain, fear, loneliness entered your life. Along with one certainty: "You will surely die."

We've forgotten how horrible this is.

We're a little more used to death. It's been a part of our reality for a long time now. And as Christians, we believe in theory that Jesus defeated death... but what does that really mean? That we get to go to heaven someday?

Because of this, when we're confronted with death, we feel bad about hating it so much. We try and act spiritual and be strong. Saying things like, "He's in a better place." or, "To die is gain!"

Jesus didn't feel the same way.

1 Corinthians 15, Paul describes death as the last enemy to be defeated. Not as a good thing.

And when you look at the gospels, you see something awesome. Every time Jesus encounters death, he stops it in its tracks.

In Luke 7, he **interrupts a funeral** 2 miles out of his way.

And as I mentioned a few weeks ago, the story of Lazarus truly shows Christ's feelings towards death.

THE SHADOW

Death is not normal. It is not good. And we live in its shadow. So much of our anxiety, our selfishness, and our insecurities arise from the fear of death.

Albert Camus

Illustrated this wonderfully. Think of the things you love. Coffee at your favorite cafe, a great book, your favorite sport, movies, art video games. Now imagine that someone comes up to you and tells you, "I'm going to kill you in two hours. There is nothing you can do. Go enjoy yourself for a while before you die."

How much can you really enjoy that coffee? You probably won't be able to focus on that movie.

Why? Because you're in the shadow of death.

This shadow is cast over everything

But we're all in the shadow. Tolstoy said the only way we can stay sane in the shadow of death is by distracting ourselves and not thinking about it. Because the reality is, you are going to die.

It breeds materialism

This causes so many in our culture today to try and fill their lives with as much pleasure, excitement, and material goods as we can get since You Only Live Once.

It also explains why nothing is ever enough. (**Ecclesiastes**) No matter how important I feel, In 50 years, few people will remember our name. No matter how much money we get, death wipes it all away.

Because of this we're never satisfied, but we don't know where else to turn. So we just search for more and more and more.

But there is hope.

THE PROMISE

Looking back at Genesis 3. What were the first words out of God's mouth after the shadow of death was cast?

"Where are you?"

God knew where they were. Why did he ask? Because he wants a relationship. God reconciles. **God seeks you.**

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside still waters.

3 He restores my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness

for his name's sake.

4 *Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,*

I will fear no evil,

for you are with me;

Why can David so confidently say that God is with him? Not because David is awesome and he found God, but because God sought him. Just like he seeks you.

What is the promise?

In Gen. 3:15, God tells the serpent that “The seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent” and that the “Head of the serpent will strike at his heel.”

As soon as death and sin entered creation, God made a promise. That it's power would be crushed. (But not without cost.)

This is where we sometimes mix things up

How did Jesus defeat death? I'll tell you how he didn't do it. This doesn't mean a ticket to heaven turning death into a nice passage to the “other side.”

Romans 8 says that all of creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.

If time allows:

C.S. Lewis Supernatural vs. Natural

- Water to wine
- Feeding the multitude
- The Resurrection?

The Resurrection

No. Jesus defeated Death. The hope that was promised was more than Heaven. It was resurrection. Eternal life.

Romans 8 continues in v. 23:

“And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.”

There's no question as to what this means. The promise of the Messiah is the promise that when he comes, he will defeat death. That's just what he did. And that when he comes again, we will defeat death, and creation will be restored.

The Resurrection life

This changes our perspective. This world is my home. God's creation is good. Death is not final. Let's live like it.