

⁸They heard the voice of the Lord God, who was walking around in the garden during the cooler part of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

⁹The Lord God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”

¹⁰The man said, “I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid myself.”

¹¹God said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?”

¹²The man said, “The woman you gave to be with me—she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

¹³The Lord God said to the woman, “What have you done?”

The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

¹⁴The Lord God said to the serpent:

**Because you have done this,
you are cursed more than all the livestock,
and more than every wild animal.
You shall crawl on your belly,
and you shall eat dust all the days of your life.**

**¹⁵I will put hostility between you and the woman,
and between your seed and her seed.
He will crush your head,
and you will crush his heel. (EHV)**

Theme: The Lord’s Gracious Response to our Sin

Adam and Eve made a mess of things—just like we often do. They ruined God’s perfect creation. They themselves were created by God in his own image and likeness—that means that they were perfect and holy, like God—without sin, and that they were completely in-tune with his will. God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and told them that they could eat from any tree in the garden except the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, warning them that if they did so, they would die.

But the devil came in the form of a snake and tempted Eve. He caused doubt in her heart and mind. The devil convinced her that the Lord was lying to her, that she wouldn’t really die if she ate some of the tree’s fruit, but she would become like God, knowing good and evil. Because she now trusted the devil and doubted the Lord’s words and his love for her, she took the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to Adam, who was with her, and he ate some too.

Have you ever done something wrong and immediately regretted it? A feeling of dread came over you as it dawned on you just exactly what you had done. That is how Adam and Eve felt—they felt the shame and disgrace of what they had done, and of being naked so they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves. And then God showed up. “Where are you?” he asked Adam.

When Adam and Eve heard God in the garden they hid—like little children hiding underneath the bed or in a closet when they did something wrong, they tried to hide from God—as if the

omniscient God wouldn't be able to find them! The Lord asked Adam if he had eaten from the tree which God commanded him not to eat from. Adam replied, **The woman you gave to be with me—she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate it.** So God asked Eve, and she said, **The serpent deceived me, and I ate.**

Adam and Eve knew that God knew what they had done. But did you notice what lies behind their answers? Excuses! Instead of admitting their guilt and taking the blame upon themselves for their own sins, they made excuses. Adam blamed Eve, "the women gave me some of the fruit and I just did what she did." But at the same time he blamed God: "the women you gave..." Adam rejoiced when God first gave him Eve, but now that sin came into the world, Adam blamed God for giving him the woman in the first place—if God never had made woman from man, then Adam never would have sinned, it's all her fault. Just like a kid passing the blame on to a sibling.

Eve was no better. Her excuse is tantamount to, "the devil made me do it. It's not really my fault, I didn't mean to do it, I was tricked into it." Again, like a little child, instead of simply taking the blame, Eve tried to pin the blame on the devil for her own act of rebellion.

Yes, Adam and Eve sounded like young children, but don't they also sound like we often do? We too make a mess of things. And when we do, like Adam and Eve, we are fond of making excuses. You didn't try to do it; you didn't know that was wrong; everyone else is doing it and it makes you happy, so God isn't possibly going to be angry at you for doing it. You blame others—it was so and so's fault, or the devil made you do it; or it was because of something that happened to you when you were younger, or you were just trying to get even with someone who sinned against you.

So we make excuses and fail to take the blame upon ourselves. It's rarely our own fault, we try to convince ourselves, someone else is always to blame. And when we are forced to admit that we did wrong, there is always a reason, outside of us for it. And so, even as we admit our guilt, we aren't really repenting.

It's not really surprising that we sound like Adam and Eve, after all, we did inherit our sinful nature from them. Adam and Eve were created in God's image, but after they became sinners, they passed down their sinful nature to the next generation. One of the saddest verses in all of Scripture is Genesis 5:3, **Adam lived 130 years, and he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his own image, and he named him Seth.** Adam had Seth, the replacement for Abel after Cain killed him, in his own sinful image and likeness, not born the holy and perfect image of God. And the sinful nature was then passed down to each generation until our sinful parents passed on their sinful nature to us.

Paul writes in Romans 5, **sin entered the world through one man and death through sin, so also death spread to all people because all sinned.** We call this original sin—the state of sinfulness into which we were born. We also call it inherited sin, because this sinful nature we inherited from our parents and ultimately from Adam and Eve.

And because of this original sin, we are spiritually dead by nature. By nature, we are born as enemies of God and children of the devil. Sin separates us from our holy creator. When Adam and Eve sinned, they brought hostility into the relationship between us and God. Now when we are born, we are born as hostile to God, we hate him by nature. Paul writes in Romans 8, **For the mind-set of the sinful flesh is hostile to God, since it does not submit to God's law, and in fact, it cannot.** So by nature, not only do we hate God, but it's absolutely impossible for us to obey him.

And so, we deserve to die. God warned Adam and Eve that if they ate from the tree they would die; and die they did. They had to pay the consequence for their actions, and that consequence was physical death. If they didn't sin they never would have died. And the fact that all people die is proof that we have inherited that sinful nature from Adam and Eve, which leads us to

commit sins against God by our thoughts, words, and actions. But the consequences for our sins that we deserve don't just end with physical death, but also eternal damnation in hell.

But God is not a vengeful God, he is not a God of retaliation and hate. He loves all people and wants all people to be saved and not perish forever. So God came to Adam and Eve out of grace. They didn't deserve to have God come talk to them, certainly after they had fallen into sin. And just the fact that God did come and talk to them is proof of his grace, the undeserved love that he had for them. He could have destroyed them the very moment they rebelled against him. He could have let them perish forever in hell and created a new man and woman, or he could have destroyed the world completely and started again with a new creation. But he didn't. Instead he came to them and gave them a chance to admit their guilt, a chance to repent. God knew full-well the answer to the questions he asked. Like parents asking their children what happened when the broken lamp is on the floor and a ball is in a hand—God knew exactly what took place. He didn't ask them those questions to find out the facts, he asked them what happened to give them a chance to confess and repent.

Another proof of God's grace is the fact that he promised them a Savior. Verse 15 is one of the most important passages in all of Scripture, it is the first gospel promise. The Lord is speaking to the snake, really the devil in the form of a snake. And he says that there will be hostility between him and the woman—before this Eve thought that they were friends and that he was telling the truth, now Eve knows otherwise; hostility between Eve's offspring, or believers and Satan's offspring, or unbelievers—and from that time forward unbelievers have always hated believers in one way or another.

But it is the last part of verse 15 that we want to focus on, **He will crush your head, and you will crush his heel.** One male offspring of Eve would crush the devil's head. The devil was clearly Adam and Eve's enemy—and enemy too powerful for them to overcome, so God promised to send them a Savior. More than that, he promised that one of their own descendants would defeat the devil for them. Yes, God spoke these words to the snake, or the devil, but he did so right in front of Adam and Eve so this gracious promise was for them! At the same time, he warned the devil that he would be defeated, he was promising a future victory for Adam and Eve—and us!

Of course, this promise is fulfillment by none other than Jesus! He is the singular male offspring of Eve that was able to defeat the devil. He was able to defeat the devil because he wasn't born with a sinful nature like you and I. As true God and true man, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, he didn't inherit a sinful nature, he never once sinned against the Lord, never falling into the devil's temptations. He lived a perfect life so that he could give that perfect life to us.

And he died on the cross to pay for our sins, removing the guilt of all that we have done wrong, and suffering their eternal condemnation. Christ then, removed our sins, suffered what we deserved, and gave us his perfect life. The perfect image of God is restored for us in Christ. Through him we are considered perfect and holy in the eyes of God, who declares us guilty sinners not guilty. Through Christ our relationship with God has been restored.

A great picture of this is the Most Holy Place in the temple and what happened on Good Friday. The Most Holy Place, during much of the Old Testament, was where the Ark of the Covenant was located. And it was above the Ark of the Covenant that God dwelled. But because of sin, no one was allowed to go into the Most Holy Place and live. Except once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest was allowed to go into the Most Holy Place to sprinkle blood from a male goat on the Ark of the Covenant. This picture served as a reminder to the people that they were unholy sinners and could not enter into the presence of the holy God because their sins separated themselves from God.

But on Good Friday, as Jesus died on the cross, the curtain in the temple that separated the people from the Most Holy Place was torn in two—from top to bottom! God tore that curtain! It is a wonderful picture that we are no longer separated from God. That which kept us away from God, our sins, had been removed by Christ, and so we are reconciled to our creator, nothing separates us from God and his love any longer! In Christ our relationship has been restored. So when exactly was Genesis 3:15 fulfilled? On Good Friday and Easter! Satan thought that he had won when Jesus died, but nothing could have been further from the truth. Jesus rose from the dead on Easter, winning the ultimate victory and crushing Satan's head! As it turned out Satan didn't strike the fatal blow, he simply struck Jesus' heel. Jesus, the male offspring of Eve, was victorious over our enemy!

As important as Genesis 3:15 is, it's interesting to note that there is no passage in the New Testament that directly points out that Jesus is the fulfillment of this passage. There are, however, many passages in the New Testament that strongly alluded to Jesus as the one who fulfilled it. For instance John writes in 1 John 3, **This is why the Son of God appeared: to destroy the works of the Devil.**

Revelation 12 is the first place where the serpent is identified as the devil and it also tells of his final defeat in the Last Days made possible by the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. **The great dragon was thrown down—the ancient serpent, the one called the Devil and Satan, the one who leads the whole inhabited earth astray—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ, because the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, the one who accuses them before our God day and night. They conquered him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony.”**

And the victory that Christ won against the devil was given to us, so that we have one the ultimate victory. At the end of his letter to the Romans, Paul writes, **The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.** Jesus crushed Satan under his foot, but because Christ's victory is ours, it's as if we have crushed Satan under our feet!

And Paul, in Romans 5 makes the connection between the sin of Adam and the salvation of Christ. **The gracious gift is not like Adam's trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of this one man, it is even more certain that God's grace, and the gift given by the grace of the one man Jesus Christ, overflowed to the many... So then, just as one trespass led to a verdict of condemnation for all people, so also one righteous verdict led to life-giving justification for all people. For just as through the disobedience of one man the many became sinners, so also through the obedience of one man the many will become righteous.** God's response to Adam and Eve's sin was not one of punishment, nor is it with us to get even, make us pay, or flat-out reject us. No, his response is one of grace. It was to send his one and only Son to be our Savior, to declare us not guilty and make us holy, or righteous, in his sight. May God's grace continue to comfort us today and always. Amen.