

Gen. 3; Rev. 12:1-12; The Promise of a Snake Crusher I. The Context of this Promise II. The Fulfillment of this Promise

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, this morning we begin our Advent Series as we take a look at the various, major covenants found in the book of Genesis. Reformed Theology is sometimes called Covenant Theology because we look for the major themes and unity of the Bible as a whole. Now a covenant is simply an agreement- a relationship or treaty made between two parties. In the OT, Covenants were not made but rather they were cut- they were promises that were literally sealed with blood. As we look at each covenant over the next few weeks, we will see how this promise of deliverance and safety are all looking forward to and fulfilled in Jesus Christ! Children, how many days is it until Christmas? How long until your first Christmas party? We don't like waiting, do we? But in some ways the longer we wait the greater our joy when that promised day arrives! In our text we really find the promise of war- that the Battle between Good and Evil is one that will rage for years! This promise of victory given in Gen. 3:15 is one that took many years to find its completion- we could estimate that it took around 4 to 5 thousand years before Jesus was born in fulfillment of this promise! That is a long time for the church to wait! However, in other ways this battle between good and evil continues to this day- the complete victory is not yet seen! So today we come to what is called the Mother Promise- or the First Gospel and good news declared in the Bible. We will be considering this theme: Jesus Christ's victory is foretold in the Mother Promise given right after the fall.

I. The Context of this Promise

In our first point we consider the context of this promise- in other words- what makes this promise necessary? Why would God need to speak of a coming time when the serpent's head would be crushed? Well, the initial context of Gen. 3 is one of great blessing and life! In the opening chapters we read of great beauty and plenty. The context is that of a new creation- that the heavens and the earth are made- being in mint condition! That out of the darkness there was light- out of the chaos and

confusion comes order and diversity. One of the things that tells you if a car is new is usually the new car smell- right! Well, we could say that creation still has that new car smell- the tag is still on the shirt- the shoes are not even broken in yet! We are only a few short verses- perhaps less than a few months after creation- maybe even less as Adam and Eve did not yet have children. And yet, it was a time of great blessing! They enjoyed fellowship with God and direct access to His presence! They walked and talked with God- and they have union with each other. As 2:25 says- they were both naked and they felt no shame. There was nothing to hide- and nothing to fear. They lived in the context of great blessing- the hills were filled with gold, the trees heavy laden with fruit- the water refreshing and clear. Adam and Eve ruled and lived as they ought- being king and queen over all creation- and living in the temple or the Garden of God's presence and delight! But that period of blessing, plenty and peace was short lived. The more immediate context of Gen. 3:15 is the opening of Gen. 3- we have an intruder in the garden. The serpent or the snake- whom we come to find out is Satan- is slithering around waiting to catch his victim. Instead of listening to and believing God's Word- Adam and Eve listen to the serpent and receive in themselves the consequences of rebellion. They take up the forbidden fruit- they eat what their eye craved and coveted -and thus they fell into sin. Immediately their eyes were opened as 3:7 says. They were filled with shame- knowing they were naked they now hid in shame. They ran from God and hid their bodies from each other. They were filled with a fear and dread as 3:10 says- trying to hide from God because Adam knew that he had done wrong. Like a child trying to hide a broken lamp, they seek to flee from God's piercing eyes. They are afraid because they know that God will be justly angry with sin. Added to this, Satan is now given power over man. As John 12 identifies, Satan is the prince of the power of the air. Man is made a slave to sin- doing the will of their fallen father the Devil. A rebel- a liar- a deceiver now seeks to run the show on earth. And there are direct consequences for Adam and Eve as well- Eve will suffer pain when giving birth, and Adam will have to sweat in order to eek out his existence from the earth that was once blessed with plenty. The ground was cursed- thorns and thistles

abound- and man who was made from dust will return to that dust from which he was made as 3:19 ends. So along with Satan ruling this world- sin and death are now part of this created order as well. That is the context of Gen. 3:15. All of this is to say that the context of Gen. 3:15 is creation lost- blessings forfeited- with sin and death now at hand.

II. The Fulfillment of this Promise

But when we come to Gen. 3:15 we find that when God speaks to the serpent, He promises a fight! Not only does God show love in that He searches for Adam and Eve- confronting them because of their actions! God could have ignored them or rightly consumed them because of their sins, but God goes to them and speaks! Added to that- the LORD speaks to the serpent in the hearing of Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve get to listen in on this declaration! Its almost as if the LORD says- Adam and Eve- I want you to hear this! And what does God promise the serpent? Well, He promises the serpent that the conflict has just begun! Satan may have won this round, but the battle is just beginning! There will be enmity v. 15 says- hostility, conflict, friction and even hatred! God does not just give up on Adam and Eve- He does not let go of His image bearing creatures. He promises a battle- the supreme battle! An earth-shattering conflict between good and evil- a battle between darkness and light! And this is good news for us- that God promises to fight for His people! In Gen. 3 we find that God established a Covenant of Grace- and as we will see there is the promise of victory as well! Now who will be the main characters in this battle- which two forces will be engaged? Well, as v. 15 says- the serpent and the woman- the children of the serpent and the children of the woman. Now the woman and her seed come to be known as Eve and her offspring- but more than that a specific line that lay hidden in her offspring. For example, Eve names her son Seth in 4:25 stating that God had appointed another offspring instead of Abel. By this it becomes apparent that not all of Adam and Eve's children will be the children of the promise. Not all in the line of the covenant! No- even as Cain killed Abel because Abel was righteous- it becomes evident that not all these children are to be seen as the children of the

Promise! In fact- from Eve's own womb will come both the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent- as the brothers Cain and Able prove. One followed his father- the devil- and became a murderer while the other was a righteous man- even a prophet whose innocent blood was shed. So we can follow this distinction down through the ages- some being children of the devil as the Scribes and Pharisees were in John 8. But there is also the line of the woman- or the line of the church and her seed that can be followed as well- from Seth to Noah and Shem- down to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob- all the way to David and his line. Now thinking back to our reading from Rev. 12, we read there that the woman gives birth to a male child- one who was given a throne by God. Who is this male child? Or we could ask- who of all the children of the woman would in fact crush the head of the serpent? We can speak of the offspring of Eve in a general sense- but we also find that the offspring or seed comes down to one in particular. When we read from Rev. 12, we found in 12:10 that the accuser has been thrown down and that the authority of Christ has come! It becomes clear that Jesus Christ is the promised seed who will- who has crushed the head of the serpent. When Jesus resisted temptation, He proved His power over the forces of darkness. Where Adam and Eve failed, He prevailed. So that He could say in John 12:31- the ruler of this world will be cast out. Or in Luke 10- I saw Satan fall like lightning. When Jesus died for our sins- and rose from the dead- He broke the bars of the grave and shattered the power of the evil one. As I Cor. 15 puts it, Jesus must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. Satan has been dethroned- the Lord Jesus Christ now has all power and authority! He is reigning and will reign over all! Satan tried to snuff out the Lord of life- but in so doing he actually hastened his own defeat! So Jesus has crushed the power of the Devil- silencing the accuser because Jesus has become our mediator and defender! That is why this verse is called the first gospel promise – or the mother promise! It points to and is fulfilled by Christ who breaks the chains of sin and overcomes the power of the grave! The very pollution and bondage that crept into this world in Gen. 3 find a promised remedy in the very same chapter! This is the grace and good news that celebrate this Christmas season -the

child of the promise has come! And as the covenant was sealed by blood in 3:21- so we are members of the new covenant- washed in His blood as we have seen in our study of Hebrews! Without the shedding of blood there can be no forgiveness- but the perfect blood of the Lamb has been shed!

To conclude, although Jesus will not arrive on the scene in the flesh for some millennia, that the does not mean that His coming was not announced- and as we have seen today- His coming is desperately needed! In many ways, the only proper way to view world history is through the lens of this battle between good and evil- right and wrong- life and death! There are two camps and two people- one the army of darkness under the sway of Satan- and the other the army of light under the dominion of Christ! Jesus has come- and the serpent's head has been crushed! Satan does not rule- he has been chained- he knows his days are few and his final defeat is at hand! He has been dealt a mortal blow! Soon Jesus will return and he will cast Satan into the lake of fire! The battle has been won- and we need simply wait for the victor to return on the clouds of glory! Jesus Christ's victory is foretold in the Mother Promise given right after the fall. This Christmas season we celebrate the coming of Jesus according to the promise- the seed of the Woman who has crushed the head of the serpent!