TRIUMPH IN THE MIDST OF TRAGEDY—GOD'S PROPHETIC PROMISE OF THE COMING CHRIST

Presented by

Tyler Mullins

In Blake's sermon, "Adam and Eve: Earth's First Couple—And Its First Sinners," he told you the sad story found in Genesis 3 about how the first humans on Earth, Adam and Eve, willfully chose to disobey God, were cast from their beautiful paradise home in the Garden of Eden, and died physically and spiritually as a result of their evil actions. However, as Blake ended his sermon, he mentioned that tucked away in Genesis 3 there is a single verse that turned **tragedy** into **triumph**. In my sermon today, I would like to talk to you about that verse—Genesis 3:15—and the important implications that it has for every human being who has ever lived, or who ever will live, on Earth.

In the distant past—long before the invention of cameras and video equipment—God used, **not *paint***, **but *words***, to create a precise portrait of an individual who, in a very literal fashion, would change the course of human history, not just in the here and now, but for all eternity. In Genesis 3 we are provided with our first glimpse of this individual during God's conversation with Adam and Eve concerning the terribly tragic consequences of their sin. As Blake explained, God placed a curse on the serpent for having tempted Adam and Eve to sin. He also placed a curse on Adam and Eve for having violated His commandments. But God then said something quite unusual to the serpent. Here are God's words, as recorded in Genesis 3:15—"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."

That single intriguing statement—appearing, as it were, out of nowhere, and with no divine commentary either preceding it or following it—heralded a wellspring of hope that was intended to allow triumph to spring forth in the midst of tragedy. But what did God mean when He said to Satan, "I will put **enmity** between you and the woman"? Furthermore, who is the "He" of whom the verse speaks so forcefully, and who is predicted to bruise Satan's head? What is going on here? What is Genesis 3:15 all about? And why is its message worthy of our attention today in this sermon?

The word "enmity" means "hostility," and refers to a deep-seated ill-will between two or more individuals. Whoever the "He" is in this passage, one thing is certain: that person and Satan will be **foes, *not* friends**. But this verse makes something else quite clear as well. Satan will hurt this person **a little**—by "bruising his heel," whereas the individual under consideration will hurt Satan **a lot**—by "bruising his head." So, once again I ask: Who is the "He" in this verse?

Adam and Eve did not know the answer to that question. **But we do!** From the first book of the Bible (Genesis), all the way through the last book of the Old Testament (Malachi), God spoke through prophets in order to paint a wondrous word picture of the person who eventually would come to be known as **Immanuel**—"God with us" (Matthew 1:22-23). We today know him in more-familiar terms as **Jesus Christ, the Son of God**.

So accurate was the prophets' portrait, that one would think they had **captured on film** the **actual image** of Jesus of Nazareth. Here, from within the inspired pages of the Old Testament, is a portion of that prophetic portrait.

The Old Testament is quite plain in its assessment that people would **not** follow the coming Christ because of any **physical features** He possessed, since, as Isaiah 53:2 makes clear, He would "have no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him." Rather, those people who eventually would choose to follow Christ would do so because He would be "zealous for righteousness" (Psalm 69:9), would "establish justice in the earth" (Isaiah 42:4), and would be gentle and compassionate in His dealings with humankind (Isaiah 42:1-4).

As might be expected of the One Who would be "God with us," Christ was predicted to have an unusual entrance into this world—**by being born of a virgin** (Isaiah 7:14). But the Old Testament prophets also noted that He would be: hated without cause (Psalm 35:19); betrayed by a friend (Psalm 41:9); mocked (Psalm 22:7-8); sold for thirty pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12); and numbered among common criminals (Isaiah 53:12). In fact, the prophets even went so far as to tell us that when it came time for Him to die He would be led as a lamb to the slaughter (Isaiah 53:7). Yet the prophets also informed us that He would triumph over death (Psalm 16:8-11) and, in so doing, would establish a kingdom that would "**stand forever**" (Daniel 2:44). The prophets painted the portrait of Christ as a Man Who partook of the nature of God, and Who, in fact, would be called "Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). When Christ arrived, one of His disciples, Thomas, correctly referred to him as "My Lord and **my God!**" (John 20:28).

The good news contained in the prophecy in Genesis 3:15 was that Someone was coming—as the writer of Hebrews would put it many years later—to "destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Hebrews 2:14). Yes, Adam and Eve **did** die **physically** as a result of their sin against God—just as every other human who came after them would, since "all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). But because of Christ's sacrifice on our behalf on the cross of Calvary—just as the Old Testament prophets predicted—**no one** has to die **spiritually**. As the angel told Mary, Jesus' mother, "You shall call His name Jesus, **for He will save His people from their sins**" (Matthew 1:21). ***That* is what brought *triumph* out of *tragedy!***

Even though the prophets' perfect portrait of Christ was intended to make Him immediately recognizable by Earth's inhabitants upon His arrival, the sad truth is that, as the apostle John rightly observed, "Christ came to His own, but His own did not receive Him" (John 1:11). For such people, the tragedy of Genesis 3 will continue throughout an unending eternity in hell where the wicked "will go away into everlasting punishment" (Matthew 25:46). But for those people who are willing to believe in Jesus and obey His commands concerning what to do to be saved, God will cover their sins with the blood of His Son (Revelation 7:14). He then will accept them as righteous so that they can enjoy eternity in heaven as they

enter into what the Bible calls “eternal life” (Matthew 25:46). Today, let me ask you this one question: Considering what you now know about the **tragedy**, and the **triumph**, discussed in Genesis 3, which one will you choose for **your** life—here, and in the hereafter?