

## Whispers of the Messiah in the Garden of Eden

One of the first whispers of the need for a Messiah is uttered in Genesis 3:15 after Adam and Eve chose to follow the voice of the deceiver instead of the voice of Truth. The evil one promised that their eyes would be opened, and they would be like God, knowing good and evil (Gen. 3:5). Well, that is what happened, but they had no idea what it would be like to know BOTH good and evil. They had only known good. They did not have any experience with evil—it was a foreign concept. They had no reference point to determine the price of what they had just purchased.

Deceptively, the evil one also neglected to tell them that their new-found knowledge had a steep price tag, one that they could not afford, namely death. He dismissed the reality of death that is inherently connected to life apart from God. This new and unfamiliar way of life on their own, called sin, cut them off from God who is the source of life. While they did not die immediately in a physical way, they died spiritually; and their bodies would now be subjected to the slow decline that leads to death and decay.

Their eyes were now opened to their nakedness and lack. The serpent was conspicuously silent and unhelpful as they scrambled to improvise in covering their sense of vulnerability and extreme exposure with insufficient fig leaves. Other new and unpleasant feelings pulsed through them—fear and a knee-jerk reaction to hide from their source of life when God came to fellowship with them in the cool of the day. Along with the new impulses to cover and hide, came the impulse to blame: “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate,” came from Adam’s lips (Gen. 3:12).<sup>i</sup> “The serpent deceived me, and I ate,” came from Eve’s lips (Gen. 3:13). And thus a trajectory of sin, separation, covering, hiding, and blaming was set in motion for the human race. The darkness of these dynamics is felt by all who are born of Adam.

The first to receive consequences for this cosmic treason was the serpent. What’s amazing, though, is that in this curse upon the evil one, embodied in the serpent, comes one of the first whispers of the Messiah.

*“The LORD God said to the serpent,  
Because you have done this,  
cursed are you above all livestock  
and above all beasts of the field;  
on your belly you shall go,  
and dust you shall eat  
all the days of your life.  
**I will put enmity between  
you and the woman,  
and between your offspring and her offspring;  
He shall bruise your head,***

***and you shall bruise his heel.”***

We find the New Testament writers picking up on this promise of this One who is to come, who will be the offspring of the woman, Eve. While his heel will be bruised, He will deal a decisive death-blow to the head and influence of the evil one. These writers all point to Jesus being the One who will save people from the deadly effects of sin.

- Matthew 1:21: “She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for ***He will save his people from their sins.***”
- Luke 2:30-32: Simeon’s prophecy when Jesus was brought to the Temple to be dedicated: “For my eyes have seen your ***salvation***, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light of revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.”
- John, the Beloved disciple warns his dear children: “He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. ***The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.***”

What is the work of the evil one?

- Steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10)
- Lies (John 8:44)
- Seeking to devour people (1 Peter 5:8)
- Accuser of God’s children (Revelation 12:10)
- Celebrates, affirms, and deceives people about the works of the flesh/the sinful nature (Galatians 3:16-24)

Aren’t you glad that Jesus came to destroy the devil’s work and bring to us the Good News of salvation in Him?

Here is how Paul celebrated the work of Messiah, known to the Greeks as the Christ:

“There is therefore now ***no condemnation*** for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the ***law of sin and death***. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, ***he condemned sin*** in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit” (Romans 8:1-4).

Christ frees me from slavery to sin. So in Christ, the condemnation is now fixated on my sin, not on me. I can now obey God from the heart. Paul implies this in Romans 16:19-20 when he encourages the believers in Rome:

“For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is ***good*** and innocent as to what is ***evil***. The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.”

Having knowledge of both good and evil is what Satan promised in the Garden to Adam and Eve. The knowledge and experience of evil is what began the trajectory that is now known as life outside of Eden for you and me. But here, in Romans, Paul brings news of freedom and a new way of life that has been opened up for believers in Christ. We now have the option to walk in the Spirit, and leave behind the oppressive ways of the flesh. He affirms the believers for their obedience and appeals to them to be wise to what is **good** and innocent (in experience) to what is **evil**. The consequences of Adam have been reversed in Christ, the long-awaited Messiah. What was hinted at in Genesis 3:15 comes to fruition through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ—and in the work He is doing in the hearts of those who follow Him. When the God of peace reigns in our hearts, He continues to deal a decisive death-blow to the work of Satan in our own lives. He is crushing Satan’s once uncontested tyrannical reign under our feet as He transforms us to be restored image bearers. The Messiah’s role makes all of this possible. What a wonderful Savior!

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<sup>1</sup> All biblical quotes are from the ESV translation.