

# Thought For The Week

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## Beginnings: Genesis 3:14-15

### The Curse and the Promise

#### The First Gospel: Hope Amid Judgment in Genesis 3:14-15

Recently Scott delivered a sermon focused on Genesis 3:14-15, a pivotal passage that follows humanity's tragic fall in the Garden of Eden. After scripture readings by Wyatt (Genesis 3:1-7) and Mike (Genesis 3:8-13) from the New King James Version, Scott turned to the aftermath of Adam and Eve's disobedience. The serpent, used by Satan to deceive the woman, had prompted her to eat the forbidden fruit, which she then shared with her husband. Sin and death entered the world, yet God's response blended righteous judgment with surprising mercy.

The Lord God addressed the serpent directly: "Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life" (Genesis 3:14). He continued, "And 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" (Genesis 3:15). These verses reveal not only the consequences of sin but also the first glimmer of redemption—the protoevangelium, or "first gospel."

Scott structured his message around three main points: the curse on the actual serpent, the significance of the seed of the woman, and the mysterious prophecy of Satan's demise.

The curse fell first on the physical serpent, a real creature Satan employed as his instrument. Revelation 12:9 identifies Satan as "that ancient serpent... the deceiver of the whole world." Why punish an animal that served as an unwitting tool? The sermon drew a parallel to Mark 5:1-13, where Jesus permitted a legion of demons to enter a herd of about 2,000 swine, which then rushed into the sea and drowned. This account demonstrates that demonic forces can influence animals, yet they require divine permission, as seen also in Job 1-2 and Luke 22:31. Demons do not act independently; they operate under God's sovereign authority.

The question arose whether the serpent was truly innocent or complicit. In the swine incident, the animals appeared to resist control, choosing death over submission to evil. Similarly, the serpent may have had a choice in yielding to Satan's influence. By submitting, it became complicit in the deception, earning the curse as a visible reminder of sin's far-reaching effects. Romans 8:20-22 explains that creation itself was subjected to futility—not willingly, but in hope of future redemption.

The specifics of the curse are striking: the serpent would crawl on its belly and eat dust. Modern snakes are limbless and ground-bound, but the text implies a change. If the serpent already moved that way, the declaration would lack punitive force. The reasonable conclusion is that the original serpent possessed limbs or another elevated form of locomotion. God instantly altered its physiology, humbling it to the dust as a perpetual symbol of degradation. This judgment

underscores accountability across creation: sin impacts people, animals, and the earth itself. Yet even here, the curse carries a thread of hope.

Shifting to verse 15, God declared enmity—hostility and antagonism—between the serpent and the woman, and between their respective seeds. Remarkably, God Himself institutes this conflict. The phrase “her seed” stands out as unusual. In most biblical genealogies, descent traces through the father, yet here the promise centers on the woman’s offspring. Why? Because she was the one directly deceived (1 Timothy 2:14). God sovereignly transforms her vulnerability into the pathway of victory.

A profound Hebrew wordplay reinforces this theme. In Genesis 3:20, Adam names his wife Eve (Chavah), meaning “life,” akin to the word *chai* (“living”). Amid the entrance of death through sin, God embeds a pointer to life. The woman who brought death’s curse becomes, in God’s redemptive plan, the mother of all living and the channel through which the life-giving seed would come.

The emphasis on the woman’s seed also carries scientific foresight. Ancient cultures, persisting into the 18th century, viewed the man as providing the seed while the woman served merely as soil. Gregor Mendel’s 19th-century experiments, aided by microscopes, revealed that both parents contribute equally to genetics. Yet Genesis, composed over 3,500 years earlier, attributes seed to the woman, aligning with modern understanding of ova and sperm. Passages like God’s promise to Hagar—“I will multiply your seed exceedingly” (Genesis 16:10)—further demonstrate precise, divinely inspired language. The Bible is not a science textbook, but when it speaks on natural matters, it proves unerringly accurate.

This singular seed foreshadows a unique birth without a human father, fulfilled in Jesus’ virgin birth (Matthew 1:18-25). The pronoun “he” indicates one specific individual—the Messiah—who would engage Satan in cosmic battle.

The prophecy itself is vivid and decisive: “He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” This is no vague curse but a declaration of war. Satan would inflict temporary suffering—a heel bruise, like a snakebite—yet the Messiah would deliver a fatal blow by crushing the serpent’s head. Scholars designate Genesis 3:15 the protoevangelium, the first announcement of salvation. From sin’s very onset, God refused to abandon humanity to despair.

This promise echoes through Scripture. Genesis 49:10 foretells a ruler from Judah; Genesis 12:3 blesses all nations through Abraham. The line continues through Isaac, Jacob, and David, whose throne is eternal (2 Samuel 7:16; Isaiah 9:6-7). Isaiah 53 depicts the suffering servant wounded for transgressions. Each prophecy builds on the foundation laid in Eden.

Strikingly, the prophecy’s participants—Jesus (the woman’s seed) and Satan (the serpent)—confront each other thousands of years later. In Matthew 4:5-7, during the second temptation, Satan quotes Psalm 91:11-12, urging Jesus to leap from the temple pinnacle, promising angelic protection. Jesus responds with Deuteronomy 6:16. The irony lies in the omitted verse: Psalm 91:13 declares that the protected one will trample the lion, the cobra, the young lion, and the serpent. Interpreters link these symbols—especially the serpent—to Satan (Genesis 3:15; Revelation 12:9; 1 Peter 5:8). Satan unwittingly highlights his own defeat.

The imagery aligns perfectly: crushing a serpent’s head bruises the heel of the one delivering the blow. Jesus suffered on the cross—His heel bruised by Satan’s schemes—yet in resurrection He

crushed Satan's head (Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8; Colossians 2:15). What Satan intended as temptation became an unwitting proclamation of his doom.

Genesis 3:14-15 portrays a God who judges sin yet overflows with grace. The serpent's curse reminds us of sin's devastating cost, rippling through creation. The seed of the woman reveals divine wisdom, turning the deceived into the deliverer's source. The first promise assures ultimate victory through Christ.

This enmity extends even to human relationships. Adam and Eve, once united as ish and ishah—names echoing harmony—saw their bond fractured by sin, a theme the sermon promised to explore further that evening.

As restorers of New Testament Christianity, the message concluded with the gospel call: Christ died for sins, was buried, and rose on the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). To share in His victory, one must hear the word, believe, repent, confess Jesus as Lord, be baptized for forgiveness of sins, and live faithfully. The seed has crushed the serpent. Victory is available. The congregation was invited to respond as they stood and sang, with a closing blessing to walk in God's light.

In this brief exchange in Eden, God wove judgment and mercy into a single promise. From curse to cross to crown, the first gospel shines as hope's enduring ray amid humanity's darkest hour.

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# Beginnings: Genesis 3:14-15

## The Curse and the Promise

### God's First Promise of Redemption in Genesis 3:14-15

Recently, Scott preached on Genesis 3:14-15, the immediate aftermath of humanity's fall. After scripture readings of the temptation and confrontation (Genesis 3:1-13), he focused on God's words to the serpent: a curse and a prophecy that together form the protoevangelium—the first gospel.

God cursed the physical serpent Satan used, condemning it to crawl on its belly and eat dust (v. 14). This implies a dramatic change; originally, the serpent likely moved with limbs or elevated locomotion, making the curse a real humiliation. The punishment highlights sin's ripple effect: even animals suffer under the fall, as Romans 8:20-22 affirms creation groans in hope of redemption.

Yet judgment carries mercy. In verse 15, God declares enmity between the serpent and the woman, and between their seeds. Strikingly, victory comes through “her seed”—a singular “he” who will bruise the serpent's head while suffering a bruised heel. This unusual emphasis on the woman's offspring foreshadows the virgin birth of Jesus (Matthew 1:18-25), aligning remarkably with modern genetics despite ancient misconceptions that only men contributed “seed.”

The imagery is cosmic warfare: Satan inflicts temporary pain (the cross), but the Messiah delivers the fatal blow (resurrection). Scott highlighted the irony in Matthew 4:5-7, where Satan quotes Psalm 91:11-12 during Jesus' temptation, unwittingly pointing to verse 13—the promised trampling of the serpent.

From Eden onward, Scripture builds on this foundation: promises to Abraham, Judah's Shiloh, David's eternal throne, Isaiah's suffering servant. Genesis 3:15 reveals a God who judges sin yet immediately offers hope. The woman deceived becomes the channel of life; curse turns toward crown.

The sermon closed with the gospel invitation: hear, believe, repent, confess, be baptized, and live faithfully. The seed has crushed the serpent. Victory is ours in Christ.

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