



Genesis 3:14 - 24

“SEEDS & WEEDS”

By The Reverend Bill Keane ©2009

Continuing on from our last study, let's look at the actual text!

Vss. 14-15 Note that in these verses which were once probably a song, even now, the serpent is only addressed as a serpent. The traditional animosity between people and snakes serves this parable very well. No better animal than the snake to represent evil, sin and temptation.

“Between you and the Woman... He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” This passage is called the Proto-Evangelium – the first proclamation of the Gospel. For from the seed of the Woman will come the One (Jesus) to redeem humanity! As Paul proclaimed, “When the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman...” We see beginning in Genesis that women hold a crucial place in God's redemptive plan for all people.

In Catholic art and Orthodox iconography one sees Mary the Mother of Jesus standing upon the head of a serpent. This is based on verse 15. Her “seed” (Jesus) will crush the power of evil (represented by the serpent) and redeem people from sin, yet not without a terrible price (Cross). The suffering that God will endure for salvation is as real as the sin his people commit. Imagine a picture of Christ on the Cross... It is no accident that God uses the very Rejection of Christ on the

Forgiveness and Reconciliation. This is perhaps the epitome of God's power – manifest in weakness! On the Cross we see that God allows people complete free will, yet still achieves His will. The Cross is perhaps the most worn and displayed, yet least understood of all religious symbols.

Vs. 16 Life now coming forth in the anguish of birth is seen to be a sign of the brokenness of humanity, and so is the inequality between the sexes! “He shall rule over you...”

The text asserts male dominance of women as a general fact, but it is shown to be a symptom of a broken relationship, resulting from sin, NOT a state of affairs endorsed by God!

It is part of the dis-ease that exists between ourselves, others and God. In striving to be like God, the Man and Woman are now alienated from each other...

Vss.17-19 This alienation also affects the wider creation. Weeds now spring up where Man disturbs the soil. Work, once an unbridled opportunity for Man to express his creativity and power, is now “toil.” Man who is so much more than “dust” is now destined to return to it...

Vss. 20-21 “Eve” resembles the Hebrew word for “living.” Note that God does not abandon his errant creation, but makes garments for their

“When the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman...”

Cross as the means of working Redemption! The Fall occurs when Man would be God. Salvation is worked when God becomes Man! On Calvary, God takes our worst evil (the crucifixion of the Son of God) and transforms it into the greatest good (the Salvation of the Whole world). God allows human Free Will in its most negative form and expression and uses it to manifest and work the utmost in Divine

protection. Yet, these garments come at the cost of other living things! Again, the brokenness of the world...

Vss. 22-24 Life, for Man, is now a terminal illness... Yet, when we see that Man is imperfect, mortality is not a bad thing. Death is the dynamic which stands between vibrant life and meaningless existence.

*...it is as though our Innocence is restored,
not through blindness to our own condition, but full awareness of God's character.*

Without redemption in Christ, eternal life would not be a blessing. Some might even call this "hell".

We are seeing this in our society with the advent of all manner of means to preserve existence, yet fewer means to preserve purpose. Living Wills are the expression of an awareness that we need so much more than just the increase of breaths and heartbeats. In addition, within these verses is the reality that even the most powerfully evil individuals must come to an end.

Questions to ponder...

Have we as a society accepted mortality? Have you?

In what ways does losing a loved one enhance the beauty of having them to begin with?

What impact does our dying have on our living?

How might the interaction between loved ones in the occasion of dying impact our living?

Death cannot be indefinitely postponed, but neither should it be hastened. Some of the most beautiful moments we can witness are manifested in the context of death, where family and friends take the time to express love and affection within moments that are totally unique, priceless and extremely powerful. In this way, the moments surrounding the passing of a loved one are "holy ground" which can deeply and positively influence those who remain. In our denial of death we decrease our reverence of life.

Photo: Bill Keane ©2009



So, the Garden is lost. But so much is gained. People are proven to be Free and God will be shown to be Forgiving. Apart from Adam and Eve we would not know Jesus the Christ. He is the One in Whom we were chosen since before the Creation of the World (Ephesians 1:3-ff). The Fall of Humanity was all part of God's wider will.

In reaching for and achieving Knowledge, Adam and Eve demonstrate their own dis-ease with who they are, even less at peace with what they have become. Primarily they learn of their own guilt and alienation. Humanity no longer has the option of recapturing Innocence through a primitive lack of awareness. We now know too much!

Yet in Christ, when we find forgiveness, it is as though our Innocence is restored, not through blindness to our own condition, but full awareness of God's character. It is Innocence based in the Knowledge of God's Grace, not in ignorance of ourselves!

Paul speaks of this when he looks forward to heaven and says, "I will know fully, just as I have been fully known."

God knows us in love, thus we can look forward to redemption and salvation not founded in amnesia for who we are and what we've done, but in the fullest apprehension of Who God is and what He has done. Thus in Heaven we will truly come to know who we are, accepting ourselves, because we are loved and accepted by God.