

The Conflict of the Ages
Genesis 3:9-15 and Revelation 12.
Sunday morning, August 8, 2010.

We come at this time in our journey through the book of Acts to Chapter 12 where we have the account of the beheading of James, the brother of John, and the miraculous deliverance of Peter from Prison.

In order to appreciate these events more fully, and to grasp the comfort they hold out to us, we need to grasp more fully the nature of the conflict we are all caught up in as the Lord's people.

Without such an appreciation we will look on our Christian journey much more as tourists than as soldiers. We will see it as a pleasure trip rather than a battle march, and we will become greatly perplexed and discouraged when we find ourselves caught up in various and vexing conflicts.

I. An Epic Conflict.

A. The hermeneutical principle called "the first mention principle."

This principle of Bible interpretation teaches us that the first time the Lord introduces a topic in Scripture, He gives us the major and important truths associated with that topic.

B. Genesis 3:15 is the first mention in Scripture of the "Conflict of the Ages."

1. It is a conflict between the woman and the serpent.

It is also a conflict between the woman's seed and the serpent's seed.

- This is to be understood as the godly offspring of Adam and Eve on the one hand, and on the other hand unbelievers of whom the Lord Jesus would say, "You are of your father the devil" in John 8:44.
- Yet the seed of the woman comes to ultimate expression in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the seed of the serpent comes to ultimate expression in the person of the Antichrist.

2. The nature of the conflict is said to be the existence of "enmity" between the woman and the serpent, and their respective seed.

- Enmity is an old fashioned word; the use of it largely limited to the Bible. Yet it is a word we do well to familiarize ourselves with.
- Enmity is different from hatred, although related to it. It is stronger. Hatred says: "I can't stand you; I never want to see you again; I never want anything to do with you again; you are repulsive to me." Enmity says: "I will come after you; I will pursue you; I will do so unwaveringly, with all that is in me, for as long as it takes. I will give myself no rest until I have brought you to utter ruin from which there is no return."

This enmity exists in the heart of the woman and her seed as well as the heart of the serpent and his seed, creating this epic conflict.

3. The bruising of the head and heel.

The word translated "Bruise," may also be translated "Crush." Bruising, the way we use the word today, is the crushing of soft tissue in the body. However, neither the head nor the heel are soft tissue; therefore "crush" is a

better rendering of the word.

- The crushing of the serpent's head speaks of his final and utter ruin.
- The crushing of the heel of the seed of the woman speaks of the suffering and death of Christ from which He would rise and recover.

The crushing of the heel speaks to us as well of the disabling effect the serpent has had on the godly offspring of the woman. Our walk with the Lord is often no better than a limping along; often stumbling and falling. When Jacob wrestled with the Lord and got the Lord's blessing; when the "cheater" became the "prince of God," he also became a cripple, and in his walk with the Lord he limped along the remainder of his days. Genesis 32.

II. The imagery of Revelation 12.

The seven seals, trumpets, signs, and bowls all convey truths that govern the time between Christ's two comings.

A. The sign of the woman.

- Clothed with the perfection of Christ's righteousness and NT revelation.
- The moon under her feet; OT revelation; only reflective, veiled glory.
- The garland of twelve stars; the twelve apostles who gave her the NT.
- She is depicted "with child and ready to give birth" to her godly seed; Christ and His people.
- She flees from Israel to the nations of the earth where she finds a place.

B. The sign of the dragon (serpent).

- Seven heads and ten horns; multiple world empires and rulers, guided by seven diadems or demonic powers of darkness. Eph. 6:12, Daniel 10:13,20
- One third of the stars of heaven cast on earth refers to the angelic host that fell together with Satan or Lucifer. Isaiah 14:3-27 and Ezekiel 28:11-19.
- Ready to devour the child; the epic battle 1 Peter 5:8
Pharaoh's decree to kill all newborn boys of Israel. Exodus 1:15,16,22.
Herod's decree to kill all the young boys in Bethlehem. Matt. 2:16-18.
- Satan cast out of heaven. As the accuser of the brethren he no longer has a case in light of the finished work of Christ when we cling to Him. He and his claims are thrown out of God's court. Luke 22:31,32.

C. The flood from the dragon's mouth; a flood of persecution, peace, prosperity, pleasure, promiscuity etc.; whatever will drown the work of grace in our hearts. Providence comes to her aid, swallows up the flood, and provides a way of escape. "When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him." Isaiah 59:19.

III. Overcoming the Serpent. Revelation 12:11.

You do not want to go at it alone!

- A. By the blood of the Lamb. It satisfies God's law; reconciles us to God as our Father, and robs Satan of any claim he might otherwise have against us.
- B. The word of their testimony. Take your stand publicly with Christ and His people. "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Romans 10:10.
- C. They loved not their own lives unto death. They didn't live for themselves but for the Lord and His people.

