

## **“GOD’S PLAN OF REDEMPTION.”**

**Rev. Robert T. Woodyard**

**First Christian Reformed Church**

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**Sermon Texts: Genesis 3:15; Romans 3:21-26**

**Belgic Confession: Article 17**

### **Introduction.**

Let’s try a little thought experiment. Imagine for a moment that a very wealthy man gave you ten million dollars. Just gave it to you out of the kindness and generosity of His heart. There were some strings attached of what you should and shouldn’t do, but they were all doable, nothing too hard and you benefited from all of them.

Now let’s imagine that you take that ten million and start using it against the man who gave it to you. You take out ads in the paper slandering him, you hire a lawyer to bring false charges against him. You hire an arsonist to burn down his mansion. You hire a contract killer to kill his kids. In other words, you actively think up terrible ways to hurt this man. You are as mean and hateful as you can be.

After all of this and much worse, you then learn that this man’s response to all of this is that he is thinking of ways that he can offer you one hundred million dollars if you just say you are sorry.

This is a quick, weak attempt on my part to create a kind of analogy for what happened at the beginning of time.

God gave Adam and Eve a beautiful paradise to live in with everything they could need. And if they could think of something missing they would only have to ask. There were a couple of strings but they were not hard. After all they already had all they needed, the two trees should not have been that big a temptation.

But nevertheless, Adam plunged the entire human race into sin, misery and death by his sin. Adam willfully rebelled against the will of God. Adam, the creature, exerted his own will against the Creator. His sin was disbelief, pride, self-centeredness, an attempt to be like God. Given who God was and what God had already done, what Adam did was the most irrational, insane thing ever conceived by mankind.

In the midst of this eternal hell deserving insanity the holy, righteous, just judge of all the universe saw our sin and misery and determined according the eternal counsel of His own will to give us an even greater gift than He had already done.

The Belgic Confession article 17 is built on the first verse in the Bible that announces this promised gift of grace, this gift of salvation and life.

### **Genesis 3:15. The Proto-evangelium; The Moeder belofte.**

**Genesis 3:15** 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.”

On the surface this verse sounds like it's about snakes and men. But beneath the surface this verse is a deep well of glory and grace, of truth and goodness, of comfort for those so soon in the misery of sin.

Genesis 3:15 is called the *proto-evangelium*, the first Gospel. God is the first preacher, the first evangelist and this is His first Gospel message.

The Dutch have a word for this verse also. They call it the *moeder belofte*, the mother promise, the mother of all promises. This is the promise that gives birth to all the rest of the promises of the Bible.

The great English preacher Charles Simeon called this verse “the sum and summary of the whole Bible.” From this acorn grows the mighty oak of salvation. This is the beginning of the history of redemption. The entire rest of the Bible is a fleshing out of this verse.

Belgic Confession, article 17 is salvation promised.  
Belgic Confession, article 18-21 is salvation accomplished.

In a single verse we are given the outline for God's amazing promise of salvation. It's a prophecy about Christ's birth and about Christ's work.

Concerning Christ's birth this verse says that redemption will come through the seed of the woman. Concerning Christ's work this verse says that Christ will suffer but that He will crush the head of the serpent Satan.

### ***Genesis 3:15 announces God's covenant of grace.***

The covenant of works said do this and you will live. Adam violated the conditions of the covenant of works that God had made with him so God instituted a new covenant, a covenant of grace.

The covenant of grace says by grace alone through faith apart from works you will live.

Since we are fallen and dead, since there is nothing left we can do, God says that He is going to step in and take over and take it from here. He does everything. He initiates the covenant and He sends His Son to fulfill the covenant. God covers both sides of the contract.

There is no works, no effort, no striving, no merit. All we bring to the equation is a dead, cold, sinful heart. We bring a corpse, God brings life.

Is this not the most glorious truth, God seeks and saves those who have grievously sinned against Him. God comes to us when we can't come to Him.

Our relationship with God is all grace.

People who say that the God of the OT is not a God of grace but a God of wrath, aren't paying attention. Right after the fall when there should be nothing but wrath, we read about the amazing grace of God.

The moment we make ourselves miserable by our sin, God comes to speak a word of comfort.

***Notice two things.***

***First, notice*** God announces His plan of attack right after the fall. At Satan's first blush of victory, God steals his thunder.

God isn't set back, frustrated, wringing His hands. God doesn't have to scramble back to the drawing board to come up with a Plan B. In fact Satan's work plays into God's plan. God permitted the fall because He had good purposes to bring out of it.

God's plan wasn't for an innocent mankind to come from a garden.  
God's plan was for a redeemed mankind to come from a cross.

Think about what we would know about God if the fall had never happened. Without the fall we would know nothing of the depth of God's grace. His grace is revealed in His seeking us as we fled from Him.

***Second, notice*** something very strange about this first preaching of the Gospel, this first promise of redemption. To whom does God speak it? God doesn't say this to Adam and Eve, He says it to Satan. Why?

You and I would never tell our plans to an enemy, we wouldn't make our strategies and troop movements known to the other side.

God puts Satan on notice. God makes clear where Satan stands in the battle that's ahead. Satan can try all he wants to stop God but he will fail. Come hell or high water or anything else, God will redeem His creation and His image bearers.

God will not have His glory robbed. No one can steal His glory or destroy His good and glorious purposes.

### **Enmity.**

Enmity means animosity, hostility, even a hatred. We know that there is a natural dislike or hatred by humans toward snakes and particularly by women toward snakes. But this verse is saying something much stronger than just that kind of enmity.

This verse is a *declaration of war* by God. He starts the enmity. There will be no peace between God and Satan, only enmity. And this isn't just any war, this is a cosmic war, a war waged in the heavenlies between the principalities and powers.

This war is played out between the spiritual seed of Satan and the spiritual seed of the woman. We see it very quickly in Genesis 4 when Cain (called in I John 3:10. 12 a son of the devil) murdered Abel. This isn't just a story of two brothers who couldn't get along, this is the first earthly battle scene in a cosmic war.

After Cain and Abel we see the battles in the stories of the patriarchs manifested in the struggles between Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, the people of God in bondage in Egypt, Pharaoh ordering the death of all the male babies, David and Goliath, David and Saul, God's people being carried off into captivity.

At the birth of Jesus another king orders the death of all the male babies, another battle in Satan's relentless pursuit and attack.

Enmity explains our world, the reality we all live in. Enmity explains the relentless attack on the church all over the world, the bombings, the shootings, the division and strife. Enmity explains the constant temptations to sin we face every day.

We don't live in a peacetime world. We live in a warzone. We should have a wartime mentality the way people in Holland and America did during WWII. We should use our money with a wartime mentality, we should pray with a wartime mentality.

This war is a real war, but it's not a war between equal foes. Satan will strike at the heel, but the seed of a woman will strike Satan on the head, it will be a mortal head wound, a deathblow.

**Luke 11:21-22** When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are safe; 22 but when one stronger than he attacks him and overcomes him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted and divides his spoil.

Jesus became man so He would be the seed of woman that would crush the head of Satan.

**Galatians 4:4** when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

When Charles Wesley wrote the familiar carol “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing,” he included a verse based on Genesis 3:15 that modern hymnals often omit this verse:

Come, Desire of Nations, come, Fix in us Thy humble home.

*Rise the woman's conquering Seed, Bruise in us the serpent's head.*

Adam's likeness now efface, Stamp Thine image in its place,

Second Adam from above, Reinstale us in Thy love,

Hark, the herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King.

**I John 3:8** The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

**Colossians 2:14-15** by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. 15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

**Hebrews 2:14-18** Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

The final triumph is described in Revelation 12 and 20.

### **Application and Conclusion.**

Salvation belongs to God. God saves sinners.

Immanuel means God with us. Jesus means He saves.

God says, “I will be their God and they will be my people.” We don't seek God, God seeks us.

Do you ever wonder if you are a Christian? Do doubts ever creep into your head? Do you ever have a twinge of fear that maybe you aren't saved, maybe you don't have enough faith?

The old Scottish pastor Thomas Chalmers once received a letter from just such an upset person in his church. He wrote back, “The truth is that your great error lies in making your comfort depend on the question, do I believe? When you should make it turn upon the question, Is God willing to receive me for Christ’s sake?”

Friends, look away from yourself to God. Do you doubt His gracious character? Wasn’t it God who came into the garden seeking Adam? Wasn’t it God who sent His Son to come and die for our sins? Wasn’t it God who first loved us? Wasn’t it God who first chose us and called us and opened the eyes of our hearts and gave us the faith to believe in Jesus Christ?

Who are you depending on, yourself or God?

Daily draw strength and comfort from the knowledge that Satan is a defeated foe, that the sting and fear of death is destroyed. We are on the winning team, the victory is secure. Jesus is our advocate and the Holy Spirit is our strength.

Genesis 3:15 is a lens for looking at the world we live in. Paul looked through this lens in Romans 3 when he described God’s plan of salvation now fully revealed in Jesus. In Romans 16:20 when Paul saw the suffering of the Christians in Rome he was able to encourage and comfort them with the promise:

**Romans 16:20** The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.