

## Christ is all

Genesis 3: 14-15: Genesis 49: 22-24: Numbers 24: 15-17.

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We all know that the Old Testament is the preparation for the New; so we only have to open the Old Testament at the book of Genesis and begin at the beginning to discover the first of the great prophecies concerning the coming of that mighty Personage, who is the foundation of everything and round whom everything revolves.

In these few verses in Genesis 3 we have Him first as *the Seed* and, remarkably enough, as the Seed of the woman, and not of the man. We read on through Genesis and we don't get many definite predictions until we come to chapter 49. True we find Him in "the seed" of Abram. The apostle Paul in the epistle to the Galatians is at pains to point out that he does not say "seeds" as of many but "Seed" as of one, and that One is Christ. This, of course, springs out of the fact that He was the seed of the woman, for the woman — Mary — was descended from Abram. This first great prediction of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ did not fall from mortal lips. Afterwards God did speak to men by prophets, but this most fundamental of all the great predictions came from the lips of the Lord God Himself, and was uttered not to man primarily, though we are permitted to hear it, but to the great adversary, Satan, under the form of the serpent. He said, "I will put enmity . . . between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." This word concerning the Seed of the woman is the great fundamental prediction of the coming of Christ.

When we get to the end of Genesis, many things have happened to the race. Israel has been called, and Joseph has acted as a shepherd, since Israel himself and his descendants are now brought down into Egypt under his sheltering hand. In the fires of Egypt they were to be welded together as a nation. Seventeen years after their arrival Israel died and blessed his sons. Now we know from Hebrews 11 that Jacob's last hours were his brightest. It was when he came to the finish that at last the power of the flesh in him was subdued, and the fire of faith that had been continually damped down by the world all his life burned with great brightness. So now he speaks as a man of faith, and when he comes to bless Joseph, he throws in that remarkable little parenthesis, printed as you notice in brackets "from thence," not from Jacob, but from the mighty God of Jacob, "is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel." So we discover that the Lord Jesus Christ is in view. He is *the Seed, the Shepherd and the Stone*. Genesis has been called, and very rightly, the seed plot of the Bible, and there you have three seed thoughts, which are marvellously developed as we go through the Scriptures.

Then I pass on to the book of Numbers. Of course, there are types of Christ in Exodus and Leviticus. There are many things that speak of Christ, but I am thinking of the definite predictions of His coming. So we come to Balaam who was, as we know, a false man at the bottom, but who was laid hold of by the Holy Ghost. God imposed Himself upon Balaam so that he found it impossible to get in touch with the dark spirits of evil with whom habitually he had intercourse. He no longer sought these enchantments to use against Israel. God took hold of him and he was made to say things which were the Word of God. God can use a donkey, Balaam's ass, or man, worse than the donkey, Balaam himself. And poor Balaam knew that though he would see Him he would not be nigh Him, yet he had to speak of His coming as the Star and the Sceptre. He is *the Seed, the Shepherd, the Stone, the Star*

and *the Sceptre*; the five-fold presentation of the blessed Saviour whom we know.

Now let us for a few moments consider these things in detail. As I was saying, the Seed is evidently the most fundamental of all. You see, God had no doubts or misapprehensions from the outset. He knew exactly the extent of the tragedy that sin had brought into the world. Adam transgressed, sin entered, and sin wholly corrupts that into which it enters. The first man and all his race was corrupted by the entrance of sin; so from the outset God made it very plain that a wholly new and original Seed must be introduced if the day was to be retrieved. Another Seed is necessary who should become *the new Fountain-head of life and fertility for man* — a Man of another order, a Man of another kind. A new Man is going to appear on the scene in due season as the seed of the woman. He came; and just because He was the seed of the virgin He was not of the first Adam's race. As Son of God, He was able to step in and achieve the victory when the first man had fallen.

Now we thank God that we can come in as of that Seed. When you get to Psalm 22 you find it ending with the words, "A seed shall serve Him." Well, that is what perverse man has not done. He has always gone in independence of God, instead of serving God. The natural bent of mankind is to act like a wild ass — kick over the traces — do what he likes. In the Psalm you have, "God is not in all his thoughts"; which means, if you could get all his thoughts together and examine them, you would not find one thought of God. You can see it in the world around. Man is in his thoughts, and nations, and money and pleasure. But God? — No, *not God!* Now there comes on the scene One who is altogether devoted to the will of God, who *has God in all His thoughts*. He sets the Lord, as Psalm 16 says, always before Him, and has Jehovah at His right hand so He is not to be moved. And it is not surprising, of course, that the One, who is characterised by such things, ends up at the right hand of God Himself. He was, indeed, Man of such a kind that the only possible place for Him was the right hand of Jehovah, the seat of the Majesty in the heavens. This One is the Seed of the woman, and He bruised the serpent's head. That, of course, means the end of the serpent's influence. He smites him in the very seat of his intelligence, though He did it, as the prophecy indicates, at personal cost to Himself — the bruising of His heel.

But then we know the Lord Jesus Christ in other ways. Now the Shepherd speaks of *control and attraction*. The eastern shepherd goes before his sheep, exerts an influence over them, exercises control upon them. Thank God we know Jesus as the Shepherd. We have come to know His Shepherd care. We can add many details, can we not? to that which Jacob was able to express. Yes, the Shepherd has come and we know Him and we have come, blessed be God, under His mighty guiding hand. It is very evident that the people of God are like sheep; they need the Shepherd. The Shepherd has arrived.

From another standpoint we need the Stone. Now a stone may speak of many things but it certainly speaks of *stability*. Men build their houses, make their erections, but sooner or later it all comes down. God is going to have His erection. God is the Builder and He has found His Stone. In the Old Testament that thought is greatly developed. You may remember Psalm 118. Isaiah too speaks of the Stone. We read of the sure foundation stone in Isaiah 28. In Psalm 118 we get that great word about the Stone which the builders refused having become the very Head Stone of the corner. The Lord Jesus Christ was God's Stone. Coming from *thence*, He was the Stone of Israel.

But He was a stone of such a character and shape that He did not, He could not, fit into men's building, experiment as they might. The Pharisees and others who were the national builders, busy with their religious systems, would have been glad to have had someone who could do marvellous works of power. If only He would have joined with them in a mutual admiration society, and patted them on the back and let them pat Him on the back, they would have been glad. And if He had so acted as to ensure

that religious power and authority and prestige should still belong to them; why, they would have worked Him in. He would have been received with acclamation. But no! He was not a stone of that sort. He could not be worked into man's corrupt, tumble down, ramshackle building, and they rejected Him. But in spite of their refusal He is the Stone of Israel, the great Foundation upon whom everything rests. We can say with very glad hearts, And the Foundation for us also. In Genesis these things stand in a setting that relates to the earth and to Israel. As we go further on we see they have an application to ourselves. In Ephesians 2, and elsewhere, we find He is the chief corner Stone of the Church edifice — that which God is building today.

When we get to the times of Balaam, although God can look upon Israel from the top of the rocks, from His own standpoint, and see them and speak of them according to His own thoughts, yet as a matter of fact the horrible perverseness of poor Israel has become manifest. What hope, we may ask, can there be if, God having called out a people to represent Him before the poor nations sunken in idolatry, they turn out like this. They were to be the centre around which God will gather the other nations for the ordering of the earth. If there is to be a settled condition of things on earth we must have Israel in the right place, the central place among the nations of the earth, and the nations blessed in and through Israel. But look what Israel is! How perverse, how bent upon going in exactly the other way to the way in which God would lead them! What is going to be done with a people like that? Why, all through the wilderness they had been running after other gods whenever they had the smallest opportunity. They had said, No, to every thought of God on their behalf. Well, through the lips of Balaam comes this wonderful word that even yet there will arise out of that people the Star and the Sceptre. The Star speaks of *hope*, and the Sceptre speaks of *rule and government*. Where is our hope? We answer, In the Lord Jesus Christ. You may say, you are not telling us anything we don't know. I am not indeed, but do we KNOW this *as we should*?

This prediction of Balaam's may have led the wise men of the East to associate our Lord with the star when He came the first time. That *may* have been, but it is very *certain* that the thought of the star is taken up in the New Testament, and the Lord Jesus Christ does present Himself to us in the closing chapter of the Bible as "the bright and morning Star." He is the One who cannot be obscured by the clouds of this world, if the faith of His people is kept simple and centred in Him. He is the Star of hope for our hearts to-day, and looking abroad in the earth we can see today, perhaps more than in any other period of the world's history, that it badly needs a righteous sceptre. Psalm 45 tells us He will wield the sceptre. But here He is spoken of as being the Sceptre. Of course, the Shepherd speaks of rule, the kindly rule of the One who cares for the sheep. But when you think of the Sceptre it is the rule of power, because the prophet goes on to say, He "shall smite;" He "shall destroy." You and I may not be much concerned about the corners of Moab or the children of Sheth, but we know the earth is full of confusion and that men seem to be bent on making things worse confounded. Thank God, we know the One who is the Sceptre and in whose hands will repose all rule and all dominion, and it is necessary that as the Sceptre He should smite. Judgment will follow just as and where it is deserved. The future, my friends, is in the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Man of the coming day.

Now I particularly wanted to say these things to you for this reason — the tendency of our hearts is always to turn from Him to something or somebody else; so having pointed out these scriptures my little message this afternoon must be this: *Remember that it has never been supposed from the outset that there is hope or help or deliverance or blessing anywhere else but in Christ.* A great many people are looking back to Pentecost, or back to the Reformation, or back to a hundred years ago. I will not name more precisely the revival which I believe God did very graciously grant one hundred years ago, for immediately God gives a gracious reviving the tendency is *to forget the Reviver and be occupied*

*with the revival.* Now there is nothing in any revival, except there has been revived something concerning Christ.

When the Holy Ghost came at Pentecost He came as *the Spirit of Christ*. He came from the exalted Head. He was like the holy ointment that flowed from the head to the skirts of Aaron's garments as Psalm 133 speaks. Everyone of the priestly family came under the anointing as the Man of God's purpose the great Head went into glory and took His seat. The might and power of His Name was brought by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and the theme of the apostles was not the Holy Ghost, but the Christ who had died and rose again. The living Christ became a great reality and a mighty work of God took place. Then there have been granted occasions when through mercy there has been some reviving of this: the Reformation, for instance. Though with many imperfections — there is no perfection outside of Christ — the faith of godly men laid hold of *something of Christ*, and laying hold of Him He wrought in their hearts and moved men. Each revival was wonderful and most blessed, until the minds of folk generally slipped away from the One who is the great Fountain-Head of all blessing and they became occupied with the glorious condition of things produced down here — the revival and the work. Then immediately things began to wilt and fade.

That is why, my friends, whether young or old, we need continually to be recalled to the fact that there is really no hope anywhere but in Christ. It has often been said the Church is never the subject of prophecy, I suppose, for a very good reason: the Church, after all, is only that which takes its origin from Christ. All prophecy centres not in the Church but in Him. He is the Fountain-Head. There is no hope in the Church, or the brethren, or in the revival, in you, or in me, or in the most gifted man that ever lived. All centres in Christ, and the one thing that will help us, young or old, is this, *freshly getting our hearts set on Christ, freshly getting our souls suffused with the glory and excellence of Christ, freshly laying hold of the fact that there has never yet been a situation, and never will be, which He is not equal to meeting.*

The *New Translation* renders Acts 13: 36, "David after he had in his own age served the will of God." That is the utmost any one of us can do. It is impossible to foretell the details of the future. My business is to do the little bit allotted to me in the present as I may be enabled by His grace. I do it very imperfectly, as I can see, but the great Head on high has resources which are everlasting. To carry on His work through the years — that is His business. He will carry things through. It is getting a long time ago since as a youth I first came into a little meeting. I am glad not sorry it was a feeble concern, because I never got the idea that the movement was a prosperous thing. Still, even so, I did get an impression that here was something stable, a kind of institution for all time. *I have had to unlearn that impression.* There is no hope, never has been any hope, we never ought to have had an atom of hope, in men, or brethren, or movements, or reformation, or revivals. If God gives us revival we thank Him, it is all His mercy. But let us never get away from this, everything is centred in Christ, hanging on Him, and it always was so. It has never been supposed from the outset that there is any hope but in Him. He is *the First*, the original, as the Seed, He is the Shepherd, the Stone, the Star, and as the Sceptre He will be *the Last*.

We have a Master on high, we belong to the risen Head, we are linked with Him, and our hopes are in Him, and He is the Master of the situation, the Star of hope. We are waiting for Him, and He will wield the sceptre and this rebellious earth will quieten into peace beneath His righteous sway. *Fix your heart on Him, and you will find that you have got a Resource that will carry you through.*