

Meditation #9: First CHRISTMAS Promise

What does it say?

STUDY: Genesis 3:1-17

GOLDEN TEXT: Genesis 3:15 and 17 = *I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.* ... *And to the man he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life.*

What does it mean?

All but one tree was available for our first ancestors. What an extraordinary ecology God had invited them to enjoy, improve and protect! We are not given very much information about the only tree that was forbidden—but it was tied to the choice of “knowing good and evil,” detached from an obedient personal relationship with God. Of the fruit of perhaps hundreds of trees, the forbidden fruit seemed irresistible, and the disobedient behavior of Adam and Eve had consequences. *Yet here we have the first prophecy of Christmas—that the descendant of the woman will crush the leader of evil...and the woman's descendant would suffer.*

1. On the very first day that our ancestors sinned, the Creator promised the Savior. What does that say about the Creator's kindness and planning?
2. Why is the Savior referred to as the *woman's offspring*—not the human offspring? Was the Creator already planning on a virgin birth for the Savior? Why is that significant to us?
3. Do all people know something of the burdensome toil it takes to bring home “the bread” from fields of work? Has our toil also been increased in part because of environmental stresses, pollution and depletion caused by human failures? What examples can you give?
4. The way to the Tree of Life was blocked because of the first sin (Genesis 3:24). Has our living environment been threatened ever since the Tree of Life was off limits? What has challenged your life? What has threatened the lives of others you know and love?

What are we going to do about it?

5. Is the challenge and privilege of protecting and improving the environment now made more urgent by human sin? How does God's grace encourage us in that type of labor? Does this first promise of Christmas help reconnect us with Creator's purposes?
6. Adam got in trouble because he blindly followed someone else—and then foolishly tried to blame her and the Creator who made them! Is this same blame-game a risk in environmental justice and care now? Do excuses count with God?
7. The Bible may be the only “sacred book” that teaches the splendid creation and the sinful Fall *as separate events*. Even now do we experience both great good and debilitating destruction in the environment at the same time? Please give examples of this ironic mix.

Truth To Celebrate: *The Creator always has a plan for further investing his amazing grace and his best in us, even when we miss his primary plans.*

Advent-Action: *Check the insulation in your home, especially in your attic. By filling gaps and increasing insulation, you save money—and energy—in every season.*

