

For it was not the supernatural birth of Jesus that brought us redemption – it was his sacrificial death
It was not the miracles of healing that he did that atoned for our sins – it was his cruel death
It was not his profound teachings that bears the fruit of the new covenant – it was the death of the seed.

For here is the miracle of sowing and reaping, the miracle of seedtime and harvest – God said to Noah in Gen. 8:22: “While the earth remains seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.”

The delivery of the seed in Bethlehem was not the end of the story and this is why the old covenant is not complete without the new, nor can we grasp the new without the old. It is the story of sowing and reaping, seedtime and harvest from God's perspective.

One takes a seed and plants in the ground, the seed dies. It is buried. But then something miraculous takes place- life begins to spring forth out of that seed. Jesus was the seed that God planted that out of it the fruit of the New Covenant could spring. Romans 8:29 declares that he is the firstborn among many brethren. Jesus died and was buried, being resurrected from the dead – he becomes the **FIRSTBORN** among many brethren.

We now live because He lives
We now reign because He reigns
We now live forever because He lives forever
We are seated together with Him in heavenly places;
His righteousness is our righteousness, His holiness is our holiness, He has crushed the head of the serpent.....**BUT**, that's not quite the end of the story.

Look with me in John 15: Jesus is teaching his disciples about fruit bearing. Let's just look at a couple of verses.

(v. 5) I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing.”

(v. 8) Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit: so shall ye be my disciples.

(v. 16) You did not chose me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain.....”

Look at those verses: “the same bringeth forth much fruit”.....”herein is my father glorified that you bear much fruit”.....”I have chosen you that you should go and bear much fruit.”

What happens when a seed is planted? The seed dies, germinates, and bears fruit. When you cut open a piece of fruit, what is it that you find inside? Seeds. What does one do with the seeds that are found in a

piece of fruit? One takes those seeds and plants them in the ground. Which brings me back to our previous question: **WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A SEED IS PLANTED IN THE GROUND?** It dies – and out of that death comes **LIFE**.

The fruit of the seed which was promised in Genesis 3 – is **SEED BEARING FRUIT**. When the “seed” of the gospel was planted in you out of the death of Christ – it has borne fruit and now that “fruit” bears seed – it is seed bearing fruit.

Matthew 16:24 says - “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it”

The interpretation of this is clear – in order to bear fruit under the new covenant one must die to himself. If he is unwilling to die to himself - “plant the seed” so to speak – he can never bear fruit and must abide alone, and he will ultimately lose his life. However, the one who is willing to give up his life (plant his seed) – he will bear fruit and his fruit shall remain forever.

We must die to our old self; we must be willing to die to the world, so that we might bear fruit to the Kingdom....we must die to self that we may bear fruit for the kingdom.

There is a seed within you that is waiting to be planted. There was a physical seed that you planted to bring your children in this world – but there is also a spiritual seed that you are to plant within those children so that they might live in the next world and that they too might become **SEED BEARING FRUIT**. What seed are you planting in your family – you must die to yourself in order to plant it. What seed are you planting at your workplace – you must die to this world in order to plant it

Now right here, many preachers would take an offering and tell you that if you plant a seed in the offering box – you can reap a harvest of money. But I'm not going to be that shallow with these truths. I'm going to tell you that the reason Christ demands that we take up a cross is that men die on a cross

The reason that Christ wants you to die on that Cross is that within you is seed – waiting to bear fruit and it can't bear fruit until you are dead to the world. As long as you remain alive to this world – that seed within you cannot bear fruit – many of you who are living “fruitless lives” know what I'm talking about. Its time – church – to stop living to reap the blessings and start dying to plant the seed.

AGAPE

PULPIT SERIES



THE SEED OF THE OLD THE FRUIT OF THE NEW

Pastor Michael K. Gantt

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AGAPE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

30 Canal Street

Brattleboro, VT 05301

Phone: (802) 257-4069

Fax: (802) 254-4239

agape@sover.net

The Seed of the Old Covenant, the Fruit of the New
Genesis 3:1-15

"the seed of the woman shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his head."

We've been talking about the word "covenant" a lot lately, and particularly as Pastor Bryan and I have spent a lot of time talking about it, some interesting discussion has come out of it. This year, 2011, we have called, "The Year of Walking In Covenant" and we are particularly concerned about what it means to walk out the covenant we are in through the finished work of Christ on the Cross. This week as we were headed out to a conference in Florida (driving to the airport, waiting in the airport, flying on the airplane, etc.) we spent a lot of time talking about covenant and I really wanted to share with you some of the things we talked about.

First, open your bibles to Genesis 3:1-15 – I'm going to read it, but I want you to follow along in your Bible.

In reading this, several things become obvious – there was one (1) Commandment given to our father Adam and his wife, Eve. That commandment wasn't particularly difficult to understand. There is ONE TREE from which you must not eat – and if you do, you will die.

Along comes Satan in the form of a serpent who suggests that God is not being truthful with Adam and Eve and that they "will surely NOT die", suggesting that God is a liar. And because the fruit of that tree was good for food (it was tasty) and pleasant to look at (it was appetizing) and because it had the added benefit of making one wise (it promised good personal benefit) Eve ate it and then gave it to her husband to eat.....and in that moment, the entire human race was doomed. From this point Adam and Eve would be banned from the Garden, and thereby cut off from the Tree of Life – forfeiting their immortality for a moment of pleasure – sound familiar?

The result of this encounter brings two things: First, there is a curse: (1) upon the serpent because he deceived the woman – he would crawl on the ground rather than walking upon feet. (2) upon the woman, because she had partaken of the fruit, she would endure great difficulty in bearing children and instead of standing as an equal with her husband, she would be under his authority. (3) Thirdly upon the man, that he would have to toil with the sweat of his brow to care and provide for his needs and the needs

of his family. (4) upon the earth as thorns and thistles were added to the vegetation, in other words , providing difficulty for all who would toil with it.

Second, there is a promise:

The first part of the promise is with regard to the "seed" of the woman – God promises that out of the union between Adam and Eve a "seed" would come that would crush the head of the serpent. However, this redemption would not be without cost for the serpent would bruise the heel of the redeemer seed.

(Gen. 3:21) As a seal of this oath, or covenant, the Lord makes he takes the skins of innocent animals and makes clothing to cover the shame of Adam and Eve – declaring that their sin would be covered by the sacrifice of innocent animals until the seed would come to remove their shame by atoning for their sin.

This being done, Adam and Eve were sent away from the Garden(3:22) so that they could not eat of the Tree of Life and live forever in their sin. We'll come back to this, but let it suffice to say that their "death" was an important part of their atonement. And this takes us through to the end of Genesis chapter 3. In those few verses God makes a covenant with Adam in which he promises to bring forth a "seed" out of Adam, that one of his own descendants would be born who would atone, or make final payment for his sin. There would be a "second Adam" who would come and in His own death (his heel being bruised by the serpent) make full and final payment, not only for the sin of Adam but for all who would come out of Adam under that same curse. This is in essence the promise of the gospel – the Good news.

Going forward from this point, beginning in Genesis chapter 4 with the birth of Cain and Able the seed flows out of Adam through a specific line (not through either Cain or Able – but Seth) that we can clearly follow down through the generations all the way to a stable in Bethlehem to a birth that was heralded by Angels and visited by shepherds. The ENTIRE OLD TESTAMENT (or Old Covenant) is a record of the journey of that seed from Adam to Jesus.

It is also the record of the vicious and murderous attempts of the serpent (Satan) to interfere with that seed, to imitate that seed, and to replace that seed. The OT, written by many different authors, over a period of thousands of years make up a single, consistent story which introduces us to many characters and many sub-plots – but the main plot is the birthing of that single seed promised back in Genesis 3 that would atone for the sins of a race in rebellion.

The seed was carried to safety on the Ark in Noah and his son Shem.....Sin tried to replace the seed by producing Ishmael from the loins of Abraham first, attempting to replace the son of promise with the son of works (replacing faith with good works). The seed was driven away into exile in Jacob as he fled from Esau. Hell tried to kill the seed with a famine in the days of Joseph and Judah. Satan tried to murder the seed in Goshen in the land of Egypt. The seed passed through a harlot in Canaan, an idol worshipper from Moab, and an adulteress in Bathsheba and it survived. The seed was carried into captivity into Babylon. Haman sought to wipe it out through genocide in Persia but was protected by a young woman named Esther, and the seed returned with Nehemiah and Ezra safe and sound. Ishmael sought to replace it; Esau, Pharaoh, and Herod tried to kill it but the book of Matthew tells us that there were 14 generations from Abraham to David, and 14 generations from David to the captivity in Babylon, and 14 generations after the captivity until we read these words in Matthew 1:18: "Now the birth of Jesus was on this wise....."

Paul records in Galatians 4:4: "But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son (seed), made of a woman, made under the law."

That single seed which came from Adam and was passed down through generation after generation to come to fruition in Bethlehem. When the shepherds crept into that manger to which the angels had directed them they found Mary and Joseph and lying in a manger of hay – was the very seed promised of God in the Garden of Eden. The seed of our salvation, the seed of our redemption – has arrived and the story of the Old Covenant is coming to an end because it has delivered the new.

Now we come to the SECOND part of our story today – the New Testament or the New Covenant. And to begin that story, I want to share with you a scripture that puts the entire story into context and brings clarity to the plot – That scripture is found in John 12:24 – and I want you to look at it with me: "Verily, verily I say unto you, Except a corn (grain or seed) of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it brings forth much fruit."

If the old covenant was about the delivery of "that seed" then the new covenant is about the death of that seed. It was not the birth of the seed that brought life back to the race – it was the death of that seed – the planting of that seed, that brought life to the human race.