

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. [12] Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. [13] You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29:11-13¹

This passage was clearly meant for the exiled Jews in Babylon but reaches down through the centuries to the Gentiles as well. Compare the Lord's promise to the Jews with this Messianic passage:

I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; [7] To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. Isaiah 42:6-7, KJV.

I would like to bring us from the hopelessness of our wretched condition in sin to the wonderful promise of God's salvation to us all. That promise is fulfilled only in Christ. What a wonderful passage this is! Here's what Jesus Christ offers the sinner today:

- Light. The sinner who lives in the darkness of Satan's realm will see the light of God. Read Isa. 29:17 - 20, also John 12:46.
- Healing from blindness - spiritual blindness, John 9:1 - 38.
- Release from the darkness of the prison of sin. Acts 16:24 - 34.

God's Wonderful Plan of Redemption is Revealed just after Adam's Sin.

Man's sin had been found out. He stood before the Lord completely ashamed of his rebellious act. But something more terrible had happened to Adam - he was no longer to enjoy the wonderful fellowship with the Lord as he had. The wonderful, exciting exploration of God's creation was to be a thing of the past. Adam had literally been "fired" from his job as creation's first scientist and had been given the job of a mere subsistence - living off the land by the sweat of his brow. God's word recorded that Adam lived a total of 930 years and died. That would have been the end of things were it not for the wonderful plan that God had put in motion in eternity past - the Plan of Redemption. The very first mention of this plan is found during that confrontation with Adam, Eve, Satan and the Lord when He pronounces on one hand judgement and on the other hand a glimmer of hope:

And 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." Genesis 3:15

God is speaking to the serpent, Satan and with this single sentence, Satan's future

¹ Unless otherwise noted all passages are in the NIV

is doomed. But no so with mankind. Let's look at this remarkable passage.

"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers;..." Remember Paul's description of sinful man in Ephesians 2? Paul described a race of men who were going to be subjects of Satan - under his rule through their sinful natures and spiritual deadness, *yet God, in His confrontation with Satan in Genesis 3, put before Satan an irony.* It had looked to Satan as though he had won the battle and put enmity between mankind and God, and yet, even while Adam and Eve's "spiritually dead bodies" were still warm, as-it-were, and God said the reverse was to be true - that the enmity was to be between the woman and Satan. Not only that, but Satan was not to have the victory between her children - most notably Jesus Christ, and God as we shall soon see. So it should be quite significant to us as students of the Word that right away, even though it looked as though man was at enmity with God - this passage is pointing out that the reverse was to be true. Yes, the curse of sin was to take its toll but more so the wonderful plan of redemption had been more than hinted to here in Genesis 3:15.

The Irony of the Enmity.

The first part of this wonderful verse stated the irony of enmity. The second part of this verse was to state the certain victory of the Redemption. He, *the Man*, the offspring of this woman, the woman who had been deceived by Satan in his dastardly plan to separate man from God, would crush the head of the serpent - a condemnation of certain death.

First let's look at the enmity issue. Paul encapsulates this battle in his letter to the Ephesians 2:1 - 3. We covered this verse last time in our section that describes our inability to discover ourselves in that we were so enslaved to our sinful passions and were dead spiritually to God that we could *never* discover our true nature nor could we ever discover God. This is the enmity that Satan had planned for. This was to be the fruit of his deception of the woman and the rebellion of Adam. However, both of these marvelous passages in Genesis and Ephesians say that the opposite was to be true - Satan's plan to separate man from God had been completely foiled - God was to have fellowship restored between Himself and man. This is the meaning that the woman and her offspring would be enemies of Satan - quite contrary to the notion that Satan had at in his plan.

Let's develop this notion of enmity a bit further. Remember Ephesians 3:1 - 3 and remember our hopeless situation as enemies of God (children by nature of wrath) and compare that with the next part of this passage written from Paul's pen:

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, [5] made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. [6] And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, Ephes. 2:4-6.

Now who is the enemy of whom?! This is the irony I bring before you. Instead of

being the enemies of God, man, in Christ, becomes the enemy of Satan!² This was the complete turnabout that God, who can do the impossible, had done. Satan had been completely blind sided by the redemptive plan of God.

The Victory of Redemption.

"...God, who is rich in mercy, [5] made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--..."

There is a battle for the hearts of all men. On one side, Satan is ruling all men as sinners because they are dead to God, completely enslaved to the master of their own sinful passions. On the other hand, God has provided, through Jesus Christ, the sinless Lamb of God, the means for restoration of fellowship. Consider that wonderful passage in our footnote that *while we were enemies* we were reconciled to God. So the first notable thing I wish to point out is that while we were supposed to be the enemies of God - instead we have become the *friends* of God.³

God has Expressed His Kindness Toward the Sinner. God has taken a personal interest in each sinner's life. The result of this interest is that some respond to His call and are placed in relationship with Him. Let's consider the next portion of Paul's passage in Ephesians:

And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, [7] in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. Ephes. 2:6-7.

What a difference God's redemption made in my life. There really was no reason why I shouldn't have continued in Satan's grip - a slave to my sinful passions - destined for hell - except for His mercy. Remember the unwanted baby in Ezekiel 16? Yes, the baby in that account was Jerusalem a.k.a. the Jews but we can bring the vivid picture of that unwanted baby over into our lives. Please forgive me if I make frequent references to these, my favorite, passages but they represent my personal testimony of what Jesus Christ did in my life. For some reason, the "kindness" of Ephesians 2:7 stands out to me. The original of this word portrays someone placing great value on another and so, they show kindness. Remember our study on Psalm 139? I do not know the reason why He has shown kindness - placed great value on me except that it is His nature to do so and that He has an investment in every sinner's life, including mine, in that He

² For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Romans 5:10

³ You are my friends if you do what I command. [15] I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. John 15:14-15

played an active, creative role in the sinner's genesis.

The Result of this Response Is New Spiritual Life in Christ.

He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it. [9] And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation. Isaiah 25:8-9, KJV See also Rom. 6:22, 23; 1 Cor. 15:53, 54; 1 John 5:11 - 13.

When the regenerate Jew read this, he didn't just think of life after death. No. He thought of eternal life *and* his life in the here and now. It's wonderful to know where we are going in our lives. Years ago we used to take rides in the countryside and see if we could get lost. It was a lot of fun especially to me (maybe because I was at the wheel and knew that eventually we would come out to a main road that was identified). But the kids would occasionally show some concern that we might not ever find home again. I would reassure them that we would make it home and we always did. Eventually, they learned to trust my ability to navigate through the strangest of territory and make it back home where they know they were safe. This is a little bit like the Jew of the Isaiah's day. They faced an uncertain future, especially the regenerate Jew, and there was a certain fear of the unknown. Dire predictions had been made by the prophets of the demise of Israel as a nation - of the terrible captivity and slavery - even horrible torture and death. This passage was meant as word of comfort to the regenerate Jew - not to the apostate but to the believer that they were safe in Jehovah's hands and that they would see the end of the calamity that was to come upon them, if not they, themselves, their children would see the promise that Jehovah gave to them in this passage.

Of course we recognize this passage from a quote that Paul made in 1 Corinthians 15 and know that this promise is made to *every* sinner who comes to the Lord in faith. This is the wonderful plan that God has for every sinner. The Lord can take any sinner no matter what his condition is - no matter how much of a mess he has made of his life and give him a new life - deliverance from the wages of sin, Death. He can take away the sorrow that every sinner faces eventually in spite of his temporary bliss in the pleasures of sin and give to him the joy of salvation.

No Tears in Heaven.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. Rev. 21:4, KJV.

The final chapter for the sinner who is under the grasp of Satan will be written by God Himself. Every one of us who has come to the Lord in faith in the Lord Jesus Christ finished work on the cross can know that no matter what we have had to

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experience here on earth that eventually God will personally wipe away all tears from our eyes, there will be no more death nor sorrow neither any pain - these were the result of sin and Satan's foiled plan to make us enemies of God. Truly the former things - the hopelessness of sin the pain of disease, the sorrow of lost loved ones will pass away for all these things will be thrown out like we do the trash. Praise the Lord for His wonderful plan for our lives.