

# Genesis 3:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

## Analysis

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**And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.** This verse, known as the proto-evangelium (first gospel), contains the earliest promise of redemption. Speaking to the serpent, God declares perpetual conflict between Satan's offspring (those who follow evil) and the woman's offspring, culminating in one particular "seed" who will defeat the serpent.

The prophecy is deliberately singular and messianic. While "seed" can be collective, the pronouns shift to singular "it/he" (הוּ, הוּא), pointing to an individual who will crush the serpent's head—a fatal blow destroying Satan's power. The serpent will "bruise his heel"—a painful but non-fatal wound, prophetically indicating Christ's suffering and death which paradoxically defeats Satan.

This promise introduces the scarlet thread of redemption running through Scripture. The "seed of the woman" (unusual phrase, since descent normally traces through fathers) anticipates virgin birth. New Testament confirms Christ as this promised seed who destroys the devil's works (1 John 3:8), defeats death (Hebrews 2:14), and reconciles humanity to God. This verse transforms judgment into hope, revealing God's redemptive purpose before expelling humanity from Eden.

## Historical Context

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The serpent in Genesis 3 reflects ancient Near Eastern associations between serpents and chaos, evil, or deceptive wisdom. Unlike pagan myths where serpents might be deified, Genesis presents the serpent as a mere creature, though Satan's instrument (Revelation 12:9, 20:2). Ancient curse formulas from various cultures parallel God's pronouncements, but Genesis uniquely embeds redemptive promise within judgment.

The agricultural curses (thorns, sweat, difficult labor) would have resonated deeply with ancient subsistence farmers for whom crop failure meant starvation. The pain in childbearing acknowledges a universal female experience that ancient cultures attributed to various causes, but Genesis traces it to sin's consequences rather than divine cruelty or inherent evil in creation or sexuality.

Archaeological evidence of humanity's ancient struggles with agriculture, disease, death, and violence aligns with Genesis's portrayal of a fallen world. Ancient wisdom literature from Mesopotamia and Egypt grappled with suffering's origins, but Genesis alone provides the theological explanation: human rebellion against God brought cosmic corruption. This account would have answered Israelite questions about why their promised land required hard labor, why they suffered pain and death, and why they needed redemption.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. What does this passage reveal about God's sovereignty and human responsibility?
2. What obstacles prevent us from living out the truths presented in this verse?

3. How does understanding Christ as the ultimate fulfillment illuminate this passage's meaning?

## Interlinear Text

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<p>וְאִיֵּב הָאֵשׁ יִתֵּן בֵּינִי וּבֵין הָאֵשׁ וּבֵין יִשְׂרָאֵל</p> <p>enmity      And I will put      H996      H996      between thee and the woman      H996</p> <p>H342      H7896      H802</p>	
<p>וְאִיֵּב הָאֵשׁ יִתֵּן בֵּינִי וּבֵין הָאֵשׁ וּבֵין יִשְׂרָאֵל</p> <p>and between thy seed      H996      and between thy seed      H1931      and thou shalt bruise</p> <p>H2233      H2233      H7779</p>	
<p>וְאִיֵּב הָאֵשׁ יִתֵּן בֵּינִי וּבֵין הָאֵשׁ וּבֵין יִשְׂרָאֵל</p> <p>thy head      H859      and thou shalt bruise      his heel</p> <p>H7218      H7779      H6119</p>	

## Additional Cross-References

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**Romans 16:20** (Parallel theme): And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

**1 John 3:8** (Parallel theme): He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

**Revelation 12:17** (Parallel theme): And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

**Isaiah 7:14** (Parallel theme): Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

**Galatians 4:4** (Parallel theme): But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

**John 8:44** (Parallel theme): Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the

truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

**Matthew 1:23** (Parallel theme): Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

**1 John 3:10** (Parallel theme): In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

**Matthew 13:38** (Parallel theme): The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;

**Psalms 132:11** (Parallel theme): The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.