

Mary, a New and Better Eve  
A Mid-week Advent Sermon

In the name of Jesus. Amen.

It was the Sixth Day. YHWH was at the pinnacle of His creative work. He had just made livestock and all creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds. It was good. It was time to unveil His masterpiece, His *pièce de résistance*: “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...” (Genesis 1:26a)

God took a little of the virgin, red earth and formed a man from it, then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. He gave the man the name Adam, after the red earth from which he was formed. A little later that day, God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep, took a rib from his side, closed the place up with flesh, and fashioned a woman from the rib. (cf. Genesis 2:7, 21-22)

God had previously told Adam not to eat the fruit from a particular tree in the middle of the Garden. He expected Adam to tell the woman the same. Adam did so, as evidenced by the woman’s interaction with a serpent which sought to deceive her. “Did God really say?” the serpent asked. The woman answered, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’” (Genesis 3:1b-3)

Doubts arose in the woman’s heart. The serpent’s lies were deceptively truthful to her ears, and the man did nothing to counter what the serpent was saying. The woman took from the tree, ate the fruit, and sure enough, just as the serpent said, she did not die! She gave some to Adam who was beside her the whole time, and he ate, too. Neither of them dropped dead that day, though they must have realized they had been deceived; I wonder, though, if they thought Satan the deceiver or God. The father of lies had them right where he wanted them; and as a result he thought himself a thorn right in the side of the proverbial flesh of God. (cf. Genesis 3:4-7)

Here was the pinnacle of God’s creation, man and woman, given the command to be fruitful and multiply, to take dominion over the earth, taken captive by that which they should rule over, fallen captive to sin. With that, Satan, who used the crafty serpent, thought himself superior to YHWH, the Creator of the universe—the One who created him, in fact. Satan was able to topple part of that creation, make something out of it which God did not intend, at least how we understand things. God had created the man and the woman—had created all things—and they rejected Him in their eating from the tree of which He had commanded them not to eat. They didn’t die that day, as they understood God to have said, but they did begin to die that day, as God said they would.

It was time for YHWH to take His walk in the cool of the day. Of course knowing all things already, He asks where Adam and the woman are. Having been deceived, they sought to compound that deception and hide from God—an impossible task, just ask Jonah. “I was naked and afraid, so I hid,” Adam said. God asks another question: “Who told you this?” The compounding continues as the man blames the woman and the woman blames the serpent.

The deed is done. Creation is cursed. Adam and the woman are expelled from the Garden, and they are cursed to live a relatively short life, but God makes a sacrifice in order to cover their shame—to cover their nakedness—with animal hides. He makes a promise, the first time this promise which is repeated throughout the Old Testament is made; speaking to the serpent as if to Satan, God says, “And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.” (Genesis 3:15)

There will come One from the woman—her Seed, God said; strange, in that women don’t have seeds—who will bruise or crush the devil’s head, who will suffer only a bruised heel as a result. That

authority and dominion that the serpent exerted over Adam and the woman, by which he thought to overthrow YHWH as God, will be undone by the Seed of the woman as He crushes the devil's head.

And in the midst of all of this, the woman receives her name. Adam named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all living. (cf. Genesis 3:20)

From Eve will come every generation of man ever born. She is your mother—a great-grandmother of great magnitude on both sides of your family. You live because she was alive and birthed those who would eventually birth you. Because you live, Eve is your mother, as indicated by the name her husband gave her.

But you are still under the same curse as your father, Adam, and mother, Eve. By the sweat of your brows do you eat your bread. Your conception is increased and in pain and sorrow do you bear children. You are born, you live for a while, and you die. As you live, you get sick, you get cancer, you lose a limb or organ. Life isn't easy, but cursed, and it is short—shorter than the hundreds of years that Adam and Eve lived.

Like Adam and the woman named Eve before, you hide from God. You fear Him, because like your first parents, you know you have been deceived and as a result of that deception, you reject God. God says, "Do this," and "Don't do that;" you don't do this, but do that instead. It's your way or no way at all, because God's ways just aren't good enough. The serpent has taught you as much. Either that, or you blame the woman or Adam or someone else or the serpent or something else. It's never your fault that you break God's Commandments, is it?

Wrong—you have broken the Law, you have transgressed God's Commandments, you have rejected Him. This is what you have done, and like your first father and first mother, you deserve to die for it.

Adam and Eve did eventually die. Generations following them have, too. And, should the Last Day not come for you to see it before you die, you will join them in a grave like theirs. Yes, you can thank Adam and Eve for that as much as you can thank Eve for being your mother and bringing you life, but you are just as much to blame for having a grave.

Still, the promise was made. The Seed of the woman will come and crush the devil's head. It's a promise from God, and He never breaks his promises.

The time had come; just the right time, as a matter of fact. (cf. Galatians 4:4) YHWH sent his messenger Gabriel to a maiden from Nazareth. She would conceive and bear a Son, not by the will of any man, but by that of God. He would be the Son of God, and she would give Him the name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins. (cf. Matthew 1:21) The Seed of the woman is conceived. He has come, and He will crush the devil's head and end his dominion. In a way, because Mary conceived and carried Jesus, she received the Word of God where the woman, Eve, had rejected it many generations before.

The devil took notice of the Seed, too. The Son was born, circumcised, and named. He quietly kept the Law of God. Then, one day, He was baptized in the Jordan. Shortly after His baptism, He was taken out into the wilderness by the Spirit in order to be tempted by the devil. As much as Satan thought himself a thorn in the side of God in the beginning, he tried to be as much as he tempted Jesus. Three times, he sought to overthrow the plan of God once more, and three times Jesus thwarted His attempts with the Word of God. In every way that the devil was able to convince the woman and Adam to reject God—hunger, testing the Word of God, and power and authority—he looked to turn Jesus from His mission and your salvation, but failed in all of those ways.

The devil left Jesus for a more opportune moment. That moment came at just the right time.

It was the Passover at about Jesus' 33<sup>rd</sup> year and time for the lamb to be sacrificed. As the devil entered and used a serpent to bring about the fall of man, this time the devil entered another serpent, named Judas, to attempt to bring about the fall of the Son of Man, Jesus. Through Judas, Jesus was betrayed into the hands of the chief priests and scribes. They handed Him over to the Roman authorities who flogged Him, beat Him to within an inch of His life, and nailed Him to a cross.

Once again, the devil thought Himself a thorn in the flesh of God. That thorn was most manifest in the spear that the Roman soldier used to run Jesus through. Pierced in His side, Jesus had already died for your life, and from that side flowed the marks by which you are given that life and by which your life in Christ is sustained—water and blood. For it is in the water of Holy Baptism that you are given new life, and by receiving the body and blood of Jesus Christ in Holy Communion that your life in Christ is renewed.

Upon the cross extended, Jesus gave His life for you, but He took it up again. He shed His blood for your redemption. He breathed His last and gave up His life in your place—the Law demands your death, and Jesus paid the price. The price Jesus paid was His perfectly innocent suffering and death, far greater than all the silver and gold in the world. With it, you have been bought back from the corruption of your first parents, and brought into life everlasting—the promise made to you in Holy Baptism, where you were washed by the water and the Word and covered in garments bought by the sacrifice of Jesus.

I said He took His life back up again, and He did so still bearing the scars of His crucifixion—a veritable bruise to His heel. But the serpent's head has been crushed when He died. Try as He might to snatch you from the Father's hand, the devil makes all kinds of accusations against you, and every one of them true by the Law of God, yet not one of them sticks because of the head-crushing death suffered in your place. The devil seeks to bring you back into death, but because of the death of Jesus on the cross and life-giving baptism in which you were washed for the sake of Jesus, you are won forever to life. The only way back into the way of death with the devil is if you so choose to remove yourself from God's grace. But because of God's grace, you have life because of the Life of the world—Jesus Christ is your Light and your Life.

Now, as for Mary being a new and better Eve, that comes only by way of her Son. Eve was given the name which means mother of all living. Her name is more descriptive of Mary, who bore for you your Savior. From Eve's womb sprang forth all human life, but this life is born to die. From the womb of Mary sprang forth the life-giving God and Creator of all in the flesh. Through her Son, all men have the promise of eternal life, and this promise was applied to you and given to you personally in your baptism. Mary, the Mother of God, is the new and better mother of all living—the mother of the ever living!

Therefore, despite this temporal life lived under the curse of Adam and Eve, it is lived in the hopeful expectation—that hope that does not disappoint (cf. Romans 5:5)—of the life that is to come, lived forever in the presence of YHWH and His Christ. For a while, still, you suffer the curse pronounced to your first parents—you may even die—but you live under the promise of life eternal, because you are forgiven for all of your sins.

In the name of Jesus. Amen.