THE PROMISE KEEPER

(Genesis 3:1ff)

I. WELCOME / TEXT: SORROW AND PROMISE / PRAYER

A. Welcome

- The joy of Christmas (and Easter): It's ours to discover, fight for, and share!
- Our preaching plan for the Advent Season: Bring a friend!

B. Today's Text: **Theme: Sorrow and Promise**

Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field that the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God really said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" 2 The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; 3 but from the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'" 4 The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! 5 For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. 8 They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" 10 He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself." 11 And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" 12 The man said, "The woman whom you gave *to be* with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate." 13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." 14 ***The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you will go, and dust you will eat all the days of your life; 15 and I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall crush you on the head, and you will bruise him on the heel."*** 16 To the woman he said, "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you will bring forth children; yet your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." 17 Then to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it', cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. 18 Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you will eat the plants of the field; 19 by the sweat of your brow you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you will return." 20 Now the man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all *the* living. 21 The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them. 22 Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"— 23 therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. 24 So he drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden he stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.

This is why the Son of God appeared *among us:* to destroy the works of the devil. – 1 Jn. 3:8

C. Opening Prayer

II. THE PROMISE KEEPER

A. Opening Illustration: The bad promises of a good cop (Blue Bloods)

B. Get this: God's promises are NOT like that!

Then (Balaam) took up his discourse and said, "Arise, O Balak, and hear; give ear to me, O son of Zippor!
19 God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should repent. Has he said, and will he not
do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not make it good? 20 Behold, I have received *a command* to bless. He
has blessed, and I cannot revoke it. – Numbers 23

Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill? 20 I have received a command to bless; he
has blessed, and I cannot change it. – NIV

C. Wh you can ALWAYS take God's promises to the bank:

- He has a purpose and a plan for the universe
- He has all the power in the universe in his hands
- He is in absolute control of everything that happens in the universe
- Therefore, his purpose, his plan, and his promises WILL BE FULFILLED!

Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is
none like me. 10 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say,
'My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.' 11 From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-
off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that I will bring about; what I have planned, that I
will do." – Isaiah 46

Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal
dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. 35 All the peoples of the earth are regarded as
nothing. He does as he pleases among the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. None can stay his
hand or say to him: "What have you done?" – Daniel 4 (Neb's words)

D. <u>TODAY'S BIG IDEA:</u> Long ago, at the dawn of history, God made a promise—a promise based on his eternal purpose and plan—that he would redeem a sinful but beloved people (and also the world he gave them) for their eternal joy and his eternal glory. The joy of Christmas lies in this fact: Just as God's promise to send a Redeemer into the world was fulfilled in the birth of Christ, so too, through the work of Christ, ALL of God's promises, purposes, and plans WILL be fulfilled.

III. THE GREATEST OT PROMISE OF THEM ALL

A. <u>Some preliminary thoughts about the Bible</u>: Its make-up: 66 books, by around 40 different authors, written over 1600 years. / Its great theme: the creation, fall, and redemption of the universe, life, and man, through the person and work of Jesus Christ. / It's divided into two parts: OT (39 books) and NT (27 books). / In essence, the OT is the history of all God did to *prepare* for the coming of the Redeemer, whom he *promised* at the very beginning of the world. Thus, the OT is a body of literature loaded with

promises, pictures, prophecies, and preparatory events, all of which look forward to fulfillment in the days of the Redeemer. / In essence, the NT is a history of all God did, is doing, and will do to fulfill his OT promises. Thus, the NT is a body of literature that *looks back* on the first coming of the Redeemer, when he *accomplished* our redemption, and *looks forward* to the second coming of the Redeemer, when he will *consummate* it.

B. The Greatest OT Prophecy of them all: Genesis 3:14-15 / My plan of attack:

- How it is fulfilled in the world of nature
- How it is fulfilled in the life of Christ
- How it is fulfilled in the life of the Church

C. How it is fulfilled in nature

14 The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you will go, and dust you will eat all the days of your life; 15 and I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall crush you on the head, and you will bruise him on the heel." (HSL)

D. How it is fulfilled in the life of Christ

14 The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you will go, and dust you will eat all the days of your life; 15 and I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he will crush you on the head, and you will bruise him on the heel." (HSL)

Note: Temptation in the wilderness (Mt. 3). / You brood of vipers! (Mt. 3:7, 12:34, 23:33) / You are of your father the devil (John 8) / The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. (1 John 3)

E. How it is fulfilled in the life of the Church

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Note: The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. (Rom. 16:20)

IV. FULFILLMENT AND JOY (Revelation 12)

A. An AMAZING text:

- Note the parallels with Genesis 3
- Note how it's a GREAT Advent text, speaking of the incarnation and all it accomplished
- Note how it's filled with Christmas joy

B. Revelation 12 (HSL)

The Heavenly Woman: Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, having the moon beneath her feet, and on her head a victor's wreath composed of twelve stars. **2** And the woman was with child, crying out in the pains of labor, and travailing to give birth.

The Serpent of Old **3** Then another sign appeared in heaven; and suddenly, I beheld a great dragon, fiery red, with seven heads and ten horns, and upon his heads, seven diadems.[1] **4** And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them down into the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was at the point of delivery, in order to devour her child as soon as she gave birth. //

The Seed of the Woman Wounded and Revived: **5** And the woman gave birth to a son, a male *child*, who is soon to be as a shepherd with a rod of iron towards all nations; and her child was suddenly taken up to God and his throne. **6** Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she might be nourished for 1,260 days.

The War of the Church: **7** Then war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fighting with the dragon. Now the dragon and his angels fought back, **8** but he could not prevail; and no longer was any place found for them in heaven. **9** So the great dragon—the serpent from of old who is called the devil and Satan, *and* who deceives the whole inhabited world—was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

The Joy of the Church: **10** Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying: "Now the salvation, power, and kingdom of our God—and the authority of his Christ— have come, for the accuser of our brotherhood has been thrown down, the one who accuses them day and night before our God. **11** But they overcame him through the blood of the Lamb and through the word of their testimony; and they did not cling to[2] their life, even in the face of death. **12** For this reason, rejoice, *you* heavens, and all[3] who tabernacle in them! *But* woe to the earth and the sea, for the devil has come down to you, filled with great wrath, knowing that his time is short."

V. APPLICATION AND CONCLUSION: A CHRISTMAS PRESENT FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD

A. Our texts this morning show us that the divine Promise Keeper will ALWAYS keep his promises. This is the source of our wisdom, strength, and joy.

B. Here's one promise I'd like to focus on: Holiness and Wholeness (2 Peter 1)

Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith no less precious than our own by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: **2** Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the spiritual knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord, **3** seeing that his divine power has bestowed on us *everything necessary for life and godliness through the spiritual*

knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and moral excellence. **4** Through these things he has granted us exceedingly great and precious promises, *so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature,* now that you have escaped the corruption *that is* in the world due to lust. **5** Now for this very reason *you,* on your part,[3] *must* make every effort to supplement your faith with moral excellence; and moral excellence with knowledge; **6** and knowledge with self-control; and self-control with perseverance; and perseverance with godliness; **7** and godliness with brotherly kindness; and brotherly kindness with love. **8** For if these virtues are truly yours and constantly increasing, they will show that you are neither ineffective nor unfruitful in your quest for the spiritual knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. **9** For he who lacks these qualities is blind—*spiritually* shortsighted—since he has forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. **10** Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure; for by practicing these things you will never stumble; **11** for in this way the entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly presented to you.

C. The gist of what Peter says:

- God has promised to make us holy and whole; to enable us to partake of the divine nature, in a measure in this life, in fullness in the next.
- This requires diligence on our part, but diligence of a special kind: We are to *prioritize and pursue to spiritual knowledge of God* through meditation upon, strong faith in, and hearty obedience to his purposes, promises, and precepts; and also through all the other means of grace he has supplied, including prayer and participation in the ordinances and life of the Church.