

SESSION 2

The Serpent and the Seed

The Fall as Covenant Breach and the First Gospel

TAKE-HOME SHEET

WHAT WE FOUND

Genesis 3 turned out to be covenant breach, not mere rule breaking. The serpent's strategy had three moves: misquote God, contradict God, and slander the Father's motives, recasting the covenant as a rigged contract. The first sin was believing a lie about who God is, and Adam, the appointed guardian, stood silent beside his bride.

Then the astonishing turn: before any discipline is spoken, God plants a promise inside the curse on the serpent. Genesis 3:15 names a seed of the woman (against the Bible's usual pattern of counting descent through men), uses a singular pronoun ("he shall bruise your head"), and shows the victor wounded in the winning. We confirmed the reading from Scripture itself: Revelation 12:9 unmasks "that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan," and Romans 16:20 promises Satan crushed under the feet of Christ's people. The Church calls this verse the Protoevangelium, the first gospel.

We ended with the Fathers' oldest Marian insight: Eve, a virgin, believed a fallen angel and brought forth death; Mary, a virgin, believed a faithful angel and brought forth Life. And we noticed what the garments of skins imply, the Bible's first bloodshed, God clothing the ashamed at the cost of animal life: covering sin costs a life, and God himself provides it.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

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St. Justin Martyr *Dialogue with Trypho, Chapter 100 (c. AD 155)*

In the middle of the second century, close to the apostolic age, St. Justin drew the parallel: Eve, a virgin, received the serpent's word and brought forth disobedience and death, while Mary, a virgin, received the angel's word with faith and joy and brought forth him by whom the serpent is destroyed. The earliest Christians read Genesis 3 with Mary already in view.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Irenaeus of Lyons *Against Heresies, Book 3, Chapter 22*

St. Irenaeus taught that the knot tied by Eve's disobedience was untied by Mary's obedience; what the virgin Eve bound by unbelief, the Virgin Mary loosed by faith. For Irenaeus this is part of Christ's "recapitulation": the Son of God retraces the human story from inside, getting right every step our first parents got wrong.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. John Henry Newman *Letter to Pusey (1866)*

Defending Catholic devotion to Mary from the Fathers themselves, St. John Henry Newman observed that the earliest and most widespread patristic title for Mary is the Second Eve, and he argued that everything the Church says of Mary grows from that root: she is no ornament to the gospel but a party to the drama

announced in Genesis 3:15.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- Bring one recurring temptation to Confession this month, and name the lie about God underneath it, not just the act.
- Pray one Hail Mary each day this week, hearing it as Genesis 3:15 answered: the woman, her seed, and the crushed serpent.
- Before next session, read Genesis 6:5 to 22 and chapter 9:8 to 17. Count how many times God says "covenant."

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

"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 (RSV2CE)

Before Next Session: Read Genesis 6:5 to 22 and Genesis 9:8 to 17. Count how many times God says the word "covenant."

Catechism References: CCC 397, 410 to 412, 2568