Teacher's Guide

2. The 'seed of Eve' prophecy: The Messiah would be a descendant of Eve, the mother of humanity (Genesis 3:15)

"I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will bruise your head, and you will bruise his heel." (Genesis 3:15, WEB)

Background

- The prophecy in Genesis 3:15, among other things, establishes that the promised Messiah would be Eve's *offspring* or *seed,* depending on the English translation, meaning he would be a descendant of Eve.
    - *Seed* is the more literal translation, and it coincides with the frequent use of plant-related imagery that is used in many Old Testament prophecies about the promised Messiah, such as *branch* in Isaiah 11:1 and Jeremiah 23:5 and *tender plant* in Isaiah 53:2.
- The underlying Hebrew word that is translated by the World English Bible as *offspring* is *zera*, which is the Hebrew word for *seed*.
    - The Hebrew word *zera* appears twice in Genesis 3:15, first to refer to the followers of Satan *(your offspring)* and then to Eve's descendents *(her offspring).*
- The Hebrew word *zera* refers to seeds that can be planted (Genesis 1:29); or to offspring, as in children or descendants (Genesis 22:18); or to followers, as in followers of Satan (Genesis 3:15's *your offspring*) or to followers of God (Psalm 112:1-2).
- The Hebrew word *zera* is an important word that appears in several Old Testament Messianic prophecies, including Genesis 3:15, 22:18, 26:4, 28:14; 2 Samuel 7:12; Psalm 89:4,29,36; and Isaiah 53:10.
    - In each of these passages, the underlying Hebrew text contains the Hebrew word *zera*. In most English translations, this word is translated as *offspring* or *seed*.
- Genesis 3:15 is the first of many *seed* prophecies, which foretold that various people in the Old Testament would be part of the bloodline that would lead to the

Messiah, including Abraham (Genesis 22:18), his son Isaac (Genesis 26:5), his grandson Jacob (Genesis 28:14), and King David (2 Samuel 7:12). Each of these examples have the word *zera* within the underlying Hebrew text.

- The Old Testament also foretold that Judah (Genesis 49:10) and Jesse (Isaiah 11:1), who was King David's father, would be part of that bloodline, but those prophecies do not have the word *zera* in the underlying Hebrew text.

Examine, analyze and understand

Our starting point is that the ***He*** in Genesis 3:15 ultimately refers to the promised Messiah and that this prophecy is revealing that the Messiah would be a descendant of Eve -- that he would be the *seed* or *offspring* of Eve.

1. Genesis 3:15 is the first of many Messianic *seed* prophecies in the Old Testament that have the Hebrew word *zera* within the underlying Hebrew text, which is translated here as *offspring*, as in ***her offspring***. Who is the word ***her*** referring to?
    a. Eve, the first woman, created by God.
2. Who is ***her offspring***?
    a. The descendants of Eve, as in the whole of humanity.
3. The ***He*** can refer to ***her offspring*** in a general sense, but who does it point to in the ultimate and literal sense?
    a. It ultimately points to the promised Messiah. We can know this because Genesis 3:15 is God's response to the problem of sin. It is the promised Messiah who is anointed by God to resolve the problem of sin, as explained throughout the Old Testament, especially in Isaiah 53 (Isaiah 52:13-53:12).
4. With Genesis 3:15, Eve is the first recipient of a Messianic *seed* prophecy. Read Genesis 22:18. Who is the second recipient of a Messianic *seed* prophecy? How is this prophecy like the one in Genesis 3:15?
    a. Abraham, who (of course) is a descendant of Eve.
5. Read Genesis 26:4, which is the Old Testament's third Messianic *seed* prophecy. Who is the recipient? How is this prophecy like the earlier *seed* promises?
    a. Isaac, the second-born son of Abraham. (Ishmael was the first-born son).

6. Read Genesis 28:14, which is the fourth *seed* prophecy. Who is the recipient? How is this prophecy like the earlier examples?
    a. Jacob, also known as Israel, the second-born son of Isaac. (Esau was his first-born son).
7. Read 2 Samuel 7:12, which is the fifth *seed* prophecy. Who is being addressed in the broader prophecy of 2 Samuel 7:12-16? How is the promise in this prophecy like the earlier prophecies?
    a. 2 Samuel 7:12-16 addresses David, who was ancient Israel's greatest king. This prophecy foretold that the House of David would produce a line of kings, which it later did, culminating with the Messiah.
    b. Like the earlier prophecies in Genesis, this prophecy in 2 Samuel is promising that a specific person (King David) would be part of the bloodline that would lead to the promised Messiah.
8. The *seed* prophecies in the Old Testament address people in many different generations. What can we learn from this? What does this express about God's plan of salvation?
    a. That God's plan of salvation was carefully carried out over a long period of time, spanning many generations of people.
9. Moses recorded Genesis 3:15 when he wrote the book of Genesis about 3,400 years ago. But when was this prophecy given? And what does the timing say about God's plan of salvation?
    a. That's God plan of salvation began with the dawn of human history, during the time of Adam and Eve.
10. **Bonus Round**: Genesis 3:15 shares connections with many other Messianic prophecies. How might we use this information to educate someone who does not view Genesis 3:15 as being a Messianic prophecy?
    a. That it must be a Messianic prophecy because all other Messianic prophecies build upon the template established by Genesis 3:15. All other Messianic prophecies are speaking of a singular individual who would resolve the problem of sin.

This Bible Study is based on Ray Konig's "301 Prophecies Fulfilled by Jesus". The book is optional but helpful. Free resources, including a summary of all 301 prophecies, are available at zealization.com/301.html