

Lesson 8 **REDEMPTION**

8.1 **The Promise of the Covenant**

8.1.1 The promise **given**

The covenant has two parties, God and man. The LORD is faithful to His covenant, and must therefore execute His punishment upon man's sin, Genesis 2:17. But the LORD, who is full of mercy, grace and kindness, opens and reveals a way of redemption for man in the covenant, Article 17, Belgic Confession. This redemption is freely given to man of grace, by faith in the promise. The promise, called the **mother promise**, appears first in Genesis 3:15, and is repeated throughout Scripture. All the threats and punishments the LORD gives are meant to urge and incite man to seize His promise of redemption.

The promise of Genesis 3:15 is called the **mother promise** since it was first given to Eve, the mother of all living, and because it forms that promise in which all the saving promises of God are comprised. God lifts the **enmity** or breach between Himself and man, and puts the enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. This enmity is also called the **antithesis**.

8.1.2 The promise **maintained**

The antithesis manifests itself throughout the history of God's people. As the line of the promise continues, we see the following:

- a. The line of the serpent making continual attacks on the line of the woman, in order to destroy the promise and the redemption from the world, Revelation 12.
- b. The line of the woman often stumbling in weakness and sin with the promise, for example, Genesis 12, 1 Samuel 11, Ezekiel 16.
- c. The triumph of faith and the promise through the power of the LORD, see for example, Hebrews 11.

We may distinguish the following periods in the history of the covenant of grace in the old dispensation:

- a. Adam to Noah - initial period ending in judgment
- b. Noah to Abraham - re-population of the earth
- c. Patriarchs - the LORD chooses one line
- d. Israel as a nation - i in the wilderness
- ii entry and early life in Canaan
- e. The monarchy - i the “golden age” David, Solomon
- ii division of tribes
- f. Decline and exile - the time of the prophets
- g. Post-exilic period - Ezra, Nehemiah
- h. Inter-testamental period - Maccabees

8.2 The Fulfilment

The end of the Old Testament leaves us with only a remnant of the chosen nation adhering to the promise, 1 Corinthians 10, Romans 9-11. The nation of Israel as such has been rejected in order to make room for the Gentiles. Because of the promise once given to them the Jews should still have a special place in the heart and life of

the Church. In Paul's day they were still called "beloved for the sake of the fathers," Romans 11:28 (NASB). Paul also warns the Church not to boast over the branches, that is, the Jews of his day. Still today, the Church must be active in mission to the Jews and must pray for the conversion of the Jews.

The mother promise finds its fulfilment in Jesus Christ, the Saviour, who came forth from the remnant of God's people. The remnant was preserved throughout Old Testament history only for His sake and for the sake of His coming. In Him, the history of Israel finds its purpose and meaning. He is the Messiah, the long-awaited Saviour. As such, He was prophet, priest, and king. These offices were progressively manifested in Israel's history.

The manner of fulfilment is through the death of Christ on the cross. Here the offspring of the woman triumphs over the offspring of the serpent, Revelation 12. Easter and Pentecost are proofs of this.

Exercises Lesson 8

I. Reference Passages

Memorize: Genesis 3:1-7, 15

Study and Review: Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 6.
Canons of Dort, Chapter I. 1-4; II. 1-4.

II. Review Questions

1. What does the word **enmity** mean, and when did it come about?
2. Who takes the initiative in restoring the covenant after the fall? Show how this happens more often in the history of redemption.
3. Explain how the mother promise is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.
4. How does the antithesis still apply today? How does it apply to the history of the Church?
5. How is the antithesis denied?

III. Extra Questions

1. What is the connection between God's initiative of salvation and His decree?
2. Which prophet most clearly foretells Christ's sufferings? Point out and compare the passages where these prophecies occur.

3. Is there any reason why God chose one nation above all others? See Deuteronomy 7:6f. Does He show partiality in this?
4. Explain how the devil mobilizes all his forces to attack the seed of the woman around the time of the birth of Christ, Revelation 12.