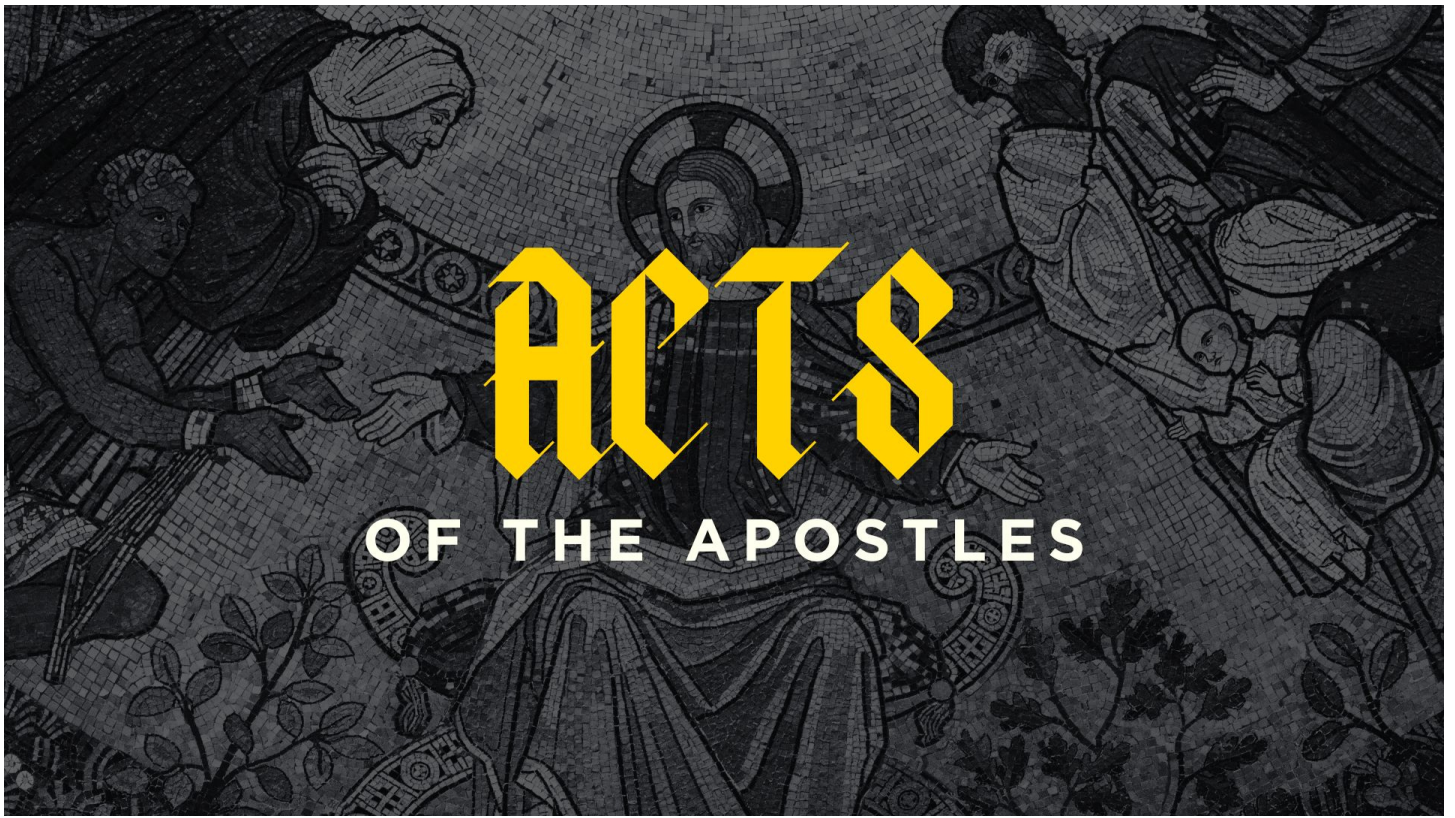




September 14, Acts Series

Acts 28

Ends of the Earth: Snakes

Genesis 3:12–15 (ESV)

12 The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” **13** Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” 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 above all livestock
and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.

15 I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel.”

Why does it have to be snakes?

- In Genesis chapter 3 Satan embodies a snake and tempts Adam and Eve to eat from The tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.
- Satan stands as the enemy of God. He was not always God’s enemy. He was once an angel. He rebelled against God and fell into sin, and God cast him out of his presence.

(Ezekiel 28:12-18)

- In Genesis 3, Adam and Eve believe Satan's words, and they eat, and they fall into the same state of rebellion against God as Satan himself.
- God comes in and He loves his creation too much to just leave them in their rebellion. He makes a way to redeem their state. And it's going to involve a curse.
- Genesis 3:13–15 (ESV) Gives us the curse God gave to the snake:
- God curses the snake in two ways here:

Because you've done this, You'll crawl on your belly and eat dust all the days of your life.

- **Dust is symbolic of death.**
- God will tell Adam that it was *from dust he was formed, and to dust he shall return*. (Genesis 3:19) Crawling in the dust is the punishment here for Satan. It's a constant reminder to him: *Satan, you are going to die*.
- Not only that, but dust is also a powerful picture of defeat. Dust gives the message from God that Satan's kingdom will not stand and will endure endless defeat.
- Isaiah (65:25) says it this way: that *dust will be the serpent's food*.

The second part of the snakes curse is God's promise that one of Eve's descendants will strike the serpents head even though the serpent will strike his heel.

- These lines are a promise to us, and a curse to Satan. And they are the first mention ever in scripture of God's plan to redeem us.

After Genesis 3, we get little hints that God's plan is playing out. Let me show you one.

- David in 1 Samuel 17 arrives on the scene of war. The Philistines send out their champion to fight. His name is Goliath. Who will go for the Israelites, God's people? That's the question.
- We're told Goliath wore bronze armor. The Hebrew word for bronze is very similar to the word for serpent. (*nawckosh vs nawckosheth*)
- For Goliath's armor, a very specific word is used that means scales. Snakes have scales.
- No one volunteers to fight the big snake. Except 16 year old David.
- King Saul tries to put the same scale-like armor on David but David refuses. He goes with the armor of God.
- He picks up five smooth stones and with his shepherd's sling he sinks one of them into Goliath's forehead, and then he cuts off Goliath's head with the sword hanging on Goliath's own belt.
- **What has happened?** *A descendant of Eve has fought a serpent like enemy and won.*
- Then, when Goliath falls, it says *he fell on his face to the ground*. (1 Sam 17:49) Into the dust.
- The best part here, is that David doesn't win by his own strength, or even his weapons, but by *the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel*. (1 Sam 17:45)
- David and Goliath provide an opening act to the main attraction to come.

- There will be one who will come in the name of the Lord. Jesus in Hebrew is *Yeshua*. It's means ***Yahweh Saves***.

What happened to the book of Acts? Aren't we in Acts?

- Yes. In chapter 27, Paul and his companions are caught up in a terrible storm. The ship was lost in the storm, but all the souls on board made it to the shore, Acts 27:41–44.
- And they all become marooned on an island named Malta in the Mediterranean Sea. They are met by some very friendly natives quick to offer aid and comfort.
- Paul is helping gather wood for a fire. And as he lays a bundle of sticks in the flames, a viper comes out of the wood and bites Paul, and clamps onto his hand.
- The word viper here means a very lethal snake.
- He shakes the snake off.
- The natives of the island expect Paul to die. They conclude Paul must be a murderer. And he's going to get what's coming.

You shall bruise his heal.

- I think the take-away for us in this broken snake-infested world, is that the promise of God is that bruising us is the most Satan can do. He cannot kill us in the end.
- So much time passes without anything happening to Paul, that the islanders suddenly decide that Paul is a god.
- For Paul, this has happened now twice.
- Back in chapter 14 Paul heals a man is crippled from birth. People begin shouting that Paul must be a god sent from the heavens.
- Luke doesn't record in Acts 28 how Paul responds to being called a god. But he does in Chapter 14. And there, Paul quotes the crowd and just says, *you have it wrong. I'm a man just like you. But there is a living God in whom I trust.*
- So on Malta its surely similar. *Oh, you've got it wrong. I'm not a god. I'm a man like you. And I'm caught up in this same world you are. But I trust in a living God, whose name is Jesus. And the wonderful news about Jesus, is that while the snake wants to kill us...all he can do is bruise us. Satan's kingdom is now truly only dust, exactly what God said it would be.*

Why does it have to be snakes?

- Because the snake is the enemy in our way. The snake jumping out of the fire at Paul is an accusation that Paul is guilty. But he is not.
- Paul is proven innocent by the name of the living God, Jesus.
- It's what God has been up to since the garden. We sinned. We deserved death. Satan slithers out and points us out. He says we're guilty.
- But Jesus is right there. Resurrected. Proving that our sin is covered, and that we're not guilty. Jesus make us right again with God.
- Satan can eat dust.

God thank you for making a way for us to reclaim what we lost because of sin. Thank you that in your power, you have bound Satan so that he can't do anything to us that's fatal. But Jesus has delivered the death blow to him. We celebrate in these emblems Jesus left for us, the life we now have in him. May your promise to us help us shake off the snakes today. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.