

## The Serpent-Crusher Has Come

The writer of Hebrews says, **“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup>but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.”<sup>1</sup> – Hebrews 1:1-2**

I explained it this way with my children this past week, and I’m going to embellish it a little more: What if you received an email, and it said it was from Jeff Bezos. In the email, it stated that Bezos planned to give you a million dollars. What would you think? You might think it’s spam. But, you investigate the email. You check the address. It seems authentic. Then there are other things that happen that seem to emphasize the reality of the email. Your faith in the authenticity increases. Then, on a certain day, the doorbell rings and it’s Jeff Bezos. With Bezos at your door, how confident are you that you’re going to receive the million dollars?

You see, in Hebrews, we’re told that there were various ways God communicated in the past (prophets, priests, kings, the Temple, sacrifices), but all of those ways pale in comparison to the fact that God the Son came in the flesh. Jesus came to this world! That’s what we are to be reminded of at Christmastime! And now, since our Triune God has spoken through Jesus, how confident can we be that God actually has goodwill and peace toward men?

This morning, with a desire to raise our joy and confidence in God, and to cause us celebrate his message of triumph and salvation, I’m going to take us on a trek through the Scriptures to see the majesty and goodness of God. The title of the sermon today is “The Serpent Crusher Has Come.” My hope is that you would see **that God’s design from the very first sin (and, actually before that) was to rescue humanity and bring a greater glory in a new creation that is free from brokenness and sin.** But the only way this would come, would be through One to come who would crush the serpent that slyly entered the Garden of Eden. This sermon isn’t going to be a three-point sermon. It’s more-so a big picture story of anticipation for God’s promised One to come and rescue the world.

So, let’s start our journey of tracing God’s promise for a Savior in Genesis. We read: **“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup>The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”<sup>2</sup>– Genesis 1:1-2**

Void, chaos, waters, darkness. Then God spoke the worlds into existence by the word of his power. The Father, through the Son and by the power of the Spirit, formed everything. All things seen and unseen were created by the Lord – this Triune God. After each day of creation,

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<sup>1</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Heb 1:1–2.

<sup>2</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ge 1:1–2.

God looked at his perfection and said, "This is good." The way the days of creation are written, we actually discover that the Garden represented a Temple for worshipping God, and God created a beautiful temple in which his creation could enjoy him and he could shed the light of his glory to it. Then, on the pinnacle day, God writes of a special creation, a creation that is most like God. In the image of God, our Triune Ruler and Creator, made man and woman.

As we move into this story, we see the heights of human privilege and the greatness of God's love. God gave things that were pleasant to look at, good to eat, and he gave creation a glorious life. All of this is in the greater context of man's supreme privilege to be able to walk with God and to obey the Creator – in his presence. We're then told of a covenant God makes with Adam: **"And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, <sup>17</sup> but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."**<sup>3</sup>– Genesis 2:16-17 The honor was that Adam could eat from *any* of the pleasant trees in front of him. Only *one* could he not eat of. Only one. This one tree was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. You see, humans were not meant to have to decipher between good and evil. When evil comes in, when God's glory is thrust to the side, everything in us tears apart. With this statement in Genesis, we see that God allowed man to be tested: Will he trust God and savor his privileged status with the Lord or will he defy the Creator?

After God makes Adam and then creates Eve, and gives them dominion and glory, the serpent enters. Satan deceptively speaks to Eve, and we are led to believe that Adam is there the whole time during the temptation. After all, she gives the fruit to the man who was with her. As the leader and representative and the one to whom God made a covenant, why isn't Adam protecting Eve and even himself? More importantly, in this creation Temple, why doesn't Adam care for God's glory and rid the Temple of sin? Well, at least in part we see that Eve (and probably Adam, too) started to believe the most heinous lie that all humans to this day believe: God is keeping me from glory.

Instead of focusing on the tremendous generosity of God in creating them and giving them a beautiful creation and even each other, they decided to believe that they were missing out by trusting God. They both eat and immediately the knowledge between good and evil enters, and instead of rising to the status of deity, the image of God is torn in them. Something's wrong. They now flee – everything is filled with fear. Hope dies. And they remember God's promise: they should surely die.

God shows up to the garden, and Adam and Eve cover themselves, God confronts them, and they try to blame shift. Right then, in that moment, you would think we'd hear God say, "I told you that you would die and now you must die." But instead of taking their lives, he does something different. He shows mercy. He gives them what they don't deserve.

Oh yes, they're punished. And let's not miss the punishment because God is holy and perfect and sin must be punished. Life is shortened, pain increases. The entire created realm is shattered. We experience the reverberations of Adam's sin to this day. God removes them from the beautiful garden that they were intended to rule in. But in the midst of their traitorous

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<sup>3</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ge 2:16–17.

actions of seeking to “de-God” God, God doesn’t give them the full extent of judgment. Somehow, God is just and right in extending mercy, and before he takes them out of the garden, God hints at the plan he’s had before time began. He says to Satan, **“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.”**<sup>4</sup> – Genesis 3:15

I’m not sure if Adam or Eve understood exactly what was being said here, but clearly God is speaking of a child that is going to crush that wicked tempter, the Serpent. That serpent who revels in dividing man from God is going to be destroyed. Absolute justice will be served, and sin will be removed *someday*. Until that point, there will be the knowledge of good and evil. There will be imperfection. There will be brokenness. But *someday*, the crusher of Satan’s head will come and restore all things.

The story of Genesis goes on and we read about Adam and Eve giving birth to sons. As we read, we ought to wonder, “Is Cain the one? Maybe it’s Abel?” But we quickly come to a story of death. The ramifications of sin were so pervasive that their offspring murdered the other. Again, God’s justice and mercy come together. God punishes, but he doesn’t take Cain’s life. Already we’re left wondering how the Creator King can be just in giving mercy to sinners. The story unfolds in Genesis, and we’re even told before and after Noah’s flood that the intent and imaginations of man’s heart is evil continually from his youth (Gen. 6:5-6; 8:21). We’re left to wonder, “How can God not wipe away all sinners? Or, maybe a more appropriate question is, “Why doesn’t the serpent-crusher come now?” Yet, even as we have this question, do you remember the sign of God in the sky after the Flood? Instead of promising to punish the world, we’re told that when it rains, there will be a bow placed in the sky. Don’t miss this importance. The bow in the sky isn’t simply a “rainbow.” This bow is the idea of a war-bow. And do you notice what direction the war-bow is facing when (or after) it rains? It’s facing upward. Instead of the war-bow facing humans. The war-bow is directed to the heart of heaven.

What must this mean? Is the serpent-crusher going to be punished?

We continue to move through Genesis and God makes a special covenant with Abram in Genesis 17:7-8: **And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.**<sup>8</sup> **And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.**<sup>5</sup>– Genesis 17:7-8 This is a promise of God that is not contingent on Abram – who is now called Abraham. This promise is two-fold. It’s a promise that God will be with the offspring of Abraham and it’s also a type of a greater restoration of Eden. We see that we humans were made for a Person and a Place. We were made for God and we were made for dwelling with him.

God says that this promise will be fulfilled to Abraham’s seed. The seed of the woman will be the seed of Abraham. The Serpent Crusher will come from this lineage. Genesis continues the story. We read of Isaac. Then we read of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel. Then we are

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<sup>4</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ge 3:15.

<sup>5</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ge 17:7–8.

told that through one of Israel's sons, Judah, that a great King will come. Genesis 49:10 says, **"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples."**<sup>6</sup> – Genesis 49:10 God hasn't forgotten his promise. The Serpent Crusher will come from Judah, and he will Rule perfectly, unlike Adam and his race.

Eventually the people of Israel are enslaved by the Egyptians. The Israelites have grown in numbers, but they groan under the weight of this fallen land. God, in mercy, hears their cries and in his perfect timing answers them. He brings forth a man named Moses. Moses doesn't seem to be the serpent-crusher. He was raised in the Pharaoh's house. Yet finally, God speaks to Moses so seriously that Moses must follow the Lord. Moses mediates for God to the Pharaoh, and God punishes Egypt because Pharaoh refuses to let God's people go. All the while, God protects his own people from the intensity of the plagues. The final plague was the worst. But God called his people to do something in order for them to be rescued from it. They needed to take the blood of a lamb and put it on their door. When the blood was seen, that death would be the representative so that eldest child would not die.

Don't miss this important truth. This speaks to the fact that every human being – even the Israelites deserved to die. But God in mercy has spared the Israelites and told them of how they could be rescued from death themselves – a representative death of a lamb. At this time when God passed over these houses in mercy, Pharaoh finally relented. Fast forward in time and Moses continues to lead the people by God's strength, but Moses also mediates for the people. They know their unworthiness to go up to Mt. Sinai. Moses goes for them and Moses returns with God's words to them. Moses teaches the people God's Law. He guides the people to a new land. Moses mediates.

Is Moses the serpent-crusher? No. No land is acquired under Moses. The people remain disobedient and they often believe the serpent's lies and Moses himself acts in haste and sins against the Lord in his mediatorial role. But there's hope. God is going to keep his promise. God says in Deuteronomy 18:18-19, **"<sup>18</sup> I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. <sup>19</sup> And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him."** – Genesis 18:18-19<sup>7</sup> This prophet is greater than Moses. He's one who will speak everything God speaks, and God will require of *everyone* to do what he says. There's a greater mediator, a greater prophet.

Until that great prophet's time, God worked through Moses to bring about laws and even to bring about a priestly system for the people. God made another covenant to people through Moses. God says to Moses to take this message to the people of Israel: **". . .if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; <sup>6</sup> and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."** – Exodus 19:5-6<sup>8</sup> Notice this covenant. If they live righteously, then they will be God's set apart people. Leviticus 18:5 reiterates this, when God says, **"<sup>5</sup> Keep My statutes and**

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<sup>6</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ge 49:10.

<sup>7</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Dt 18:18–19.

<sup>8</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ex 19:5–6.

ordinances; a person will live if he does them.”<sup>9</sup> It’s almost as if God is saying to them, “If you can crush the serpent, then you will have eternal life.” This is the nature of God’s Law. The Law says “do.” But the Law can’t provide help or aid. The absolutely mind-boggling response of the Israelite people is that they actually agree to the covenant and say to the Lord that they will do all that he commands, but we know what happens, don’t we? The people don’t obey. The people don’t seek the Lord. Quickly the Israelites depart from God. They don’t want Moses. They want a new mediator. God threatens punishment. Moses mediates. God holds back. In mercy, God keeps the people – not because they’re so great, but God had a plan before time began. He enacted the plan. He made a promise to Abraham, to Noah, to Moses. The seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, the seed of Judah, the Greater Moses, must crush the serpent and bring peace and restoration.

Until that time, God brings about a temple system to represent forgiveness. But more death takes place with animals to speak to the need that humans need a representative to give their lives for them. While in some ways a very effective picture, the reality is that the blood of bulls and goats can’t save. The temple system is a pointer to the need for serpent-crusher, the one who will be pierced by the war-bow, even though he will also be the One who will actually keep the covenant of Moses and do all God commands.

But where is he? When will he come? Time marches on. God continues to be merciful and gracious with Israel. Eventually, as a result of Israel’s sin, God institutes a king for his people. But we could wonder, is he the King from Judah that is going to reign forever? No. Saul’s heart was far from the Lord. He couldn’t rescue the people. He himself needed rescue. He wouldn’t fear the Lord and he clearly is not the Prophet that all must listen to.

Then God calls David – a little boy, the youngest in the family, unimpressive by looks, but a man who would depend on the Lord. Could it be that David is the one? The nation grows and increases under David’s reign. Before David becomes king, while still a young boy, he defeats the great enemy, Goliath. Once King, the people, in general, love David. They’re committed to this man. God is glorified through this great worshipper of the Lord. But then we read of David’s great failures as well. He too believes lies of the serpent, following in Adam’s footsteps. Even this wonderful King cannot rescue Israel. So, the temple system is still in place, the King fails, prophets still await a greater prophet. But, while David is not *the* scepter from Judah, David prophecies of one to come. God had given David a covenant in 1 Chronicles 17: **“When your days are fulfilled to walk with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom.”**<sup>10</sup> . . . **I will confirm him in my house and in my kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever.”**<sup>11</sup> – 1 Chronicles 17: 11, 14 The seed of Eve is the seed of Abraham is the seed of Judah is the seed of David. He will be a greater Adam, the fulfillment of Israel, the Ruler over all rulers.

As we continue through Israel’s history from this point, the nation deteriorates after Solomon. There was a type of greatness, but then there’s failure after failure. There’s captivity as a result

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<sup>9</sup> *The Holy Bible: Holman Christian Standard Version*. (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2009), Le 18:5.

<sup>10</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Ch 17:11.

<sup>11</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Ch 17:14.

of their sin, and God keeps his covenant to actually punish Israel. Yet, God has this greater promise to Abraham. So, in the midst of punishment, God's prophets still speak.

And these prophets continue to speak of a greater One to come. Isaiah talks about One who will be "the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." And prophets like Jeremiah still hold out hope for a day that there will be a people with a new heart and God will be their God. No longer running in shame like Adam and Eve, but running to the Lord. There's still hope in the midst of darkness. But then we get to the final book of the Old Testament Scriptures, Malachi. Immense confrontation to Israel for all their sinfulness, and we hear this: **"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. <sup>6</sup> And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction."** <sup>12</sup> – **Malachi 4:5-6** After these words come silence. For 400 years, the nation of Israel has no prophet. The priestly system continues, but their kingdom has failed. They're finally a part of Roman conquest, and by the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, there are many who have failed to grasp the importance of Messiah. They miss land. They want to be freed from oppression, but the reality of their sinfulness is obscured. What we find during these years of silence seem far from visions of Eden restored. Is God dwelling with them? Is he even *their* God? Where is the serpent-crusher? What we see is brokenness and darkness. Does God care?

Now, let me ask you a question: Do you remember what the world was like before he formed it? Darkness and chaos, yet he brought order. And so it was after these 400 years of silence, ". . . **But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law. . .**"<sup>13</sup>– **Galatians 4:4-5** Our Triune God is at work in bringing about a new creation; so, at the will of the Father, the Spirit hovers over the waters of Mary's womb, and then God the Son is in human flesh in the womb of Mary. This virgin conception was prophesied by Isaiah and now we see right away that this baby is special.

Then, just as in the creation of the world, God started with "Let there be light." So with this new creation, the apostle John records it this way: **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . In him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."** – **John 1:1, 3-4** <sup>14</sup> So, the Spirit hovers over and the Son is the Light of the world. But this new creation is far grander than the previous one. This is the promised One who was planned from before time began. This is the One in whom all the promises, types, figures, people of the Old Testament find their fulfillment. And Matthew says that this one baby, Jesus, is Emmanuel. Not merely a person, but literally God with us in human flesh!

As Jesus becomes an adult, he begins ministering to people, forgives people of sins, confronting sinfulness, caring for the needy, calling people to turn from their sinfulness to God, but if we know the Old Testament story well enough, we also know there's still a war-bow that must pierce the Serpent Crusher. From the temple sacrifices, we know that we need a once-for-all

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<sup>12</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Mal 4:5–6.

<sup>13</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ga 4:4–5.

<sup>14</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Jn 1:1, 3-4.

sacrifice that actually will bring forgiveness in our place. We know we need a King who can give us new hearts that desire to worship God.

So, how does the Serpent Crusher crush the serpent? The prophet Isaiah states it like this, “It was the will of the Lord to crush him.” How can he crush the serpent by being crushed?! It’s a glorious mystery. The Bible tells us that Jesus took the punishment for sins that he never committed. He, the Greater Adam, became the representative for a new people. Anyone who trusts Jesus has Jesus as their representative – not Adam any longer. Therefore, Jesus obeyed the Law’s demands and then received the Law’s curses. Why? Because our Triune God had a plan all along. In Jesus fulfilling all righteousness, he reveals the necessity of God’s Law. In taking the war-bow that sinners deserved, he satisfies the justice of God. Which means, that if you turn to God for forgiveness of sins on the basis of Jesus, you are completely forgiven!

But there’s more. Even though we humans have failed, we learn that through Jesus’ obedience we get the blessings of his obedience. Remember, to those who obeyed, God said that they would be a holy nation? Now listen to what Peter says of all those who trust Jesus: **But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.** <sup>15</sup> – **1 Peter 2:9-10** We have not earned this! Jesus has given this to us. And because Jesus has come, the Scriptures tell us he is coming again. When he returns, he will bring greater than Eden! There will be a New Heaven and a New Earth with perfect justice and grace. And, we will worship God and be in fellowship with others for all eternity.

If you’re not a Christian, but you have more questions about what it means to trust or follow Jesus, please talk to me. I hope and pray you’d trust Jesus. But let me add that if you are a Christian, **rejoice in the reality today that the Serpent Crusher has come! And now, for all here who have trusted Jesus, we’re even told in Romans 16 that because of him, we can now crush the serpent. So, Christians, rejoice! God keeps his promises. Rejoice! Emmanuel has come. God’s plan before time began came about one night in Bethlehem when a baby entered this world. Praise the Lord that the Serpent Crusher has come.**

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<sup>15</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Pe 2:9–10.