

The Serpent Crusher

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[0 : 00] So we've got a Bible. I'm going to make today's search for the Bible passage super, super easy.

You only have to go three chapters in, so Genesis chapter 3 is where we're going to be. That's the first book of the Bible, third chapter, Genesis chapter 3. And we're going to read from verse 1 to verse 15.

Very well-known words, but listen to God's word. Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made.

He said to the woman, did God really say you must not eat from any tree in the garden? The woman said to the serpent, we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say you must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it or you will die.

You will not certainly die, the serpent said to the woman, for God knows that when you eat from it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

[1 : 21] When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it.

She also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked, so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

But the Lord God called to the man, where are you? And he answered, I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid. And he said, who told you you were naked?

Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from? The man said, the woman you put here with me, she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it. Then the Lord God said to the woman, what is this you have done?

[2 : 23] And the woman said, the serpent deceived me, and I ate. So the Lord God said to the serpent, because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals.

You will crawl on your belly, and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers.

He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel. This is the word of the Lord. Let's pray.

Gracious God, will you speak to us this morning?

Will you be kind and merciful to open our ears, and more than that, to open our hearts to receive your word. Your word which is truth. Your word which feeds us with food that we can get nowhere else.

Let your spirit be present and show us, Jesus, that we might be changed by what we see. We ask this for Christ's sake and his glory. Amen. So I'll start with a question this morning, and you don't have to answer out loud.

[3 : 30] You can just think about it as you're sitting there. But the question is this. Where does the story of Jesus start in the Bible? Where does the story of Jesus start in the Bible?

Now, that's an important question. Because based on how you answer that question will greatly influence how you read all of the Bible.

How you think the whole of Scripture fits together. So does the story of Jesus start with the Nativity scene? Mary and Joseph and the Magi and the angels and the shepherds.

Is that where the story starts? That's normally where we turn our attention this time of year. Today, like Graham said, is the first Sunday of Advent. And so for this Advent series, I want to make the

case that the story of Jesus actually starts much, much, much earlier than the Nativity accounts that you find in the Gospels.

And Advent, this season in the calendar, actually helps us to do that very thing. Because often people think that Advent and Christmas are basically the same thing. That's probably because during the season we do all sorts of Christmassy things, right?

[4 : 46] So we have Christmas office parties. We put up trees. We play Boney M. We eat mince pies. We do this time of year. But Advent is actually the season that precedes Christmas in the church calendar.

The traditional church calendar. And the primary themes, if you're looking for like sort of theological themes that are associated with the season of Advent, the primary themes that are associated with Advent are themes of longing, waiting, waiting patiently, preparing for the coming of Christ.

Advent is often a season to reflect on the brokenness of this world. It's quite a somber season in some ways. The misery that sinners created, the injustice, the lack of peace, the suffering.

And then realizing how desperately we actually need a Messiah to come. I think the song, out of all the songs that we sing during this time of year, the song that captures the season of Advent the best is, O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

That first stands, O Come, O Come, Emmanuel. And ransom captive Israel that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.

[5 : 58] So there's a sense that we are in exile. You and me, we are in exile. We're not in our true home. We're longing to be ransomed. We're longing for the Son of God to appear. That was the longing leading up to the first Christmas, the birth of Christ.

And it's the longing that we all carry, even as Christians now, that we carry in ourselves as we wait for Jesus Christ to return again. Now that longing, as you even see from that song I just mentioned there, that longing has its roots in the Old Testament.

So there are images and there are stories in the Old Testament that show us, they show us a bunch of things. They show us what's wrong with us. They show us what's wrong with this world. They show us what kind of Messiah we need to come and put everything right.

And so if you want to understand Jesus this Christmas, what you've got to do is you've got to go all the way back. You've got to go back to your Old Testaments, and you've almost got to enter into that experience of longing. So for the next four weeks, we're going to look at four images of Christ from the Old Testament that speak to that longing.

And the first image we're going to consider this morning is the image of Christ as the serpent crusher. Christ is the serpent crusher. Now, just a kind of a sidebar note here as we do this whole series, that is, as we go back into the Old Testament and we look at these images of Christ, I don't want you to think that we are just sitting here in the future sort of retrospectively reading Jesus back into texts that were obviously written before he was even on the planet.

[7 : 32] This is not us imposing a framework on the Bible. This is what the Bible actually says about itself. This is what Jesus says about himself. So there's a famous scene in the Gospel of Luke, the end of Luke, Luke 24, where Jesus is walking with two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

And they don't quite recognize him at first, and then he starts telling them about the Bible. He does a Bible study with them, and he says this. He says, How foolish you are and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. Beginning with Moses and the prophets. That's like a shorthand way of saying the Old Testament. So Jesus does a whole Old Testament Bible study with his two disciples to try and say, Look guys, it's me.

I am the risen Messiah that the Old Testament speaks about. The Old Testament is about me, is what he's saying. And so when we go there, when we read there, we should find him.

[8 : 40] When we go looking for him, we should find him there. The late great Old Testament scholar Alec Mottier, he put it this way. He said, The Old Testament is Jesus predicted. The Gospels are Jesus revealed.

Acts is Jesus preached. The epistles Jesus explained. And Revelation Jesus expected. Now as you've just seen this morning, you actually don't have to read very, very far in the Old Testament before you find him.

He's there pretty clearly in Genesis chapter 3, the third chapter. In fact, there's a sense which is there even earlier. But in terms of explicit references, he's right there, Genesis chapter 3. So look at verse 15. God talking to the serpent.

He says, He will crush your head and you will strike his heel. Some figure in history, the seed of the woman, is going to kill the serpent or Satan.

But in the process, take a significant blow himself. Now who does that sound like, class? This is where you can give the Sunday school answer, right? Jesus. A lot of scholars have called this the proto-Evangelion, the first gospel, the original gospel.

[9 : 53] This is an unavoidable reference to the Messiah. In a truly, truly ancient story written down centuries before Christ, probably passed around in oral form even longer before that.

Now I look at this and I go, well hang on, is this us just being clever here with the text? So when I first really spent some time looking at this text, and I've taught this passage many times, but when I first really spent some time looking at this, I puzzled over this.

I thought, is this really about Jesus? Or are we actually importing something into the text? Now one of the things that bothered me was that word offspring, or literally seed in the original Hebrew there. So many places in the Old Testament, the word is plural, as in multiple offspring, who will come from some original descendant like the woman. But in the next part of the sentence, you'll see that the modern English translators have chosen the pronoun he, singular.

And so I'm thinking, look, is this just modern Christian interpreters reading our Christian theology back into the text when it's not really there? Then I discovered something very, very interesting.

[11 : 04] About 300 years before Jesus was born, at a time when Hellenistic Greek culture dominated the Eastern Mediterranean, Ptolemy II, the Greek king of Egypt, the Greeks kind of ruled Egypt at that point, and they ruled what is now Israel, they ruled that whole area.

But Ptolemy called a bunch of Hebrew scholars together, and he said, look, I want you to create a Greek translation of the Torah, the first five books of the Bible, for his famous library that's in Alexandria.

I'm sure you've all heard of the famous library in Alexandria. Now here comes the interesting part. When those Hebrew scholars came to translate chapter 3, verse 15, 300 years before Jesus, remember, they also put the pronoun he in the singular.

They saw the woman's seed there as referring to a specific individual in history. So this is not an idea that kind of Christians have imported back into the text.

It was already there long, long before Christ, and today we actually have a whole lot of technical, modern grammatical studies that have cemented that translation that you have in your English Bibles. The original author had a he, singular, in mind when he wrote that verse.

[12 : 27] Now that makes this verse as clear as daylight, a reference to our saving Messiah, Jesus Christ.

So let's try to understand this reference together. Two things. I know there was a long introduction, but the points will be shorter. Two things I want you to see. The crushed head and the struck heel. The crushed head and the struck heel.

The crushed head is the first one. One thing Genesis 3 most obviously does, and if you know the rest of the Bible, you probably understand this, but the one thing Genesis 3 obviously does is it sets up the drama of the entire Bible.

It puts forward the problem that the rest of the Bible then is gonna focus on trying to solve, and that is the problem of sin. So Genesis 3 is the origin story of sin.

It's the origin story of our world and why it is like it is. Why we have things to lament in the first place about the brokenness in this world. Have a look at verse 7.

[13 : 26] Sorry, verse 1. The first seven verses. So verse 1, The serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, Did God really say you must not eat from any tree in the garden?

And the woman said to the serpent, We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say you must not eat from the tree that is in the middle of the garden.

You must not touch it, or you will die. You will not certainly die, the serpent said to the woman, for God knows that when you eat from it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, notice that, and he ate it.

Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they realized they were naked, so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. God creates a good world. If you read the first two chapters of Genesis, you see God creates a good world.

[14 : 29] He puts Adam and Eve in this good world, this beautiful world, but Adam and Eve, deceived by the serpent, sin. They break God's beautiful world. God actually only gives them one commandment.

He says, Do what you want. This is a beautiful place. Here's all these trees, this wonderful place where you can run up, you can frolic naked in the trees and eat fruit. One thing you can't do, and that is, you cannot eat from the tree in the middle of the garden.

Satan comes and he says, that's not completely true, is it? That's not completely true. In fact, the chief sin, he says, is, don't you want to be like God?

God's holding out on you. Don't you want to be like Him? Their chief sin was wanting to be like God. And as a result, they take the fruit, they eat, they plunge the entire human race into a state of sinfulness.

Now, Christians have taught for thousands of years that we as human beings are born into sin. So the original sin of Adam has some sort of hereditary effect upon every single one of us.

[15 : 38] We're not born morally neutral and then begin to sin. We sin, we participate in acts of disobedience to God because we're born into a state of sinfulness from day one as a result of our ancestors' original trespass.

That's what we call the doctrine of original sin. So if you go to the Westminster Confession of Faith and you try and understand it there, it says it this way. It says, this is in chapter six, By this sin, Adam and Eve fell from their original righteousness and communion with God and so became dead in sin and wholly defiled in all the parts and faculties of soul and body.

Since they were the root of all mankind, the guilt of the sin was imputed to and the same death in sin and corrupted nature were conveyed to or their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation.

From this original corruption by which we are utterly disinclined, disabled and antagonistic to all that is good and wholly inclined to all that is evil, all actual transgressions proceed.

So it's simply saying, we're not sinners because we sin. We sin because we're sinners. You see the difference between those two things? We sin because we're sinners through the inherited sin nature that we get from Adam.

[16 : 59] Now I know that in churches today in a place like the city center of Cape Town when we preach on a subject like this, a whole lot of people, if you're new to the Christian faith or if you have never really wrestled with this subject or maybe if you have thought about it, you start to have some red flags going off in your mind at this point and you're going like, I don't know how I feel about that.

There's a dominant school of thought in our secular culture that the idea of original sin is harmful and in conflict with human flourishing and particularly with mental well-being, like having a good sense of yourself.

Like you can't have this doctrine of original sin and then have like self-esteem basically. If you keep telling people that they're sinners, that their identity is one born in sin, what you're doing is you're just setting people up for untold amounts of shame and guilt and anxiety that is not going to help them become mentally and psychologically healthy people.

Sin is such a harmful, primitive idea. Like we need to get rid of that. Instead, what we tend to do actually in our present culture is we tend to try and account for human bad behavior primarily through environment.

It's our context. It's our history. Even our genetics that determines the way we behave. Why we behave the way we do.

[18 : 19] Why we might have negative feelings and emotions. Why we might hurt each other. And certainly I want to say there's plenty of social science evidence to demonstrate that our environment does affect our lives in significant ways.

But, and here's the very big problem, if we only have the environment to account for the widespread moral deficiency in human beings, then I would want to say that we're actually greatly, greatly

disempowered.

Incredibly disempowered. Because let's be honest, there's not much you can do about your genome, is there? There's not a whole lot you can do about that. There's not much you can do about where you grew up, what your family was like, how tall or short you are, how athletic or non-athletic you are, how good looking or not good looking you are.

You can't do much about your circumstances that have happened to you, can you? And so if you stop short of original sin and if you just say, look, the world is the way it is because of environment, then that leaves us in a desperately disempowered place.

A hopeless place, really. Victims. Victims of a cruel world. But if our bad behavior and the kind of connected misery that comes from that, if that is about more than just our circumstances, well then it means that something can be done about how we respond maybe to those circumstances.

[19 : 46] So the doctrine of original sin says that our moral corruption as human beings can't just be attributed to our environment. You can't just blame your upbringing. It goes deeper than that.

It goes to the heart of who we actually are as people. And friends, as difficult as the doctrine might sound, that is actually strangely empowering.

Because once you know that, you can now begin to resist. You can push back. You can't do that if it's just environment. You can just throw your hands up and say I'm a victim.

But with original sin now, you can fight back. The reality is that environment, in any honest look environment, just doesn't account for all the human corruption and evil that we experience in this world.

Wars, hatred, discord, racism, all those sorts of evils, still break out in educated, sophisticated, and affluent societies. Societies that, on the surface, appear to have the sort of environments around them that would mitigate that sort of immoral behavior.

[20 : 55] C.E.M. Jode was one of the foremost philosophers in Britain at the beginning of the last century. And he was an atheist for most of his life, but he was an atheist committed to the idea that human bad behavior was not hardwired and that it was simply a matter of a lack of education and a lack of material prosperity.

Forget those two things. If you get good education and you get material prosperity, then we will behave better as human beings. Later in his life, he actually converted to Christianity through the influence of C.S. Lewis.

and he wrote a book called *The Recovery of Belief*, which was published a year before he died. In it he said this. He said, It is because we rejected the doctrine of original sin that we on the left were always being disillusioned by the behavior of both the people and the nations and politicians and by the recurrent fact of war.

He said, We put all our bets on environment and we kept getting bad results. And we're going, We don't understand.

We're creating the right environment. We're giving education. We're giving material prosperity and we're still having world wars. What is going on? Friends, without the doctrine of original sin, this world doesn't make much sense.

[22 : 13] It's a confusing, very brutal place. And so if you sit here this morning and you say, Well, I am truly concerned about brokenness, about the lack of human flourishing in our world, about corruption in individuals, in systems, about justice, if we truly want to see a better humanity, if we truly want hope, then I think we need to be honest about the root of it all.

We shouldn't shun original sin as some sort of primitive idea. We'd rather see it actually as a far, far more comprehensive explanation that is more comprehensive than anything else our kind of best moral philosophers have given us in the past.

Now, here's the good thing. As soon as the Bible introduces us to this horrible reality about the human condition, it straight away opens the door to hope.

Straight away. Sin enters the world through the deceit of the serpent and the minute it's embraced by Adam and Eve, that deceit sort of starts to pulsate through them like blood through veins. but God in His great mercy will not let us rot away in that deceit. He comes into the garden and He seeks out Adam and Eve.

[23 : 29] In the midst of their crushing shame, they're covering themselves from God, from each other. The first thing He does is He curses the serpent.

He curses the serpent. Verse 14, So the Lord God said to the serpent, because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals. You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life and I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers.

He will crush your head. God appoints an individual who will crush a serpent's head.

Now the crushing of the head there is undoubtedly a death. Death blow. That's what he's meaning there. It's not a gentle heel on the head. It's a death blow. It's a promise right there at the very, very beginning of the Bible that sin will be dealt with decisively.

It will be killed. Sin will be killed. Before humanity even gets a chance to kind of go out of the garden into the big, scary, brutal world they're going to face, God slips in this promise right at the very beginning of that brutal world coming to an end.

[24 : 44] This is going to end. You've messed up right now but this is going to end. There are a lot of negative things that come with social media.

We could do seminars on that subject alone and there's a ton of literature out there on the internet around about that but I think perhaps one of the good things that has come through the proliferation of social media is that ordinary people in general have become more and more aware that our society and our world is deeply unequal and unjust in history and in the present day.

Before social media it was easy to cocoon yourself off from what was going on around you especially if you were more affluent it was easier to block yourself off.

Traditional media just didn't give you information at the speed and at the volume that social media now gives you information I mean something happens overseas it's on your feed straight away.

You don't have to wait to buy the Sunday Times to have your Sunday lunch and read the Sunday Times like my parents used to do once a week. It's like it's right there in your face now with video of what's happening.

[26 : 07] Now with disinformation and AI and all that crazy stuff it's becoming harder and harder I think today to assess the content you're consuming and how truthful the content is but I think in kind of the earlier years of social media so think like I know some of you don't know what this is but think back to like from MySpace anybody know what MySpace is?

Don't lie Sean you know what MySpace is. From MySpace up till say maybe the mid 2010s so like the earlier years of social media if you think back to that period I think one of the effects that that sort of period of getting now onto this mass consumed information had and having it like close to us was that a lot of people were going wow the world's actually more messed up than I thought.

There's a lot of injustice out there. There's a lot of corruption. There are a lot of people suffering.

And so I think you see this growing burden particularly amongst younger people to be involved in justice somehow.

And I think that's a praiseworthy impulse. I'm not always convinced about the directions that it goes sometimes and the causes that are championed in the name of justice but the impulse to want the world to be more just to be more compassionate to be more fair that is a praiseworthy thing no matter where you kind of are on the political spectrum.

And so I want to ask you this as you look at your world and you think about that would that impulse not be so much better empowered driven directed motivated if many many more people were confident in their heart of hearts that injustice has its root ultimately in human sin in our alienation from the God who created us and that ultimately that God will one day crush injustice and sin once and for all.

[28 : 08] If in your head and in your heart you know that you know those things to be true you believe those things to be true you're convinced that God is going to undo injustice he's going to repair brokenness he's going to vanquish sin he's going to wipe away tears he's going to restore the creation then surely there can be no greater motivation for living a just life right now.

You're living for what's already coming you're living into true reality today people say well look inside of yourself and find out who you really are and I want to say that's not where you want to be looking if the Bible is correct because the Bible is going to show you something you don't want to see rather live for who God is going to make you and what God is going to make this world the crushing of the serpent's head is the the proto-euangelion the good news the original good news it's good news for you it's good news for me it's good news for our world God will not leave us in our despair and in our sin he will crush the serpent now secondly the struck heel look how the curse that's placed on the serpent continues in verse 50 I will put enmity between you and the woman and

between your offspring and hers and he will crush your head and in the part we didn't read and you will strike his heel the serpent will strike the heel of the serpent crusher now if that was any other animal you'd be like oh that's not so bad you crush his head you get a little nip on the ankle like well I'll take that that's not so bad but if it's a venomous snake it's a different story isn't it then having your heel struck is deadly Jesus Christ our serpent crusher crushed Satan's head but how did he do it well this is how Mark's gospel said he did it listen to this they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha which means the place of the skull then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh but he did not take it and they crucified him dividing up his clothes they cast lots to see what each would get they crucified two rebels with him one on his right one on his left those who passed by hurled insults at him shaking their heads and saying so you are going to destroy the temple and build it up in three days come down from the cross and save yourself in the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves he saved others they said but he can't save himself let this messiah this king of israel come down now from the cross that we may see and believe those crucified with him also heaped insults on him at noon darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon and at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice which means my God my God why have you forsaken me when some of those standing near heard this they said listen he's calling Elijah someone ran filled a sponge with wine vinegar put it on a staff and offered it to Jesus to drink now leave him alone let's see if Elijah comes to take him down he said with a loud cry Jesus breathed his last that's how he did it that is how he crushed the serpent's head Jesus gave up his life dying on the cross and through that he crushed Satan's head he brought the death blow upon sin and death in that moment the action demanded his own life his heel was struck in that moment by the venomous serpent and you might say well why why did it demand his life why does his heel need to be struck and the answer to that question is deep love and deep justice deep love and deep justice you see crushing the serpent's head is good news it is the original good news but it is only good news if you are on the side of righteousness and justice and not on the side of sin if you're on the side of sin well then the crushing of the serpent's head is actually terrifying news for you if God is going to deal totally decisively absolutely decisively and ruthlessly with sin and take it out away from this planet so that there will really be no more tears like Revelation says if God is going to deal ruthlessly with sin well then he has to deal decisively and ruthlessly with you and me we are sinners the deceit of the serpent passed through to Adam and Eve passed on to you and me you'll notice back in

Genesis chapter 3 verse 15 it talks not just about the one seed of the woman it also talks about the seed of the serpent plural there in that sense and you say well who is that who are these offspring of the serpent and I would say to you the offspring of the serpent are all who continually ask that question did God really say did God really say that's the original sin the seed of the serpent are all those who keep asking the question did God really say they're the ones who continue to delude themselves that they can actually be like God it's you it's me because we actually ask that question all the time and if you say well I'm not sure I believe you Stephen well think about something simple like worry think about worry we all worry right we worry why are you fearful in your life right now why are you worried about your life right now Jesus says pretty explicitly in the Bible in the Sermon on the Mount don't worry about your life what you will eat or drink or about your body what you will wear and then he points to

God's sovereign control and care over this whole world that God has got this whole world in his hand down to the smallest detail he knows the number of hairs on your head for some of you that's easier than for others but he knows the number of hairs on your head he knows when a little bird falls out of the sky he knows everything he's got this whole world in his head Jesus says don't worry it's in the Bible but we worry why do we worry we worry I think because almost subconsciously we think that God is not going to work out our lives in the way that we actually want him to work it out we worry that God in his sovereign all powerful all good character is not going to make our lives go the way that we think our lives should go we worry that he might not have what we perceive to be our best interests at heart now what are you doing when you do that even if it's like a subconscious reaction gut reaction what are you doing when you do that you are asking the question did God really say did God really say did God really say that he will clothe us that he will feed us that he will hold us through all eternity what if

[35 : 39] God doesn't get it right like maybe maybe I need to take control maybe I should be the one who makes all these important decisions maybe I should be God for my own life you see friends we are continuously without fail day to day the seed of the serpent we ask that question all

the time did God really say we prove this in the simple things in our life like worry and anger and fear we do not trust God to be God at a functional level and so if God is then to rid this world of sin of the seed of the serpent then what is unavoidable that he is to rid this world of you and me because if he didn't do that he would not be perfectly just he would not be putting Eden back to the way it was but God so loved this world that he sent his one and only son out of love he sent his son to stand in our place to bear the punishment for sin that we deserve when the serpent crusher is struck on the heel and experiences that violent death we should see in that moment more than anything we should see the deep love and the deep justice of God someone's got to pay the price the deep love and the deep justice of God coming together in the most powerful way

God will be good he will be good completely good not a hint of injustice or sin in him he will be good and you can never doubt him on that because the nails in Jesus' hand forbid you from ever doubting his goodness his commitment to justice is such that his son will be punished in our place to fulfill justice God will be good God also loves you and you can never ever doubt him on that because the nails in Jesus' hand also forbid you for ever doubting God's love his passionate love for you that he was willing to do that to endure that cost to fulfill the just requirements of the law and see you saved 19th century hymn writer captured this best when he penned these words on the mount of crucifixion fountains open deep and wide through the floodgates of God mercy flowed a vast and gracious tide grace and love like mighty rivers poured incessant from above and in these last two lines and heaven's peace and perfect justice kissed a guilty world in love that's the gospel maybe this advent season you look out at our world and you long for justice you long for things to be right you see hate and you long for love to be the order of the day you see pain suffering you long for peace to be present that longing that you have in your heart is a longing for the serpent crusher that's what you're longing for that's what you're really longing for you're longing for the serpent crusher and friends the incredibly good news of the gospel is that in the coming messiah the baby born in the manger that we will celebrate in four weeks time and the one who will return to judge the living and the dead in Jesus

Christ we have that longing fulfilled we have the true serpent let's pray gracious God and heavenly father we do have longings in our hearts in this advent season because we have all in one way or another experienced the misery of this world pain suffering loss hurt injustice tears help us to see as we long for an end of this help us to see help us to rightly direct that longing to the right place it's not ultimately social projects or political projects or strength of will that is going to make everything right it's your son our true serpent crusher who will crush the serpent's head father we thank you for the incredible cost endured to bring about that great salvation the serpent crusher is struck on the heel may we never fail to be filled up with a sense of awe and wonder as we consider that moment of Christ on the cross the serpent crusher being struck on the heel may it drive us and motivate us to make us people who resist the injustice of this world who resist the pain and the suffering and wipe away tears who bring peace in places of dissension and discord who bring love in places of hate not because we can ultimately bring about this perfect world but because Christ has already done it and we are his offspring we are the seat of the serpent crusher help us father we pray for Christ's sake amen