

The Snake Crusher

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[0 : 00] Genesis 3.15, if that's open in front of you, should leave you asking, who is he? Who is the he of verse 15?

It's our question. Who is the one man born of a woman who will crush the head of the Satan snake? Who is the one who is going to come into the world and deal with the evil one and destroy this death-bringing devil and free humanity from his deadly grip?

Who is the he? Do you know? It is. This morning we begin a Sunday series of sermons in the lead-up to Christmas called Waiting for the Saviour.

It's six and a half weeks till Christmas. We won't mention Christmas every single week from now until then. It's not long to go. And Christmas is a time when the UK stops for a few days to see family, eat food, have presents, and maybe remember the birth of Jesus.

Maybe. Because of course for many people in our world today and in this society, Jesus doesn't really mean anything. He's in the school nativity play. The kids act something out. But did he even exist? No one knows. And who cares?

[1 : 15] Or lots of others around might say, if pushed, well yes, a person called Jesus did exist 2,000 years ago. But all the stuff Christians say about him, he's the son of God, he's the saviour, it's just weird.

It's like loading onto this person from history something more than he was. So that, I don't know, so that you can feel Christians can feel saved and comforted or something like that.

I mean, call him an inspiring leader. One amongst many. But he's not much more than that, many would say. And certainly not enough to impact our lives so that we start following him.

And sometimes, maybe we would say this, when so many around us think and talk like that, it is possible to come to church. It's possible to call yourself a Christian even.

And have inside you, sometimes, genuine, niggling doubts. Are Christians right about Jesus?

[2 : 22] Jesus is the son of God who can change your life and forgive your sins. Can I know that? Or maybe I'd love to know, just a bit more deeply and solidly and certainly, that Jesus is who he says he is.

Because if we're going to build our lives around him, if we're going to follow him and worship him, we want to be confident about him. Well, a mini introduction to say that is what this series is for. What we're going to do over seven weeks, seven talks through to Christmas, is we're going to delve back into the Old Testament, the Old Testament, all written hundreds, even over a thousand years before the birth of Jesus.

And we're going to see here in the Old Testament, just as it was read to us here, that the coming of Jesus into the world, the first Christmas, is not just something that happened. He existed and people said stuff about him, but rather his coming was announced in advance and spoken of and prophesied.

That is, in ancient history past, recorded in these scriptures, the living God spoke and promised and pointed forward to the coming of his son, who he would be, what family he'd come from, where he'd be born, what he would do, even how he would die.

[3 : 47] In this Bible, in the Old Testament, wonderful ancient prophecies looking forward to the coming of the one man who is and always has been, from the beginning, right at the centre of all God's plans and purposes for his world, the Lord Jesus Christ.

This may be new for some of us, not so new for others. Over these seven Sundays leading up to Christmas, my hope and prayer is that as we make our way through the Old Testament, which we will do from Genesis to Malachi, and as we see how some of these words, these words, these scriptures testify so clearly about Jesus, you and I, old and young, will find our faith in him

strengthened and deepened so that we will be able to say with even greater confidence that this one born in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago, he is the long-promised Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour and our God.

We will follow him. And so, as we read from Genesis 3, we begin today right back at the very beginning of the Bible and world history with what one writer calls the first glimmer of the Gospel, first pointer to Jesus in Genesis 3.15.

But to get to grips with what's going on in these verses in front of us, we need to talk about the snake. We've got to talk about the snake. Genesis 1, the very first chapter of the Bible, describes the creation of the world in a big, epic way.

In Genesis 2 onwards, we swoop down into the Garden of Eden and see the Lord God tenderly creating a woman and a man in paradise. And yet here in the Garden of Eden, as we heard read, in a perfect and good world danger lay.

[5 : 40] The snake. The Satan snake. So first this morning, with Genesis 3 open in front of us, see the Satan snake uncovered.

In Genesis 3.14 we read, so the Lord God said to the snake, because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals.

Who is this snake? Back in 3 verse 1, it says, now the snake was more crafty than all the wild animals the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, did God really say?

Now the snake is one of God's creatures. He's made by God. And yet, so strangely here, speaking to the woman and deceiving her, you realise he is more than just a snake.

The rest of the Bible clarifies. Revelation 12 verse 9 speaks of that ancient snake called the devil or Satan, who leads the whole world astray.

[6 : 53] So this animal then, in Genesis 3, is the devil in snake form. He is Satan, the accuser. A personal evil spirit who opposes God and everything good.

You read that, you hear of that on a Sunday morning. I don't know what you make of that. It'll be different for each of us. I'm a white British middle class boy brought up in the 1980s in the West Country.

And when I was brought up, me and my mates didn't believe in anything so stupid like the devil. The devil was a joke figure, not real, just silly. And on Halloween, people would go out and buy a cheap costume to wear of red tights and devil horns and a big fork.

and it was just for laughs. Maybe for you, round you at your school, there are clever and sophisticated people who would say, don't give me any talk of supernatural evil stupidity.

And you'd be tempted to think that too. On the other hand, maybe from your culture or your background, or just from your own personal history and experience, you know that there is such a thing as personal supernatural evil, the Satan.

[8 : 12] And if that's you, you are right. And what is he like? What does he do? And the Satan, the devil, is a crafty liar and a murderer and his sole aim is to deceive people and lead people away from the living God and see them destroyed.

And that is what happens here in Genesis 3 so tragically and awfully. The man and the woman are in the garden and the Lord had said, you may eat from any tree in this garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

For when you eat of it, you will certainly die. And here in the garden, Satan, the crafty one, slithers forward and gets to work, his tactics clear and unchanging.

First, in verse 1, he questions God's words. Did God really say, you must not eat? And second, in verse 4, he denies God's judgment.

You will not certainly die. Third, in verse 5, he doubts God's goodness. God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and things will be good for you.

[9 : 34] He is keeping things from you. He is a crafty devil. These are his tactics. He attacks God's word.

He attacks God's character. He sows doubt in people. He deceives and leads astray. And he is very successful. Because next in the tale, tragically, famously, Adam and Eve, they give in.

They swallow the devil's lies. They thrust God aside. They disobey his word. How offensive to be like that. And from that one responsible act flows death.

And here in the Garden of Eden, for Satan, it is an evil job. Well done. So you say, that's okay.

I understand that. But that was then. Well, here is the connection for us. So hard to hear, I think, sometimes, that this same Satan is alive and active today.

[10:40] And as was his evil work then, deceiving, lying, leading astray, destroying humanity. So it has been all the way through history and is now today in today's world.

A world which is, from one angle, the Bible says, under the control of the evil one. So when you hear someone today questioning God's words, did God really say that?

It's not that clear, surely, Satan is lurking, he is at work. When you hear a person denying God's judgment, no, no, if he is there at all, he's just a God of love, surely I'll be okay.

That is devil-influenced talk. If you hear a society doubting God's goodness, his ways aren't good, those old Bible commands, I can't trust that, much better for me to choose my own way.

He has wrapped himself around us as a society and is squeezing tight. And you can't see him. But these are the awful marks of his work.

[11:56] When godless warriors speed through Sudan on pickup trucks and they flout God's law and they murder people made in God's image, how do you understand that?

Like, they are responsible for their crimes, those evil men. And at the same time, they have the fingerprints of Satan all over them who does everything he can to see people destroyed.

That is society around us. It's Sudan over there. But we should think more personally too. Because it says in the New Testament that since the fall of humanity in Genesis 3, all of us find ourselves, the Bible says, born into sin and under the power of the evil one.

And Paul says in Ephesians 2, verse 3, that by nature from birth you and I follow the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

He means Satan, the evil one, at work. Because from birth our natural instinct, our bent, is to copy Adam and Eve and follow Satan and listen to his crafty voice and do as he wants.

[13:18] As we find ourselves doubting God's goodness and disobeying his word. And as we destroy ourselves and others and slide towards our death in fear.

And the Bible says, did you know this? That we are born in Satan's grip. We're enslaved to him. We're blinded by him with his coils wrapped around us. It's such a serious thing to talk about that you won't hear anywhere else. I wonder if you know this to be true.

I'm taking lots of the teaching of the Bible together. Did you know this? If you are a person who says that the gospel of Jesus can't really be true, I couldn't believe in Jesus.

That is because the devil has blinded your mind. And do you know how you're meant to live day by day but you find yourself addicted to destructive behaviour and trapped somehow and you can't get out?

[14:26] He is acting. Do you ever find yourself doubting what God says or not listening to Jesus? Satan is clawing at you. Do you ever give in to temptation?

Do you ever refuse to love other people? That is Satan having his way in you. Do you ever get angry and stay angry? Do you ever find yourself being proud and arrogant?

The evil one is close at hand. Are you scared of dying and then facing the God who will uncover all the guilt in your life?

Satan has got you. The Bible truth is he is close at hand. He is a crafty snake. He's a roaring lion.

He's an enemy in our midst against whom left by ourselves we have absolutely no defence because neither you nor I are able to stand against the powerful devil who is at work.

First thing this morning Genesis 3. Such a sombre thing to talk about. God would have us see the Satan snake uncovered.

[15:44] This evil murderer and father of lies who would deceive us and work in us and lead the world astray that we might destroy ourselves and die. But what I want us to see this morning from Genesis 3.

14 and 15 and this is the good news half of this sermon is that in the face of the Satan snake there is good news. There is someone more powerful than he who will act for our good.

See the Satan snake uncovered. Second now Genesis 3. 14 and 15 let's focus down on these verses. See this Satan snake cursed. Cursed by the Lord of heaven and earth.

In verse 13 look at the text with me. The Lord God said to the woman what is this you have done?

And the woman said the snake deceived me and I ate. And so verse 13 so the Lord God said to the snake because you have done this because you have deceived this man and woman whom I have created and love cursed are you.

And to curse is the opposite of to bless. Were you to curse someone you'd be calling on God to judge them and punish them bring darkness down on them rather than light or life.

[17 : 15] And if you decide to if you curse someone else you can't make it happen. God may or may not choose to curse them. But here it is God himself who curses.

He's the sovereign Lord who said let there be light and there was light. When he speaks when he curses it is done and it happens. And so here in Genesis 3 just two words cursed you and the devil's fate is sealed for all eternity.

And before we go on it is so important to know this. And we don't live in a world where good and evil are battling it out like Star Wars the alliance against the empire and who knows how things will end. That is not the world we live in. Don't think that God is on one side of the boxing ring and Satan is on the other like two heavyweight boxers and it's an even contest.

It's not like that. If you see around you if you're aware in your own life of Satan's influence tempting you trapping you you need to know that terrifying to us though the devil may be he is absolutely no match for the God of heaven.

[18 : 42] Cursed are you says the Lord God to this creature he's made and it is done. Look 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.

He's a snake but there is symbolism here too eating the dust is what defeated enemies are forced to do humiliated before the victor and says the Lord God verse 15 continuing his curse I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers.

This is a promise to promise that the Satan snake will not have his way because God will bring about a long running hostile battle through history first between the snake and the woman and somehow God will kindly work in this woman Eve so she will learn to fight the devil's lies and lean on the Lord but not just her I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring offspring or seed and hers and so in the text here the snake will have offspring descendants who are part of his family and are like him people who are children of the devil desperate to destroy the woman's offspring her descendants who are part of her family and like her will lean on the Lord and fight the devil's lies

Abel and Noah and Abraham and on through the pages of the Bible until until what? We'll come lastly this morning to the final two verses two lines of verse 15 see the Satan snake uncovered see the Satan snake cursed and now finally in the fullness of time see Satan crushed destroyed for good and the Lord says 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 and this promise here right at the beginning of time of a single he born of the woman has become known as the first gospel the first announcement of the good news and you can see why can you not?

Because he will crush Satan's head forgive the illustration and maybe you'll say you shouldn't do that Chris but I don't know if you've ever stepped on an insect to kill it some insects just squish under your foot depending on what it is and sometimes I can't really see what it is there can sometimes be a crack as some part of the insect's body breaks and then is crushed underneath you crushing a snake's head under your foot standing down with your full weight on it till things crack and flatten that is terminal for the snake that is game over that is life over with his head battered in says here this single seed of the woman he will crush Satan's head and somehow as he does that at the same time Satan will strike his heel causing suffering to this he even as Satan breathes his last and now we come back to our question at the beginning do you know who the he is in the fullness of time after a long running battle who is the he born of the woman who will suffer himself as he deals a death blow to the devil you and I by nature and from birth bent away from God we are so easily deceived by the devil's lies and are heading for death we need this he our world led astray from God eyes blinded locked into destroying one another how we need this snake crusher to free us from Satan's grip do you know who the snake crushing saviour of the world is it is

[23 : 19] Jesus arrive in the New Testament and the New Testament speaks so clearly and wonderfully Galatians 4 verse 4 when the fullness of time had come God sent forth his son born of a woman he's the seed of the woman why did Jesus come why did he come into the world the first Christmas 1 John 3 verse 8 the reason the son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work we say Jesus is peace and love he is unless you are the devil Jesus is the seed Jesus is the one who crushes the snake and grown up and baptised he is sent into the desert to be tempted by Satan and where Adam and Eve and you and I fail he stands firm against the devil's lies he's a champion

he's a hero he casts out demons and they tremble before him and then he goes to the cross and he dies do you know why he dies

Hebrews 2:14 so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death that is the devil and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death the Lord Jesus Christ promised in Genesis 3:15 comes into the world he lives he battles against Satan's temptations he dies on the cross and as he suffers his heel was struck by supernatural evil by the devil and yet through his death on the cross at the centre of history dying the death that you and I deserve for our disobedience to God it says that he has broken the devil's power once and for all and he has done that so that now as weak people like us turn to Jesus Christ in faith we will be freed you can be freed from Satan's enslaving power you can be freed from fear you can be freed from addiction you can be freed to know

God as your father and your friend and you can be freed to now resist the devil in your life and live to please your God and that is because the Lord Jesus Christ who came into the world the very first Christmas he's not just a someone or something and people make up stuff about him he is the one to whom all of history points he is the one who is the snake crusher I've said lots swiftly this morning the point about these sermons is to grow confident faith in Jesus there is no other saviour no one else who is able to beat Satan and release you from him he was promised way back at the very beginning and he came into the world to be our champion and saviour and free us so that we might know our Lord and God and live our lives resisting the evil one so in these months coming up from now until Christmas grow in your confident faith in Jesus what was written he has done and cling on to him in faith and know that in him you can be freed from

Satan for all eternity let me lead us in a prayer I'm going to pray so that by his death he might break the power of the evil one our Lord and God thank you that all through history you have spoken there's much we do not understand about the devil and yet by nature we are in his grip yet you are the sovereign Lord and when you curse someone is cursed and when you promised that the seed of the woman would come he came thank you that the Lord Jesus Christ is more powerful thankful thank you that in him we can be safe and free forever help us please in our weakness and our fears to run to the

Lord Jesus Christ and find in him the refuge we so long for we ask in Jesus name amen to the ending Thank you.