

# The Serpent's Head

Romans 8:31-39

4/19/2025

---

## Scripture

[Gen 3:15 NKJV] 15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."

## Scripture

[Rev 20:10 NKJV] 10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

## Scripture

[Rom 8:31-39 NKJV] 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." 37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## The Big Picture

If you're wondering what these verses have to do with each other, I succeeded with the intended effect. Have you ever seen something and struggled to understand what you're looking at until you see it from a distance, in a larger frame? Let's look at a few items and see if you can identify them. Many people see their life in this same way... through the lens of what's right in front of them; their current struggles, disappointments, hurts, or joys and victories. It's difficult, and sometimes seemingly impossible, to see one's life from the perspective of how everything in the past plays into the present and how it will all impact the future. Keep this in mind, and look at this next picture:

This is the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem. Many believe this is the tomb Jesus was buried in... We aren't going to get into that debate today, but the great news is that it's empty! That empty tomb represents history's most glorious, revolutionary, earth-shattering, eternity-changing moment. If you were to look at this alone, and grasp it and believe it, it would be the most impactful thing that has ever happened to your life. But do you realize that if you were to zoom out on that empty tomb, and bring the past and future into full view, the image you would see would cause any logical, sensible, truth-loving person to fall on their knees at the grand design of God's masterpiece. Everywhere you look, there are stories. To Zoom in on those stories teaches you a lot about what might be happening in a specific context, but when you look into the broader picture, you recognize that every story is intrinsically and intentionally interwoven into God's grand story, at the center of that Grand Story is a cross and an empty grave, you recognize, if my life is a story, the center needs to be that cross and that empty grave.

## Quote

— *Pastor Josh*

You will never fully understand the story of your life until you understand the story of God's salvation.

### The Death and Resurrection of Jesus:

Before we take a stab at grasping the bigger picture, it is worth noting that the incredible, singular moment of Jesus' resurrection is something that cannot be ignored, written off, or avoided simply because one sees it as inconvenient.

You might be annoyed that your car keeps beeping at you, and there's a light next to the big E on your dashboard. You might cover it with paper or tape so you don't have to deal with it, but you will deal with it, most likely stranded on the side of a road. Sticking one's head in the sand about real issues will never lead to successful outcomes. And what more critical issue could a human being, who is finite, whose time on earth is numbered, have to wrestle with than the one of their existence, purpose in life, and eternal soul? And that's what the resurrection deals with. To ignore these realities is like sticking your head in the sand of this world, only to realize you still have to deal with it after it's too late and your eternal soul is standing before its creator.

### The Evidence

The resurrection of Jesus Christ stands as a cornerstone of the Christian faith, enduring the scrutiny of skeptics and critics throughout history. From the Jewish religious leaders who sought to suppress the news of Christ's resurrection by bribing the guards at His tomb (Matthew 28:11-15), to the Roman authorities who attempted to quell the growing belief in His resurrection (Matthew 28:12-13), various adversaries have tried to discredit this pivotal event. Despite these challenges, the truth of Christ's resurrection has prevailed, inspiring countless believers and transforming lives across generations.

Some of humanity's most revered and applauded philosophical minds have proven how little they know about God and His unconquerable plans.

Voltaire (17th-18th century philosopher who was a fierce critic of religion) - "One hundred years from my death, the Bible will be a museum piece." He famously predicted the death of Christianity and the Bible's irrelevance. Ironically, within 50 years of his death, the Geneva Bible Society used Voltaire's former home to print and store Bibles. Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) – German philosopher and atheist - "God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him." Ironically,

History is littered with the gravestones of critics who mocked or predicted the end of the Church. Yet as G.K. Chesterton once quipped:

At least five times... the Faith has to all appearances gone to the dogs. In each of these five cases, it was the dog that died.

Better yet, the promise of Jesus has held true:

"I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18)

2,000 years in, He's made good on that promise!

Eyewitnesses and changed lives

Moreover, the eyewitness accounts of individuals who encountered the risen Christ provide compelling evidence for His resurrection. The disciples, initially fearful and disheartened after Jesus' crucifixion, were transformed into bold and unwavering proclaimers of His resurrection following their personal encounters with Him (John 20:19-29). The Apostle Paul, once a persecutor of Christians, became a fervent, sold-out disciple of the risen Christ after encountering Him on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-22). So powerful was his conversion and experience with God that not only did he start to build that which he once tried to destroy, but he counted all that he lost from his former life, as well as all of the suffering he experienced for Jesus, as a privilege to know Jesus. These firsthand testimonies serve as powerful affirmations of the reality of Christ's resurrection. Furthermore, the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah's resurrection underscores the divine orchestration of this miraculous event. Psalm 16:10 foretold that God's Holy One would not see corruption but would be raised from the dead, a prophecy fulfilled in Jesus' resurrection (Acts 2:25-32). The intricate alignment of these prophecies with the events surrounding Christ's resurrection serves as a testament to God's faithfulness and sovereign plan.

Historical Context

While there is ample evidence to trust the historicity of the Bible as a source of true, historical accounts, there are still those who try to write off scripture as propaganda. However, it is fascinating to note that secular history corroborates the existence of Christ and the events surrounding His life.

It is essential to recognize that Jesus intentionally avoided seeking fame during His earthly ministry. This humility and deliberate choice to operate in a seemingly insignificant manner align with His teaching that His kingdom would be like a mustard seed - starting small but growing exponentially over time. This approach contrasts sharply with the worldly pursuit of power and recognition. Nevertheless, secular historical records do bear witness to the reality of Jesus, His crucifixion, and ultimately, His resurrection. These external attestations serve as additional layers of confirmation for those seeking to understand the profound impact of Christ on human history and salvation.

For instance, Josephus, a first-century Jewish historian, referred to Jesus as a wise man and a doer of wonderful works. He specifically calls him the Christ., and speaks of His trial before Pilate and condemnation to the cross. He also reports that Jesus' followers reported Him alive three days after His crucifixion. In the 2nd century, Tacitus, a Roman historian, mentioned Jesus in the context of Emperor Nero's persecution of Christians in Rome. These extra-biblical sources not only acknowledge the existence of Jesus but also affirm the events surrounding His life and crucifixion. This convergence of historical and biblical evidence underscores the reality of Jesus' earthly ministry and the lasting impact He had on humanity.

In essence, the historical reality of Christ's resurrection stands firm against all attempts to discredit or diminish its significance. It remains a testament to God's power over death, a source of hope and assurance for believers, and a cornerstone of Christian faith that continues to withstand the test of time.

## Illustration

J. Vernon McGee was a radio Bible teacher. Once, a lady wrote him a question, "Our preacher said that Jesus just swooned on the cross and on Easter, the disciples nursed Him back to health. What do you think?" McGee replied, "Dear Sister, beat your preacher with a leather whip for 39 heavy strokes. Nail him to a cross. Hang him in the sun for six 3 hours. Run a spear through his heart. Embalm him. Put him in an airless tomb for three days. Then see what happens..."

Understanding the historical reality, eyewitness accounts, and the evidence of transformed lives forces one to face a God who has the power to overcome death forever. But how does that play into the bigger picture and the grander story of what happened in that moment?

## Main Point

### Point 1

In the First Garden (Genesis 3)

## Illustration

When we lived in NorCal, we had the privilege of building a house. Someone in the church was a master craftsman and home builder. Out of love for us, he invested much of his time designing and building our house, pouring his craftsmanship into the smallest details. Having lived in many houses, I will always remember something special about looking at a window frame or a staircase railing and remembering the care that went into something specifically for me.

The very first dwelling place of mankind was a beautiful, custom-designed garden by the creator. Genesis two and three give us a glimpse into that place.

It was a place of God's PRESENCE - Adam and Eve walked with God in the cool of the day, unrestricted from being near to Him in every way. It was a place of God's PROVISION - every tree that grew there was pleasing to the eye and good for food. It was a place of God's PLEASURE - there was no shame, everything was designed to be what King David described, "In your presence is fullness of joy, and at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

Yet this place was also invaded. Yes, the Garden of Eden was also a place of God's protection, but God's protection extended as far as Adam and Eve's obedience. The serpent, Satan, having been hurled to the earth for His prideful rebellion against God, was on a rebel-making mission. He already got 1/3 of the angels, and now it was time to target God's prize possession. The apple of God's eye would be deceived by an apple [image of Apple logo] (or at least some kind of fruit).

Eve was deceived, falling for the age-old lie that the forbidden fruit is sweeter than the promises of God. She tragically discovered that God's boundaries were to actually save her from the poison of sin.

Adam, on the other hand, was not deceived but willingly chose to follow along in this act of disobedience.

## Illustration

It's reported that the reformer Martin Luther and his wife were prone to heated, knockdown, drag-out arguments. One such argument consisted of Martin angrily quipping, "Don't forget that Eve was the one who was deceived!" To which his wife quickly responded, "Well, don't forget that Paul called it the sin of Adam!"

We often talk too quickly about Adam as if it would have been clear to any of us what should have been done. We give Adam 2 options:

Option 1 - If he was present during the temptation, which the Bible seems to imply, why didn't he stop it? Why didn't he say something? Consider first that we don't know whether or not he was actually there during the temptation. Second, it's possible there was some warning from him that wasn't heeded or recorded. Thirdly, remember that Adam was called to lead, but not to control. What was he supposed to do? Crush his wife's autonomy? Should he have taken Eve and tied her up to a tree for the rest of eternity to ensure she never did anything stupid?!

Option 2 - When offered the fruit, Adam could have declined to take it from his wife. Yes, it would have probably been a better decision, but think about it. Eve banished to death while Adam watches from the Garden, alone for the rest of eternity? Adam chose a fallen existence with the bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, over watching his wife bear the guilt of the sin alone. But that didn't work out too well for the rest of us.

Option 3 - the one we never talk about. The one Adam should have chosen. Before eating the fruit, Adam could have looked to God and said, I take responsibility! I will give my innocent life for my wife's guilty life. Banish me and may my life make a way for her to be forgiven and right with you.

This helps us really understand the words of Paul to the Romans when he said,

## Scripture

[Rom 5:18-19 NKJV] 18 Therefore, as through one man's (Adam) offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's (Jesus) righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. 19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

The first Adam fell short in his selfishness and unwillingness to choose obedience to God. Therefore, the life God breathed into Him eventually extinguished, and the body of sin gave way to death. But Jesus, in His perfect obedience and perfect sacrifice, took the penalty for the guilty bride upon himself. It's as if he looked to the Heavenly Father and said, "They are guilty! They ate the fruit, swallowed the lie, and chose their own way. But Father, take my life instead. Father, blame me and through my sacrifice, give them life." And because Jesus was able to endure the greatest suffering and sacrifice, the power of God raised Him to life, so just as Adam's rebellion led to our death. Jesus' obedience led to resurrection. first for Jesus. and then to all those who

And this promise was prophetically woven into the curse of sin. God pronounced the inevitable consequences to Adam and Eve for their rebellion. Pain, suffering, labor and death would be their new course, but the curse was not without a glimmer of hope that God would not forsake His creation:

## Scripture

Genesis 3:15 - "I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will bruise your head, and you will bruise his heel."

You see, the language of the seed is typically applied to men. Men have the seed. But here is a prophetic reference to the virgin birth. The seed of the woman would have his heel bruised by the serpent. On Good Friday, the feet of Jesus were pierced and nailed to a cross. For a moment, it appeared that Satan's greatest weapon, death, had inflicted an irreparable blow to Jesus. But three days later, when Jesus walked out of that grave, alive forevermore, he took His royal foot and smashed it over the head of Satan.

## Illustration

Years ago, I was at work and received an image text from my wife. Apparently the kids were playing outside, and upon walking out to the back patio, she discovered a rattlesnake hanging out near the bbq grill. Ashley is not a fan of snakes and would probably much rather avoid them altogether, but her mama's heart kicked in. No snake was going to remain a threat to her children. That day, the snake met a rake!

## Main Point

### Point 2

In the Last Garden (Revelation 20)

Fast forward to the end of time, and we see that it's God's intention to restore heaven, earth, and all of His people to the state he originally intended. In Revelation 22, we get a peek into the New Jerusalem in the New Earth. In the middle, there seems to be a garden. The tree of life that Adam and Eve never tasted will be available for all to eat from. The curse of sin will be gone, and there will be no more need for sun or moon, for the glory of God will be the ever-living light. There will be no more tears, no more pain, no more lack... and there will be no more serpent. John tells us of his fate:

## Scripture

[Rev 20:10 NKJV] 10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

The final blow to Satan's slithery sting will be inflicted by the King. I believe this is the moment Paul is looking forward to when he writes to the Romans:

## Scripture

[Rom 16:20 NKJV] 20 And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

But between that first garden and that last garden is a lot of time we call human history. I like to call it the weeds in between the gardens

## Main Point

### Point 3

In the Weeds (Romans 8)

If it has eluded you, you ain't in the Garden of Eden anymore! Sin brought forth the curse of thorns and thistles for man. Let's face it, there are some beautiful moments in life. Occasionally, you get to eat some fruit in this life that tastes pretty good. But without fail, every sweet moment will be touched by a bitter root, a thorny branch, or an invasive weed that seeks to rob the joy, beauty, and sweetness of a moment.

## Illustration

I'm reminded of this every spring when I start to prepare my yard and garden. If I don't get ahead of the weeds, they get ahead of me! There always seems to be something trying to get in the way of what's good... like a snake trying to strike.

We live in a state many theologians call the "Now but not yet."

In other words, our victory is complete, our eternity sealed, the ultimate war won, but we live in a timeline in which God's story is still unfolding. We have to continually learn in this in-between time to walk by faith and not by sight. And we know that the same old serpent, the deceiver and destroyer, still likes to lurk about in the weeds. Oh, Jesus stomped his head and took the poison out of his fangs for all those who trust in Him, but the snake's body still writhes. Until the moment Jesus decapitates the serpent, he still tries to inflict wounds. He sure can try to make some misery in life! Though he can't snatch anyone from Christ's hand, he will try to deceive and destroy what he can. This is where Paul's words to the Romans bring hope for the person who is wandering in the weeds.

## Scripture

[Rom 8:31-39 NKJV] 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." 37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ, Jesus our Lord.

Paul talks about how the death and resurrection meet the believer in four areas and crush the head of Satan in this life.

The Opposition of the Enemy - Paul asks a question that I think we might raise an eyebrow at. If God is for us, who can be against us? I don't know about you, but I can think of plenty that can be against us! I can think of plenty of enemies, both physical and spiritual, that can be against us. I've experienced it in my own life. The opposition to those who carry and live the gospel of Jesus Christ is constant! Paul's point isn't that you won't face any opposition in life, but that there is no opposition that can take away from you that which was promised by God in Christ Jesus. Yes, you might be under attack spiritually or even physically, but those enemies don't have the power or authority to rob you of the peace that passes understanding, the joy of the Lord that is your strength, the Holy Spirit's power to overcome the world, and ultimately the eternal life that has been secured for you by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead! The Accusation of the Enemy (vs. 33) - Revelation 12 calls Satan "The accuser of the brethren". If you read the book of Job, you see the snake bringing accusations against Job, a righteous man, before God. And while Satan is the king of all trash talk and lies, Paul reminds us that no matter what he has to say about us, true or not, he cannot stand against the power of Jesus' sacrifice and what it's accomplished for us.

## Quote

— *Pastor Josh*

If Jesus was crucified so that you could be justified, then Satan's accusations are nullified.

## Illustration

Years ago, Shane and Shane wrote a song called "Embracing accusation." Here are some of the lyrics: [Verse 1]: The father of lies coming to steal, kill and destroy All my hopes of being good enough I hear him saying, "Cursed are the ones who can't abide" He's right, Hallelujah, he's right The devil is preaching the song of the redeemed That I am cursed and gone astray I cannot gain salvation, embracing accusation [Verse 2] Could the father of lies be telling the truth Of God to me tonight? If the penalty of sin is death, then death is mine [Bridge] Oh, the devil's singing over me an age old song That I am cursed and gone astray Singing the first verse so conveniently over me He's forgotten the refrain: Jesus saves

The Condemnation of the Enemy (vs. 34) - While the enemy's accusations have been completely silenced by the righteous Jesus in the presence of God, we still frequently hear His words here on earth. Who is he that condemns? Paul reminds us that while Satan may always put condemning lies in our ears or before our eyes, Jesus is the one interceding on our behalf before God. He tells us that Jesus was crucified to silence the accusations, but he was also risen and ascended to the Father's right hand to stand in our place and represent us before God's holy presence! What lies is Satan constantly spewing regarding your identity? Your worthiness to be accepted by God? Your past failures or your current struggles? Condemnation always sounds like this: "God won't accept you because you did, or didn't do..." Guess what friend? Satan doesn't get the final say in your life when Jesus is involved. There's only one thing that will keep you out of heaven, and that's the rejection of the only one who can successfully defend you against the condemnation of the serpent. Yes, the Holy Spirit will convict you of areas in your life that need to change, grow or come into alignment with God, but God convicts us to change us, not to reject us. The Separation of the Enemy - Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? The interesting theological truth here is that amidst trials and tribulations, one may be inclined to

## Quote

— CS Lewis

“Jesus has forced open a door that has been locked since the death of the first man. He has met, fought, and beaten the King of Death. Everything is different because He has done so.”

## Conclusion

Everything is a story. God wants to write yours. He gave his life in a sacrificial death for you. He conquered death, rose from the grave, and lives forever as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He is the ultimate author and finisher of everything. But there is also a counterfeit. The lying serpent still slithers, head wounded and leash intact, but seeking to steal, kill, and destroy as much as he can, knowing that his time is short. Who is writing your story? If you have not yet recognized and surrendered to Jesus for the king and savior He is, there's no more reason to wait. Be free from the tyranny of the liar and be set free by the great Snake Crusher, Jesus. Yes, that grave is empty, but it's empty so that your heart, life, and eternity can be full.

## Quote

“This world offers promises full of emptiness, but Easter offers emptiness full of promises.”