



The First Christmas Card

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I'm assuming most of you have sent out Christmas cards this year. Did you get my Christmas card, by the way? Did you see that? Wasn't that just idealic? Didn't it look great? It was a pain in the butt. (audience laughing) This year's photo shoot was just awful. I was sitting there in the torture and it always messes up Thanksgiving too, because that's always when you have to do this. And I started thinking who started this mess of sending cards to each other? So I did some research, not at the moment, but I thought about it. I said, well, how did this start? And I found out that was in the mid-1800s in England is where this became popular at Christmas time to send out Christmas cards. And the reason stated as you look into this is because at that time they'd pretty much perfected this postal service in England. And it was called the Penny Post because it only was a penny. Well, it ain't a penny anymore. Not to mention the card and the photo card and just all this. The US Postal Service raised the rates twice this year, by the way, and I used to be when my wife would say go pick up some stamps on the way home. Okay. Now it's like I got to transfer money, you know, (audience laughing) it's like, okay, take it out of my retirement account. It's amazing. You know, they raised it twice this year, it's up to \$0.73 for a first-class stamp. Boy, did that surprise you? Your accountants order your stamps for you. What? I mean. Yeah, that's what it costs. It's outrageous. And then it's not a penny anymore. That's true.

But I thought to myself if anyone should keep doing this, even though it's a hassle and it costs, it probably should be Christians, because we as Christians are trying to send something to our friends and acquaintances and coworkers that should say something about the real meaning of Christmas, even if it's just subtle or, you know, just some slogan. It would be good for you to keep on as the old Christmas carol says publishing tidings of comfort and joy. Because really, when it comes down to it, that is what the message of the coming of Christ, the doctrine of the incarnation is really all about. Right? This is something that should bring comfort and joy to us, but not on the surface level that Norman Rockwell photos might try to express. This is something far deeper. And when I really started thinking about where did this Christmas card thing start? You know, of course, the history books will say in England in the 19th century, but, you know, no one's going to beat God to the punch when it comes to publishing the story of the coming of Christ. And if I said to you, well, where was that first given to us, it might bring you back if you start reading through the Scriptures to a mysterious little verse in the third chapter of the Bible. Genesis Chapter 3 verse 15.

Now, theologians throughout church history like to call this the protoevangelium. And that's just a conflation, a compound of two different Greek words, ultimately through Latin. But the word "Prōteus," which means "first" and "euangélion" in Greek, which means the "gospel" or "good news". So this is a prōteus, the first good news, The first publishing of the good news. Now, some may debate this. And as you'll see, Joseph, our Worship Director, is just praying about our Bible study. It's a bit of a study this morning to dive into this because it's a bit of a tricky text and there's some mystery to all of this. But I want to understand it and I want to understand it as best we can so when we leave not only knowing that God is always first at doing things like telling people that, you know, he's going to bring his Son into the world to



solve the biggest problem that we have. But I want you to leave with knowing this really is a message of comfort and joy. Because if you're looking for the worst context in which you might find in the Old Testament, it's certainly going to be in Genesis Chapter 3. As I often like to say, there are only four good chapters of the Bible. Does that sound like blasphemy? Only four good chapters, and I only mean that tongue in cheek. But of course I mean that because the first two chapters in Genesis and the last two chapters in Revelation give us these four sinless chapters where what we have is God in fellowship with his creation and everything's copacetic and good.

But everything in between Genesis Chapters 3 through Revelation 19 is all, you know, pretty much a mess even though God is working out for his own glory his redemptive plan. But that redemptive plan certainly seems to be telegraphed here with the first publishing of the Christmas joy and comfort that we should still continue to do even if it's a hassle and it costs a lot. So let's look at this text. It's there printed on your worksheet, Genesis Chapter 3 verse 15. And to understand how this comes you need to know it is a bad context, a bad context because Eve and Adam have fallen into sin in that order. And they certainly have made a mess of things because God said don't eat of this particular tree and Satan comes along and tempts them and says it's okay if you want to do it, you should just do it. If that sounds familiar, it should sound familiar. He's been giving the same message to people throughout the centuries, and that is, hey, if you want to do that and don't let God tell you, you can't. And that's exactly what went on in Genesis 3.

So God comes on the scene beginning in verse 14 by delivering some judgment, some punishments, and those punishments end with Adam being punished. And the way he's punished is that God says I'm going to curse the ground because of you. And one thing that should pop out only after two chapters of the Bible, Adam and Eve are made from the ground, right? They're made of the stuff of earth. So their bodies now are going to be cursed. Then they're going to be deprived at the end of this section that we often call the curse from the Tree of Life. So they're all going to die, biologically die, even though relationally they died the minute they rebelled against God. So it ends with that, "cursed is the ground because of you," it's going to grow "thorns and thistle" and you guys are going to have a big headache on your hands just trying to feed your face and feed your family and there's going to be trouble. And then the verse in front of that is some nice news for you ladies that one of the greatest joys that a lot of ladies, most ladies have in life is carrying life within them and bringing life into this world and nourishing these young lives. But it's not going to be without a lot of pain. Right, ladies? I've seen it up close three times, but I've passed a kidney stone if that helps. (audience laughing) But I am just saying it's a punishment. It's a judgment from God. Right? You're going to have pain in childbirth and you'll have conflict in your marriage, right? Don't say amen to that. But that certainly is part of the curse ever since the beginning.

Well, the two verses in front of that are Genesis Chapter 3 verses 14 and 15. Now, verse 14 is an interesting passage. It should have you kind of revisualize what's going on there. It's not like the Renaissance paintings of the Fall show you because usually they show you with a carefully, you know, covered Eve who's really hot and yet covered and she's reaching out for an apple on a tree and then there's a snake wrapped around the tree trying to talk to her



about the apple. Well, we don't know if it's an apple. It's some kind of fruit. Jews thought it was a pomegranate, by the way. I don't know about that. But whatever. I'm not big on exotic fruit. Not that that's exotic. I don't know. I don't know. I'm not a foodie. But whatever it was, it was a tree that they weren't supposed to eat from and you picture a snake because that's what ended up happening in verse 14. But that is not what we had prior to verse 14. Satan utilizes an animal that God now curses the animal and changes its form and makes it the slithering thing that normal people are repulsed by. So that's how this is a judgment upon this animal, which probably didn't look as weird as a snake, I'm sure of it. I mean, it was something probably more like, I don't know, something cuddly and cute like a panda bear or something. I don't know. But whatever it was, it now has got no arms and no legs and no fur and it's going to slither around on the ground and give us the heebie-jeebies is when we see snakes slithering for most normal people.

So that's what's happening in verse 14. But then something very profound in one verse that we going to preach on this morning in Genesis Chapter 3 verse 15. You've got to figure out the pronouns because God is talking to the snake, which really is not a snake. That's just the vehicle that Satan used. He's an angelic being, a spiritual being. But in this new thing that God has done, creating people, spiritual people, in time and space, in the physical material world with ears and teeth and mouth and vocal cords, now all of a sudden Satan is going to enter into that creation. God allows this and he's going to utilize some probably some cute cuddly animal or whatever to talk to Eve and tempt her. And so now God is speaking to the one who is driving this, who's utilizing that animal, and that is the arch enemy who's already fallen. If you want to read more about that they certainly think is a transfer from kingly rebels to the real rebel behind it all in Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14 that precedes it even though in the Bible it's after it. But chronologically, that happened before what we see in Genesis 3, and that is Satan fell, he rebelled, and now he's going to make human beings rebel. At least he's going to try really hard and of course he succeeds.

So here's the verse. Are you ready? Let's look at it with our eyeballs. Genesis Chapter 3 verse 15. I'll try to read it in kind of a wooden, awkward way by giving you a definition of each of the pronouns. So the first pronoun is "I" and who's I? God is speaking. "I," God, "will put enmity between you," now that's Satan who's been utilizing the serpent, "and the woman," that's Eve, "and between your offspring," that's the serpent's offspring, "and her offspring," that's the woman's offspring. He..." Okay, now all of a sudden, we have a shift here at least in our English text. In the Hebrew text we're not sure that it's kind of like the word "offspring" in English, we're not sure whether that's singular or plural, it can be both. We'll look at that in a minute. But the English translators for us in English have put this into a singular, masculine pronoun, "he" and that is a summation or maybe a person who is an offspring of Eve. "He," the woman's offspring, "shall bruise your head." Now, "bruise," if you look at this word elsewhere it's not very often in the Hebrew Bible, but sometimes it's translated "to crush," and even old translations will use the word crush and the references to it in New Testament Greek, which is not Hebrew, obviously, is going to use the word "crush" for this verb.

So if you bloody the head of something you picture the crushing of the head of this animal, which is metaphorically representing the spirit that's enveloped in this discussion, this

bloodying of the head, that's a mortal wound. That's to crush, to bloody, to bruise. Bruise seems kind of mild, but it's a bigger word than that. And "he," the woman's offspring, "shall bruise your head," the serpent's head, which is representing Satan at this point. "And you," the serpent, "shall bruise his," again, we have a personal pronoun here, a singular pronoun, "his," the woman's offspring's "heel." Okay, let me read that like a normal person now. "I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." So you start talking about "his" and "he." Did I read it in a way that you followed it? Okay. So we're trying to make sense of this if we can.

But the first word that I just read past twice is a very helpful word. And it's the word "enmity." Enmity. It's kind of an old-fashioned word but you know what this means, right? You don't have to go to college to figure this word out. Enmity means there are problems. There's warfare, there's opposition, there's hostility. We have two warring parties now, and it starts with the serpent and the woman. And then it says the serpent's offspring and the woman's offspring and these are going to have conflict. Now, I think it's helpful that the woman here, Eve, is said to be in opposition to the serpent. The serpent, of course, is the tempter. Well, it's as though the woman was seeing the serpent as her friend in the sense that Satan is now giving her good advice. Hey, if the food looks good to eat, if it's going to give you wisdom and I'm telling you it is. And God's like... just listen to me. And she does listen to him. And therefore they're kind of aligned in this. Now, all of a sudden, she's guilty and she knows she's guilty. And they start to do weird things because they're naked, which to us is weird but to them it wasn't. Now, all of a sudden in their shame they want to cover up. And so she's afraid when God starts to come back to have some interaction with him, she's going to hide. And she's covering herself with foliage now. That picture of Eve being ashamed of what she has done and now who she is, is dealt with in verse 21 of this passage, at least the practical issue of you're naked and ashamed.

So look at Chapter 3 verse 21, "And," Yahweh, Elohim, "the Lord God made for Adam and his wife garments of skins and clothed them. Now they were already clothed, but they were shopping at, you know, Ross or something. This is like foliage, it's not going to last, it's not very good. Now God could have left it that way. But he says, I'm going to give you more durable clothing and I'm going to give you skins. Now, how do you get, you know, skins to cover you? Right? Well, the same way your shoes, if they're leather, or your belt or whatever, we have to kill an animal. And so this picture is even symbolic that there's some kind of a precursor to the sacrificial system that an animal dies so that you can be covered. The verb here "is to be clothed."

Now, the word used throughout the book of Leviticus and in the Mosaic Law for you dealing with God in worship is going to the priest bringing an animal, the best animal from your flock and having that animal die and that innocent animal, it's not a morally culpable animal, it's just an animal. It dies. And then you're supposed to go home after this worship session feeling like you're okay with God because your sins are, here's the Hebrew word, "Kafar" your sins are covered, covered. So they are having this experience of I'm ashamed, I'm a sinner, which is a whole sermon in itself. Their nakedness, their awareness of their shame and they want to cover. And now God says, I'm going to cover you with something and we'll deal with this so



you don't have to replace your fig leaf every day. Now I'm going to give you durable clothing. You're going to cover your shame in your nakedness.

Here's what I like about the fact that after this realization of shame Satan is being told, you are going to be an enemy with the woman. And I like that because that gives me some hope. Sometimes in the call-in radio shows I have people say about Adam and Eve, do you think they're going to be in heaven? Well, here's a good indicator that perhaps so, because she is a, in this case, let's just assume here, I'm filling in the blanks, but maybe a repentant sinner who knows she's guilty, she's done wrong, she's hiding from God. And God says, listen, I'm going to cover this. You're going to be clothed. That's a good picture though I'm reading between the lines, but it's a good picture to think about the reality of certainly in light of now the enemy is going to be against you. It seems like he was your ally in temptation. And now that you've sinned and you've bought into this moral rebellion, Satan's going to be against you. So that's a helpful sign at least in the sense that I feel good about Eve maybe getting right with God in this whole thing. What we need is contrition and confession and I'm a sinner and now God please fix the problem. And at least the practical expression of the problem of guilt is their shame and nakedness and God says I'm going to cover it. Which the whole rest of the Mosaic Law was trying to describe the atonement for our sins. Does anyone follow that? Are you with me on that? Kind of deep but let's just start with that.

Now, enmity going to continue with her offspring, and it's going to talk about the serpent's offspring or Satan's offspring. Now, more on that later. But let me just stick at least one verse in your mind right now. Let's just think about John 8:44 when Jesus is there dealing with the Pharisees and even the heading of our English Standard Version, the translators kind of editorially put in this and he calls these Pharisees children of the devil. Now there's something you don't put on your Christmas greeting cards. You don't believe me. You don't believe the truth about who I am, Jesus says, and you are just like your father, the devil. He's a murderer and you want to kill me. "He's a liar," and you're lying about who I am because you're calling me an illegitimate child. I'm not that. I am the virgin-born Son of God, Son of Man of Daniel Chapter 7, all the way back to the Mosaic Law, the prophet that was to come. I'm the fulfillment of the Old Testament. You're lying. You know the Bible better than anyone in this generation and you are here calling me someone I'm not. You're lying and you want to kill me. That's exactly like what Satan does. So people can be seen in biblical history as descendants or, if you will, sons, offspring of the enemy.

But of course who's involved in all that? Here's another verse to jot down if you're taking notes, Ephesians Chapter 2, Ephesians Chapter 2 verses 1 through 3, which ends with the fact that we are all in this camp when we were born, all following the course of this world after the "prince of the power of the air," in keeping with or in league with "the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience." Who is the spirit? Who is the prince of the power of the air? Well, that's the enemy. Jesus said it often, John Chapter 16 verse 11. He says, "The ruler of the world," is Satan, the god of this age, the ruler of this age. So the Bible speaks of Satan being in charge and the people who follow being his offspring. Now, in this case the offspring of Eve, who are we talking about there? I know we haven't said the first point yet. We'll get to it. You're filling in underneath it if you're taking notes.

But let's look at verse 20 of Genesis 3. Are you still open in Genesis 3? Scroll down to verse 20. "The man called his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all living." Duh. Right? I mean, what we have in this passage with the first man and the first woman and they're having kids, and so that makes you the mother of all the living. Now, we have this description in Genesis 3:15 that the offspring of the woman are going to be at war with the offspring of Satan. Well, who are the offspring of the woman? Let's read it literally. The literal reading of the text is "all," everyone, right? Everyone after Adam and Eve are all offspring of the woman Eve. So let me ask this: is Satan again, do let's just think about him, not his offspring right now, is Satan himself against ALL humanity? And the answer would be in Scripture, yes. Right? John Chapter 10 Jesus said of Satan, he "only comes to kill and steal and destroy." That's what Satan is all about. He's a murderer. And the whole domain of death is his in a sense, in that that's what he wants. And so in that sense Satan himself, the angelic being, is against all of humanity. Okay. So that's the literal reading of the text.

But if I think about Eve, if perhaps I'm right, saying well she is a repentant, at least a shamed sinner and God is covering her, then maybe I could look at it the way the Bible looks at it, and that is that the sons or the offspring of the woman, particularly the woman that is right with God and I'll show you this in a second from the book of Revelation, those are ones who are living righteously, who are clinging to Christ. Now I can say if I'm going to figuratively read this offspring thing, I'm going to say not only is Satan himself against all of humanity, Satan is, and you Sunday school grads know this from a million verses that rush into your mind, Satan himself is against, in particular, the children of God. Now, you would all agree with that, right? The offspring of the woman, if she's a repentant sinner, certainly Satan is against repentant sinners. He's all about before, which is her going after whatever she wants. Satan is all about that. But once you repent and once you say I'm a sinner and I need God's forgiveness, he's not for that.

One passage on this. Go to the book of Revelation just to drive this home a little bit, Chapter 12. Revelation Chapter 12. So much going on in this passage. The book of Revelation is tough, obviously, but it starts in verse 7. By the way, the reason we know who Satan is, look at verse 9. Here's a little key to the map. "The great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan," the diabolos and the satan. The opposer, the one who slanders and the one who opposes, "the deceiver of the whole world." So obviously, the serpent in the Garden, the ancient serpent, is Satan, incarnate in the sense that he's utilizing an animal that gets twisted after the curse in verse 14 of Genesis 3 into a snake. He's thrown down to earth. A lot's going on here so much in terms of the, if you understand the book of Revelation the way I do, I'm a futurist, I believe it's all happening in the future. The "time, times and half a time."

Look down, if you will, into this passage. Like verse 14, "The woman was given two wings with a great eagle to make fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to a place she'll be nourished for a time, times and half a time," takes us back to Daniel Chapter 9. There's a time, that's one, two times, that's two, that's three total, and then a half a time, that's three and a half. There are two sets of three and a half. And all of that's divided for us in Daniel Chapter

7, the 70th week of Daniel that's yet to come, I believe is cut in half. And the woman here in the context, if you look back up at the beginning, has this son who is very important. And I guess verse 13, I can just read it. "When the dragon saw that she'd been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child." The ultimate, and we'll look at that in a second, the ultimate offspring of the woman and "the woman was given two wings of the great eagle so she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, she's going to be nourished there, cared for, protected "for a time, times and half a time."

Well, the serpent didn't like that. He does all he can. He throws everything at this woman who is Israel and the converts of Israel. I can prove that later. Verse 15, "The serpent poured out water out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away, as with a flood. But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened up its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon that had been poured from his mouth." In other words, Satan wants to destroy this remnant in the time of Jacob's trouble in the Great Tribulation, the second half, after the anti-Christ breaks this covenant, and it says then because he can't get to them, look at verse 17, "Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring." I love that because there is this ethnic offspring that's always of concern of these writers, particularly as it relates to the 70th week of Daniel or the time of Israel's trouble. And those now, those are all children of Abraham, literally and spiritually at this point, because they're trusting now in Christ as messianic converts in the tribulational period. But since he can't get to them, Satan turns his attention now to the Gentile converts, or at least those who aren't in Jerusalem fleeing now to Edom or wherever they're at, which I think Edom.

But what's happening here? How are they defined? The rest of the people who are also the offspring of the woman, they're not the offspring of Sarah or Abraham. They're not genetically. They're the offspring of the ultimate woman, of Eve. Right? And it says who are they? Those are "those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus." That's a key phrase and very helpful. Helpful in the sense that the people who are right with God, even if you trace this back to Abraham and you say, well, I'm a child of Abraham in the sense that I have faith in Christ and I may be a Gentile, not a literal child of Abraham, here's the thing, I am the child, the offspring of the repentant woman in the sense that I "keep God's commandments and I hold to the testimony of Jesus." Now, that's not chronological, but those go together.

First John is all about the fact that if you hold to the testimony of Jesus and what's that? That he came to seek sinners to save the loss, to give his life as a "ransom for many." I know I'm a sinner just like Eve, I need to repent and confess, and God will take care of my sin problem. I hold to Christ. Christ is the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" The ultimate kafar, the ultimate atonement is Christ. So I hold to the testimony of Jesus and what am I doing? I'm also then driven, according to the New Covenant promise, to keep the commandments of God. So our lives should be markedly different as First John says. And I'm seen to be according to First John Chapter 3 a child of God by the evidence of my keeping God's commandments. And if I don't, then I'm seen as a, hold on now, wait for it, "a child of the devil." That's how it's described in First John Chapter 3.



So the picture here, I know we haven't given the first point yet. I know that. What's happening here is that those literal reading, all humanity is an offspring of Eve. Figuratively here, though, I want to talk about those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus, they are repentant sinners. Satan is particularly mad at them. And there's hostility, enmity. Okay? Now, translators of the English Standard Version used a singular pronoun that there's also hostility here between her offspring, which they call a "he" in the next phrase, and the offspring of the enemy. Okay. Let's talk now Christologically. If you outline this in your head at least under number one, we've got a literal reading of the text, we've got a figurative reading of the text and then we have a Christological reading of the text, which is obviously the one who does the ultimate reversing of the problem of Satan is Christ. So the Christological reading of the text, which I think I can prove in the New Testament, is that this offspring of Eve, this woman, is not a plural, it's ultimately a singular, even though we share in that, we share in the victory, we're not the one that accomplished the victory. Is anyone still following us?

So I can say that he is right, which, by the way, he said, well, that's what the Christians say. Christians came up with this reading because the Hebrew doesn't call for a singular. You're right. You're right. You're right. But even in pre-Christian times, when we took this text from Hebrew into Greek, which was in the second and third century B.C. when Alexander the Great conquered the ancient world and he wanted in Alexandria, Egypt, to create this great library, he had to get all the important books. And there's no more important book than the 39 books of the Hebrew Old Testament. So we had 70 scholars together and something we call the Septuagint had them all brought together in Egypt to translate this into Greek. Well, you have to decide in this text if this is going to be a singular or a plural. And so they said it's a singular. So even before Christ arose the prediction of the Bible of the New Testament writers, the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, they were seeing this as a "he." He is going to crush the head of the tempter, of Satan, of the serpent. And that picture of "he" that's very important. And if you think about is Satan pitted against Christ well of course ultimately he is. That's the whole discussion in John Chapter 8. You guys are against me because Satan is against me.

And if you read Luke Chapter 4, when he goes out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, the devil puts his sights on Christ, he fails and you think, well, the temptations are over. But if you read the end of that pericope, the last line of that whole section, it says, but Satan then left him for a more "opportune time." Satan wasn't done setting Christ in his sights. And when we talk about the Antichrist at the end of time, as John says, the Antichrist is coming, you've heard that, but there are many antichrists already. The people in our culture who are against Christ, they are the offspring of the adversary. They are the ones in league with him. So all of that to say what? I started on this concept of enmity. You should know that the prediction is enmity, and enmity means you're always going to have people against Christ, Christological, against Christ's people. Yes. And then in kind of a tricky way, the enemy seems to be in league with non-Christians, and yet he just uses, abuses and he tosses out the people that he utilizes. So no one's really on Satan's team because Satan doesn't care



about his team. He uses people and then discards them. And ultimately he is discarded first in the Lake of Fire, then after the judgment, the rest of his team goes.

So we have opposition of the enemy toward humanity, toward Christians or followers of Christ, repentant sinners, and of course, against Christ himself. That enmity is predicted. I do these call-in shows and people call in and they ask questions that, and I've said on the radio this week several times, there are no dumb questions. I'm not saying this is a dumb question, but it's a question you should know better when they ask why is everything so bad. Right? I want this fixed and why is it this way? And I like to remind them it's this way because God predicted it would be this way, because he said it would be this way, he planned it to be this way. Right? I'd love to live in the four chapters of the Bible that I really, really like, but I don't. I live between the other 1,165 chapters or whatever it is, I live in this time of hostility. And if I'm going to stand with Christ who's the ultimate target of the enemy's vitriol, I'm going to be attacked as well. And so I know it's going to be hard. And all of humanity ultimately is going to suffer the penalty of death because Satan has had his way with humanity. And therefore I should expect it to be hard. Okay.

If I know that the prediction for the world is you're going to have hostilities here in this world. Satan, a very powerful being and all of his henchmen are going to be against you, his offspring, against YOU, right? Then I would expect it to be rough. And if people want to say why are things rough? I'm going to say because God promised they would be. My uncle has cancer and he's dying. Why would God do this? Because God promised it would be this way. That's what the curse is all about. It is going to be hard and we're going to get sick and we're going to die and Satan is going to attack us and it is going to be a bad time. And as I always say, predicted prophecy, the forecast, just like the weather forecasts, is not given to scare us. What do I always say? It's given to prepare us, three of you remember, given to prepare us.

If I were the commander-in-chief which is not a stretch to think about these days (audience laughing) let's just imagine I ran for office and I won. And so I'm the commander-in-chief. I come to Orange County and I say to you, I say, hey, welcome back. I used to pastor here, now I'm the commander-in-chief. I just want to let you know those drones over there in New Jersey. What's really going on is we're in the middle of a war, it's about to start and I'm declaring war this afternoon at 3:00. So I just want to give you the heads up. We're going to start a war. But here's the thing. I'm also divine, (which is not true), but I'm also divine and I know the war is going to be over and we're going to win ten years from now. We're going to win. So get ready, arm yourself. Get ready. Your house is probably going to be firebombed, it's going to be really rough. So all of you are going to be at war. War is going to come to our soil now. We're going to be at war with China, North Korea, whatever. They're all going to come and they're all going to attack us on our own soil. So get ready.

Now, if two years into the battle you said why in the world is this happening? Right? I hope someone next to you would say, weren't you in the service where the commander-in-chief told us we're going to go to war? Jesus said it, "In this world," John 16, "you will have," how many times do I have to quote it? What? Fun. Do you remember the passage in this world you will have fun. It'll be great. Right? Just follow me. It'll all be good. Not now it won't be good. "In



this world you'll have tribulation. But take heart; I've overcome the world." Okay. Can you at least write the first point down now that we're an hour and a half into the sermon? (audience laughing) Number one, "Don't Fret the Enemy's Interim Success," right? Don't fret the enemy's interim success, the hostility of the enemy, who really is winning in a sense. So much so that Jesus in John 16:11 says he is "the ruler of the world." Paul says in Second Corinthians Chapter 4 verse 4, he is "the god of this age." That's a big word "Theos." He's the god of this age. The Bible says in First John Chapter 5 that the whole world, I think it's verse 19, "The whole world lies in the power of the evil one." We should just know it's going to be a mess, right? We are in war, right? Merry Christmas. (audience laughing) This is the reality. And we send our Christmas cards, I just want you to know we're declaring tidings of comfort and joy. I know that's not a Bible verse, but you do understand. I guess it comes from Isaiah. It is a Bible verse in a sense, Isaiah 40. The idea of comfort, I'm bringing you a message that should comfort you. Why? Because you're in a mess right now. People you know are going to die. You're going to die. We're going to get sick. There's going to be war. First Peter Chapter 5, "Satan is prowling around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." And he's got his sights set on this: the offspring of the repentant woman.

So if you've sought atonement in Christ, you're going to be targeted. So we just can't fret. Jesus said it when he talked about the future, he said there are going to be "wars and rumors of wars." When I have people calling me on the radio show saying why are there so many wars? Because Jesus said that. Don't you understand? He said, it's going to happen. There's going to be "wars and rumors of wars," which means rumors of wars are supposed to frighten you. Now, they're not supposed to frighten us. We're supposed to not be jarred by bad news. But we know there's going to be bad news and there's going to be pestilence and earthquakes and famines. It's going to continue till the end. And yet the end is not here yet. That's what Jesus promised. So I just want to know that all of our Christmas cards, all of our declarations of tidings of joy are not for the here and now. The Coke commercials of my childhood about Christmas and Christmas trees and drinking, you know, caffeinated sugar water is not in any way the solution that God wanted to promise at Christmas. That is not the point. In the interim we're having trouble and get use to it.

But the good news, middle of verse 15 of Genesis 3, are you still with me on this? Look at the middle phrase here. And "he," the ultimate offspring, the Christological offspring of the woman, "will crush your head." God is talking to the serpent who really is Satan who just happened to hijack this animal. And he's saying, hey, you're really going to get your butt kicked and it's going to be an offspring of this woman. You're going to have someone coming from a woman who is going to take on human flesh and going to win, bloody your crushed head. Okay. Turn with me to Hebrews if you want to... "I thought this was to be a Christmas sermon." Okay, fine. I'll give you a Christmas passage. Well, how about this one? Hebrews Chapter 2. Let's start in verse 14. Hebrews Chapter 2 verse 14. Hebrews 2:14. Are you with me on this? "Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood." That's us. Now, of course, the context we're talking about is children who are descendants of Abraham. This is the book called Hebrews. Although we know the New Covenant promise is through him to bless ALL the families of the earth. We know now the Gentiles are included in this, and that's most of us in the room. So we are all the children of Eve. We're the offspring of Eve. We have flesh and



blood. He himself, the offspring, the ultimate offspring of Eve, "he himself likewise partook of the same things."

Now, there's no pre-existence for anyone in the room. Right? You're not Shirley MacLaine and if you were, I'm sorry because she's wrong, right? You did not pre-exist, right? The Mormons are wrong. You did not pre-exist. Only Christ is the pre-existing human because he lived eternally as the Son. And then he took on flesh and blood because we have flesh and blood. He must partake of the same thing, which now makes him subject to death. And in fact, "Through death." Whose death? His death. "He might destroy the one who has the power of death." I thought God has the power for everything. God of this world, ruler of this age, the one in charge, the power of the evil one, this world is dominated by the enemy. It says, "that is the devil." Okay, just think about that. Christ now puts on humanity. He comes from Eve. He comes from Sarah. He comes from David's descendant, Mary. He takes on humanity so that he might come and do what was promised in Genesis 3:15 part B, and that is to crush the enemy's head. That's the idea, and that is the picture. And he says he did that through his own death. And that death, by the way, is a reference to the heel being bloodied. And Jesus had his heel bloodied, literally on a cross he had his heel bloodied. And in fact, he had a life that was certainly pained by the enemy.

But through that, he ends up benefiting ALL of the repentant offspring of Eve. How? By "delivering all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery." Right? And here we can go back to, you know, high school and reading Hamlet and Hamlet here, sitting there after a terrible season of his life saying, "to be, or not to be," should I live or should I die? Right? And the Mike Fabarez paraphrase, here's what he's saying, right? It would be great to be done with the "slings and arrows" of this cruddy life but here's the deal. Here's the rub. If I think about killing myself what am I going to face? What kinds of terrors are on the other side? Because we know inherently we are sinners. We're going to meet our maker. What kind of judgment is there? "Aye, there's the rub." Therefore, Hamlet decides, the Prince of Denmark, I'm not going to kill myself because I don't know what lies beyond. What's that about? It's slavery to the fear of death.

And I've said this many times before, but in my line of work, I'm by a lot of bedsides right before people die. And I see many from our church who are right with the living God, they die with courage as the Bible says Paul does. They face life and death with courage. They face it with peace. They are freed from the slavery of death. But then I meet some people and they are kicking and clawing and scratching for life terrified of what's coming. And that's the difference between Christians and non-Christians. And the difference is the power of the enemy to make you afraid of judgment, being judged. Right? All of that's taken away. "There's no condemnation for those in Christ." First John Chapter 5. Romans 8:1, All that judgment has been removed from you. There's no judgment for you because the judgment has been laid on Christ in his death. He crushed the power of the enemy. And I love this line, "Delivered all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery."

Now if you want to make Satan mad here's the next line. This is really going to ramp this up, "For surely it is not angels that he helps." Well, I don't think the angels need help. Oh, there's



a group of them that need a lot of help because they rebelled and they rebelled with both eyes open with complete, unmitigated access to God. And here's what the Father decides in his redemptive wisdom. I'm not going to help you. But the offspring of Abraham, the human beings down there, particularly those, now let's align ourselves spiritually with Abraham, those who have faith as Romans Chapter 4 says Abraham had in the deliverance of God. We recognize as he quotes David in that great chapter of Romans 4, who sees sin for what it is and cries out for God's forgiveness. Abraham had faith and God then forgave him and made him righteous, imputing righteousness to him. And so he says, hey, if you're like that, if you're an offspring of Eve, a repentant sinner who like Abraham, an offspring of Abraham, so to speak, spiritually, who puts our trust in Christ, well then guess what? That's who he's going to help. Hey, Satan and your demons, sorry, sorry, sorry. You're done. And here is why Satan is so angry.

But Christ, of course, our great high priest, verse 17, "He had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become the merciful and faithful high priest in the service to God, to make a propitiation for the sins of the people." It's not a lamb. It's not a goat. It's not a bowl that takes away our sin. It is Christ dying as the one who is going to be nipped at, if you will, on the heels and have a heel bloodied on a cross so that you and I might be forgiven because our sins laid on him and his righteousness imputed to us, we become acceptable as repentant daughters and sons of Eve. That's a great, great truth. You should take courage in that. If I didn't give you the point yet and that's been my problem this weekend. Number two, "Take Courage in God's Long-Planned Victory." We're reading this morning a passage from Genesis 3. How early is that, man? That's as early as it gets. The only earlier thing for humanity, at least, is being created. Well, then they're tempted. Then they fall. Then before the guilt is even assuaged here is God saying, you know what? I'm going to crush the enemy and all his work, and I'm going to use someone from the line of humanity. Eve's offspring is going to crush you. And he's speaking directly to the enemy. Is it cloaked a little bit? Is it mysterious? Sure it is. Is there clarity in this verse? I don't have much clarity other than the fact that God is going to win through the offspring of Eve. That's a big deal.

And the only one who can do this for us according to the prophets of the Old Testament is God's strong arm himself. That's why he is in Daniel Chapter 7 not only LIKE a son of man, in that he actually has flesh and blood sharing in humanity to save people in humanity, but he's also divine, so divine that he should be worshiped. You don't worship anybody but God. Exodus 34 verse 14 makes it very clear you don't worship anybody but God. Exodus 20, the first three verses, the whole Decalogue, is based on the fact that there's only one God and we only worship one God. But in Daniel 7, when "one like a son of man," is presented before the throne, he's "given all dominion, all glory," and all peoples are supposed to bow to him. This is a big deal. And you ought to take courage that God had this all planned out before the guilt even started, to start to be minimized in Genesis Chapter 3, within the hour, so to speak.

Speaking of calls I got, I got a great call the other day about a question on the radio program. And that is someone asked, you know, Second Corinthians Chapter 4 verse 4, which, by the way, I quote all the time, that Satan, the god of this age, "the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers," the eyes of the unbelieving. That's called blindness, right? Spiritual

blindness, that they may not see "the glory of God in the face of Christ," the gospel. And yet in the passage it says, God then can speak things into existence, including "let there be light." So God makes the blind seeing. And that passage is about the problem is you got the compounding effort of the enemy trying to prevent people from getting saved. So that seems in that passage, the questioner asks, it seems like that's a negative thing to be blind. And I'm like, yeah, yeah, yeah, that's very clear in Second Corinthians.

Well, then they brought up John 9. Well, is this a contradiction? Because in John 9 it seems like Jesus wants us to be blind. Well, let's go to John 9 and sort this out because it's totally relevant to the sermon this weekend. John Chapter 9. If you know the passage, it starts with a man born blind and the apostles are asking what's this all about? And who sinned? And God tries to point out their bad theology but at the end he ends up healing this man who was born blind and the man gets called on the carpet ultimately by the synagogue that he attended. And the parents were called on the carpet. And ultimately the Pharisees were trying to say, you're not with Jesus, are you? That's the Mike Fabarez summary. Okay? At the end of this passage, after he gets kicked out, Jesus goes to find him. Look at verse 35. So Jesus finds the formerly blind man who had been cast out of the synagogue. And it says, "having found him, he said, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?'" There's Daniel 7. Do you believe in the God-man? The prophecies of the Old Testament regarding the Messiah. And the formerly blind man answered, verse 36, "Well, who is he, sir that I may believe in him?" Okay, well, that's probably a safe question. A good, safe response. Good answering the question with a question and not a bad thing in this case.

Verse 37, "And Jesus said to him, 'You have seen him,'" wink, wink, wink. Right? He hadn't seen his whole life, but now he's standing in front of one of the... I mean, the first face he saw in his whole life was Jesus, "You've seen him," and not only that, I know your ears are working and, "he's speaking to you right now." He's speaking to you. And this man, formerly blind man, said, "'I believe,' and he worshiped him," which, by the way, again, we're talking about the God-man, the Son of Man. The phrases all match, right? Daniel 7. That's great. You should worship the son of man, "one like the son of man," Jesus. "And Jesus said," you know, "for judgment I came into the world." And even if you know the Bible well, you might think of John Chapter 3. This seems like a contradiction. Well, that judgment is about condemnation, he's bringing his condemnation, his retribution, with him in his second Advent, not his first Advent, but for the first Advent, he did bring an assignment to get people to have a judgment, "Kriino," to make a judgment, to have a decision. And for this assessment, this discernment, I came into the world. What are you talking about? I'm not making that up. Making unseen distinctions. There is a seen distinction here in that he says, "those who do not see may see." Okay, I want blind people to see. Now you are a physically formerly blind person that now you see, I'm talking about spiritually blind people who don't see what you're now seeing, and that is that I'm the Messiah, I'm the Christ, you ought to be committed to me or to use the words of Revelation. Right? You are holding to the testimony of Jesus and working out of that, the fruit of that, you're keeping the commandments of God. I want people to see that. And that those who see may become blind.

And that's where the questioner on the radio program said, I don't get that part. Okay. And the answer's coming up in verse 40. "Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, 'Are we also blind?'" Are you kidding me, man? Do you think that we're blind? We're not blind. That's what they're saying. And certainly they did not think they were blind. They thought they were right about their assessment or their judgment of Christ. Christ sees this man make the right assessment. He says this is the judgment I came into the world for. We are now living in the age of God trying to get us to make the right judgment about Christ. And in this he says, You think you see and you look at me and you don't believe me. To quote John 8:44 And because you don't believe me and you don't accept me, you oppose me, and that means you're in league with the enemy. But I've come so that you can be blind. What does that mean? I want you to know that you're blind. Jesus said, now he shifts from metaphor to reality, "Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind,'" translation: if you said you were blind, if you admitted you were blind, if you knew that you didn't know the truth then, "you'd have no guilt." That's the problem. Your guilt is still on you because you think you see. "If you were blind, you'd have no guilt," because you would see me. Just like this man who was formerly blind is now seeing and now his sins are forgiven. Your sins are not forgiven. "But now you say, 'We see,' we're not blind. You say that, but "your guilt remains."

So what's the point? God wants to remove spiritual blindness so you can see Christ and grab onto the testimony of Christ. That's what he wants. But you can't do that until you know you're blind as you are, and no one's born seeing, we're all born blind. Or as it's put in Ephesians Chapter 2 verse 1, "You're all born dead in your transgressions and sins." God wants to make you, verse 5, "alive together with Christ." But you have to admit that you're blind. You have to admit you can't see. You have to be a repentant sinner. You have to come to the place where you know you have sinned and you need to be covered by the atoning work of Christ. That's the picture. And sadly, even though Jesus wants us to be freed from the blindness that Satan's trying to maintain in our lives, to become a Christian is to say I want to see and that means I'm blind. You can't get the remedy without knowing the problem. You're not going to wear braces if you think your teeth are straight, you're not going put on glasses if you think your eyesight's good. You have to admit that you have the problem. And this is what Jesus came for. And the good news is the victory of what happens when you trust in what Christ has said and you repent of your sins, that's the victory that Christ came many, many years after the promise in Genesis 3:15.

All right, back to our text, the last phrase, verse 15. "And you," Satan, "shall bruise his," the offspring of Eve, "his heel." Okay. Well, that didn't come without injury, right? Yeah, well, that's true. That's true. And usually we think in terms of Satan attacking Jesus and that's true. You want to talk about the Antichrist. Well, yeah, well, the Antichrist, THE Antichrist, the man of lawlessness, the one that the Bible speaks of in First Thessalonians, Second Thessalonians, the book of Revelation. If all that ends up coming onto the scene you better run because you're allied with Christ. Antichrist is certainly anti-Christ. But I want to end with you thinking about the fact that you're in the battle as well. You may be a repentant sinner but remember it's the repentant sinners who are also targets of the enemy. And you need to be one who recognizes you're engaged in the battle, that's how we started this message, and you need to be prepared for that. And knowing that we're all going to win, that's true. But



you're going to have to prepare for the battle. Number three, let's put it this way you need to "Prepare Daily to Endure the Battle" and you will win. If I say we're going to win in ten years, then here's the promise. Jesus says we're in a battle. We've declared war. I can't tell you where, and when we're going to win because it's a secret but just believe me, we're going to win. And we're waiting for that victory. It's going to happen.

Go with me real quick to Romans Chapter 16, to take this metaphor to its New Testament reality. We win with Christ. And so if I had a longer point, I would put it that way with Christ we endure the battle. With Christ we're preparing for victory, but we have to fight every single day. Romans 16 verse 19 might be a good reminder of what it is to hold to the testimony of Christ and to keep his commandments, keep God's commandments. And he says keep doing it, "For your obedience," this is Romans Chapter 16 verse 19, "For your obedience is known to all." Man, everyone sees your fruit, everyone sees your obedience, "so they rejoice over you," I'm so happy for the Christians in Rome. "But I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent to what is evil." Keep at it, right? "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet."

Here's the great eschatological hope of the people in Christ. Christ crushed the enemy at the cross, so much so that he could say "it's finished," you can't touch these. To quote First John 5... Let's go there. We got time for this verse, John Chapter 5. And even if we didn't, I'd take you there anyway. First John Chapter 5. I quoted verse 19. But let's look at the context. Just to read the meat in the sandwich, verse 19, "We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one." And that's a chilling verse. But look at verse 18. "We know that everyone who's been born of God does not keep on sinning." We hold to the testimony of Christ and we start obeying God's commandments, imperfectly, I understand that. But we very much care when we stumble and fall. "And he who was born of God protects him." "But he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him." Right? We end up being protected. Satan can't mess with you. So the victory has been won. We get forgiveness. He paid for our sins. "But we know we may be from God but the whole world lies in the power of the evil one."

Verse 20, "And we know that the Son of God has come and he's given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true," even though they called him in John Chapter 8 a liar, "and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life." That's why we worship him every Sunday. That's why we worship him I hope more than every Sunday. We are ones who believe in the Son of God, the Son of Man, "one like the son of man" to whom all of our dominion, all of our honor, all of our wealth, all of our authority, all of the glory is to go to. Because he is the one who solved the problem of our sin by crushing the enemy and saying you are not going to have these people enslaved to sin anymore. I'm going to cancel out the law of sin and death. Sin should equal death. I'm going to reverse all that by a new thing, by this law of the Spirit in life. I'm going to send my Spirit through Christ to work all this out, to then indwell these people and make them holy. And therefore they're going to get life even though they're sinners. That's a great arrangement.



But here in this passage we just need to recognize that the crushing of Satan in terms of his work, though it has been done, the effect of the battle continues. And you know how that works. There are times that are pivotal even in modern military warfare, where we know the war is over and yet it's playing itself out to the end. Right? And that's how it's going right now. The enemy is mad and he knows he's lost. But there's a continued assault upon the people of God. Don't expect it to go well for us. There's going to be a lot of trouble and it's going to end even in this domain of death, in our own death, unless Christ comes back first. But the reality is we have already won and soon all of this will be realized and Satan will be crushed under our feet. That's a great concept and a great idea that should lead us to celebrate and even send some Christmas cards back and forth and say that we win. And that's big. And you ought to see that.

And I've had some great people responding even to the introductory concept of this sermon to realize that this is the truth we need, whether it's Christmas time or whether it's just in the slog of just everyday life, we're going to win, even though Satan is out there trying to cause as much damage as possible and our brethren around the world are under attack just like we are. He gives us the equipment to endure this battle. I don't have time to get into any of that but at least jot it down for a homework assignment. Ephesians Chapter 6 verses 10 through 20, Ephesians Chapter 6 verses 10 through 20. Paul says there in trying to parallel a Roman soldier's armor to all the things we need to do, which in summary is basically more Bible, more prayer, more truth, more Christianity, more involvement in the body of Christ. That's what we need to be able to endure this thing. But we win. That's a good, good thing.

Back when I was teaching on angelology, I did try to find some pictures and most of the grand pictures of the Bible were painted, you know, in some of the earlier seasons of Western civilization and the ones that have survived at least. And I looked for pictures of Eve being tempted. And of course, I couldn't find any, well, I found three, I guess, at the end of the day that tried to depict the animal as something other than a snake before it was cursed in verse 14 of Genesis 3. Most of the pictures are totally wrong. I just know it because they're ugly animals and I know what was probably utilized as a vehicle for the enemy to tempt Eve, it probably was a nice and attractive animal. That appearance was transformed so that we have a natural enmity between ourselves and a snake. And if you don't. Sorry, but you should. It's like spiders. You should just react in apprehension to snakes.

When I was a young kid, Dad used to take us out into the desert. I just ran across a picture of me at five years old shooting tin cans out in the desert. And because we went out in the desert to go shooting back in the day, Dad knew there'd be snakes out there in the California desert. So he taught us a little axiom about snakes. And his favorite line about snakes was the only good snake is a dead snake. And so that rang around in my mind. And, you know, I'm no big game hunter or anything. I'm not even a small game hunter. I don't have any, you know, elk hanging on the wall in the game room of my house or anything like that. But I've killed some snakes in my day. I mean, I remember when I was a kid, I mean, I've shot snakes slithering across the path with my little Remington 22 bolt-action. I've shot them with a .38. I've cut their heads off with my little hatchet. I'm a snake killer. (audience laughing) Not recently but when I was a kid. Because in my mind that's all I thought about, right? The only



good snake is a dead snake. This snake could bite me and kill me. I mean, I wouldn't even take time to figure out whether it had a diamond-shaped head and whether it had venom sacs. It's just like it's a snake. Dad says, kill it. I'm going to kill it. And so that was my whole mindset.

Speaking of my childhood between ten years old and 12 years old, I used to shoot in this little NRA club and I tried to get good with my marksmanship. Every Saturday I was at the Long Beach Pistol Range practicing my shooting and trying to win awards and medals and stuff like that. So I did that in these formative years, 10 to 12, and a lot of interesting people hung out at the pistol range, including myself I suppose at that point. And a lot of them were law enforcement types like my Dad probably where he got that slogan, the only good snake is a dead snake, from the old, you know, the guys sitting around with their coffee and donuts and cigarettes and they're all talking about, you know, whatever life from a law enforcement perspective. But there are also some other oddballs that showed up at the range every Saturday. I met a bunch of them. One of them was a gal named Maria. And Maria came out, she brought her gun, she came to the range to shoot. I used to see her regularly. Well, one day I'm watching her and she's sitting there coming up to the line to go shooting and practice her, you know, marksmanship or whatever, there crawls out of her pocket a snake. And of course I have an axiom for that. The only good snake is a dead snake, that's what my dad says, so I wanted to help her out. But of course she wanted everyone to see it because she was a snake woman.

Now I admit I'd met cat ladies and, you know, dog moms and all that, but I was now being introduced to the snake woman, and I know there's more of them because there's some in our church I found out after preaching this message twice already. (audience laughing) But it's a weird group of people it seems. And at least the one that I met, Maria, when I was a kid. And so snake woman here, she would come with different snakes all the time on Saturday. She'd have a little snake in her pocket, she'd just like it to creep up her face and all this, and she'd bring bigger snakes. And it was just, it was a weird thing. And it reminds me of times when people who try to domesticate lions and animals and like that. Like, I don't think she died of a snake bite or anything, but, you know, it is at least metaphorically a picture of the world where people are very comfortable with the tempter, right? They're fine. Matter of fact, Satan is saying the things that still resonate. They resonated from the Garden in Eve's mind all the way to today. And that is, if you want to do it, just do it. Don't worry about the commandments of God. Live your life the way you want, and that's the world we live in. And here we are supposed to be people holding to the testimony of Jesus and keeping the commandments of God. And we're going to be of the theological variety, at least, of the only good snake is a dead snake.

Now, Satan is still slithering around this world doing his work, but his fate is sure, to quote Martin Luther, and the victory was won. And one day he'll have his head chopped off so to speak. He's already had it crushed. The mortal wound is bleeding out and he's going to be cast one day into the Lake of Fire. And all the people who loved warming up to the philosophy of the enemy will go with him. And we need to know our job is to snatch them from the fire, so to speak. Do the best we can at evangelism and use your Christmas cards and everything



else you got to do what you can to try and put the truth on the light. These are tidings and proclamations, publishing comfort and joy. The comfort is this world is a mess. But we are going to be plucked from this world and sanctified by God's grace to be a counter-cultural movement stuck in our churches and in our neighborhoods around the world, serving the one that everyone else likes to dismiss. And we are avoiding like the plague, the tempter, who is whispering in the ears of thousands, millions, right? Billions of people around the world saying do whatever you want.

And here's the good news, right? One day we'll live in a world without Satan, there will no longer be a tempter or any of his henchmen, his offspring running around, not even in the demonic realm or the human realm. And we'll have as Second Peter Chapter 3 says, "A world in which righteousness dwells," and we need to fight the good fight every single day, put on the armor of God, spend time together in the word, pray, doing all the disciplines that our grandparents used to talk about, that we are so over but we need to get back to. We need the disciplines of the Christian life. We need more time with God's people, more time studying God's Word, more time praying, more time doing the things that God says are going to help us avoid the enemy and be committed even in that passage, he goes on to say they were "faithful to Christ even unto death," no matter what it takes, no matter what it takes, because the head of the enemy has been crushed and one day he'll be thrown into the fire.

Let's pray. God, at Christmas time we talk about the coming of Christ and we think only about a manger and a baby and all the rest. But in fact, this was a grand cosmic battle of sin capturing people and enslaving them not just to death, but the fear of death. Because we even know in the core of our hearts that we going to have to face our creator. But we want our creator not to be our judge. We want our creator to be our redeemer. And so we look to the Son of God also called the Son of Man in Scripture, Christ's favorite appellation for himself in the gospels. And we say that we are ready to fall down, just like we saw in John Chapter 9 and worship you for being our savior and our king. God help us to realize this was not something you threw together after you had to go to the war room and figure it out, you had this plan from the very beginning. And in the Garden, you were telling the enemy you're on notice. It's over for you. A lot of history, a lot of chapters had to play themselves out until we finally get to Revelation Chapter 21 but we're looking forward to that day. So God, let us pray every day. Maranatha, come quickly. Let us pray your kingdom come and let's do the best work we can publishing tidings of comfort and joy to a world that desperately needs it.

In Jesus name. Amen.