

# The God of Peace Will Soon Crush Satan Underneath Your Feet

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[ 0 : 00 ] It's good to see you all here this morning on Palm Sunday.

We are back in Romans chapter 16. I promise you that I am trying to finish the book of Romans, but we are not going to quite finish it yet this morning. We will come back and finish this book out after Easter.

But this morning I want to finish what I started last week. Last week we started in a paragraph, verses 17 through 20, but we didn't quite touch upon verse 20.

And so that's where our focus will be this morning. But we are going to read for the sake of context and so that we can remember the connections between verse 20 and the verses that come before.

And so I want your eyes to fall on verse 17, and we will read down through, of course, verse 20.

Now, if you guys would join me in reading and standing together. The Apostle Paul writes, I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught.

[ 1 : 15 ] Avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. And by smooth talk and flattery, they deceive the hearts of the naive.

For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you. But I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil. The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Father, may your grace, the grace that comes to us through Jesus Christ, be with us this morning as your spirit opens our eyes and our hearts to see and treasure the truths of your word.

We pray in Christ's name. Amen. You guys take a seat. When I was a kid, I used to love to go to the local parades that we would have.

Now, I would guess that probably most of you in here have at some point in your life been to a small town parade. And as a kid, I loved going because what's not to love if you're a kid?

[ 2 : 26 ] I mean, there are fire trucks and police cars and if you're in a small town, there are tractors carrying all sorts of things and they literally throw candy at you as they go past you.

So there's, I can't think of anything as a small child that you wouldn't want and you wouldn't enjoy about those small town parades. But parades go way back in history.

Parades are not a uniquely American thing. They're not anything that have arisen newly in our culture. They've been around literally for thousands of years. In fact, in the ancient world, in the world of the times of both the Old and the New Testaments, it was very common for a king or for a general of an army upon returning home after a great victory to have a sort of parade awaiting them.

People would gather outside the gates to cheer them on as they came back into the city and inside the city walls, all along the streets, the people would line the streets as the king rode high in on his horse or was carried in on his carriage and as his army, dressed still in their battle gear, would walk behind them.

They would cheer them on and have these wonderful celebrations, these victory parades. Well, on Palm Sunday, we celebrate a parade of sorts, a kind of victory parade that in some ways was intended to mirror those victory parades of the kings and generals of the ancient world.

[ 3 : 50 ] We see Jesus approaching Jerusalem for one last time before his death. And as he approaches Jerusalem, we are told in all four Gospels that people lined the streets, they laid down their palm leaves, and they cheered and praised Jesus as he entered into the city.

Ryan read earlier from John chapter 12. I'd like you to hold your place in Romans and turn back to John chapter 12 so that we can see these verses again that he read at the beginning of our service. John chapter 12, beginning in verse 12.

Listen to this account. The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, Hosanna!

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel. So they are singing the praises of their coming King. They are recognizing Jesus to be the rightful King of Israel.

In Matthew's account, he's even more explicit. In Matthew's account, they proclaim Jesus to be the King from the line of David. This is who they have been waiting for.

[ 5 : 04 ] This is the descendant of David, the long-awaited descendant of David. In fact, the Gospel writers tell us that the people were, as they were praising, Jesus was riding into town on the foal of a donkey, and all of that was to fulfill a prophecy that had been given centuries earlier in the book of Zechariah about the King coming mounted on the foal of a donkey.

But if you look in its original context in Zechariah chapter 9, we are told that this great King from the line of David, that His rule would be from sea to sea, that His rule would be a worldwide rule, that He would bring peace to the nations.

And this is the very King that they are cheering for there outside the gates of Jerusalem as Jesus makes His final approach to the city.

He is the descendant of David. They have been waiting literally for centuries for Him to come. But in fact, they've been waiting longer than that for this descendant to come.

Because as we have seen before in other places as we've been walking through the book of Romans, we have seen this great truth that the promise given to David about a descendant of His who would rule on His throne forever was the continuation of a promise that had been given centuries before David even lived.

[ 6 : 33 ] Abraham was promised that through him a seed would be given, a descendant would come who would bring a blessing to all the families of the earth.

But even long before Abraham, we find the promise of a descendant, literally of a seed who would come and would set all things right.

If you look all the way back to the beginning of your Bible, back to Genesis chapter 3, you can see the beginnings of this promise of a seed or a descendant or an offspring who would come and set things right.

Of course, the beginning of Genesis recounts for us the creation of the entire world by God Himself. And then God creates man and woman in His image and He places them in a land called Eden within a garden in that land, a garden that would supply all of their needs and they had a simple task to keep the garden and then to spread their rule over the garden to the ends of the earth, to exercise dominion over the world, to be God's representatives, to be His image in the world.

And yet we know from reading the story that very early on they disobeyed God's Word. They failed to believe His Word and they fell into sin.

[ 7 : 55 ] The tempter came, they listened, they gave in, and they fell. And Adam's sin had repercussions not only for him and Eve but for all of humanity.

He and Eve were removed from the garden and removed from the land of Eden and kicked out. Death was to come to them. But not only to them but to their children and to their children's children and to their children's children's children all the way down to you and me.

Paul tells us in Romans 5, verse 12 that death came into the world through one man. Death came into the world through one man because of that one man's sin. He tells us that it was through one man that condemnation came to all men.

And so the sin of Adam affects all of us. And not even just us but the entire world, all of creation. Of course in Genesis chapter 3 we read of the fact that God not only cursed Adam and Eve but He cursed the ground itself.

Paul says in Romans chapter 8 that the entire creation is groaning in the pains of childbirth. He says that the creation was subjected to futility all because of Adam's sin.

[ 9 : 15 ] Judgment came. Judgment came to Adam and to Eve. Judgment came to their descendants. And judgment came to the entire created order because of what they did.

And judgment even came to the tempter himself. And in fact it's in the midst of God's pronouncing judgment upon the serpent that we find the first instance of this great promise of a seed, a descendant who would come and set things right and undo the work of the enemy in the garden itself and undo the effects of the sin of Adam.

Look down in Genesis chapter 3 verse 15 as God speaks to Satan to the serpent. He says, I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring.

He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel. This is the promise that the Apostle Paul has in mind in Romans chapter 16 verse 20.

And if you're familiar enough with this story and if you know the outlay of the Old Testament and how this promise of a seed who is to come weaves its way through the entire story of the Old Testament, then you won't be surprised to find Paul making a very clear reference back to this early promise.

[10:45] Look back in Romans 16 again. I want us to read this crucial verse again so that you can see it now having seen the promise in its original context so that you can see it now here in Romans 16.

Verse 20, The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

It's a clear reference back to that promise. But of course, he doesn't quote the promise directly, does he? It's not a direct quotation of the promise. He makes some crucial alterations to the wording of Genesis 3.15 so that he can draw out for us the implications of that promise for us as followers of Christ and for the Roman Christians in the circumstances in which they found themselves.

Remember, in this paragraph, he is warning them about the great dangers posed to the church by false teachers. Not necessarily any false teachers that he believes have already infiltrated the church at Rome.

We've seen no evidence of that in the book of Romans. But Paul is well aware because of his ministry of the general dangers posed by false teachers throughout all of time and in every place and in every church.

[12:03] They are lurking and they are coming. And he told us, as we saw last week, Paul tells us that we are to watch out for them and when we see them, we are to avoid them. They are dangerous.

They spread among us. They're deadly. And so in the face of that grave threat, Paul now gives us this sweet promise.

Do not fear. Do not worry. The very one who stands behind those false teachers, who stands behind all the evildoers in the world, the God of peace is coming to crush him and destroy him. He is coming and he will do it. What I want us to do this morning though is to focus upon the most significant changes that Paul makes to the quotation as he paraphrases it here in verse 20 so that we can see and understand how Paul is applying this ancient promise to the church today.

I see mainly three primary changes, three primary alterations that the apostle makes here. First of all, he says, of course, that it is the God of peace who will come and crush Satan.

[13:17] Now, in its original context, it is the seed who crushes Satan. But now he says the God of peace will crush Satan. And then secondly, he says that this will take place soon.

There's no mention of any time frame in Genesis chapter 3. But now he says it will happen soon. And then finally, the third alteration that I think we need to pay attention to is that he mentions that Satan will be crushed under your feet.

Originally, it was beneath the heel or the foot of the seed. But now it is beneath your feet, our feet. So as we think this morning, I want us to think about these crucial changes that he makes.

First of all, he says that the God of peace is coming to do this great work. Now, I want you to imagine for yourselves a situation in which some random stranger walks up to you and says, I want you to know that I am a peaceful man.

I'm all about peace. I am a man of peace. Okay, well, it's kind of weird for you to walk up and say that to me. I mean, who says that sort of thing today? Right? But then he says next, and I've come here to smash your head into pieces.

[14:25] Whoa. Hey, I thought you were all about peace. What do you mean you're going to smash my head into pieces? Well, that's essentially what the Apostle Paul is saying here. The God of peace is about to deal a death blow to his enemy.

He's going to crush the head of his enemy. What sense does that make? Why would Paul go out of his way to highlight that God is a God of peace in a verse in which he is proclaiming God's utter defeat and destruction of his greatest foe?

Why would he do that? It only makes sense if we can recall and we remember why it is that this has become necessary and how God is going to go about achieving the defeat of Satan himself.

You remember that Satan came into the garden to disrupt the order that God had set up. That was his goal all along to turn everything upon its head.

Adam and Eve had been created to be the image bearers of God and Satan's goal is to destroy the image of God, to mar it and to create havoc so that the image of God can no longer clearly shine forth to the rest of creation.

[15:47] That's his goal. It was his goal in the garden and it continues to be his goal throughout human history. He wants to prevent us from giving to God, from imaging forth God and giving to Him the glory that He rightfully deserves in all that He does and certainly in His work in the garden.

He was aiming to bring about the destruction of the image of God in man. That's his goal. He started a war. He began a great battle and God is determined to finish it, to put an end to it.

He did not start the war. But He will most certainly bring it to an end. But how does He do that? How does He go about accomplishing this great victory?

Well, recall the promise. In the original promise, the offspring of the woman, the seed of the woman, would crush the head of the serpent. But what would happen in the midst of that?

As He bruises the serpent's head, we are told that His own heel or His own foot in the process of defeating the serpent, He Himself would incur an injury.

[17:05] God has a very clear plan in mind from the beginning. And when the seed comes into the world, He comes into the world to accomplish that very plan.

So for instance, we read in 1 John 3, verse 8, whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil. For the devil has been sinning from the beginning.

There's a clear allusion back to Genesis 3. Now listen to this. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

That's why He has come. That's what He's going to do. That's what He's all about. The writer of Hebrews is even more clear. In Hebrews chapter 2, we come across these words.

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same things so that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death.

[18:05] That is the devil. So the Son of God, the seed promised long ago, comes into the world to destroy the devil in all of His work, but He will do it through His own death.

That is His plan. That's the bruising of His heel. No minor injury here. His death is required for this victory to be won. Paul gets even more specific.

I want you to turn to Colossians chapter 2. In Colossians chapter 2, Paul connects the work of Christ on the cross with the defeat of what he calls the rulers and authorities.

That's a way of speaking speaking of demonic beings, demonic hosts, headed of course by Satan himself. So what we're reading about is the means by which Christ defeats Satan.

Verse 13 of Colossians chapter 2. And you who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our trespasses by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.

[19:21] This He set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in Him.

You see what He's doing here? Satan's primary power is that of accusing people of sin. That's what His name means. The name Satan means the accuser.

And that's what He does. He loves accusations at human beings, those who are to bear the image of God so that He might set us on a collision course with God's holiness and God's justice.

That's His goal in everything that He does on Judgment Day to be able to point to us and say, they are a sinner. Now do what your holiness and justice require of you and judge this one made in your image.

And yet, God tells us very clearly that Christ canceled the record of debt that stood against us with all of its demands. That He brought about the forgiveness of all of our trespasses.

[20:33] All of that happening on the cross. Christ taking upon Himself the punishment due to us. Jesus bearing in His own body on the cross our sins and the wrath of His Father in our place.

And by so doing, He disarmed Satan and all of His hosts. He has no more accusation to love God's people. They're guilty of sin to which God responds.

See no sin upon them. But they did this. They did that. They... I've already dealt with that. I've already judged that sin.

I poured out my wrath on my Son for that very deed. He has been disarmed. He has been disarmed. So that when we think about how the God of peace goes about crushing the head of the serpent, we must remind ourselves at all times that the decisive defeat of Satan occurred on the cross of Christ.

It is done. When Jesus says it is finished, that's exactly what He means. Satan and all of His hosts have been decisively defeated on the cross of Christ.

[ 21 : 55 ] He came to do that work. He was born into the world for that very purpose. And in so doing, God has now once again established peace between Himself and His people.

So that the God of peace the One who in all that He does in defeating His enemy and crushing His head is ultimately bringing about a state of peace between Himself and His people.

That's what He is about. That's why Paul draws our attention to the peacekeeping ability of God in the midst of the crushing of the head of His enemy.

He will bring peace. He will show Himself to be the God of peace. How? He will crush the head of the serpent and disarm Him and remove all hostility between Himself and those who trust in Him. But there's an additional change that we saw in Romans 16 because we need to think beyond merely the work on the cross.

[ 23 : 08 ] We need to think beyond that because what we see in the New Testament and what we experience in our lives tells us that though Satan has in fact been decisively defeated by God, he is still at work.

He is still causing trouble. He is still tempting us. He is still prowling around like a roaring lion seeking to devour us.

He is still very much at work in the world. He is still defeated and yet he is still thrashing about. He is like a chicken with its head cut off.

You ever see that? It is weird. It is really weird. They are dead. I mean they are dead. You can't be alive if you don't have your head on your shoulders. They don't even have shoulders technically though.

But you can't be alive without your head. But when you cut a chicken's head off many times the body still keeps running around and doing all kinds of weird things.

[ 24 : 08 ] I think that is sort of how we ought to envision Satan. He is still running around and he is doing things but he has in fact been defeated. I really like John Piper's illustration of this. He says that the serpent has been defanged.

His fangs have been removed at the cross. He can no longer bring about death to the people of God. He can't do it but he will gum us all day long. Right? That is a great image of what he is doing and what he is about.

And so we need to see more than yes he has been defeated. But is there more to come? Because he is bothering me now. He is troubling me now.

Is there more to come? And yeah there is much more to come. And I think oddly enough that is communicated in this little word that the Apostle Paul adds soon.

soon. Now you might think what does the word soon have to do with the ultimate defeat of Satan? Why are you making that sort of connection?

[ 25 : 13 ] Well I am making that connection because this is how the New Testament writers frequently talk about the return of Christ judgment day in the final defeat of Satan himself.

They frequently speak of it in this language of being soon. quickly. It is coming. It is going to come upon you. And we scratch our heads and say soon huh?

Like 2000 years almost since he wrote this. What do you mean by soon? Well that wasn't something that that wasn't a charge that the Apostles were unaware of.

To even say soon for Paul when he is writing this letter in the mid to late 50's. Or in some of the other New Testament writings. To say soon even at that point in time is to say decades removed from the ascension of Jesus into heaven.

And so even to say soon in that context is somewhat confusing. What do you mean soon here? Turn over to 2 Peter. I'll show you what the Apostles mean when they use this kind of language.

[ 26 : 23 ] 2 Peter chapter 3. Peter acknowledges the problem of speaking of the imminent return of Jesus. He acknowledges it. Verse 4.

They will say, where is the promise of his coming? Where is he? Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.

Where's the evidence that he's actually coming back? I don't see it. Things just, they appear to be the same as they've been forever. Ever since our ancestors were alive, things are pretty much trucking along normally.

I don't see any evidence that he's coming back soon. What do you mean soon? It's been a long time. Soon. Peter has a response for that. Verse 8. Do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. But, now listen carefully, the day of the Lord will come like a thief and then the heavens will pass away with a roar and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

[ 27 : 48 ] The point of saying that the return of Christ is imminent, that it is soon or that he will come quickly is not actually to emphasize the timeline. The point is to emphasize it can happen at any moment.

And so every day we are to live our lives aware of the fact and the reality that Christ could be returning now. Any moment. Not that moment.

But any moment, right? Any moment he could come back. Like a thief he will come. You won't see him and you won't predict it and you won't be aware of it.

And if you're not careful, you'll think like these people in 2 Peter think. I don't see any evidence that he's coming. Everything's just trucking along normally. I don't think he's coming. Be very careful, Peter says.

Like a thief he will come. And so believers, followers of Jesus, are those who live every day with an expectation. Today may be the day. He may be coming back now.

[ 28 : 47 ] He may be coming back tomorrow. He may be coming back next week. But every day I live as if he's coming now. And that's encouraging when you're in the midst of a great battle.

Whether you're dealing with false teachers, or you're dealing with problems in your family, or you're dealing with cancer or heart disease or some other sort of illness, whatever it is that you're facing, it's important for you to keep in mind, God is not slow about fulfilling his promises.

And at any moment, at any moment, this world that seems to cause us so much pain and distress, it will be changed.

He will come and he will do a great work that will end the thrashing about and the gumming of the serpent of old with finality.

If you wonder and if you have any doubts about whether or not that's really going to take place, there is an apostle who saw it. He saw it. He saw the future. He looked ahead.

[ 29 : 53 ] He saw in a vision. And he saw what was going to happen. It's at the end of your Bible. Revelation chapter 20 verse 10. And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were.

And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. It's coming. It's certain. It's coming soon. Any moment you come like a thief and he will do this. And that enemy will be no more. He will be no more.

He will prowl no more. He will roar no more. He will devour no more. And it is most certainly coming. It's coming soon. Paul tells us though also the third thing that I want us to focus on is that Satan is going to be crushed under your feet.

[ 30 : 59 ] Which I think can help us now in the day to day of living and having to deal with his temptations and having to deal with the fact that he wants to bring us down.

It's helpful for us to read these words that he will be crushed underneath your feet. What does he mean precisely by that? And how can he say that?

I mean it's made very clear in Genesis 3.15 that the serpent will be defeated and crushed beneath the foot of the seed who is Jesus.

And it's very clear from the passages that we read in the New Testament that Jesus is in fact the one who defeats him and has defeated him on the cross. That's as clear as day.

So what does Paul mean when he says he's going to be crushed under your feet? Well you have to keep in mind what I think is one of the most common and yet one of the most overlooked realities in the theology of the New Testament.

[ 32 : 05 ] judgment. And that is something that theologians often refer to as union with Christ. And we don't talk about that a lot. We don't throw that terminology around very often and I think we probably should more often.

We use terms like justification to talk about salvation. Or we talk about our being adopted into God's family. We use these sorts of terms which we ought to use because they're all over the New Testament.

But there's also this category not only of being justified through faith in Christ but also through that faith being united to Him. You are in Him.

You belong to Him. And this is a category of thought that is scattered everywhere in the New Testament. And if you're not careful you will miss it. It's everywhere that we see believers referred to as being in Christ or in Jesus.

And I don't know if you guys can remember back to just a couple of weeks ago but when we were looking at the first half of chapter 16 all of these greetings one of the things that we saw there was that Paul refers back and he refers to the believers in Rome as being either in the Lord or in Christ or in Jesus seven times in his greetings to them.

[ 33 : 18 ] Not because he's trying to make some particular point but because that's just how he thinks about Christians. That's just how Paul thinks. If you're a Christian you're in Christ.

You're united to Him. You belong to Him and you're connected to Him in a vital, vital way. You are united. You are in union with Jesus if you've trusted with Him.

Which means that all of His victories are your victories. And that all of His winnings are your winnings. They belong to you in Him. This is good news for us and not just for the future.

This is good news for us every single day. Let me show you why. I'll show you from Romans. Turn over to Romans chapter 6. We could go to a lot of places in this book but I think one of the clearest is in Romans chapter 6.

In verse 5. Paul says, If we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His.

[ 34 : 28 ] How's Paul thinking here? Paul's thinking is that if you're united with Christ by faith, then you in a sense experience His death. His death counts as your death and you have in fact been crucified with Him.

You have died with Christ. And because of that, you will also live with Christ. If you are united with Him in death, you shall certainly, Paul says, be united with Him in life.

Resurrection awaits you because resurrection has already happened to Him. And if you are in Him, then you'll be made like Him. But that's not limited to resurrection day.

Notice what Paul goes on to say. Verse 6. We know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that, now this is important, in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

For the one who has died has been set free from sin. Now, if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him. What's he saying here?

[ 35 : 43 ] He's saying that union with Christ not only offers us forgiveness of sin, and not only promises us life in the future, but it also gives us freedom from sin now.

We've not just been set free from the guilt of our sin, we have been set free from the enslaving power of sin. And so that even right now, we get to experience the victory of Christ over Satan. So that when Paul says, He will be crushed under your feet, he means His victory belongs to you. And it belongs to you because your sins have been forgiven. It belongs to you because you have life awaiting you.

And it belongs to you because right now you can participate in and you can enjoy the fruit of freedom from sin. Sin to which you spent your whole life in bondage.

He has set you free from it. He has made you so that you can walk in righteousness. There is good news in being told that not only is the enemy crushed, he is crushed beneath our feet.

[ 36 : 51 ] And we have a part in his defeat and therefore we have a part in Christ's victory. This is good news through and through.

Peace has been brought to us. Peace. Life awaits us. And freedom is ours. Because God long ago determined that He would undo all that happened in the garden.

All of it. All of it rolled back. Every bit of it. So that Paul is able to say in Romans chapter 8 not only that the creation groans, not only that the creation is in bondage, and that it is experiencing futility, but he also says that the entire creation is waiting for the revealing of the sons of God.

All of creation is tied in to the redemptive work of Jesus. And all of it awaits the final, full, ultimate salvation of those who have been united to Jesus and adopted into God's family and made into sons of God.

This is good news because God decided at the very beginning that He was going to do this and now He has done all that is necessary to accomplish it. And if you are in Jesus, if you have repented of your sins, and if you have trusted in Him, it's all yours.

[ 38 : 27 ] It's all yours to be had even now. The only question is, are you in Him? And do you belong to Him?

Notice the end of verse 20. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

It's just a simple little blessing that we would probably read and pass over quickly. Except that it's rich.

It's the grace of our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the promised one. And it is with us if we are in Him.

Let's pray.