

*Genesis 3:9-20 9 Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" 10 So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself." 11 And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" 12 Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." 13 And the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." 14 So the LORD God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life. 15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel." 16 To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you." 17 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. 18 Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. 19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return." 20 And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.*

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There they sat in utter and complete perfection. Among the flowers, not one could be found to be wilting even the least bit. No bruises were found on the skin of any piece of fruit. Love between spouses was as natural as breathing. And best of all, no work was required to keep these blessings going. Enjoyment of those blessings was their main work in Eden, if you wish to call that work.

Then the serpent came with an idea. Maybe God didn't really know what He was talking about. Perhaps they could eat of the forbidden tree. Perhaps it would make them like God. So Eve took a bite, and Adam followed soon after.

God's voice rang out, "Where are you?" They ran and hid. You see when they ate that fruit, something, well everything changed. They were afraid to see God instead of being pleased to see him walking through the garden as He often did. They knew something had gone terribly wrong, and they were that something. What would God do to them? What would he say? Would they die as he had said?

God began to question them. Adam blamed Eve. Eve blamed the serpent. But now God would speak. What would he say? He began with the serpent, "Cursed are you above all animals; you will crawl on your belly. You will eat dust your entire life." Oh no, just as they had feared, God was beginning to hand out judgment. Oh, they should have never listened to that snake. God would surely kill them on the spot. He had asked only one thing of them, and they had disobeyed even that one request.

But then God said something that caught their ears. He told the serpent that Eve's Seed and the serpent's seed would be enemies of one another, but that the Seed of Eve would crush the serpent's head while the serpent would only be able to strike at Eve's Seed's ankle.

Adam and Eve paused. They listened as grace and mercy began to ring forth in the midst of the wrath which sin and disobedience had aroused. They couldn't believe it. The one that had deceived them would be defeated. And maybe, just maybe, if God's enemy would be defeated, then there was hope for them God's people. If God took care of the evil that they had just let enter the world, then there could be life with God again just like it has been before that fatal bite. Yes, God and he alone could restore Eden to paradise.

Oh sure, Adam and Eve each did receive punishment for their actions and would eventually die, but not immediately and not forever. And so they held in their hearts the promise they had heard. Eve's offspring would defeat the devil.

You can imagine the anticipation with which they awaited their first son. Finally that wrong done in the garden would be righted by her seed. That was God's promise. And finally, Eve's first son was born. She named him Cain, which means to possess. Yes, she now possessed the one that God had promised, the crusher himself, Cain.

It was some time later she sadly realized that her hopes were perhaps misguided. You see Cain and Able, her second son, seemed to have gotten in a disagreement about sacrifices. And then the awful news came. It started off bad. Able was dead. You can imagine the grief of a mother losing her child. But then the message got worse. Cain had killed him. Not Cain, not the promised one. Surely he was not a murderer. But he was, and so it was clear, he was not the one God had promised.

Perhaps it was Able that God meant. Well he was a good boy alright, but he was dead. He surely was not the one to crush the head of Satan either. Maybe Seth? No. Not him either. Eve gave birth to many sons but none lived up to the promise of God. None of them was the Crusher.

So Eve was left with two options. She could choose to believe that God was a liar or that His promised one was still coming. She knew God too well to accept the first. He had never said anything to her that wasn't true. So she believed. She believed and she waited for the One who would come and crush Satan's head. She waited. And we wait with her in this advent season. Oh come, oh come, Emmanuel.

Amen.