

**Satan Crushed**  
**Romans 16:20**  
**ABC 1/7/18**

Ever had one of those times when you're reading your Bible & you run across a vs you know you've read before but you have no memory of it? Rom 16:20 is one of those vss for me. Last week I had planned on preaching through vss 17-20, but didn't get to vs 20. This morning we'll be taking a look at it & see what God has for us in His Word in this short vs. Do you realize that throughout this book of Romans Paul hasn't yet mentioned the devil (except indirectly in 8:38 where he said that neither **angels, nor principalities** can separate us from the love of God in Christ)? In view of how much he treats the truth of justification in chapters 3-5 & the Christian life in chapters 6-8, that silence about Satan should, as John Piper says,

*caution us against making too much of the devil in how we fight the fight of faith.... Paul's silence till now does not mean that Satan is insignificant, or that he can be trifled with. But it does mean that we deal with Satan mainly indirectly rather than keeping him in our mind & going toe to toe.<sup>1</sup>*

Those who think of all struggles in terms of conflicts with the devil to be fought face-to-face must wonder how Paul could write 15 chapters about salvation & Christian living & not mention Satan at all. But now, near the end, Paul does mention Satan. What's he say about him? To use the words of Martin Luther, *His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure.*<sup>2</sup> Paul has one sentence to say about Satan in 16 chapters. **The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.** That's all. He get's one mention & it's one of defeat. God will crush him under our feet. That's good news, right? **17-20 PRAY**

How does Satan's doom fit into Paul's thoughts here? As we saw last week, Paul said in vss 17-18 we should watch out for people who cause **dissensions & hindrances** by teaching things that don't line up with the apostle's doctrine. Watch them & avoid them, Paul says. Why? Because the false teachers aren't always easy to spot with their smooth & flattering talk. They **deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting**. These aren't innocent intellectual mistakes but slavery to the appetites of their flesh. In vs 19 Paul commends the Romans for their obedience & mentions this as a reason why

<sup>1</sup> [www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-god-of-peace-will-soon-crush-satan-under-your-feet](http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-god-of-peace-will-soon-crush-satan-under-your-feet)

<sup>2</sup> *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*, hymn #26 in our hymnal

they need to be vigilant about false teaching & why he's rejoicing over them. He says, **your obedience has reached to all**. Don't you wish Paul could say that of us? Are we praying toward that end? That we'd be on guard against false teachers, be obedient to God & His Word, & that would be obvious to those who see us? Paul is telling them that if false teachers infiltrate & they're deceived by their heretical doctrines, then all the more reproach will come upon Christ because their obedience is known everywhere. The greater your reputation for obedience, the more damage can be done if you get sucked into false teaching. We all have the responsibility to be vigilant. The Romans' obedience brings Paul great joy. Remember, Paul hadn't planted this church. He'd never been there. He was simply joyful over the reputation of this church that walked in obedience to Jesus. The size of a church or the number of programs or the quality of the music aren't the important things. What is necessary is to be obedient to the commands of Jesus. We're still reviewing. Paul gives one more warning: even though the Romans were obedient & Paul found joy in that, he wants to be sure caution them to be **wise in what is good & innocent in what is evil** (19). He got this way of talking from Jesus, who said, **Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents & innocent as doves** (Mt 10:16). **Sheep in the midst of wolves** sounds like what Paul's warning about, right? Paul's cautioning against people departing from the biblical doctrine who talk like sheep but don't serve the Lord. They are wolves ready to devour the naïve. When it comes to wisdom, the discerning of false teaching & destructive behaviors, don't be naïve. Be wise; be mature. But when it comes to evil, erroneous destructive doctrines & appetites, be innocent. As we begin a new year, let's be that way. Let's make an effort to be wise as to what is good & innocent as to what is evil.

Vs 20 is a remarkable statement in that it contains 3 surprising statements, all in one sentence.

1. That the **God of peace** should crush anyone. This is surprising because crushing seems ruthless, & we don't easily reconcile crushing with peace or peacemaking. It doesn't seem to be what God or any good personality should do. How can a God of peace be belligerent?

2. That the crushing of Satan should be under **our feet**. This is surprising because Gen 3:15, which Paul's statement obviously refers to, says it is Jesus who will crush Satan: **He**, that is, Jesus, **will crush your head, & you will strike His heel**. What part do we have in it?

3. That this crushing is going to happen **soon**. This is surprising because Paul's words were written to Christians in Rome nearly 2,000 years ago, & Satan doesn't seem to be defeated yet.<sup>3</sup>

The point of vs 20 seems to be this: Do not be tricked or lured into any evil, whether it's false teaching or slavery to fleshly appetites, because the leader of evil, Satan, is going to be crushed. Don't get involved with the works of Satan, don't let him or his false teachers deceive you. Why? Because *his doom is sure*. Be encouraged to press on in your battle against all that is false & destructive because the father of all lies & destruction will be destroyed.

**1. God of Peace** In this context, where God will crush Satan, Paul calls Him **the God of peace**. He makes peace both between us & Him & peace between believers through the cross of Jesus (Eph 2:14). Robert Haldane writes:

*God is the God of peace, because He ... is the Author of all the peace that His people enjoy. Were it not for the overruling power of the Lord, His people would have no rest at any time in this world. But the Lord Jesus rules in the midst of His enemies, & He gives His people peace in the midst of their enemies. This shows us that we ought constantly to look to God for this peace. If we seek it not, but grow self-confident & secure, dangers & troubles may arise from every quarter. Our only security is God, & our duty is constantly to ask peace of Him in the midst of a world of trouble.... We ought, therefore, constantly to pray for peace to God's people all over the world....*

*Even in the churches there would be no peace, were it not for God's presence. Such is the cunning of Satan, & the remaining ignorance & corruption of the Lord's people, that Satan would keep them in continual broils, if God did not powerfully counteract him. God is here called the God of peace, with a peculiar reference to the factious persons against whom the believers were warned in the preceding connection.<sup>4</sup>*

In Himself God is peace. Think about that. He has no tension or stress. In the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit there is no mania; no paranoia; no delusion; no confusion; no frustration; no depression; no frenzy; no distractions; nothing cranky; no screws are loose; no bats lurk in the divine belfry; there is in God a total acceptance of what God is, an utter contentment with all His being, decrees & works of creation, providence, redemption & judgment. God is at peace with Himself.

<sup>3</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *Romans: The New Humanity*, Vol 4, p 1937

<sup>4</sup> *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans*, p 644

The relations between Father & Son & Spirit are undisturbed by any strife. There is no jealousy, no envy, no secret suspicions that one Person in the Godhead is getting more glory than He deserves. Total tranquility; total repose; total acceptance of the other Persons, that is what we find in the Godhead. Infinite mutual affection characterizes the Father, the Son, & the Holy Spirit. How they love one another & encourage one another & support one another. That is how God has always been. That is how God was in the beginning from all eternity, & when He came to create the world that is still how He was, & when man fell in Eden that is how God remained, & when He sent His Son to be our Savior, that is how He was, & when His Son hung in the darkness of Calvary the Father was not groaning in pain, He was at peace, & when the last trumpet shall sound & the dead rise & all the world gathered to the judgment, God will still be the **God of peace**, & when the eternal state begins God will forever & ever be the **God of peace**, utterly self-integrated, self-contained, self-sufficient & self-sufficing, needing no external helps to maintain His peace. On the other hand, our hearts are restless until we find our rest, our peace in God. Made by Him & made in His likeness we are made for Him & until we know Him as our God there is no peace in our hearts & no peace in the world.

**2. Satan Crushed** Paul seems to be giving a broad & glorious promise about the triumph of God through the church over the Satan. **The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.** It doesn't seem to be a reference to anything happening in the church in Rome. The troubles he describes are of an ongoing kind. We have to be vigilant for false teachers until the Lord returns. Paul is having them look ahead to the last great events of history when Satan is finally crushed & put in the pit (Rev 20:2-3) & then ultimately into the lake of fire (Rev 20:10). It's a warning not to put up with evil false doctrines because their father, the devil, will lose. This is also an encouragement to stay vigilant against the false teaching because the fountain of all error will one day be destroyed. When we speak of our salvation we sometimes say that we have been saved, are being saved, & one day will be saved. In a similar way, when we speak of Jesus' victory over Satan, it is possible to say that Satan has been defeated, that he is being defeated, & that he will be defeated. The 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> of these victories has been or will be by the Lord Jesus

Christ alone. We have no part in it. But we do have a part in the 2<sup>nd</sup> of these battles, Satan's being defeated, which is why Paul can say, **The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.** How is Satan crushed under our feet? Here's where the link between this text & Gen 3:15 is helpful. We must remember that in the Garden of Eden Satan had come to Eve offering her & Adam the knowledge of good & evil (Gen 3:5). In Rom 16:19 Paul has just told them, *I want you to be wise about what is good, & innocent about what is evil.* That is what must have suggested the Genesis story to him & led him to write what he did in vs 20. He must have been thinking that Satan offered the knowledge of good & evil by getting Adam & Eve to do evil. What Paul desires of the Christians is that they know & embrace the good but shun the evil, even though they'll be aware of its nature & know it's there. It's as we live like this that God will use us to crush Satan. In other words, this crushing of Satan has to do with our victory in the sphere of the knowledge of good & evil, the same sphere in which sin 1<sup>st</sup> came to Eve & Adam. & it has to do with our knowing & pursuing the good, regardless of the pain Satan or his followers may cause us because of it. In Rev 12:11 John writes of the victory of the saints over Satan, saying, **They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb & by the word of their testimony.** There are 2 parts to this victory: 1<sup>st</sup>, the victory achieved by Jesus through His death on the cross, & 2<sup>nd</sup>, the victory won by our testimony to the truth of God. As for the latter, it's still God's victory (God working in us) but it's our victory too, since it's achieved by our testimony. This is what Paul is saying in Romans. It is God who will crush Satan but He'll do it under our feet, that is, through us. But we can't forget that we must use God's weapons in this battle. The world has its weapons, but they are not ours. The weapons of the world are money, numbers, power, & politics. Our weapons are the Word of God & prayer: the Word of God, because it carries within it the power of God to demolish arguments & bring down strongholds (2 Cor 10:4-5); prayer, because even with the Word of God it requires the regenerating power of God to open blind minds to receive it & be persuaded of its truth. Again, it's the God of peace who will crush Satan. Our peace comes directly from divine warfare against the enemy of our souls. God wins peace for us through divine warfare. God is the source of our peace. God's peace comes to us through God's war. It

comes to us from God's victory in God's war against our enemy. Our peace is brought about by the victory of God, especially in the life & death & resurrection of Jesus. Paul wants us to be mindful of where the source of our peace is & he wants us to be mindful of how that peace has been won for us.

Let's step back & see what God's Word says about the defeat of Satan. Vs 20 obviously looks back to Gen 3:15 where God promised that the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent. God was proclaiming cosmic warfare, the final defeat of Satan & the renewal of the entire universe. 1 Jn 3:8 says, **The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.** So we can sum up the work of Christ as destroying Satan & it appears to happen in 3 stages.

**A. Satan Has Been Decisively Defeated in the Death & Resurrection of Christ.** Paul puts it like this in Col 2:14-15, **Jesus canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; & He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. When He had disarmed the rulers & authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.** By nailing our sins to the cross God took all the damning weapons out of the devil's hands. Now he can rage against us, but he cannot condemn. **Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us** (Rom 8:33-34; cf Jn 12:21; 16:11; Eph 1:22; Heb 2:14-15; 1 Jn 3:8).

**B. Satan Is Being Defeated Now by God Through Christians Who Obey & Proclaim the Word of God & Put on the Whole Armor of God.** Paul writes in Eph 6:12-13,

**For our struggle is not against flesh & blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, & having done everything, to stand firm** (cf 2 Cor 4:4-6; Rev 12:11).

So we embrace & apply the victory of Christ by faith in our battles against the devil, mainly by believing & applying the Word of God (cf 2 Tim 2:24-26). Until Christ returns the battle rages as the enemy seeks to deceive & devour Christians. We win the battles against him as we put on the full armor of God & resist his evil schemes (Eph 6:10-20; 2 Cor 2:11; Js 4:7; Rev 12:11).

Satan was crushed at the cross, he is being crushed by every victory we have over temptation, & he will be crushed in the final judgment when he's condemned forever in hell. It's as if Paul says, *Praise God for Satan's defeat in the past, in the present, & in the future.* Robert Haldane is again helpful here. He points out that the head of Satan was crushed by Christ alone in His death on Golgotha. The disarming, the triumph & the shaming of Satan was all accomplished by Christ alone there, once for all, but it is under our feet that the rest of him, his long body, is to be crushed until the end of the world. When you read the Acts of the Apostles then you hold a book that could be subtitled, *Satan Being Crushed under the Church's Feet.* On the day of Pentecost 3,000 men confess that Jesus is Lord & Satan is being crushed under the feet of the witnessing church. Then you read Philip taking the gospel to Samaria & again under his feet Satan is crushed. Then the leading opponent of our Lord, Saul is converted & again Satan is being crushed. Then into the Gentile world goes the church. The Holy Spirit falls on all those in Cornelius's house & Satan is crushed under their feet. Then the gospel moves on to Antioch & there Satan is crushed, & on to Pisidian, Antioch, Lystra, & Derbe, & to Greece & Rome & everywhere Christ builds His church, many confess Christ is Lord & in all those places Satan is crushed & the body of Christ thrives & grows.

**C. Satan Will Finally Be Vanquished & Thrown into the Lake of Fire Never to Deceive or Torment the World Again.** Paul says in 1 Cor 15:25 that Jesus **must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.** The defeat was decisive in the cross & resurrection, but the final blow will be delivered in the future when Christ puts all things clearly under his feet. There's the link with Rom 16:20, **under His feet.** Only here it's **under your feet.** The reason it's our feet is that we are in Christ & His triumphs will be our triumphs. While we shouldn't ignore Satan & we should respect his cunning & power, we shouldn't fear him. The Bible is clear that God will triumph & Satan will lose (1 Jn 4:4). The **God of peace** will do this; it is promised & certain because Satan loses at the beginning, in history, at the cross, & in eternity. This is as certain to happen as the fact that Christ already came & died & rose again. That's why Eph 1:22 speaks of all things as already under Christ's feet. God **put all things in subjection under His feet, & gave Him as head**

**over all things to the church.** Rom 16:20 is a glorious promise to struggling saints in situations & cities where it seems as if evil has the upper hand & Satan is well on his way to winning. This is a warning not to give up & change sides when someone comes along & gives a false gospel. It's an encouragement to keep on being vigilant against falsehood & idolatry & to **be wise in what is good & innocent in what is evil.** This promise is a comfort even to us today. We must be diligent to keep heresy from taking root in the church, but even when error seems to be winning, the Lord won't let it stay that way forever.

**3. Christ's Grace With Us** Until the final victory is complete, Christians are promised grace. **The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you** takes us back to Rom 1:7 which says, **Grace to you & peace from God our Father & the Lord Jesus Christ.** Grace runs through this letter because God's grace is at the heart of the gospel. False teachers invariably subvert the grace of God, either by teaching salvation by works or by promoting sinful living. Knowing & experiencing God's grace sustains us in the battle against the enemy. His grace motivates us to study His Word, which protects us against the deceptive lies of false teachers. Paul follows the promise of victory over Satan with this wish of grace. Jesus is our Lord to all who turn from sin to bow to Him as Lord & trust Him as their gracious Savior. Jesus has lived perfectly, died sacrificially, & risen victoriously to rescue His people from sin, death, & the devil. & to those who trust Him, He will forever give grace. Grace is unmerited favor; it's getting the opposite of what we deserve. When we deserved punishment, God gives forgiveness. When we deserve for God to give up on us, He perseveres with us. When we deserve nothing good, He gives all the goodness that Christ has earned & will forever give us Himself. That's grace & it only comes through our Lord Jesus. So if you've never turned from your way of living to follow Him, then I urge you to come to Him for grace today. Until the final victory comes & Satan is tossed into the Lake of Fire, we are promised God's grace for the battle. **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.** It arrives every day in just the right amount for the battles we face. It is new every morning. Great is His faithfulness. We depend entirely on grace at every point in our Christian journey. Without grace we are nothing. His sovereign, effectual grace is our only secure hope.



I want you to note 3 things about this benediction. The 1<sup>st</sup> thing is it emphasizes the favor & aid of Christ for His people. **The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.** It's the favor & aid of Christ that enables us to have victory over Satan. 2<sup>nd</sup>, this benediction or prayer or blessing is an act of worship. It acknowledges Christ as the source of grace. & 3<sup>rd</sup>, it is a witness to Jesus' divinity. He calls Jesus here, **Lord**, & he recognizes Jesus as the fountain of grace. Every good Jew knew that all grace & favor came from God, & God alone. & so, when Paul announces that Jesus is the source of grace, he's identifying Jesus as divine, the Son of God, deity, & he's recognizing His divinity & His Lordship. If God is the source of peace, then no peace He offers, or authors, will be at the expense of His truth.

Finally, how long until this victory comes? What's Paul's answer? **Soon!** That can have 2 meanings: quickly or without taking much time & near at hand. So the prophecy that God will crush Satan **soon** could mean either that when He does it, it'll happen quickly or the victory is just around the corner. Those who choose the 2<sup>nd</sup> meaning sometimes suggest that Paul was mistaken, since this was written almost 2,000 years ago & Satan is still very active. But what is the victory Paul is writing about? If it's that the victory of believers who live by the truth of God's Word & do the right & good thing, regardless of whatever consequences may come from it, then the victory is immediate, constant, widespread, & absolute. Because when we do the right thing, God is glorified & Satan is shown to be a failure. So every victory for us like this is a promise of victories yet to come. Every act of good in this life is a victory & points to Christ's final victory. Every quiet triumph of faith is a victory, a defeat of Satan, whose ultimate but ineffective weapon is death. He has been **a murderer from the beginning** (Jn 8:44). It points to the final victory of the resurrection. All trust in Christ points to faith in His return, when Satan & his angels will be totally destroyed. This is the great & final victory. It is for this that we both long & wait.

John Piper uses his imagination & says we might hear a conversation like this between Paul & the Lord who by His Spirit is guiding what Paul is writing.<sup>5</sup> It goes like this:

Paul: *O Lord, how long? How long until this great enemy is finally removed & the troubles of the church come to an end?*

---

<sup>5</sup> [www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-god-of-peace-will-soon-crush-satan-under-your-feet](http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-god-of-peace-will-soon-crush-satan-under-your-feet)

The Lord: It is not for you to know. My Father has the time fixed in His secret councils. & He is infinitely wise & infinitely good.

Paul: *Lord, could it be long, hundreds or even thousands of years?*

The Lord: & if it were a 1,000 years—or 2,000? Would that be long? A 1,000 years is like a day with me.

Paul: *How then should I speak of this coming triumph? What should I say about the time?*

The Lord: Be true to me the way I really am, & say what will help people be ready at My coming. They must not think that they can presume upon My delay. For if they do, they will drift into indifference & be snatched away.

Paul: *So do you mean, Lord, that I should say that You are coming soon even though I don't know that from our side whether it will be soon? That wouldn't be a mistake to say?*

The Lord: No that would not be a mistake. Say that. It will cause some to stumble, like many other things that I say. Scoffers will come & ridicule My promise. I know that. But if you give the impression that it will not be soon, you will do far more damage to the truth & to the souls of men than if you stay true to My timeless haste & help the people be always ready & full of hope.

Paul: *Lord, if a 1,000 years or 2,000 should pass & You do not come, what should Your people think who read these words in those days? Will they not think, "So many hundreds of years have come & gone, there is no reason to think it will be soon any more or that our lives will be interrupted by His appearing?"*

The Lord: They should remember that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. It will be sudden & unexpected. The world will be going on as usual (Lk 17:26-31). & sudden destruction will come upon them. Pray for them, Paul, that they not stumble over the word *soon*. Pray that they'll know that for Me it will be soon, & for them it will be sudden. Pray that they will understand that expecting it to be soon is the best way not to drift into indifference & be snatched away in destruction.

Paul: *Thank you, Lord. You know I would love for You to come back while I'm still alive. I would love to be clothed with life rather than stripped of my body in death. Come, Lord Jesus. Come quickly.*

The Lord: Paul, my dear servant, your desire for Me & My quick return is a great honor to Me. I would not want you to desire anything less. Finish this letter to the Romans & pray that those who come after you will have your same desire. & until then, never forget—and don't let the people forget—when I come I will crush Satan under your feet. My grace be with you.

I like that. Vs 20 is a promise to give us hope not to give up even when everything around us seems like Satan is winning. It's a promise that tells us not to cave into evil & to not stop caring about truth because the God of peace will crush Satan under our feet. The devil has already been defeated & we simply need to believe that truth, claim that victory in Christ, & live in the Spirit's

power. The song *A Mighty Fortress* is actually about our enemy the devil & how Jesus & His Word give us victory & security to run to.

*& though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,  
We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us:  
The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him;  
His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure,  
One little word shall fell him.*

*That word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them, abideth;  
The Spirit & the gifts are ours through Him Who with us sideth:  
Let goods & kindred go, this mortal life also;  
The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still,  
His kingdom is forever.<sup>6</sup>*

The prince of darkness, Satan, our enemy, is a loser. His doom is sure. In Christ, we can live a victorious life by the Spirit & we win even if enemies take this mortal life from us. Those are truths that can sustain us in whatever we face. I pray you are encouraged knowing that the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet. May the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. PRAY

Men come

---

<sup>6</sup> Vss 3-4 *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*

Jesus came to this world in order to become the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The Savior must die on the cross as our substitute; God laid on Him the iniquity of us all. God has had to deal with our sin & He's done so by imputing them all to His beloved Son. Christ died for our sins. On the cross the wrath of a sin-hating God was directed somewhere it had never been focused upon before that time, on His dearly beloved & sinless Son. God's wrath had been shown towards some of the angels when they rebelled against him. God's wrath had homed in on Adam & Eve when they sinned & He drove them out of the garden. On the whole world at the time of Noah God manifest His holy wrath towards what contradicts all He is as love & grace & He sent a great flood upon it. Kings & emperors, false prophets & priest, individuals & cities had all experienced His wrath, but never His Son, for Jesus remained as holy & sin-hating as his Father. But now what a great & mighty wonder appears. At Golgotha Christ is made sin! Jesus cries, **My God, My God why have you forsaken Me?** There is no reply. He is forsaken that we should be accepted. God's wrath is fully placated because it has been exhausted in the Holy One who willingly & lovingly bore it in our place. In our place condemned He stood; He sealed our pardon with his blood; bought us peace with God through dealing with our shame; reconciled the sin-hating Father by appeasing His wrath totally. Justice has been done. The full penalty of our sin has been paid by Christ. The enmity towards us has gone. That's what we remember as we come to the communion table. PRAY PASS

**The Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me."**

**In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.**