

# OpenTheo

## The Promise of Christmas

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### **Life and Books and Everything** - Clearly Reformed

In this episode of Life and Books and Everything, Kevin reads from his recent article in WORLD opinions about the curse in the garden, the hope and promise of Christ's coming, and our restoration to communion with God.

## Transcript

[Music] Greetings and salutations and Merry Christmas. This is a piece I wrote for World Opinions entitled The Promise of Christmas Amid curses and judgments. Here comes hope.

Earlier this year I discovered two podcasts that have quickly become favorites. American scandal and American history tellers. I'm sure I'm late to the party here and many of you already listen and both shows the narrator is Lindsey Graham, not the senator from South Carolina, different Lindsey Graham.

His voice and his style are unique. He tells each story by bringing you into the event as if you were there and by describing what you are experiencing in the present tense. So in that vein I want you to imagine it's almost noon.

The weather is ideal 72 degrees sunny slight breeze low humidity. You look around and everything you see is stunningly beautiful. The trees the grass the sky the river in front of you the hills farther in the distance they are all amazing.

The sound of birds overhead is pleasant the animals are all perfectly playing. You grab a banana from the tree peel the skin and take a bite. It's the best banana you've ever had.

You share one with your best friend standing next to you. You look at each other and smile. It's another perfect day in paradise.

Literally because your man you are Adam. If you're a woman you're Eve. As you stroll through the garden of Eden you enjoy each other you enjoy your surroundings you enjoy the presence of God in your midst.

It's been like this since the beginning you hope nothing will ever change. But just then you see a snake slither up to your feet. No reason to be alarmed snakes have never heard you before nothing has ever heard you before.

But then the snake talks. He talks to you about God about yourself and about a fruit that is forbidden by God but the snake wants you to eat. You don't know it at the time but the snake is lying to you.

But you've never been lied to before. You take the fruit and you eat. Both of you eat.

You would hope that nothing would ever change but now in an instant you know that the world will never be the same. All of a sudden everything looks different. You notice that you're naked.

It's embarrassing so you quickly stitch together some makeshift clothes to cover yourself. Then things get worse. As God starts to talk God has always been the best thing about the garden but now he sounds disappointed.

Angry. Concerned. He asks where you are and why you are hiding.

He asks who told you that you were naked. He asks about the fruit that you both ate. Then he speaks of curses.

He curses the serpent. He curses the ground. He tells you that work will be painful.

He tells you that childbirth will be painful. He tells you that pain has been found and paradise has been lost. But in the midst of all this bad news, this frightening news in the midst of this terrible evil day there is something else God says.

You aren't sure what to make of it at first. God says that a child will come from the woman and that this child will be at war with the snake. The snake will bruise the heel of the child but and this is what gets your attention.

The child will crush the head of the serpent. What a strange word and yet for the first time since taking a bite of the fruit you feel something like hope. For in the middle of curses and judgment it sounds like God is making a promise.

Over the next hundreds and thousands of years that promise will grow and grow until one day it enters the world as a tiny child. This is the one the weary world has been waiting for. The seed of the woman, Genesis 3.15, the child of Abraham, Genesis 12.3, a lion of the tribe of Judah, Genesis 49.10, a prophet like Moses, Deuteronomy 18, a royal son, Psalm 27 and a descendant of David, Psalm 132 verse 11.

This is the child long foretold. He is born of a virgin, Isaiah 7.14, a light to the Gentiles, Isaiah 9, and a shoot from the stump of Jesse, Isaiah 11. Born in Bethlehem, Micah 5, come out of Egypt, Hosea 11.1, this is the speaker of peace to the nations, the one

whose rule shall extend from sea to sea from the river Euphrates to the ends of the earth, Zachariah 9.10, this poor, whimpering child is the God of justice and the Lord come to his temple, Malachi 3.1. You can't see all that now as the two of you hang your shameful heads in the garden, but you want to believe, you have to believe what other hope do you have.

How else can your guilt be covered? Who else will save you from your sins? For some, the baby will be a Judean scandal, but for those who dare to hope in the promise, his coming and now his coming again will be the greatest story any history teller has ever told.

[Music]

(buzzing)