

The Humiliated Dust Licker: The Progressive Defeat of Satan

Joel Richardson

“You will crawl on your belly, and you will eat dust all the days of your life.” (Genesis 3:14)

The opening chapters of Genesis are unspeakably tragic. A garden once filled with intimacy, harmony, and holiness becomes a place of rebellion, shame, and judgment. Yet in the middle of the disaster, God speaks to the serpent, not merely the creature, but to Satan, the cosmic rebel working through it, and pronounces perpetual disgrace: *“On your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat.”*

Dust here becomes a symbol of humiliation and defeat. The exalted being who once walked among the stones of fire is cast down to crawl. The one who sought to rise above the throne of God will forever lick the dust.

But the curse is more than humiliation. It is also a prophecy—a promise of the serpent’s ultimate defeat. Determining precisely when that defeat occurs, or in what way, is an interesting discussion. Scripture essentially conveys Satan’s defeat in four steps, beginning at the dawn of time and ending with the eternal state.

Step One: The Garden - The Defeat Announced

From the beginning, the serpent’s fate was sealed. In the *protoevangelium*, God declared that the seed of the woman would crush the serpent’s head (Genesis 3:15). Already judged and humbled, the serpent’s destiny was written into Scripture. The battle was never one of equals.

Step Two: The Cross - The Decisive Blow

At the cross, this ancient prophecy leapt forward in fulfillment. Paul writes that Jesus “disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public display of them, having triumphed over them” (Colossians 2:15). The serpent struck the heel of the Messiah, but in the very act, his head was crushed. The cross was not a narrow escape but a cosmic conquest.



The Humiliation of the Dust Licker

Step Three: The Return of Christ - The Crushing at Armageddon

The Bible describes a day when Jesus will return, defeat the armies of the Beast, and seize the serpent once more. Satan will be bound, silenced, and restrained for a thousand years (Revelation 20:1–3). The noisy deceiver who has plagued the nations will be chained, his influence stopped.

Step Four: The Final Judgment - The Serpent's Eternal End

After the Millennium, Satan will be released briefly, only to be destroyed once and for all. He will be thrown into the lake of fire, never again to accuse, deceive, or corrupt (Revelation 20:10). The war that began in Eden will close with his ultimate disgrace. The dust-licker will never rise again.

Why This Matters for Us

We live in the awkward and difficult in-between—the serpent still tempts, still deceives, and still causes real harm. At times, it may even feel as though evil is prevailing. But the story of Scripture reminds us that Satan's defeat is progressive, irreversible, and guaranteed.

In Eden, it was predicted.

At the cross, it was secured.

At Christ's return, it will be enforced.

At the end of all things, it will be finalized.

Because Christ has come, Satan's doom is already sealed. He already crawls in the dust. His power is limited and his time is short. When the pains and storms of this age assail you, remember that because Jesus has come, because he has already triumphed, we can be confident and know that He will return to dwell with us forever. Until that day, we hang on and live in hopeful confidence, praying: *"Come, Lord Jesus. Come and finish the work. Crush the serpent once and for all."*



How You Have Fallen, O Lucifer