

Peace be with you, listening friends. We greet you in the name of God, the Lord of peace, who wants everyone to understand and submit to the way of righteousness that He has established, and have true peace with Him forever. We are happy to be able to return now to present your program *The Way of Righteousness*.

In the past two studies, we learned how God created the first two people. The Scripture says, *"God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."* Within the soul of the man and the woman, God placed a spirit capable of knowing God, and a heart capable of loving Him. God also entrusted them with a free will, so that they could choose for themselves whether or not to obey Him. We also saw that God placed man in the Garden of Paradise, a delightful garden He had prepared on the earth in a place called *Eden*. God gave the first man, **Adam**, and the first woman, **Eve**, everything they needed to live in peace and true prosperity. **God wanted people to know Him, love Him, and worship Him forever.**

Thus, we saw that God, in keeping with His perfect plan, placed a **simple test** before the man whom He had created. In the middle of the garden, God planted **the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**, and then commanded the man, saying, *"You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for [in the day that] you eat of it you will surely die."*

Why did God test Adam in this way? God wanted to show the condition of Adam's heart. God did not test Adam to cause him to sin, but to bless and strengthen him. The man whom God created had no faults and was without sin, but that does not mean he possessed a perfect love or a mature character. God placed a test before Adam, **to test his love**. If Adam stood the test and obeyed God, he would prove that he loved God in his heart. Also, if Adam stood the test and refused to sin, that test would strengthen him, because the Scriptures say that *"patience in times of trial produces character."*

Today then, we have come to the third chapter in the book of Genesis. This is the chapter

which shows us **how sin entered the world**. If we are familiar with the teaching of this chapter, then we know why the heart of man is crooked and evil, and why the world is full of suffering and pain.

We have already seen that, in the beginning, Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Paradise where they were perfectly satisfied and had everything for their enjoyment. The best thing of all was that **the Lord God visited the garden each day**, in the cool of the evening, so that He might talk with Adam and Eve. God visited them because He wanted to have a meaningful and wonderful relationship with them.

However, the Scriptures tell us that **someone else was also in the garden**. Do you know who it was? It was Satan, God's adversary, **the devil**. When God created the world and all that it contains, Satan was watching. When God gave Adam the commandment not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Satan was listening. And he did not stop at simply watching and listening, but he was also **weaving a plan** to spoil God's wonderful works. Satan planned to tempt man whom God had created so that he would disobey God, commit sin, be separated from God and perish! As for God, He knew all that Satan planned to do, but Adam and Eve knew nothing about it.

One day, when Adam and Eve were standing near the forbidden tree, Satan came as a **serpent**, and began to speak with them. Thus, the Scripture says: *"Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God really say: You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'"*

Let us pause here briefly. Why did Satan appear as a serpent? The Scripture gives us the answer when it says: *"the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made."* Satan is the tempter, and therefore presented himself as one who is very wise. Satan did not come to Adam and Eve in the form of a huge red dragon saying, "Peace be on you, Adam and Eve. I am the devil, the enemy of God! I have come today to tempt you to turn your back on God, the Lord of life, so that you might perish forever!"

Satan did not operate like that! How did he appear to them then? As a beautiful and wise creature. He chose to speak to them through a serpent, because at that time, before sin entered the world, the serpent was the craftiest of all the animals.

Satan is still like that. He is crafty. He habitually presents what he has to offer as a good thing. The Scriptures say: *"Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light."*

Consequently, God warns us in His Word, saying, *"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves."* **Satan is a deceiver.** That is why he appeared to Adam and Eve as a wise serpent. That is also why he preferred to talk with Eve, instead of with Adam himself, because he hoped that it would be easier to tempt Eve than Adam. Satan knew that God had given the commandment about the tree to Adam, before He created Eve. However, Eve also knew about God's commandment. The devil is highly intelligent and he knew exactly what he wanted to achieve. Satan thought if he could convince the woman to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, perhaps Adam would follow her in disobeying God.

Thus, the Scriptures say: *"The serpent said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'"* Did you hear what Satan said to Eve? He said, *"Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'"* Do you see what Satan was trying to do? He was attempting **to plant doubt** in the mind of Eve concerning the sure Word of God. That is why he said, *"Did God...say?" Did God really say...?"* Satan still uses this method. He **fights against the Word of Truth**, because he knows that the Word of God has the power to disarm him and discredit his lies. Satan knows that the truth dispels lies, as light dispels darkness.

Now let us listen to the rest of the conversation between the woman and the devil. The Scripture says:

"The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God has said, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you

*must not touch it, or you will die.' **You will not surely die,**' the serpent said to the woman. 'For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'*"

This is amazing! What did God say would happen to Adam and Eve if they ate of the forbidden tree? He said, "**You will die!**" What did Satan say? He said: "**You will not die!**" Thus, Satan did not stop at merely casting doubt upon God's Word, but he came right out and **denied it!** What do you think about this? Who was speaking the truth, God or Satan? The Holy Scriptures say that God is the True One and cannot lie. As for Satan, he does not hold to the truth, *"for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."*

However, we must also remember that Satan is not only **a liar**. He is also **a deceiver**. He is crafty; he takes what is **not true** and **mixes it** with what is **true**. We can see that in what Satan said to Eve and Adam, *"When you eat of [this tree] your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."* When Satan said, *"You will be like God!"* that was **a lie**, because the one who sins is not like God, but like Satan. But when Satan said, *"You will know good and evil"* he was speaking **the truth**, because after Adam and Eve sinned they came to know what evil is. However, Satan did not tell them of the bitterness that such knowledge would bring into their lives. God said, *"If you eat of the tree **you will surely die!**"* But Satan said, *"If you eat of the tree **you will not die!**"* Satan is a liar. That is why when God said, *"You will die!"* Satan denied it, saying, *"You will not die!"*

Now the moment had come for Adam and Eve to **choose between the Word of God and the word of Satan**. The choice before them was this: Would they believe the words of God or the words of Satan? Would they accept the truth or the lie? Would they follow the Lord of Light or the Lord of darkness?

Let us read on to see the choice they made. The Scriptures say: *"When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for*

gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it."

Amazing! God created man in His own image so that he could know Him, love Him and obey Him forever. But what did man do? Did he love God enough to obey His command? No! **He chose to disobey the God of love, and to follow Satan, the enemy of God and man!**

What a sad day this was! Our ancestors, Adam and Eve, turned their backs on the Lord God by eating the fruit of the tree that He had forbidden. An old African saying goes something like this: "An epidemic is not confined to the one from whom it originates!" In the same way, the Word of God says: "*Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned!*" Whether we like it or not, that is the way it is!

Another African proverb says "The leaping gazelle doesn't produce burrowing offspring." Like father, like son, you and I, and all people, take after Adam. We are born sinners and must die, because **we come from Adam**. The first man who disobeyed God's commandment is our forefather and **we are just like him**. Who among us can say that we have never disobeyed the commandments of God? Not a single one of us! So where did we inherit this nature in us that disobeys God's commandments? From Adam. Like a horrible contagious disease, **the sin that was in Adam has spread to us all**. Truly, "an epidemic is not confined to the one from whom it originates!"

However, all hope is not lost, because the Word of God also declares: "*Just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.*" We cannot look into it today, but in future lessons we will study the righteous way of salvation that God has established by which sinners might come back to God.

Friends, this has been your program *The Way of Righteousness*. Next time, we plan to continue in this important chapter to see what happened after Adam and Eve strayed from the way of righteousness, and followed the way of unrighteousness....God bless you as you remember this foundational truth:

"Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned!"

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