

# PARADISE LOST SERIES

## MESSAGE # 4

### "DOUBTING GOD"

When Adam and Eve chose to DOUBT GOD they started a tidal wave of sin that flood our lives to this day. This morning this is our 4<sup>th</sup> visit in our Paradise Lost Series and each of us present in this room is fallen. Listen to the tragic results of the Fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

When they began doubting God it was because they listened to the whisper of a dragon, the devil of old, our adversary, Satan.

- God pronounced the curse that would stalk the covenant for all time:
- Eve was tempted and Adam fell, but the seed was promised to crush the serpent.
- Abel was murdered, Cain was marked and the race was drowned because it was beyond hope, but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.
- The world united in religion against God so at Babel he confounded the languages, but He chose Abraham and the struggle intensified.
- The 12 tribes were corrupted and the true worship apostatized and God was silent for 400 years.
- The Promised Seed was born and the babies were murdered.
- The Christ was tempted in person by the dragon slanderer and murderous liar, but Jesus was triumphant.
- His ministry was dogged with false accusations and death threats, but He did not look away.
- Gethsemane was like a second Garden of Eden. The snake dripped venom again and the Savior sweat blood. But, he didn't turn back.

And then, on Calvary's Hill, He died...at last did Satan, the murderer, win? Was the Promised Seed done, the covenant over?

No, Hallelujah He Arose. Death and the Devil were vanquished and God's redemption plan's price was paid! And the doubters could return to God by grace.

## SATAN DOESN'T WANT YOU TO LISTEN TO GOD'S WORD TODAY

Satan is in an all out attack to make you and me doubt, reject and become deafened to the voice of Jesus. We are not listening to the voice of Jesus when

we think wrongly about God! Will you listen to that voice? Adam and Eve chose to not listen to God.

Instead of following God obediently in Paradise, Adam and Eve listened to the Devil, doubted God, disobeyed God's Word, fell into sin, and Paradise was lost. Please look with me at Rev 12:7-11. Stand, read, pray.

Back to our text this morning in our Paradise Lost series.

Genesis 3:1-5 Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'"<sup>2</sup> And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; <sup>3</sup> "but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.' "<sup>4</sup> Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.<sup>5</sup> "For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." NKJV

Every day we face pride the supreme temptation from Satan, because pride is at the heart of his own evil nature.

Pride is the ***sin of doubting*** with God,  
And humility is the ***virtue of trusting*** God.

Now back to Genesis 3. This is the crash site. This is where doubting began. As we sift through these verses and piece together the remains of the fall we can see just what lies Satan told. And, we can see if those lies or spiritual flaws are present and harming us today.

## SATAN'S FOUR LIES GENESIS 3

- ✓ **DOUBT GOD'S WORD** v. 1a "Has God indeed said". What Satan wants is for us to DOUBT GOD. We doubt God when we doubt His Word. Satan wants us to believe that God's Word is just like any other book. It is nice, helpful, but not absolute. He wants us to question God's Word, avoid God's Word, and neglect God's Word or whatever else it takes to get us out of regular contact with the Lord.
- ✓ **DOUBT GOD'S GOODNESS** v. 1b "You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" What Satan wants is for us to DOUBT GOD. We doubt God when we doubt His Goodness. Satan wants us to believe is that God is trying to hold out on us, He is robbing us of some good times, He is out of touch with our needs, He missed that disaster we just went through, He messed up on how He made us, He means well but doesn't quite have everything under control. This is a direct attack on

the character of God. One of the great truths about our God is the moral attribute of God we know as His GOODNESS.

- ✓ **DOUBT GOD'S AUTHORITY** v. 4 "You will not surely die". What Satan wants is for us to DOUBT GOD. We doubt God when we doubt His Authority. Satan wants us to believe is that God is not in charge – we are in charge; God isn't interested in our choices – are in charge; God will not make us accountable for our deeds – we are in charge.
- ✓ **DOUBT GOD'S PLAN** v. 5 "your eyes will be opened" What Satan wants is for us to DOUBT GOD. We doubt God when we doubt His Plan. Satan wants us to believe is that there is a better way to immortality, an easier way to glory, a quicker way to happiness. Again this is an attack upon the very Word of God. God's Word is sufficient. That is one of the characteristics God has given us about His Word. What the sufficiency of the Word means is "that everything God wants to tell us about how we should think about a particular doctrinal issue or to do in a particular situation is to be found in Scripture."<sup>1</sup> So God has a wonderful and perfect plan revealed in His Word. Every time we open His Word we can hear His plan. The question is not does God speak, it is do we listen?

Now, let's examine each of these lies closely. Each one, as all sin, is a direct attack upon the character of God.

1. **DOUBT GOD'S WORD** v. 1a "Has God indeed said". What Satan wants is for us to DOUBT GOD. We doubt God when we doubt His Word. Satan wants us to believe that God's Word is just like any other book. It is nice, helpful, but not absolute. He wants us to:
  - ✓ QUESTION God's Word,
  - ✓ AVOID God's Word,
  - ✓ NEGLECT God's Word or whatever else it takes to get us out of regular contact with the Lord.

Let me ask you this morning, is Satan's flaw showing up in your life this week? Do you doubt that God's Word is more important than even eating? Jeremiah said in 15:16 Thy words were found and I ate them, and Thy words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I have been called by Thy name, O LORD God of hosts.

2. **DOUBT GOD'S GOODNESS** v. 1b "You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" What Satan wants is for us to DOUBT GOD. We doubt God when we doubt His Goodness. Satan wants us to believe is that God is trying to hold out on us, He is robbing us of some good times, He is out of touch with our needs, He missed that disaster we just went through, He messed up on how He made us, He means well but doesn't quite have everything under control. This is a direct attack on the character of God.

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<sup>1</sup> Grudem, p. 130-31.

One of the great truths about our God is the moral attribute of God we know as His GOODNESS. Let me define that for you.

"The goodness of God means that God is the final standard of good, and all that God is and does is worthy of approval."<sup>2</sup>

- ✓ Psalm 34:8 O taste and see that the Lord is good; how blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!
- ✓ Psalm 84:11 For the Lord God is a sun and shield; The Lord gives grace and glory; No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.
- ✓ Psalm 119:68 Thou art good and doest good; teach me Thy statutes.
- ✓ Matthew 7:11 "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!
- ✓ Romans 8:28 and we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?
- ✓ 1 Thessalonians 5:18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
- ✓ Hebrews 12:10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness.
- ✓ James 1:17 every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow.

Thus in theological terms we can say: God's mercy is His goodness toward those in distress; God's grace is His goodness toward those who deserve only punishment; and God's patience is His goodness toward those who continue to sin over a period of time.

So we all have an Adam-solidarity. We all are in the same boat. John Donne, a great poetic mind and a Biblical mind, spoke of our solidarity this way:

No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were: any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bells tolls; it tolls for thee.<sup>3</sup>

Our Response<sup>4</sup>? *Appreciate the goodness of God.* Count your blessings. Learn not to take natural benefits, endowments and pleasures for granted;

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<sup>2</sup> Grudem, Systematic, p. 197.

<sup>3</sup> Hughes, R. Kent, *Preaching the Word: Romans—Righteousness From Heaven*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books) 1997.

<sup>4</sup> J. I. Packer, *Knowing God—20th Anniversary Edition*, (Downer's Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press) 1993.

learn to thank God for them all. Do not slight the Bible, or the gospel of Jesus Christ, by an attitude of casualness toward either. The Bible shows you a Savior who suffered and died in order that we sinners might be reconciled to God; Calvary is the measure of the goodness of God; lay it to heart. Ask yourself the psalmist's question—"How can I repay the LORD for all his goodness to me?" Seek grace to give his answer—"I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD. . . . O LORD, truly I am your servant; . . . I will fulfill my vows to the LORD" (Ps 116:12–18).

3. **DOUBT GOD'S AUTHORITY** v. 4 "You will not surely die". What Satan wants is for us to DOUBT GOD. We doubt God when we doubt His Authority. Satan wants us to believe is that God is not in charge – we are in charge; God isn't interested in our choices – are in charge; God will not make us accountable for our deeds – we are in charge.

The religion of works righteousness was begun with Satan's rebellion against God. As Lucifer, the highest of the angels, he attempted to usurp God's throne and glory by his own creaturely efforts (see Isa. 14:12-15; Luke 10:18). It was with the lure of self-effort that he tempted Eve, and indirectly Adam, to eat the forbidden fruit, deceiving them into thinking that by self-willed disobedience they could wrest divinity for themselves (Gen. 3:1-7). It was the same lure of self-willed effort that prompted Cain to offer his own kind of sacrifice to the Lord and to offer it in presumption rather than faith (4:3-7). In each case God rejected and condemned the self-willed efforts of His creatures. He cast Satan out of heaven, cast Adam and Eve out of the Garden, and refused to accept the faithless sacrifice of Cain.

## **ALL RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD APPEAL TO SELF-EFFORT**

- ✓ If one carefully studies the various religions and cults of the world, he will soon discover that, without exception, they are founded on some form of human effort and works righteousness. And without exception, all religions and cults that deal with the supernatural trace their origins to angels, extraterrestrial creatures, or other spirit beings. For example, the angel Moroni is said to have presented the Book of Mormon on golden plates to Joseph Smith; the angel Gabriel supposedly dictated the Koran to Muhammad; and it was on supposed angelic revelations to Mrs. Herbert Armstrong that Armstrongism (the Worldwide Church of God) was founded. In addition to that, every human religion and cult denies the Trinity, denies the sole divinity of Jesus among men, and denies His unique and complete sacrificial atonement for<sup>5</sup> man's sin.

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<sup>5</sup> MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

4. **DOUBT GOD'S PLAN** v. 5 "your eyes will be opened" What Satan wants is for us to DOUBT GOD. We doubt God when we doubt His Plan. Satan wants us to believe is that there is a better way to immortality, an easier way to glory, a quicker way to happiness. Again this is an attack upon the very Word of God. God's Word is sufficient. That is one of the characteristics God has given us about His Word. What the sufficiency of the Word means is "that everything God wants to tell us about how we should think about a particular doctrinal issue or to do in a particular situation is to be found in Scripture."<sup>6</sup> So God has a wonderful and perfect plan revealed in His Word. Every time we open His Word we can hear His plan. The question is not does God speak, it is do we listen?

## **WE MUST LISTEN TO GOD'S WORD**

GOD has FOUR truths that destroy Satan's 4 lies. We would do well to heed God's Word:

1. TRUST His Word. Psalm 119:89 Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven. NKJV
2. REST in His Goodness Psalm 73:1 Truly God is good to Israel, to such as are pure in heart. NKJV
3. SUBMIT to His Authority. James 4:7 therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. NKJV
4. FOLLOW His Plan Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. NKJV

What should be our response to these truths?

1. YIELD TO THE WORD! Christ and His Word are inextricable. You cannot divide Him from the Scriptures. He spoke them, defended them and affirmed them. To accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord is to yield to what He taught about Scripture. Scripture's authority is Christ's authority. To obey the Lord is to obey His Word. "He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God" (John 8:47). To trust in Christ is to say of Him as Peter did, "You have words of eternal life" (John 6:68).
2. TRUST THE WORD! The Old Testament cannot contain any errors. If there were any we would have to decide one of two things about Jesus Christ. Either He was ignorant of those errors, in which case He was not omniscient and was therefore not God. Or else He knew of the errors but denied them, in which case He would have been a liar and a hypocrite, and therefore not holy God.

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<sup>6</sup> Grudem, p. 130-31.

3. RECEIVE THE WORD! Always remembering that it is “the word implanted, which is able to save [our] souls” (James 1:21). We should receive it because of the infinite majesty of the Author and His authoritative statements about it. We should receive it because of the price that God paid to get it to us, and because it is the standard of truth, joy, blessing, and salvation. And we should receive it because not to receive it brings judgment.
4. EXALT THE WORD! Psalm 138:2 I will worship toward Your holy temple, And praise Your name For Your loving-kindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word above all Your name. (NKJV) Charles Spurgeon said, “Is the infallible revelation of the infallible Jehovah to be moderated, to be shaped, to be toned down to the fancies and fashions of the hour? God forbid us if we ever alter His Word.”  
Martin Luther never feared men, but when he stood up to preach he often felt his knees knock together under a sense of great responsibility to be true to the Word of God.
5. OBEY THE WORD! We should be diligent to present ourselves approved to God as workmen who do “not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). Like Jeremiah, we should find God’s words and eat them (Jeremiah. 15:16), and “let the word of Christ richly dwell within” us (Col. 3:16).
6. DEFEND THE WORD! We are to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). Like Jude, we should fight for the integrity, purity, and authority of Scripture. Spurgeon said, “*The everlasting gospel is worth preaching even if one stood on a burning fagot and addressed the crowds from a pulpit of flames. The truths revealed in Scripture are worth living for and they are worth dying for. I count myself thrice happy, to bear reproach for the sake of the faith. It is an honor of which I feel myself to be unworthy, and yet most truly I can say the words of our hymn, ‘Shall I to soothe the unholy throng, soften Thy truths and smooth my tongue to gain earth’s gilded toys, or flee the cross endured my God by Thee?’*”
7. SHARE THE WORD! We are to have as our constant goal to share the Word. 2 Timothy 4:1-2 I charge [you] therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom,: Preach the word! Be ready in season [and] out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching. (NKJV) Says Spurgeon again, “*I cannot speak out my whole heart on this theme which is so dear to me, but I would stir you all up to be instant in season and out of season in telling out the gospel message, especially to repeat such a word as this: ‘God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.’ Whisper it in the ear of the sick, shout it in the corner of the streets, write it on your tablet, send it forth from the press, but everywhere let this be your great motive and warrant. You preach the gospel because the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.*”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

