



Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

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“Where Art Thou?” — God’s Question To Humanity

By

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“Where art thou?” are the first words of God to mankind after sin (Gen. 3:9). This question is not a question of physical location, but of spiritual relation to God. All of us need to honestly evaluate our relationship to God. Where we are in relation to God is determined by where we are in relation to sin, and where we are in relation to sin is determined by where we are in relation to temptation. In this study, consideration will be given to the context in which this question appears, paying special attention to the temptation and sin which led to the separation of the first couple from God. From these observations it is hoped that we will better understand Satan’s tactics, that we will better realize the crushing consequences of sin, and that we will better appreciate fellowship with God.

The Setting

Before considering the details that led to the question, we must recognize the setting. God created the man and the woman and placed them in the ideal setting (Gen. 2:8-14). The Garden of Eden was the perfect

place for the purpose God had in creating it. In the midst of the Garden were two trees: the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:9). Concerning the trees of the Garden, God said, *“Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die”* (Gen. 2:16-17). The first man and the first woman lived in a peaceful and harmonious relationship with one another and with God (Gen. 2:25) – until sin entered.

The Temptation

“Where art thou?” in relation to temptation determines where we are in relation to sin. Let us look at Eve’s temptation. First, consider the tempter, *“Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made”* (Gen. 3:1a). Satan is the tempter who confronted the woman through the serpent (cf. 2 Cor. 11:3, 14; Rev. 12:9; 20:2). The serpent provided the ideal instrument through which Satan could deceive. The serpent was the

most “cunning” (NKJ) of all God’s creatures. The Hebrew word translated *“subtil”* is of itself a neutral word. It can be used in a good sense (“prudent” cf. Prov. 12:16, 23; 13:16; 14:8) or in an evil sense (“crafty” cf. Job 5:12; 15:5). Obviously, in this context the word reveals the most powerful device of Satan – cunning craftiness! Satan, not the serpent, is the real enemy (cf. Eph. 6:11-12), but by noting the serpent’s cunningness, Moses tells us that we better pay close attention to its words.

Second, consider the tactic of the tempter – to undermining the goodness of God. *“And he said unto the woman, Yeah, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”* (Gen. 3:1b). Satan’s question to Eve is designed to cast doubt on the benevolence of God and the validity of His word. *“Yeah, hath God said . . .”* is an expression of fake surprise. *“Why, you mean to tell me that God won’t allow you to eat of every tree in the garden?!”* is the sense of the tempter’s question. Satan very subtly changes God’s positive invitation, *“Of every tree*

... *thou mayest freely eat*" (Gen. 2:16), into a negative prohibition, "*Ye shall not eat of every tree.*" By this slight change of words, Satan is suggesting to the woman that God is strictly prohibitive and that He does not will good for mankind. The text itself does not reveal how Satan knew God's command, but one thing we can know is that a dangerous lie is one that contains some truth. In fact, the more truth a lie contains, the more dangerous it is. Satan added a "not" to what God said, and it made a world of difference!

Third, consider the target of the tempter – the mind. "*And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die*" (Gen. 3:2-3). Doubt has been successfully planted in Eve's mind. In attempting to correct Satan's words, the woman succumbs to his tactics. Eve adds to God's "*thou shalt not eat of it*" (Gen. 2:17) a prohibition against touching it. Eve waters down God's "*thou shalt surely die*" (Gen. 2:17) to "*lest ye die.*" With these very slight alterations, Eve moves away from God. Even she begins to think of God as harsh and too restrictive – even a touch is lethal! Satan now perceives that her defenses are weak and, therefore, blatantly contradicts God's word. "*Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye*

shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:4-5). Satan now claims that disobedience to God's word will actually bring blessing. He places before Eve the possibility of being more than she is ("*ye shall be as gods [God ASV, NKJ]*"). Satan could not have gotten by with this earlier, but now that he has placed the element of doubt and dissatisfaction within the mind of Eve, she is opened to all kinds of lies. Adding to the craftiness of Satan is the appearance that what he says actually comes true. Adam and Eve did not immediately die physically (cf. Gen. 5:5), and the first couple did, in a sense, become like God (cf. Gen. 3:22). But such is the appearance of temptation.

Satan can and does make sin look good and beneficial. Satan can and does make God seem harsh and repressive. As we look back upon the temptation, we might certainly think that Eve would have been better off not even giving Satan the time of day. But she did, and she allowed him to gradually move her away from God. But what about us? Where are we in relation to temptation? Have we allowed Satan to move us away from God? Once Satan has succeeded in controlling our mind, we will, like the first couple, succumb to sin and lose precious fellowship with God. May we ever be aware of the tempter's tactics and target so that we do not move ourselves away from God.

The Sins

Satan has convinced Eve of sin's seemingly commendable

virtues, "*And when the woman saw that the tree was good for good, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise . . .*" (Gen. 3:6a). The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was beautiful to look upon; it was physically appealing for nourishment; and it promised great transforming power. Indulgence in this fruit would give to Eve something she did not think she had – wisdom! Eve allowed her own mind, rather than God's word, to be her guide; therefore, when she perceived the advantage to be gained, "*she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also to her husband with her; and he did eat*" (Gen. 3:6b). Eve's sin can be seen in progressive steps: she "saw . . . took . . . ate . . . gave." In these steps we see the tragic working of "*the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*" (1 Jn. 2:16). No sooner than Eve sinned, she induced Adam to sin. She does not tempt him, but simply gives him the fruit, and he eats it without question.

Adam and Eve both sinned. When their sins are contrasted, we note two root elements; namely, unbelief and out right rebellion. Eve, having

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allowed herself to be led away by Satan's tactics, disbelieved God. She doubted His goodness, disbelieved His word, was dissatisfied with her perceived lack of wisdom, and she wanted herself and her husband to enjoy the imagined blessings. Adam, on the other hand, sinned in full knowledge of what he was doing. He ate with "his eyes wide open." This is at least one reason why the woman is never blamed for the entering of sin and its consequences into the world. Adam is the one through whom sin and its consequences entered (cf. 1 Cor. 15:21-22; Rom. 5:12, 17, 19). When Adam's sin is compared with Eve's sin another root element of sin is found; namely, pride. Pride is why Eve chose to eat of the tree in opposition to God's command. She thought she knew better than God concerning what was in her best interest. She was sure that God was mistaken. The tree would actually be good for her. Pride is also why Adam cast aside God's authority and knowingly ate. Pride is that which causes us to want to be more than God intended for us to be. Disbelief, pride, and rebellion, therefore, underlie the first sin which separated Adam and Eve from God.

The Effect Of Sin Upon One's Relationship To God

In the following verses (Gen. 3:7-13), God reveals the tragedy of sin. "Where art thou?" in relation to sin has now been determined by Adam and Eve's choice to eat. The first couple's eyes were opened, but what they "saw" was not what they

expected (Gen. 3:7). They now knew (i.e. experienced) both good and evil, but this was not the knowledge for which they bargained. Before, they only knew good, but now they know sin. Their innocence has fled and they are now ashamed to be seen by each other (and by God). The sewing of the fig leaves together shows their urgency and desperation to cover up. As a result, they try to hide from God (Gen. 3:8). But can anyone hide from God? The answer is a resounding "No!" (cf. P. 139:7-12; Jer. 23:24; Heb. 4:13).

The confrontation in the Garden shows the effects of sin from the human standpoint. First, sin brings shame. Nakedness signified a healthy and harmonious relationship (Gen. 2:25), but now, because of sin, it was something for which they were ashamed. Our usual response to shame, like Adam and Eve's, is to cover it up ourselves, but this only separates us further from God. Second, sin brings fear. Adam and Eve were terrified when they heard God in the Garden. The "voice [sound NKJ]" of God in the Garden was not unusual, for it showed God's consistent communion with them, but their reaction to Him on this occasion was not their normal response. This time, because of sin, they were afraid to meet God, so they ran and hid. Our usual response to fear is to run and hide, thinking that somehow sin will take care of itself over time. Such, however, will not remove our sin and will only result in a calloused conscience. Third, sin brings

guilt. Like Adam and Eve, our usual response to guilt is to shift the blame. Adam blamed God for giving him the woman, and Eve blamed the serpent (Gen. 3:12-13), whom God created (Gen. 3:1). Although the first couple admitted that they had sinned, they denied the guilt by "pointing the finger."

The question, "Where art thou?," reveals the gracious nature of God. "Where art thou?" is not a question so that God will know where they are hiding (He is omniscient!), but the question is really an invitation for Adam (and Eve) to return. God already knew where Adam was, but Adam needed to know for himself. God did not come to the Garden in great thundering power to condemn, but He came in the cool of the day with a question intended to bring back Adam (and Eve) from sin. "*Who told thee?*" and "*Hast thou eaten?*" (Gen. 3:11) were also questions to give Adam the opportunity to acknowledge and confess sin.

As sinners we must recognize where we are in relation to God before we can return to Him. "Where art thou?" in relation to God is a question that all of us must face. Sin divides us from God (Isa. 59:1-2), but sin is not the final word (cf. Gen. 3:15). Sins will be removed by God if we repent of them, confess them, and seek forgiveness from them according to His plan. May God help us not to hide, run, or blame others for our sins, but to receive cleansing through the blood of Jesus Christ. "Where art thou?!"



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Date _____ Phone _____

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Check Classes Desired Classes Marked with "*" Are Taught at Extension Locations

Hours	Course	Instructor	Credit
Monday			
___ 8:30 to 12:00	Hebrews & Galatians 21343	Davis	3
___ 1:00 to 4:15	Introduction to Old Testament 31379	Kenyon	3
___ 7:00 to 9:30 p.m.	1st & 2nd Corinthians 11335 (High Springs)*	Burgett	2½
___ 7:00 to 9:30 p.m.	Life of Christ 11317 (Sarasota)*	Stilwell	2½
Tuesday			
___ 8:30 to 12:00	English Grammar 11324	Kenyon	3
___ 1:00 to 4:15	Old Testament History 21339	Stilwell	3
___ 7:00 to 9:30 p.m.	Romans 21361 (Bushnell)*	Stearsman	2½
___ 7:00 to 9:30 p.m.	Topical Bible Studies 11344	Blackman	2½
___ 7:00 to 9:30 p.m.	Biblical Eschatology 31376 (Orlando)*	Kidwell	2½
Wednesday			
___ 8:30 to 12:00	Life of Paul 21362	Stearsman	3
___ 1:00 to 4:15	Topical Bible Studies 11344	Kenyon	3
Thursday			
___ 8:30 to 12:00	Ezekiel & Daniel 21314	Stearsman	3
___ 1:00 to 4:15	Song Leading 11333	Davidson	3
___ 7:00 to 9:30 p.m.	1st & 2nd Corinthians 11335 (Auburndale)*	Blackman	2½
___ 7:00 to 9:30 p.m.	Christian Evidences 21344 (Jacksonville)*	Mosher	2½
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___ 1:00 to 4:15	Sermon on the Mount 31380	Kenyon	3

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