



DID GOD REALLY SAY...DO NOT EAT THE FRUIT?

~ GENESIS 3:1-19 ~

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¹Now 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?'" ²The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³but God did say, '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.' " ⁴"You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵"For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶When 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. ⁷Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. ⁸Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" ¹⁰He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid. ¹¹And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" ¹²The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." ¹³Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." ¹⁴So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. ¹⁵And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." ¹⁶To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." ¹⁷To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. ¹⁸It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."



Grace, mercy and peace be to you from our gracious God,

"When in the height heaven was not named, And the earth beneath did not yet bear a name, And the primeval Apsu, who begat them, And chaos, Tiamut, the mother of them both Their waters were mingled together, And no field was formed, no marsh was to be seen; When of the gods none had been called into being, And none bore a name, and no destinies were ordained; Then were created the gods in the midst of heaven,"

If you guessed what I just read was a creation account of an ancient people, you are correct. It is the beginning of the creation account of the Sumerians, which is found on seven tablets of about 100+

lines each. Compare that to the first words of Genesis 1, which we read last week, **“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”** So simple, so clear. It doesn’t take long to realize there is a stark difference between the creation accounts of other civilizations and that of the first chapters of Genesis.

What is quite peculiar in my limited searching of other civilization’s accounts of the beginning of the world, they are all silent as to how this world became so sinful and disorderly. That’s probably because all of the other civilizations fashioned their gods after men. Men who lied, stole, cheated and murdered. It was just a fact of life, they never conceived of perfection, at least perfection as the way the Bible describes it. We know at the end of the six days of creation, God saw what he had made and he called it **“good,”** or God’s word for “perfect.”

Genesis three is where things change a little bit, Genesis three is where the devil comes into the picture and tempts Adam and Eve into sin and ruins the perfect world God created. And it all began with a simple question that promotes doubt, a question after which our summer series is named after: **“DID GOD REALLY SAY?”** **“DID GOD REALLY SAY TO NOT EAT THE FRUIT?”** The question Satan used to fell the human race thousands of years ago is being resurrected today, by those who question if this is an actual historical account or simply another legend or extended metaphor. And so we take a look at the question, DID GOD REALLY SAY TO NOT EAT THE FRUIT? We keep these two points in mind: How our answer affects

1. The fall of man
2. The fall of Satan

(1)

Let’s review the story up until this point. In Genesis two we are told that God placed two special trees in the Garden of Eden. They were allowed to eat from one of the trees – the tree of life, but were forbidden to eat from the other – the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But far from being a burden upon Adam and Eve, this was a way they could show their love and appreciation for God. Martin Luther described this tree as their church – they could worship at the tree by obeying what God commanded them. And so now enter the serpent. This was no ordinary snake however, but the devil himself who put the seed of doubt into Eve’s mind as to whether God was holding out on them.

What makes the devil so deceiving here is his ability to tell half-truths, the ability to convince you he’s looking out for your best interests. And Eve, like the rest of us have since then, succumbed to the devil’s trap – placing more trust in the words of the crafty serpent than in the Lord God who had made and created her. Even more startling was her husband Adam was right there with her going along with this, not stopping her, not stepping up and taking the lead. He too knew this was wrong, but like many husbands after him, probably did it in part to please his wife. This is certainly one place where saying “No” clearly would have been the better option.

But there was no turning back from their sin after they had bitten that fruit. And what is the first thing they noticed, they noticed they were naked, they were not wearing clothes, and they felt ashamed. It’s actually amusing as we hear God walking in the garden in the cool of the day and Adam and Eve scurry to find cover, as if they could possibly hide from God. And then, when God gave them the

opportunity to confess their sin, we see the blame game starting to take place. Adam: “God, it was this woman you put here with me, she gave me some fruit and I ate it, but it’s not my fault!” Eve: “God, it was the serpent, I’m not the one to blame, he tricked me, and I ate.” In the end, they admitted the truth, they had both eaten from that which God had forbidden. This is the fall of man.

What passes for modern “theology” may tell you that this is just another legend of a creation account. It is a parable, meant to teach us a higher principle, but it never really took place. They will say that we are all Adam, we are all Eve – when we do what God doesn’t want us to do. The lesson to be learned here then is to confess our sins to God instead of trying to hide from them like we are so apt to do. But does that really fit with what Scripture says? Does this chapter fit the description of a parable or a myth? And if it were a myth, how would that affect the fall of man?

The fall of man then becomes no more than a footnote, it really didn’t happen. The fall of man is reduced to something that we do every day when we sin by disobeying what God wants for us. Now at first, that may not seem like a big deal, we sin every day. So what’s the difference between saying a historical man named Adam sinned and this is just a story to share the way we sin every day? First of all it would deny the fact that we are born dead in sin, we call this original sin. Because sin isn’t just something we commit, sin is something that lives in us. We don’t have a choice to choose between good and evil like Adam and Eve did, the prophet Isaiah makes this very clear when he says, **“All your righteous acts are like filthy rags.”**

Even more despairing if the fall of man is reduced to a moralistic story about ourselves is the disconnect we have with God’s promise of forgiveness through one Savior. Paul in the book of Romans writes these words, **“For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.”** If one man did not start the snowball of sin, then what confidence would we have in these words, that the other man (Jesus Christ) would stop it and make us righteous?

So, DID GOD REALLY SAY DO NOT EAT THE FRUIT? If we are to take God and the Bible at its word then, “yes,” God really did say do not eat the fruit. There really was a first man named Adam, and a first woman named Eve. There really was a serpent in the garden who spoke and tempted Eve to eat fruit from a real tree, and the Lord God really did come walking in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day to meet with his creation.

(2)

The question we consider this morning may have a different flavor than the question the devil tempted Eve with, but it accomplishes the same result. The serpent asked, **“Did God really say you couldn’t eat from any of the trees in the garden,”** planting the seed of doubt into the mind of Eve. When the devil prompts people to ask the question, “DID GOD REALLY mean for Genesis 3 to be a historical account?” he plants the seed of doubt into the minds of believers and unbelievers alike.

The original seed of doubt sprouted, causing the fall into sin, and now from that seed of doubt spring up all sorts of others seeds of doubt. The original seed of doubt really explains a lot about why the world is the way it is. We have temptations that cause us to doubt God’s goodness – when we feel we know what makes us happy more than God does – so we neglect his Word, we follow after other gods of

money, sex, and pride, and how easy this is to see in others, but we see it even in Christians, even in us. Perhaps the most damaging thought a Christian can have is to think he can have it both ways – to think he can continue to hold onto his pet sin, and still be a follower of God. This cannot be!

Adam and Eve displayed this in their hiding from God in the Garden of Eden. They were quick to blame others, they were quick to make excuses, but that didn't excuse the fact that they disobeyed God when he said, "DO NOT EAT THE FRUIT from that tree." Just like our blames and our excuses do not excuse the fact that we sin and are deserving of nothing but punishment from God.

But we know God is also love. In fact his very name brings that out. When you see that name "LORD God" (It's recorded six times in these 19 verses) together it is talking about the just and merciful God, the God slow to anger and abounding in love. And so we see the LORD God taking action. First by calling to the serpent and giving not only a curse to him, but a promise to us. **"I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."** We understand this as the first gospel promise of a Savior to come. A Savior who would create that enmity (hostility) between believers and unbelievers. And so knowing GOD REALLY DID SAY DO NOT EAT THE FRUIT also gives us certainty of God's promise and the fall of Satan.

Notice who is the one performing the action. Adam and Eve will not create this hostility between themselves and the devil, God will. Likewise, we were not the ones who have a hostility to Satan and unbelievers, it was God who placed that hostility within us through the work of Christ. A hostility that was created when he placed faith in your heart – through baptism, through the hearing of his Word in a Bible story. That's probably one strong evidence of Christian faith – how do you view sin? Do you view the sins around you and the sins within you with disdain? Then you might be a believer.

But where really is this hostility? Sure there are times when this hostility is visible – a Christian baker refuses to bake a cake for homosexual wedding. But I really don't think you would face hostility when you would do your grocery shopping at Fry's or Safeway after service this morning. I don't think you would face open hostility between you and an unbelieving co-worker. That's because we do not have a hostility to unbelievers as individuals, because even God so loved the world (not just believers) that he sent his Son, so we too are to love our neighbors and co-workers. The hostility arises from the world as it remains adamant in sin and unbelief, and resents the simple child-like trust and humble service a Christian gives to his God and Savior in faith.

This is the effect of believing GOD REALLY DID SAY DO NOT EAT THE FRUIT. It means to trust and not doubt. To trust that he will hold us close to those promises. It is a trust that the words which are written on the pages of Holy Scripture mean what they say. For just as the creation account in Genesis chapter 1 is a historical account, so also is Genesis chapter 3 a historical account. An account that shows us GOD REALLY DID SAY, 'DO NOT EAT THE FRUIT' It's an account of the fall of man, and through the fall of Satan, the salvation of man. DID GOD REALLY SAY? Yes, Yes he did. Amen.