

Eve replies to the serpent

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[0 : 00] Will you turn with me now to the chapter that we were studying, Genesis chapter 3, and we'll continue studying that chapter this evening. Genesis chapter 3.

You remember last week how we saw how sin upsets the order that God had laid down in the world. How we saw that Eve, who was created in order to be man's companion, to be man's helpmeet, that we find that she becomes the instrument of his downfall.

That instead of being his helper, that she became the reason for his downfall. And we saw how the devil, that was the serpent, how he came with a very cunning question.

We saw how he phrased it, and by his very question, that he cast doubt on God's goodness. And he did it in a disarming way.

He appeared to ask a question, and that he was willing to be corrected. He didn't come, sort of, with a great rush. He came and asked, in a disarming way, is it really true that God won't let you eat of all the trees in the garden?

[1 : 17] As much as say, if I'm wrong, please correct me that I'm willing to be corrected. But at the same time, in his very question, he's insinuating that God is being unreasonable, that God is being selfish, by not allowing them to eat of all the trees in the garden.

And then we saw how the Bible means us to believe that the serpent was used by the devil. That the serpent and the devil, frequently throughout the Bible, are referred to as the same.

Remember we read in Revelation how John there refers to Satan, the devil, and the serpent as one. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world.

He was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And again, we're reading Revelations again, and he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.

That the Bible means us to believe, and to understand, and to accept that here, in some way that we cannot understand, the serpent was being used by the devil.

[2 : 32] And then we see that the serpent refused to say Lord. In that chapter we find that God was always called the Lord God.

But that was too much for the serpent, for the devil to say. He refused to say Lord, and he referred to God as God. And then this evening we come on to Eve's reply.

And we read straight away. 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, He shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

And the woman said unto the serpent, And Eve, there is your first mistake. She spoke to the serpent. She entered into a conversation with the serpent.

She began a discussion with the serpent. She engaged in a dialogue with the talking serpent. It was out of order. She should have known that this was out of order.

[3 : 40] This was not right. Because this serpent was assuming a position that it didn't have in the order of creation. This serpent was assuming to itself a gift that did not belong to the order of beings that it belonged to.

It was assuming the authority and the position that man had. Because man was the only one of the creatures that was allowed, that was given the gift of speech.

And the serpent was elevating itself to at least to being on a par with man. Adam had named the serpent. And we saw that a naming ceremony in the Bible meant that you were establishing authority over that person.

And we saw how in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, man wasn't allowed to give Jesus his name. He was told, his parents were told by the angel, Thou shalt call his name Jesus. Because nobody was allowed to have authority over Jesus. And we find that throughout the Bible, it's a sign or a symbol of authority over somebody when you give them a name. And we saw that Adam had named all creatures.

[4 : 50] It had given names to the serpent. And here was this serpent, not only placing himself on a par with man, but actually, as we see the question later on, and as we see what he says, he's actually placing himself above God because he begins to question God's dealings with Adam and Eve.

And he insinuates in the way that he talks that God was not wise in his commands. That there were flaws in God's character in the giving of his commands.

And Eve should have immediately denounced such sinful arrogance. But poor Eve fell into the trap of speaking and accepting on an equal level this prayer.

message from the devil. She was drawn into a debate on the evil one's terms. She began to talk. And the woman said unto this serpent.

We read in that passage from Matthew about when the Lord Jesus Christ was tempted. That he didn't enter into a dialogue with Satan at all. He entered into no dialogue. He reproached immediately with direct quotations from Scripture.

[6 : 02] And it's in the sentence that the three quotations that he takes in answer to the devil's temptation are from the book of Deuteronomy. The three of them are from the book of Deuteronomy. But he goes directly to the word of God to counteract with what the devil was saying.

And there's a lesson there for us. Because we often land ourselves in an awful lot of bother by engaging in a dialogue or in a conversation with people who are trying to impose error upon us.

And there's a great difference between a person who's genuinely seeking after the truth. Or who's genuinely misunderstanding things. And who comes genuinely to you trying to find out the truth.

There's a great difference between a person like that and one or two people who set out deliberately to try to impose error upon you.

Who come to your door in agreement with certain things that you say. But just like the serpent trying to inveigle you into a conversation or a dialogue. So that they will impose their error upon you.

[7 : 06] They only wish to engage in a conversation with you to push their own brand of lies upon you. And we should always be very careful about not entering into a conversation with them.

By immediately saying, thus saith the Lord, we are happy with what the Lord says. We accept what the Lord says. We accept what the Bible says. And there is no dialogue or discussion entered into.

Because we do finish up, an awful lot of us, in a tremendous panel, by trying to engage in a dialogue with people who are out and out trying to impose error upon us.

And this happened, and Eve said, and the woman said, this happened, 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.

Well, in that little sentence, we find that there are three things that Eve says that are wrong. Three things that she does that are wrong.

Because straight away she dismisses God's liberality. And she belittles it. God hath said about the permission that they had, about their ability and the liberality of obtaining the fruit of the garden, what his words were, of every tree of the garden, thou mayest freely eat except one.

[8 : 34] And he laid stress on the fact that they were allowed every tree. And he laid stress upon the fact that they were allowed to freely eat. It was a kind and open invitation to Adam and Eve to help themselves to abundant provision.

But Eve puts it this way. She says, we may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden. In other words, we may eat. In other words, it's almost a grudging permission that she's obtaining to eat.

There's no mention of every tree of the garden. There's no mention of the freeness that they were allowed to help themselves to the fruit. But she says, yes, we may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden.

It's definitely a grudging permission. That's one thing. And then she, the second thing is that she magnifies God's strictness. Because you'll notice that she adds there, neither shall ye touch it.

Because God hadn't said that. God had said that they weren't allowed to eat of it. And he didn't say anything about touching it. And many people we find down through the ages of time have done the

same thing.

[9 : 42] That they add on things that God has said. That God has already said. They imposed a man-made legality upon people. And that is wrong. Because Eve here says, neither shall ye touch it.

But God hadn't said that. It was an extra imposition. It was as if she was trying to impress the serpent with what she knew. That she was half agreeing with what the serpent said.

And yet she was trying to explain to him how well she understood God's law. And in so doing, she adds to it. And then the third thing she says is, Lest ye die.

Lest ye die. The penalty which God had said. Which God had laid down. Which God had threatened. Is watered down. Its forcefulness is weakened.

God had said, In the day that thou eatest thereof, Thou shalt surely die. But Eve says, Lest ye die.

[10 : 42] That there was a chance. It immediately opens up the avenue that there was a way of escape. That they didn't really, That it wasn't sort of obligatory upon them. It wasn't laid upon them all the time.

She takes away from the penalty which God had threatened. In the day that thou eatest thereof, Thou shalt surely die. God had said. And Eve said, Lest ye die.

You see again, Eve, Down through the ages of the church, Eve has had many successors in toning down God's justice. Men who preach peace, Peace when there is no peace.

Men who choose to preach what the people want to hear. Rather than the truth of God. Where they water down God's word. And we must always remember, That to give a wrong impression, Or to preach a half truth, Is a lie.

Is an absolute falsehood. And that we must adhere very closely, To the word of God. That's why we must be constantly going back to see, What does God say?

[11 : 40] That we mustn't accept people's views on things. We must go back and see what God himself says. But why did Eve play down God's kindness in the first place? Why did she add to the commands of God?

Why did she make the penalty for disobedience? Vague rather than definite, As God had laid down. Well, we are not awfully sure. But it definitely shows a heart, That is already all too willing, To turn to temptation.

You see, Eve was the crown of God's creation. Eve was the final finishing touch, To a whole creation, That was very good.

A creation that was set up, In order to glorify God. And Eve, you could say, Was the finishing touch. But her love, For God, Her confidence in God, Was wavering.

By giving room, To the insinuations of the serpent, She was now, She was now, On her way, To rebelling against God. She gave room, To those insinuations, In her mind.

[12 : 51] She allowed the devil, To engage in conversation with her. She gave him, A place in her mind, And by so doing, She came up, The narrow road, That she should have stuck to, In order to glorify God.

She was on the road, To rebelling against God, As soon as she began, To listen to the serpent. And the serpent, Said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die.

You notice how he's changed. Gone are the crafty insinuations. The crafty insinuations, Had done that work. She was now, Softened down a bit. The seeds of doubt, Had already been sown, In her mind.

And now the serpent, Having won the first round, Moves straight in, For the knockout. And he makes, A direct attack, Upon God's word. Instead of the insinuations, That we had earlier on, It's now a direct denial, Of God's word.

And in the original language, In the Hebrew, The negative, Of this phrase, Comes first. And it makes the denial, Very very forceful. So that a little translation would be, No, It is not true, That you will surely die.

[14 : 04] You see, He's come right out into the open, And now, It's a straight contest. Because Eve now knows, Where she stands. It's a straight contest, Between standing with God's truth, Or, Taking the devil's side.

Because it's a straightforward contest, Between God's word, And the serpent's word. And it's very interesting, That the very very first, Doctrine, That has been attacked, By the devil, Was the doctrine, Of judgment.

The first doctrine, To be denied, Is the doctrine of judgment. And do we not find, That in our churches, Throughout the land, And throughout the ages, Down below, That this doctrine, Was often attacked, And is still, Under attack.

Because the serpent here, Is attacking, The authority of God. He's denying, The authority of God. He's saying, What an awful lot, Of modern people say, You can't go through life, Under this harsh discipline.

You can't go through life, Imagining that God, Who made you. That God, Who made all, All that trouble, To make you. That one day, He will destroy you. If you disobey him, In this small thing. [15:17] No, No, That can't be so. Your life, Will be too constricted, Too cramped. You will never grow, Or blossom, Into a personality, That realizes, Its full potential. The law of God, Is not as important, As love.

The soul, Must be free, To develop, And express itself. And this can only be done, Through freedom and love. Narrowness, And restrictions, As the absolute authority, Of God imposes, Must be abandoned.

Is that not the argument, That we hear? Is that not the argument, That we hear constantly? That is the 20th century. That people must blossom, People must get freedom, People must, Must think their own things, People must, The children's school, Must be able to read, And find out about, All the religions, In order to pick their own.

Is that not a direct attack, On the authority of God? Does the Bible not tell us, You haven't got a right, To have your own opinion? I am the Lord, I change not.

You are the ones, That are changing, You are the ones, That can't understand, What I am telling you, But if you pray to me, If you turn to me, I will teach you, My ways.

[16:30] But constantly, God's own authority, Is being attacked, In this world. And, No matter how, We find the argument, Coming across, Whether it is a denial, Of everlasting judgment, Or of the everlasting damnation, Or not.

It is just a repetition, Of what the serpent, Is saying here, He shall not surely die. You see, An attack on God's authority. And then the serpent, Very cunningly, Makes it appear, That he has, A slightly better knowledge, Of God, Than Eve has.

He strikes, At God's very motives. He passes judgment, On God. And he says, That God is jealous, In case Adam and Eve, Become like himself.

Because he says, For God knows, That in the day, That ye eat thereof, Ye shall be as God, Knowing good and evil. You see, He is saying, There is not, Out of a loving concern, For you, That God has given you, This command.

But out of a jealousy, Lest you become like himself. The fruit of the tree, Will not harm you. Rather, It will do you good. It will give you, A knowledge of good and evil.

[17:45] A knowledge, So that you will be, Like God himself. God doesn't want you, To be wise. God doesn't want you, To know all the things, That he knows. That's why he's forbidden, You this tree.

The fruit of this tree. But if you eat of, The fruit of this tree, Then you'll be like God himself. And he speaks, An enormous, Down to Eve here, In a way that he speaks, Down to her, As much as I know God, Better than you do.

And as God is jealous. And God here, Is set up, By the serpent, As an enemy, Of man. He's set up, As an enemy of man, Who must be outwitted.

And is that not, The same way, As the tempter, Of our souls, Follows, Today. He follows the same pattern.

How many people, Who have not turned, To the Lord, Look upon God, As their enemy. They look upon, The church, As their enemy. They look upon, The minister, As their enemy. And that is straight, From the devil.

[18:49] If they can only, Open their eyes, And see. God is their friend. God loves them, So much that he gave, His only begotten son, In order that they would live. The church, Has been put here, By the Lord Jesus Christ, To do good.

The minister, Is a signpost, Pointing them, To the Lord Jesus Christ, Who alone, Can save them, Throughout all eternity. And yet the devil, Has put in their minds, That the church, Is their enemy, That Christ, Is the enemy, That the minister, That the Christian, Is the enemy.

And this is the way, The devil does it. He denies the truth, Of the word of God, By putting forward, His own interpretation of it. He portrays, And present God's love, In such a way, That the world believes, That God is the enemy.

You see, Loving service to God, Is presented by the world, As, A constriction. It's, It's something that, That restricts your movement.

It's something that keeps you, From being free. It's as if the Christians, Were bound by chains. As if the Christians, Were bound by, A lack of freedom. So that loving service, To God, That we give lovingly, Wishing that we could, Do more for the Lord, Is portrayed by the evil one, And by the world, As slavery.

[20 : 14] And we are, Constantly told, To go out, And master life, By jumping straight, Into the things of the world. The youngsters are taught in school, To become somebody, To assert themselves, And to go, Into the world, And to taste, And see, Of everything that's in the world, And they call this, Suicidal leap, A leap into life.

They say, That you've got to live, That you're allowed to live, That you must have life. And the way they do it is, By indulging, In all the things, That the Bible forbids.

Again, It's very similar, To Christ's soul temptations, All these things, Will I give you, Remember the devil said. What the, World, And the evil one is saying, Telling the Christian, Abandon, The blind attitude of faith.

Strike out on your own, Don't be held down, By any restrictions. Make up your own mind, Go ahead, Head first into the world, You will become as God, Knowing good and evil.

What a lie, When you look at it. Man's puny attempt, To outwit God. To do the exact opposite, Of God tells us to do, In love.

[21 : 37] What insolent pride, Man has, When he decides, To go his own way. Human arrogance, Which began, From the evil one.

From the serpent. Can you see the difference, Between a man of the world, And the Lord Jesus Christ, When you set up, The attitude, Of the Lord Jesus Christ, And the human arrogance, Of mankind.

Philippians 2, Let this mind be in you, Which was also in Christ Jesus, Who made himself, Of no reputation, And took upon him, The form of a servant, And was made, And was made, In the likeness of men, And being found, In fashion as a man, He humbled himself, And became obedient, And to death, Even the death, Of the cross.

See the attitude, The different attitude, The Lord Jesus Christ, In all humility, Came to die, On the cross of Calvary, In order that sinners, Such as we are, Will be saved, But man, In his human arrogance, Says, I'll go out, I'll conquer the world, I will get divine right, To take over the whole world, And I will make up a mind, Who I will worship, I will make up a mind, Whether I'll have a God or not, And we stride off, Thinking that we're taking life, As it were, Without rush, A suicidal leap into hell, That's all it is, And yet God, Stands there, Weeping, And says, Why will you die, Turn ye, Turn ye, Why will you die, And he gives us this chapter, In order to show us, The way that the evil one works, In order to show us, That things haven't changed, To warn us, And to show us, The dangers, Of all of the things, That we've been studying, Of entering into dialogue, With an evil one, Of retaining, Any insinuations, Of evil in our head, Or of accepting, Anything at all, That he plaques, From the loving concern, That God has, For his own people, Amen, Let us pray, The Lord of heaven and earth, We give thee thanks, That we are able to gather, Around thine own word, And more and more, We ask for a light from heaven, To shine upon the written word, That we may see, And understand, What it means, We pray, That it will be a word of life, To each one of us, That not only, Will we be able to understand it, But that we will enjoy, Listening to it, And understanding it, More and more, Be with each one of us, We pray, Each one with individual problems, We pray especially, At this time, For those who are dejected, And downcast, Over the latest news, About the employment situation, In this area, Oh Lord God, We ask that thou, Scent into their hearts, That they may really know,

[24 : 29] And hear, The Lord Jesus Christ's own words, As he tells the people, Do not be concerned, So much about the things, Of the world, Look at the lilies, They toil not, They spin not, Yet Solomon in all his glory, Was not arrayed, Like one of these, Help us to see, We ask of thee, That everything that comes our way, Is a test, And that the Lord, Is looking to see, Am I really the king, In that passion's heart, Help us Lord, To throw ourselves upon thee, Build up our strength, And our trust in thee, So no matter if things look black, And if things look very despairing, And no

matter if our people, Around about us, And our loved ones are despondent, We pray for the strength, To say, Jesus Christ is king, In my heart, And we ask, That thou would reward their faith, By drawing very near to them, And making them strong, In the Lord, Remember us all, We pray, Remember all those, That call upon thee, We remember particularly,

Those who do not, Those who go their own way, Those who seek, After the things of the world, And ignore, The love of God, Which calls them to himself, Bless all those, Who are lonely, And those who are, Needing assistance, At all times, Those who are sick, And in hospital, Remember the Dick family, You have just left us, We pray that God's blessing, Will go with them, That they will find, That pastures new, Are blessed by thyself, Or for thou dost say, In thine own word, That you are going, To prepare a place for them, Help them to see, That thou dost do that, In this world as well, As in the world to come, We ask all this, In Jesus' own name, Amen.