

Rebellion on Earth Genesis 2-3:1

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In the last message, we talked about Lucifer's fall from Heaven and his determination to bring down mankind in order to obtain worship for himself.

We learned that Satan's blinding ambition and sinful pride had prompted him to deny God's authority and to attack God's very nature – a nature that is the very essence of Truth and Love.

He was so blinded that he developed a distorted view of these two essential components of the Divine nature.

We can only imagine just how completely this once-glorious cherub must have been corrupted by his own splendor.

He had such a burning ambition to reach the top that he was incredibly resentful when he was impeded in his ambitions.

This resulted in that age-old sinful attitude, so familiar in human relationships, *"He doesn't want me to reach my full potential and succeed because he wants all the glory!"*

Therefore, if he couldn't reign in heaven, he'd deceive Adam and Eve into the same delusion that precipitated his own fall by replacing the image of God in man with his own.

And that's precisely what our archenemy did by using tactics that come naturally to him: deceit, delusion, and lies.

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In the beginning, God placed man in a beautiful garden filled with every kind of luscious fruit tree for him to enjoy.

In this environment, man could rejoice in his God-given freewill. As God said in Genesis 3:16, *“You are free to eat from any tree in the garden...”*

But of course, that privilege was dependent on man respecting God’s will when He declared in Genesis 2:17, *“You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil...”*

Surely this was not a difficult task. Man only had to abstain from eating the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Just one tree!! Just as the path to salvation is narrow, so is the path to sin. Only one tree among so many!

What made this tree so special? According to Genesis 2:9, all the trees God placed in the garden were pleasing to the eye and good for food but unlike the others, this tree wasn’t for the maintenance of human life or sensual pleasure.

It was a tree to make men wise. A tree that would give man the knowledge of good and evil. Notice, God didn’t say that the fruit would make man a god.

It would just give man the knowledge of good and evil; as God Himself had.

But taking the fruit in disobedience would destroy man. Genesis 2:17, *“For when you eat from it you will certainly die.”* Disobeying God always results in consequences, regardless if it is Adam or us.

That’s why any act of rebellion against God estranges man from his Creator who is the only source of life. Corruption and death, both spiritually and physically, are the inevitable outcome of disobedience.

Romans 6:23, *“The wages of sin is death.”* Romans 5:12, *“...just as sin entered the world through one man and death through sin, in this way death passed upon all men because all have sinned.”*

Another consequence was that man would be condemned to continue indefinitely in a similar state of disobedience.

Because... when he gained the knowledge of good and evil, man lacked any capacity to differentiate between the two.

This lack of understanding corrupted his values and rendered him unable to reject evil and choose the good!

Isaiah 5:20, *“Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.”*

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That’s why the wisdom of this earth is both demonic and unspiritual. It results in, among other things, envy and selfish ambition.

James 1:17 contrasts this envy and selfish ambition with heavenly wisdom, which is *“Pure, peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.”*

Think of Satan’s lie as counterfeit currency. Counterfeit banknotes are so varied that it’s impossible to distinguish between them all. But banks have learned how to recognize false currency.

They train their employees to know exactly what a genuine note looks and feels like! Anything and everything different to that is a counterfeit.

Man, as he walked and talked with God, should have learned to understand and appreciate the true nature of goodness, like bank employees who understood what a genuine banknote resembled.

If man had reached that stage, he would never have been taken in by Satan's lies and deception. He would have spotted the counterfeit easily.

But, taking the fruit in disobedience had so thoroughly confused good with evil in man's consciousness, that his mind was now receptive to Satan's lie that God isn't entirely trustworthy, or worthy of worship.

Satan has gotten mankind to believe he is their true benefactor. That his values are the ones that make sense in this world.

And to enforce this deadly delusion, Satan set out to foster a spirit of pride and independence in man. Satan knew this was the best way to achieve his goal.

After all, it was the same spirit that led to his own fall from glory. Therefore, man's belief and faith in God would have to be undermined.

So, the first thing Satan did was to cast into doubt the ultimate authority and truthfulness of God Himself!

Genesis 3:1, *"Did God really say...?"* In other words, *"Is God's word reliable?"* *"Does He really mean what He says?"* *"Can He really be trusted?"*

Eve was lured into this deadly trap! Instead of simply sticking to what God had said, as Christ did in the wilderness, she began to make things up as she went along!

Genesis 3:3, *"The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"*

God said nothing about not touching the fruit! Once Eve had departed from the foundation of the Word of God and begun to argue with Satan, by using her own wisdom and intelligence, she was vulnerable to the lie which followed immediately.

Genesis 3:4, *“You will not certainly die, the serpent said to the woman.”* So, who to believe?

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Who was the more trustworthy? If man could indulge in forbidden fruit without consequences, that would make Satan’s advice an attractive option!

Then Satan tips the scales. Genesis 3:5, *“For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”*

Self-serving rationalization has always been an effective ally of disobedience!

In other words, *“Eve, God hasn’t forbidden the fruit because it’s lethal! No! It’s because He wants to prevent you from reaching your full potential! To prevent you from becoming like Him!”*

Believing this lie involves a further assumption. That God isn’t only a liar, but He’s neither gracious nor kind since He didn’t want to share what he had!

Therefore... God had forfeited the right to be their god.

It was a masterpiece of deceptive reasoning! We can just imagine the same thoughts running through the mind of the once-heavenly cherub. He didn’t think he could reach his full potential unless he threw off God’s yoke.

So, God's truthfulness and the truth of God's love were both subjected to Satanic attack - and man fell for the lie.

And in doing so, he betrayed his relationship with his Creator, as Lucifer had done, and transferred his allegiance to God's seductive nemesis.

True to God's word, spiritual death followed immediately. In believing the lie, man was instantly cut off from the source of all truth; resulting in death, since God is the only source of life and health.

Believing the lie, with its fatal consequences, has become part and parcel of human nature and experience ever since.

Consider what Paul says about the condition of the heart of sinful man in Romans 1:18, "...*they exchanged the truth about God for the lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever...*"

Contrary to many translations, the Greek verbiage used here actually says the lie and not a lie. It's the same lie!!

This is the lie that was first believed in the Garden of Eden. This is the same lie first embraced by the once-glorious cherub and subsequently passed directly from Satan to man.

What's this lie: God is not worthy of worship! That we can be independent of God! That we can be our own gods responsible for our own destinies!

Corrupt humanity has always subscribed to it. Man's rejection of God's truth and God's grace has resulted in a bizarre paradox in human consciousness.

On the one hand man will say that he doesn't believe in God; the truth of God has been lost! But as soon as something goes wrong, that same person will bitterly blame God, that same God that he says he doesn't believe in, for his problems!

Man says: *"How could a God of love let this happen??"* You see, he's lost the knowledge of God's love.

Man called God a liar in the garden and he's been doing it ever since! Adam and Eve's decision to follow Satan's advice implied that God was really no better or worse, than Satan himself.

Satan, after all, and not God, was telling the truth and really wanted what was best for man.

Yet, thousands of years later, God revealed Himself in the person of Jesus.

Hebrews 1:1, *"Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son..."*

This is why a rejection of Christ is a rejection of God. This is verified by Jesus Himself when he said, *"He who has seen me has seen the Father."*

Those who believe Satan's lie are who we call unbelievers. This is a generic name for those who haven't made a decision for Christ, but in fact it's something far more serious than that!

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Listen to the words of 1 John 5:9-10, *"We accept human testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son."*

Whoever believes in the Son of God accepts this testimony. Whoever does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because they have not believed the testimony God has given about his Son."

It's the Garden of Eden played over and over again in the heart of the unbeliever. With man calling God a liar! With Satan, by one means or another, playing the same role as the usurper and arch-deceiver.

2 Corinthians 4:4, *"...the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."*

Ever since his success in the Garden of Eden, Satan has played on man's pride and carefully nurtured his sinful desire for independence from God.

Satan encourages anything but faith and dependence on God. Reincarnation, Satanism, evolution, humanism, atheism, world religion - anything but the truth about God.

And with his nature infected by sin, man's spirit is like a warped windowpane. It distorts any light it receives from God - simply because it's God's truth!

On one occasion Jesus said to the Jews in John 8:45, *"...because I tell the truth, you do not believe me!"*

What a stunning indictment of human nature!! Not, *"in spite of the fact that I tell the truth,"* but *"because I tell the truth, you do not believe me."* If Christ is the truth, a rejection of Christ is a rejection of the truth and vice-versa.

This darkness of ignorance is the preferred state of unregenerate mankind who won't believe anything that threatens his continued enjoyment of independence from God and its accompanying sinful self-indulgence.

John 3:19 tells us that *"Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil."*

If we trace the progress of mankind, from the fall in the garden to today, we see that this sinful spirit of rebellion and independence from God is stamped on man's activities ever since.

This sinful spirit of rebellion and independence from God showed itself with Cain's murder of his own brother and then in Lamech's unjust killing of a young man.

This spirit of rebellion continued and culminated in a world-wide flood, made necessary because, in the words of Genesis 6:5, *"The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time."*

It's also interesting to see how mankind asserted his godless independence by manufacturing a self-supporting and independent lifestyle revealed by Lamech's three sons.

Jabel became the father of Agriculture, Jubal became the father of civilized arts, and Tubal-Cain became the forerunner of workers in tools of bronze and iron.

Agriculture, art and technology. All three areas, designed to make this world a more livable place, demonstrate man's attempt to create a compatible and comfortable environment for himself in a world independent of God.

This is the basis of humanism: Finding the answer to life within us and within what we can achieve. All this began with Satan's blandishment and his lies in the garden of Eden.

His lies that say God is not worthy of worship. That we can be independent of God. That we can be our own gods. That we are responsible for our own destinies!

What gross deception! Yet mankind has always subscribed to it.

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Conclusion

Sin will always seek to dethrone God. It must; otherwise how can it achieve independence? Sin must always deny the reality of who God is and who and what we are!

Man, in his fallen state, is no lover of the truth. Romans 1:18, *"...people suppress the truth by their wickedness."* 2 Thessalonians 2:10, *"...sinners perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved."*

Independence from God comes at a spiritual cost, not to mention a fatal intellectual compromise. For example, faced with truth about our Creator, man blindly sticks to notions of evolution despite the evidence.

He'll either ignore the evidence, dismissing it as unreliable, distorted and biased or, if this option isn't open to him, he'll twist it to fit his predetermined and inflexible, godless world-view.

It's like the story of a man who went to visit his doctor. "Doctor" he said, "I regret to inform you, but I'm dead." "Well, no - actually you aren't." replied the doctor, "You walk into my office."

"But I'm still dead." said the man. "What you've seen are muscle contractions and spasms. They can happen after death and they brought me in here!" Puzzled, the doctor decided on a different tack.

"I tell you what," he said. "Let me run a series of tests and we'll settle this once for all." So, the doctor ran his tests and showed his patient the results.

"There", he exclaimed triumphantly. "Everything inside you is working well. Liver, lungs, kidneys and so on."

"Come on doc", the man said. "You know, as well as I do, that tests can be misleading, data can be distorted, and results can be falsified. I tell you - I'm dead!"

The doctor was baffled. But then he had an idea. "Ok", he said. "Given that all that is true - would you agree on one thing at least?" "What's that, Doc?" "Would you at least agree that if a person is dead, the heart stops and the blood stops flowing?"

"Of course, doctor - everyone knows that!" So the doctor jumped up, grabbed a nearby needle, went over and jabbed the man in the arm. Immediately blood began trickling down.

The patient gazed at the trail of blood in astonishment. "Well - what do you know," he exclaimed in astonishment. "I was wrong! Dead men do bleed!"

Dismiss the evidence if you can, but if you can't, twist it to suit preconceived ideas. It's not that man can't believe; it's because he doesn't want to believe.

There's a saying that goes, "*There are none so blind as those who will not see.*"

Satan has done a great job of turning man against his Creator. And in doing so, he has successfully appropriated the worship and loyalty of this world.

Right now, he's the Prince of this world, the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient, and the whole world is under his control.

But Satan had a problem! God so loved the world that He sent His Son, not to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.