

HAS GOD INDEED SAID?

PART 3

Rulership and the Woman's Deception

Genesis 3:1-4

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'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; 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.'" Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die."

We've seen in our previous weeks of study that this encounter between the serpent and the woman concerned one thing: rulership in the seventh day. The serpent understood why God had restored the ruined material creation, and he knew exactly what God had said about the reason He had created the man and the woman.

Genesis 1:26

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion..."

He knew they had been created to replace him. And he knew that if he was going to prevent that change in rulership, it would be the woman who was open to deception.

1 Timothy 2:14

And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.

It had to be this way, because of the type God had built into the account for us to learn from. We'll remember:

Romans 5:14

Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

Adam is a type of Christ, and Christ, obviously, cannot be deceived. But those pictured in the woman — Christians with the potential to become Christ's Bride — certainly can be, and certainly will be.

2 Corinthians 11:3

But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

This deception among the eternally secure, working through the challenge to God's Word — "Has God indeed said?" — is what continues to be the subject of our study.

The promised Seed of the woman came to earth when the fullness of time had come. Jesus, as the second Man, the last Adam, proved Himself worthy to replace Satan. But Satan also knew that for Christ to take the crown from his head, Christ would need a Bride to rule at His side.

Genesis 2:18

And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."

Following His death and resurrection, Christ returned to His Father to await the promised Day of His return — a Day that has been predetermined and clearly stated in Scripture.

Acts 3:20-21

"and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began."

2 Peter 3:8

But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

And as we saw last time, before His departure into the heavens the Lord gave instructions to His servants — those with the potential to be His Bride — instructions to be carried out until His return.

Luke 19:13

"So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.'"

It's the same charge we've already read once — watch, work, and wait. And it's worth setting alongside this account again because it's the standing instruction behind everything that follows:

Mark 13:33-37

"Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning—lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!"

Each servant is to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling, producing a profit on what he's been given, as he waits for his Master's return. Each one is to wait, to work, and to watch. And so two thousand years have passed since the Lord gave those instructions — from a human perspective, a very long time. Add to that the four thousand years that preceded it, and the temptation to think time will simply continue as it always has becomes easier and easier to accept. But to keep our focus and our patient endurance, we have to view this matter through Scripture, with the eyes of faith — not through the passing of time.

The Serpent Approaches the Bride

The Lord's return for His church is the next event on God's prophetic calendar, and it will determine which Christians have become worthy to be part of Christ's Bride and adopted as a firstborn son. That's exactly why this event, in particular, has been singled out for deception, as the serpent approaches the woman with the same question he asked in the garden.

2 Peter 3:1-4

Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."

This is the same passage we've now come back to twice, and worth it — it's the single verse the whole deception turns on. Our Lord is in the heavens and cannot be touched, but those who could be His Bride remain within Satan's jurisdiction, and it's there that his attention is focused.

2 Timothy 4:10

for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica...

Now, if we place the verses from 2 Peter 3 within their context, we first come to this.

2 Peter 1:10-11

Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

What we're looking at here is the Word of the Kingdom — the good news of an abundant entrance "into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." These verses follow instructions Peter had just given, instructions that, if followed, would make that abundant entrance possible for the faithful Christian and keep him from ever stumbling with regard to his inheritance. Or we could say it this way: in following them, the Christian would be kept by the power of God through faith, for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Our Lord may be physically separated from us, but if we believe His Word and remain faithful to it, His power becomes our armor against the wiles of the devil.

And with "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" still in view, Peter continues:

2 Peter 1:16-21

For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And we heard this

voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

An Eyewitness of His Majesty

What Peter is describing here is his experience on what we call the Mount of Transfiguration, the account of which we find in Matthew.

Matthew 16:27-17:8

For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom. Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid." When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

What Peter, James, and John experienced on that mountain was Christ's coming in His Kingdom glory. Within its particular context, it has to do with Israel and the end of the tribulation — but nonetheless, what they witnessed was Christ's literal return. As Peter said, he did not follow "cunningly devised fables" to make known to them the power and coming of the Lord. He was an eyewitness of Christ's majesty, *after six days*.

And because he was an eyewitness to this event, he wanted those entrusted to his care to have a constant reminder of it, so that they would never mistake the coming of Christ for a mere teaching. It was, for Peter, a reality he had personally experienced — a reality that confirmed the prophetic word already set in place in the first thirty-four verses of Genesis. It was a reality his readers would do well to heed "as a light that shines in a dark place." And there's probably no darker place than the darkness of this age at the end of this dispensation, immediately prior to the Day dawning and the morning star rising in our hearts. It's the surety, the certainty, the irrefutable reality of the coming of Christ that is our beacon of hope — the lamp to our feet, the light to our path, the anchor of our soul.

The Introduction of the False Teachers

As we've seen, 2 Peter 1 ends with the reminder that no Scriptural prophecy originated in the minds of men, but came solely through the ministry of the Holy Spirit — it was brought forth from above, "God-breathed." And it's from right there, with the God-breathed Word still at the forefront, that chapter 2 opens with the introduction of the false teachers.

2 Peter 2:1-3

But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words;

We've met this warning twice already in these studies, and here it is a third time, at the very hinge point where it was first written — these are the same false teachers Peter goes on to call "scoffers" at the start of chapter 3, the ones who proclaim the fables of men as Scriptural truth, who set aside the Holy Spirit's own prophetic word to introduce the lie: "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." From everything we've looked at so far, we can see that this question strikes at the very heart of God's purpose for the ages.

Pause for a moment on the wording itself: "from the beginning of creation."

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

The lie perpetrated by these scoffers discounts everything that follows verse 1 of Genesis 1. It denies God's act of restoration and the purpose behind it; it denies the reason for the creation of the man and the woman; and in doing so, it eradicates the very typology built into that foundation.

Psalms 11:3

If the foundations are destroyed, What can the righteous do?

The answer to that question is self-evident: they will perish with respect to the Millennial Kingdom. That is Satan's aim.

The Leaven and the Willfully Forgotten Word

This, then, is the false teaching of the scoffers. It's the leaven a woman placed in three measures of meal at the beginning of the dispensation, until the whole was leavened — a corrupted teaching placed into the divinely perfect Word of the Kingdom, distorting the gospel of grace and undermining the gospel of the glory of Christ.

And as we know, this is the work of the enemy, working through apostate Christians to introduce doctrines of demons into the church.

1 Timothy 4:1

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons...

We've also seen that those who stood away from the faith did so according to their own lusts — described for us as having gone "in the way of Cain," having "run greedily after the error of Balaam for profit," and having "perished in the rebellion of Korah." Like Esau, they despised their birthright, considering the fulfillment of their carnal desires in the present to be worth more than what was promised at Christ's return.

So pervasive has the work of the leaven been that the "church" of these last days is now completely devoid of what is the central pillar of all of Scripture: the Word of the Kingdom, the return of Christ, the coming seventh day, the Millennial Kingdom. And this destruction of the foundation has been possible because of a deliberate act on the part of those who began the process.

2 Peter 3:5-7

For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

"They willfully forget" — the King James renders it "they are willingly ignorant of." Both translate the same Greek word, *lanthano*, which means to escape notice, or to be hidden. In other words, these individuals willingly and deliberately allowed what Scripture teaches about God's interventions in the affairs of man to be hidden from them. They chose to be ignorant of what God has done, in order to deny what God will yet do.

What the Scoffers Forgot

The essence of the scoffers' message is that there is no promise of His coming, since the world has continued uninterrupted from its creation onward. What they willfully forgot is Scripture's clear teaching that there has been divine intervention with respect to the earth in the past, just as there will be divine intervention with respect to the earth in the future. People will often ask, "Why does God allow these awful things to happen?" — when the correct question would be, "When is God going to intervene to stop this?" And that we know the answer to.

Notice how Peter's reminder to them begins: it was "by the word of God" that the events of the past were brought to pass. They didn't just happen.

"The heavens and the earth of old" takes us back to the very beginning.

Genesis 1:1-2

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep...

At an unspecified point in eternity past — "in the beginning," in Genesis; "of old," in 2 Peter — God created the heavens and the earth, and that creation was perfect. He did this by His Word, the very same Word we met at the opening of this whole study.

John 1:1-3

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

Between what's recorded in Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, something happened that caused the earth to become without form and void — and we can know this is true by comparing Scripture with Scripture.

Isaiah 45:18

For thus says the LORD, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: "I am the LORD, and there is no other."

This verse is God's own commentary on Genesis 1:1, and it states categorically that God did not create the earth "in vain." The word translated "vain" here is the very same word translated "void" in Genesis 1:2 — the Hebrew word *tohu*. So in Genesis 1:1 we read that God created the heavens and the earth; then, at the beginning of verse 2, we read that the earth was *tohu*. But God has told us through Isaiah that the earth was not created *tohu*. If God did not create the earth *tohu*, and yet it became that way, then clearly something took place in between to bring it about.

The Messianic Angel and the Rulership of Eden

Just as an aside — and knowing God's affinity for numbers, it's worth noting that the opening verse of Genesis, ten words in English, is a translation of only seven words in the Hebrew. Seven is the number God uses to show completion, and in this context, completion in a perfect sense. Those seven Hebrew words are made up of twenty-eight letters — four sets of seven. And four is the number of creation with respect to the earth: four seasons, four points of the compass, four elements. God has underscored what He said with a numerical construct that further proves this: in the beginning, when He created the heavens and the earth, it was done perfectly.

And this perfectly formed creation was brought into existence, in the beginning, to be ruled over. God created a "messianic angel," and other angels with him, to administer that rule. Rulership of the earth, in conjunction with the heavens, is at the very heart of creation, and it can never change.

Daniel 4:26

...the heavens do rule.

Rulership with respect to the earth was never an afterthought; it was the primary thought. And in Ezekiel we find a description of the messianic angel created to exercise it.

Ezekiel 28:12-15

"You were the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, Beryl, onyx, and jasper, Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes Was prepared for you on the day you were created. You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you."

Here is the description of a beautifully created angelic being whose location was "in Eden, the garden of God" — an Eden somewhat different from the one in which we find Adam, this one filled with minerals and precious stones. We can know we're not dealing with a man here, since verse 13 speaks of "the day you were created," and every man since Adam has been procreated, not created. He's also described as the "anointed cherub" — literally, the messianic angel — created to "cover," a word meaning to fence in and protect. In other words, he was created to have charge over, to rule over, to govern under God's authority, this one province in God's universal Kingdom that included Eden, the garden of God.

And it's within the jurisdiction given to him, as an act of governance, that we find him going back and forth.

Job 1:6-7

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. And the LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" So Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it."

Scripture has more to tell us about him, and about God's first intervention in the governance of the earth. But that will have to wait until next time.