

Bethel Christian Church
In God Alone

Study 2 **Eve: Believer of Lies, Mother of Messiah (2)** **Brian Arthur**

‘In God Alone’ is a series of studies on the life and the testimony of God seen in ten Old Testament characters and three from the New.

I intentionally use the term ‘the testimony **of** God’ rather than the testimony **about** God shared by these characters. There is a vast difference between the two.

In this study we will consider Eve’s seduction and God’s gracious response.

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made.

He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" 2And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 3but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" 4 But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

8And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. (Genesis 3:1-7)

What is the testimony of God through this tragedy of Eve and the Serpent? Remember we finished last time with the question, In the light of the blessings of being a woman, a human being, how could Eve be seduced? Was she somehow deficient? Was there something about Eve that was not reliable? Was there something about how God related to her that left her vulnerable? For many these questions are constant causes of uncertainty and fear.

Nothing in her formation or her relationship with God and Adam could have predisposed her to temptation. She was made to be with Adam, and thus be with God. In her relationship with Adam the very life of God was enjoyed. This was God saying “This is how to live and love like me” If human beings together reflect God’s image then this happens when Adam and Eve were relating freely with each other, sharing the gifts and calling of God.

The ‘being-with’ between Adam and Eve was God sharing his deepest joy with human beings. Their communion was God’s gift to the couple of the first sight of his purpose to make a bride for his Son. So their being-with was holy and functional and had a strong promise of things to come.

The terror of Eve’s deception is beyond our comprehension.

How then could Eve so quickly fall from these riches? The answer is through the cunning deceit of the evil one. Eve of herself was no match for the cunning of the evil one. Paul saw the evil one’s cunning coming against simply cherishing of Christ.

³*But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.*

Eve was no match for the cleverness of the evil one: Particularly when she stood alone and entered into conversation with him. Adam would have fared no better. Of ourselves Paul said we are weak.

To parley with the devil (entertain another word other than the word from God) is a dual tragedy. It indicates that hearing God in the open communion of love has become less desirable. Secondly it seems to establish a new valid framework in which life can be found. As the couple found out this was a lie.

A valid question at this point would be why Eve was not talking to Adam/God about the evil ones approach and his words? Why didn't she fly straight to them? Something was already deeply askew between the couple. Maybe it was this that predisposed Eve to the subtleties of the tempter.

He offered friendship and a better way to enjoy Eden

- He seemed to be looking out for Eve's best interests.
"Has God said?" is not just a challenge of God's goodness. It is also an appeal to Eve to think outside of her communion with God.
- By entertaining the thought that God's way was deficient she became increasingly vulnerable to the evil one's seduction.

In our studies in 1 John we have seen that John is emphatic that the commands of God are not burdensome. Had Eve fled to the Father, seen and felt again the wonder of what he was to her. Had she listened again to the spirit of his commands she would like Jesus have had nothing in her by which the evil ones seductions could stick. Consumed by the good giving of the Father any false friendship any 'extra' word promising a better Eden a better Eve would have found no home in her heart. There would have been no lurking impatience to which the serpent could have appealed. There would have been no disappointment by which the name of God could have been slandered. Eve would have seen the lie and not been seduced to think the lie was the truth.

What is God's testimony to us through Eve?

1. Unless we have a filial frame of mind (Cherishing the Father and his every word) we never can withstand the insinuations of the world and evil one. The good (cleansed) conscience becomes the simplest prophylactic against temptation. The cleansed conscience is not simply a relief mechanism, a letting off the hook but the means by which the heart continues to see and enjoy the love of the Father. Where there is joy in the Father's presence the friendship the world and the evil one offer is unable to seduce us. We may then resist the seduction of other more 'reasonable' words, laws, about what will make us happy and what will give us pleasure.

2. Never stay and parley with the tempter.

The decision to entertain his words for a second undoes us. When the seduction came to Jesus he simply rebutted the evil one with a simple word about his Father. It was not a cold theological proposition. Like a medieval priest holding up a cross to the devil. The words of Jesus at his temptation came from a heart in full song about the Father's love and way. So it is in this way we are shown how to resist the devil.

Satan's seductions are rarely full frontal attacks but rather a beguiling that alters the course of our life from simplicity in Christ to gradual disengagement.

3. But!

As we will see with each of the following characters God always interposes his own grace and freedom into the scene of humanity's utter hopelessness.

In the midst of unremitting fear and banishment grace was about to appear.

Despite Eve's seduction,

Despite Adam's wilful participation,

Despite the terror unleashed upon the world,

Despite the immediate and lasting judgement upon them,

Despite their inability to undo what had been done,

In the face of the evil one seeming to have total control,

God's testimony to and through Eve was richer than ever could be imagined.

Eve would have a seed, a child, a descendant. This seed would crush the head of the one who had seduced Eve. So Paul explained, *She shall be saved through child bearing*. When Cain was born Eve cried, "I have got the man of the Lord" (Luther). Whatever Eve understood about Cain's role we know from the New Testament that her seed is Jesus. Through Eve God directs us squarely to him.