

The First Question

Introduction

The first question found in the Bible came from Satan. The second question came from God. These two questions reveal a vast difference in the characters of these two speakers. They also reveal two different eternal destinies.

The First Question

Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" (Genesis 3.1)

Satan's question to the woman revealed his nature. His nature to deceive. All we need to know about Satan is this: his nature is to deceive; he can never be trusted. Jesus called him the "father of lies" (John 8.44). He is the source of all lies and deception. The strategies he employs are manifold and work on many levels but their foundation is deception. In Jesus' great dissertation upon end times, He repeatedly warned His hearers not to be deceived. During the Tribulation Satan will be his most convincing by working great wonders of deception (Matthew 24).

Satan's question to the woman was designed to cause her to question God's character, specifically, His goodness. How long their dialogue lasted is not revealed. Surely it lasted much longer than the record in Genesis. The account provides the main points of the conversation. Satan succeeded in his plan (2 Corinthians 11.3), convincing the woman to doubt God's goodness. She ate.

Satan's main objective was not the woman but the man. He reasoned he could not deceive the man but that he could attack

the woman and defeat the man. He was right. Adam, when he discovered what had happened recognized the problem but chose unwisely in solving the problem. His eating did not as a result from deception (Genesis 3.13; 1 Timothy 2.14). He knew what he was doing. The Scripture places the blame of sin upon Adam, not Eve (1 Corinthians 15.22). It is unlikely Adam understood or appreciated the consequences of his choice. It cost him dominion over the earth (Genesis 1.26, 28), returned rule of the world to Satan (Ezekiel 28.12-15; Luke 4.5-6; 2 Corinthians 4.4), and plunged the earth under a curse which resulted in decay and death (Genesis 3.17-19; Romans 8.19-22). From that point, every living thing died (1 Corinthians 15.22). What ruin!

God's First Question

Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" (Genesis 3.9)

After Adam and Eve ate fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil they recognized they were naked. More is here than appears on the surface. They may have been clothed in a glory that vanished with their eating. At the very least they acquired an unknown knowledge of nakedness: shame. This was the true nature of the "knowledge of good and evil" of which God had warned. Satan had represented it as something desirable which God was withholding (Genesis 3.5). In reality, this "good" was grief, sadness, regret, heartbreak, and death.

Because of the shame Adam and Eve felt, their first act was to try to cover themselves. They attempted this by sewing fig leaves together, fashioning crude "clothing" (Genesis 3.7). Volumes could be written about this. It was a representative act of what every human being does when we try and cover sin, excuse failure, and rationalize evil. The fig leaves were: "I'm ok, you're ok." They were not and we are not.

In Genesis 3.8, we read of God's walking in the garden.¹ Apparently, this was His habit with the couple during the "cool of the day." During these walks He met and conversed with Adam and Eve. Prior to their eating, this had been the highlight of their day. But that had all changed. They were now afraid of Him and hid.

The Nature of the Question

Satan asked his question to manipulate Eve to doubt God's goodness. God asked His question to restore the couple. God's asked, "Where are you?" because He could not see Adam and Eve. They were not where they usually met for their afternoon walk. But the larger sense of His question was psychological, not geographical. God asks each of us this question. Where are we? If we are truthful, we can only answer: Lost!

Jesus taught this lesson to the Jews of His day through statements and parables. One familiar passage is the parable of the lost sheep. Luke recorded:

³ So He told them this parable, saying, ⁴ "What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? ⁵ When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. ⁶ And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' ⁷ I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance (Luke 15.3-7).

Like the sheep, Adam and Eve were lost. They were the human race. The point of Jesus' parable was that the lost sheep knew it was lost. The ninety-nine the shepherd left did not. They

thought they were ok. They did not know they too were lost. They shepherd rescued the sheep who knew it was lost. God sought Adam and Eve in the garden for they too knew they were lost.

Conclusion

⁷ So Jesus said to them again, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. ⁹ I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly (John 10.7-10).

Because of Adam's failure, each of us enters the world without Christ, without hope, and without eternal life. We are lost. God asks each of us the same question He asked the first man: "Where are you?" If honest, our answer is that we are lost and without hope. Jesus told the Jews He was the door (cf. John 14.6). If anyone enters through Him he will be saved. Paul declared how one is saved in our age:

³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15.1-4).

Salvation is a gift. The Lord Jesus Christ solved the problem of sin and death with His death and resurrection. He paid for every person's sin with His sacrifice. Putting one's trust in His work, that He died for your sins and rose from the dead is how we enter into life.

¹ This is the first account of a theophany. God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, in His pre-incarnate form visited with His creation, created in His image.

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