



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

July 2, 2017

Jump Start # 1864

Genesis 3:6 "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 desirable to make one wise, she took from it's fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate."

The Genesis account of the fall of mankind, Eve being deceived by Satan, begins with her conversation with the serpent. She engaged in a conversation with the serpent. He twisted what God said, added words that God did not say and created doubt about what God had said. Then the final punch was the tree itself. It was a delight to her eyes. It was desirable to make one wise. Eve took the forbidden fruit and ate it. She gave some to Adam and he followed.

All of this began because Satan got into Eve's head. He deceived her. The starting point of this downward spiral was the credibility that Eve allowed Satan to have. She had no history with Satan. She had no reference point in her past that she could say, "He was right about that, he might be right about this." Satan had not blessed her. Satan had not helped her. Satan had not been there for her. God had. God made Eve. God made the creation. God, it seems from the text, had walked with Adam and Eve in the garden. God had been good to them. God had talked with them in the past. Eve had a history with God. God had reference points in her past that she could say, "God has been right and good to us."

It is troubling to see that Eve would believe Satan, when there was nothing to go on. And she would believe Satan's doubts about God, when she knew how good God had been.

This Eve story is repeated again in Proverbs 7 when a man looks out his window and sees a young naïve man going down the wrong street at the wrong time of day and meets the wrong person. She is a prostitute. Her intentions are sinful and wicked. The implications are that they did not know each other. "With her many persuasions she entices him," is what we are told. He has no history with her. He has no way of saying, "She's been right before." Like Eve, he has a conversation with a serpent. Like Eve, he listens. Like Eve, he throws out everything he knows that is good and right. And, like Eve, the naïve young man ruins his soul because he believed the prostitute over what God had said.

The Eve story is repeated today through books, college lectures and especially the internet. Someone casts doubts about what the Bible says. They put question marks where God has places exclamation points. They cloud the meaning of the text. They creation suspicion about what the Bible says. They propose alternative meanings, often that lead through the door of error that is not supported by the Bible.

(OVER)

And suddenly, just like Eve, just like the naïve young man walking down the street in Proverbs 7, a Christian begins to doubt what God has said. They begin believing the poisonous error that has filled their brain and their eyes. Do they ever stop to think about the background of the person that they are talking to? Do they have a history together? Has this person helped them in the past? Could they say that they were right before? And with all of this, they completely forget about God. God has been right there for them. God has helped them, led them and been right all along. Yet, that is tossed out. A new thought. A new idea. A new way. Different from what the Bible says, and yet, it is followed, believed and accepted. The Christian now doubts the way he has worshipped. Not because of what he sees in the Bible, but because of what a college professor has lectured, or a book has stated or a website has grumbled about. The truth is tossed for a lie. For Eve, it was taking hold of the forbidden fruit. For the young man in Proverbs 7, it was taking hold of the prostitute. And for us, it is taking hold of a lie that the Bible does not teach. For all, the results are deadly. For all, the same steps have been followed.

Why believe serpents over God? Why believe prostitutes over God? Why believe a college professor, a website over God? Why trust their words? Why allow the sinister thread of doubt to be woven into our hearts? Why accept their words over God's?

For the young person today, it may be a friend, someone they are dating or a roommate that weaves that doubt into a heart. Is this person right about other moral things? Is this person right about what God says in other areas?

For others, it may be a family member or a co-worker, who weaves doubt into our hearts. They speak as if they know God. They say things as if they know more than God. What's their track record? Is there any reason to listen to them over God?

Talking to serpents is a dangerous thing to do. No history. No past. No credible evidence of goodness, accuracy or truthfulness when it comes to religious matters. God is holy and righteous and wants the best from us. Others, simply want us to back off of God and be more like them. Who are we going to listen to and believe? Who is right? Who has been there all along pleading for us to do right?

The language of serpents is deception, twisting words, creating doubt and confusing minds and hearts. If God wasn't right about the forbidden fruit, what else was He wrong about? Could God be trusted about anything? This was more than eating something that was forbidden. This was about believing God. Eve had every reason to stay with God. He was good to her. She had no reason to believe that serpent. Yet, she did.

And too often, we follow in those same steps. Believing lies. Accepting things without proof. Allowing our minds and our hearts to be confused. Listening to serpents rather than holding on to what we know is true.

Eve should have known better. So, should we.

Roger Shouse