



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Genesis 3:1-7

“The Garden of Eden, or the Fall of Man”

TRANSCRIPT

[Audio begins] Well it's eight o'clock, so we'll begin with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we thank Thee for the privilege of study again in Thy word. We thank Thee for the truth that is contained within it. And we pray again as we look into the things which concern the nature of the living and true God that the Holy Spirit will enable us to understand Thy word. Prepare our hearts and may the truths that we learn become vital in our experience. We commit the hour to Thee now for Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Now last time we did not quite finish and so for a few minutes I would like to conclude our study of the eternal Trinity, Father Son and Spirit, and then move on to our topic for tonight, the Garden of Eden, or the fall of man.

Now just one or two words of review, remember that we had been saying that we come to the Bible with two presuppositions, God exists and that he has revealed himself. He has revealed himself in a two volume book, a book of revelation. Volume one is his revelation of himself in nature, and we can learn from nature that God is a supreme

being, we can learn that there is with in him his eternal power and divinity. We can not of course learn that he is a God of love and grace from his revelation in nature. That revelation is ambiguous. There are some things that suggest that he is a loving God, there are some things that suggest that he is a God of judgment. And so we have in the word of God, the second volume in God’s book of revelation, and this volume is addressed to man as a sinner and reveals to man the fact that God is loving and gracious through his Son, Jesus Christ.

Now we also pointed out that this word has come to us by inspiration, and inspiration is the activity of God whereby he, through men, gives us his inspired word, the second volume of his book of revelation. And then we pointed out very briefly that the Bible is a spiritual book and consequently we need the help of the teacher, the Holy Spirit in understanding it. We can not understand the Bible so far as its spiritual meaning is concerned unless we have the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Now that comes to us when we believe in our Lord Jesus Christ. The moment that we put our trust in him, a supernatural operation takes place within us by God according to the word of God and he never tells a lie, he gives us the Holy Spirit through the new birth. And then after we have been born again, to use our Lord’s won words, we have the Holy Spirit, we have the teacher of the word of God who is able to give us interpretation that is true and accurate. Interpretation that is far better than my interpretation.

Now last time we spent our time studying the eternal Trinity and I tried to point out to you that we can not comprehend God, that if we want to know God we must turn to the word. And in turning to the word we discover that the Bible recognizes three as God, the Bible recognizes three as eternal, the Bible reveals that the three are distinct persons, and yet the Bible reveals and this is a mystery, that the three form or posses one essence. So the Bible says that there is one God who eternally subsists in a plurality of persons, three persons, no more, no less, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Then we were talking as the hour concluded about the attributes of God, the

properties of God, the things that make up his nature. And I suggested to you that while there are different ways in which we might analyze the properties of God, of course all of our analyses are finite and limited. But nevertheless, as we study the word of God, and seek to discover exactly what God is and what he is like and what are his properties we may analyze the attributes in various ways. But I was just suggesting to you that we could look at God's attributes in this way, we could look at those that were incommunicable, that is certain absolute properties that can not be communicated to man and then some that are communicable. That is, that God as a person may communicate to others. And I believe that we were discussing his self existence, and the hour closed and I was trying to point out that by his self existence or his independence that he is the first cause of all things and that he himself is an uncaused being. And that the questions, “Who made God” and “Why isn't he married?” and questions like this are out of court because God is the self existent I Am. And by the way lest any of you think that I am trying to preach the heresy of the I Am movement, I assure you that I am not. That comes from California as a great deal of our heresies do come, a place from which a lot of them do come. But “I Am” is God's own way of describing himself. He says in effect, you can not define me I am the Existent One. I may relate my self to you as the God of Abraham the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, but I am the self existent one.

Now the second property which is incommunicable is his immutability. And I want you now if you will to turn with me to a passage in the Old Testament; it's the last book of the Old Testament, the Book of Malachi, chapter 3 and verse 6, where the prophet speaks of the immutability of God. Now immutability means his unchangeability. He does not change in his nature. Now this does not mean that God may not as far as man is concerned, appear to change his purposes, but we're referring to his nature. And Malachi chapter 3 and verse 6, the last book of the Old Testament says, “For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.” He means by this verse, that I have given certain promises to Israel and because I am an immutable God,

because I do not change, these promises do not change, and you sons of Jacob, in spite of your disobedience are not consumed. By the way, the sons of Jacob are still with us, the sons of Jacob are not only with us, but now they have their own country in the east and the land of Israel is a reality. And when you read a text like this, “For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.” We have in history of nineteen hundred and sixty-eight, another evidence of the fact that God is the immutable God. He does not change.

Now this is not just a theological doctrine, this is tremendously important for us as Christians, because it's one thing to read in the Bible that God is love, it's one thing to read in the Bible that we, when we believe in Jesus Christ become the children of God, it's one thing to believe in the Bible that we are justified, that we stand righteous in the presence of God through Jesus Christ's work, and it's one thing to read that we have a salvation that is perfect and complete before God, but it is extremely important for us to realize that the things that God has done for us are things that are permanent, because he is an immutable God. So his immutability is a doctrine that should be something that Christians should rejoice in day by day, the fact that when he says something he keeps his word. And because he is a kind of person that he is he stays that kind of person. If he loves us today, he will love us tomorrow. If he loves us tomorrow, he will love us ten years from now. If we fall into sin in the mean time, he still loves us. He does not change in his love, his love is immutable. His holiness is immutable, his care for us is immutable all of those features that belong to the character of God are immutable. And it's a tremendously practical doctrine to realize that God is immutable. Theologians like to take these wonderful doctrines and talk about them as theological doctrines, and that is important, but we must not forget that almost every one of these doctrines has an applicability to every feature of your daily life. They even affect you in the kitchen and they affect you at your desk.

Now thirdly is his infinity. Now his infinity is expressed in passages like 2 Peter chapter 3 and verse 8. So will you turn over now to the New Testament, 2 Peter chapter 3 and verse 8. And remember if you can not find these passages, we're going to wait until you do find them, use your index, and if you've got somebody sitting by the side of you who does know where to find the books, well sneak a look over there and notice what part of the Bible he's looking in and try to fake it through you know. [Laughter] His infinity, 2 Peter chapter 3 and verse 8, now I wish that we had time to talk about the contexts of all of these passages, and you'll have to forgive me for not doing it, because we just do not have the time. I want however to simply say this, that the Apostle Peter is saying that there are in the last days some individuals who are going to come on the human scene and their going to say that, they're going to be scoffers, there are going to be men whose lives reflect the immorality of their heretical doctrines and they're going to say, “Where is the promise of the second coming of Jesus Christ, or since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.” In other words, we have a creation that has stayed the same down through the years.

Now Peter says in verse 8, “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” He is the infinite God, and if he made a promise two thousand years ago that he would come again, then that is just as if he made it day before yesterday. This is Friday, it's just as if God spoke on Wednesday and said, “Jesus Christ is coming again.” And the fact that a thousand years or two thousand years intervenes is of no significance so far as God is concerned. A thousand years is with him as one day. And the fact that it appears that there have not been any changes in God's creation since the creation is a very deceptive thing, because we're dealing with an infinite God. Of course he does say that you've overlooked one thing, you've forgotten the flood, and God did interfere in the history of men with that. But we must remember that God is and infinite God, and consequently years to him do not mean the same thing that they do to you and to me.

Now will you turn back just a few pages to the Book of Hebrews chapter 1, Hebrews chapter 1. You will notice here that in verse 10 we read, “And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands: They shall perish; but Thou remainest;” In other words, Jesus Christ is an eternal person. The things that belong to the Godhead include infinity.

Now fourthly is unity. Will you turn now back a few more pages to 1 Corinthians chapter 8 and verse 6, 1 Corinthians 8 and verse 6. His unity, verse 6, now we have already stressed this, so I'm just going to read this verse, “But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.” But to us there is but one God, the unity of the Godhead. There is no disunity in God, there is a unity within the God head, and even though there are three persons, there is one God and his unity is one of his incommunicable attributes.

Now let's look at the communicable attributes very quickly, and first of all his spirituality. And now turn back a few more pages to the Book of John, Matthew Mark Luke and John. John chapter 4 and verse 24, John 4 verse 24, now Jesus is speaking to the woman of Samaria and in the course of his speech with her he says in verse 24 of John 4, “God is Spirit (or a spirit) and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” So God possesses spirituality, he is distinct from the world and its materiality in his being. He is a spiritual being. This is of course is something he may communicate to others as a personal spirit. But he possesses spirituality. He is a spirit.

Secondly, his intellectuality, now by his intellectuality I mean that he possesses knowledge, wisdom, wisdom is not the same as knowledge. Knowledge is the type of thing that we gain when we go to college or university. When we finish our schooling, we have a lot of knowledge, but we may not have very much wisdom at all. We have known of course many people who have been educated far beyond their intelligence, and there are some people who have never had any education who nevertheless are very wise people. So knowledge is the possession of a lot of facts in the mind, wisdom is the ability

to use them in a way that is fruitful and worthwhile. Now also we could include his veracity if we wished his truthfulness. But perhaps knowledge and wisdom are the primary things.

Now thirdly, his holiness and I want to say a word about this, because this is more important than some of the others, his holiness. And I would like for you to turn with me if you will, back to the Old Testament to Isaiah chapter 6 and verse 3, Isaiah chapter 6 verse 3. So if you want to take a chance, take a guess, it's about half way through the Bible again, remember Isaiah, Jeremiah, you might hit it because it's a big book, Isaiah chapter 6 and verse 3. I have a good friend, he likes to pronounce it the “Book of I-zi-ah,” so if your looking for I-zi-ah, that's the same thing we call Isaiah. Isaiah chapter 6 and the 6th chapter of Isaiah is the call of the Prophet Isaiah to his prophetic ministry. And in this chapter he receives a vision of the Lord Jehovah. Let's read beginning with verse 1,

“In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: (These are angelic beings) each had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.”

Now for just a moment I want to say something about holiness, because I think this is one thing that is often misunderstood by students of the Bible. When we think of God's holiness, we are inclined to think of the fact simply that he is righteous. That is that there is no moral evil attached to him. The word holy however is really basically a word that means separated. And so in the statement that God is holy, there is implied a distinction between God and every other being in his universe. He is separate from others. He is unique, He is of one class, his creation is of another class. Holiness means

simply that God is God, and man is man. And whenever man has holiness, it is a communicated holiness which comes from God. He is absolutely different from us, that's what we mean when we say God is holy. He is different from men. As a matter of fact, it is my personal opinion that this the basic attribute of God, not his love. You say love, God is love. You also read God is holy, but the fundamental doctrine is not that God is love though that's a true doctrine and a blessed doctrine; the fundamental doctrine is that God is holy. He is different, he is, modern theologians like to say he's the Holy Other One. And that is true to this doctrine of holiness. He is different. It is something that means that he is transcendent, above this universe, he is not caught in this universe, he is transcendent above it, he is prior to the universe, he is apart from the universe, and when the universe passes out of existence, he will still abide. He is the holy one, separated from men. Now of course his moral attributes include not only his holiness, but they include his goodness and his righteousness but his holiness is tremendously important.

Now connected with this is goodness, and we could put it here but I listed this one because I think it's the most important one. His goodness relates to the fact that he is interested in us. As a matter of fact, he knows, believe it or not, but he knows and the word of God says it, he knows when men, when every, well let me make it more specific, he knows when any hair falls out of your head. And he is concerned about the fact that one hair falls from your head. I've been giving him a great deal of anxiety myself over the last ten years. [Laughter] But he is that kind of a God. Now I'm not saying that he's as interested in the hair falling out of my head as he is in other things, but he is that kind of infinite God, so that he knows even minute things like this.

And finally, his sovereignty, this will conclude our study; well I did want to say something about why we have a Trinity. So sovereignty now and then that question. Now sovereignty is very important so let's turn back to the New Testament, Acts chapter 17, Acts chapter 17. Now this is a Bible drill night so we're learning at least, how to find these books of the Bible, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts and Acts chapter 17 contains

Paul’s sermon which he gave in Athens to the intellectual elite of his day. And he said in verse 22 then Paul or he began by saying,

“Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. (Or very religious the Greek text puts it) For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;”

So God is absolutely sovereign over his creation. He is sovereign in his will, he is sovereign in his power, he rules this entire creation. He does not wonder with anxiety what Kosygin is going to do or Ho or Lyndon or anyone else. He is in absolute control of all of the affairs of this universe. And of course he is in control of the affairs of your life too. So he is absolutely sovereign, he is that type of God. Now this does not mean that we are merely puppets in the hand of God, he gives us a limited freedom but it is limited. Well we can not choose completely. I would never be a Johnson if I had a choice, I would be a Rockefeller or a Ford, or something like that, [Laughter] with a house in the north and one in the south and one in the West Indies and several other places too, but I couldn’t choose. And so I was born into this wretched family by the name of Johnson.

Now I’m very proud of my branch of it [Laughter] but I’m not proud of all branches of it. [Laughter] So we have a limited freedom, God is absolutely sovereign however, we have this limited freedom. So we must not say since God is sovereign that therefore we are just fatalistic in our doctrine. We have a limited freedom. On the other hand, we must not say that we have absolute freedom, for we do not have absolute freedom. So we have God as sovereign and we have limited free will. I always was

amused by two soldiers who were discussing the fact that they were going into a battle and they were explaining, talking over their anxieties and one of them was saying with a great deal of bravado, “Well I’m not worried about anything except that bullet that has my name on it.” The other one says, “I’m not worried about the one that has my name on it, I’m worried about the one that has on it: To Whom It May Concern.” [Laughter] Now one of them was a fatalist and the other one believed in extreme free will. But the truth is between. Sovereignty is one of the attributes of God.

Now as we conclude this study of the character of God, I want to just simply suggest why God is a Trinity. Now this is a very very difficult question for a finite person such as I particularly a professor at a theological seminary to presume to answer why God is a Trinity. But I’m just going to suggest to you two or three reasons why this doctrine of the Trinity is a rational doctrine.

Now I think in the first place that God is a Trinity because we could never have a revelation of God in the truest sense if there were not a Trinity. God can only be revealed by God, and in order for God to be truly revealed, he must come down into our human scene, partake of our human nature so that we can be able to see God. And that of course is what our Lord Jesus Christ did. But if were true that the God who is the eternal God became a finite human being and dwelt among men, who would be running the universe while he was here as a finite dependent being? So you see it is essential that there be plurality in the God head. And of course the Holy Spirit is the one by whom he as a man carried out the will of God, for no man can carry out the will of God except by divine enablement. So in order for us to have a revelation from God, a true revelation from God, the infinite God, it is necessary that he accommodate himself to humanity by becoming a man and living among us and also, limiting himself as a man in the specific ways in which he did. Of course our Lord Jesus came as a limited man, he was one who became tired and weary just as you and I do, apart from sin and lived the perfect human life.

The Trinity is also essential if we are to have a proper redemption for we need not only someone to die for us on the cross as a man, but we need someone who has infinite merit in his own being in order to be a sacrifice sufficient to cover infinite evil. And so our Lord Jesus as the infinite Son of God gave his life for sin, and the sacrifice has infinite value by reason of the person who died. For it was our Lord, the divine human person the Theanthropic that is the God man, who died. And so it is necessary in order to have a perfect redemption.

And finally it is essential to any proper Theism. Love is impossible for a solitary being. I could not love if I did not have someone to love. And so since God in his nature is love, it is essential that there be an object of his love. And then of course there must be a love which exists apart from any retaliation in love. Two people might love each other because they love each other. But since there is a third involved, one may express his love without any necessary hope for return. And consequently, by logic, the Trinity is justifiable. Now that is very weak and very poor of course, and it will always be so with us because this is a mystery. But nevertheless, the Bible reveals that God is a Trinity, he possesses communicable and incommunicable attributes. He is the eternal sovereign being and there is a good, there at least is some rational basis for the character of God as he is set forth in the revelation of his word.

Now in the remainder of our time tonight, we're going to turn to Genesis chapter 3 and we're going to discuss something that is also one of the most important things in the Bible, The Garden of Eden, or the fall of man. Now if it is important for us to know that God has revealed himself, and if it is important for us to know that God is a Trinity in unity, it is extremely important for us to realize that man by reason of the history recorded in the Scriptures is in the sight of God a rebellious autonomous being, and that he needs redemption in order that he might really know himself and know God. When we come to Genesis chapter 3, we come to a chapter which probably through Augustine and Calvin has influenced Western civilization more than any other chapter in the Bible. Because in

this chapter we are told that man is this autonomous rebellious independent being who needs redemption. And frankly, I do not, of course many of you I do not know personally yet, but I can, I think, say this with our any fear of contradiction what so ever and after twenty-five years of experience, that if you can grasp the force of Genesis chapter 3, you will have an insight into human nature and into God that will enable you to understand what is happening in this world and also what is happening in your own life and has happened in your own life.

Who has not been troubled by some of the enigmas of life? Who has not felt sometimes like Jacob who said, “All these things are against me.” If you look out over the human scene, there is every evidence of senseless tragedy in almost every place. We read in the newspapers of a plane crash and then we look at those who are the victims and we go down the list and we see well here is a prominent scientist, a man who may have been on the point of making a discovery that would have been of inestimable benefit for the human race. Or we look and here is the name of a man who was a great scholar who was just ready or in the process of contributing some extremely important information to the human race. We read in our newspapers of an earthquake and five thousand people in a community are wiped out, women, children, the innocent with the guilty, it's difficult to understand. Or we open up our newspapers in the Summertime and we read of a little child three years of age, wanders out of his back yard, wanders down the ally, wanders through another door in a fence, wanders over to the swimming pool falls into the swimming pool and drowns.

And it's difficult for us to understand things like this, why do these things happen? Why does God allow them to happen? Why is there pain? I know a man who has been a minister of the gospel for fifty years. He's one of the outstanding thinkers among Christian theologians; he's now about eighty years of age. He has not been allowed to contribute tremendous amounts of genuine spiritual information by way of writing for the simple reason that he probably has not been a day without pain for the last forty years of

his life. Now how can you explain that? Or I had a friend who went through theological seminary with me probably a few years younger than I am one of the leading missionary statesmen of our day. A few years ago he contracted brain cancer and died just at the time that he had assumed the headship of a mission with great fruitfulness in the West Indies. Now how can you understand something like that?

Or if you look at man himself, what is man? From whence did he come and where is he going? On the one hand, he bears the marks of the divine, he has personality, he has will, he has emotions, he has intellect. He has some of the things that God has, and yet as you look at man and look at man in history you see that he is a ruined and dismantled temple. It's just as if you were to go to Athens, Greece and you were to walk outside the city and look at some of the ancient ruins of the temples there. And you would see the stones piles up on stones and the grass growing up and then let's just say for the sake of illustration that you were to go over and you notice some markings on some of the stones and you brush it all away and finally you read these words, “Which was the Temple of God.” And yet it's all broken down, ruined and dismantled now. Well that is the way man is, that's what we are. We are the ruined and dismantled temple of God because sin has come into God's universe.

Now Robert South once said, “An Aristotle is but the wreck of an Adam and Athens is but the rubbish of an Eden.” And Pascal said that, “Man is the glory and the shame of the universe.” Why? How did this blight on creation occur? Here we have it in Genesis chapter 3. Explains everything, explains why you can't get along with your wife some mornings, explains why your wife does those exasperating things that she does so often, explains why you and your children get at odds, explains why you can not get along with your neighbor, explains why we can not get along with some of the nations of the world and why they can not get a long with us, explains why we have our newspapers with violence and strife and rape and all of the other things that are

constantly before us but man doesn't like to look at these things. Now, tonight you're going to have to because I have you as a captive witness for a few minutes.

So we're going to look at Genesis chapter 3 in which we have the temptation and fall of man. Now I know that there are some people who say that this is a mythological chapter. I do not know of any reason why we have to say this is mythological. Now I taught Hebrew for a number of years and when I went through theological seminary, did a great deal of study before I taught Hebrew and I can assure you that the kind of language that we have here is no different from the language that we have in the later part of the Book of Genesis in which we have the narratives of the lives of men like Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. And there is no stylistic reason why this chapter is not of the same kind as the chapters that preceded it and the chapters that follow it. Consequently, I do not think that this is a mythological chapter. I think that it is historical. Now I know that there are reflections of the Genesis account in other religions, you will find in the religions of the East, some reflections of the account of the fall of man, you will find some reflections of the account of the flood. Those accounts are memories of the account in the Book of Genesis. This is the beginning account from which they have come. And the point of Genesis chapter 3 is simply this, that sin is an intruder in the human race. But it is here because man has sinned against God.

In other words, man is not good in the making but he is spoiled good. And man's problem is not his environment as some of our environmental sociologists tell us, man was a member of the original great society, but because of his own sin, he corrupted the society of which he was a member. Man's need is not psychological maladjustment as some Freudian theorists tell us, man was once psychologically adjusted to God properly, but he sinned, and as a result of that, sin has come into the human race. By the way, the theories of psychological maladjustment and economic exploitation of the Marxists proceed on the basis that there is at least one sinless type of society. That is if the trouble with us is that we are psychologically maladjusted, there has to be some entity within the

human race that is psychologically adjusted. And I don't suppose that the psychologist want us to believe that they are the ones who are adjusted or the psychiatrist that they are the ones who are sinless in this sphere, there is no such. And consequently, psychological maladjustment is not our problem, and economic exploitation is not our problem even. So let's read now and see what God says in his book. And I want you to notice that the way in which this is presented runs counter to much of the thought of twentieth century Western man,

“Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. (Now before the fall, the serpent was not the kind of serpent that we see today, what we see today is the result of the fall. There is every evidence to believe that the serpent was a beautiful animal in God's creation.) He was more subtle than any beast of the field (He was a beast of the field, so every time you see a little snake slithering along the ground and you shout ladies, and scream and holler, just remember that's God's way of saying sin has come into the universe.) Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said (Now apparently this was a form of, of course we do not know what life was like in the Garden of Eden it may not have been a miracle at all, it may have been that the animals did speak on the other hand, this may be a miracle, there is nothing wrong with a miracle if we have a living and true God. Balaam's ass spoke to him, so if an ass can speak, I'm sure that the serpent could have before the fall.) And the serpent said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”

Now, what I want you to notice about Satan is this, Satan comes to Adam and to Eve in the garden who have been created by God placed in this beautiful environment, and he comes to them not as an unbeliever in God. Did you think that Satan was an unbeliever? Satan is not an unbeliever; he's a deeper believer than many of you are in

God. Why he comes to Eve as a pious believer. He comes to Eve as one who has more piety than a nun. He's more knowledgeable of the ways of God than a professor of New Testament and Old Testament and so he does not come to her saying, "Listen Eve, I'm an ancient Madalyn Murray, I'm an atheistic monster, and I want you to beware of me because I'm an agnostic I'm an atheist, I'm everything bad. And if I attend church, I sit on the back row." Well that isn't the way he comes at all. He comes as a believer, as a pious believer. You know what he says? He says. "Let's have a little seminar on religion." As a matter of fact, the first person in the Bible who speaks of God in the third person is Satan. Let's have a little discussion about God.

Now you see the reason that he's like this is because he can fool you this way. If he came the other way, Eve would have thrown up her hands in horror and say, "I'll not have anything to do with you." And she would have run into the presence of God if she could have. But he comes as a counterfeit, he comes as a fraud and that's the way he does today, he's a counterfeit, and he's a fraud. Now we all know that our counterfeits and our frauds are successful so far as they are like the reality. If I were to come to you and say I'd like to give you a silver dollar and I reached down in my pocket and pulled out one that was shaped like a triangle, what would you say? You'd say no thank you. Well if I reached in my pocket and I pulled out one that looked like silver but was really some other metal and was round, you might be more inclined to accept it because it's more like a silver dollar. The closer I can make my silver dollar like a genuine, the easier I may fool you. And so when Satan comes he comes as a counterfeit as a fraud.

Now before we look on I want you to turn in the New Testament, just for a moment, to 2 Corinthians chapter 11, and I'm not saying this in order for you to say, "Well, I guess Dr. Johnson is really the only true preacher of the word. But I just want to put you on your guard. 2 Corinthians chapter 11 and verse 13, by the way this was one of the first truths I learned after I became a Christian and it has stood me in good stead down through the years. I have not been fooled nearly so many times as I would have

had I not known these verses, 2 Corinthians chapter 11, now Paul is talking about the false teachers in Corinth and he says, verse 13, 2 Corinthians chapter 11 now we have someone who hasn't found it yet and so I'm waiting for you to find it. 2 Corinthians chapter 11. Have you got it? Good. Okay. Verse 13, I know her, [Laughter]

“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.” (Satan's men do not go around saying; I am an emissary of Satan. They say I'm an apostle of Jesus Christ.) “And no marvel; (Paul says) for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”

So if you want to discover Satan, be sure to look in the pulpit. [Laughter] That's exactly what he means. His ministers are ministers of righteousness, who call themselves the apostles of Jesus Christ. They come into the pulpit and they open up the Bible and say “let's read from the word of God, but then in a fraudulent, counterfeit way, preach a doctrine that is not genuinely Christian. Like Christian, same terms Father, Son, Spirit, atonement, redemption, resurrection, but they just mean different things. Resurrection does not mean bodily resurrection; it means that the influence of Jesus lives on today. Second coming does not mean visible, bodily coming, as the angels said, it means that he comes to us in our tragedies, in our trials. He comes to us perhaps when we die. Inspiration of the Scriptures, not that the Bible is the word of God, but somewhere in the Bible if we look long enough, we can find some good ideas from God and so on and so on. So when Satan comes to Eve in the garden, he comes as a fraudulent counterfeit, giving her a seminar on God,

“Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” Now the woman said unto the serpent, (Verse 2) We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it,”

Now of course God had not said that, if you turn back to chapter two verse 16 and 17, we read,

“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: (Doesn't say you may not touch it.) But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: (It doesn't add neither shall thou touch it) for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

Now I'm not sure that that is really a very significant addition that Eve made, but she did add to the word of God. I have a friend who says that's the first revised version. [Laughter] He's just joking of course. “Ye shall not eat of it; neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.” In other words the woman says and she repeats God's one requirement. He allowed her absolute freedom to partake of all of the trees of the garden but just this one. In other words he went out of his way to make it possible for Eve not to sin. But this one limitation was placed upon man in order that man might remember that he or she is a dependent being, that's all. It's not a moral thing as over against an immoral thing. But simply this one test, that man might recognize that he is a creature, that's all. Now in verse 4 the serpent says unto the woman, “Ye shall not surely die” First thing that he did was to question the word, “Yea hath God said?” Now he says. “Ye shall not surely die.” This is the first lie. This is why Jesus said in the Gospel of John that he was the father of lies. The first lie, in other words, it's not really a matter of life and death, this attitude to

God. That's the terrible first lie, because you see your relationship to God is a matter of your life and your death.

Now the next thing that he does and the final thing is to malign the character of God. He says, “Ye shall not surely die. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God (That should be singular) ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil.” Now here is what we would call a little well poisoning, because he in effect says God is not really good, the reason that he does not want you to eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden is because he doesn't want you to be like him. You see he's afraid that you might learn all of his tricks and all of his recipes. And if you learn all of his tricks and all of his recipes, then you will relegate him to retirement like Mr. K. in Russia has been relegated to retirement. And God is afraid of you. And so he has introduced doubt of the character of God. And now let's see what happens, verse 6,

“And when the woman (Men, there is where the trouble begins) [Laughter] And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, (Now see her heart is doubtful, her senses are inflamed by the fruit of the tree.) When the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”

John says, “The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes the pride of life, these are the things that make up the world.” And here we have the lust of the eyes, she say that the tree was good for food. I should have said the lust of the flesh. And the lust of the eyes, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and the pride of life, “and a tree to be desired to make one wise.” And so she reasoned, and, now the ladies, I don't want you to jump on me because I love you with all my heart, my wife better, but nevertheless I love you with all

my heart. But one thing that the woman must be careful about doing is reasoning. [Laughter] Now that is something that God made the man especially to do, and that's why he says that when you want to know something in the church, go ask your husband. Now don't come up to me and ask me afterwards, "What shall I do if I don't have a husband?" Because I don't know the answer to that I'm just telling you what Paul said. He said if you want to know something in the church, wait, keep silent, ask your husband. He should know. By the way men, that means you ought to have the answers. Isn't it sad that today in our churches the women have the answers and the men are taking up the collection. [Laughter] arranging the chairs, providing for the financing of the building, ushering and so on. Everything's out of order.

Now of course Adam acted contrary to his basic being too, because after Eve ate, we read, "and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." Now later on God said "Why did you hearken to the voice of you wife?" What Adam did was to act emotionally; he acted because he loved his wife. Eve had sinned and apparently because she had sinned and because she had such persuasive power over him, he acted. Instead of reasoning as he should have and not sinning, he acted contrary to his being by acting emotionally. Eve reasoned when she shouldn't have, she should have asked her husband, and consequently, the two of them have sinned.

But now remember, they're both religious, they haven't stopped believing in God, they still believe in God, but they have now fallen. In other words, belief in God is not the essence of Christianity. A man who is a fallen man may believe in God. Demons believe in God. Eve is still a believer, she's still religious, and so is Adam. Furthermore, they have not acted immorally, they have not committed adultery, they've not stolen they've not murdered. Oh what they do will issue in murder and it won't be long before Cain rises up and slays Abel. Once sin has entered the human race, those are the products. But you see sin is unbelief. This is why when the Lord Jesus was here, he said he was going to send the Holy Spirit when he left and the Spirit would convince the

world of sin because, “they believe not on me.” Sin is unbelief. That’s what sin is. It issues in rebellion. Because Eve would not believe the word of God, “that in the day thou eateth thereof thou shall surely die.” Because she really didn’t believe that because she didn’t trust that statement of God, she rebelled she ate.

Now this issues in immorality, it’s a product of sin. Now today Satan has so confused us that we think sin is this. Of course this is sin, but that is the product of sin. This is sin, this is its immediate product, this is its issue. And out of immorality come all the other sins like murder, theft et cetera and right on down the list.

Now it is important for us to remember this because you see, by this we all are guilty of sin. By this all are guilty of sin. Oh we might be good citizens, church members, paying our pledges, nice to our neighbor, good to our families providing for them and so on, but we may be rebels against God, and if we are, we’re guilty before God. It may not have reached this out breaking stage yet, but it surely will ultimately.

Now the consequences of the fall, well it’s just about nine, let me just point out one of the consequences in connection with sin and then we’ll have to stop. Verse 7 through 9, we can stop because next time we’re going to take up the promise that is given and we’ll begin right here. But let’s notice the consequences in connection with sin. What are the consequences of the sin of Adam and Eve? Verse 7 says, “And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked;” Apparently they had lived with some form of covering that was like glory. Now however, they do know good and evil. But unfortunately, they know good and they can not do it, and they know evil and they can not help but do that. They knew that they were naked; they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. In other words, they tried to compensate for the effects of sin.

Now if I had time, I would like to show you how religion is man’s attempt to ignore the revelation of God. For this is what we do: We have all forms of religion with its legalism, with its mysticism, with its rationalism and they are the fig leaves whereby we

cover our nakedness before God. And so Adam and Eve rushed off. The effects of sin are there, what do you do about it? Well of course you should go to God and confess your sin, receive his forgiveness. He loves Adam and Eve just as much as he did before the fall, He's gonna come down and visit them as in the former days. You see the one thing you must learn is that in your sin, God has not turned back upon you. He still loves you. Now that sin is a barrier to fellowship, but he loves you, and the thing to do with it is to bring it to God. He's waiting like a father to receive you. He hasn't turned his back so that now you have to plead with him, cajole him to forgive you, he's waiting for you to come. And as a Christian too, when you sin he feels the same way. He loves you just as much, but they do like man does in his sin. They are independent of God, they want to stay independent. And so they rush off to the fig tree, of all the trees to pick, why the leaves of a fig tree, have you ever noticed? They are itchy, creepy crawly, scratchy leaves. [Laughter] And so they put those just take a fig leaf some time and feel under it that's the kind of clothes they put on. They were very very uncomfortable in their religion. [Laughter] This is the first religion of works, fig leaves. And every other religion since is fig leaves. The remedy, we shall see next time, is the cross of Jesus Christ. That's the remedy, for the Son of God will take Adam and Eve's rebellion their sin, the sin of all the other Adams and Eves since that time and will die bearing all of their sin away. And now this holy God is free to offer to us everlasting salvation. Next time we will see how he clothed Adam and Eve in the garments of the skin of animals which have been slain, because it is by redemption through blood that man is ultimately covered, the redeeming work of the Lord Jesus who cried out, "My God, My God why has Thou forsaken me?" Because he took our sin bore our judgment, bore our independence. And now we may have his life. Time's up, we must stop; let's have a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we thank Thee for this wonderful opportunity to study Thy word.
We pray ...

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“The Garden of Eden, or the Fall of Man” by S. Lewis Johnson
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[AUDIO ENDS ABRUPTLY]