

Was it really a serpent that deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden?

One of the difficulties that non-believers have with The Bible is the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. They cannot believe that it really was a serpent that deceived Eve at the very beginning. If we are to establish once again the fact that The Bible is the most accurate book ever written then we must face up to the difficulties that people have with certain passages and see if there is a logical explanation for any discrepancy or part of The Bible that cannot be understood logically.

The fact is that if you read what The Bible says in Genesis chapter 3 you will see that it does not say that a serpent deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden. The first three words of verse 1 of this chapter are “Now **the serpent**” There are two things you need to know here, the first is that using such a term is referring to the characteristics of the one who deceived Eve and not to its physical appearance. We can see this in Luke chapter 13 verses 31 and 32 that some Pharisees came to Jesus and warned Him that Herod was seeking to kill Him. Jesus made the following reply: “The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get out, and depart from here: or Herod will kill you. And he said unto them, Go tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.”

Jesus did not mean to suggest for one moment that Herod had red hair, a bushy tail and walked around on four legs, clearly from this scripture we can see that Jesus was referring to the characteristics of Herod not his physical appearance. Moreover we see from Revelation chapter twelve verse 9 that Satan is again referred to (among other things) as the serpent. “The great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, who deceived the whole world: he was cast out onto the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

We further learn that this formerly high-ranking angelic being can transform himself into an angel of light in appearance. In 2 Corinthians chapter 11 verses 13 and 14 Paul is writing about others who try to deceive others into thinking that they are true Apostles of Jesus Christ. “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. No marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.”

Just stop for a moment and think. In the first letter the Apostle John wrote to the churches and verse 5 we read the following: “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.” That being the case Adam and Eve would be familiar with having fellowship with a being of light (God) they would not previously have known about another being that can transform himself in appearance to look like a being of light, so there would be no reason for them to reject or question his presence.

Why then would this formerly high-ranking angelic being want to get at mankind and cause them to sin, since they are the pinnacle of God’s creation? That question can be answered by taking a look at Isaiah chapter 14 and Ezekiel chapter 28. The first of these reads as follows from verse 10 to 19 inclusive which read as follows: “All they shall

speak and say unto you, Have you also become weak as we are? Have you become like us? Your pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of your viols: the worms are spread under you, and cover you. How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, who weakened the nations! For you said in your heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet you shall be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

They that see you shall narrowly look upon you, and consider you, saying, is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners? All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house, but you are cast out of your grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcass trodden under feet.”

It seems clear through this that this formerly high-ranking angelic being tried to become like God. Many say that the original sin was to disobey God by eating of the fruit mankind was told to leave alone, however we see from this that the original sin took place amongst the angels of heaven and the leader (in this passage given his proper name) was swollen with pride and wanted to take over from God or at least make himself equal to Him. This clearly is the sin of pride, a sin we shall be looking at again a little later when it happens with Eve in the Garden of Eden. Now though let us look at the passage from Ezekiel chapter 28 and learn more about this fallen formerly high-ranking angelic being. We look in this chapter at verses 13 to 19 which clearly cannot be referring to a mere human being and therefore are clearly referring to the same one as we read about in that passage from Isaiah chapter 14.

“You have been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of your tabrets and of your pipes were prepared in you in the day that you were created. You were the anointed cherub that covered; and I set you so: you were upon the holy mountain of God; you hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. You were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, till iniquity was found in you. By the multitude of your merchandise they have filled the midst of you with violence, and you have sinned: therefore I will cast you as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty, you have corrupted your wisdom by reason of your brightness: I will cast you to the ground, I will lay you before kings, that they may behold you. You have defiled your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of you, it shall devour you, and I will bring you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all

them who see you. All they that know you among the people shall be astonished at you: you shall be a terror, but never shall you be any more.”

Now that this formerly high-ranking being has failed to take over or become the equal of God we can see why he would want to work on the pinnacle of God’s creation, mankind and bring corruption and sin to what God has made in His own image. The original sin was committed in heaven but in effect that same sin of pride was committed in the Garden of Eden and is continuing to be committed all over the world even to this very day. We shall see how this has come about by looking at the way this angelic being of light set about deceiving Eve.

Looking again at the first letter that the Apostle John wrote to the churches, chapter 2 verse 16 we read the following: “For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” Here in Genesis chapter 3 we can see this scenario being played out. The first thing that the serpent did was to question what God had said. We see today that there has been a great increase in the number of (even) theologians who are questioning whether The Bible has actually recorded accurately what God has said or whether it was meant to change over time. The answer to this problem can be found in 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 25 and reads as follows: “But the word of the Lord endures for ever. And this is the word the gospel that we preached unto you.”

Now let us take a look at what the devil said to Eve in the Garden of Eden. Genesis chapter 3 v 1 to 6 we read: “Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field that The Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, has God said, you shall not eat of every tree of the garden? The woman said unto the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, God has said, you shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die. The serpent said unto the woman, you shall not surely die: for God knows that in the day you eat of it, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. 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 that fruit and ate, and gave some also unto her husband and he did eat.”

First the devil tries to get Eve to disbelieve the word of God, if he can successfully do this then it is certain to lead to sin, which is precisely what happened. She could see that the fruit looked good (lust of the eyes) enticement to partake of something forbidden – (lust of the flesh) wanting to become like God (the sin of pride – just the same as the sin of the devil in heaven). Now today we commit these same sins in almost every nation. There is research going on to cure all the diseases known to man, yet in Deuteronomy chapter 28 God promises that if we obey Him then He will remove all sickness from amongst us. However, mankind does not want to obey Him so continues to seek other ways of removing sickness rather than the way God has presented to them.

The fact that there are millions of aborted babies every year across the world shows that mankind wants to play God and decide who lives and who does not. This is very much

like what a certain national leader tried to do during World War 2. We will never become like God for we were never intended to be and were never given such a capacity. Mankind was created to have fellowship with His creator for all eternity. No relationship is worth having if one partner willingly and consistently does what is hateful to the other. Mankind wants to be independent of God, not have to submit to His ways, even though they are for our good always. This is a fine example of the kind of pride that brought down the devil in heaven.

Further Mankind wants to rule this world without having to bring God into their decision making or political environment, they want to have power over as many people as possible without being answerable to anyone else but themselves. Truly this is a lust of the flesh when mankind wants to live by their own rules and be answerable to nobody else but themselves. There we have it, the same type of sins that were committed by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden has been proven to still be put into action today. No wonder the world is in such a terrible state. What a far better and more wonderful world this would be if we all sought to obey God and show His love and concern for our fellow humans, which is precisely what God has been urging us to do for millennia.

Today many people think that the story of the fall of man (fall from grace in the eyes of God and fall into sin) is just a story that has no relevance to today. We shall continue to look at this story by looking at what happened when God came to visit them and fellowship with them in the cool of the evening that very same day. Verses 7 to 13 reveal several things about human nature.

“And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. Then they heard the voice of The Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of The Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. The Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, where are you? He said, I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree I commanded you not to eat from? The man said, the woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. The Lord God said unto the woman, what is this that you have done? And the woman said, the serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.”

Firstly mankind ran away from the presence of God, this is what mankind has been doing ever since, making every possible excuse to stay away from the presence of God. When they realized their sin and sowed fig leaves together to cover their nakedness fear entered in. This happens even today when sin is committed fear of being found out and fear of condemnation comes in, these things only God is able to take away. Then Adam blames Eve for what has happened, Eve blames the serpent and it is he who does not have a leg to stand on.

Since God is a righteous God when sin has been committed it must be atoned for by the shedding of blood. Either a righteous person will do this for you by shedding their innocent blood or you will have to take the consequences of your wrong doing upon

yourself for all eternity. Provision has been made to avoid this by the shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accepting His sacrifice and walking in fellowship and obedience to Him thereafter removes condemnation from upon you and therefore eliminates all reason you have to fear any longer.

In this passage alone Adam and Eve are offered three opportunities of confessing their wrong-doing before God and asking His forgiveness but instead of doing this they try to blame someone or something else. Have you noticed that if someone commits a crime it is not really their fault anymore, they are a victim of their environment, peers or have inherited the tendency to act that way from a parent or grandparent. Only if we own up to the responsibility we have for our own wrong doing and ask God to forgive us for it can we hope to have fear and condemnation removed from us.

In the continuation of this story God then meets out to Adam, Eve and the serpent the consequences of their wrong-doing. Some might say that it was very harsh of God to ban them from such a wonderfully lush environment just because of one sin, but to say this is to ignore the record of what God thought to Himself after such a thing had happened. Verses 22 to 24 of this chapter read as follows: “The Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: therefore The Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim, and a flaming sword that turned every way, to keep them from getting to the tree of life.”

If mankind had been allowed to eat of the tree of life then they would have to live forever in their state of sin and there would be no possibility of redemption. God loved mankind so much that He was not prepared to let this happen to them. In the verses in this chapter that speak of God spelling out the consequences of their sin He also mentions the plan that is to be put into effect in order to restore mankind into fellowship with his creator.

“I will put enmity between you (the serpent) and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; it shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” No mention of the father’s involvement in this process, because one of the laws that God had laid down was that seeds produced of their own kind. Since then mankind had sinned, any off-spring of his would naturally also be of a sinful nature. However, if someone were to come who was of the same original stock as the first Adam and could live a life without sin (disobedience to God) from start to finish then the blood of this person would qualify to atone for the sin and wrong-doing of Adam and Eve. Thus the final part of this story points the way to Jesus, of the same origin as the first Adam and also without a sin nature which Adam originally did not have.

Because Jesus lived a life completely free from wrong-doing and a life totally pleasing to His father God in every way His blood qualified to atone for the sin of mankind in the sight of God forever. As Jesus Himself told His disciples many years later “Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends” John chapter 15 verse 13. Jesus took this one stage further; He laid down His life even for those who at the time

were His enemies, and rose again to prove to us that his sacrifice on our behalf had indeed won for us redemption – the forgiveness of our sins. Nobody else could have done it, we should thank God that Jesus did.