



THE *Jesus*
CODE



52 Scripture
Questions Every Believer
Should Answer

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1 HAS GOD INDEED SAID . . . ?

—GENESIS 3:1



*W*e had a really good start. Life began in a perfect paradise. The climate was never too warm and never too cold. We had no aches or pains, heartache or worries. We lived in perfect peace and harmony in the midst of a perfect garden. And we had dominion over everything *except* the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil,” which God had forbidden us to eat (Genesis 2:17). We were doing wonderfully well . . . *until* the devil slithered into our world and asked the first recorded question in Scripture. It was cleverly designed to cause us to doubt God, His word, and His heart: “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’” (3:1). That simple seed of doubt took root in our hearts. From that time on, we have wondered, “Has God indeed said?”

Satan entered the scene of life just three chapters into the Bible, and the last time we encounter him is three chapters from the end. And the damage he has caused is seen on every page in between. This cunning creature was smart enough to know that doubt is deadly. He did not try to force us to eat the forbidden fruit. He simply tossed a seed of doubt our way, and we took it from there: “Has God indeed said?”

This cosmic conflict has not changed through the millennia.



Satan is still very much at work causing us to doubt what God has said to us in His Word. Satan’s tactic is a clever three-pronged strategy designed to lead us—just as he led Adam and Eve—to personal defeat and separation from God.

SATAN’S DECEIT BRINGS A SELFISH DESIRE

The plan was simple. The devil made a brief appearance in the garden, and all he did was ask a question: “Do you think God really meant that? Come on. Do you think you would really die if you took a bite of that single little fruit? Be realistic. God knows that if you did, you would become a god yourself; you would know both good and evil.” And that is the last we hear from our enemy. He is gone. That is all he did. And that is all he had to do (Genesis 3:1–5).

Our minds are like a hotel. The manager can’t keep people from coming into the lobby, but he can keep them from getting a room. It is the same with our thoughts. It is not a sin when an impure thought goes through our minds. The sin comes when we give it a room and let it settle down there.

And Satan’s deceit brings to the surface our sinful, selfish desires as well as a lack of trust. It was true then, and it is true now: once doubt gets a room in your mind, Satan’s battle is half won.

A SELFISH DESIRE BRINGS A SINFUL DECISION

Once doubt had its foot in the door, three things happened in rapid succession. Eve “saw that the tree was good for food . . . pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise”



(Genesis 3:6). Next she took it . . . and ate. Then she gave her husband a piece, and he ate. Bam! Did things ever change! Adam and Eve were booted out of the garden, and they ran in an attempt to hide from God.

Once the seed of doubt took root, a downward digression followed. First, Eve *saw*: she “saw that the tree was good” (v. 6). Then she *coveted*: it was “desirable to make one wise” (v. 6). Then she *took*: “She took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband . . . and he ate” (v. 6). And finally, they *hid*: “Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God” (v. 8). The pattern had been revealed.

King David walked that same path. He *saw* a woman on a rooftop bathing. He *coveted* and sent men to find out more about her. He *took*: he brought her to his palace and slept with her. He *hid* . . . to the hideous extent of having her husband killed in battle in order to cover his actions. All of us walk this path when we allow doubt to have a room in our minds. We are no different from Eve or David. If we do not break the cycle, we also will see, covet, take, and then spend our lives looking over our shoulder to see if we will be found out. Why does this happen? Because a selfish desire that has been allowed to take root in our hearts brings a sinful decision.

A SINFUL DECISION BRINGS A SURE DEFEAT

Adam and Eve “knew that they were naked” (Genesis 3:7). Duh! But before that point, God had been so much the center of their devotion and attention, they had not realized it. Now, with sin in the picture, they were focused on themselves! So



they covered themselves with fig leaves. God caught up with them, and the buck passing began. Adam blamed his sinful disobedience on Eve: “She gave me the fruit to eat.” In fact, Adam even shared some of the blame with God: “You gave her to me.” Eve said, “The devil made me do it!” Clearly, human nature hasn’t changed much at all. Someone besides us is almost always to blame for all of our wrong decisions and all of our defeats.

But God, in His grace, intervened. Fig leaves would never suffice. So God took an innocent animal (a foreshadowing of the Lamb of God), killed it, and covered Adam and Eve with its skins. When that little animal took its last breath, it became the first to experience the deadly toll that sin takes. Strange, isn’t it, that the whole scenario began with a simple question: “Has God indeed said?” It was designed to cause us to doubt God and His word, and that plan succeeded. Doubt is deadly.

And the bottom line? God placed man in a perfect paradise; Satan entered briefly and sowed a seed of doubt; we fell. God drove our first parents out of paradise, and you and I have been trying to get back home—back into God’s presence—ever since. The Bible is the record of this heartbreaking journey in search of what we once enjoyed: the account begins in Genesis with paradise lost, and it ends in Revelation with paradise regained! Right now we are exiles from Eden. But God has made a way through Jesus Christ who, incidentally, is still asking, “Why did you doubt?” (Matthew 14:31).





Q & A: “*Has God indeed said . . . ?*” The answer is a resounding, “Yes, He certainly has.” And what He says in His Word is true. We can trust Him. Remember this week that doubt is deadly when the Deceiver comes to you in various ways to get you to doubt what God has said in His Word.

