**Did God Really Say?**

Based on [Genesis 3:1-21](http://biblia.com/books/esv/Ge3.1-21)

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Lenten Midweek 1

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Lent is a penitential season. It is not to have us despair for despair’s sake, but repentance is essential to an understanding of God’s grace. **God graciously forgives us for Christ’s sake. If you are to be forgiven, you need to have realized you've done something wrong. In order to have done something wrong there needs to be a difference between right and wrong that you are aware of. If you are to be aware of right and wrong**, the author of right and wrong would have had to have informed you of it. And for God to have clearly informed you of right and wrong, he would have had to have spoken.

Our reading is the account of the Fall of Adam and Eve into sin under the influence of the Satanic serpent...and this was done despite God clearly informing them, in spoken words, what they were not supposed to do. Genesis answers so many questions about our origins. Why are there so many different languages and cultures throughout the world?...tower of Babel. **Why are there such sweeping rock formations, layers of rock and sediment and fossils buried deep in the earth?.**..because of a cataclysmic flood. If the creator of our world, the almighty God, is such a perfect craftsman...why is it that the world and everything in it is damaged goods?...because of the Fall into sin.

Adam didn’t “fall” into sin. It is more accurate to say that he jumped into it. He didn’t fall for anything. He wasn’t deceived but knew what he was doing. But Eve, we’re told, was deceived, tricked, and so it is accurate to say she fell into sin, because she fell for a lie.

Eve was tricked by the serpent. Look at how the satan worked her. First he got her to question God's word. "Did God actually say?..." "Did God actually say you can't eat ***any*** fruit." **Satan begins by misquoting God's command and making it even more strict than it was to begin with.** And so she responds to the serpent correcting him that it was only fruit from a certain tree they couldn't eat, but adds to God's word another command, "***neither shall you touch it***, lest you die." It’s like dickering over the price of a car...you never start with the price you’re really aiming at. Satan is crafty, he's ratcheting her down first to doubt whether she heard God right in the first place; then convince her that God really meant something else.

That's how Eve was tempted by Satan, and how He always tempts the human race even today. The first step is to twist God's word, (Did God really say?)...**that causes dickering over the word. That causes doubt; and doubt about what God said leads us to fill in the blank with our own judgments.** Satan could sell ice to an Eskimo, because he actually convinced Eve that when God said he didn't want her to eat, that she just misunderstood. When Satan was done with her, Eve believed that when God said "**don't eat lest you die**" what he really meant was "**eat that you may be wise**." That's how Satan works, not by saying "don't listen to God", but by drawing us away from the clear concise Word of God and instead making us think that God really means something else entirely. How can that happen?

"Did god really say" is still the wedge Satan uses to get a foothold, even within God's church today. "Did God really say homosexuality is a sin?" "Did God really say I always have to forgive people?" And maybe the most subtle killer of faith is done by those who teach that prayer is a way to hear from God. The person who is told to “seek God's will in prayer” is taught to constantly ask themselves, "Did God really say?". Did God really say that I should quit my job? Did God really say I should leave my unhappy marriage?

Did God really say *anything*?...YES HE DID! Not in the feelings aroused in fervent prayer, nor in the enlightened modern mind of man. What God really said, he said in Holy Scripture. We don't need to look before or beyond what he has written. After all, the Scriptures were enough for Jesus...

...Some 4000 years after Adam and Eve, Jesus was told to go into the wilderness to fast for forty days...that was Jesus' Lent. **And while he was fasting, Satan came to him, not a serpent this time though, but as himself, and tempted Jesus.**

**Now, if anyone ever had the right to speak from their heart, it was Jesus. If anyone could have prayed a spontaneous prayer, or listened for God to speak to his heart, Jesus had the right to do it.** After all, whatever Jesus says is God's Word because He Is God. And yet, Jesus does not quote his heart, he quotes scripture, the clearly spoken words of God. None of this, "Did God really say" nonsense. God said it, not “because I feel it,” but because IT IS WRITTEN. It is written, man shall not live by bread alone. It is written "you shall not put God to the test. **It is written, "You shall worship the Lord and serve him only."** Jesus preached to Satan God's written word and then sent him away.

Did god really say? That's how it all starts, because salvation comes by the word of God...for man does not live by bread alone, but by EVERY word that comes from the mouth of God. **Eve was deceived into thinking this: that when God said, "Don't eat" what he meant really meant was "eat."** Is this all that different than those today who say, "When Christ said in the Last Supper, "this is my body", what he really meant was "this is not my body?" Or those who say that when the apostle Peter said, "Baptism now saves you", what he *really* meant was, "Baptism can't *really* save you."

But baptism does save you. Jesus body and blood are true food and drink for your salvaiton. These are the way God packaged his gift of grace for you, his chosen people, called out of the world and into his kingdom of grace in the midst of this fallen world. St. Paul says in Romans, "**For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of God that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many."** Lent begins in defeat, Easter in victory. Lent begins in death, Easter in Life. And so it is that the curse is reversed in the same way it was given, for Lent begins with Adam and Eve an eating forbidden food in unbelief; Easter begins with us eating holy food in faith in the Lord's Supper. Sins forgiven; victory won!