

Come to Understanding

**They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding,
and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. — Isaiah 29:24**

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Enchanting the World

According to the Book of Genesis, God created the heaven and the earth:

1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. -Genesis 1

As He first spoke into the darkness, God created the light. He saw that it was good:

2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

4 And God saw the light, that *it was* good: and God divided the light from the darkness. -Genesis 1

Many people who begin reading the Bible reject its basic premise, which is that God is the Creator. Instead, they claim that the universe somehow created itself. Even among those who accept that God is the Creator, many of them question who God is. Some think He is a nameless energy force whose source is within their own minds and defined by their own thoughts.

Fueling this concept, René Descartes, a seventeenth century French philosopher, wrote the now famous words, “je pense, donc je suis,” which mean in English, “I think, therefore I am.” He defined his existence by his own thoughts, which is by his own reason. As others joined Descartes in believing reason to be the basis of being, they provided the foundation for the beginning of the “Age of Reason,” which is also called the “Enlightenment.”

Reason is a wonderful gift from God. However, when we allow it to freely challenge the authority of Yahweh because His word does not agree with our reason, we run into problems. The “Enlightened” are quick to find reasons why they should reject the truth of the Bible. As they read it, they soon find discrepancies that do not fit with their reason.

First they learn that Yahweh, the Creator of all things, is gracious, compassionate, patient, merciful, and good to “all his works” (everything and everyone):

8 Yahweh *is* gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.

* René Descartes, *Discourse on Method for Reasoning Well and for Seeking Truth in the Sciences*, 1637. (Released in French as *Discours de la méthode*, Project Gutenberg EBook #13846, October 25, 2004 and updated: August 14, 2006).

9 Yahweh *is* good to all: and his tender mercies *are* over all his works. -Psalms 145

Then they look around the world and see social injustice, war, famine, disease, hurricanes, earthquakes, and even global warming. Striving for compassion and tolerance, they ask, “How can a loving God allow this?” Trying to respond through the filter of enlightened reason, they can only believe either that “there is no God” or “contrary to what He says, the God of the Bible is not loving.” Therefore, they conclude, “we need to find a god that *is* ‘gracious, compassionate, patient, merciful, and good.’”

These thoughts are not new. When Satan showed himself in the Garden of Eden in the form of a subtle serpent, he also brought up the issue of Yahweh’s apparent injustice. He began with a question about whether Yahweh had really said what the woman thought He had said:

1 Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which Yahweh God had made. And he said to the woman, Indeed, has God said, You shall not eat of every tree of the garden? -Genesis 3

Had the woman ignored the words of the serpent, she would not have been deceived. Likewise, had she clearly known the words God had said, and believed them, she would not have been confused. Nevertheless, without either clearly understanding or strongly believing the Word of God, she naively engaged the serpent in a dialogue:

2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

3 But of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God has said, You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die. -Genesis 3

She quoted part of what Yahweh had said. However, she failed to quote Him accurately. He didn’t mention anything about *touching* the fruit. He only said that they must not *eat* of it!

17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die. -Genesis 2

Either she didn’t know what Yahweh had really said, or she misunderstood it, or she embellished upon it. In any case, she opened herself up to the serpent, who appealed to her reason concerning the apparent injustice of God.

Until this point, everything that she had known was good, because it was created by God:

**So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading. — Nehemiah 8:8**

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31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, *it was* very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day. -Genesis 1

If God is good and His creation is good, how could He be so cruel? How could a loving God cause someone to die just because, as she said, they only *touched* a piece of fruit? It did not seem reasonable to her.

With a seed of doubt now growing in her mind, the woman was ready to receive the next words that the serpent offered. He told her that the Word of Yahweh was not really true. She would not die at all! Instead, the serpent told her that she would be as gods, knowing good and evil:

4 And the serpent said unto the woman, You shall not surely die:

5 For God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. -Genesis 3

Believing the subtle deception of the serpent instead of the word of Yahweh, the woman, along with her husband, ate of the forbidden fruit:

6 And 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 to her husband with her; and he did eat. -Genesis 3

Once the knowledge of evil entered into the couple in the Garden of Eden, it soon overtook the minds of mankind, who continually thought of it:

5 And Yahweh saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually. -Genesis 6

How could a “serpent” have so completely deceived mankind? He is really Satan, the great deceiver of the world:

9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. -Revelation 12

Satan was called a “serpent,” which is translated from the Hebrew noun נָחָשׁ (nachash). It is based on the word that is most often translated into English as “enchantment” (see *Online Hebrew Bible Lexicon*). The English word “enchant” is based upon the Latin word “incant,” which means

to recite or utter. An “incantation” is the “chanting or uttering of words purporting to have magical power.” (see *Random House Webster’s College Dictionary*, 1995, p. 679)

Words are symbols that are used to transmit thoughts from one mind to another. When the woman allowed Satan to speak to her as an enchanting “serpent,” she opened her mind to receive his thoughts. By engaging him in dialogue, she allowed him to manipulate her reason by his subtle and skillful use of words. He then successfully deceived her mind into believing him instead of Yahweh.

Satan tried a similar tactic on Yahshua (also called Jesus) by misapplying the Scriptures. However, Yahshua, fully knowing the Scriptures, cast him aside with these words:

8 And Yahshua answered and said to him, Get you behind me, Satan: for it is written, You shall worship the Lord *Yahweh* your God, and him only shall you serve. -Luke 4

Although we know that the Word of God can be used to cast off Satan and his spirits, it is best not to engage them in dialogue. Yahshua, for example, commanded the devils (the evil spirits of Satan) not to even speak:

34 And he healed many that were sick of various diseases, and cast out many devils; and permitted not the devils to speak, because they knew him. -Mark 1

Unclean spirits, called the “spirits of devils,” are also those of gods or goddesses (see *Online Greek Bible Lexicon*). They come out of the *mouths* of those who have them:

13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *come* out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, *which* go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. -Revelation 16

These demonic spirits are transmitted from the mouths of those under Satan’s power, whether through incantations, appealing words, or in some other way, to deceive the rulers and people of the world into opposing Yahweh.

Those who are unaware of the tactics of Satan can easily mistake him for an angel of light and believe that his ministers are “ministers of righteousness:”

13 For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of the Messiah.

14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

15 Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also are transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works. -2 Corinthians 11

Paul warned the Corinthians:

3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in the Messiah. -2 Corinthians 11

We need to beware of enchanting words that appeal to our reason, but are contrary to the Word of God.

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