

Introduction to Chapter 6

The narrative of Gen 2:4–24 reiterates the sixth day of creation from a more intimate perspective. It describes the Lord’s provision for and relationship with those created in his image (Gen 1:26–30). After forming Adam from the ground and breathing a living soul into him, God placed him into a well-watered, luxuriant garden to perform the priestly function of serving, working, cultivating, and keeping it. This beautiful park was full of trees which produced wonderful food, including the tree of life which stood at its center (Gen 2:8–15).

The Lord gave Adam freedom to eat from any of these. However, there was one prohibition. The Lord God laid charge upon the man, saying, ‘From all of the trees of the garden you are able to eat, but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat, because in the day you eat it, you shall surely die’” (Gen 2:16–17). Adam was to acquire wisdom through his relationship with the Lord, rather than seeking it on his own.

Recognizing that it was not good for Adam to be alone, God paraded the animals he had created before him. While exercising the authority of an image-bearer of God by naming each animal,¹ Adam reached a devastating conclusion. Every animal had its mate, but an equal and adequate partner did not exist for him (Gen 2:18–20).

Now that God had awakened Adam’s longing, the Lord placed him into a very deep, supernatural sleep. God took raw material, not from the ground, but from Adam’s side to fashion the first woman. Upon awakening, the man recognized his true counterpart and enthusiastically uttered a covenant of unalterable loyalty:

This, this time,
[is] bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh.
This shall be called woman,
for from man was taken this!²

In harmonious intimacy, the two became one flesh; they were naked but knew no shame (Gen 2:21–25).

Serpents in the Ancient Near East

1) Gen 3:1: Humanity experienced a time of probation in the garden through Adam as our representative. God expected Adam to adhere to the prohibition of eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Gen 2:16–17). This test would determine whether Adam accepted his position of power under the Lord, his emperor, when presented with what seemed to be an arbitrary command.³ Meanwhile, the serpent had a two-fold objective: to halt the spread of the kingdom of God and to prevent humanity from continuing to serve as the Lord’s ambassadors.⁴ In the Ancient Near East (ANE) during the second millennium BC, people associated serpents with both death and wisdom.⁵

¹Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*, 75.

² Translation by G. Wenham; see Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 69–70.

³ Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*, 104–5.

⁴ Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*, 120.

⁵ Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBCOT*, Gen 3:1.

For example, in the Epic of Gilgamesh, the protagonist dove through deep water to procure the “Old Man Becomes a Young Man” plant which one could eat to become immortal. Before Gilgamesh could test it, a snake smelled the plant, sneaked up behind him, and stole it. As the serpent slithered away, it sloughed off its skin, demonstrating that the plant imparted eternal life.⁶ Due to this treachery, Gilgamesh was doomed to die, for “Enlil...the father of the gods...has destined thy fate, O Gilgamesh, for kingship, for eternal life he has not destined it.”⁷

The Akkadian story of a man named Adapa also features an account of squandered eternal life.⁸ A serpent-shaped god whose name means “Lord Productive Tree” (Gishida) ruled over the netherworld.⁹ He offered Adapa the bread of life to give him immortality. However, another god had already tricked Adapa, saying, “When they offer thee bread of death, thou shalt not eat [it]. When they offer thee water of death, thou shalt not drink [it]. When they offer thee a garment, put [it] on.” Therefore, when Lord Protective Tree presented the bread of life to Adapa, he refused it.¹⁰

According to Egyptians, each night the ship of the sun god moved through the skies of the underworld, where a demon named Apophis lurked.¹¹ This forty-five-foot serpent operated as an “anti-god and enemy of order.”¹² Therefore, Egyptian priests performed daily temple rituals to repulse him, sparing the land from destruction.¹³

“This spell is to be recited over Apophis drawn on a new sheet of papyrus in green color and put inside a box on which his name is set, he being tied and bound and put on the fire every day, wiped out with [your] left foot and spat upon four times in the course of every day. “[The sun god] Re is triumphant,” and “Pharaoh—life, prosperity, health!—is triumphant over his enemies”—four times.¹⁴

On the other hand, the serpent Wadjet served as the patron goddess of Lower Egypt. People portrayed her as a cobra on the headdress of the pharaoh. Egyptians viewed Wadjet as very wise and capable of great magic.¹⁵

During the time of Moses, artists depicted the fertility goddess Qudshu on Egyptian amulets and reliefs. Typically, she appeared naked, holding snakes in both hands or flowers in one and serpents in the other.¹⁶ She often surfaced in erotic scenes with other minor gods. Later, her identity fused with that of a Canaanite fertility goddess named Astarte or Asherah, who bore seventy sons.¹⁷ Eventually, Asherah ensnared Israel (Judg 6:24–25; 1 Ki 18:17–19; 2 Ki 23:7). In sum, people in the ANE often worshiped serpents. They represented occult wisdom, chaos, fertility, and immortality.¹⁸

⁶ “The Epic of Gilgamesh,” *ANET*, 11:265–89, 96.

⁷ S. N. Kramer, trans., “The Death of Gilgamesh,” in *ANET*, lines 33–5, 50.

⁸ Pritchard, *ANET*, 101.

⁹ Walton, *Genesis*, 203.

¹⁰ E. A. Speiser, trans., “Adapa,” in *ANET*, lines 20–70, 101–2, 101–3.

¹¹ James B. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*, 3rd. Ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 6.

¹² Ludwig D. Morenz, “Apophis: On the Origin, Name, and Nature of an Egyptian Anti-God,” *JNES* 63, no. 3 (July 2004):201–5, 201, <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdfplus/10.1086/424771>.

¹³ Pritchard, *ANET*, 7.

¹⁴ John A. Wilson, trans., “The Repulsing of the Dragon and the Creation,” in *ANET*, 7.

¹⁵ Walton, *Genesis*, 203.

¹⁶ The University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, “Plaque 61–14–1655,” <http://www.penn.museum/collections/object/338637>. This site features an excellent photo.

¹⁷ John Day, “Asherah (Deity),” *ABD* 1:483–7, 484.

¹⁸ Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBCOT*, Gen 3:1–5.

In Gen 2:25–3:1, Moses employed wordplay concerning the man’s and the woman’s innocent nakedness (*arummim*) and the snake’s shrewdness (*arum*). This accentuated the vulnerability of Adam and Eve.¹⁹ A neutral term, we can also translate *arum* as “cunning” or “prudent,” a remedy for naiveté (Prov 1:4).²⁰ Yet, when utilized by those who seek evil, such craftiness connotes danger (Exod 21:14).²¹

Moses described the snake as an animal, presumably one of the creatures made by God. An evil force came from within the created order; it did not break into the world from another realm.²² The text gives no hint of a supernatural entity,²³ except for the fact that the serpent spoke.²⁴ It seems that the snake had heard the prohibition which the Lord had delivered to Adam (Gen 2:16–17).²⁵ He then altered it to ensnare his victims, asking the woman, “Has God really said, ‘You shall not eat from all the trees of the garden?’”

In effect, the serpent said, “You must have misheard. Surely a good God would not limit someone he loves in that way.”²⁶ As a result, the snake altered the attitude of the creatures toward their creator, encouraging people to make judgments about God’s words rather than simply obeying them.²⁷ Genesis does not explain why the serpent addressed Eve,²⁸ nor does it disclose why Adam failed to assist her in rebuffing the snake’s claims.²⁹

a) Read Gen 3:1. How did people in the ANE view serpents? What act by the serpent in Eden first revealed his craftiness?

A World-Altering Conversation

b) Gen 3:2–5: By the time of Moses, serpents represented occult wisdom, chaos, fertility, and immortality in the Ancient Near East.³⁰ In the garden, a snake engaged Eve in conversation regarding the Lord’s prohibition in Gen 2:16–17. He began by asking, “Has God really said, ‘You shall not eat from all the trees of the garden?’”

Moses reported, “The woman said to the serpent, ‘From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat, but of the tree which [is] in the middle of the garden, God has said, “You shall not eat from it, and you shall not touch it, or you will die.”’ The serpent said to the woman, ‘You shall not *surely* die. For God knows that on the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened and you will become like God, knowing good and evil.’”

¹⁹ Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 90.

²⁰ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “עָרִים” (*arum*), *BDB*, 791, <https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/790/mode/2up>.

²¹ Walton, *Genesis*, 203–4.

²² Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 105.

²³ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 188.

²⁴ Walton, *Genesis*, 204.

²⁵ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 73.

²⁶ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 106.

²⁷ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 107–8.

²⁸ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 188.

²⁹ Walton, *Genesis*, 206.

³⁰ Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBCOT*, Gen 3:1–5.

She corrected the snake, but not quite accurately, adding a ban on even touching the tree.³¹ Furthermore, the Lord had warned, “You shall surely die” (*moth tamuth*) (Gen 2:16–17). He underscored the inevitability of death,³² not an immediate loss of life. Eve reported that God said, “...or you shall die” (*temuthun*) which has a slightly different nuance. The serpent recognized Eve’s faulty understanding and capitalized upon it by contradicting her, not God.³³

It responded with an unusual construction which occurs only three times in the Hebrew Bible (Ps 49:8; Amos 9:8. By placing the word “not” (*lo*) in front of “surely die” (*lo moth tamuth*), the snake negated the emphatic inevitability of death, not that it would occur.³⁴ The snake asserted, “Death is not an immediate hazard. You have nothing to fear.”³⁵

This event underscores the importance of teaching what God says, rather than making the Bible seem more restrictive than it really is. Since evil can take advantage of this type of exaggeration, we must guard against it.³⁶ If Eve had been informed that she would die if she merely touched the fruit and suffered no harm for doing so, this may have caused her to doubt the veracity of what God forbade and encouraged her to proceed in error. Although placing limits upon ourselves to avoid falling into sin reflects wisdom, we must accurately teach others what Scripture declares (Deut 4:2; Deut 12:32).

After asserting that Eve faced no immediate threat from death,³⁷ the serpent directed her attention to the Lord’s inner thoughts, suggesting that he could ascertain the mind of God. Instead of judgment, the snake promised that disobedience would result in blessings.³⁸ The nature of evil entices humans to sit in judgment on God’s word, not to simply hear and obey it.³⁹ Ultimately, rebellion treats the truth as a lie.⁴⁰ According to the serpent, Adam and Eve could begin their heavenward climb to becoming like God, moving beyond the limits set by the Lord in understanding his mysteries.⁴¹ Had they waited, the wisdom the serpent pledged to Adam and Eve might have been theirs to enjoy in the future, when they passed the test and the time was right.⁴²

Read Gen 3:2–5. What did Eve say that the Lord commanded? How does that differ from what he told Adam in Gen 2:16–17? Why was the serpent able to use her misunderstanding to his advantage? What did the snake promise?

³¹ Walton, *Genesis*, 204.

³² Gesenius, *GKC*, 342.

³³ Walton, *Genesis*, 205.

³⁴ Walton, *Genesis*, 205.

³⁵ Walton, *Genesis*, 205.

³⁶ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 109.

³⁷ Walton, *Genesis*, 205.

³⁸ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 189.

³⁹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 108.

⁴⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 112.

⁴¹ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 190.

⁴² Walton, *Genesis*, 205–6.

Succumbing to Temptation

d) Gen 3:6: Adam and Eve viewed the snake—a creature under their authority—as the paragon of wisdom (Gen 1:26–28). Folly drove their decision, for they possessed all the good things they needed but wanted more (Gen 1:29–30).⁴³ Consequently, Eve chose to view the fruit from the forbidden tree like all other produce in Eden: good for food and a delight to the eyes (Gen 2:8–9, 16–17).⁴⁴

Once she determined that the tree was “desirable in order to become wise,” covetousness arose in her heart.⁴⁵ Unaware of evil, Eve likely saw this as an opportunity to grow in godlikeness.⁴⁶ Craving something she did not have,⁴⁷ Eve ignored God’s command to pursue aesthetic appearance, sensual desire, and convenience.⁴⁸

Moses wrote, “And she took of its fruit, and she ate, and she gave [it] also to her husband [who was] with her, and he ate.” The verb forms point to a chronological sequence of events, with each one representing the logical consequence of what preceded it.⁴⁹ This rapidly cascades to push the narrative forward.⁵⁰ The text does not convey that Eve tempted Adam. We do not know what type of fruit they ate. The notion of an apple comes from the Latin words for “apple” and “evil” sounding alike.⁵¹

Read Gen 3:6. What changes took place in Eve’s heart? How did Adam respond when his wife offered him forbidden fruit? Why do you think he did that? In what sense did Adam and Eve die that day? How do you respond to things which delight your eyes and offer a short-cut to achieving your goals?

Their Eyes Are Opened

e) Gen 3:7: In one respect the serpent told the truth. Adam and Eve’s eyes were opened, but to a shocking discovery (Gen 3:4–5). They were naked!⁵² The duality of good and evil demolished their prior unity of knowledge, with all things beneficial.⁵³ Thus, a sign of their healthy

⁴³ Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary*, 103.

⁴⁴ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 75.

⁴⁵ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 190.

⁴⁶ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 113.

⁴⁷ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 190.

⁴⁸ Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 91.

⁴⁹ Gesenius, *GKC*, 328, <https://archive.org/details/geseniushebrewgr00geseuoft/page/328>.

⁵⁰ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 75.

⁵¹ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 191.

⁵² Walton, *Genesis*, 206.

⁵³ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 122.

relationship suddenly became shameful (Cf. Gen 2:25),⁵⁴ and they immediately experienced the alienation of spiritual death (Gen 2:16–17).⁵⁵ Ironically, fig leaves come from trees which symbolize the fertility of life.⁵⁶

Read Gen 3:7. How did the opening of their eyes differ from what Adam and Eve had expected? What did their shame lead them to do? How do you react to shameful experiences?

Receiving the Crown of Life

2) James 1:12: Earlier in chapter 1, James exhorted his readers to respond with joy to trials because the testing of their faith would produce perseverance (Jas 1:2–4).⁵⁷ Yet, every ordeal we encounter also carries an inner enticement to sin.⁵⁸ Therefore, he contrasted two paths we can take. Facing tests with endurance leads to life. Yielding to desire produces sin, which causes death.⁵⁹

Our loyalty to God causes us to turn from temptation, for real love for the Lord manifests itself in action.⁶⁰ God has promised the crown of life to those who love him. James employed imagery of disciplined, well-trained athletes so enthralled with their sport that they pursue their goal to the end and win the race, earning laurel wreath crowns.⁶¹

a) Read James 1:12. How does temptation provide both a pitfall and an opportunity? What enables you to persevere through trials?

A Baited Trap

b) James 1:13–15: Since the same Greek word means “test” and “tempt” (*peirazō*),⁶² some of James’s readers regarded testing by God as an act in which he tempted people to sin.⁶³ In keeping with Prov 19:3, a Greek text records Zeus making this complaint: “See how men lay blame upon us gods for what is after all nothing but their own folly...though he knew it would be the death of him; for I sent Hermes to warn him not to do either of these things...Hermes told him this in all good will but he would not listen, and now he has paid for everything in full.”⁶⁴

⁵⁴ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 191.

⁵⁵ Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 92.

⁵⁶ Walton, *Genesis*, 206.

⁵⁷ Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter of James* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 69.

⁵⁸ Moo, *The Letter of James*, 72.

⁵⁹ Scot McKnight, *The Letter of James* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 121.

⁶⁰ David P. Nystrom, *James* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 72.

⁶¹ Moo, *The Letter of James*, 70.

⁶² Danker, et al., “πειράζω” (*peirazō*), *BDAG*, 792–3.

⁶³ McKnight, *The Letter of James*, 114.

⁶⁴ Homer, *The Odyssey* (trans. Samuel Butler, revised by Timothy Power and Gregory Nagy; London: A. C. Fifield, 1900), 1.32–4, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3atext%3a1999.01.0218>.

James used two allusions familiar to people who hunt and fish to explain how evil works. Someone who fishes employs a lure to capture and drag away a fish, and a hunter sets bait to entice an unsuspecting victim.⁶⁵ Even so, the seductive power of human desire pulls us toward sin.⁶⁶ We may blame others, Satan, or even God, but ultimately the guilt for our moral failure falls upon us.⁶⁷

Read Jas 1:13–15. Why do we know that God does not tempt us? How and why are we tempted?

Hiding from God

3) Gen 3:8: This verse does not depict God calmly enjoying an evening stroll through paradise ignorant of what Adam and Eve have done.⁶⁸ The phrase commonly translated “cool of the day” also means “wind (*ruakh*) of the storm” (*yom*), a reference to God’s sudden intervention (Cf. Job 38:1–3; Ps 18:9–15).⁶⁹ Adam and Eve saw and heard evidence of impending judgment (Cf. Ps 29; Nah 1:2–3). No wonder they ran into hiding!⁷⁰ Even as they fled, they likely suspected that one cannot escape from God.⁷¹

a) Read Gen 3:8. Why were Adam and Eve so frightened? How would you have reacted?

A Day of Reckoning

b) Gen 3:9–13: Genesis 3:9–19 forms a chiasm. This type of parallelism takes the form A–B–C–B–A. First, God addressed the man, then the woman, and finally the serpent. The penalties for their rebellion occur in the reverse order. In a chiasm, the most important point usually comes at the center, as it does here (Gen 3:14–15).

The passage opens with the Lord calling Adam to account, just as a pharaoh later demanded an explanation from Abraham (Gen 12:14–20).⁷² Afraid to answer the question but not daring to lie, Adam explained that he hid because he was naked, even though he had covered himself (Gen 3:6–8).⁷³ Ironically, we can translate “I heard (*shama*) your voice in the garden” as “I obeyed your voice in the garden.”⁷⁴ That is precisely what Adam failed to do.⁷⁵

⁶⁵ Nystrom, *James*, 74.

⁶⁶ McKnight, *The Letter of James*, 118.

⁶⁷ Nystrom, *James*, 73.

⁶⁸ Meredith G. Kline, “Primal Parousia,” *WTJ* 40, no. 2 (Spring 1978): 245–80, 245, <https://meredithkline.com/klines-works/articles-and-essays/primal-parousia/>.

⁶⁹ Walton, *Genesis*, 224.

⁷⁰ Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBCOT*, Gen 3:8.

⁷¹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 129.

⁷² Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 76.

⁷³ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 193.

⁷⁴ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “שָׁמָע” (*shema*), *BDB*, 1033–4,

<https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/1032/mode/2up>.

⁷⁵ Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 93.

The Lord gave Adam an opportunity to confess his transgression. He asked, “Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” (Gen 2:16–17).⁷⁶ Adam exhibited the divisive effects of rebellion, instead of acknowledging his sin. God’s silence indicates that he rejected this explanation.⁷⁷ Eve also failed to express contrition. However, she blamed neither God nor her husband.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, sin obliterated the harmony between God and humanity, between men and women, and between people and animals (Gen 1:26–31; Gen 2:18–25).⁷⁹

Read Gen 3:9–13. How did Adam’s evasive answer indict him? Who did Adam blame for his actions? How did Eve explain her behavior? Why do we tend to exhibit this pattern?

Falling for Deception

4) 2 Cor 11:2–4: The serpent employed rhetorical guile to ensnare Eve (Gen 3:1–6). In the same way, Paul’s rivals snaked their way into the Corinthian church. They won its members’ affection and captured their minds with an alluring false gospel.⁸⁰

Surprisingly, people did not identify Satan with the serpent in Eden until the second century BC–first century AD.⁸¹ According to a Jewish apocryphal text, Satan envied humanity because God made them in his image and installed them as his representatives over the created order (Gen 1:26–28). It says, “God formed us to be imperishable; the image of his own nature he made us. But by the envy of the devil [that Adam and Eve had dominion over all creation], death entered the world, and they who are allied with him experience it” (Wisdom of Solomon 2:23–4, NABR).

During the centuries before and after the birth of Christ, authors speculated concerning Eve’s deception, with some writing that the serpent physically seduced her.⁸² In 4 Maccabees (first century AD), the heroes’ mother stated, “No seducer of the desert *or* destroyer in the field destroyed me, nor did the destroyer, the deceitful serpent, maltreat my innocent virginity. So, I remained until the end with *my* husband.”⁸³ Later, the Babylonian Talmud made a more explicit assertion: “Rabbi Yohanan (180–279 AD) says, ‘When the serpent copulated with Eve, he infused her with lust’” (*b. Yebam 103b*).

Contrary to a popular view that women are more prone to deception, Paul warned the entire Corinthian church that falling for deceit did not exonerate Eve. Neither would they be without guilt if they followed false teachers.⁸⁴

⁷⁶ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 194.

⁷⁷ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 77.

⁷⁸ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 194.

⁷⁹ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 78.

⁸⁰ Garland David E., *2 Corinthians* (NAC; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 462.

⁸¹ New American Bible Revised Edition, Wisdom 2:23–4,

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Wisdom+2%3A23-24&version=NABRE>.

⁸² Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, 445.

⁸³ R. Brannan, et al., *The Lexham English Septuagint* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), 4 Macc 18:8.

⁸⁴ Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 463.

a) **Read 2 Cor 11:2–4.** Why did Paul compare the members of the congregation in Corinth to Eve? What was his concern? Why is it significant that he compared both men and women to Eve? How can you avoid following false teachers?

An Angel of Light

b) **2 Cor 11:13–15:** Paul exposed the scandalous nature of the “false apostles” and “deceitful workmen” in Corinth who challenged his position as an apostle.⁸⁵ Unfortunately, successful con men often assume religious personas to pursue their selfish ambition. However, their narcissism and superior attitudes ultimately reveal that they masquerade as people sent by God.⁸⁶

One pertinent document, entitled “The Life of Adam and Eve,” was written during the first century AD. This fictitious work describes the lives of the couple after their exile from Eden.⁸⁷ It says, “Eighteen days passed. Then Satan grew angry and transfigured himself into the brilliance of an angel and went off to the Tigris River to Eve.”⁸⁸

Another apocryphal work gives this account of the fall according to Eve: “And the devil spake to the serpent saying, ‘Rise up, come to me and I will tell thee a word whereby thou mayst have profit.’ And he arose and came to him. And the devil saith to him, ‘I hear that thou art wiser than all the beasts, and I have come to counsel thee. Why dost thou eat of Adam's tares and not of paradise? Rise up and we will cause him to be cast out of paradise, even as we were cast out through him.’ The serpent saith to him, ‘I fear lest the Lord be wroth with me.’ The devil saith to him: ‘Fear not, only be my vessel and I will speak through thy mouth words to deceive him.’ And instantly he hung himself from the wall of paradise, and when the angels ascended to worship God, then Satan appeared in the form of an angel and sang hymns like the angels. And I bent over the wall and saw him, like an angel. But he saith to me: ‘Art thou Eve?’”⁸⁹

Since Satan can fashion himself into an “angel of light,” we should not be shocked when his followers disguise themselves as “ministers of righteousness.”⁹⁰

Read 2 Cor 11:13–15. Why must we be on guard for false teaching in our churches? How can we protect ourselves from falling prey to con artists and deceptive teachers?

⁸⁵Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 524.

⁸⁶Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 484.

⁸⁷Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1998), 351.

⁸⁸Berlie Custis, Gary A. Anderson, and R. Layton, trans., *The Life of Adam and Eve* (1995), 9:1, [Http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/anderson/vita/english/vita.lat.html](http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/anderson/vita/english/vita.lat.html).

⁸⁹R. H. Charles, trans., “The Apocalypse of Moses,” in *APOT, Vol. 2* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), 16.1–17.2, 145–6, <https://archive.org/details/CharlesRHTheApocryphaPseudepigraphaOfTheOldTestamentInEnglishVol21913/page/n161>.

⁹⁰Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 525.