

Session 20 Pictures of the Bride: Eve, Part 2

INTRODUCTION

We're starting Session 20, but for the tape I'll call this, "The Mystery of God." However, we won't start that for a few minutes. Actually we're finishing Session 19 right now, and then in a few moments we'll get to Genesis 3, and then I'll ask you your theories. The mystery of God is where we're going, but we'll finish Session 19 first. We're on page 10, at Roman numeral X.

MAN GAVE NAMES TO ALL THE ANIMALS

This is a verse that I haven't read. Genesis 5:1-2 fits really well there. It's the genealogy of Adam, "In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female, blessed them, and called them mankind, in the day that they were created" (Gen. 5:1-2, paraphrased).

Again, we have two different lines of thought going through this story. We have that God created *him* and called *them* mankind, and called *them* male and female. He's called *him*, singular, but it's *them*. It's a little tricky, because the Hebrew word *Adam* and the Hebrew word *humanity* is the same word. The translators are trying to work their way through this. Some folks don't understand the absolute necessity of both dimensions of the image of God functioning in the context, not only of the church, but the home, the society, and everywhere else, for life to work in God's fullness.

Adam names the creatures, the animals and the plants, in Genesis 2:19. "Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam" (Gen. 2:19). The Lord brought each one of these animals to Adam, which is an interesting concept. God wanted to see what Adam would call them (*ibid*). Because remember, Adam was given the task of being the ruler over natural creation.

GOD GIVES US THE BOUNDARY LINES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

"And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him" (Gen. 2:19-20)—or a companion suitable for him.

Another thing I think that this reveals to us is how we'll function as the corporate Adam, as the redeemed before the Lord, as He entrusts His rule to us. There's this independence. God desires to see what was in the heart of the one who was made like His Son, and the Lord actually wants to draw their hearts out. This is how God commits rule to His people. It's an interesting idea that the Lord puts within our understanding a framework that's inspired: that He limits us with a certain framework, but within that framework we have choices and decision of righteousness that really count forever with God. God gives us the boundary lines of righteousness, the boundary lines of His will. Even more than what's morally right, these are things and strategies that He actually wants accomplished. Then, within the framework of that, there's sometimes a choice for it to go one way or the other.

THE LORD COMMITS THE DIGNITY OF CHOICE TO HIS PEOPLE FOREVER

I like to think of it this way: it's like the Lord says, "I will put you on the right highway and I want you in a specific direction, in a specific time, and I will let you choose which lane you want to go in." There's a dignity to the human race where our decisions and our choices are actually accounted by God as valuable and important

to Him. We're not just robots taking impulses from Him. He forms in us thinking and understanding; that's a resource of the inspiration of God through which our own personalities are expressed. The reason I'm saying this is because it impacts the way we entrust leadership to our children and other forms or positions in life. I believe it's the way we'll rule with Him in eternity. I think He's going to determine the framework, the direction, the destination, the timing, but He's going to give us choice within that range that will be pleasing to Him. It's a partnership, not a robotic system. The dignity of the human heart in the presence of God is so much higher than we realize. Our choices are relevant, and they are dignified. That's the point I want to make.

BRINGING THE ANIMALS UNDER THE DOMINION OF MAN

The task of naming the animals. First the Lord gave Adam the rule over the animals, and the naming of the animals implied bringing them under his dominion, under his leadership. When he named them, they were actually brought under his control. Because when Adam named the animals, he discerned the nature and the purpose of each animal. He named them according to his ability to discern their nature, personality, and the purpose for which they were created. Adam discerned the nature that God put in that animal, analyzed it, and categorized it. He analyzed the purpose and the temperament and the construction of the heart of that part of creation. It speaks of tremendous insight. There's a tremendous spirit of wisdom that's operating on Adam, that he's subduing creation by naming, but he's discerning it fully.

In the midst of this, it says in verse 20, "But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to"—or suitable for—"him" (Gen. 2:20). He recognizes that there's not a companion suitable to him. In his dignity of ruling, it connects with him that there's a helper who isn't present who would make him more complete.

JESUS IN HIS HUMANITY WILL RULE WITH A BRIDE FOREVER

Lest we come up with a heresy, the eternal God is completely complete in Himself, 100 percent. There's no sense in which the Bible describes any lack within the Trinity at all. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are in total fullness. However, there's something that's very important for us to recognize. First, we're thinking of Adam as literally a man needing the companionship of a woman, another person with him. Secondly, there are hints of this when Jesus is fully joined to His creation, the redeemed human race, as a man, not as God. He's putting on the hat of a man who is a redeemer, a mediator for creation. The Church in Ephesians 1:23 is called "the fullness of Jesus" (Eph. 1:23, paraphrased).

Let me work on this thought for a few moments. As God, Jesus is complete, but the fullness of Jesus' experience is only found in the Church. Because once He became a man, He's a man forever. He can never, ever go back to being just God. The moment He said yes to take upon Himself the form of a man, that was an eternal decision. That wasn't a decision He made for a time, and then, when He accomplished His work on the cross, He laid aside humanity to go back to being only God again. When He said yes to take upon Himself the form of a man, this was an eternal decision. This is so powerful. It's like God the Father was saying to Him, "My Son, You can't do this and in a billion years change Your mind. You'll be forever in the likeness of a man, forever with humanity."

Jesus considered this and said, "Yes." Ephesians 1:23 is one of the most unique passages. The Church is called the fullness of Jesus. The Church provides the full expression of Jesus in His humanity. The human Church compliments the human Man Christ Jesus, the last Adam. Jesus isn't called the fullness of the Church, but the theological phrase, "the fullness" means, "the full complementation." It's complementary. It's complementing that which was lacking in Jesus in His humanity to rule as a man over the creation of God. Jesus didn't want to

rule creation just as God alone. He wanted to rule God's empire as a man with a human helpmate at His side called "the Bride of Christ."

It's an awesome mystery. Jesus is called the fullness of God. Jesus has all that the Father has, and between Them and the Spirit They have fullness between them, in Their deity; but it's in humanity that He's going to rule the nations in the future. It's Jesus in His human position. He's fully God and fully Man forever, but in His humanity, Jesus isn't made complete until His bride is at His side. Therefore the Church is called the fullness of Jesus. That in itself is a staggering concept, that Jesus could take upon Himself that which was contrary to Himself in the form of a man, and then for fullness need something for the first time in His life. Because He never, ever needed anything outside of the fellowship of the Trinity to be complete until He said Yes to humanity. Then He was in need of fullness. He was in need of creation.

This is an amazing thing. If someone says, "Is Jesus in need of the Church?" you would say, "As God, no, but as fully Man, yes." As the Ruler over the nations, as fully God and fully Man, He does have a complement that's necessary to Him, and it's called a human bride. Part of His own creation fulfills that, because something happened that was so drastic when He took upon Himself the form of a man. This is so stunning and so awesome. Adam speaks of Jesus, Jesus as fully Man, as He looks into the future, as He sees that He has a desire for a companion for His fullness, that He longs to be equally yoked to a human bride that's fully empowered with a divine nature.

The divine nature is in the human bride (2 Pet. 1:4). Though the human bride will never be divine, the nature of God has been fully extended to us. Adam recognizes that he needs a companion to be complete. Again, for the individual man Adam, this was fulfilled in Eve; but the corporate man, the human race, has become that companion for the Son of God.

WHEN JESUS BECAME A MAN, HE TOOK ON THE DEEP SLEEP OF GOD'S WRATH

"And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place" (Gen. 2:21). I'm just blown away. When the Lord caused the deep sleep to fall on Adam, it was like the deep sleep of Jesus. When this happened, I have no doubt in my mind that God the Father looked at the Son and said, "My Son, You know where this is going."

The angels don't understand it; Adam doesn't understand it, but the Son of God understands it. Paul the apostle, 4,000 years later, quotes this passage and says it was about Jesus and His people. There was a deep sleep that came upon Jesus when He said yes to the wrath of God and paid the price for our sin. He took upon Himself the form of a man and in the wrath of God entered into the deep sleep of the night, the wrath of God.

The Lord caused the deep sleep. Sometimes people get this confused and they think the devil tricked Jesus. That's not what happened. The devil didn't trick Jesus. You know how the songs go? I don't mind it; I'm not offended by it. The story goes that Satan snuck in there, finally got an upper hand, killed Jesus, and then said, "Oh, no! He rose from the dead. I didn't know this was going to happen."

That's not how it happened. Actually, the devil didn't want Jesus to go to the cross. Remember what Peter said: "Don't die!"

Jesus said, "Get behind Me, Satan" (Mt. 16:23).

GOD THE FATHER DELIVERED UP HIS SON TO DEATH

It was Satan who didn't want Jesus to die in Matthew 16. It was Satan saying, "Don't go to Jerusalem." The reason Satan entered Judas wasn't so that Jesus would die. Jesus had already set His face resolutely to go to Jerusalem (Lk. 9:51). Jesus had set His face resolutely to go to Jerusalem, and when the devil saw that, he said, "OK, He's already done that. He's already rebuked me when I tricked Peter and spoke through Peter that there's a better way to do this than dying."

What Satan wanted to do was to bring the whole Jewish nation as well as the whole Roman Empire into guilt. At the Passover, when the whole nation gathered from all around Israel and other nations, he wanted to get the crowd to turn on Jesus so that they were all guilty. He wasn't trying to trick Jesus into going to the cross. Jesus was resolute. Satan knew he had lost that battle, so he said, "I want to get as many people guilty of killing God as possible."

The truth of the matter is that the Father delivered up His Son. In Romans 8:32, Paul the apostle said, "If God delivered up His own Son and did not spare Him, how much more will He give everything to you" (Rom. 8:32, paraphrased)? God the Father delivered up His Son. God the Father said, "Son, if You want to purchase her, You have to become a man and take My wrath."

He said, "I know. I understand that."

Satan tried to get Jesus to do it another way in the wilderness, and tried to get Jesus to do it another way at Caesarea Philippi when Peter said, "Don't go to Jerusalem and die," and Jesus said, "Get thee behind Me, Satan."

The Father delivered up His Son and did not spare Him, because the justice of God had to be paid. The Lord caused the deep sleep. The plan of God was the point; it was the Lamb slain from the very foundation, from before Genesis 1 (Rev. 13:8); God already saw the unstoppable plan. Jesus would be slain. It was already finished in the economy of God. It hadn't happened in time and space, but He knew it was settled in the eternal counsels. It could not be stopped. Therefore, Genesis 1 and 2 took place after that information was already established in the eternal counsels.

PIERCED IN THE SIDE FOR THE SAKE OF A BRIDE

God took one of Adam's ribs. God pierced Adam's side. Of course, it's obvious that on the cross Jesus' side was pierced to fulfill the type of what was signaled in Genesis 2:21—the pierced side of the first Adam. The first Adam was put to sleep to provide a bride. The last Adam was put to death to provide His bride. Both of them were pierced in their side to bring forth a bride.

It's interesting that Adam came from the dust, but Eve came from his side. Eve came from the very substance of that out of which Adam was made, from Adam's very flesh. We will come from the very humanity that Jesus is in His resurrected form. He's the first fruits of the resurrection. He's the first One in that new humanity that's raised with bodies that are greater than angels. We come out of that substance. That's what we will be made of. Someone give me a "Hallelujah!"

ADAM SAW IN EVE HIS SUITABLE COMPANION

Adam's delight in Eve. You know who this speaks of? The Lord's delight in His people (Gen. 2:22-23). "Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man" (Gen. 2:23). God says, "What do you think?"

Adam had just been naming, analyzing, categorizing, and subduing all of creation by naming it and discerning it and bringing it under his authority. Adam looks at her with discernment and with the spirit of wisdom that was on him, and with this mandate to name all of creation, and now he must name her.

Now look at the next verse. "And Adam said: 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man'" (Gen. 2:23). You see, he was looking for a companion. Every commentary that I read affirms this. Why? Because he had been searching for a companion that was suitable to him as he was naming all of creation. He couldn't find or discern anything made like him. When he looked at her, he said, "This is now bone of my bone. She's just like me. She shall be called 'Whoa, man!' She shall be called *Woman*, because she was taken out of man."

He saw in her the suitable companion. He saw in her the companion that really touched his heart. When I saw my wife I said, "Wow man, prime rib!"

It was Adam's delightful discovery. "This is now bone of my bones." In other words, "I can rest. I've found my companion. Yes, this is good."

WHY ARE WE BEAUTIFUL TO GOD?

Why are we beautiful to God? The first reason that we're beautiful to God is because of God's personality. It's because of who He is. If He were a grumpy old man, it wouldn't work. If He had the personality of a Scrooge, nothing would make Him happy, but He's the ultimate happy person.

There's a book that Sam Storms has that talks about the infinite happiness of God: that God's passion and His pleasure are in abundance towards His people, His creation. God has so much happiness towards His creation. That's the number one reason why we're beautiful. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and the way that God looks at the human race, He views it as beautiful because of His personality.

The second reason we're beautiful to God is because of the design of the human spirit. We're especially what God desires. He made us according to His Son's liking. God not only has a personality that easily likes, He made us according to what He likes.

Thirdly, we're beautiful to God because the gift of righteousness has been wrapped around us. The righteousness of Jesus has been wrapped around us like a garment, like a robe. It's the mantle of righteousness.

Fourthly, it's because God has put a willing spirit in us. He put a willing spirit in us at the new birth. Each of these verses tells how God delights in and will never refuse us. His heart is moved by a willing spirit, a contrite spirit (Ps. 51:17). He's moved by a spirit that says yes even before we attain to maturity; it's the yes in our spirit that moves God. It really does.

Jesus told Peter in Matthew 26:41, “Peter, you have weak flesh, but you do have a willing spirit” (Mt. 26:41, paraphrased). Peter fell and denied Him three times, and when the Lord stood before Him in John 21:17, he said, “Peter do you love Me?”

Peter said, “Lord, You know everything. You know that I love You” (Jn. 21:17, paraphrased). God could see the love even in Peter’s immaturity; He saw the willing spirit in Peter.

When God looks at you, because of who He is, He likes you. Because of the way He built you, He likes you. Because of the garments that are on you, He likes you, and because of the willing spirit that was put in you, the yes that was put in you at the new birth, you’re beautiful to God, even in your immaturity. The Lord looks at you and says His heart is ravished over you even in your immaturity (Song 4:9).

Adam cleaves to Eve without shame. “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed” (Gen. 2:24-25).

Verse 24 is the passage that Paul quotes in Ephesians 5:31-32. Paul, 4,000 years later, says, “Do you know what He was talking about? Jesus and the Church. I would never have known that from studying, but the Holy Spirit told me straight from God that this was on His mind” (Eph. 5:31-32, paraphrased).

When Adam was cleaving to Eve, the Holy Spirit said, “That’s the picture of where God’s blueprint for creation is going.” The Son of God, having embraced humanity, slept the deep sleep of God; pierced in His side, He now cleaves to another human called the corporate bride. He’s the human Jesus, fully God, yes, but also fully human, cleaving to a fully redeemed human bride at the end of creation. The revelation of God starts with this in Genesis 1 and 2, but the revelation of God ends with Jesus cleaving to a bride in Revelation 21 and 22.

“THEY WERE BOTH NAKED . . . AND WERE NOT ASHAMED”

They were both naked; they were hiding nothing. They were not ashamed. There was no issue in their life that brought any shame whatsoever. They were completely vulnerable. Everything was in the light and there was zero shame. That’s where the marriage union goes. That’s how God started it and that’s how He’s going to finish it—vulnerable, hiding nothing, totally in the light, complete openness of spirit both ways, with no shame whatsoever, in full knowledge.

In that day, you will be fully known (1 Cor. 13:12). You’ll know that you’re known. You’ll be fully known. You will fully know as you are fully known. That’s the point. You will see face to face. You will have all knowledge then. There will be no shame on that day.

“THE SERPENT WAS MORE CUNNING THAN ANY BEAST OF THE FIELD”

The deception of Eve. The same deception is going on in the Body of Christ today. Again, I said this in the last session: Eve is called “the mother of all living” (Gen. 3:20). She’s called the same thing in Galatians: the eternal city (Gal. 4:26). The Bride of Christ is called the mother of all living, the New Jerusalem.

“Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made” (Gen. 3:1). By the way, God put the serpent in the garden. He wanted the serpent in the garden. God made the serpent; that’s

the point I want to underline. The serpent wasn't an accident. God wanted voluntary love coming out of the human race, where they wouldn't fall even in the future. They would be redeemed and would never fall again.

“And [the serpent] said to the woman, ‘Has God indeed said, “You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”’ . . . Then the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate” (Gen. 3:1, 4-6)

Let me go through this, and then we will stop and go on a theorizing session for a few minutes.

EXCITEMENT IS FINDING GOD IN THE SMALL EVENTS OF LIFE

First, Satan's half-truth. This is how Satan first comes. He says, “Has God really said?” Satan comes and accuses God's integrity, God's intention. First he may say, “Did God really say you would get in trouble? That you'll really be disciplined if you do these things, take certain things into your life that the Lord doesn't want in your life?”

On the other hand, he says, “Did God really say He would bless you in the way that you think He said?” Satan always comes with a half-truth and tries to get us to question God. That's his strategy in your life and in my life.

Then he comes with a blatant lie in verse 4. He says, “You shall not surely die.” In other words, “There are no consequences for your actions.” The very dignity of the human race says there are consequences. Consequences are what give dignity to life. God remembers, rewards, and values it. The good things that God remembers, the cup of cold water in the name of the Lord, are what make our life an adventure everyday (Mt. 10:42). For some people, the kingdom of God is somehow only exciting when revival surges every time they gather, but life is exciting when you know there's relevance in giving someone a cup of cold water. The heart of God is moved. Excitement is finding God in the small events of life.

Satan lied and said, “Your actions have no consequences; the good actions don't, and neither do the bad.” That's the lie, that it doesn't matter what you do.

The person goes off into a small amount of sin in this area or a small amount of sin in that area, and the devil comes and tells you everything is over. That's not true, either. The Lord does set things into motion, building a fence around us so that we will never do it again. It's called “divine discipline.” I've had it in my life. It's the Lord's passion. “I love you so much, I don't want you stumbling in this. I'll build a fence around you and the fence has a few thorns on it and a few of them will hurt you, but it will hedge you in.”

SATAN COVETS THE POSITION OF THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

Satan comes with another lie and says, “You'll be like Him.” This is the very lie that Satan attempted in Isaiah 14:13, when he said, “I will ascend to the very mountain of God. I will be like God” (Isa. 14:13-14, paraphrased). Satan wanted the position that the position that the Bride of Christ has. We were made in the image of God, and that's what Satan wanted in Isaiah 14:12-14. He wanted to be like God. He wanted to break the code, so to speak, of God's blueprint, and take a position by violence and storm. This position of being the companion of Christ, of being like Him, was protected for the human race. Satan couldn't have that position.

“NO GOOD THING WILL HE WITHHOLD FROM THOSE WHO WALK UPRIGHTLY”

Isaiah 14 tells us five things that Satan said in his heart. Then he was cast into judgment from heaven. All five of those things are given to the Body of Christ. There are five descriptions of the dignity and privilege of the Church. He wanted that position. Now he comes to the one who is made in the likeness of God and says, “God is afraid you will be like God.”

I think God said, “Afraid? I built her like God. I built her with the capacity to be the bride of My Son. She’ll always be like God.” That’s number one.

Number two: the underlying sentiment here is that Satan was saying, “God has something good that He’s going to keep from you. There’s something to be had that God won’t give you because He’s afraid to give it to you. Either He doesn’t have the heart to give it to you, or He’s protecting it from you for some reason.”

The basic premise of Scripture is Psalm 84:11: “There’s no good thing that God will withhold from the life of a person who walks uprightly—not if it will help them” (Ps. 84:11, paraphrased). That’s an absolute premise of life. There’s no good thing that God will withhold, ever, from a person walking with Him, if that thing will ultimately help them to grow in love—nothing.

Satan came along and said, “God knows there’s life and good that He wants to keep from you.”

So what do we do? We try to find life on other terms besides God’s terms. That’s what Eve did. Eve said, “He’s keeping life back from me? Are you kidding? There are experiences that I could have that would enrich my life, and He’s not giving them to me?” That was the fear—the fear that says hundredfold obedience will make our life a drudgery instead of bringing us into fullness.”

There was a time in my life when David Parker spoke this to me. He said, “I thought there were two options: life on God’s terms, and life on our terms, and that life on God’s terms was preferable. But God said there’s only one option: life on God’s terms and death.”

There’s no such thing as life on our terms. It doesn’t exist. It’s not that it’s a lower quality; it doesn’t exist. He said, “When that hit me, it stunned me.” There’s no life in disobedience. There’s momentary pleasure, but it never enhances your heart in life—never. It always takes more from you and demands that you go back to the well and drink more. It takes life from you and makes you addicted to it. You get addicted to that which takes life from you. It never, ever enlarges your experience of life. It never enhances your ability to experience life—never.

Satan says, “God knows there’s life on other terms, and He doesn’t want you to be in on it.” The lie is that hundredfold obedience is going to keep us from being enhanced in fullness. If we go out and get a small amount here and there, we’ll get fullness; we’re missing out.

THE LUST OF THE FLESH, THE LUST OF THE EYES, AND THE PRIDE OF LIFE

Genesis 3:6 lays out three different things, the threefold sin of the human race. John describes it as “all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1 Jn. 2:16). Lust of the flesh is sensuality; lust of the eyes is greed; and boastful pride of life is pride. All three are right here: sensuality, pride,

and greed. Sensuality is pleasure without reference to the will of God. God is really into pleasure, but not without reference to the will of God. Greed is possessions without reference to the will of God—having stuff God doesn't want you to have.

The third one is the pride of life—a position without reference to the will of God. Sometimes I strive to get into a position because I'm not sure God will give it to me. That's the subconscious mind not being sure He'll give it to you. To get into a position that's without reference to the will of God is bound to bring you heartbreak anyway. It will stress you out and then break your heart. But the Lord is committed to getting you out of it. There's nothing more difficult than trying to kick a door down and rebuke it, while the Lord is on the other side, leaning against it.

Incidentally, one last thing about this: these are the very three sins that the last Adam confronted in the wilderness in Matthew 4:1-10. All three are exactly the same. Jesus stood in the exact same place as the first Adam and answered all three temptations and prevailed.

Paul's interpretation of Genesis 3:1-8. We find it in 2 Corinthians 11. Paul was really into Genesis. He was always commenting on it. Paul had powerful revelation. Look at 2 Corinthians 11:2-3: "For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Cor. 11:2-3). *Simplicity* here means "simplicity of devotion." Simplicity means the opposite of duplicity. It's the opposite of having two minds; it means being single-minded for God. It's devotion.

SATAN'S CRAFTINESS IS IN THE DISTORTING OF TRUTH

Satan's deceit. Paul feared that Satan would come with the same lies he had used on Eve, and all the issues we just talked about. He gives you half-truths; he'll tell you there are no consequences and that there's life God is keeping from you in obedience. Satan tells you there's life to be had outside the realm of obedience. "You're losing out by obeying." That's what Satan's deceit is: there are no consequences, God doesn't tell the truth, and God is keeping stuff from you that's good for you. That's his deceit.

Satan's craftiness is the distorting of truth all the time. It's a seed of truth with distortion. That's his way. He says half of it right and then changes it at the end and makes it all wrong. In the context of 2 Corinthians 11, it's verse 4 that I don't have written here. It's the false teachers who preach another Jesus with a different spirit, "who preach another gospel" (2 Cor. 11:4, paraphrased).

These Judaizers believed Jesus was the Messiah. They believed Jesus the Nazarene was God. That's pretty good. They believed that the way you got saved was by obeying, and then Jesus loved you. That makes the whole message false. Some things you can be off on and you're OK, on the secondary issues. You're still in the truth, in the way, but that truth makes the whole doctrine false. That's what Satan does: he distorts truth all the time. He plays mind games with half-truths all the way through. The goal is to corrupt our minds. His goal is to give us a wrong image of God. That's what Satan's express goal is: to give you a wrong image of God. Then what happens when you have a wrong image of God? You have a wrong image of yourself. Then you get a wrong image of everyone else.

When you have a wrong image of God, imperfect people are an impossible burden to you. You can't see any beauty in them because you don't see that God sees beauty in you as an imperfect person, and so you see other people as impossibly disturbing. You see other people as the enemy because you don't have a vision of a sovereign God. Saul was always the bad guy, but when you have a vision of a God that loves you, Saul can only train you; he can't stop you. You get enemies everywhere because you think people are your problem. Sauls can only train Davids. The only person who can stop David is David. No one can stop David but David. Saul can't stop David. You know how God's time is: when there's an old Saul that God takes out of the way, He's raising up a young Absalom. Saul Jr. is coming up in the ranks. It makes no difference; God always has someone there. Satan corrupts our minds and gets us into bitterness, and out of love; that's the whole point.

God, water the seed, and water it and water it. Let it grow for months and years before Your coming. We thank You and bless You for it.