

THE QUESTION OF THE WEEK

("Did God really tell you not to eat of the fruit of any of the trees in the garden?")

(Genesis 3: 1)

The serpent was the most cunning animal God had made. Cunning. Smart. Sly. Anticipatory. Angling. Self-referencing. We get it We understand what cunning means. It means that we had better be on our guard because the cunning person is ahead of us—perhaps several steps ahead of us. The serpent in the story from Genesis certainly is.

God planted all the trees in the garden of Eden and have them all to us humans as delicious food to eat. Even the fruit of the Tree of Life. But not the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We were not to eat of the fruit of that tree. God even says why. For the day you eat of it you shall die. So the serpent overstates and misstates what God had said. Eve is to supply the corrective. We can eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden. It is only about the tree in the middle of the garden that God said: "You shall not eat of it, or even touch it, lest you die." But God did not say all that. Eve adds the "or even touch it, lest you die."

God's Word is not heard as God spoke it. God's word is heard as the human being chooses to hear it. That, my friends, still goes on. That, my friends, gets us into trouble. God's word does not need to be added to nor subtracted from. God's word does not need to be enhanced or improved upon. It cannot. Any religion or denomination that seeks to alter, change, improve or enhance God's word goes down the path of untruth. That happened in the original sin and it happens in our own world when we sin and try to substitute our own thoughts about things we do for what the Lord commands or invites us to do.

We do not want to be, but we are—susceptible to the lie. And because we are, we have to learn how to go to God with what lies before us and ask for the assistance we need to ascertain what is true and helpful to follow and what is misleading and deceitful. We cannot tell on our own. Do you believe that? That is the question of the week.