

# The Rejected Man

by John Nelson Darby

---

*The sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting God and not questioning His goodness and love, highlighting the consequences of disobeying God's command and the result of exalting man.*

**Scripture:** Genesis 3:1

**Topics:** "Trust in God", "Sin and Redemption"

---

## Description

John Nelson Darby explores the theme of humanity's rejection of God, tracing it back to the original sin of Adam and Eve. He emphasizes how Eve's conversation with Satan led to a distrust in God's goodness, resulting in disobedience and the fall of man. Darby highlights the deceitfulness of sin and the importance of recognizing our dependence on God to avoid falling into the traps set by the enemy. He concludes with the promise of redemption through Jesus Christ, the Second Adam, who restores what was lost through sin.

---

## Transcript

### THE REJECTED MAN

#### Genesis 3

It is a good thing, seeing the great levity of our hearts, that we should all of us sometimes look at our origin, at what we were, and at the actual corruption of the stock whence we are derived. Thus shall we see what God has done, and the revelation He has made of Himself in what we are.

The Israelite was instructed to remember the day that he came out of Egypt all the days of his life (Deut. 16 : 2) ; and the confession made by him when presenting his basket of the firstfruits of the land was this : " a Syrian ready to perish was [not I, but] my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous ; and the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage; and when we cried unto Jehovah the God of our fathers, Jehovah heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression; and Jehovah brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders : and he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey," Deut. 26 : 5-10.

Our first father hath sinned. Thus the fountain was defiled. Evil has abounded, and sin has taken its free, full course. We learn in all this scene in the garden what has distorted the natural conscience, in circumstances so plain that we can say what they are. Now it is hard to learn what we are, because that which has made us sinners in heart has made us sinners in understanding also. As the conscience is affected and renewed by the Holy Spirit, so is it perverted by sin. There may be a false standard of good and evil, and thus blindness through that (as a law of darkness), as well as corruption of heart. Paul says, " I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, which thing I also did," etc. (Acts 26 : 9-11). And the time was come, the Lord forewarns, when those that killed the disciples would " think they did God service," John 16 : 2.

The book of Genesis gives us, in the first dealings of God with man, the first grand elements of truth with exceeding freshness and energy. All that was said by Satan to Eve (except " Ye shall not surely die," v- 4), was in a certain sense true. That was not true. And this is the way he deceives. He does not present evil in its own hideous garb, but in a plausible, insinuating manner. He can tell truth if it subserve sin-much attractive truth, so that he win attention by it ; but he never uses it to lead to obedience. Both that which was spoken by Adam and Eve, and that which was spoken by Satan, shews the exceeding deceitfulness of sin. Where God has not His place in the soul, in the assertion of our independence, our weakness and inconsistency open the way to the guile of the enemy, and the mind does not see its departure from truth. " I said in my haste, All men are liars," Psa. 116 : 11. So again, Micah 7 (where there is every kind of corruption), " The best of them is as a briar : the most upright is as a thorn hedge.... Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom," etc. They had departed from God. To learn what sin is to any purpose is to learn the source from which we have departed. We have departed from God.

Notice, the first thing introduced here is the subtilty of Satan. It was not flagrant open sin and wickedness when Eve replied to it ; it is not, I am the devil come to deceive you. He puts the present pleasantness of the thing, and with subtilty inquires, " Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden ? " The Holy Ghost does not say the devil was wicked, but He says, " Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? "

The woman entered into conversation with him, and she was clean gone. This questioning what God had done was a calling in question of His goodness and love ; just the temptation to mistrust God. ' Hath God said so and so ? ' is in effect, ' Well, do not believe Him, He has kept back something worth the having.' The moment Eve entered into the discussion, and parleyed with the serpent, God was altogether gone from her; and all was gone.

She ought to have said, Why ask me ? Surely He hath done whatsoever it hath pleased Him to do. A right mind would have rejected the temptation at once ; a true heart would have fallen back upon God. " He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not," i John 5 : 18. Satan "touched" Eve. He had got his question into her mind, and she had departed from her strength ; for God had lost His place in her soul. When Eve began questioning God's goodness and answering Satan's question, she was putting herself above God, and judging God, and thus putting herself into the hands of Satan. Had Eve been worshipping God, Satan could not have " touched " her; but, judging God, she took the place of independence, and thus Satan had power over her, and, being wiser than she, he deceived her.

We cannot judge God's ways without judging God: we may adore Him in His ways, but the moment we judge or question that which He has revealed, we get above God, we make ourselves gods, and put God in the place of the creature as subject to us. This brings our souls under the power of every one that is more clever than ourselves ; we are in their hands, and they can do what they please with us. Now the devil is more clever than we are (the woman was no match for him). Therefore we ought to keep God ever in His place of God in our souls, lest Satan should make gods of us, and set us judging God Himself. If God be displaced, we get into the place of those who are irresponsible, and as creatures become the prey of any more cunning than ourselves.

The soul, when first awakened, finds its place before God. It may not all at once have peace and joy, but this at any rate it learns to submit to God, and to be willing to be taken up anyhow, so that God will but have it at all. How does God keep this His place in our souls ? Because it is the constant aim of Satan to slip in. between God and our souls. In order to meet Satan, we must get into the place of entire responsibility to God. God did not hold His place in Eve's mind, or she would not have been questioning His love, and judging Him: there was the want of submission. And may it not be that there is the want of submission in us, that our minds are questioning and judging, and not submitting to God's righteousness ?

Notice also that Eve was in full recognition of God's command. " And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden ; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die," V. 2, 3. There was the clear and definite knowledge of what God had said to her. So with ourselves. We have all heard about God, and about His way of salvation; yes, many of us have before our minds much of scriptural knowledge. But this did not put Eve beyond the power of Satan. Neither will it us-it may only the more immediately put us into the hands of Satan. We all know what God has said about our sins (we may not believe it perhaps : that is another thing), that " there is none righteous, no, not one." We all know that Christ came to save the lost ; but then, if we do not know that we are lost, this knowledge, remaining without faith, does not take us out of the hands of Satan, but really gives Satan power over us. We must have delivering power from God before we can be out of Satan's power. We must have conviction of sin before we are off the ground of sin.

The very moment that Satan got Eve to listen to one breath of his suggestions, that moment he took God's place in her soul. You cannot suppose she would have parleyed with the devil, and have listened to him as to somebody speaking to her as her friend, if she had not had confidence in him. So that she did trust in Satan. The truth is, she held not with God, but with Satan. She looked upon Satan as a better friend than God. Eve was not content. Now the enemy of our souls may not be met by the simplicity of truth, because of the want of simplicity of our minds.\* Her reply was truth, but it was truth not held in communion with God. She thought God had kept back something that was competent to make her happy. It was not a settled thing with her, that God knew and had provided all that was needed for her happiness. And have we no desires for anything not actually given to us? There was distrust that God had power in Himself to make her happy, and therefore she was desiring and seeking it somewhere else. This was the beginning of it all. This led to man's willingly subjecting himself to the dominion of Satan. And now we see the world bent on providing itself with pleasures apart from God.

\* According as our minds are not spiritual, and in any sort affect anything not the object of the Spirit, to which they are not led by Mm, therein the simplicity of truth fails to keep them, and the power of the enemy can avail itself of its subtlety against them. If there were any measure of positive though mixed spirituality, apparent rejection of the word would not be possible. But Satan does not so proceed: he does not

therefore propose disobedience, but modifies obedience, proposes preliminaries to it, or substitutes something instead.

And how is it with you, dear friends ? Let me ask, Is this your case ? Are you wanting something that God will not allow you to have ? Man naturally does not believe that God is competent to make him happy, and therefore he desires the things of the world, supposing that they can make him happy. This to the end is the subtle state of the flesh, even in God's children; not trusting God to make one happy. It is a mercy, in a certain sense, that man must earn his bread with the sweat of his brow (for God is not mocked ; and when He said, " In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground," etc., what a store of accompanying sorrow and toil came in as the result of man's disobedience!), since that prevents the giving up of our poor race to the unbounded gratification of their desires away from God.

When the soul is distressed or cast down, that is not in itself sin. But sin comes in when there is distrust of God. Satan gets entrance for his full power in the soul the moment there is a shade of distrust of God. God will be trusted in the confidence of His love. Eve had the highest place in the world; she was surrounded by blessing, and possessed of actual happiness (man's state in Eden was one of actual happiness, though not of spiritual power such as the saints now have) ; but the very moment she felt distrust in God's competency to make her happy, it was all gone. Distrust in God is the positive condition of every natural man : all are seeking their happiness in something or other, if they are not trusting in God to make them happy. It is a solemn thought that one-half of the world is employed in providing the means of pleasure for the other half.

Satan was trusted by Eve. If God is not trusted, Satan most certainly will be. Man, standing alone in his independence, is not independent, but the slave of every man,\* the slave of sin and Satan. Like Eve he trusts Satan rather than God. She hoped on his authority that there was a doubt about the fulfilment of God's threatenings. God had said, " In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," chap. 2 : 17. He said, " Ye shall not surely die," impugning the truth of God's word. And so he says now. Men say in their hearts that sin will not bear the consequences God has said it will-" The wages of sin is death," Rom. 6 : 23. No man could go on if he believed what God said, instead of believing Satan. The happiness of man is faith in Satan's lie in this respect. They are proceeding in the same course, listening to that old detected lie of Satan. But God has said, " Ye shall surely die," and there is an end of all pleasures. So that all the devil can do is to hide the consequences of sin. He could not keep men going on if he did not keep out of their sight that truth, " Ye shall surely die." It is not that terror of it would change their hearts ; but if they did really believe it they would not have one happy day here. Where is the earthly happiness these words will not blast-" Ye shall surely die " ? But men believe what Satan says, and disbelieve what God says. " The lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life," have present enjoyment connected with them-man rushes to take the bait, willingly selling himself to Satan, though in so doing he is morally conscious that he is not acting according to the commandments of God. Observe, I am not here speaking of gross sin, but of disbelief in God Himself.

\* Look at the state man is really in, as regards the trust he puts in man rather than God. If his neighbour should ask him to do anything, though his conscience may tell him God hates what his neighbour wants him to do, still, rather than disoblige his neighbour, he will sin against God. He finds it harder to refuse his neighbour than not to walk with God ; it would distress him more to refuse him either in going to ungodly places of amusement or gratification, or indulging in known sin. I say it would distress him more to refuse his neighbour to join in such scenes and diversions than to break the holy commandments of God, and to despise the sacrifice of God's Son.

Let us see the next step. God has lost His character in the heart of man ; all man's confidence in God is gone : and Satan the liar and arch-deceiver is believed. Now the devil can say whatever he likes, he having the confidence of the heart instead of God. " God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, they your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil," v. 5. He began by insinuating that God knew the fruit would make her happy, but grudged to give it; then he questioned the truthfulness of God ; now he adds, " ye shall be as gods," tempting man to assume the privileges of God Himself.\*

\* Thus there were three things in which the devil desired that man should dishonour God; first, as to His grace; secondly, His truth; thirdly, the majesty of His Godhead.

How entirely had Eve forgotten every thought of God? Her soul should have recoiled with horror from the proposition. "What, I account myself as God! I take this glory to myself, and cast off God 1 Am I to set about being a thief-to take from God His glory, and become like Him- I, creature, and indebted to Him for everything ? " How different the way of Him who, " being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant" ! etc. (Phil. 2 : 6). But when we are once away from God, we have no spiritual sense of sin at all. Eve had no sense of the sin of leaving God out, and making herself the centre. And this is ever the result of exalting man, of looking at God's ways through man's telescope. Dependence is true exaltation in a creature, when the object of it is right. It looks up, and is exalted above itself. See David (Psalm 8) the greatest philosopher. But Eve was so willing to get rid of God that she sought by robbery to make herself equal with God. She may not have known the extent of the presumption of her confidence in Satan's he : but the secret of it all was this, that she had forgotten God, and thought only of herself-she had got self as a centre, and God was not in all her thoughts. When God is not our centre, all that by which we can exalt ourselves becomes the motive and principle of our hearts.

" The man is become as one of us, to know good and evil." This is God's account of fallen man: Satan never deceives by a mere abstract lie. But supposing Eve could have known that it was the truth, it would have been only an added deception, because it would not have been the truth in power in the conscience. Her heart having departed from God, her then seeing it to be truth would only have added to her darkness. I am doubly blind if the truth does not lead my heart towards God and put me under God.

Eve goes on in the way of sin. " 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," in positive and known disobedience to God's command, acting on the present enjoyment without any regard to consequences. And now she becomes the active instrument of sin, " and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat," v. 6. The man was not deceived (i Tim. 2: 14); but more shame to him in following the woman (who was deceived), contrary to the truth of God. Natural affection often becomes the means of drawing the heart away from God.

" And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked : and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons," v- 7. Here we find conscience at work, not conscience towards God, but that of shame, the conscience that drove out the accusers of the adulterous woman; John 8. The guilty pair have the sense of the shame of their nakedness, and they seek to hide it the one from the other. The divine work in enlightening the conscience gives a man to see the guilt of sin, the exceeding sinfulness of sin ; but sin has its shame as well as its guilt, and the natural conscience always seek to hide the shame of its sin with some fig-leaf covering.

This is no proof of conversion ; it is only the main proof that man has got into a bad conscience, and cannot get out of it. Adam and Eve dare not look at each other, nor yet to God. They cannot bear the condition they have got into, and they cannot change it, therefore they hide it. But do not mistake this for repentance. Shame merely drives them to hide from, and excuse themselves to, God. And so with ourselves : as long as the shame of sin continues, we try to hide it, to get away from it ; but it only drives us farther and farther from God. It is not a divinely-taught conscience, because we are more concerned about the shame before men than the sinfulness before God. Until God has the place which man now occupies in our hearts,, there is no conversion : the soul is not looking to God. We may be able to reason about the tender love and grace of God, but our sense of the guilt of sin should ever be deeper than that of its shame. When the conscience is before God, guilt brings sorrow ; and yet we can as sinners reckon upon the love and the kindness of God.

And now the dreadful moment arrives when they hear the voice of Jehovah God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. "And Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the. trees of the garden," v. 8. The Lord comes not with a fiery sword in judgment as yet;\* but still He comes as an " adversary " in some wise.

\* Man is the only intelligent being who is still alive in successful apostasy. What do we find in the case of the fallen angels ? Their sin brought its immediate and irremediable punishment. Man, man alone, is abiding in unbelief ; condemned indeed, but still the execution of the sentence is suspended.

Thus Jesus came, seeking an account of the fruit produced. " Agree with thine adversary, quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him." Christ was saying, I am yet in the way with you. " Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." The axe was laid to the root of the tree ; Luke 3 : 9. Therefore the only thing to be done was to agree with Him who had the right against them, " lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily, I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing."

"And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou ? " (v. 9). How came you not to be with me! " Enoch walked with God," Gen- 5 22. God had no occasion to say to him, " Where art thou ? " And he [Adam] said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself," v. 10. If the Lord were here, those who are ignorant of His grace would go out one by one, like the accusers of the poor adulterous woman. When Christ spoke to their conscience in those words, " He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her," they walked out from His presence one by one (not all together, lest it should be noticed that they were sinners). They were careful of their character before men, but not before God. Had they been willing to confess their sin and to submit themselves to God's righteousness, they would have stayed. It was not that the Lord used any reproach to those Pharisees, but He fixed the sin on their consciences. So God merely says here to Adam, How comes it that you are not with me ?

And how comes it, dear friends, that you have found bitterness and sorrow in the world ? You will say, perhaps, it is because sin is in the world ; but it is sin you have got into. You talk of a good conscience : the best conscience of a sinner only leads him to get as far away as he can from the presence of God. Do you call it a good conscience here in Adam, getting away from God and then judging for himself about his state ? " I was afraid, because I was naked ; and I hid myself." And it is thus even with the saint if he gets into sin ; there is darkness in the sin, and fear in the conscience after the sin. And when he is convinced he must get back again into the presence of God : and there is not unreserved confession, he seeks to

excuse himself. You will always find conscience, where the heart is wrong, tends to the invention of deceit. What did Adam say ? I am guilty; pardon me, O Lord ? No, he practises deceit.

" And he [the Lord] said, Who told thee that thou wast naked ? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat ? And the man said The woman whom thou gavest to be with me " (not " my wife " : in seeking to excuse himself, he casts the blame in reality upon God. It was Thou who gavest me this woman, and] "she gave me of the tree, and I did eat," v. 11, 12.

God takes no notice of this. He turns to the woman. "And the Lord God said, What is this that thou hast done ? " Eve now learns her lesson from Adam, as Adam had learned his of her before: " And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat," v. 13. All this is the truth; but conscience is not before God.

God, when He comes to deal with them about their sin, at once takes them up on the ground of their own excuses. " And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake ; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life : thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee," etc. (v. 17-19). The very excuse he gave was just the height of his sin, and the very thing by which God condemned him. So also with the woman. Out of their own mouths were they judged. The plea of temptation was only in fact saying that they preferred their own lusts to God ; that they listened to the devil's word more than to God's commandment.\*

\* In this the world most accurately follows the example of our first parents. They sin, and then plead, as an excuse or extenuation of their guilt, temptation, natural desire, expediency, etc. But we rest on God's truth when we declare that there is no excuse that man makes, which is not in fact the ground of his condemnation, yea, the very reason of it. See in the parable of the marriage supper, for instance, the excuse those who were invited gave for not attending: " I have bought a piece of ground, and must needs go and see it, I pray thee have me excused." Where was the " needs be " ? Only just this-they preferred their own gratification to the reception of the Lord's invitation.

Still God says nothing about this at first. But what does He ? He brings in grace. When He does take up the question, the man had already departed from Him-as a sinner he had departed from Him., before God came to judge him for the sin-and the effect of conscience is to drive away from God. Why does the infidel delight in infidelity ? Because he dislikes God. God therefore takes up man in grace, and brings in promise. But He pronounces judgment upon what they have done. He does not take up grace and pass lightly over sin. Alan always begins with what he will do, but God begins with what He has done. The truth always looks at what I am in the sight of God.

Having traced up the evil to its source, God goes at once to the serpent as the author of it ; but in pronouncing sentence He deals with Adam as lost (already the condition of man was that he was lost : God comes to no question about goodness ; and there is no promise made to Adam as in the flesh), and sets up the Second Adam. "And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field ; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life : and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," v. 14, 15.

There is where grace comes in. There is the root of the evil, and there is the sole remedy to set aside what man and the devil had done. He sets up the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, " the seed of the woman," as the bruiser of the serpent's head. What is the meaning of the term probation, as applied to our present state ?

" To save the lost " settles that. Grace brings out man's misery and sin in the presence of God, and brings Christ in. Man is under the power of Satan, decent or indecent. The decent, moral, unconverted man is only the more deceived, but the decent slave of Satan. God takes up the full power of the evil, and sets up His power for remedy in the Lord Jesus Christ. Man is not mended in his condition. God deals with Him as already set aside and lost, and, without any proposition of mending the evil, brings in and sets up the Lord Jesus Christ, the Second Adam, as the destroyer of the works of the devil ; 1 John 3 : 8.

And where was He to be found ? Where does God bring in His glory ? The grand fact is that it is " the seed of the woman." The spring of the evil was in the woman, and out of her was to come the deliverer. There is the glory of divine grace. Out of the eater cometh forth meat, and out of the strong sweetness ; judges 14 : 14. The poor wretched woman was to give birth to the Saviour of the world. God does not slur over sin, but brings out all its vileness, and sets up Christ as the Second Adam in the very place of sin-His birth-place was in the death that sin had brought into the world. " Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord," Rom. 5 : 20, 21.

And mark the perfect contrast of the obedience of Christ! Not as the first Adam (from the place of the creature exalting himself to be as God), He from a high place takes a low. " Being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," Phil. 2 : 6-8. He lays not the burden on the weak one, but bears her sin. Instead of saying, " The woman that thou gavest me," etc. (v. 12), He loved the church, and gave Himself for it; took her sins upon Himself, and came into the depth of her sins. " He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all things," etc. (Eph. 4 : 10), that in His blessed grace the greatest, the chief of sinners, might be able to find a resting-place, not in their own wretched excuses, but in His divine love.

---

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-nelson-darby/the-rejected-man/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**