

Text: Genesis 3:1-7 (Pew Bible, pg.3)

Title: “Hazardous Material”

INTRODUCTION

ILLUSTRATION – I don’t mean to scare you with this outfit. Hopefully you will never be in a situation where you have to be around first responders who are wearing a hazmat suit like my friend is wearing today. Whenever you see a first responder, like a fireman, wearing a suit like this you know that some hazardous materials have been released. This suit is supposed to keep the fireman from being exposed to the hazardous materials. But it is to keep him safe while he is hopefully able to do something about it ... to eliminate the threat.

Today I want to introduce a series of messages I will begin two weeks from today. I’ve entitled the series “Hazmat ... Some of the Most Dangerous Ideas in our Culture.” These ideas are morally and spiritually lethal. If you consume them they will ruin your life, perhaps even for eternity.

This is an invisible danger. Just like the deadly vapors that are released in the air when a tanker truck explodes, the hazardous material I’m talking about is invisible ... it comes in the form of ideas and philosophies and worldviews.

My purpose in this series is to help you ... men and women, students, boys and girls ... to suit up, not with a hazmat suit, but with the Word of God so that you can do battle against this hazardous material. And we must fight them.

2 Corinthians 10:3 - For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does.

2 Corinthians 10:4 - The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

2 Corinthians 10:5 - We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

What are some of these lethal, dangerous ideas in your world? Where and how are these ideas introduced into the atmosphere of our world?

ILLUSTRATION – Let me give you a few examples:

There’s hazardous material in television shows like NBC’s series “The New Normal.” The description on the NBC website says, “These days, families come in all forms - single dads, double moms, sperm donors, egg donors, one-night-stand donors. It's 2012 and anything goes. Bryan and David (two men) are a Los Angeles couple, and they have it all. Well, almost. With successful careers and a committed, loving partnership, there is one thing that this couple is missing: a baby.” You can imagine where it goes from there. That’s hazardous material.

There’s hazardous material in the scientific and educational community. Some of you have heard of Bill Nye - The Science Guy. He’s a science educator and a PBS television host.

Well, he has come out condemning Christian groups who cast doubts on evolution and on lawmakers who want to bring the Bible into science classrooms. A news report said “Bill Nye The Science Guy has waded into the evolution debate with an online video that urges parents not to pass their religious-based doubts about evolution on to their children.” That’s hazardous material.

There’s hazardous material found in the platform of political parties and candidates who place the reproductive rights of women above the right to life for little babies. It’s found in the bullying propaganda of Planned Parenthood where expectant mothers are told that the child growing inside them isn’t a human being yet, so they can go ahead and just have it removed. That’s hazardous material.

Some of these ideas are just potent, undiluted godlessness and perversion. But some of this hazardous material is disguised as popular religious thoughts and philosophies.

Hazardous material is even found in churches in our land where preachers think they are wiser than God and tell their listeners they can’t really trust the Bible to be the Word of God, and that Jesus isn’t the only way to get to heaven. And that kind of thinking is just as hazardous because it can deceive people right into hell for eternity.

And these ideas are contrary to the Gospel; they all in some way are a perversion the Gospel by which we are saved. It is through the apostolic message of the NT and the Gospel, that we fight and fortify ourselves against this hazardous material.

Now today I want to show you where it all started. Turn to Genesis 3. Many of these ideas appear to be new, but they’re really not. The first such hazardous material was released into earth’s atmosphere in the Garden of Eden. Follow along as I read the familiar story from Genesis 3:1-7.

So, from the earliest days of human history ideas have been presented that are hazardous in so many ways.

1. THE SOURCE OF THESE IDEAS (Genesis 3:1)

Let me give you a little background first. God created the universe, including the first man and woman, Adam and Eve. He placed them in a perfect Garden where everything they would ever need was provided by God. God told them they could eat of any tree in that glorious Garden except for the tree of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. This was a tree whose fruit would give Adam and Eve firsthand experience and knowledge of good, but also of evil. And God told them that if they ate of that tree they would die. Now why wouldn’t God want them to have that? It’s not that God didn’t want them to have that knowledge. It is because He wanted them to have that knowledge based upon God’s revelation, not upon their own experience.

ILLUSTRATION – Every parent wants their child to know that if they touch a flame on the stove they will be severely burned. They want their children to learn that by listening to what the parent teaches them, not to learn it by sticking their hand in the fire. It was the same thing

for Adam and Eve with the knowledge of good and evil. God wanted them to learn it from His teaching, not from their own experience.

So far, so good. Adam and Eve are doing great in the wonderful Garden God prepared for them to enjoy each other, and for them to enjoy His presence. So we come to Genesis 3.

Genesis 3:1 - Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”

Now Satan comes into the Garden clothed as a snake. Revelation 12:9 calls him...

Revelation 12:9 - The great dragon ... that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray.

And it says that he was more subtle than any of the other animals. Snakes are that way. They slither around and sneak up on their prey. They blend in with their surroundings so as to disguise themselves.

So Satan cloaks himself in the body of a snake ... and introduces the first hazardous ideas in the Garden of Eden. And even to this day Satan continues that activity of releasing hazardous material in the form of lethal ideas and philosophies. And it will be so to the very end of human history.

The Apostle Paul said...

1 Timothy 4:1 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

1 Timothy 4:2 Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.

The Spirit of God is saying something to the church. People who have called themselves Christians are going to abandon the faith and follow after teachings that are, in reality, demonic, deceptive and destructive. Notice it says that such teachings come from liars who are inspired by the Great Liar, Satan.

These demons are deceiving spirits whose mission it is to introduce this hazardous material into the world, and even into the church.

You see, Satan's mission has always been to keep people from God, and one of the ways he does this is introducing ideas, thoughts, philosophies, worldviews that keep man from trusting God, and encourages them to go after their own wisdom.

Notice that these teachers are hypocritical liars. Some of these ideas and philosophies even come from religious people. They know full well that they are liars, but their consciences are

seared so that they have no qualms with introducing this hazardous material into the atmosphere of our world.

There are millions of people in our world who have bought into these lies and they are in danger ... morally and spiritually. These are lethal ideas that lead people down the path of destruction. And sadly many believers get infected by these same ideas and philosophies.

Now the antidote to this hazardous material is the teaching of truth. Paul would go on to say to Timothy...

1 Timothy 4:6 - If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, brought up in the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed.

There is such a thing as truth. And truth, by its very nature is exclusive and it is to some degree intolerant. There is such a thing as truth that serves as the standard against which all these other ideas are tested. The Word of God is true, and it matters that we believe what is true.

Though many of these ideas appear to be new, in reality they can all be traced back to the first hazardous material introduced in the Garden of Eden by Satan the deceiver. Next...

2. THE SUBSTANCE OF THESE IDEAS (Genesis 3:1-5)

Three things are at the heart of these ideas. They include...

- **Doubts about the truth of God (v.1)**

Genesis 3:1 – (The serpent) said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”

The seeds of doubt are sown when Satan says, “Did God really say...” The fact is that God didn’t say that. He told Adam and Eve they could eat of any tree in the Garden, except one.

As we read the Bible Satan still tempts us with the idea that God didn’t really say those things, and therefore we don’t have to obey them or live by them.

- **Distortions of the truth of God (vv.3-4)**

Satan loves to distort the truth of God’s Word.

Genesis 3:3 – (Eve said) God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’ ”

Genesis 3:4 - “You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman.

God said it, but Satan found a way to twist and distort God’s Word.

ILLUSTRATION – The same thing happened in the Wilderness of Temptation for Jesus. Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness with ideas and thoughts. He told Jesus to jump off the highest point of the temple. Then Satan quoted a psalm to Jesus that said God would command his angels to protect Jesus and that He would never strike His foot against a stone. Well that’s a distortion of the truth.

- **Deceptions about the character of God (v.5)**

Genesis 3:5 - “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

In other words Satan said, “God doesn’t care about you or your happiness. He just wants to make life miserable for you with all these rules.”

So we see the source of these hazardous ideas, and the substance of these hazardous ideas. Next...

3. THE SUBVERSION OF THESE IDEAS (Genesis 3:6-7)

There’s something incredibly subversive and destructive about these ideas.

Genesis 3:6 - When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

Genesis 3:7 - Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

The result of believing the lies of Satan is that Adam and Eve were separated from God because they sinned. They died spiritually the moment they ate of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, just as God said they would. They were still alive physically, but they died spiritually because their sin separated them from God, the source of life.

Now Satan will do whatever he can to get people to breathe the hazardous material of his lies so that they would perish for eternity. The Bible says he comes to steal, kill and destroy. He’ll do anything he can to keep people from being saved.

But of course when we are saved, Satan has no power over our eternal destiny. That is secure in Christ. But he can still lead believers astray with his lethal ideas and thoughts and worldviews. Paul said to the believers in Corinth...

2 Corinthians 11:3 - But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

That's what God is after for us ... sincere and pure devotion to Christ. Don't let the hazardous material of the Satan and the world keep you from that. Whether you hear or see it on television, or in a classroom or on the internet. Keep your devotion to Christ sincere and pure.